

## Motivational bases of grammatical categories within the framework of cognitive grammar

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**Annotatsiya:** This article explores the motivational foundations of grammatical categories from the perspective of cognitive grammar. Cognitive grammar treats grammar not as an autonomous system but as an integral part of human cognition, reflecting how people conceptualize the world. The study focuses on how categories such as tense, aspect, mood, number, and case are semantically motivated and grounded in cognitive experience. The analysis reveals that grammatical structures are not arbitrary but are based on metaphorical and conceptual patterns that correspond to our perception, attention, and experience. Examples from English and Uzbek languages are used to illustrate how similar grammatical categories may arise from different motivational schemas. The paper highlights the role of conceptual metaphors and image schemas in forming grammatical meanings, offering insights for linguistic theory and language teaching. This cognitive approach enables a deeper understanding of the links between meaning and form in grammar, ultimately enhancing both theoretical linguistics and applied language studies.

**Keywords:** Cognitive grammar, grammatical categories, motivation, conceptual metaphors, image schemas, language and cognition, semantic basis, English and Uzbek languages

## Мотивационные основы грамматических категорий в рамках когнитивной грамматики

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**Аннотация:** В данной статье рассматриваются мотивационные основы грамматических категорий в рамках когнитивной грамматики. Когнитивный подход рассматривает грамматику не как автономную систему, а как неотъемлемую часть человеческого мышления, отражающую, как люди концептуализируют мир. Исследование сосредоточено на таких категориях, как время, вид, наклонение, число и падеж, и показывает, что они семантически мотивированы и основаны на когнитивном опыте. Анализ показывает, что грамматические структуры не являются случайными, а базируются на метафорических и концептуальных моделях, связанных с восприятием и опытом. Примеры из английского и узбекского языков иллюстрируют, как одни и те же категории могут

формироваться по разным мотивационным схемам. Особое внимание уделяется роли концептуальных метафор и образных схем в формировании грамматических значений.

**Ключевые слова:** Когнитивная грамматика, Грамматические категории, Мотивация, Концептуальные метафоры, Образные схемы, Язык и мышление, Семантическая основа, Английский и узбекский языки

### **Kognitiv grammatika doirasida grammatik kategoriyalarning motivatsion asoslari**

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**Annotatsiya:** Ushbu maqola kognitiv grammatika doirasida grammatik kategoriyalarning motivatsion asoslarini tahlil qiladi. Kognitiv yondashuv grammatikani mustaqil tizim emas, balki inson tafakkurining ajralmas qismi sifatida ko'radi va bu orqali odamlar dunyoni qanday tasavvur qilishlarini aks ettiradi. Tadqiqot davomida zamon, holat, nisbat, son va kelishik kabi grammatik kategoriyalarning semantik asoslari va ularning kognitiv tajriba bilan bog'liqligi yoritilgan. Tahlil natijalariga ko'ra, grammatik tuzilmalar tasodifiy emas, balki metaforik va tushunchaviy naqshlarga asoslangan. Ingliz va o'zbek tillaridan olingan misollar orqali bir xil kategoriyalar turli motivatsion sxemalarga ko'ra shakllanishi ko'rsatilgan. Maqolada tushuncha metaforalari va tasviriy sxemalarning grammatik ma'nolarni shakllantirishdagi o'rni ochib beriladi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Kognitiv grammatika, Grammatik kategoriyalar, Motivatsiya, Tushuncha metaforalari, Tasviriy sxemalar, Til va tafakkur, Semantik asos, Ingliz va o'zbek tili

**Introduction.** Cognitive grammar is a theory in linguistics that focuses on the relationship between language and the human mind. Its scope encompasses the understanding of grammar as a manifestation of conceptual structures, illustrating how linguistic forms reflect mental processes. Unlike traditional grammar, which often views rules as separate from meaning, cognitive grammar integrates syntax and semantics, highlighting the ways in which language mirrors our cognitive abilities and experiences. Studying the motivational bases of grammatical categories is crucial because it uncovers the underlying reasons why specific grammatical structures exist and evolve. This exploration can reveal insights into human thought patterns, cultural influences, and cognitive processes that shape linguistic expression. Understanding these motivations can enhance language teaching, translation, and comparative linguistic analysis, enriching our comprehension of diverse languages. The article aims to explore the motivational bases of grammatical categories, particularly focusing on how these bases influence language structure and use. By examining the grammatical frameworks of English and Uzbek, this study will provide a comparative analysis that highlights both the universal and language-specific aspects of cognitive grammar, ultimately enriching our understanding of linguistic diversity and cognitive frameworks across cultures.

