

## Cognitive-Linguistic Modelling of the Homeland Concept Based on Conceptual Integration Theory

ODINA RASULJONOVNA ISMAILOVA  
*Namangan State University, Uzbekistan*

### ABSTRACT

*This article investigates the cognitive modelling of the “homeland concept” in Eshqobil Shukur's poetry through the framework of Conceptual Integration Theory (CIT), one of the contemporary approaches in cognitive linguistics and cognitive poetics. Although the homeland concept has been examined from linguoconceptological, linguocultural, and cognitive perspectives in numerous studies within Uzbek linguistics, its formation in poetic discourse through the system of mental spaces and the mechanisms of conceptual integration has not yet been sufficiently explored. The present study aims to fill this research gap.*

*The objective of the study is to identify the Input Spaces, Generic Space, and Blended Space involved in the construction of the homeland concept in Eshqobil Shukur's poems ‘Mengim Momoning Yo'qlovi’ (‘My Grandmother's Lament’), ‘Boyqaro. 1501’, ‘Bolalikdagi Uy’ (‘The House of Childhood’), ‘Men Ko'rgan Bir Tarix Kitobi’ (Butefos) (‘A History Book I Have Seen (Butefos)’), and ‘Munofiq’ (‘The Hypocrite’), as well as to reveal the new poetic meanings generated through their conceptual integration and to explain the cognitive functions of conceptual metaphors and symbolic images.*

*The research employs the methods of conceptual integration analysis, linguoconceptual analysis, cognitive–semantic analysis, comparative analysis, and interpretative analysis. The findings demonstrate that, in Eshqobil Shukur's poetic worldview, the “homeland concept” is not represented*

*as a mere collection of lexical units but as a complex cognitive structure emerging from the conceptual integration of mental spaces that embody historical memory, personal memory, nature, and national-spiritual values. Furthermore, the study establishes that, within poetic discourse, the homeland is conceptualised not as a geographical territory but as a multilayered artistic concept encompassing national identity, historical memory, spiritual belonging, and axiological values.*

*The findings expand the methodological potential of Conceptual Integration Theory for the cognitive analysis of Uzbek poetic texts and propose a new scholarly approach to interpreting the individual conceptual worldview reflected in Eshqobil Shukur's poetry. The results are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to further research in cognitive poetics, linguoconceptology, and the study of poetic discourse.*

**Keywords:** Homeland concept; Conceptual Integration Theory; cognitive poetics; cognitive linguistics; mental space; Input Space; Generic Space; Blended Space; historical memory; Eshqobil Shukur.

## INTRODUCTION

Since the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the anthropocentric paradigm has emerged as one of the leading scientific approaches in world linguistics, directing particular attention to the study of language in close connection with its user – the human being, human cognition, national mentality, and culture. Within this paradigm, language has come to be regarded not merely as a means of communication but also as a complex cognitive system that enables individuals to perceive, process, and verbally represent knowledge. Consequently, such anthropocentric disciplines as pragmalinguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, cognitive linguistics, and linguoculturology have developed, opening broad opportunities for investigating language through the prism of the human factor.

One of the most significant branches of the anthropocentric paradigm is cognitive poetics, which examines literary texts as

products of the author's cognitive activity and as cognitive models reconstructed in the reader's mind. Within this framework, particular attention is devoted to the cognitive strategies, conceptual structures, and their linguistic representations that participate in the creation and interpretation of poetic discourse. Accordingly, cognitive poetics interprets a poetic text as the linguistic manifestation of the author's individual conceptual worldview and aesthetic cognition.

The development of cognitive linguistics has substantially increased scholarly interest in identifying the conceptual structures underlying linguistic units. In particular, studies devoted to the role of metaphor in human cognition and to its conceptual nature have considerably strengthened the theoretical foundations of cognitive poetics. Scholars such as M. Osborn, W. von Humboldt, J. Jaynes, E. Cassirer, N. F. Alefirenko, G. Lakoff, and M. Johnson [1: 125] have interpreted metaphor not merely as a stylistic device but also as a fundamental cognitive mechanism through which human beings perceive reality and conceptualise experience. As J. Jaynes argues, abstract concepts are formed through concrete metaphors because, when attempting to comprehend unfamiliar or abstract phenomena, people naturally rely on familiar images grounded in their sensory experience [5: 35]. Therefore, metaphor should be regarded as one of the principal cognitive mechanisms responsible for generating new knowledge and constructing conceptual models.

This theoretical perspective has also shaped the modern interpretation of the notion of concept. Within cognitive linguistics, a concept is understood not as the simple semantic meaning of a linguistic unit but as a mental entity that incorporates an individual's and a community's experience, cultural memory, and ethnocultural values. The dependence of concepts upon national and cultural experience has been particularly extensively investigated in Russian linguistics. In this regard, the well-known definition proposed by Yu. S. Stepanov – "A concept is the fundamental unit of culture in human consciousness" [2: 824] – has become widely recognised. According to Shulyatikov, a concept is a collective cognitive unit

characterised by linguistic expression, ethnocultural specificity, and an orientation towards higher spiritual values [3: 103].

The rapid development of cognitive linguistics and linguoconceptology in Uzbek linguistics has considerably increased the number of studies devoted to the national-cultural characteristics of concepts, their verbalisation, and their representation in literary discourse. In particular, such concepts as “homeland,” “nation,” “people,” and “honour” have been examined from linguocognitive and linguocultural perspectives. Nevertheless, the formation of historical and cultural concepts in poetic discourse through the system of mental spaces, the cognitive relationships among Input Spaces, Generic Space, and Blended Space, and the mechanisms of their conceptual integration have not yet been sufficiently explored as an independent object of research. Specifically, no comprehensive study has been devoted to the cognitive modelling of historical and cultural concepts in Eshqobil Shukur's poetry based on Conceptual Integration Theory. This research gap determines both the relevance and the scholarly necessity of the present study.

