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CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS OF FORGIVENESS IN UZBEK: EMBODIED SCHEMAS AND DISCOURSE FUNCTIONS

Sherozbek Siddiqjonovich Muminov
Associate Professor, Department of Linguistics, Fergana State University
E-mail: sherozbek.mominov@bk.ru

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7475-1849

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Abstract. The article explores metaphorical constructions associated with forgiveness in Uzbek and differentiates established lexical imagery from context-dependent interpretive extensions. Using conceptual metaphor theory and cultural linguistics, it proposes five source-domain mappings: emotional burden and release, knots and loosening, distance and rapprochement, temperature and softening, and traces and removal. Expressions such as ko‘ngli yumshamoq and ginasini unutmoq are interpreted within complete discourse contexts rather than treated as automatic synonyms of kechirmoq. A mapping matrix illustrates the semantic affordances and limits of each schema. The contribution is a cautious analytical inventory that can be tested by corpus evidence.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor; forgiveness; Uzbek; cultural linguistics; embodiment; semantic mapping

Аннотация. В статье исследуются метафорические способы концептуализации прощения в узбекском языке. На основе когнитивной теории метафоры и культурной лингвистики предложено пять интерпретативных схем: освобождение от тяжести, развязывание узла, сокращение дистанции, смягчение эмоционального состояния и устранение следа обиды. Выражения ko‘ngli yumshamoq, ginasini unutmoq и другие рассматриваются в контексте, поскольку сами по себе не всегда обозначают акт прощения. Представлена матрица соответствий между исходной и целевой сферами. Работа носит качественный характер и формулирует гипотезы, требующие проверки на текстовом корпусе.

Ключевые слова: концептуальная метафора; прощение; узбекский язык; культурная лингвистика; когнитивная семантика

Annotatsiya. Maqolada kechirimlilik konseptining o‘zbek tilidagi metaforik ifodalanishi kognitiv-semantik yondashuv asosida o‘rganiladi. Emotsional yukdan xalos bo‘lish, tugunni yechish, masofani qisqartirish, ko‘ngilning yumshashi va xafalik izini o‘chirish kabi besh sxema taklif etiladi. «Ko‘ngli yumshamoq», «ginasini unutmoq» singari ifodalar kechirish bilan har doim bir xil ma’noni bildirmasligi kontekst orqali ko‘rsatiladi. Manba va maqsad sohalari o‘rtasidagi munosabat jadvalda umumlashtirilgan. Natijalar keyinchalik matn korpusida sinovdan o‘tkazilishi mumkin bo‘lgan tahliliy farazlar sifatida talqin etiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: konseptual metafora; kechirimlilik; o‘zbek tili; lingvomadaniyat; ko‘ngil; semantik tahlil

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INTRODUCTION

Forgiveness is an abstract interpersonal category: it cannot be observed in the same way as a visible movement, yet speakers routinely understand it through bodily and spatial experiences. Uzbek expressions involving ko‘ngil (inner feeling or heart), gina (lingering grievance), distance and relief suggest that conflict resolution can be construed as a change in an internal state, a social relation or an ethical decision. Conceptual metaphor theory holds that such expressions may reflect systematic mappings from familiar domains to abstract experience [1]. Still, identifying a metaphor in a sentence does not prove that the whole culture shares a fixed conceptual model. This paper addresses two related questions: which recurrent semantic schemas provide plausible ways of conceptualizing forgiveness, and where do their interpretive limits lie? The distinction matters because metaphorical proximity is not lexical equivalence. Ko‘ngli yumshadi describes a change of emotional stance; it does not, without further context, guarantee that a speaker has explicitly forgiven the person who offended them. Cultural linguistics provides the methodological reason to retain local conceptual content while avoiding a claim of cultural uniqueness based on a few illustrative expressions [3]. Accordingly, the analysis distinguishes metaphorical representation from actual forgiveness, examining how linguistic choices construct emotional change, interpersonal reconciliation and moral responsibility within specific communicative contexts. The study therefore considers metaphor as a context-sensitive resource through which speakers express forgiveness, negotiate interpersonal boundaries and reconstruct social harmony. Particular emphasis is placed on the interaction between embodied experience, culturally embedded meanings and pragmatic intentions, allowing the analysis to distinguish conventional expressions from context-dependent interpretations.

