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METAPHORICAL REPRESENTATION OF NATURE IN ENGLISH AND KARAKALPAK PHRASEOLOGY

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Abstract. Metaphor is one of the principal mechanisms through which natural phenomena acquire abstract and figurative meanings in phraseology. Human experience of the physical environment provides speakers with a large number of conceptual models for describing emotions, behavior, social relations, personal development, and life situations. This paper examines metaphorical representations of nature in English and Karakalpak phraseology, focusing on the relationship between source domains derived from nature and target domains associated with human experience. The analysis considers several major metaphorical patterns involving fire, water, wind, plants, animals, weather, and landscape.

Keywords: metaphor, nature, phraseology, English, Karakalpak, source domain, target domain, conceptualization, linguoculture.

Introduction. Metaphor plays a fundamental role in the organization of linguistic meaning. It enables speakers to understand abstract concepts through more concrete and familiar experiences. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) demonstrated that metaphor operates at the conceptual level and structures everyday thought rather than functioning exclusively as an artistic or rhetorical device. Phraseology offers particularly clear evidence of this process because fixed expressions frequently preserve metaphorical mappings that have become conventionalized through repeated use. Nature represents one of the most productive source domains for metaphorical conceptualization. Human beings experience the natural environment through their bodies and senses, observing heat, cold, movement, growth, destruction, darkness, light, animal behavior, and changes in weather. These physical experiences become cognitive resources for understanding less concrete phenomena. Consequently, emotions can be conceptualized as fire, difficult circumstances as deep water, personal development as plant growth, instability as wind, and positive experience as light.

The Water Metaphor. Water constitutes another productive source domain. Its properties include fluidity, depth, movement, unpredictability, and the ability to surround or carry objects. These physical characteristics can be transferred to human experiences. The English expression to be in deep water conceptualizes a difficult situation through the physical experience of being surrounded by deep water. The deeper the water, the greater the potential danger, and this physical relationship is mapped onto the degree of difficulty experienced by an individual.

The same general metaphorical mechanism can occur in Karakalpak phraseology. Water may be associated with movement, life, difficulty, abundance, or environmental conditions. However, the specific phraseological meanings and evaluative associations depend on cultural context. Therefore, comparison should not be restricted to identifying whether both languages contain “water metaphors.” It should also examine what kinds of human experiences are conceptualized through water and whether the evaluation is positive, negative, or neutral.

Plant Metaphors and Human Development. The growth of plants offers a particularly transparent model for conceptualizing human development. A plant begins from a seed, develops roots, grows, and eventually produces flowers or fruit. These stages can be mapped onto human life, education, family, relationships, and social development.

The English expression to put down roots conceptualizes social or personal stability through the physical process of a plant establishing itself in soil. The metaphor is based on the correspondence between roots and human attachment. A person who develops strong social or emotional connections to a place can therefore be described through plant imagery. Plant metaphors may also encode cultural

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ideas about continuity and belonging in Karakalpak. The conceptual importance of land and settlement provides a background against which notions of roots, growth, and attachment can acquire additional cultural significance. Thus, the metaphorical meaning is produced through the interaction of universal physical experience and culturally specific interpretation.

Wind and the Concept of Instability. Wind is characterized by movement that cannot always be controlled or directly observed. This makes it a suitable source domain for conceptualizing uncertainty, change, freedom, instability, and loss of control. The English expression to throw caution to the winds associates wind with uncontrolled movement and the abandonment of restraint. The metaphor suggests that caution is something that can be physically released and carried away. The natural phenomenon therefore provides an image for a psychological or behavioral decision.

Wind imagery can also be connected with change in Karakalpak phraseology. Nevertheless, the cultural meaning may depend on the community's relationship with weather and environmental conditions. In comparative analysis, this factor is important because the same natural phenomenon can receive different emotional or evaluative interpretations.

Weather as a Metaphorical Model. Weather provides speakers with a dynamic model for conceptualizing changing human conditions. Sunshine, rain, storms, cold, and clouds can become representations of happiness, sadness, difficulty, uncertainty, or emotional change.

The English expression under the weather demonstrates the relationship between environmental conditions and human well-being. Although its modern meaning is conventionalized, the expression retains a conceptual association between external weather and internal physical condition.

Landscape, Earth, and Identity. Landscape-related imagery provides another important metaphorical model. Expressions associated with land, ground, roots, and physical stability may represent psychological security, identity, belonging, and social continuity.

The English expression to have one's feet on the ground associates physical contact with the earth with psychological realism and practicality. The metaphor creates a correspondence between physical stability and mental stability. The person whose feet remain on the ground is conceptualized as realistic and sensible. In Karakalpak cultural interpretation, land and landscape may carry additional meanings related to place, belonging, traditional life, and collective memory. Consequently, landscape metaphors can provide important information about how communities conceptualize identity and social continuity.

The comparison of English and Karakalpak demonstrates that nature-based metaphors operate simultaneously at cognitive and cultural levels. At the cognitive level, both languages use familiar physical experiences to conceptualize abstract ideas. At the cultural level, however, different communities select particular natural images and assign different evaluative meanings to them. This distinction can be represented through three major relationships. First, some metaphorical mappings are based on universal human experience. Fire can represent intensity because heat and physical force are universally observable. Second, particular images may become more productive in one culture because of historical or environmental experience. Third, even when two languages use the same source domain, the target meanings and evaluative associations may differ.

Conclusion. Nature-based phraseological metaphors demonstrate the close relationship between physical experience and abstract conceptualization. English and Karakalpak use natural phenomena such as fire, water, wind, plants, animals, weather, and landscape as source domains for representing human emotions, behavior, social situations, development, and identity. Although these metaphorical mechanisms reflect universal aspects of human cognition, their linguistic realization is strongly influenced by cultural experience.

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