

## Linguocognitive and Linguocultural Features of Phraseological Units with Floristic Components

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of the current study is to explore the cognitive and cultural aspects of phraseological units containing floral imagery in English and Uzbek languages. The main goal is to determine the impact of flower-related metaphorical conceptual structures on phraseological meaning formation and show the ways in which culturally determined perception of reality manifests itself in phraseology. In terms of theoretical background, the study relies on the concepts of contemporary cognitive linguistics and linguoculturology, paying much attention to such notions as conceptual metaphor theory and culturally conditioned cognition.*

*In order to achieve these goals, a holistic approach was chosen, including comparative and semantic analysis as well as cognitive modeling techniques. A specially selected set of phraseological units containing floral imagery in both languages was subject to scrutiny with the aim of establishing recurrent conceptual models, degree of semantic transparency, and culturally specific semantic transformations. It was found that there existed a three-level interpretation pattern comprising denotative, metaphorical, and idiomatic layers and showing semantic conventionalization process.*

*From these findings, it is possible to conclude that floristic phraseological units act as efficient cognitive tools in terms of perceiving abstract spheres like emotions, character traits, or existence-related phenomena. Linguo-culturally speaking, it is evident that there are significant differences in the approaches to perceiving and understanding the studied linguistic phenomenon: English phraseological units emphasize aesthetic*

*perception and individualism, while Uzbek phraseological units have much in common with spirituality and moral purity, as well as an interaction with the natural environment.*

**Keywords:** Phraseological units; floristic components; linguocognitive analysis; linguoculturology; conceptual metaphor; cognitive semantics; cultural linguistics; English phraseology; Uzbek phraseology; figurative language.

#### INTRODUCTION

Floristic elements in phraseological expressions make up an extremely vivid part of the figurative apparatus of a particular language. These phraseological units not only represent some universal structural principles inherent in human cognition, but also reflect culturally specific ways of conceptualizing the world around us. As shown by cognitive linguistics, and especially by the theories of Lakoff & Johnson (1980), metaphor is the way of human reasoning which helps us build abstract concepts based on our experience and embodiment.

With regard to modern linguistics, there is a trend towards understanding language in relation to human cognition and culture. The ideas put forward by Langacker (1987) and Kövecses (2010) reveal how the linguistic meaning is conceptual and experience-based, and at the same time metaphorical systems determine the structuring of reality in different societies. Therefore, nowadays phraseology should be viewed as a semiotic system of culture-bound cognitive representations.

The current research deals with the study of linguocognitive and linguocultural aspects of phraseology units with floral components in the English and Uzbek languages. Consistent with the views of Telia (1996) and Alefirenko (2005), the phraseological units are treated as culturally marked signs, which represent the value system of collectivity and national culture. The floristic component, embedded into human interactions with the external world, serves as means of mediating abstract concepts, including emotions, moral evaluation, inter-personal relationships, and existential experience.

Conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Kövecses 2010) lies in the basis of the current theoretical framework. The theory claims that all abstract thought is constructed by systematically applying metaphors, which are based on human physical and sensory experience. Linguoculturological paradigm (Telia 1996; Alefirenko 2005) highlights the role of language in preserving and maintaining cultural memory and value system of national collectivity.

However, despite numerous advances in the study of phraseology and cognition (Vinogradov 1946; Kunin 1970), there is still much work to be done regarding comparative studies of floristic phraseologies in typologically and culturally distant languages, such as English and Uzbek. In particular, the processes by which the same images receive various interpretations depending on the culture remain underresearched. Thus, the objective of this paper is to determine and examine the mechanisms of linguocognition and linguoculture of floristic phraseological units in both English and Uzbek.

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The current paper relies on the theoretical basis of cognitive linguistics and linguoculturology, as proposed by Lakoff & Johnson (1980), Langacker (1987), Kövecses (2010), and Telia (1996). These researchers define phraseological units as linguocognitive and linguocultural entities that reveal the interplay of language, thought, and culture. Thus, in line with these ideas, the methodological approach is aimed at the detection of universal cognitive patterns and culturally specific semantic features within phraseological systems of the English and Uzbek languages.

The empirical data for this research project includes a specially constructed corpus of phraseological units incorporating floral components from the English and Uzbek languages. The selection of data was carried out based on the information provided in reliable lexicons, phraseological dictionaries, and compilations of scientific literature (Vinogradov 1946; Kunin 1970; Alefirenko 2005). The inclusion criterion was limited to units containing floristic constituents in a figurative

way. Nominal botanical phraseological units were not taken into consideration in the analysis.

