

The Concept of Love in Uzbek Folk Proverbs: A Linguocultural And Cognitive Analysis

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Abstract: This article investigates the linguocultural and cognitive representation of the concept of love in Uzbek folk proverbs. As the most concise yet semantically rich expression of folk wisdom, proverbs encapsulate cultural perceptions, stereotypes, and moral norms related to love. The study employs conceptual analysis, discourse analysis, and linguocultural analysis methods. The concept of love in Uzbek proverbs is examined through positive and negative connotations, gender aspects, family relationships, and spiritual-moral values. The findings suggest that love in Uzbek folk proverbs primarily serves educational and social functions within the community.

Keywords: Love concept, Uzbek proverbs, linguoculturology, cognitive linguistics, folk wisdom, conceptual metaphor.

Introduction: One of the most important genres of Uzbek oral folklore, proverbs have attracted considerable attention in linguistics as a unique cultural code reflecting the people's mentality, customs, traditions, and system of values. In particular, love—being one of the fundamental ontological categories of human life—is interpreted in proverbs in various ways. In recent years, the rapid development of Conceptology and Linguocultural Studies has required new approaches to the investigation of concepts in the lexicon of national languages. The studies of such scholars as G.S. Slyshkin, V.A. Maslova, Yu.S. Stepanov, and D.S. Likhachev on concept theory have also laid the groundwork for new research directions in Uzbek linguistics.

The purpose of this article is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the linguistic, cognitive, and cultural characteristics of the concept of love in Uzbek folk proverbs, as well as to determine the role and significance of this concept in contemporary Uzbek culture.

The research material consists of collections of Uzbek folk proverbs, including the academic compilations

published by T. Mirzayev and B. Sarimsoqov, as well as electronic databases. More than 200 proverbs were analyzed, of which 87 were found to be directly related to the concept of love.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of love is universal in nature and has been studied within various linguistic schools. Zoltán Kövecses (2000) demonstrated from a cognitive perspective that love is expressed through conceptual metaphors such as "LOVE IS A JOURNEY," "LOVE IS FIRE," and "LOVE IS A BUILDING." This theoretical framework is also useful for the analysis of Uzbek folk proverbs.

In Uzbek linguistics, scholars such as N. Mahmudov, H. Dadaboyev, F. Botirov, and D. Xudoyberdiyeva have made significant contributions to the study of paremias (proverbs and sayings). However, there is still a lack of specialized research devoted to the cognitive analysis of the concept of love within the framework of folk proverbs, which determines the relevance and significance of the present topic.

From the perspective of comparative studies, an analysis of the concept of love in Uzbek proverbs

alongside its representation in Turkish, Arabic, and Persian proverbs – as examined by scholars such as R. Aksan, M. Al-Khatib, and F. Ahmadi – could provide a deeper understanding of the distinctive features of Uzbek proverbs.

METHODOLOGY

The following research methods were employed in this study:

1. **Conceptual Analysis Method** – The semantic field of the concept of love and its constituent elements (conceptual metonymy, metaphor, and frame structures) were identified and analyzed.
2. **Linguocultural Analysis** – Cultural norms, moral values, and distinctive features of the national mentality reflected in the proverbs were examined.
3. **Componential Analysis** – The semantic structure (sense composition) of lexical units expressing the concept of love in the proverbs was investigated.
4. **Quantitative Analysis** – The identified conceptual groups were statistically classified, and their percentage distributions were determined.

DISCUSSION

1. Semantic Fields of the Concept of Love

In Uzbek folk proverbs, the concept of love is manifested in three main semantic groups: (1) family love and fidelity; (2) romantic love and one's life partner; and (3) parental love. The study revealed that 42% of the analyzed proverbs belong to the first group, 31% to the second group, and 27% to the third group.

2. Conceptual Metaphors

In Uzbek proverbs, the concept of love is expressed through various conceptual metaphors. The most frequently occurring metaphors include:

- “Love is Fire”: Love is flame and fire.
- “Love is a Garden”: Love is the fruit of the heart.
- “Love is the Light of the Eyes”: Love is blind and deaf.

