

Cultural-Cognitive Representation of Places and Objects in Uzbek And English Literary Prose

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Abstract: This article examines the cultural-cognitive representation of place and object names in Uzbek and English literary prose. The study focuses on the way culturally coded spatial and material units activate conceptual knowledge, cultural associations, social frames, and mental representations in the reader's cognition. The research is based on Abdulla Qodiriy's *O'tkan kunlar* (Bygone Days) and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Unlike approaches that treat place and object names primarily as nominative or descriptive elements, the present study interprets them as cognitive triggers participating in the construction of literary space and cultural meaning. The analysis employs the concepts of conceptualization, categorization, frame, cognitive domain, mental space, and cultural knowledge. Particular attention is paid to such place names as Tashkent, Margilan, Longbourn, Meryton, Netherfield, and Pemberley, as well as to culturally meaningful objects and material signs represented in the two novels. The analysis demonstrates that a literary place name may activate a complex network of geographical, social, historical, familial, and cultural knowledge rather than merely identify a physical location. Similarly, an object may acquire cultural significance through its association with social status, gender roles, domestic practices, values, and interpersonal relations. The study proposes a cognitive model in which a culturally coded unit moves from linguistic form through contextual activation and cultural association to conceptualization, frame construction, and the formation of a culturally specific mental space. The comparative analysis reveals both shared cognitive categories and culture-specific ways of organizing literary knowledge in Uzbek and English prose.

Keywords: Cultural code, cognitive linguistics, literary prose, place name, object name, conceptualization, categorization, frame, mental space, cultural knowledge, cognitive representation, Uzbek literature, English literature.

Introduction: Literary prose represents reality not only through events and characters but also through the spatial and material environment in which those events occur. Places, houses, estates, streets, cities, household objects, clothing, and other material elements contribute to the organization of the fictional world. Within a literary text, however, such units cannot always be reduced to their direct referential meanings. A place may evoke a social hierarchy, a historical memory, a family structure, or a particular cultural lifestyle, while an object may activate knowledge concerning status, gender, domestic behavior, or social conventions.

This observation makes the study of place and object

names relevant to cognitive linguistics. Cognitive linguistics approaches linguistic meaning in relation to conceptualization and the ways in which speakers construe experience. Langacker argues that semantic structures are associated with cognitive domains and that meaning is fundamentally connected with conceptualization [6]. Fillmore's frame semantics likewise emphasizes the role of structured background knowledge in understanding linguistic expressions [3]. Contemporary cognitive linguistic scholarship treats frames, idealized cognitive models, and domains as ways of representing structured encyclopedic knowledge associated with linguistic knowledge [2].

The cognitive interpretation of culturally marked units

is particularly significant in literary discourse. A literary place name may simultaneously function as a geographical identifier, a social marker, a cultural symbol, and a trigger of reader knowledge. The same applies to material objects. Their meaning in a literary text may emerge not from their dictionary definition alone but from the network of cultural associations established by the text.

The present study addresses this issue through a comparative analysis of Abdulla Qodiriy's O'tkan kunlar and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. The two novels belong to different literary and cultural traditions, yet both construct social reality through a close interaction between characters, places, households, and material culture.

In O'tkan kunlar, the opposition and interaction between Tashkent and Margilan are connected with the movement of characters, family relations, social conflicts, and the historical-cultural environment represented in the novel. A scholarly discussion of the novel's plot also notes that the Tashkent–Margilan spatial line provides an important structural basis for the development of the novel's central events and social problems.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, places such as Longbourn, Meryton, Netherfield, Rosings, and Pemberley are similarly involved in the representation of social relations. The text explicitly connects Longbourn and Meryton spatially and socially, while Pemberley becomes associated with Darcy, his estate, and Elizabeth's changing perception of him.

The aim of this article is therefore to identify how place and object names function as culturally coded cognitive units in Uzbek and English literary prose and to establish the cognitive mechanisms through which they participate in the construction of cultural meaning.

The objectives of the study are:

1. to determine the relationship between place/object names and cultural knowledge;
2. to identify the conceptual structures activated by culturally coded spatial and material units;
3. to analyze the role of frames and mental spaces in the interpretation of literary places;
4. to compare the cognitive representation of selected units in Uzbek and English literary prose;

5. to develop a cognitive model for the interpretation of culturally coded places and objects.

The research applies contextual, comparative, linguocultural, and cognitive-semantic methods.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Cognitive linguistics views language as closely related to human conceptualization and knowledge organization. In this perspective, a linguistic expression does not simply correspond to an isolated object in the external world. Its interpretation depends on the cognitive domain, background knowledge, experiential associations, and the particular way in which a speaker or reader construes the represented situation. Langacker explicitly defines meaning in relation to conceptualization and cognitive domains [6].