**Main body.** Cognitive grammar is a branch of cognitive linguistics that views language as an integral part of human cognition rather than a self-contained, autonomous system. One of its pioneers, Ronald Langacker, proposes that grammar is not a separate structural mechanism but rather an extension of meaning and usage. In cognitive grammar, all grammatical structures are meaningful; they are seen as symbolic units, where form and meaning are inseparably linked. This approach

opposes traditional formal grammar, which tends to isolate grammar as a rule-governed domain of syntactic operations largely independent from meaning. Where traditional grammar often treats syntax and morphology as abstract systems with arbitrary signs, cognitive grammar insists that even the smallest grammatical element – such as a tense marker or a case suffix – has a conceptual grounding. Language, in this view, reflects patterns of human experience and perception (Langacker, 2011).

Langacker's theory is grounded in the idea that linguistic knowledge consists of a vast inventory of symbolic units. These units range from morphemes to complex constructions and are inherently meaningful. Cognitive grammar also emphasizes the importance of conceptualization and construal – how speakers choose to present information. For instance, the choice between “She is singing” and “She sings” reflects not only grammatical tense but also the speaker's subjective experience of the action. This connection between grammar and perception is at the heart of cognitive approaches (Langacker, 2011).

Motivation in language refers to the non-arbitrary relationships between form and meaning. In cognitive linguistics, motivation is typically categorized as semantic (relating to meaning), conceptual (based on thought structures), or metaphorical (rooted in conceptual metaphors like TIME IS SPACE or STATES ARE LOCATIONS). These motivations guide how grammatical forms emerge and are used. For example, the use of spatial prepositions like “in” or “on” in abstract expressions (“in love,” “on duty”) reveals metaphorical motivation – drawing from concrete spatial experience to express abstract states. Similarly, tense and aspect in language are motivated by how humans perceive and process time. These elements are not randomly assigned but are based on embodied experience and cognitive schemas.

Understanding these motivations is essential because they reveal how grammar is shaped by human cognition, perception, and culture. Rather than memorizing rules in isolation, language users develop an intuitive grasp of grammar through repeated cognitive experiences. This perspective not only deepens our theoretical understanding of grammar but also offers practical advantages for language learning and teaching, as it ties abstract grammatical forms to meaningful, real-world experiences.

Grammatical categories such as tense, aspect, mood, modality, number, and case are not arbitrary constructs but are deeply rooted in human cognitive experience. Cognitive grammar posits that these categories emerge from the way people perceive and interact with the world, and they are shaped by embodied experience and mental construals. Tense and aspect, for instance, are grounded in the human conceptualization of time and event structure. Tense locates an event in relation to a reference point – often the moment of speaking – whereas aspect conveys the internal temporal structure of the event, such as whether it is ongoing, completed, habitual, or repetitive. In English, the contrast between “She is walking” and “She walked” reflects not only temporal placement but also how the speaker construes the event. Uzbek, similarly, uses suffixes like *-yapti* (present continuous) and *-di* (past) to indicate different temporal and aspectual views. These forms are motivated by how speakers mentally segment experiences in time, with continuous aspect suggesting an ongoing, unbounded event, and past tense indicating a completed, bounded action.

Mood and modality also reflect cognitive construals, specifically how speakers present their attitudes toward the likelihood, necessity, or desirability of an action or event. These grammatical tools allow language users to express various degrees of certainty, obligation, permission, and possibility. In English, modal verbs such as “must,” “can,” “might,” and “should” encode the speaker's stance and intentions. These are conceptually grounded in human judgment, evaluation, and social interaction. For instance, saying “You must leave” implies a high degree of necessity or obligation, likely stemming from social norms or authority. Uzbek also employs mood and modality markers, such as *kerak* (need/must) or the optative *-aylik* (let's...), which reflect cognitive evaluations of situations. These structures are not random; they mirror how humans categorize possibilities and expectations based on contextual and cultural knowledge.

The categories of number and case are similarly motivated by how individuals perceive and distinguish between entities and their roles in events. Number reflects the cognitive distinction between singularity and plurality – a fundamental concept rooted in visual and experiential perception. The presence of plural markers like English “-s” or Uzbek “-lar” serves to highlight more than one instance of a noun, corresponding to the basic human ability to count and categorize. Case systems, on the other hand, encode grammatical relations and participant roles in a sentence. These are guided by image schemas such as CONTAINER (for locative cases), PATH (for directional cases), and FORCE (for agentive roles). For example, the accusative case is frequently used to indicate the object of a verb, which is cognitively interpreted as the “goal” or “endpoint” of an activity. In Uzbek, the suffix -ni marks the definite direct object, aligning with how attention and focus are directed toward specific entities in discourse. The use of case also reflects the speaker’s perspective in structuring events, with different languages selecting and emphasizing different cognitive aspects of interaction.

