NATIONAL-CONCEPTUAL MODELS AND LINGUOCULTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF METAPHORS RELATED TO SOCIAL CONCEPTS IN THE UZBEK LANGUAGE

Khudayberganova Durdona Sidikovna
Head of the Department, Institute of Uzbek Language, Literature and Folklore, Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Doctor of Philological Sciences, Professor
E-**mail:** xudoyberganovadurdona@gmail.com
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Annotation. The article explores the cognitive and linguocultural factors underlying the formation of metaphors related to social concepts in the Uzbek language and establishes their national-conceptual models. Particular attention is given to the role of language users' cognitive perception, lived experience, and embodied interaction with the external world in shaping such metaphorical expressions.

Keywords: metaphor, national-kognitivt model of metaphor, embodied metaphor, archetype, cognitive mechanism, embodied theory of meaning, linguocultural factor, cognitive factor, image schemes.

Аннотация. В статье исследуются когнитивные и лингвокультурные факторы формирования метафор, связанных с социальными понятиями в узбекском языке, определяются их национально-концептуальные модели, а также рассматривается роль восприятия, жизненного опыта и физического взаимодействия с внешним миром носителей узбекского языка в формировании подобных метафор.

Ключевые слова: метафора, концептуальная модель метафоры, воплощенная метафора, архетип, когнитивный механизм, теория воплощённого значения, лингвокультурный фактор, когнитивный фактор, образ-схемы.

Representatives of any linguocultural community reflect their national experience, ways of perceiving the world, system of values, and collectively established perceptions in certain units of the language system. This process is particularly manifested in cognitive metaphors as a distinctive conceptual schema for understanding and expressing a particular concept in a figurative manner**.** We believe it is appropriate to refer to this schema as the *national-conceptual model of metaphor***.** The national-conceptual model of metaphor reveals the distinctive patterns of a nation's thinking and the principles underlying the reconceptualization of elements of reality. This aspect is also manifested in a distinctive manner in metaphors associated with social concepts in the Uzbek language.

Metaphors associated with social concepts are, by their very nature, a reconceptualization of social phenomena, social relations, and concepts. They arise from language users' attribution of the properties and actions or states characteristic of elements of objective reality to social phenomena, based on particular pragmatic purposes. In the course of compiling the *"Anthropocentric Dictionary of Metaphors in the Uzbek Language"* [Khudoyberganova, 2026], it was established that metaphors belonging to this group are formed on the basis of such conceptual models as IDEAS ARE WARRIORS, INTELLECTUAL OR EMOTIONAL (Sruggle), COMPLEXITU IS A TANGLED THREAD, THOUGHTS AND IDEAS AREF SPACE (Field), in which actions take place, MORAK AND ETHICAL SUPERIORITU IS SPATIAL ELEVATION (Height), A RELATIONSHIP IS A WHOLE THAT CAN DEVELOP A CRACK (To crack), SPIRITUALITU IS ATREES (Root),

HAPPINESS/ LUCK/OPPORTUNITU IS AN ACCESSIBLE SPACE (Door), and A FATHER'S ACTIVITU IS A CHOSEN PATH (Trace/Track*)* [Khudoyberganova, 2026]. In these metaphors, concepts associated with spirituality, knowledge, and enlightenment are most often selected as the source domain.

In the Uzbek language, the metaphor kurash ("struggle"), used in the sense of "conflict and confrontation between ideological views and convictions," is one of the metaphors associated with social concepts. The cognitive model of the kurash metaphor can be defined as IDEAS ARE WARRIORS . The cognitive mechanism of conceptual metaphorization plays a central role in the formation of this metaphor.

Kurash ("struggle") exists in human consciousness not only as a cognitive and linguocultural image but also as an ancient archetype. The **struggle** archetype represents a universal psychic model expressing the conflict between spirit and body, good and evil, consciousness and the inner shadow (emotions such as anger, envy, ill will, and fear that are rejected by human consciousness) [Jung, C. G., 2019: 17–18].