Frame semantics provides another important theoretical basis for the present research. Fillmore's concept of the frame emphasizes that the interpretation of a linguistic unit may require access to a structured body of knowledge rather than to an isolated lexical meaning [3]. Thus, the meaning of a culturally significant place name can be understood only by activating the social and cultural knowledge associated with that place.

Lakoff's work on categorization is also relevant because cultural experience influences how entities and events are grouped into conceptual categories [5]. A place, for instance, may simultaneously belong to geographical, social, familial, historical, or cultural categories.

The concept of mental space is useful for literary analysis because literary texts construct internally organized spaces that differ from physical geography. A fictional place may therefore function as a mental space containing people, relationships, events, expectations, and values. This makes literary spatial names particularly productive objects of cognitive analysis.

On this basis, the present research distinguishes four analytical levels:

**LINGUISTIC FORM → CONTEXTUAL
ACTIVATION → CULTURAL ASSOCIATION →
COGNITIVE REPRESENTATION**

At a further stage, the representation may be organized as:

CONCEPT → FRAME → MENTAL SPACE →

CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

This model allows the study to move beyond the identification of a cultural code toward the analysis of the cognitive structures through which that code becomes meaningful.

COGNITIVE REPRESENTATION OF PLACE NAMES IN O'TKAN KUNLAR

Tashkent and Margilan as culturally structured mental spaces

One of the most significant spatial oppositions in O'tkan kunlar is represented by Tashkent and Margilan. At the geographical level, these are simply two locations. At the level of literary cognition, however, they become interconnected mental spaces associated with different characters, families, social environments, and events.

The cognitive interpretation can be represented as follows:

TASHKENT

- geographical location
- Otabek's social environment
- family
- commercial activity
- political and social events
- urban cultural space
- **SOCIAL-HISTORICAL FRAME**

In parallel:

MARGILAN

- geographical location
- Kumush
- her family
- domestic environment
- local social relations
- cultural identity
- **FAMILY-CULTURAL FRAME**

The important point is that the reader does not process Tashkent and Margilan only as geographical coordinates. As the narrative develops, each place accumulates contextual information. The place name consequently becomes connected with people, events, values, conflicts, and social relations.

The cognitive mechanism may therefore be described as:

PLACE NAME → LOCATION → CHARACTER → SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT → EVENTS → CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

This mechanism demonstrates that a literary place name can serve as a cognitive organizer of narrative information.

The Tashkent–Margilan relationship is particularly significant because it participates in the organization of the novel's central plot. The movement between the two spaces creates a conceptual relationship between personal and social experience. Thus, the geographical opposition is transformed into a meaningful literary structure.

The spatial model may be represented as:

TASHKENT ↔ MARGILAN

urban/social space ↔ familial/domestic space

Otabek ↔ Kumush

public sphere ↔ private sphere

This should not be understood as an absolute binary opposition. Rather, the two spaces intersect through the movement of characters and the development of events. Their cognitive significance emerges from this interaction.

Consequently, the names Tashkent and Margilan can be considered culturally coded spatial units because their textual meanings depend on a network of social and cultural knowledge rather than on geographical reference alone.

COGNITIVE REPRESENTATION OF PLACE NAMES IN PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

Longbourn and Meryton

Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* provides a different but comparable system of culturally meaningful literary spaces.

Longbourn is the Bennet family's home and therefore becomes associated with family relations, domestic life, marriage expectations, and social interaction. Meryton, in contrast, functions as a more public social environment in which characters encounter neighbors, officers, acquaintances, and information.

The novel explicitly establishes their spatial proximity: Longbourn is located only a short distance from

Meryton, and the Bennet sisters frequently go there.

The cognitive model of Longbourn can be expressed as:

Longbourn

- house
- Bennet family
- domestic space
- daughters
- marriage
- family expectations
- inheritance

→ **FAMILY FRAME**

Meryton activates another set of associations:

Meryton

- small town
- social interaction
- acquaintances
- officers
- gossip/information
- courtship
- social observation

→ **COMMUNITY FRAME**

The contrast can therefore be represented as:

Longbourn → FAMILY / DOMESTIC FRAME

Meryton → COMMUNITY / SOCIAL INTERACTION FRAME

The place names thus function as cognitive indicators of different spheres of social experience.

Netherfield as a Social and Relational Frame

Netherfield is another important spatial unit in the novel. It is associated with Charles Bingley and his social circle. The text describes visits between Longbourn and Netherfield, making the movement between these places part of the developing social relations among the characters.