The analysis of poetic texts constitutes one of the major directions of contemporary linguistic research, since poetic discourse provides valuable material for investigating the language, style, and expressive means of literary works [6: 34]. Consequently, examining the mechanisms through which concepts are constructed in poetic discourse is essential for revealing the author's conceptual thinking. Eshqobil Shukur's poetry is distinguished by its multilayered artistic representation of historical and cultural concepts such as historical memory, national identity, ancestral heritage, homeland, people, and spiritual values. Within the poet's conceptual universe, these concepts do not function as isolated lexical units; rather, they generate poetic meaning through the interaction of interconnected mental spaces. Therefore, the present study analyses Eshqobil Shukur's poems ‘Mengim Momoning Yo'qlovi’ (‘My Grandmother's Lament’), ‘Boyqaro. 1501’, ‘Bolalikdagi Uy’ (‘The House of Childhood’), ‘Men Ko'rgan Bir Tarix Kitobi (Butefos)’ (‘A History Book I Have Seen

(Butefos’), and ‘Munofiq’ (‘The Hypocrite’), within the framework of Conceptual Integration Theory in order to reveal the cognitive mechanisms underlying the modelling of the concept.

The primary objective of this study is to identify the cognitive mechanisms through which historical and cultural concepts – particularly the homeland concept – are modelled in Eshqobil Shukur’s poetry on the basis of Conceptual Integration Theory. More specifically, the research aims to elucidate the relationships among the Input Spaces, Generic Space, and Blended Space involved in the construction of meaning in poetic discourse and to explain the emergence of new poetic–cognitive meanings resulting from their conceptual integration. Drawing upon selected poems by Eshqobil Shukur, the study analyses the integration of historical memory, personal experience, nature, and national – spiritual values in the conceptualisation of the homeland, thereby reconstructing the poet’s individual conceptual worldview and the cognitive model of his poetic thinking.

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

According to the traditional Conceptual Metaphor Theory, conceptual meaning in human cognition is constructed through conceptual projection between the Source Domain and the Target Domain. Developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, this model has served as a fundamental theoretical framework for explaining the principal cognitive mechanisms underlying metaphorical thought. However, its explanatory potential becomes limited when applied to poetic discourse, where historical memory, cultural experience, individual emotions, and aesthetic imagery interact simultaneously to produce complex conceptual meanings. Consequently, contemporary cognitive poetics widely employs Conceptual Integration Theory (CIT) as a methodological framework for explaining such multilayered mental processes.

Conceptual Integration Theory, developed by Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner during the 1990s, explains meaning construction through dynamic cognitive interactions among

multiple mental spaces. A mental space is defined as a temporary conceptual structure representing a particular situation, experience, or domain of knowledge, which interacts with other mental spaces during cognitive processing. According to the theory, conceptual integration consists of at least four principal components. Input Spaces contain the conceptual knowledge and experiential elements related to a given concept. The Generic Space represents the abstract cognitive structure shared by the input spaces, whereas the Blended Space generates new conceptual meaning through the selective integration of elements derived from the input spaces, producing emergent structures that did not previously exist [4: 183-204]. Consequently, new aesthetic and cognitive meanings in poetic discourse are not created through the simple accumulation of individual concepts but emerge as products of the conceptual integration of multiple mental spaces.

During the blending process, it is not complete concepts that are integrated but rather selected cognitive elements extracted from them [7: 5-13]. These elements are interconnected, enriched by the individual's encyclopaedic knowledge and cultural experience, and further elaborated until they generate novel conceptual meanings. As these stages are systematically completed, new poetic meanings emerge that are absent from the original input spaces. Therefore, Conceptual Integration Theory provides an effective methodological framework for explaining the multilayered semantic and cognitive organisation of poetic discourse.

In the present study, Conceptual Integration Theory was adopted as the principal methodological approach. The analysis combined linguoconceptual, cognitive-semantic, contextual, and interpretative methods. In the initial stage, the lexical, symbolic, historical, and cultural units that verbalise the homeland concept in the selected poems by Eshqobil Shukur were identified. Subsequently, the Input Spaces involved in the construction of this concept were distinguished, and their common cognitive foundation was reconstructed through the Generic Space. The resulting Blended Space, emerging from the interaction and integration of the mental spaces, was then described, allowing the

conceptual model of each poetic text to be reconstructed. Finally, the conceptual models identified in the individual poems were subjected to comparative analysis, on the basis of which a comprehensive cognitive model of the homeland concept in Eshqobil Shukur's poetic worldview was developed.

## RESULTS

### *Cognitive analysis of Eshqobil Shukur's poem 'Mengim Momoning Yo'qlovi' ('My Grandmother's Lament')*

In Eshqobil Shukur's poetry, the homeland concept is generally constructed not through the direct nomination of a geographical territory but through the interaction of historical memory, human suffering, nostalgia, and spiritual belonging. In 'Mengim Momoning Yo'qlovi' ('My Grandmother's Lament'), the poet does not aim merely to recount the tragic events of political repression in chronological order; rather, he seeks to poetically model how the homeland continues to exist within the consciousness of a person who has been separated from the native land through exile. Consequently, the poem's conceptual structure is generated through the integration of historical collective memory and individual biographical experience.

The background of the poem is also essential for understanding its cognitive meaning. In the television programme *Uyga Qaytib* ("Returning Home"), Eshqobil Shukur recalls that during his childhood he frequently spoke with elderly women who had survived political repression and exile. He emphasises that their life stories, lamentations, and traditional folk worldview left a profound impression on his creative memory. Therefore, the poem is not merely the product of the poet's imagination but represents a poetic reconstruction of the psychological traces preserved in human memory from historical reality.

From its opening lines, the poem brings historical tragedy and personal memory together within a single conceptual space:

The images of Boymoqli are frozen in your eyes,  
Within the shroud lies a lifeless body—and a living longing. [8: 44]

These poetic lines simultaneously activate two principal mental spaces. The lexical units like “shroud,” “lifeless body,” and “living longing” evoke collective historical knowledge associated with political repression, exile, separation, and the tragic fate of those who died far from their homeland, thereby forming Input Space 1, the mental space of historical exile. In contrast, the toponym Boymoqli activates the lyrical persona's personal memories associated with the native village, childhood, parents, ancestors, and genealogical identity, thus constituting Input Space 2, the mental space of the personal homeland.

