
Cultural and linguocognitive representations of the concepts of the happiness and the heart in English and Uzbek: a comparative study of Judith Mcnaught’s literary discourse

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Annotation

This article examines the cultural and linguocognitive representation of the concepts of happiness and heart in English and Uzbek through a comparative analysis of literary discourse, focusing on selected works by Judith McNaught. The study is based on cognitive linguistics and cultural linguistics, especially Conceptual Metaphor Theory developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. Its main aim is to explore how emotional concepts are structured, conceptualized, and expressed in different cultural contexts. Using qualitative methods such as semantic, conceptual, and contextual analysis, the research investigates lexical units, metaphorical expressions, and phraseological constructions related to happiness and heart in English literary texts and their Uzbek equivalents. The findings reveal that both languages share universal cognitive patterns, such as linking happiness with warmth and emotional fullness, while differing in cultural interpretations and symbolic meanings. The study contributes to cross-cultural semantics, translation studies, intercultural communication, and language teaching.

Keywords

Cognitive linguistics, cultural linguistics, conceptual metaphor, happiness, heart, literary discourse, cross-cultural analysis

Madaniy va lingvokognitiv tasvirlar: ingliz va o’zbek tillarida “baxt” va “qalb” konseptlari Judith Mcnaught asarlari misolida qiyosiy tahlil

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- Annotatsiya** *Ushbu maqola ingliz va o'zbek tillarida "baxt" va "qalb" konseptlarining madaniy hamda lingvokognitiv ifodalanishini Judith McNaught asarlari misolida qiyosiy tahlil qiladi. Tadqiqot kognitiv lingvistika va lingvomadaniyatshunoslik nazariyalariga, ayniqsa Jorj Lakoff va Mark Jonson tomonidan ishlab chiqilgan Konseptual Metafora Nazariyasiga asoslanadi. Asosiy maqsad emotsional konseptlarning turli madaniy kontekstlarda qanday shakllanishi, konseptuallashuvi va til orqali ifodalanishini aniqlashdan iborat. Semantik, konseptual va kontekstual tahlil usullari yordamida ingliz adabiy matnlaridagi baxt va yurak bilan bog'liq leksik birliklar, metaforik ifodalar hamda frazeologik konstruksiyalar va ularning o'zbek tilidagi muqobillari o'rganiladi. Natijalar har ikki tilda umumiy kognitiv modellar mavjudligini, biroq madaniy talqin va ramziy ma'nolarda sezilarli farqlar borligini ko'rsatadi. Tadqiqot qiyosiy semantika, tarjimashunoslik, madaniyatlararo muloqot va til o'qitish sohalari uchun muhim ahamiyatga ega.*
- Kalit so'zlar** *Kognitiv lingvistika, lingvomadaniyatshunoslik, konseptual metafora, baxt, qalb, adabiy diskurs, qiyosiy tahlil*

Культурные и лингвокогнитивные репрезентации концептов «счастье» и «сердце» в английском и узбекском языках: сравнительное исследование литературного дискурса Джудит Макнот

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- Аннотация** *В данной статье рассматривается культурное и лингвокогнитивное представление концептов «счастье» и «сердце» в английском и узбекском языках на основе сравнительного анализа литературного дискурса, с акцентом на произведения Джудит Макнот. Исследование основано на теориях когнитивной лингвистики и лингвокультурологии, особенно на Теории концептуальной метафоры, разработанной Джорджем Лакоффом и Марком Джонсоном. Основная цель исследования – определить, как эмоциональные концепты формируются, концептуализируются и выражаются в различных культурных контекстах. С помощью семантического, концептуального и контекстуального анализа изучаются лексические единицы, метафорические выражения и фразеологические конструкции, связанные со счастьем и сердцем в английских литературных текстах, а также их узбекские эквиваленты. Результаты показывают наличие общих когнитивных моделей в обоих языках, однако культурные*

интерпретации и символические значения существенно различаются. Исследование имеет важное значение для сравнительной семантики, переводоведения, межкультурной коммуникации и методики преподавания языков.

