

## CONCEPTUAL AND AXIOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF METAPHORS IN UZBEK ECOLOGICAL DISCOURSE

G'ayratova Gulzoda San'at qizi

First-year PhD student, Bukhara State Pedagogical Institute

[Gayratovaguli@gmail.com](mailto:Gayratovaguli@gmail.com)

**Annotation:** This article examines the theoretical foundations of ecological metaphors within the framework of Uzbek linguistics, employing conceptual and discursive approaches. In addition to interpreting metaphor as a semantic phenomenon, the study explores its cognitive and axiological dimensions. The findings demonstrate that ecological metaphors in the Uzbek language are structured around anthropomorphic, axiological, and dramatic models, and highlight their significant role in shaping ecological consciousness.

**Keywords:** ecological metaphor, conceptual modeling, axiology, ecological discourse, semantic shift, environmental awareness.

**Introduction:** In the 21st century, the intensification of ecological problems necessitates reconsidering the relationship between language and thought within a new scientific paradigm. A person's attitude toward nature is primarily reflected in the process of linguistic conceptualization. In this regard, metaphor appears as an important tool for cognitive modeling of reality.

Although metaphor in Uzbek linguistics has often been interpreted as a type of semantic transfer, its conceptual and axiological aspects have not been sufficiently systematized. In particular, ecological metaphors have not been studied as a separate linguo-cognitive unit. The purpose of this research is to theoretically substantiate ecological metaphors, determine their conceptual structure, and reveal their functional load in ecological discourse.

**Methodology:** An artistic image, as an important aesthetic category, represents a specific way of perceiving reality and is therefore considered an element of a particular culture. When creating an artistic image, the author relies on social and personal experience, poetic tradition, expressive language means, and above all, the potential of the word itself. A poetic word activates psychological and emotional associations connected with the social experience of the people. By expanding the semantic scope of the expressed concept, a word or phrase often acquires symbolic meaning in poetic discourse.

Words, besides their primary meaning, also convey figurative meanings. Figurative meaning arises on the basis of the direct meaning of words. When used figuratively, words not only name objects and phenomena but also perform a descriptive function.

Metaphor is the transfer of meaning based on similarity between objects or phenomena. It is one of the most widespread ways of forming figurative meaning. There are two types of metaphor: linguistic metaphor and individual-author metaphor.

Linguistic metaphors arise as a result of language development and usually perform a nominative function without expressive coloring (e.g., "the foot of the mountain," "the eye of a ring").

Individual-author metaphors are created within literary style based on the author's aesthetic intention and subjective attitude. Such metaphors vividly express characters' emotions and possess connotative meaning. Figurative devices, including metaphor, enhance expressiveness and enable an imaginative representation of reality.

In Uzbek linguistics, metaphor has mainly been interpreted within a semantic paradigm. A. Abduazizov defines metaphor as semantic transfer based on similarity and considers it a dynamic element of the lexical-semantic system.



H. Ne'matov emphasizes the cognitive nature of metaphor, interpreting it as a product of the dialectical unity of language and consciousness.

N. Mahmudov evaluates metaphor as a means of conceptual categorization in analyzing the interaction between language and thought.

The following methodological approaches were applied in the research:

*semantic-structural analysis;*

*conceptual modeling;*

*discursive interpretation;*

*axiological analysis.*

**Results and Discussion**

The analysis shows that ecological metaphors in Uzbek are mainly formed based on three dominant models:

**Table 1. Conceptual typology of ecological metaphors**

Conceptual Model	Linguistic Realization	Semantic Feature	Axiological Orientation
Anthropomorphic	“The earth is breathing”	Interpreting nature as a living subject	Formation of empathy
Axiological	“Mother Earth”	Perceiving nature as a sacred value	Sense of responsibility
Pathological	“Nature is wounded”	Interpreting ecological crisis as illness	Necessity of “treatment”

These models allow ecological phenomena to be interpreted within the framework of human experience. As a result, ecological problems appear not as abstract notions but as emotionally and socially perceptible realities.

Ecological metaphors perform the following functions in discourse:

Cognitive function — simplify and explain complex ecological processes;

Axiological function — encourage perceiving nature as a value;

Pragmatic function — stimulate social action and ecological responsibility.

Particularly in journalistic texts devoted to the Aral Sea problem, dramatic metaphors gain strong expressiveness and significantly influence social consciousness.

**Table 2. Conceptual typology of ecological metaphors**

Conceptual Model	Linguistic Realization	Semantic Feature	Axiological Orientation
Anthropomorphic	“The wind is conversing”	Interpreting nature as an active subject	Strengthening emotional connection
Axiological	“Mother Earth awaits us”	Nature as a value and object of care	Responsibility, ecological awareness
Pathological	“The forest is suffering”	Ecological problems as illness/pain	Taking necessary measures
Pathological	“The air is poisoned”	Personification of environmental damage	Raising awareness and precaution

These models make ecological issues emotionally tangible and socially significant.

**Theoretical Issues**



Several theoretical problems arise in interpreting ecological metaphors:

First, the boundary between metaphor and personification is not always clearly differentiated, which may affect classification accuracy.

Second, the use of metaphor in scientific discourse is complex. While metaphor enhances explanatory clarity, excessive expressiveness may contradict scientific neutrality.

Third, ecological metaphors are shaped by national mentality. The model “Earth as Mother” has positive connotations in Uzbek cultural code, but its semantic resonance may differ in other linguistic cultures.

Based on the research findings, ecological metaphors serve as an effective conceptual mechanism for forming ecological consciousness in Uzbek society. Particularly, metaphors based on the axiological model demonstrate high pragmatic potential in ecological education.

However, scientific texts must maintain terminological precision and methodological standards. Metaphor may strengthen argumentation but should not replace empirical evidence.

**Conclusion:** Ecological metaphors in Uzbek function not only as products of semantic transformation but also as elements of a linguo-cognitive and axiological system. They structure ecological discourse, reflect national values, and influence social consciousness. In-depth conceptual analysis of ecological metaphors provides an important scientific basis for ecological education, social communication, and sustainable development strategies.

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