Within the poem, Boymoqli does not function merely as a geographical name. Once the toponym is introduced, it immediately activates in the lyrical subject's consciousness the associative chain village – childhood – parents – ancestors – lineage – homeland. Consequently, Boymoqli is transformed from the designation of a physical location into a conceptual marker representing personal origin and national identity. Likewise, the expression “the images are frozen in your eyes” suggests that this place exists not as an ordinary memory but as an enduring psychological image permanently preserved in consciousness despite the passage of time.

The oxymoronic expression “living longing” constitutes the poem's first conceptual node. The juxtaposition of a “lifeless body” with a “living longing” conveys that, although biological life has ended, the desire to return to the homeland and the longing for one's native land continue to exist as an enduring spiritual reality. Thus, while exile may physically separate an individual from the homeland, it cannot erase the memory of, or the emotional attachment to, the native land. At this point, historical tragedy merges with individual nostalgia, giving rise to the emergent conceptual meaning that “the homeland lives within the human heart.”

In the subsequent lines, the image of the homeland is further enriched through representations of nature:

Upon the summit of the Boysun Mountains,  
Its snow glitters brightly;  
From the ancient cliffs,  
Millennial waters continue to flow.

In this quatrain, the lexical units Boysun, mountains, cliffs, snow, and water perform a function that extends far beyond the creation of a landscape description. In particular, the expression "millennial waters" establishes a conceptual connection between nature, historical continuity, and the passage of time. Human life is transient and generations inevitably change, yet, like the waters flowing continuously from the cliffs, national memory endures across centuries. Consequently, within the lyrical subject's conceptual world, Boysun is reconstructed not merely as a remembered landscape but as a symbolic space inhabited by ancestors – a place preserving historical continuity and awakening genealogical memory.

These two mental spaces – the space of historical exile and the space of the personal homeland – complement one another. The separation, death, and unfulfilled longing embodied in the first mental space merge with the memories of Boymoqli, Boysun, the native village, and the ancestors contained in the second. As a result, although the lyrical persona remains physically distant from the native land, the images of the homeland, its mountains, and its flowing waters are continuously reactivated within his cognitive world. Through this process of conceptual integration, the homeland gradually ceases to function as an external geographical location and instead becomes an inner spiritual reality that is constantly reconstructed through memory.

The cognitive transformation reaches its culmination in the following lines:

My grave is within my own heart,  
For within my heart there is the Homeland.  
May the shirt I wore  
From my native village become my shroud.

In these lines, the conventional relationship between human beings and space is fundamentally reversed. Traditionally, a person lives in the homeland; in Eshqobil Shukur's poetic model, however, the "homeland" lives within the human heart. In the line "within my heart there is the homeland," geographical space

is transformed into spiritual space, and the “homeland” emerges as an inner spiritual entity constituting the lyrical persona's personal identity. Consequently, the “homeland” is no longer conceived as a place left behind or to which one may eventually return; rather, it becomes a spiritual value that accompanies the individual throughout life and remains beyond the reach of death itself.

The line "My grave is within my own heart" intensifies this conceptual transformation. A grave is conventionally understood as the final physical destination of human existence. By associating the grave with the heart, however, the poet juxtaposes biological death with spiritual continuity. The displacement of the grave into the heart symbolises the tragic contrast between a body that may remain buried in a foreign land and a soul whose spiritual home continues to be the homeland. Thus, although the lyrical persona may be physically buried elsewhere, his true spiritual destination remains inseparably connected with the native land.

In the lines "May the shirt I wore from my native village become my shroud," the spiritual bond with the homeland is further materialised through a tangible object. The shirt functions not merely as an ordinary garment but as a symbolic object preserving the memory and traces of the native village. This image activates in the reader's consciousness the associative chain shirt – home – mother – childhood – village – homeland. Although the poem never explicitly mentions maternal affection, the atmosphere of home, childhood memories, and the spirit of the native village become embedded in the symbolic meaning of the shirt. Consequently, the desire for this shirt to serve as the burial shroud expresses the lyrical persona's wish to preserve his connection with the homeland even after death.

Within this section of the poem, Input Space 1, representing historical exile, physical separation, and tragic death, merges with Input Space 2, which comprises Boymoqli, Boysun, the native village, the symbolic shirt, and the heart. The Generic Space is constituted by the universal cognitive model of human attachment to one's birthplace and the continuity of spiritual belonging despite physical separation. During the integration

process, the elements of separation and longing are selected from historical tragedy, whereas the village, nature, the shirt, and the heart are selected from individual memory. Their integration produces an emergent poetic meaning that is absent from either input space independently: the homeland as an inner spiritual space residing permanently within the human heart.

Within the Blended Space, Boymoqli is transformed from a birthplace into a symbol of genealogical identity; Boysun evolves from a natural landscape into a space representing historical continuity and ancestral memory; the shirt becomes a material embodiment of the memory of the homeland rather than an ordinary article of clothing; and the heart is reconceptualised from the centre of emotion into the dwelling place of the homeland itself. Consequently, political repression is presented not merely as a historical event but as a cognitive mechanism through which the inseparable spiritual bond between human beings and the homeland is revealed.

The analysis demonstrates that the following conceptual model of the homeland concept is constructed in 'Mengim Momoning Yo'qlovi':

Historical exile and separation – the memories of Boymoqli and Boysun – the shirt brought from the native village – the Homeland residing within the heart.

Within this model, the homeland is conceptualised not in terms of political territory or geographical boundaries but through the integration of historical memory, personal biography, genealogical identity, and spiritual self-identification. The poem's emergent cognitive meaning lies in the idea that, although exile separates the individual physically from the native land, the homeland continues to exist within consciousness through the remembered images of Boymoqli, the landscapes of Boysun, the symbolic shirt from the native village, and the enduring presence of the heart.

Thus, in 'Mengim Momoning Yo'qlovi', Eshqobil Shukur models the homeland concept through the conceptual sequence historical exile – personal memory – inner spiritual space. Within

this historical-nostalgic model, the homeland is not represented as a lost territory but as a multilayered cognitive construct preserved within the human heart, embodied in material symbols of memory, and ensuring spiritual continuity with one's ancestors.