MATERIALS AND ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

The study combines Uzbek lexicographic reference material with a small inventory of analytically constructed phrases and dialogue contexts. Dictionary evidence confirms the semantic intersection of kechirim with pardon and apology, while gina denotes a grievance or resentment retained toward another person [8] [7] [6]. These definitions provide lexical anchors but do not, by themselves, establish metaphor frequencies. Consequently, no numerical distribution, dialect attribution or claim of semantic universality is offered. The examples are examined by identifying the source domain, mapping its salient physical structure onto the target experience, and checking whether the whole utterance denotes forgiveness, prepares for it or merely describes emotional change. Five working mappings were selected because they highlight different facets of the same broad relational process. Selection is theory-driven and not exhaustive. For each mapping, the analysis distinguishes lexicalized idiomatic material from possible creative constructions. A lexical item can also participate in several readings: ko‘ngil may signal sympathy, desire, vulnerability or relational attachment, depending on co-text. Consistent with Uzbek pragmalinguistic analysis [5], the procedure employs three tests: Does the phrase presuppose a grievance? Does it present a change in the offended party’s position? Does the following speech confirm continued acceptance of the other party? These tests restrict unjustified metaphor-to-action inferences [4].

The burden schema conceptualizes unresolved hurt as something carried. A constructed expression, «Bu ginani ortiq ko‘tarib yurmayman», portrays abandonment of resentment as unloading weight. The target is not simply loss of memory: the speaker can remember the offense while deciding to relinquish ongoing emotional punishment. In contrast, «Unutib yubordim» may denote forgetting a detail and may have no moral force. Burden imagery is analytically useful precisely because it separates the cognitive memory of an event from its emotional load. The body-based perspective is consistent with studies of the relation between emotion and metaphor [2].

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The knot schema models conflict as entanglement and repair as release. Phrases built around tugun and yechmoq can suggest a relationship that cannot progress until an unresolved problem is addressed. For instance, «Oramizdagi tugunni gaplashib yechdik» is an illustrative construction in which dialogue, not unilateral forgiveness, supplies the means of resolution. The distance schema, by comparison, presents estrangement as separation and rapprochement as coming closer: «Oramizdagi sovuqlik ketdi» may describe restored warmth, while «yana yaqinlashdik» foregrounds relational re-approach. These are different outcomes, and neither warrants an automatic judgment about the sincerity of an apology. Temperature and softness imagery is closely associated with changes in affective stance. The idiomatic expression ko‘ngli yumshamoq can describe the reduction of resistance or anger, whereas muz erimoq may creatively picture gradual emotional thawing. Here the target is readiness for reconciliation rather than a completed moral decision. The trace-removal schema represents resentment as a mark that can fade, disappear or be actively erased. An analytical phrase such as «Ko‘nglimdagi ginaning izi qoldi» is especially revealing: the speaker may accept an apology yet disclose that an emotional trace remains. Consequently, metaphor-based descriptions make room for partial, delayed or conditional forgiveness rather than a simplistic binary division between forgiving and not forgiving.

POLYSEMY AND DISCOURSE-LEVEL METAPHOR

Metaphor identification must also consider the possibility that an expression profiles a neighboring emotion rather than forgiveness itself. The idiom «ko‘ngli ko‘tarildi» may indicate improved mood, consolation or regained confidence without an underlying grievance. Likewise, «orasidagi sovuqlik» can refer to impersonal distance even when no explicit injury has occurred. A reliable annotation therefore requires more than a recognizable source domain: the analyst must identify an offense-related frame, a participant whose stance is changing, and evidence that the change concerns blame, acceptance or reconciliation. Otherwise ordinary emotion metaphors will be mistakenly counted as forgiveness metaphors.

