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COGNITIVE AND PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF ZOOPHYTOMORPHIC METAPHORS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH

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Abstract: This article examines zoophytomorphic metaphors in Uzbek and English from cognitive and pragmatic perspectives. The study focuses on how animal and plant imagery is used to convey evaluative meanings, emotional attitudes, and communicative intentions. By analyzing linguistic data from both languages, the research identifies universal metaphorical patterns as well as culturally specific pragmatic functions. The results show that zoophytomorphic expressions play a significant role in shaping interpersonal communication and reflect culturally embedded models of perception.

Keywords: zoophytomorphism, cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, metaphor, Uzbek, English, discourse

Аннотация: В статье рассматриваются зоофитоморфные метафоры в узбекском и английском языках с когнитивной и прагматической точек зрения. Особое внимание уделяется тому, как образы животных и растений используются для передачи оценочных значений, эмоционального отношения и коммуникативных намерений. Анализ показывает наличие универсальных моделей метафоризации, а также культурно обусловленных прагматических особенностей. Результаты исследования демонстрируют важную роль данных метафор в межличностной коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: зоофитоморфизм, когнитивная лингвистика, прагматика, метафора, узбекский язык, английский язык

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada o‘zbek va ingliz tillaridagi zoofitomorf metaforalar kognitiv va pragmatik nuqtai nazardan tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda hayvon va o‘simlik obrazlari orqali baholovchi ma’nolar, emotsional munosabat va kommunikativ niyatlar qanday ifodalanishi o‘rganiladi. Natijalar umumiy metaforik qonuniyatlar bilan birga madaniy jihatdan o‘ziga xos pragmatik xususiyatlarni ham ko‘rsatadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: zoofitomorfizm, kognitiv tilshunoslik, pragmatika, metafora, o‘zbek tili, ingliz tili

Introduction

Metaphor is not only a linguistic phenomenon but also a fundamental cognitive and communicative mechanism that shapes how individuals perceive, structure, and interpret reality. Within the framework of cognitive linguistics, metaphor is viewed as a process of mapping between conceptual domains, allowing abstract notions to be understood through more concrete and experiential categories. Zoophytomorphic metaphors, which rely on animal and plant imagery, represent a particularly vivid and culturally loaded type of metaphorical expression.

These metaphors enable speakers to encode evaluation, emotion, and social attitudes in a compact yet highly expressive form. By drawing on shared knowledge of the natural world, they facilitate efficient communication and enhance the эмоциональная и образная насыщенность речи. At the same time, they reflect culturally specific models of perception, revealing how different linguistic communities conceptualize human behavior, personality, and social interaction.

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Although previous studies have predominantly focused on the semantic and structural aspects of metaphor, comparatively less attention has been paid to their pragmatic functions in discourse. However, it is precisely at the level of discourse that metaphors reveal their full communicative potential — functioning as tools for evaluation, persuasion, mitigation, irony, and emotional expression. Their interpretation depends not only on linguistic form but also on context, speaker intention, and shared cultural knowledge.

In Uzbek and English, zoophytomorphic metaphors are widely used in both everyday communication and literary texts. However, their pragmatic functions, frequency, and evaluative orientation may differ significantly due to cultural and communicative norms. This makes a comparative analysis particularly relevant.

The present study aims to analyze zoophytomorphic metaphors in Uzbek and English from cognitive and pragmatic perspectives, focusing on their role in expressing evaluation, emotion, and speaker intention. It also seeks to identify both universal patterns of metaphorical thinking and language-specific features shaped by cultural context.

Theoretical Framework

The present research is grounded in the principles of cognitive linguistics and pragmatics, which together provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing metaphor as both a mental and communicative phenomenon. Within cognitive linguistics, metaphor is understood as a conceptual mapping between a source domain (e.g., animals, plants) and a target domain (e.g., human behavior, emotions, social roles). As argued by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), such mappings are systematic and reflect underlying patterns of human thought rather than merely stylistic language use.