*Cognitive analysis of Eshqobil Shukur's poem 'Boyqaro. 1501'*

In Eshqobil Shukur's poem 'Boyqaro. 1501', the homeland concept is poetically modelled through historical figures and the memory of statehood. Rather than merely retelling historical events, the poet artistically reconstructs an inner dialogue between historical memory and contemporary national consciousness. Consequently, the images of Husayn Boyqaro, Alisher Navoiy, and Herat are presented not as historical facts but as conceptual entities that construct a multilayered representation of the homeland.

From the opening lines of the poem, historical memory and individual spiritual experience converge within a single conceptual space:

I came to you with longing and restless yearning;  
My fruitless days have torn out my hair.  
Heavy sorrows rise within my mind,  
Navoiy has died within my heart. [8: 406]

In this poetic fragment, Input Space 1 activates historical and cultural knowledge associated with the Timurid period, Husayn Boyqaro, Alisher Navoiy, and Herat. Input Space 2, in contrast, represents the lyrical persona's present psychological condition, the process of constructing national identity, and a profound sense of moral responsibility toward history.

Particularly significant is the line "Navoiy has died within my heart," which constitutes the conceptual centre of the poem. Here, Navoiy is represented not merely as a historical figure but as a conceptual embodiment of national consciousness, Turkic literary heritage, aesthetic refinement, and moral integrity. Consequently, the image of Navoiy becomes integrated with the inner world of the contemporary lyrical persona, ensuring the

continuity of historical memory within present-day national consciousness.

The historical space is further expanded in the following poetic fragment:

I have no words for the sun,  
Nor have I words for the moon.  
Only life grieves for my condition.  
Could Herat, which once released its white birds,  
Ever sink into pitch-black mud?

Within this quatrain, the image of Herat in Input Space 1 represents the scientific, literary, and cultural achievements of the Timurid Renaissance. In Input Space 2, however, the lyrical persona perceives this historical greatness as the standard against which contemporary national consciousness is measured. While the metaphor "Herat, which released its white birds" symbolises an ideal civilisation, the image of "pitch-black mud" signifies historical decline and cultural degeneration. Consequently, Herat is transformed from a geographical location into a conceptual symbol of the nation's spiritual perfection.

The subsequent lines deepen the spiritual relationship between the historical figure and the contemporary individual:

I have come to you with longing, O my Uzbek people;  
Has your poet departed from me in disappointment?  
Would it not be better if a king  
Discovered his people and his identity within the poet's heart?

In this poetic fragment, the image of the historical poet becomes integrated with contemporary national consciousness. The concepts of poet, people, identity, and king interact to express the idea that the spiritual foundation of a state rests not upon political authority but upon the nation's creative intellect and cultural memory. Consequently, a natural conceptual correspondence emerges among Navoiy as the poet, Herat as the spiritual homeland, and Boyqaro as the embodiment of statehood.

As a result, historical memory, the conceptual image of Navoiy, the spiritual space of Herat, and the contemporary lyrical

persona's national identity become integrated within a single conceptual network. Within the Blended Space, the homeland is no longer conceptualised as a historical territory; instead, it is reconstructed as a multilayered cognitive model uniting the nation's spiritual continuity, creative consciousness, and ideals of statehood.

The analysis demonstrates that, in this poem, the homeland concept is constructed through the conceptual sequence: historical memory – the Navoiy concept – national consciousness – ideal statehood.

Thus, 'Boyqaro. 1501' establishes the historical-statehood model of the homeland concept within Eshqobil Shukur's individual poetic conceptual system.

*Cognitive analysis of Eshqobil Shukur's poem 'Bolalikdagi Uy' ('The House of Childhood')*

In Eshqobil Shukur's poetics, the "homeland concept" is not confined solely to historical events or the symbolism of statehood. For the poet, the homeland is, above all, a spiritual space formed through the harmonious integration of childhood memories, parental love, family values, and the natural environment in which an individual is born and raised. Consequently, in many of his poems, love for the homeland is conceptualised not through historical events but through the individual's earliest life experiences and personal memories.

In the television programme *Uyga Qaytib (Returning home)*, the poet recalls that his father's hands were always covered with calluses. Only many years later did he realise that those calluses symbolised honest labour, patience, and paternal devotion. He also remembers his father as a compassionate man who could not remain indifferent to another person's suffering – even shedding tears upon hearing of a stranger's death – and who regarded honest work as the highest moral value. These recollections later became the foundation upon which the poet's artistic perception of childhood and the homeland was constructed.

In 'Bolalikdagi Uy' ('The House of Childhood'), these personal memories are transformed through poetic imagination. The lyrical persona integrates the father's hands, the mother's

affection, the village courtyard, the fields, the wind, angels, and childhood impressions into a unified spiritual space, thereby constructing a new poetic model of the homeland concept. Consequently, the homeland is conceptualised not as an external geographical territory but as the space of childhood memory through which the individual's worldview, moral values, and national identity are formed.

From the opening lines of the poem, the homeland begins to unfold through the images of family and the father:

My father's hands were covered with calluses,  
Layer upon layer of calluses,  
Layer upon layer of pain.  
Whenever my father returned home exhausted after work,  
I loved pressing and playing  
With the blisters on his hands. [8: 29]

In this poetic fragment, the concepts of father, labour, calluses, and pain constitute Input Space 1, which represents the lyrical persona's family memory. Within this mental space, the father is perceived not merely as the head of the household but as a person who bears the burden of labour, sacrifice, and life's hardships.

Input Space 2, by contrast, is constructed through the mature lyrical persona's present-day perspective. Looking back upon childhood, he now interprets those innocent experiences differently:

I was ignorant... I was only a child – how could I have known  
That I was playing with my father's pain?

These lines represent one of the poem's most significant conceptual turning points. During childhood, the father's callused hands appeared to the child merely as objects of innocent play. As an adult, however, the lyrical persona recognises that those calluses embodied a lifetime of hardship, sacrifice, and devoted labour. Consequently, the integration of naïve childhood experience with mature reflection transforms the image of the father into the moral foundation of the homeland concept.