Ключевые слова Когнитивная лингвистика, лингвокультурология, концептуальная метафора, счастье, сердце, литературный дискурс, сравнительный анализ

Introduction

A language operates not only as a system of communication but also as a symbol of human cognition and cultural identities (Croft & Cruse, 2004). In the field of modern linguistics, especially in the sphere of cognitive linguistics, a language is comprehended as a means via which individuals conceptualize and interpret the surrounding world around people. The concepts of emotional terms such as *happiness* and *heart* occupy a basic place in the process, as they demonstrate complex mental organizations structured by both universal human experience and concepts acquired according to cultural norms and standards.

The concept of *happiness* has been highly studied through disciplinary processes, consisting of philosophy, psychology, and linguistics, in which it is frequently considered as a multidimensional phenomenon demonstrating emotional, cognitive, and social behaviors (Kövecses, 2000). Based on a linguistic perspective, happiness is not merely considered to be a lexical unit but a concept which is embedded culturally that is expressed via metaphorical sentences and meanings and discourse patterns (Barcelona, 2000). Moreover, the concept of the *heart* performs as a symbolic unit which is fundamental in most languages, demonstrating expressive emotions, states which belong to inner feelings, and moral values. However, the perception and interpretation of these concepts, with the addition of usage of them, differ significantly across cultures, showing distinct systems of understandings, beliefs, and different values. This article mainly concentrates on the

comparative studies of the linguocognitive demonstrations of *happiness* and *heart* in English and Uzbek languages, with significant focus on their realization in literary discourse. Literary contexts, texts share a rich recourse of data for the benefit of this analysis, as they have the capacity to encapsulate emotional levels, cultural norms, and humanly expressed expressions and feelings. The novels written and developed by well-known Judith McNaught are particularly reliable and suitable for this purpose owing to their expressive languages which provide us with emotional intensity, and extensive usage of metaphorical frames and structures which are relevant to love and inner human experience.

Comparing English to Uzbek, the Uzbek language offers a different conceptual perception for expressing emotional expressions and psychological states. Concepts like *yurak* and *ko'ngil*, are frequently translated as *heart*. They carry wider and broader and more nuanced meanings that extend beyond the organ itself meaning that they can mean different meanings if used with expressive emotions in communications including moral character, emotional sensitivity, and spiritual awareness (Wierzbicka, 1999). This differentiation is considered to be semantic and it emphasizes the significance of cultural contexts in comprehending linguistic meanings and represents that direct translation between languages frequently cannot be implemented to capture the fullness of conceptual depth of such common terms. The theoretical foundation of this article is basically relevant to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which disputes

that concepts which are abstract are shaped through mappings of metaphorical fields which are grounded in experience with bodily engagement. With the contribution of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, human thought is extensively metaphorical in nature, and language operates as a demonstration of these cognitive processes which occur due to the effects of underlying cognitive approaches (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

The primary data for this article are demonstrated from chosen and selected literary works done by Judith McNaught, whose novels are considered to be reliable and his novels are characterized by emotionally rich language and the usage of extensive metaphorical expressions related to love, happiness, and feelings with emotional states based on inner experience. Literary discourse is selected considering it as the main source of information as it can provide nuanced and expressive demonstrations of concepts with emotional states, showing both individual creation of creativity and wider and broader cultural standards with norms. Additionally, with English literary contexts and texts, the study works in the incorporation of Uzbek linguistic data, consisting of lexical items, expressions with idiomatic terms, and units of phraseological terms relevant to *happiness* (*baxt, saodat*) and *heart* (*yurak, ko'ngil*). These data can be taken from dictionaries, linguistic works and studies, and common usage in the Uzbek language (Dirven & Verspoor, 2004). The analysis is acquired utilizing several methods. Starting with, semantic analysis is selected to study the meanings of important lexical items and their variations based on contextual points. This process involves defining the basic semantic frames of words such as *heart*, *yurak*, and *ko'ngil*, with the addition of their metaphorical variations. Secondly, it is time for the conceptual analysis and conceptual analysis is utilized to discover the underlying cognitive features and structures that help to shape these meanings, especially the metaphorical mappings that connect to concrete expressions