In Uzbek linguoculture, *kurash* ("struggle") is associated with the spiritual sphere and is understood as a means of ensuring progress through **internal struggle** (the struggle against one's *nafs*, or base desires) and **external struggle** (the struggle for noble and virtuous ideas). The word *kurash* in the proverbs *Kurash qurbonsiz bo'lmas* ("There is no struggle without sacrifice"); *Yiqilgan kurashga to'ymas* ("One who falls does not become weary of struggle"); *Kurashdan qochgan g'olib bo'lmas* ("One who avoids struggle cannot be victorious"); and *Kurashda mard bilinar, yo'lda – yor* ("A person's courage is revealed in struggle, and a companion on the road") is understood by language users, depending on the communicative context, both in its literal and metaphorical senses. The formation of the *kurash* metaphor has been influenced by the **struggle** archetype in human consciousness, which expresses the human will, courage, and the need to struggle for justice. In the formation of this metaphor, the cognitive basis was the conceptual operation of likening the confrontation between particular ideological views to a contest between people**.** Consider the following examples: *"At such times, the struggle of ideas remains the principal means of conquering the world not territorially, but ideologically."* (From a newspaper.) *"There has been a struggle between noble ideas and teachings and evil and harmful ideas since ancient times."* (From a newspaper.)

One of the metaphors associated with social concepts in the Uzbek language is the **eshik** ("door") metaphor. This metaphor denotes a means of attaining or gaining access to what is signified by the word with which it is associated. The *eshik* metaphor has developed under the influence of the **door** archetype. The **door** archetype conveys the meaning of transition from one world to another or from one state to another. As a cognitive image, it is associated with the concept of boundary, manifesting such oppositions as inside/outside, openness/closedness, and freedom/restriction. The image of the door is considered a universal image across the world's cultures and conveys various symbolic meanings in different linguocultures. This image also occupies an important place in Uzbek linguoculture, where it functions as a symbolic representation of the concepts of protection, tolerance, and hospitality. The image of the door also conveys the meanings of acceptance (*"Our door is always open to you"*) and rejection (*"This door was closed to me forever"*). A characteristic feature is that the expression "open door" in many cultures signifies a new opportunity, whereas a "closed door", by contrast, denotes the absence of opportunity or an obstacle. In the Uzbek proverbs *Kiradigan eshigingni qattiq yopma* ("Do not close firmly the door through which you may enter") and *Bir eshik yopiq bo'lsa, bir eshik ochiq* ("If one door is closed, another door is open"), the door is conceptualized as a means of achieving a particular goal. In the proverbs *Eshigi ochiq uyga baraka kirar* ("Blessings enter a house with an open door") and *Eshik qoqqanga eshik och* ("Open the door to the one who knocks"), the values of tolerance and hospitality are expressed. This metaphor is formed through a

cognitive mechanism based on likening and associatively relating the conceptualization of the door as a means of entering a particular territory to the conceptualization of an object or factor that serves to achieve a particular goal. In the formation of the *door* metaphor, positive concepts such as happiness, good fortune, and opportunity are conceptualized as a particular space, while the door is perceived as a means of entering that space. Its national-conceptual model has thus developed in the linguocultural thinking of language users as HAPPINESS /LUCK/OPPORTUNITU IS AN ACCESSIBLE SPACE The word *eshik* ("door") functions as a bound metaphorical unit and combines with words such as *baxt* ("happiness"), *omad* ("good fortune"), *tole* ("fortune"), and *imkoniyat* ("opportunity"): *"Aytsam, rad etsa, qo'ysa chek, Andishangiz eshitib, Biz o'zimiz ochmoq bo'ldik Toleingiz eshigin."(* If I speak, and you refuse and draw the line, Having heard your reservation, We ourselves sought to open The door to your fortune*.)* [H. Khudayberdieva, *Selected Works*]. *"Men ularning tortishuvlarini eshitib turib, bo'ldi, bu yerda ham omad menga o'z eshiklarini ochmadi, degan xulosaga keldim."* ("Having listened to their argument, I came to the conclusion that, well, even here, fortune did not open its doors to me.") [U. Ruziev, In the Shadow of the Dew].