Thus, family memory and contemporary self-reflection enter into conceptual integration, through which the homeland begins to emerge as a spiritual space primarily perceived through paternal labour and family values.

The following poetic fragment further expands this spiritual space until it encompasses the entire world of childhood:

Upon the brown earth,  
Beneath the blue sky,  
We had no one except God.

In these lines, the images of the Brown Earth, the Blue Sky, and God function not merely as descriptions of nature. Rather, they construct a holistic cognitive model of the child's universe. For the lyrical persona, the Earth and the Sky represent the material dimension of existence, whereas God constitutes its spiritual foundation. Consequently, the childhood home is conceptualised not simply as a physical dwelling but as a sacred space existing under divine protection.

The line "We had no one except God" does not express loneliness or social isolation; instead, it emphasises the family's spiritual foundation. Rather than recalling material wealth or external protection, the lyrical persona remembers faith in God as the central value of childhood. As a result, the family environment becomes integrated with nature and religious belief, creating an additional conceptual layer within the homeland concept.

Particularly significant is the line "We had no one except God," which expresses not the family's isolation but its spiritual foundation. Here, the lyrical persona recalls neither material wealth nor external protection; rather, faith in God is remembered as the fundamental value of childhood. Consequently, the family environment becomes integrated with nature and divine faith, giving rise to a new semantic layer of the homeland concept.

In the subsequent section of the poem, the childhood home expands beyond a place inhabited solely by parents. It evolves into a spiritual world where nature, folk beliefs, and

ancestral memory coexist in harmony. While reconstructing the child's perception of the world through natural phenomena, the poet interprets them not merely as elements of landscape but as poetic signs rooted in the centuries-old worldview of the people.

Above our courtyard,  
I would sometimes see angels flying.  
At night, a lonely wolf would howl,  
And the wind would emerge from the woodland,  
Like a sorrowful wandering dervish  
Who had walked barefoot for three hundred years.

In this poetic fragment, the images of the angel, the wolf, the wind, and the dervish further enrich Input Space 1. This mental space embodies the people's mythopoetic imagination, religious beliefs, and traditional perceptions of nature. Particularly noteworthy is the comparison of the wind to "a sorrowful wandering dervish who had walked barefoot for three hundred years." Through this metaphor, a natural phenomenon is anthropomorphised and endowed with historical and spiritual significance. As a result, the wind is transformed from an ordinary natural phenomenon into a poetic symbol that carries the memory of successive generations.

Input Space 2, in contrast, represents the lyrical persona's individual experience, grounded in childhood memories and interpreted through mature reflection. As a child, the lyrical persona genuinely imagines angels flying across the sky and perceives the wind as a wandering dervish. As an adult, however, these images are reinterpreted as evidence of the extraordinary purity of childhood consciousness and its profound harmony with a mythopoetic worldview. Thus, folk belief and individual memory become conceptually integrated, allowing the childhood home to be conceptualised as the individual's first spiritual universe.

The poet further strengthens the spiritual affinity between humanity and nature through the mother's seemingly simple yet profoundly meaningful words:

Whenever a cool breeze arose in the heat of midsummer,  
My mother would say, "The angels are beating their wings."  
When the first drops of autumn rain began to fall,  
She would say, "Your grandmother is weeping."

In these lines, the mother interprets natural phenomena not as ordinary physical events but as manifestations of spiritual meaning. The cool breeze is associated with the beating of angels' wings, while the first autumn rain becomes identified with the grandmother's tears. Consequently, the boundary between nature and human spirituality disappears. Having grown up within this traditional cultural worldview, the lyrical persona perceives nature not as an inanimate environment but as a living and meaningful reality endowed with spiritual significance.

As a result, the folk-mythological representations contained in Input Space 1 become integrated with the childhood memories represented in Input Space 2. Consequently, for the reader, the wind is no longer perceived merely as a current of air, nor is the rain regarded simply as a natural phenomenon. Instead, they emerge as poetic symbols associated with the family's spiritual world, the memory of the ancestors, and the centuries-old worldview of the people.

In the following poetic fragment, the lyrical persona recalls the social environment of childhood:

In a distant village,  
In a secluded village,  
I saw people  
Who had tamed wild fear.  
I saw brave men.  
I saw the poor  
Who spread their hearts like generous tables,  
And I saw their sorrows.

In these lines, the homeland is no longer confined to parents or the family courtyard. Rather, it expands through the villagers, their character, philosophy of life, and moral values. The image of "the poor who spread their hearts like generous tables" symbolises the spiritual rather than the material wealth of the people. The poet places not poverty but human generosity at the

centre of the poetic representation. Consequently, for the lyrical persona, the homeland is first and foremost the world of the people who shaped his character and identity.

Thus, family memory, folk beliefs, nature, and experiences associated with the people of the village complement one another. As a result, the childhood home is no longer perceived as a collection of isolated memories; instead, it becomes a unified conceptual space in which the individual's moral, aesthetic, and spiritual worldview is formed.

In the final section of the poem, the lyrical persona further expands the memory of childhood into a broader spiritual space through images of nature and humanity. At this stage, the homeland is represented not merely through parents, the family home, or childhood itself, but through the people's way of life, their harmonious relationship with nature, and their spiritual values.

I saw majestic mountains shedding tears,  
I saw plane trees as dear to me as my grandfather.  
I saw orchards scattering all they possessed across the world,  
And hearts as vast—and as wounded—as the open steppe.

Within this poetic fragment, the images of the mountains, plane tree, orchard, and steppe function far beyond the level of ordinary landscape description. By attributing human qualities to these elements, the poet interprets nature as a continuation of national character and ancestral spirit. Particularly significant is the line "I saw plane trees as dear to me as my grandfather," in which the plane tree is perceived not simply as a tree but as a symbolic embodiment of the ancestors. Likewise, the image of "majestic mountains shedding tears" associates nature with the destiny of the people and with historical memory. Consequently, the boundary between humanity and nature dissolves, allowing both to be perceived as components of a single spiritual space.