and experiences. Finally, with the third approach, analysis is applied comparatively to identify correspondences and divergences in English and Uzbek languages, concentrating on both linguistic structures and cultural perspectives. In this article the particular attention is given to metaphorical expressions and phraseological units, as these are considered to be important indicators of how concepts are shaped in the human mind with cognition. For instance, expressions such as *broken heart* or *broken soul* in English and in Uzbek *yuragi ezilgan yoki qalbi cho'kmoq* demonstrate both similar points in emotional contexts and differences in linguistic features. Through the process of analyzing such expressions in their contexts with cultural norms and textual contexts, the study is about to aim to provide a broader comprehension of how languages possess the reflection and shapes of human cognition and mental processes with experience.

The concept of *happiness* demonstrates one of the most fundamental and universal and emotional experiences; however, its representation from a linguistic and cognitive viewpoint differs with significance through cultural standards. In the framework of cognitive linguistics, happiness is not accepted as a simple emotional state but as a structure which complex and conceptual and it is shaped by metaphorical mappings, cultural values and social norms relevant to their own cultural standards (Gibbs, 1994). In English literary discourse, especially in the works of Judith McNaught, the concept of *happiness* is conceptualized with predominant perspective as an intense feature, individualized experience based on emotional states by being closely associated with romantic acceptance and fulfillment and individual satisfaction. This part of the conceptualization is demonstrated in a broader and wider range of metaphorical expressions that reflect happiness as a state of illumination and elevation. Expressions, for instance, "*she felt herself as if she were floating*", "*he was on top of the world*", or "*her heart was*

filled with bright light" describe the underlying conceptual metaphors meaning that **happiness is up, happiness is bright light, and happiness is fullness**. These mentioned metaphors align with the theoretical works of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, who shaped via embodied experiences like vertical orientation and sensations which are physical.

Comparatively, the Uzbek conceptualization of *happiness*, showed expressions through lexical words such as *baxt* and *saodat*, demonstrates a more collective and value-based viewpoints. Happiness in Uzbek culture is not connectively tied to socially structured harmony, family relationships, and also moral integrity. There are also some expressions which are worth paying attention to and they are those such as "*baxtli hayotda yashamoq*", "*baxtli hayot kechirmoq*" (to live a happy life or to live happily) or "*ko'ngil joyiga tushdi*", "*ko'ngil xotirjam bo'ldi*" (one's heart or soul or mind became calm and relieved) which indicate that happiness is connected to feelings and emotions like stability, peacefulness, and social balance as opposed to intensively emotional excitement or any feelings similar to this. From a linguocognitive perspective, Uzbek demonstrations of happiness often accompany metaphors relevant to **calmness, completeness, and inner harmony and inner feelings and inner expressions**. The dynamic is distinct in English and it frequently emphasized emotional expressions while Uzbek discourse is more prone to highlight moderation and equilibrium. This distinction shows cultural values with deeper understanding, where happiness is connected to filling social positions, keeping warm and respectful relationships, and acquiring inner peace and tranquility (Palmer, 1996).

Regardless of these differences mentioned in this article, there are also notable likeliness and similarities between the two languages. Both English and Uzbek use metaphors of *fullness* and *warmth* to depict positive emotional and inner states. English expressions, for instance, such as "*a heart full of*

joy" and Uzbek expressions such as "*ko'ngil to'lmoq*" (one's heart becomes full and not satisfied) illustrate a shared cognitive core established in human bodily expressions with experience. This aims to help the argument, developed by Zoltan Kovecses, that while conceptual metaphors are seen as universal, their specific realizations are structured by cultural standards and norms with cultural contexts.