Through the lens of cognitive grammar, grammatical categories are seen as meaningful, conceptual structures that correspond to how humans experience the world. They are not rigid, formal mechanisms but dynamic reflections of perception, interaction, and embodiment. Understanding the cognitive motivation behind these categories allows for a more nuanced and human-centered approach to grammar, bridging the gap between abstract form and experiential meaning.

Conceptual metaphors and image schemas play a vital role in shaping grammatical categories, providing the cognitive and experiential grounding for linguistic forms. In cognitive grammar, metaphor is not merely a rhetorical device, but a fundamental mechanism of thought through which abstract concepts are understood in terms of more concrete, embodied experiences. One of the most well-documented conceptual metaphors is TIME IS SPACE, where temporal relations are expressed using spatial terms. For example, in English we say “looking forward to the future” or “leaving the past behind,” framing time as a physical path or journey. This metaphorical mapping influences grammar, particularly in tense and aspect. The grammatical past is often conceptualized as being “behind” the speaker, and the future as “ahead,” guiding both syntactic constructions and adverbial expressions.

Image schemas are recurring, dynamic patterns of embodied experience that structure our understanding of more abstract domains. They form the basis for many grammatical structures by providing intuitive, bodily-grounded models. For instance, the PATH schema, derived from the experience of moving from one point to another, underlies constructions involving motion, direction, and change of state. Sentences like “She went into a rage” or “He came to a realization” use the language of physical motion to represent emotional or cognitive changes. In Uzbek, directional suffixes like -ga, -dan also reflect movement along a path, not just in physical space but in conceptual space as well, such as *maktabga bordi* (he went to school), with the school metaphorically functioning as a goal or endpoint.

The CONTAINER schema also plays a significant role in grammar. It is based on the basic human experience of being inside or outside of physical boundaries. Expressions such as “in trouble,” “out of luck,” or “within reach” reflect this schema. Grammatical elements like prepositions, cases, and aspectual markers often depend on the CONTAINER schema to convey notions of inclusion, exclusion, or boundedness. For example, perfective aspect in many languages implies a bounded event – one that is “contained” in time – while the imperfective reflects an ongoing, unbounded event.

Another important schema is FORCE, which is rooted in the physical experience of exerting and resisting force. It underlies causative constructions and modality. For instance, in sentences like “He made her cry” or “You must obey,” the force dynamics between participants are linguistically encoded. In Uzbek, causative verb forms like -dir (as in *o‘qitdi* – “he made [someone] study”) represent a direct application of this schema. Modality markers expressing necessity, permission, or ability also derive from FORCE interactions – “must” implies a compelling force, “can” an enabling condition.

Altogether, these conceptual metaphors and image schemas show that grammar is not a disconnected system of arbitrary rules, but a reflection of deeply rooted cognitive structures and embodied experiences. Understanding how metaphor and schema shape grammar provides insights not only into the structure of language but also into how people make sense of abstract and complex experiences through linguistic expression.

A comparative analysis of English and Uzbek through the lens of cognitive grammar reveals both shared motivations and distinct differences shaped by cultural and linguistic contexts. Both languages exhibit cognitive motivations for grammatical categories such as tense, aspect, modality, number, and case, but the ways these categories are expressed and prioritized often reflect deeper conceptual and cultural differences.

In terms of tense and aspect, both English and Uzbek conceptualize time based on the metaphor TIME IS SPACE, using grammatical forms to indicate the location of events in time. English uses auxiliary constructions like "is walking" (present progressive) and "had walked" (past perfect) to express temporal nuances. Uzbek, while also distinguishing present, past, and future, tends to rely more heavily on suffixation, such as *-yapti* (present continuous) or *-di* (simple past). However, Uzbek often conveys aspect more implicitly, relying on context and lexical aspect of verbs, whereas English tends to be more grammatically explicit. This has implications for translation – rendering nuanced English tenses into Uzbek may require contextual amplification or paraphrasing (Heine, 1997).

Modality and mood also demonstrate interesting contrasts. In English, modality is primarily expressed through auxiliary verbs like "can," "must," or "might," which are relatively fixed in structure. Uzbek uses a combination of modal expressions (e.g., *kerak* for necessity) and mood suffixes (e.g., *-sin*, *-aylik*) to express obligation, permission, or possibility. These expressions often reflect Uzbek's rich use of politeness and indirectness, rooted in cultural norms. For instance, Uzbek might prefer indirect modal expressions to soften commands or obligations, which can be more direct in English. This reflects a broader cultural orientation toward hierarchy and deference, influencing how modal constructions are cognitively framed and pragmatically used. With number and case, both languages show cognitive grounding in basic perceptual schemas such as singular vs. plural and agent vs. patient roles. English marks plural with "-s" and uses a fixed word order to indicate grammatical roles. Uzbek, in contrast, employs a highly inflectional case system, marking nouns with suffixes like *-ni* (accusative), *-da* (locative), or *-dan* (ablative), which are closely tied to image schemas such as PATH and CONTAINER. This gives Uzbek more syntactic flexibility but requires learners to internalize complex form-function mappings that are less overt in English.