It is well known that the concept of "metaphor based on bodily experience" exists in linguistics. Among metaphors associated with social concepts, metaphors based on bodily experience constitute a distinct group. Such metaphors are of particular importance in determining how the figurative thinking characteristic of a particular ethnos has been formed.

In his 1987 work Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things ("Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things"), George Lakoff discusses the concept of image schemas, describing them as recurring, dynamic cognitive structures grounded in human bodily experience. The experiences that people repeatedly acquire through their bodies and bodily organs in relation to such concepts as heaviness, lightness, height, depth, up and down, location, force, balance, and barriers subsequently serve as a means of understanding and explaining abstract concepts. Lakoff regarded image schemas as structures derived from human experience and interpreted them as a source for the formation of metaphors. Among such image schemas, he included more than thirty concepts, such as Front–Back, Up–Down, Deep–Shallow, Part–Whole, In–Out, Link, Cycle, Level, Process, Object, Boundary, and Surface [Lakoff, 2004: 90–106; 431–442]. As concepts that emerged from humanity's earliest bodily and lived experiences, these notions subsequently became a means of creating conceptual metaphors. Metaphors formed on the basis of such image schemas became the object of study within the field of linguistics known as *the Theory of Embodied Meaning*. These metaphors are characterized by the reconceptualization, through metaphorical meaning, of concepts that originally denote things perceived through the human body and through perceptual and sensorimotor experience during movement in space and interaction with objects and natural phenomena—such as height, front or back, heat, bitterness, wholeness, barriers, and so forth—as means of explaining other things and phenomena.R. Langacker, the founder of cognitive grammar, also addressed this issue and expressed his view as follows: "Our knowledge of abstract objects and concepts is grounded in bodily experience, and many linguistic expressions reflect this by projecting schemas of physical interaction onto the domains of emotions and mental states" [Langacker, 2001: 37].

Mark Johnson, in his book *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* ("The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Foundations of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason"), further developed the Theory of Embodied Meaning, arguing that meaning is deeply grounded in human perception, bodily movement, spatial experience, and interaction with the physical world [Johnson, 1987].

It should be noted that metaphors based on bodily experience are considered universal across the languages of the world**.** The Uzbek language also contains numerous metaphors formed in this way. In particular, it is clearly evident that, in forming metaphors associated with social concepts, language

users actively employ words denoting things and characteristics perceived through human physical experience. Such words generally serve to characterize words denoting social concepts and contribute to the formation of metaphorical combinations. For example: *baland obro'* ("high reputation"), *iliq munosabat* ("warm relations"), *sovuq munosabat* ("cold relations"), *qaynoq nuqta* ("hotspot"), *yuqori martaba* ("high rank"), *past nazar* ("low regard"), *qalin do'st* ("close friend"), *qing'ir yo'l* ("crooked path"), *og'ir vaziyat* ("difficult situation"), *og'ir gunoh* ("grave sin") and so forth. Below, we present an analysis of the words *past* ("low") and *nozik* ("delicate/subtle"), which function as such metaphors.

One of the figurative meanings of the Uzbek word past ("low") is "not occupying a high status or position; of relatively low value or standing." Along with language users' physical experience of spatial dimensions, this meaning also reflects their cultural and social conceptualizations of the world and the place of human beings within it. For example: "Yet, once again realizing that her status was lower than that of Kutlugh Nigor Khanim, Fotima Sultan narrowed her eyes in pain." — (P. Kadirov, *Starry Nights*). "On one side sorrow, on the other, unconcern;
Blood against blood, soul against soul. When I sought to appreciate the worth of life,
I found that the suffering soul was of little value." (A. Ikram, *The Depths of the World*).