The concept of the *heart* possesses a central position in the linguistic demonstration of expressive emotions across different cultures. As a symbolic and cognitive structure, the heart is frequently linked with feelings, inner states and conditions, and moral values. However, the specific meanings and understandings and functions attributed to this concept differ with a significant point between languages, showing distinct cultural models of emotional and psychological experiences. In English, the concept of the *heart* is basically conceptualized as the focus of emotions, especially those relevant to love, inner feelings, affection, and vulnerability. Judith McNaught's literary discourse the concept of the *heart* often appears as a metaphorical center of romantic expressions and intensity with emotions. Expressions such as "*he gave her his heart*", "*her heart ached with longing*", "*a broken heart*" demonstrate the usage of the pervasive style of the heart as a symbol of love and emotional difficulties and suffering. These mentioned expressions demonstrate underlying metaphors with conceptualization such as **the heart is a container for filling emotions and feelings and emotional pain is physical damage and suffering is also the injury and damage**, where experiences with emotional states are comprehended in terms of processes with physical effects impacting on the heart. Additionally, the concept of the *heart* in English is connected with sincerity and courage, as considered in expressions such as "*from the bottom of his heart*" or "*taking one's heart*". However, the meanings are frequently not as important as the basic one and they are seen as

secondary to their dominant role in showing romantic and expressively emotional experiences.

In Uzbek, the conceptualization of the concept of the *heart* is more difficult to identify and more complex as well, involving at least two important lexical units: *yurak* and *ko'ngil*. While both of these terms can be interpreted as *heart*, they demonstrate different aspects of inner experience. *Yurak*, for example, is primarily connected to courage, strength, and emotional expressions and resilience, as reflected in expressions such as "*yurakli inson*", "*yuragi bor inson*", "*katta yurakli inson*" (someone who is brave) or "*yuragi parchalandi*", "*yuragi ezildi*" (someone whose heart is crushed or in a down state). On the other hand, *ko'ngil* refers to the expressively inner emotions and spiritual world, showing feelings, intentions, and moral sensitivity with expressive emotional conditions. There are expressions such as "*ko'ngli nozik emish*" (to show one's sensitive heart) or "*ko'nglini olmoq lozim*" (to find a way into one's heart to build a romantic relationship or to comfort someone who is in pain) which emphasize the importance of emotional awareness and perceptual harmony. From a comparative viewpoint, both English and Uzbek choose the conceptualization of the concept of the *heart* as a central organ of the experience which is emotional, helping to support the notion of a shared embodied core for this metaphor. However, the distinction in semantic structure and usage demonstrate prominent cultural differences. English is prone to unify emotional conditions under a unique and simple concept (*heart*), while Uzbek shows distinctions between various aspects of inner states and conditions. Moreover, the Uzbek conceptualization concentrates greater on the moral and social dimensions of the heart, while English puts more focus on individual emotional expressions and conditions. This distinction is especially clear in the form emotions are evaluated and expressed with expressions: Uzbek discourse frequently

emphasizes restraint, emotional feelings, respect for others, while English discourse, particularly in romantic life and literature, puts more emphasis on emotional intensity and personal fulfillment and solitude.

Methods

This study employed a comparative cognitive and cultural-linguistic methodology to investigate the linguocognitive representations of the concepts of happiness and heart in English and Uzbek languages. The research is grounded in the theoretical frameworks of cognitive linguistics and cultural linguistics, with particular reference to Conceptual Metaphor Theory developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. The research design integrates several complementary analytical approaches:

- **Cognitive-Linguistic Analysis:** Examined how the concepts of happiness and heart are mentally represented, structured, and conceptualized in both languages. The analysis focused on identifying conceptual metaphors, cognitive models, and associative imagery. Particular attention was given to metaphorical mappings such as HAPPINESS IS UP, HAPPINESS IS LIGHT, and THE HEART IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS, which reflect embodied human experience and cognitive structuring of abstract concepts.
- **Semantic and Lexical Analysis:** Analyzed the meanings and contextual variations of key lexical units, including happiness (*baxt*, *saodat*) and heart (*yurak*, *ko'ngil*). The study examined both denotative and connotative meanings, as well as semantic extensions across different contexts. Phraseological units and idiomatic expressions were analyzed to determine how emotional meanings are linguistically encoded and culturally interpreted.
- **Conceptual and Metaphorical Analysis:** Identified and categorized the underlying conceptual structures that

shape emotional meaning. This stage focused on the relationship between abstract emotional concepts and concrete experiential domains, emphasizing the role of metaphor in structuring human cognition. Literary examples were used to illustrate how metaphorical expressions function within discourse to convey emotional and psychological states.

- **Comparative Analysis:** Conducted a systematic comparison between English and Uzbek linguocognitive representations. This involved examining similarities and differences in lexical items, metaphorical expressions, and phraseological constructions. The analysis focused on both structural features and cultural dimensions, highlighting distinctions such as the unified concept of heart in English versus the differentiated representation (*yurak* and *ko'ngil*) in Uzbek.
- **Cultural-Linguistic Interpretation:** Explored how cultural values, social norms, and worldviews are reflected in the linguistic representation of the selected concepts. The study interpreted emotional expressions within their cultural contexts, emphasizing differences between English individual-oriented emotional expression and Uzbek collective, harmony-based conceptualization.
- **Data Collection and Analysis Procedure:** Data were collected from selected literary works by Judith McNaught, as well as from dictionaries, linguistic studies, and naturally occurring Uzbek language usage. A qualitative content analysis method was applied to identify recurring semantic, lexical, and metaphorical patterns. Cross-linguistic comparison enabled the identification of both universal cognitive features and culturally specific distinctions.

This multi-layered methodological approach ensured a comprehensive analysis of the interaction between language, cognition, and culture, providing deeper insight into how emotional concepts are conceptualized and expressed in English and Uzbek.

Results

The conducted comparative linguocognitive analysis of the concepts of *happiness* and *heart* in English and Uzbek languages reveals a complex interaction between universal cognitive mechanisms and culturally specific conceptual structures. The findings are derived from the examination of English literary discourse, particularly the works of Judith McNaught, alongside Uzbek lexical, phraseological, and contextual data.

Firstly, the analysis demonstrates that in English literary discourse, the concept of *happiness* is predominantly conceptualized as an **intensive, individualized, and emotionally heightened experience**. This is reflected in a wide range of metaphorical expressions such as *"on top of the world"*, *"floating with joy"*, and *"filled with light"*. These expressions correspond to underlying conceptual metaphors including *HAPPINESS IS UP*, *HAPPINESS IS LIGHT*, and *HAPPINESS IS MOTION*, which are grounded in embodied human experience. Within this framework, happiness is represented as dynamic, expressive, and closely associated with personal fulfillment, romantic realization, and emotional intensity (Evans, 2009).

In contrast, the Uzbek conceptualization of *happiness*, expressed through lexical units such as *baxt* and *saodat*, reveals a **more balanced, socially embedded, and value-oriented interpretation**. Linguistic expressions such as *"baxtli hayot kechirmoq"*, *"ko'ngil xotirjam bo'ldi"*, and *"ko'ngil joyiga tushdi"* indicate that happiness is perceived as a **state of stability, inner peace, and emotional equilibrium**. Unlike the English tendency toward heightened emotional expression, Uzbek discourse emphasizes

moderation, continuity, and harmony within social and moral frameworks.

Secondly, the results show that the conceptualization of the *heart* differs significantly in terms of semantic structure and cultural interpretation. In English, the term *heart* functions as a **unified metaphorical center of emotional experience**, encompassing love, affection, vulnerability, and emotional suffering. Expressions such as “*broken heart*”, “*give one’s heart*”, and “*heart full of joy*” illustrate conceptual metaphors such as *THE HEART IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS* and *EMOTIONAL PAIN IS PHYSICAL DAMAGE*. These patterns highlight the tendency in English to consolidate diverse emotional states within a single conceptual domain.

