

Linguacognitive Study of Proverbs With a Human Component in English and Uzbek Languages

*Marufova Yulduzkhon*¹

Annotation: This article presents a linguacognitive study of proverbs with human components in English and Uzbek languages. It investigates the metaphorical and cognitive patterns used in proverbs that feature human body parts, traits, and social roles, offering a comparative analysis of the two languages. By exploring the underlying cognitive metaphors and cultural values, the study uncovers similarities and differences in how proverbs conceptualize human experience in both languages. Concrete examples are analyzed in terms of their linguistic structures and cognitive frameworks, highlighting the challenges and nuances of cross-cultural understanding.

Keywords: Human component proverbs, cognitive linguistics, metaphor, cultural values, English proverbs, Uzbek proverbs, comparative linguistics, conceptual metaphors.

Proverbs, as concise forms of folk wisdom, encapsulate societal values and cognitive patterns unique to each culture. The study of human component proverbs—those involving human body parts, traits, or social roles—offers valuable insights into how different languages conceptualize human experiences and relationships. This article focuses on a linguacognitive comparison between English and Uzbek proverbs, examining how these cultures metaphorically frame human life through proverbs.

Using Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) theory of conceptual metaphor, which posits that metaphors reflect underlying cognitive structures, this study explores the cognitive and cultural frameworks encoded in proverbs of both languages.

Cognitive linguistics suggests that human cognition is structured by metaphorical thought. In both English and Uzbek, proverbs use human body parts and characteristics to symbolize larger concepts, such as wisdom, power, morality, and social behavior. Proverbs like 'The heart rules the head' (English) or 'Ko'ngilga buyruq berib bo'lmydi' (Uzbek: 'You can't give orders to your heart') illustrate how body parts are metaphorically used to express human emotions or decision-making.

Proverbs with human components reflect cultural values and social norms. In English, proverbs often emphasize individualism and personal responsibility. For example, 'The eyes are the window to the soul' highlights introspection and personal integrity. In contrast, Uzbek proverbs like 'Ko'p eshitgan kam xato qiladi' (He who listens more makes fewer mistakes) stress communal wisdom and collective learning, showing the value of societal relationships and shared experience.

Both languages use proverbs to metaphorically represent human components, but the underlying cultural philosophies—individualism in English versus collectivism in Uzbek—inform how these proverbs are structured and understood.

Examples and Linguacognitive analysis

1. English: 'Actions speak louder than words'

Human component: Action (associated with human behavior)

Cognitive metaphor: 'Doing is stronger than speaking'. This proverb metaphorically contrasts verbal communication (words) with physical behavior (actions), suggesting that what one does is more significant than what one says. In cognitive terms, this emphasizes the concept that 'seeing is

¹ FB TUIT English language teacher



believing' and promotes action over empty promises, a reflection of the English-speaking world's focus on tangible outcomes.

Uzbek: 'Og'izdagi oltin, qo'ldagi kumushdan afzal'

Translation: 'Gold in the mouth is better than silver in the hand'

Human component: Mouth (speech) and Hand (action)

Cognitive metaphor: 'Wise words outweigh material wealth'. This Uzbek proverb values thoughtful speech (associated with the mouth) over physical possession or labor (associated with the hand). It emphasizes the importance of wisdom and eloquence over material success, contrasting the English proverb, where action (the hand) is valued over speech. This shows a culturally distinct view in Uzbek society, where verbal wisdom may be more respected than physical action.

2. English: 'Don't bite the hand that feeds you'

Human component: Hand (provider)

Cognitive metaphor: 'Dependency and gratitude'. This proverb uses the human hand as a symbol of care and provision, warning against betrayal or harm toward those who offer support. The cognitive metaphor suggests that 'Harming your benefactor is foolish', reinforcing social norms of loyalty and gratitude.

Uzbek: 'Yordami yo'q qarindoshdan yetti yot begona yaxshi'

Translation: 'Strangers are better than unhelpful relatives'

Human component: Hand (assistance)

Cognitive metaphor: 'A helping hand defines relationships'. Similar to the English version, the hand represents assistance and mutual aid. However, the focus in Uzbek is on appreciating those who actively help, which ties back to communal and reciprocal values deeply embedded in Uzbek society. This proverb places more weight on building relationships through active assistance.

3. English: 'A man's home is his castle'

Human component: Man (individual)

Cognitive metaphor: 'Autonomy and protection' This proverb highlights the idea that a person (man) is the master of their own household, metaphorically linking the home to a place of authority and safety. The cognitive metaphor reflects values of independence and personal space, significant in English culture's emphasis on individual rights.

Uzbek: 'Bosh omon bo'lsa, do'ppi topiladi'

Translation: 'If your head is safe, you can find your headwear'

Human component: Head (individual's decision-making center)

Cognitive metaphor: 'Rationality guides personal decisions' In Uzbek, the head symbolizes rationality and guidance, suggesting that just as a house has a physical place, a person's head (rational thinking) leads their life decisions. This proverb highlights the importance of wisdom and good judgment, which are highly valued in Uzbek culture, particularly within family and community settings.

Both English and Uzbek proverbs use human components to reflect cultural values, but their emphasis differs. English proverbs often focus on personal autonomy and direct action, while Uzbek proverbs emphasize collective wisdom, verbal expression, and the interconnectedness of people within a community. These differences in cognitive metaphor illustrate how language encodes cultural priorities and thought patterns.

The proverbs also highlight how certain human components—like hands, heads, and mouths—are universally used but conceptualized differently depending on cultural context. In English, the hand



may symbolize action and self-reliance, while in Uzbek, it often represents help and community support.

The linguacognitive study of human component proverbs in English and Uzbek reveals significant insights into how these cultures perceive human experiences, relationships, and social roles. While both languages share commonalities in metaphorical use, their cultural frameworks shape how proverbs are constructed and understood. Cross-linguistic comparisons of proverbs enhance our understanding of cultural cognition and the challenges of translating culturally embedded expressions.

References

1. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. University of Chicago Press.
2. Mieder, W. (2004). *Proverbs: A Handbook*. Greenwood Press.
3. Bobojonova, S. (2015). *Uzbek Proverbs: Linguistic and Cultural Insights*. National University Press.
4. Rasulova, G. (2011). *Cognitive Metaphors in Uzbek and English Proverbs*. Linguistic Studies Journal.

