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A COGNITIVE LINGUISTIC AND CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This paper provides a comprehensive comparative analysis of English and Uzbek phraseology from both traditional descriptive and contemporary cognitive linguistic perspectives. It examines cross-cultural parallels and divergences in idiomatic expressions related to nature, value systems, hospitality, body parts, and social relations. The article further examines embodiment patterns, demonstrating that while both languages use body-part idioms, they map emotional and moral concepts onto different organs—notably the liver (jigar) as a seat of deep empathy in Uzbek, a role absent in English. Pedagogical implications and directions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: phraseology, cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor, image schemas, English, Uzbek, cultural scripts, embodied cognition, cross-cultural pragmatics, hospitality discourse, face concept, steppe culture,

This paper pursues two complementary aims. First, it provides a descriptive inventory of major phraseological themes in English and Uzbek, highlighting both universal convergences and culture-specific divergences. Second, and more centrally, it applies the analytical tools of cognitive linguistics to explain why these differences exist and how they structure the mental worlds of speakers. The central thesis is that English and Uzbek phraseologies are not arbitrary collections of colorful expressions but systematic, motivated networks of conceptual metaphors and image schemas that reflect each culture's embodied experience of the physical and social environment.

Cognitive linguistics emerged in the 1980s as a reaction against generative grammar's claim that language is an autonomous, modular faculty. Instead, cognitive linguists argue that language is embodied—rooted in bodily experience—and encyclopedic—inseparable from general cognitive processes and cultural knowledge (Langacker, 2008).

Cognitive phraseology (Dobrovol'skij & Piirainen, 2005) emphasizes that phraseological units are not dead metaphors but active cognitive schemas that influence how speakers perceive and reason about the world. Key insights include:

· Motivation: Most idioms are motivated by underlying conceptual metaphors.

· Cultural grounding: Phraseological units encode culture-specific experiences and values.

· Prototypicality: Within a semantic field, some expressions are more cognitively central than others.

English (Indo-European, Germanic) and Uzbek (Turkic) are typologically distant. English has rigid SVO word order and uses prepositions. Uzbek is agglutinative, SOV, and uses postpositions. However, structural differences are less relevant to phraseological comparison than cultural-historical differences. While English phraseology has been extensively studied

from cognitive perspectives (Kövecses, 2010; Gibbs, 1994), Uzbek phraseology remains underrepresented in cognitive literature (Rakhmatullaev, 1992; Mamatov, 2018).

Natural Environment: Sea vs. SteppeEnglish nautical idioms: As an island nation, English is saturated with sailing imagery:

· All at sea (confused)

· Sail close to the wind (take a near-illegal risk)

· Miss the boat (lose an opportunity)

· Batten down the hatches (prepare for trouble)

· Three sheets to the wind (drunk)

· A rising tide lifts all boats (general prosperity)

· Run a tight ship (maintain strict discipline)

· Sink or swim (succeed or fail by own effort)

Uzbek steppe and desert idioms: Uzbek draws on livestock and agriculture:

· Tog‘day qulab (to fall like a mountain — great misfortune)

· Tuyaning dumidek (like a camel's tail — very short/insignificant)

· Bozordagi tuyaday (like a camel at the market — unable to hide)

· Cho‘lga aylantirmoq (to turn into a desert — to devastate)

· Qo‘y bo‘lib ketmoq (to become a sheep — to become meek)

· Yilqiday yayramoq (to frolic like a herd of horses — to be joyous)

· Tulkiday aylanmoq (to circle like a fox — to be cunning)

· Bo‘riga bo‘lib bermoq (to give to the wolf — to waste on the undeserving)

Cognitive interpretation: English conceptualizes uncertainty and risk through the unpredictable sea. Uzbek conceptualizes these domains through animal behavior and the stark emptiness of the steppe.

English: TIME IS MONEY. This conceptual metaphor, identified by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) as characteristic of industrial capitalism, is pervasive: save time, waste time, spend time, invest time, borrowed time, time is money. This reflects a cultural orientation toward efficiency and productivity.

