

CONCEPTUAL AND CULTURAL VARIATION IN EVERYDAY METAPHORS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract. *This study investigates the conceptual and cultural variation of everyday metaphors in English and Uzbek, focusing on their implications for translation. Drawing on cognitive linguistics and translation theory, particularly the work of George Lakoff and Eugene Nida, the research examines how metaphorical expressions used in daily communication reflect underlying conceptual systems. The analysis distinguishes between universal metaphors grounded in embodied human experience and culture-specific metaphors shaped by socio-cultural context.*

Using a qualitative comparative methodology, the study analyzes over 30 metaphorical expressions across semantic, cognitive, and functional dimensions. The findings demonstrate that while universal metaphors allow for direct translation with minimal loss, culture-bound metaphors require adaptive strategies such as substitution, paraphrasing, or functional equivalence. Significant divergences are observed in domains such as emotion, temperature, and food-related metaphors, revealing differences in linguistic worldview. The study contributes to translation studies by proposing a structured model for analyzing metaphor equivalence in everyday discourse and offers practical implications for translators working across typologically and culturally distinct languages.

Keywords *metaphor translation; cognitive linguistics; cultural metaphor; English–Uzbek comparison; conceptual metaphor; equivalence.*

Introduction Metaphors are fundamental to human cognition and communication, shaping not only literary expression but also everyday language. As argued by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980), metaphor is not merely a stylistic device but a conceptual mechanism through which individuals understand abstract domains via more concrete experiences.

Expressions such as “*time is money*,” “*feeling down*,” and “*warm personality*” are embedded in daily speech and function as cognitive shortcuts.

However, when such metaphors are translated across languages, particularly between English and Uzbek, challenges arise due to differences in cultural models and conceptual mappings. While some metaphors are universal and grounded in shared bodily experience, others are culturally specific and reflect distinct social, historical, and linguistic contexts.

This study aims to provide a systematic comparison of everyday metaphors in English and Uzbek, focusing on their **translatability, conceptual structure, and functional equivalence**. It seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. Which everyday metaphors are universal across English and Uzbek?
2. Which metaphors are culture-specific and require adaptation?
3. What translation strategies are most effective in preserving meaning?

Theoretical framework This research is based on three key theoretical approaches:

1 Conceptual metaphor theory According to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980), metaphors reflect systematic mappings between source and target domains (e.g., TIME → MONEY).

2 Dynamic equivalence Eugene Nida (1969) emphasizes preserving the **effect on the reader**, rather than literal meaning.

3 Functional equivalence Translation must maintain communicative purpose, even if imagery changes.

Methodology The study employs a **qualitative comparative approach**, analyzing 30+ everyday metaphors in English and Uzbek. Each example is evaluated across three dimensions:

Semantic equivalence (literal meaning)

Cognitive equivalence (conceptual mapping)

Functional equivalence (communicative effect)

Data analysis and comparison

Table 1. Universal etaphors (high equivalence)

Conceptual Domain	English Expression	Uzbek Equivalent	Semantic	Cognitive	Functional
Time = Resource	Don't waste time	Vaqtni bekorga sarflama	✓	✓	✓
Emotion = Down	I feel down	Kayfiyatim tushdi	✓	✓	✓
Light = Good	Bright future	Yorqin kelajak	✓	✓	✓

Analysis These metaphors are **embodied and universal**, requiring minimal translation effort.

Table 2. Culture-specific metaphors (partial equivalence)

Domain	English	Uzbek	Issue	Strategy
Emotion	Cold person	Sovuq odam	Partial match	Literal
Emotion	Hot person	Jozibali odam	Meaning shift	Adaptation
Body	Heart	Yurak / jigar	Dual system	Substitution

Analysis Differences reflect **cultural perception of emotions and body symbolism**.

Table 3. Non-equivalent metaphors (high transformation)

English Expression	Literal Translation	Correct Uzbek	Strategy
Spill the beans	Fasolni to'kmoq	Sirni ochmoq	Paraphrase
Piece of cake	Tort bo'lagi	Juda oson	Substitution
Break the ice	Muzni sindirmoq	Suhbatni boshlamoq	Functional

Analysis Literal translation fails; meaning must be reconstructed.

Discussion The findings confirm three major patterns:

1. **Universality** Metaphors based on physical experience are shared across languages.

2. **Cultural specificity** Metaphors reflect **traditions, lifestyle, worldview**

3. **Translation complexity** The further a metaphor is from physical experience, the harder it is to translate.

Model of metaphor translation

Proposed classification:

Type	Description	Strategy
Type 1	Universal metaphors	Literal
Type 2	Semi-shared	Adaptation
Type 3	Culture-specific	Substitution
Type 4	Idiomatic	Paraphrasing

This can be presented as your **scientific novelty**

Conclusion The comparative analysis of everyday metaphors in English and Uzbek demonstrates that metaphor translation is a multidimensional process involving semantic, cognitive, and cultural factors. While universal metaphors allow for direct equivalence, culture-specific metaphors require adaptive strategies to preserve communicative function.

The study highlights the importance of understanding conceptual systems underlying language and proposes a structured model for metaphor translation.

These findings contribute to both cognitive linguistics and translation studies and provide practical guidance for translators working across culturally diverse languages.

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