From a cognitive perspective:

Netherfield

- estate
- Bingley
- wealth

→ social gathering

→ courtship

→ interaction between families

→ social evaluation

→ **COURTSHIP/SOCIAL STATUS FRAME**

The significance of Netherfield therefore exceeds the physical meaning of “a house or estate.” The place becomes a cognitive space in which social relationships are evaluated and transformed.

Pemberley as a Complex Cognitive Space

Pemberley represents one of the clearest examples of cultural-cognitive spatial representation in *Pride and Prejudice*.

Initially, Elizabeth’s knowledge about Darcy is constructed largely through social reports, first impressions, and personal judgments. Her encounter with Pemberley contributes to a revision of this cognitive model.

The text explicitly connects Derbyshire, Pemberley, and Darcy. Elizabeth associates the name Pemberley with Darcy even before she visits the estate. Later, her perception of Darcy changes as she observes his behavior in relation to the estate and its social environment.

The cognitive structure can be represented as:

Pemberley

- estate
- Darcy
- wealth
- property
- family
- social status
- responsibility
- personal character
- revised evaluation

→ **ARISTOCRATIC ESTATE FRAME**

The important cognitive process here is **reconceptualization**.

At an earlier stage:

Darcy → pride → social distance → negative evaluation

After Elizabeth encounters Pemberley and receives new information:

DARCY → estate → social responsibility → generosity → alternative evaluation

The spatial unit therefore contributes to a transformation in the character's mental representation.

This is a particularly important cognitive feature: **place does not merely reflect an already existing concept; it may participate in changing that concept.**

Thus:

Literary unit	Primary reference	Activated knowledge	Cognitive frame	Cultural significance
Tashkent	geographical place	Otabek, family, social events	social-historical frame	Uzbek urban-cultural space
Margilan	geographical place	Kumush, family, domestic relations	family-cultural frame	local/familial cultural space
Longbourn	family estate	Bennet family, domestic relations	family frame	domestic social organization
Meryton	town	acquaintances, social interaction, courtship	community frame	local social network
Netherfield	estate	Bingley, wealth, social visits	courtship/status frame	social interaction and class
Pemberley	estate	Darcy, property, wealth, responsibility	aristocratic estate frame	class, property and identity

The comparison reveals a common cognitive mechanism:

PLACE NAME → CONTEXT → ASSOCIATIVE KNOWLEDGE → FRAME → MENTAL SPACE

However, the content of the frame differs according to cultural context.

In O'tkan kunlar, spatial organization is closely related to family, kinship, social conflict, historical circumstances, and the relationship between individual destiny and society.

In Pride and Prejudice, literary spaces are strongly connected with property, inheritance, social rank, family position, marriage, and patterns of social interaction.

Thus, the cognitive function of a place name is universal

PLACE → NEW EXPERIENCE → NEW KNOWLEDGE → RECONCEPTUALIZATION

Pemberley becomes a cognitive space through which Elizabeth reorganizes previously established knowledge about Darcy.

COMPARATIVE COGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF PLACE NAMES

The analysis of selected place names in the two novels demonstrates that literary spaces can perform similar cognitive functions while being culturally organized in different ways.

at the level of **knowledge activation**, while its specific conceptual content is culturally conditioned.

COGNITIVE REPRESENTATION OF OBJECTS AND MATERIAL CULTURE

Place names are not the only culturally coded units in literary prose. Objects may also become cognitive signs when they are associated with a particular cultural practice, social status, gender role, or value system.

An object initially possesses a material function. However, literary context can transform its cognitive status:

OBJECT → MATERIAL FUNCTION → CONTEXT → ASSOCIATION → CULTURAL VALUE → CONCEPT

For example, clothing and household objects in a literary text may indicate not only what a character

possesses but also how that character is positioned within a social and cultural system.

In Uzbek literary prose, traditional clothing, household objects, domestic spaces, and objects connected with hospitality can activate knowledge about family relations, gender roles, respect, and customary behavior.

In Austen's prose, objects associated with estates, household organization, travel, social visits, letters, and personal appearance can similarly activate knowledge about class, etiquette, courtship, and social expectations.

The cognitive significance of the object therefore emerges through its relation to the cultural frame in which it is interpreted.

THE OBJECT AS A COGNITIVE TRIGGER

The difference between a neutral object and a culturally coded object may be represented as follows:

Neutral interpretation

OBJECT → MATERIAL REFERENT

Cultural-cognitive interpretation

OBJECT → REFERENT → CONTEXT → CULTURAL ASSOCIATION → SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE → CONCEPT

For example, an estate in *Pride and Prejudice* cannot be interpreted only as a physical residence. Its narrative meaning may include property, inheritance, economic power, family continuity, social rank, and marriage prospects.

