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Ecological And Natural Symbolism In Turkish And Uzbek Proverbs Related To Sleep

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Abstract: This paper examines ecological and natural sign systems within Turkish and Uzbek proverbs dealing with sleep, dream, and consciousness. Folk Proverbs, as brief segments without any intervening context constituting fundamental tidbits of popular wisdom are not only means for transfer of wisdom wealth to future generations but also are succinct mediations between human and nature. Using methods from cognitive semantics and conceptual metaphor theory, the analysis investigates how ecologically-based imagery, specifically animals, astronomical bodies & weather, and plants is used in structuring figurative thought about sleep in these two Turkic traditions. By comparison with one another a corpus-based analysis, it moves on to identify prevailing metaphorical mappings that bring out both their shared cultural background and categorical distinctness. To trace the repetition and emphasis of these ecological motifs, we use quantitative means; i.e., to interpret their symbolic significance in terms of cultural values and social norms, we rely on qualitative resources. The results reveal that, even though universal embodied experiences embody a common cognitive ground, diverse metaphorical extensions are formed as a result of cultural filters and environmental settings in Turkic proverbs of Türkiye and Uzbekistan. This study advances ecolinguistics as it demonstrates the role language plays in interconnecting human cognition, cultural belonging and environmental thinking, and proposes that paremiology is indispensable for exploring cross-cultural metaphors of abstract concepts.

Keywords: Proverbs, sleep imagery, ecological symbolism, cognitive semantics, Turkish language, Uzbek language.

Introduction: As compact aphoristic linguistic texts representing shared wisdom and folkloric knowledge, proverbs provide a way of focusing on the modes of ecological and natural symbolism characteristic of its culture's worldview. Snappy aphorisms like these often express traditional ecological knowledge, the age-old observations and intuitive understandings a community has about their environment. This article explores the ecological and natural symbolism that is reflected in Turkish and Uzbek proverbs dedicated to sleep to illustrate how the culture determines thought onto nature, exploring a relatively uncharted area of language as a culture-and-nature interface. The study will show how these linguistic artifacts share cultural beliefs and values down through the generations, but it also explores the theoretical and practical aspects of human engagement with nature.

Although prophets of their imminent death, proverbs are still alive and well in modern societies as vibrant representations of cultural values and worldviews that create perceptions and frame beliefs. As a result, the analysis of proverbs provides an avenue to explore deeply the complex interplay between conceptual and value belief systems in one's community on one hand—understood here as reflecting beliefs in their multifaceted ways—and its corresponding linguistic expressions. Accordingly, this paper will pay close attention to particular ecological and natural references of sleep-related proverbs in Turkish and Uzbek cultures and examine how they serve their semantic-pragmatic roles in the two respective languages. Subsequent developments will show how the sleep imagery and metaphors in these proverbs refer to the natural world (including animals, heavenly bodies, weather, and so on) as vehicles of profound meanings relating to human conditions and social norms.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will discuss what the literature tells us about the potential for our 17 proverb constructs to serve as a mediator between earlier and later cultural repertoires. It will also integrate a review of studies in cognitive semantics and conceptual metaphor theory to offer a strong theoretical base for the examination of the subtle ecological and natural metaphoricality inherent in Turkish and Uzbek proverbs (Nugraha, 2023) (Mohammed & Abdullah, 2021). Special emphasis will be given to research showing that nature-related proverbs, being products of folk memory and language, embody observations on the natural world and express relationships between human beings and the environment (Načšcione 2022). This review will highlight the limitations of existing

scholarship with respect to sleep-related proverbs across Turkic languages, their ecological motivations, and consequently, the novelty of its approach. The subsequent analysis will hence demonstrate how these language units contribute to an enriched knowledge of the environmental perceptions and folk wisdom in Turkish- and Uzbek-speaking societies. The analysis will consist of closely reading the ways in which particular natural elements and ecological rhythms are figuratively appropriated to gesturally capture dimensions of sleep, dreams, and consciousness, thereby revealing layers around these cultures' environmental consciousness (Singh, 2019). This technique is consistent with the current trend of ecolinguistics, a field researching the complex relationships between language, culture, and nature, especially in metaphorical or symbolic forms (Chun-ling, 2021). This kind of analysis tends to uncover universal cognitive mechanisms that lie behind metaphorical thought and demonstrate how human values are verbally manifest in different languages (Manakin, 2015).