Zoophytomorphic metaphors, in particular, are based on embodied cognition, as they emerge from human interaction with the natural environment. Knowledge about animals and plants—acquired through direct experience and cultural transmission—serves as a foundation for structuring abstract meanings. For instance, observable characteristics such as strength, fragility, growth, or aggression are transferred metaphorically to describe human qualities and states. This process demonstrates how language encodes experiential knowledge and transforms it into conceptual structures.

From a pragmatic perspective, metaphor is not only a representational device but also a strategic communicative tool. According to pragmatic theory, metaphors are used to achieve specific communicative goals, including evaluation, persuasion, emotional expression, mitigation, and the creation of stylistic effects such as irony or humor. In discourse, zoophytomorphic metaphors often function as implicit evaluative markers, allowing speakers to convey attitudes indirectly while maintaining politeness or rhetorical subtlety.

The interpretation of such metaphors is highly context-dependent and relies on shared background knowledge between interlocutors. Cultural norms and communicative conventions play a crucial role in shaping how metaphors are understood and whether their connotations are perceived as positive, negative, or neutral. Consequently, the same metaphorical image may carry different pragmatic meanings across languages and cultures.

Thus, the integration of cognitive and pragmatic approaches allows for a more nuanced analysis of zoophytomorphic metaphors, revealing not only how they are structured conceptually but also how they function in real communicative contexts.

Pragmatic Functions in Uzbek

In Uzbek discourse, zoophytomorphic metaphors are widely used as expressive tools for conveying emotional evaluation, social attitudes, and interpersonal positioning. These metaphors are

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deeply embedded in everyday communication and are particularly prominent in informal speech, where they contribute to the vividness and эмоциональная насыщенность высказывания.

Animal-based metaphors in Uzbek often carry strong evaluative meanings and are used to characterize individuals in a direct yet culturally nuanced manner. For example:

- “bo‘ri” (wolf) – a strong, dominant personality (frequently positive, associated with courage and лидерские качества)
- “itdek ishlamoq” (to work like a dog) – extremely hardworking (neutral to positive, emphasizing endurance)
- “eshakdek qaysar” (as stubborn as a donkey) – very stubborn (negative, but commonly used in familiar contexts)

Plant-based metaphors, on the other hand, tend to express aesthetic and emotional evaluations:

- “gul” (flower) – beauty, admiration
- “guldek ochilmoq” – to flourish, to become more beautiful or confident

From a pragmatic perspective, these expressions often function as intensifiers, strengthening the speaker’s эмоциональное отношение. They are also frequently used as indirect evaluative strategies, allowing speakers to convey praise, criticism, or irony without explicitly stating their judgment. This indirectness can serve politeness strategies, especially in culturally sensitive interactions.\n\nMoreover, Uzbek zoophytomorphic metaphors tend to be relatively transparent and emotionally rich, making them effective tools for establishing solidarity, expressing empathy, or reinforcing social norms

Pragmatic Functions in English

English, zoophytomorphic metaphors are широко распространены как в разговорной, так и в письменной речи и выполняют разнообразные прагматические функции. Однако по сравнению с узбекским языком они чаще обладают более сдержанной или контекстуально обусловленной интерпретацией.\n\nAnimal-based metaphors in English are frequently used to express evaluation, often with implicit or culturally coded meanings. For example: \n- “snake” – a deceitful, untrustworthy person (strongly negative evaluation) \n- “busy as a bee” – a hardworking, industrious individual (positive evaluation) \n- “a lone wolf” – an independent or socially isolated person (neutral to context-dependent) \n\nPlant-based metaphors similarly encode emotional and social meanings: \n- “wallflower” – a shy, socially withdrawn person \n- “to blossom” – to develop or gain confidence \n\nFrom a pragmatic standpoint, English zoophytomorphic metaphors often function as subtle evaluative devices. They may convey irony, humor, understatement, or even criticism in an indirect manner. Their effectiveness largely depends on context, intonation, and shared cultural knowledge between interlocutors.\n\nIn addition, English metaphors are frequently lexicalized and may be perceived as idiomatic expressions rather than creative figurative language. This contributes to their flexibility in discourse but may also obscure their metaphorical origins for speakers.\n\nOverall, English zoophytomorphic metaphors demonstrate a tendency toward pragmatic subtlety and contextual variability, in contrast to the more direct and emotionally expressive usage observed in Uzbek discourse.