Uzbek: OR-NOMUS (Honor-Shame) as a spatial schema. Uzbek has an elaborate phraseological system organized around or-nomus — a paired concept combining honor (or) and shame (nomus) as an indivisible unit:

· Yuzi qizarmoq (for one's face to redden — to be ashamed)

· Yuzini yo‘qotmoq (to lose one's face — to be disgraced)

· Oq yuz (white face — honorable person)

· Qora yuz (black face — dishonorable person)

· Or-nomusini qo‘riqlamoq (to guard one's honor-shame)

· Or-nomusini to‘kmoq (to spill one's honor-shame — to publicly disgrace)

· Yuzi bilan o‘ynamoq (to play with someone's face — to manipulate reputation)

· Yuzi yerga tushmoq (for one's face to fall to the ground — deep humiliation)

Cognitive interpretation: English conceptualizes time as a commodity because industrial capitalism made time measurable and scarce. Uzbek conceptualizes honor as a spatial-visible phenomenon because Central Asian social organization is collectivist, where reputation is publicly visible and constantly evaluated.

Both languages use body-part idioms, but they map emotional and moral concepts onto different organs. The following table summarizes the comparison:

Body Part	English Conceptualization	Uzbek Conceptualization
Heart	Seat of emotion (heartbroken, heartfelt, learn by heart)	Seat of courage and will (yurak bermoq — to give one's heart, meaning to dare; yurak yutmoq — to swallow one's heart, meaning to endure fear)
Liver (jigar)	No cognitive role; merely an organ	Seat of deep empathy and compassion. Jigaringizni tilga solaman — "I will put your liver to words," meaning "I will speak so sincerely it moves your very core." Jigari ezilmoq — for one's liver to be crushed (to feel profound pity). The liver is also addressed as a term of endearment (jigarim — my liver)
Face (yuz)	Peripheral schema for social interaction (save face — a loan from Chinese, not native; face-to-face)	Primary schema for social morality and honor. Elaborate system of face idioms (see Section 3.2.2). Face is where internal moral state becomes externally visible

Eye (ko‘z)	Perception and attention (keep an eye on, see eye to eye)	Also envy and supernatural harm (ko‘z tegmoq — eye to touch, meaning the evil eye; ko‘zi ochiq — open-eyed, meaning greedy or envious; ko‘zi qayroq — sharp-eyed, meaning vigilant but also potentially dangerous)
Hand (qo‘l)	Agency and control (lend a hand, caught red-handed)	Ownership, proximity, and power. Qo‘li uzun — long-handed (having influence). Qo‘l qovushtirmoq — to fold one's hands (to wait passively or respectfully). Qo‘lga olmoq — to take into hand (to take control). Bir qo‘lda — in one hand (unified, under single control
Head (bosh)	Reason and leadership (use your head, head of the department)	Also counting, responsibility, and destiny. Boshimga tushdi — it fell on my head (I became responsible). Bosh qotirmoq — to mix one's head (to think deeply about a problem). Boshini boqqan — one who looks after their own head (a self-sufficient person)

Cognitive insight: The most striking difference is the liver. English has no emotional-cognitive role for the liver. In Uzbek, the liver (jigar) is arguably more central to the expression of deep empathy than the heart. This is a powerful example of how the same universal embodiment (having a liver) can be culturally elaborated into a phraseological system in one language while remaining cognitively inert in another.

From a cognitive perspective, English and Uzbek speakers do not simply say things differently — they conceptualize reality differently. The English mind, shaped by maritime history and industrial capitalism, builds containers for problems and linear journeys for goals. Time is a commodity to be spent wisely. The individual voice is a moral good.

The Uzbek mind, shaped by the open steppe, the Silk Road, and collectivist social organization, scans a visible horizon, navigates a shared path of honor, and feels empathy in the liver. The guest is a sacred duty. Face is where morality becomes visible. Silence is not awkward but respectful.

This thesis has demonstrated that phraseological comparison, when enriched by cognitive linguistics, moves beyond colorful lists of idioms to reveal the deep mental grammars of culture. To learn a language's phraseology is not merely to expand vocabulary — it is to undergo cognitive retraining, learning to see the world not as it is, but as the ancestors of that language imagined it to be. And in that comparison, we find not a clash of civilizations, but a beautiful diversity of human thought itself.

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