Cultural influences are also evident in idiomatic constructions, honorifics, and metaphorical extensions. Uzbek grammar reflects social roles and relationships, such as age or formality, which are grammatically encoded more subtly or not at all in English. For example, verb endings and modal forms in Uzbek often align with sociocultural norms of respect and collectivity, unlike the more individual-oriented structure of English. The implications for translation and second language teaching are significant. Translators must go beyond lexical equivalence and consider the cognitive and cultural motivations underlying grammatical structures. In teaching, educators should emphasize meaning-based instruction that explains not just how forms work, but why they are used, drawing attention to the cognitive metaphors and schemas behind them. For Uzbek speakers learning English, it may help to highlight the explicitness of English tenses and modals. For English speakers learning Uzbek, instruction should focus on the rich morphology and context-dependent nature of grammatical meaning. A cognitive approach bridges these differences by grounding abstract forms in universal experiences and culturally specific conceptualizations.

The motivational approach in teaching grammar, rooted in cognitive grammar, offers significant benefits for language learning and linguistic theory. One of the key advantages of this approach is that it aligns language instruction with how learners naturally acquire language. By emphasizing the connections between forms and the meanings they convey, this method helps students grasp not only the rules of grammar but also the conceptual frameworks underlying them.

This understanding fosters a more intuitive use of language, encouraging learners to apply grammatical structures in context rather than through rote memorization. When grammar is taught through a cognitive lens, students can see the relational aspects of language more clearly. For example, instead of memorizing verb conjugations in isolation, learners can explore how different tenses encode temporal relationships and convey nuances of meaning related to time, aspect, and modality. This contextualization helps students make sense of why language is structured the way it is and empowers them to create more complex sentences that reflect their intended meanings (Broccias, 2008).

Moreover, this cognitive approach can significantly enhance students' engagement and motivation. When learners understand the rationale behind grammatical structures, they are more likely to find relevance in what they are studying. This can lead to increased curiosity and a proactive attitude towards language learning, as students become eager to explore how different languages express similar meanings through varied grammatical systems.

Furthermore, this perspective can help learners develop their critical thinking abilities. By analyzing the motivations behind grammatical choices, students can learn to evaluate language use critically, considering how different grammatical forms serve various communicative purposes. This analytical skill is transferable, enriching their capabilities in academic writing and other forms of communication. From a linguistic theory standpoint, a cognitive approach supports the idea that language is not merely a set of arbitrary rules but is deeply intertwined with human thought and experience. It challenges traditional views that separate syntax from semantics and opens avenues for interdisciplinary research, bridging linguistics, psychology, and cognitive science. This holistic understanding fosters a more comprehensive framework within which language is studied, prompting researchers to look at language as a dynamic system that evolves in response to human cognition and social interaction (Langacker, 1986).

Ultimately, recognizing the motivational bases of grammatical categories enriches both teaching practices and theoretical explorations of language. By grounding language instruction in real cognitive processes, educators can cultivate a learning environment that not only emphasizes grammatical accuracy but also values the reasons behind language choices. This shift in focus can lead to more meaningful language experiences for students, equipping them with the tools to communicate effectively and creatively in the target language. As students become more aware of the intricate connections between form and meaning, they position themselves as active participants in their language development, ultimately enhancing their proficiency and confidence in using language. This approach reaffirms the view of language as a living, evolving entity that reflects the complexities of human thought, offering deeper insights into both the nature of language itself and the processes through which it is learned and taught.

**Conclusion:** A comparative analysis of English and Uzbek grammatical categories through the lens of cognitive grammar reveals both shared and distinct motivations shaped by cultural and cognitive factors. While both languages rely on conceptual metaphors such as TIME IS SPACE to structure tense and aspect, they differ in how these concepts are grammatically encoded, with English focusing on auxiliary verbs and Uzbek utilizing suffixes and context. Similarly, while both languages use modality to express necessity, possibility, and obligation, the forms of expression reflect different cultural nuances, such as English's directness compared to Uzbek's more indirect and polite constructions. The examination of number and case also highlights the cognitive grounding of these categories in both languages, with English relying on plural markers and word order, and Uzbek using a rich case system that provides greater syntactic flexibility. The influence of culture is further reflected in the unique grammatical forms used to convey respect and formality in Uzbek, emphasizing social roles and relationships more explicitly than in English. These insights have important implications for translation and second language teaching. Understanding the cognitive and cultural motivations behind grammatical structures can help learners navigate the complexities of

language acquisition and provide translators with the tools to convey meaning more accurately across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

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