The same caution applies to degrees of conventionality. A frequent idiom should not be placed on the same evidential footing as an attractive phrase created for illustration. To study productivity, researchers can collect authentic tokens, classify their grammatical flexibility and ask independent speakers whether the expression sounds idiomatic in a forgiveness-related context. Translation should preserve this distinction. A figurative English equivalent may convey roughly the same image but have a different level of conventionality, while a direct non-metaphorical translation may better express what the original speaker intended. The appropriate choice depends on the whole conversational act, not on one word [1] [3].

DISCUSSION: METAPHORS AS DISCOURSE RESOURCES

The five schemas differ in agency and temporality. Unloading foregrounds the injured person’s choice; undoing a knot places emphasis on mutual communication; decreasing distance is relational and requires at least an interpreted response; softening can occur gradually without an explicit decision; removal of a trace concerns the durability of emotional experience. These contrasts show why it is unhelpful to group all metaphorical expressions under one undifferentiated label of “forgiveness language.” Each mapping selects one aspect of a multidimensional event, and metaphors may conflict within a single account. A speaker might say that the relationship is restored while the gina still weighs on the heart. A useful application is translation and intercultural education. Literal translation of ko‘ngli yumshadi as “his heart softened” often preserves imagery but does not necessarily express all implications of the Uzbek context; rendering it as “he forgave” may overstate the event. The same problem arises when an analyst converts a relational metaphor into a psychological diagnostic category. Cultural pragmatics encourages the researcher to retain participant

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meanings, discourse history and possible alternative interpretations [3] [4]. For corpus testing, each candidate must be counted only after annotation for target domain, expression type, speaker role and whether the surrounding exchange demonstrates granting of forgiveness.

Table 1. Interpretative mapping of metaphorical schemas

Source-domain schema	Illustrative Uzbek expression	Foregrounded target meaning	Interpretive caution
Weight / release	ginani ko‘tarib yurmaslik	Relinquishing ongoing resentment	Memory may remain
Knot / untying	oramizdagi tugunni yechmoq	Resolving relational impasse	Resolution may be mutual
Distance / approach	yana yaqinlashmoq	Re-establishing proximity	Not a direct pardon formula
Softness / warmth	ko‘ngli yumshamoq	Lowering emotional resistance	May precede forgiveness
Trace / erasure	ginaning izi qolmaslik	Disappearance of emotional residue	Requires context

CONCLUSION

Conceptual metaphor offers a precise account of why forgiveness can be spoken of as lifting a burden, untying a knot, bridging distance, softening the heart or eliminating a trace. These are proposed semantic schemas rather than established corpus-frequency findings. Their contrast reveals distinct stages and orientations of conflict repair: emotional readiness, moral decision, communicative negotiation and relational renewal. The main methodological implication is that researchers should analyze metaphor in its dialogue context, with explicit attention to agency, temporality and responsibility. Corpus-based verification can subsequently determine which expressions are conventional, productive or socially restricted in contemporary Uzbek. Further empirical research based on contemporary Uzbek spoken and written corpora is necessary to verify the proposed semantic schemas, identify their conventional and context-dependent forms, and establish their frequency, productivity and sociocultural distribution. Interviews, family conversations, proverbial expressions and naturally occurring communicative interactions may provide additional evidence concerning the transmission and transformation of forgiveness-related metaphors across generations.

Overall, the study contributes to cognitive linguistics and pragmatic discourse analysis by presenting forgiveness as an embodied, culturally mediated and interactionally constructed concept in Uzbek. It also highlights the importance of integrating conceptual metaphor theory with discourse pragmatics and language socialization research to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how emotional meanings and interpersonal values are expressed and negotiated through language.

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