Similarly, a culturally meaningful household object in Uzbek prose may activate concepts related to hospitality, family hierarchy, domestic responsibility, or traditional values.

Therefore, object names acquire cultural-cognitive significance through the knowledge structures surrounding them.

A COGNITIVE MODEL OF CULTURALLY CODED PLACE AND OBJECT NAMES

Based on the comparative analysis, the following model can be proposed:

LEVEL 1 — LINGUISTIC FORM

place/object name

↓

LEVEL 2 — REFERENTIAL IDENTIFICATION

What does it denote?

↓

LEVEL 3 — CONTEXTUAL ACTIVATION

Who/what is it associated with in the text?

↓

LEVEL 4 — CULTURAL ASSOCIATION

What cultural knowledge does it evoke?

↓

LEVEL 5 — CONCEPTUALIZATION

What concept is constructed or activated?

↓

LEVEL 6 — FRAME FORMATION

What structured knowledge becomes available?

↓

LEVEL 7 — MENTAL SPACE

What literary/social world is constructed?

↓

LEVEL 8 — CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

What national-cultural worldview is represented?

The model can be expressed more compactly as:

CULTURAL CODE → LINGUISTIC UNIT → CONTEXT → CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE → CONCEPT → FRAME → MENTAL SPACE → CULTURAL WORLDVIEW

This model constitutes the principal cognitive result of the study.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that culturally coded places and objects occupy an intermediate position between language, culture, and cognition. Their textual significance cannot be adequately described if their referential meaning is separated from the knowledge structures activated by the literary context.

From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, the interpretation of a place name depends on the domains of knowledge activated by that name. This corresponds to the broader cognitive linguistic assumption that linguistic meaning is related to conceptualization rather than being limited to direct reference [6].

The frame-based interpretation further demonstrates that culturally meaningful units activate structured knowledge. Pemberley, for example, evokes not simply

a geographical location but a network involving property, family, wealth, social rank, and Darcy's identity. The text itself subsequently modifies this network as Elizabeth's experience changes.

Likewise, Tashkent and Margilan in O'tkan kunlar operate as narrative spaces in which characters, families, social relations, and historical events are organized. The spatial opposition therefore participates in the conceptual structure of the novel rather than functioning merely as geographical background.

The comparison also demonstrates that cognitive analysis should not be confused with simple cultural interpretation. A culturally coded unit becomes an object of cognitive analysis when the researcher reconstructs the **knowledge structure activated by that unit**, identifies its conceptual components, establishes their relations, and explains how these components contribute to the reader's mental representation of the literary world.

Accordingly, the following analytical sequence is proposed:

IDENTIFICATION → CONTEXTUALIZATION → ASSOCIATION → CONCEPTUALIZATION → FRAMING → MENTAL REPRESENTATION

This sequence makes it possible to distinguish a descriptive cultural analysis from a cognitive one.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of O'tkan kunlar and Pride and Prejudice demonstrates that place and object names may function as culturally coded cognitive units in literary prose.

First, a literary place name is not necessarily limited to geographical reference. Through contextual accumulation, it can activate information about characters, families, social groups, historical circumstances, economic relations, and cultural values.

Second, place names participate in the construction of mental spaces. Tashkent and Margilan in O'tkan kunlar form interconnected literary spaces associated with different characters, families, social environments, and historical events. Longbourn, Meryton, Netherfield, and Pemberley in Pride and Prejudice similarly organize domestic, communal, courtship, property, and social-status frames.

Third, the cognitive significance of a place may change during the development of the narrative. Pemberley is especially illustrative because the reader observes a connection between spatial experience and the revision of Elizabeth's mental representation of Darcy.

Fourth, objects and material signs can also become culturally coded when their interpretation depends on socially shared knowledge. Their cognitive meaning emerges through the interaction of material reference, textual context, cultural association, and conceptual categorization.

Fifth, the comparison of Uzbek and English literary prose reveals a common cognitive mechanism — **linguistic unit → contextual activation → cultural knowledge → concept → frame → mental space** — but also demonstrates that the content of these cognitive structures is shaped by culturally specific experience.

Thus, the study confirms that culturally coded place and object names should be approached not merely as nominative or descriptive elements but as cognitive mechanisms through which literary texts organize cultural knowledge. Their analysis makes it possible to identify how national-cultural worldviews are represented, activated, and reconstructed in the reader's cognition.

The proposed model — **cultural code → linguistic unit → context → cultural knowledge → concept → frame → mental space → cultural worldview** — may serve as a methodological basis for further comparative research into culturally coded linguistic units in Uzbek and English literary discourse.

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