This metaphor also reflects values associated with something that is considered significant or worthy of respect. In Uzbek linguoculture, states associated with a high social status are expressed through the metaphor *baland* ("high"), whereas the opposite states are expressed through its antonymous metaphor *past* ("low"): *qadri baland odam* ("a person of high standing") refers to a respected person, whereas a person whose *hurmati* and *qadri* are *past* ("low") is regarded as having a comparatively lower social standing. Thus, the *past* metaphor has emerged as a derived meaning of a word denoting a spatial dimension and functions as a word characterizing social status, thereby serving to model a particular social situation. In this metaphor, verticality represents a person's hierarchical status within society**.** The experiences of members of the linguocultural community concerning the concepts of *past* ("low") and *baland* ("high"), their conventionalized perceptions, and their associative linking of these perceptions with social states constitute the cognitive basis for the formation of this metaphor. Thus, based on language users' axiological attitudes toward the concept of *lowness* and their perceptions of it, the national-conceptual model of this metaphor can be defined as follows: DIGNITY IS HEIGHT; LASK OF WORTH IS LOWNESS.

One of the metaphorical meanings of the Uzbek word ***nozik*** ("delicate") consists of the semantic features "requiring a cautious and prudent approach; delicate; sensitive; precarious." The cognitive mechanism underlying this metaphor lies in likening the property of delicacy characteristic of a physical object to the features of processes such as events, actions, or precarious situations that require particularly careful handling. The cultural factor involved in this process is reflected in the fact that language users have extended the word *nozik*, denoting delicacy and refinement, to actions and situations that require an exceptionally cautious approach and involve a certain degree of risk. In this case, their associative thinking concerning the fragility and breakability of delicate objects**,** together with their acquired knowledge and life experience, has emerged as the principal factor underlying the metaphorization. Consider the following examples: "In my opinion, there is nothing in the world as delicate as marriage," Rahmat said, turning to Otabek. "After you marry, it is wonderful if your wife suits your temperament; otherwise, there is no burden in the world heavier than this." (A. Qodiriy, *Bygone Days*). "At such a delicate moment, the cunning Ali Dustbek sought to distance Kasimbek from Bobur and intended to take charge of the responsibilities of the *sohib ikhtiyar eshik ogha*[1] himself." [P. Qodirov, *Starry Nights*]. "Only now did the begim realize that Bobur was pursuing a delicate policy capable of bringing peace to both sides." (P. Qodirov, *Starry Nights*).

[1] The Eshik Agha vested with executive authority.

The *nozik* metaphor denotes the characteristic features of concepts referring to **activities** (*nozik ish* — "a delicate matter"), **time** (*nozik payt* — "a delicate moment"), and **political processes** (*nozik siyosat* — "delicate politics"). From a pragmastylistic perspective, this metaphor distinctly and concisely conveys the relevant characteristic, emphasizing that the situation is not ordinary but rather one that requires a thoughtful and cautious approach**.** Therefore, the national-conceptual model of this metaphor can be defined as SOCIAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL PHENOMENON IS AN OBJECT REQUIRING CAUTIOUS HANDING.

The analysis of metaphors in the Uzbek language has demonstrated the distinctive features of the national figurative thinking of members of the Uzbek linguocultural community, while also revealing the operation of linguistic universals within these units. Metaphors clearly reflect language users' ways of perceiving the world, their national figurative and associative modes of thinking, life experiences, attitudes toward national values, and cultural worldview. In metaphors associated with society, concepts related to spiritual values, knowledge and enlightenment, the national and cultural heritage left by our ancestors, and the meaning of human life are expressed in a figurative and emotionally evocative manner. In general, it should be noted that metaphors in the Uzbek language constitute an important source that also reflects the historical development of the national thought of the Uzbek people. The study of metaphors from cognitive-conceptual and linguocultural perspectives, as well as the identification of their national-conceptual models, contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between the meanings of linguistic units and human activities and lived experiences, thereby providing important insights into the anthropocentric nature of language.

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