Similarly, the poetic expression "I saw hearts as vast as the steppe" reveals the moral principles that have accompanied the lyrical persona since childhood. As the boundlessness of the steppe becomes associated with the generosity of the human heart, the homeland undergoes a conceptual shift from a natural

landscape to a moral space. Thus, for the lyrical persona, the homeland is not merely the place of birth but the spiritual environment in which fundamental human virtues are cultivated.

The poem concludes by repeating the principal foundation of the childhood world:

Upon the Brown Earth,  
Beneath the Blue Sky,  
We had no one except God.  
We had no one except God!

This poetic repetition constitutes both the ideological and conceptual conclusion of the poem. The recurrence of these lines from the opening section not only provides structural cohesion but also emphasises that the centre of the childhood world is grounded not in material wealth or social power but in spiritual faith. Here, the Brown Earth symbolises the material world inhabited by human beings, the Blue Sky signifies infinity and spiritual transcendence, while God represents the ultimate spiritual foundation of existence. Consequently, family memory, nature, and divine faith become integrated within a unified spiritual space.

At this point, the two mental spaces developed throughout the poem naturally converge. The memories associated with the father's labour, the mother's affection, the childhood home, nature, folk beliefs, and the villagers contained in Input Space 1 merge with the mature lyrical persona's present-day spiritual awareness represented in Input Space 2. As a result, childhood experiences are no longer perceived as simple recollections but are reinterpreted as profound spiritual experiences that have shaped the individual's entire worldview.

This conceptual integration gives rise to a new poetic meaning within the Blended Space. The homeland is no longer conceptualised as a geographical territory or political entity; instead, it emerges as an integrated cognitive model encompassing childhood memory, family values, harmony with nature, the traditional worldview of the people, and religious faith. Through his depiction of the childhood home, the poet

artistically reconstructs the sacred space in which an individual's entire spiritual universe is formed.

The analysis demonstrates that, in 'Bolalikdagi Uy' ('The House of Childhood'), the homeland concept is conceptualised through the sequence: childhood – family – nature – people – divine faith.

Accordingly, within Eshqobil Shukur's individual poetic conceptual sphere, the homeland is conceptualised not only through historical memory, national consciousness, and statehood but also as a sacred spiritual space in which childhood experience, family values, and the individual's moral and spiritual development are formed.

*Cognitive analysis of Eshqobil Shukur's poem 'Men Ko'rgan Bir Tarix Kitobi' ('A History Book I Have Seen')*

In Eshqobil Shukur's poetics, the homeland concept is conceptualised not only through historical memory or ancestral heritage but also through the ecological and social tragedies experienced by the nation. The essay 'Men Ko'rgan Bir Tarix Kitobi' ('A History Book I Have Seen') and the poem 'Butefos,' inspired by it, represent a remarkable example of this artistic vision, in which the illness of a single child becomes a symbolic representation of the history of an entire nation. The work was inspired by the poet's encounter with a two-year-old sick child and his mother in a hospital in Tashkent. Consequently, rather than narrating a historical event itself, the poetic text reveals how history becomes inscribed upon the human body and preserved within individual destiny.

At the beginning of the work, the lyrical subject's attention is drawn not to the child but to the unusual notebook held in the mother's hand:

...In her right hand she carried her sick child, while in her left she tightly held a thick yellow notebook, almost the size of a bound book... [8: 33]

Within this poetic situation, Input Space 1 represents the historical and ecological reality associated with the Soviet cotton

monoculture, the widespread use of Butefos, and other toxic agricultural chemicals. This mental space activates the reader's historical knowledge of environmental degradation, damage to human health, and the destructive consequences of the totalitarian regime.

Instead of presenting this historical reality through statistical evidence, however, the poet artistically embodies it in the notebook held by a single mother. Consequently, the ecological catastrophe is perceived not as an abstract historical phenomenon but through the concrete experience of human destiny.

The conceptual development is further intensified in the following observation:

...The 'Medical History' file of the two-year-old child I had seen was two or three times larger than the volume entitled 'History of the Uzbek SSR. [8: 33]

This striking poetic contrast gives rise to Input Space 2. Within this mental space, the sick child, his mother, and the Medical History notebook function as representations of individual human destiny. Yet the poet elevates this notebook beyond the status of an ordinary medical document, transforming it into a symbolic chronicle of the nation's concealed history.

Thus, two different versions of history are placed in direct opposition. On the one hand stands the official history constructed by ideology; on the other stands the authentic history inscribed upon the bodies of the people, preserved in a mother's tears, and embodied in the suffering of a sick child. Consequently, the very concept of history undergoes a profound poetic reconceptualisation.

This idea becomes even more explicit in the poem's central poetic fragment:

Now the two-year-old child  
Has a "Medical History" notebook.  
Its pages are piled layer upon layer,  
Its pains are gathered basket upon basket. [8: 34]

In these lines, the medical history notebook no longer records the illness of a single child; instead, it becomes a symbolic book preserving the suffering of an entire nation. The poetic parallelism of "layer upon layer of pages" and "basket upon basket of pain" suggests that suffering is not individual but collective in nature. Gradually, the child ceases to function as an individual character and is transformed into a universal poetic symbol of a generation victimised by ecological catastrophe.

The poet further develops this conceptual model in the following lines:

While the history of the nation was being burned,  
His notebook preserved the history of suffering.  
The Homeland aches from its wounds;  
This is among the heaviest histories of a people.

This poetic fragment represents the conceptual climax of the poem. By juxtaposing "the history of the nation" with "the history of suffering," the poet argues that the true repository of history is not official historical texts but the tragedies endured by ordinary people. Particularly significant is the line "The Homeland aches from its wounds," which elevates the homeland concept to a new semantic level. Here, the homeland is no longer represented as a geographical territory but as a living spiritual organism that experiences and bears the collective suffering of its people.

Accordingly, the historical-ecological reality represented in Input Space 1 and the individual destiny of the sick child represented in Input Space 2 become integrated within a unified conceptual structure. As a result, the Blended Space reconceptualises the homeland not as a political or geographical entity but as an integrated cognitive model encompassing the health of the people, historical justice, ecological memory, and the destiny of future generations.