The theoretical methodological approach involves the use of several interconnected types of analyses. Comparative analysis according to the approach of Halliday (1994) based on a functional approach was used for establishing the similarities and differences in the structure and semantics of phraseological groups relating to nature among the compared languages. Semantic analysis was used for assessing the degree of idiomaticity, semantic motivation, and semantic transformation inside phraseological groups according to the methodology suggested by Vinogradov (1946) and Kunin (1970) in their investigations of phraseology.

Conceptual cognitive analysis based on the theory of conceptual metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Kövecses 2010) helped establish the regularities of mapping from nature to the fields of abstract phenomena such as emotional states, personality characteristics, and interpersonal relations. Moreover, linguocultural analysis according to Telia (1996) and Alefirenko (2005) was used for identifying axiological and symbolic meaning of nature-based linguistic concepts.

Moreover, the selected units were categorized in three stages of interpretation such as denotative, metaphorical, and idiomatic in order to identify the incremental steps in the formation of semantic shift and phraseologization.

Thus, the application of the mentioned approaches guarantees the construction of the multi-dimensional analysis of the structure, semantics, cognition, and culture of floral phraseological units in English and Uzbek languages.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study of the corpus of phraseological units incorporating floristic components in the English and Uzbek languages reveals the existence of a complex relationship between universal and culturally specific meanings. In support of Lakoff & Johnson (1980) and Kövecses (2010) theoretical postulates, one can state that the metaphorical thinking process is viewed as a cognitive strategy used for structuring abstract experience on the basis of

embodied, concrete experience. Thus, floristic concepts become productive domains that make it possible to describe complex phenomena and experiences.

From the point of view of linguocognition, the study proves the assumption that floristic components work as stable elements in metaphorical mapping when features of nature are projected on abstract domains including emotions, personality traits, relationships between people, and life experiences. Such an interpretation confirms Langacker's (1987) idea of conceptual nature of meaning as embodied cognition. The fact that growth, blossoming, withering, and fertility become recurrent cognitive models in English and Uzbek languages supports the hypothesis stated by Kövecses (2010) about the partial universality of metaphorical conceptualization in human physical experience.

In this regard, though, the linguocultural aspect of the analysis performed following the ideas of Teliya (1996) and Alefirenko (2005) indicates considerable discrepancies in the valuation and symbolism of the flora-based elements. As can be seen, in phraseological units in English, the mentioned elements are mostly concerned with the sphere of aesthetics, individual emotionality, and stylistics which correspond to culturally specific notions about subjectivity and individuality. On the other hand, in Uzbek phraseology, collective values, moral assessment, and spirituality dominate in the context of which the mentioned flora-related elements are understood to denote purity, morality, and unity. The indicated examples prove the existence of cultural differences in terms of linguistic representations of worldviews.

The further subdivision of phraseological units according to their denotative, metaphorical, and idiomatic layers provides another evidence of the mentioned process of semantic transformation that was outlined by such representatives of classical phraseology as Vinogradov (1946) and Kunin (1970). As is evident, at the first stage of semantic modification, flowers in phraseology are still perceived in their direct botanical sense; in the second, partial semantic change is achieved due to associations while full semantic reconstruction takes place in case of idioms.

The results presented above demonstrate the relevance of the theoretical integrative paradigm which regards phrasemes with

floristic elements not only as linguistic or stylistic constructions but rather as cognitively semiotically oriented formations that emerge within specific cultures. It can be also stated that the comparison proves metaphorical cognition to be universal in its tendencies; however, it requires the realization within linguocultural contexts.

#### CONCLUSIONS

In accordance with the research undertaken within the paradigms of cognitive linguistics and linguoculturology, it is possible to identify the linguocognitive characteristics and functions of the phraseological units containing elements of floristic nature in English and Uzbek languages. With regard to the methodological principles presented in the introduction of this paper, the analysis helps understand how floristic images work as cognitive-semiotic mechanisms in the phraseology of English and Uzbek.

It appears that floristic units have double function, being able to express universal cognitive processes based on bodily knowledge and metaphorical representations while being at the same time the bearers of cultural meanings related to particular axiological approaches. Thus, it becomes clear that phraseological units cannot be treated as random combinations of lexemes but as specific linguistic constructions influenced both by the general laws of cognition and cultural specifics.

Moreover, when comparing the phraseological units with the similar constructs in English and Uzbek languages, it becomes obvious that the former are more concerned with aesthetics, individualism, and emotions, whereas the latter are primarily connected with morality, spirituality, and cultural norms.

At the same time, the steady process of semantic evolution from denotation to metaphor and idioms in both languages is a proof of the universality of phraseologization as a process within the field of cognitive semantics. It is consistent with the idea that figures of speech are products of the relationship between perception and cultural concepts.

To sum up, floristic phraseology should be considered an important part of the linguistic and cultural cognition of both

cultures as they function as accumulators of collective culture and perception. The findings of this investigation can become useful in expanding our notion of phraseology as a phenomenon.

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