Comparative Discussion

Both Uzbek and English actively employ zoophytomorphic metaphors as a means of expressing evaluation, emotion, and social attitudes. These metaphors function as cognitively grounded tools that allow speakers to interpret human behavior through familiar природные образы. Despite this shared foundation, the two languages differ significantly in their pragmatic orientation, reflecting broader cultural and communicative patterns.

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One of the key distinctions lies in the degree of explicitness and emotional intensity. Uzbek zoophytomorphic metaphors tend to be more direct and emotionally expressive. They are frequently used to convey clear evaluative judgments, often with a strong affective component. For example, referring to a person as “bo‘ri” immediately invokes associations of strength, courage, and dominance, with relatively little ambiguity. Such expressions are readily interpreted and often carry a socially accepted, culturally reinforced meaning.

In contrast, English zoophytomorphic metaphors are generally more context-dependent and pragmatically nuanced. Their interpretation often relies on situational context, tone, and shared background knowledge. For instance, calling someone a “snake” conveys a negative evaluation, but the intensity and intent of the statement may vary depending on context—ranging from serious accusation to ironic or humorous usage. This reflects a broader tendency in English discourse toward indirectness and pragmatic subtlety.

Another important difference concerns the role of cultural symbolism. In Uzbek, metaphorical meanings are often closely aligned with traditional views of nature and long-established cultural associations. Animals and plants are perceived through a lens shaped by historical lifestyle (e.g., pastoralism, agriculture), which contributes to relatively stable and transparent interpretations. In English, however, metaphorical meanings are influenced by a wider range of sources, including literature, folklore, and modern media, resulting in more varied and sometimes ambiguous connotations.

Furthermore, the pragmatic functions of zoophytomorphic metaphors differ in interpersonal communication. Uzbek speakers frequently use such metaphors to intensify emotional expression, reinforce solidarity, or convey attitudes openly. English speakers, on the other hand, may use similar metaphors to soften criticism, introduce irony, or maintain politeness through indirect expression.

These differences reflect broader communicative styles and cultural norms within the two linguistic communities. Uzbek discourse tends to prioritize emotional openness and expressive clarity, while English discourse often emphasizes contextual sensitivity and pragmatic flexibility.

Thus, the comparative analysis highlights not only universal cognitive mechanisms underlying metaphor use but also culturally specific patterns that shape how meaning is constructed and interpreted in communication.

Conclusion

Zoophytomorphic metaphors function as powerful cognitive and pragmatic tools in both Uzbek and English, enabling speakers to conceptualize human experience through nature-based imagery. Their widespread use confirms the existence of universal metaphorical mechanisms grounded in embodied cognition and shared human interaction with the natural world.

At the same time, the study demonstrates that the use and interpretation of such metaphors are strongly influenced by cultural context. Uzbek discourse tends to employ zoophytomorphic expressions in a more direct, emotionally expressive, and evaluatively explicit manner, reflecting a communicative style that values openness and intensity. In contrast, English discourse often relies on greater pragmatic subtlety, where metaphorical meanings are more context-dependent and may serve functions such as irony, mitigation, or indirect evaluation.

These findings highlight the importance of considering both cognitive universals and cultural specifics in the study of metaphor. Zoophytomorphic expressions not only enrich language but also act as carriers of cultural knowledge, social norms, and communicative strategies.

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The results of this research have practical implications for translation studies, intercultural communication, and language teaching. Awareness of differences in metaphorical usage can help avoid misinterpretation and improve cross-cultural understanding.

Further research may focus on corpus-based analysis to examine frequency and distribution patterns, as well as on discourse-oriented studies exploring how zoophytomorphic metaphors function in different communicative contexts, such as media, literature, and everyday interaction.

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