The analysis demonstrates that, in 'Men Ko'rgan Bir Tarix Kitobi (Butefos)', the homeland concept is modelled through the conceptual sequence: historical-ecological tragedy – the child – national memory – the future.

Within this conceptual model, ecological catastrophe is transformed from a historical event into a central cognitive mechanism through which the homeland is represented as a living repository of collective memory, historical trauma, and national responsibility for future generations.

*Cognitive analysis of Eshqobil Shukur's poem 'Munofiq' ('The Hypocrite')*

In Eshqobil Shukur's poetic worldview, the homeland concept is not confined to historical memory, ancestral heritage, or the place of birth. Rather, the homeland is primarily understood as a value determined by an individual's conscience, moral choice, and spiritual responsibility. In 'Munofiq' ('The Hypocrite'), the poet portrays a character who proclaims patriotism yet, in practice, lives in opposition to the interests of the people and the nation. Although the poem is written in a satirical tone, its conceptual core lies in the sharp opposition between the authentic and the false interpretations of the homeland concept.

From the opening lines, the poem reveals hypocrisy not as an external characteristic but as an inner moral condition:

A mouth swollen like foaming soap,  
A tongue that has ruined the nation with its cawing like a crow.  
A throat soured by unlawful morsels –  
That is all you possess; that is all you are. [8: 131]

In these lines, expressions such as "a swollen mouth," "a tongue that has ruined the nation," and "unlawful morsels" construct Input Space 1, representing hypocrisy, self-interest, and moral degradation. The poet depicts not the individual's physical appearance but the moral identity revealed through speech and actions. Particularly significant is the expression "a tongue that has ruined the nation," which suggests that the most dangerous weapon of hypocrisy is falsehood expressed through deceptive language.

These images prepare the reader for the subsequent conceptual development of the poem, where falsehood directly confronts the lofty declarations made in the name of the homeland.

The poet intensifies this conflict in the following lines:

You proclaim yourself a patriot,  
You call yourself devoted,  
As you pound the podiums with your fists.  
Yet after consuming the orphan's last piece of bread,  
You begin another speech about compassion for orphans.

This poetic fragment constructs Input Space 2, which embodies the social and moral values associated with the homeland, the people, patriotism, and spiritual responsibility. At first glance, the lyrical persona hears declarations such as "I am a patriot" and "I am devoted." However, the subsequent image—"after consuming the orphan's last piece of bread"—exposes the true nature of these claims.

Here, speech and action are placed in direct opposition. While the homeland is glorified through public rhetoric, humanity and justice are simultaneously violated in practice. Consequently, grandiloquent patriotic slogans lose their moral legitimacy, revealing the ethical emptiness concealed behind them.

The contradiction becomes even more pronounced in the following poetic fragment:

In secret, you spit upon the people,  
Yet upon the grand stage you shout, "The People!"  
At meetings you boast about beauty,  
But whenever you see a gazelle, you sharpen your teeth.

In these lines, elevated values such as the people and beauty are juxtaposed with hidden self-interest, hypocrisy, and greed. Particularly striking are the lines:

In secret, you spit upon the people, yet upon the grand stage you shout, "The People!"

These verses constitute one of the poem's most powerful satirical devices. They expose the profound discrepancy between public discourse and private conduct, demonstrating that the repeated

invocation of national ideals becomes meaningless when it is not supported by genuine moral integrity. Thus, the poem presents hypocrisy not merely as an individual moral defect but as a phenomenon capable of undermining the ethical foundations upon which the homeland concept itself is built.

Here, the concept of the people extends beyond its literal meaning to represent one of the fundamental components of the homeland concept. For the poet, love for the people is not a slogan proclaimed from a public platform but an ethical attitude manifested in everyday human conduct. Consequently, the contrast between performative patriotism displayed before the public and concealed self-interest creates one of the poem's most striking poetic oppositions.

The true essence of hypocrisy is revealed even more profoundly in the poem's concluding fragment:

Someone else's hem has become your Homeland,  
Someone else's feet have become your sanctuary.  
Blind glory, hollow deeds, and a treacherous tongue are your  
honour,  
A disease creeping like worms through an open wound.

In these lines, the concepts of hem, sanctuary, and homeland enter into a new semantic relationship. Through the poetic formula "Someone else's hem has become your homeland," the poet exposes the moral collapse of an individual who has reduced the homeland to a means of personal advantage. Likewise, the line "Someone else's feet have become your sanctuary" juxtaposes sacredness with servility, suggesting that genuine faith has been replaced by opportunism and self-interest.

Thus, the two mental spaces developed throughout the poem – the first representing hypocrisy, self-interest, and falsehood, and the second embodying the values of the homeland, the people, honesty, and conscience – ultimately confront one another. Their interaction gives rise to the Blended Space, in which the homeland is conceptualised not as a geographical territory or a political entity but as an integrated cognitive model founded upon conscience, honesty, moral integrity, and national responsibility.

The analysis demonstrates that, in ‘Munofiq’ (‘The Hypocrite’), the homeland concept is constructed through the conceptual sequence: conscience – morality – honesty – national responsibility.

Accordingly, the poem confirms that, within Eshqobil Shukur's individual conceptual sphere, the homeland concept is formed as a multilayered cognitive construct, integrating ethical consciousness, spiritual responsibility, and national identity rather than merely representing a physical homeland or a political category.

#### DISCUSSION

Although the homeland concept demonstrates a common cognitive foundation across the five poems analysed, its conceptual modelling is realised through the integration of different mental spaces in each poetic text. In all five poems, the homeland is represented not as a geographical territory but as a multilayered concept integrating historical memory, personal experience, moral values, national consciousness, and spiritual belonging. While the overall mechanism of conceptual integration remains theoretically consistent, each poem employs different Input Spaces, distinct patterns of conceptual mapping, and unique emergent meanings within the Blended Space.

Table 1 summarises the principal cognitive models of the homeland concept identified in Eshqobil Shukur's poetry on the basis of Conceptual Integration Theory.