These metaphors reflect the Uzbek people's closeness to nature, their appreciation of beauty, and their spiritual and moral values. As noted by Zoltán Kövecses (2000), conceptual metaphors serve as important cognitive mechanisms through which abstract notions

such as love are understood and expressed.

According to the theory of universal conceptual metaphors proposed by Zoltán Kövecses, these metaphorical patterns occur across many languages; however, in Uzbek proverbs, the spiritual and moral dimensions tend to predominate.

3. Gender Aspect

The analysis revealed that in 58% of the proverbs, normative and educational expectations directed toward women are strongly emphasized within the context of love relationships. This reflects the linguistic manifestation of the traditional patriarchal structure of society.

From the perspective of contemporary gender studies, it is important to emphasize the need for a critical reassessment of such proverbs, taking into account changing social values and evolving views on gender roles and equality.

4. The Moral and Ethical Dimension of Love

In Uzbek folk proverbs, love is interpreted not only as an emotion but also as a duty and responsibility. It represents an important linguocultural source that embodies the people's centuries-long life experience, moral views, and aesthetic ideals. Although the concept of love is a universal phenomenon in human culture, its interpretation acquires distinctive features depending on each nation's historical development, traditions, and national mentality.

In Uzbek proverbs, love is reflected not only as an emotional relationship between two individuals but also as a symbol of family values, compassion, loyalty, and humanism. Such characteristics are expressed through frames like “love is patience,” “love is fidelity,” and “love is service” in Uzbek culture:

- “Sevgida zorlik bor, zo'rlik yo'q.” – In love, patience and endurance are important.
- “Soxta oshiq ishqdan lof urar, oy o'tmasdan musht o'q'talib dod urar.” – Loyalty is a core value in love.

Analysis of the main conceptual features of the concept of love

Based on the analysis of proverbs, the following conceptual features of the concept of love can be identified:

Conceptual symbol	Content
Kindness	Doing good to people, caring
Loyalty	Loyalty and Trust
Samimiyat	Intimacy of heart and pure intention
Family	Stable family relationships
Humanism	Humanism and humanity
Appreciation	Recognition of a person's spiritual worth

These features demonstrate that, in the national mentality of the Uzbek people, love is formed as a multifaceted phenomenon.

National-Cultural Characteristics of the Concept of Love

In Uzbek folk proverbs, love is interpreted more as a social and ethical value than as an individual emotion. While in Western cultures love is often associated with romantic feelings, in Uzbek paremiological sources it is closely connected with:

- Parent – child relationships;
- kinship ties;
- neighborhood relations;
- friendship;
- family loyalty.

Therefore, the concept of love in the Uzbek linguistic worldview has a broad semantic field and functions together with concepts such as “kindness,” “compassion,” “loyalty,” “faithfulness,” and “humanity.”

CONCLUSION

This study leads to the following main conclusions: first, the concept of love in Uzbek folk proverbs has a multi-layered and multi-dimensional structure in which linguistic, cultural, and cognitive aspects complement one another. Second, the concept of love in proverbs expresses not only emotions but also social order, moral norms, and a system of spiritual values. Third, the analysis of conceptual metaphors clarifies the worldview and cultural identity of the Uzbek people.

The scientific novelty of this research lies in the fact that, for the first time, the concept of love in Uzbek folk proverbs has been comprehensively analyzed using a cognitive-linguocultural approach, and a system of conceptual frames has been developed. For future

research, it is important to conduct comparative-typological studies comparing proverbs in neighboring Turkic languages.

In Uzbek folk proverbs, the concept of love is an important linguocultural unit reflecting the people's spiritual world, moral views, and national values. Linguocultural analysis shows that love is expressed in connection with kindness, compassion, loyalty, sincerity, and family-orientedness. Cognitive analysis reveals that love in folk consciousness is structured through conceptual models such as spiritual wealth, a unifying force, loyalty, and the foundation of the family. As a result, the concept of “love” in Uzbek folk proverbs appears as an important component of the national mentality, reflecting the life experience and spiritual values of the people.

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