By contrast, the Uzbek language demonstrates a **more differentiated conceptual system**, represented through the lexical units *yurak* and *ko’ngil*. The term *yurak* is primarily associated with **courage, strength, and emotional resilience**, as reflected in expressions such as “*yurakli inson*” and “*yuragi ezildi*”. Meanwhile, *ko’ngil* denotes **inner emotional states, spiritual sensitivity, and moral perception**, as seen in expressions like “*ko’ngli nozik*” and “*ko’nglini olmoq*”. This distinction indicates a more nuanced representation of inner experience, where emotional, moral, and psychological dimensions are linguistically differentiated (Sharifian, 2011).

At the same time, the analysis identifies notable similarities between the two languages. Both English and Uzbek employ metaphorical models based on **fullness, warmth, and internal containment** to express positive emotional states. For instance, English expressions such as “*a heart full of joy*” and Uzbek equivalents like “*ko’ngli to’lmoq*” demonstrate a shared embodied conceptual basis. These similarities confirm the presence of universal cognitive patterns in the structuring of emotional concepts (Kövecses, 2010).

Discussion

The results of the present study provide strong support for the theoretical assumptions of cognitive linguistics, particularly the Conceptual Metaphor Theory developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. According to this framework, abstract concepts such as emotions are structured through metaphorical mappings grounded in bodily experience, which explains the cross-linguistic similarities observed in the use of metaphors related to spatial orientation, containment, and physical sensation.

The shared metaphorical patterns identified in both English and Uzbek, including the association of happiness with elevation, light, and fullness, indicate the existence of a **universal embodied cognitive foundation**. These patterns arise from common human experiences, such as physical movement, sensory perception, and emotional responses, which shape the way individuals conceptualize abstract phenomena (Langacker, 2008).

However, the differences revealed in the analysis underscore the significant role of **cultural context in shaping linguocognitive representations**. In English literary discourse, particularly in the works of Judith McNaught, happiness is primarily constructed as an **individualized and emotionally intense experience**, often linked to romantic fulfillment and personal achievement. This reflects broader cultural values associated with individualism, emotional expressiveness, and the prioritization of personal satisfaction.

In contrast, Uzbek conceptualizations of happiness emphasize **collective well-being, social harmony, and moral balance**. The representation of happiness as calmness and stability suggests a cultural orientation toward equilibrium and continuity rather than emotional intensity. This distinction reflects the importance of social relationships, family structures, and ethical values within Uzbek cultural frameworks (Taylor, 2002).

Furthermore, the differentiation between *yurak* and *ko'ngil* in Uzbek highlights a **more complex and layered conceptualization of the inner world**. Unlike English, which tends to unify emotional, moral, and psychological experiences under the single concept of *heart*, Uzbek distinguishes between physical-emotional strength (*yurak*) and spiritual-emotional sensitivity (*ko'ngil*). This indicates a higher degree of semantic specificity and reflects a cultural tendency to categorize inner experiences more precisely.

The observed differences also demonstrate that linguistic expressions of emotion are not merely reflections of internal states but are shaped by **culturally conditioned models of understanding, evaluation, and communication**. While English discourse often encourages open emotional expression and intensity, Uzbek

discourse tends to value restraint, balance, and interpersonal sensitivity.

Overall, the study confirms that language serves as a dynamic interface between cognition and culture, where universal cognitive mechanisms interact with culturally specific meanings. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of cross-cultural semantics and highlight the importance of considering both cognitive and cultural dimensions in linguistic analysis.

In practical terms, these results have important implications for **translation studies, intercultural communication, and foreign language teaching**, as they demonstrate that accurate interpretation of emotional concepts requires not only lexical equivalence but also an awareness of underlying conceptual and cultural frameworks.

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