As demonstrated in Table 1, the mechanism of conceptual integration operates according to the same theoretical framework throughout all five poems, whereas the semantic content of the input spaces varies considerably. In *Mengim Momoning Yo'qlovi*, conceptual integration is centred upon historical exile and personal longing. In ‘*Boyqaro. 1501*’, the principal cognitive foundation is constructed through historical figures and the memory of statehood. In *Bolalikdagi Uy*, the homeland is modelled through individual experiences associated with family, childhood, and nature. In *Men Ko'rgan Bir Tarix Kitobi* (Butefos), ecological catastrophe and collective suffering

generate a new semantic dimension of the homeland concept. Finally, in Munofiq, the homeland is conceptualised primarily as an ethical category whose meaning is determined by honesty, conscience, and national responsibility.

Table 1. *Cognitive models of the homeland concept in Eshqobil Shukur's poetry based on conceptual integration theory*

|                 |                                                              |                                                       |                                                              |                                                        |                                            |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Cognitive Space | Mengim Momoning Yo'qlovi                                     | Boyqaro. 1501                                         | Bolalikdagi Uy                                               | Men Ko'rgan Bir Tarix Kitobi (Butefos)                 | Munofiq                                    |
| Input Space 1   | Exile, political repression, historical memory               | Timurid era, Navoiy, Boyqaro, Herat                   | Father, mother, childhood, village                           | Butefos, ecological catastrophe, illness               | Hypocrisy, falsehood, self-interest        |
| Input Space 2   | Boymoqli, Boysun, heart, shirt                               | Contemporary national consciousness                   | Family memory, nature, folk beliefs                          | Sick child, mother, history of suffering               | Homeland, people, conscience, honesty      |
| Generic Space   | Spiritual attachment between the individual and the Homeland | Historical memory and national identity               | Formation of personal identity                               | National destiny and historical justice                | Moral choice and national responsibility   |
| Blended Space   | Homeland as an inner spiritual space residing in the heart   | Homeland as historical continuity and ideal statehood | Homeland as the space of childhood and spiritual development | Homeland as collective suffering and historical memory | Homeland as conscience and moral integrity |

The comparative analysis demonstrates that, within Eshqobil Shukur's poetic worldview, the homeland concept does not constitute a static or monolithic conceptual entity. Rather, it functions as a dynamic cognitive construct emerging from the conceptual integration of diverse conceptual domains, including historical memory, statehood, childhood, ecological catastrophe, and moral values. Consequently, although the homeland is modelled differently across various poetic contexts, all

conceptual models ultimately converge upon the same cognitive core, namely the ideas of national identity, spiritual belonging, and historical continuity.

These findings further confirm that Conceptual Integration Theory provides an effective methodological framework for reconstructing the cognitive organisation of poetic discourse. Through the interaction of multiple mental spaces, Eshqobil Shukur creates emergent conceptual meanings that cannot be derived from any individual input space in isolation. Accordingly, the homeland in his poetry should be understood not as a fixed geographical or political notion but as a dynamic conceptual structure continuously reconstructed through the interaction of memory, experience, culture, morality, and national consciousness. This multidimensional conceptualisation constitutes one of the defining features of Eshqobil Shukur's individual poetic conceptual sphere and demonstrates the explanatory potential of Conceptual Integration Theory for the cognitive analysis of Uzbek poetic discourse.

#### CONCLUSION

The cognitive analysis of Eshqobil Shukur's poems 'Mengim Momoning Yo'qlovi' ('My Grandmother's Lament'), 'Boyqaro. 1501,' 'Bolalikdagi Uy' ('The House of Childhood'), 'Men Ko'rgan Bir Tarix Kitobi (Butefos)' ('A History Book I Have Seen (Butefos)'), and 'Munofiq' ('The Hypocrite') within the framework of Conceptual Integration Theory has led to the following conclusions:

1. In Eshqobil Shukur's poetic worldview, the homeland concept is not a static notion or merely a geographical territory. Rather, it functions as a multilayered cognitive model emerging from the conceptual integration of historical memory, personal experience, family values, national consciousness, and moral principles.
2. Within the poet's individual conceptual system, the homeland is represented through five distinct cognitive models: the historical-nostalgic model, the historical-statehood model,

- the childhood-memory model, the historical-ecological model, and the moral-conscience model. These models do not duplicate one another; instead, each reveals a different semantic and conceptual dimension of the homeland concept.
3. The analysis demonstrates that, in all of the poems examined, the mechanism of conceptual integration operates through the interaction of two principal Input Spaces. The integration of historical events, personal memories, national values, and contemporary psychological experiences generates new poetic meanings of the homeland within the Blended Space, thereby illustrating the dynamic process of conceptual meaning construction in poetic discourse.
  4. In Eshqobil Shukur's poetry, the homeland is consistently conceptualised through its interaction with such concepts as historical figures, parents, childhood, collective suffering, ecological catastrophe, conscience, and spiritual responsibility. This conceptual interconnectedness confirms that the homeland occupies one of the central positions within the poet's individual conceptual sphere.
  5. The application of Conceptual Integration Theory to poetic texts has proved to be a highly effective methodological framework for explaining the formation of imagery, symbolic structures, and historical-cultural concepts in Eshqobil Shukur's poetry. This approach enables researchers to reconstruct the hidden cognitive organisation of poetic discourse and to reveal the author's individual conceptual worldview with greater explanatory precision.

Overall, the present study demonstrates that investigating Eshqobil Shukur's poetry through the framework of Conceptual Integration Theory makes it possible to reconstruct the homeland concept as a unified cognitive system integrating its historical, cultural, psychological, and moral dimensions. Furthermore, the findings expand the methodological potential of contemporary cognitive linguistics for the analysis of Uzbek poetic discourse and provide a productive theoretical framework for future research in cognitive poetics, linguoconceptology, and conceptual modelling.

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**ODINA RASULJONOVNA ISMAILOVA**

PHD STUDENT,

DEPARTMENT OF UZBEK LINGUISTICS,

NAMANGAN STATE UNIVERSITY,

NAMANGAN, UZBEKISTAN.

E-MAIL: <ODINAISMOILOVA84@GMAIL.COM>