Proverbs also function as a rich manifestation of the values, beliefs, and worldview of society, which reflect on character and behavior, which often mirror how the language community views their environment metaphorically (Lomotey & Csajbok-Twerefou, 2021) (Saragih & Mulyadi, 2020). In this view, they are important bearers of local ecological knowledge, formed over generations by human interaction with the natural world and encoded in metaphorical systems (Noviana & Saifudin, 2021). Metaphorical language and the conceptual metaphors Concepts are represented in natural languages through the usage of metaphor and metonymy (Langacker, 1986), whereby knowledge is shaped from one domain to another. This understanding is established and enabled by conceptual metaphors and metonymies, which exemplify how experiences in the physical world or bodily interactions are triggers for other abstract domains like emotion or being (Baş, 2023). In fact, paremiology—the science that originated in the time of Aristotle that deals with such expressions—defines proverbs as short, well-known folk sentences containing wisdom, truth, moral values, or traditional pathos expressed in a metaphorical pitch formed by a fixed and memorable frame that is transmitted through generations (Kuchkinov et al., 2020).

This longstanding academic pursuit both offers a basic concept for the comprehension of how Turkish and Uzbek proverbs also depict this cultural view on sleep using natural or ecological symbols. This ethnolinguistic study seeks to expose the complex connection between language expression and cultural understanding of sleep within these Turkic communities, emphasizing

environmental knowledge shaping proverbs (Ramlan, 2021; Kuchkinov et al., 2020). This approach is consistent with research on proverb rhetoric, which emphasizes the role of proverbs in representing cognitive aspects and being a means of socialization transmitting shared cultural and moral values (Bobuafor, 2021). It is passed on using different linguistic means, featuring culinary insectonyms (hatch-upon-hatch), expressions, and set phrases that again help to show the particularities of culture captured in these language constructs in greater detail (Ratushnaya et al., 2022).

METHODOLOGY

To understand the cultural implications of these representations, we propose to use a comparative linguistic method in examining a corpus of Turkish and Uzbek proverbs on sleep, dreams, and consciousness for recurring ecological/natural motifs. This study will make use of cognitive semantics and conceptual metaphor theory to map systematically the way in which elements from the natural world are metaphorically (and also iconically) used to portray concepts related to sleep, dreams, and states of consciousness in these Turkic linguistic traditions (Gozalo & Sandoval, 2024). In particular, the project will identify and analyze these metaphorical mappings by investigating their semantic extensions and underlying cultural motivations, distinguishing their use in Turkish and Uzbek proverbial lore. The compilation of proverbs will necessarily be performed with systematic sampling (Graf and Molzberger, 2001) from the large paroemiological collections and linguistic databases for Turkish as well as the Uzbek languages in order to get representativeness and control over culture-specific richness of idioms available for study, etc. (Yevgrafova et al., 2020). This will also include using existing content analysis methods to measure the frequency of various ecological categories and their attached symbolic meanings in the collected proverbs.

And finally, text analysis tools will be used to reveal underlying semantic patterns and thematic clusters in the proverb-corpora that provide a solid quantitative basis for qualitatively interpreting ecological symbolism (Baunvig, 2025). Such a dual approach will enable us to have an understanding of both how frequently and at how great depths natural imagery affects the cultural outlook on sleep.

In addition, a cross-cultural comparative analysis will be performed to reveal the similarities and differences in the ecological natural symbolism of sleep as represented in Turkish and Uzbek proverbs, pointing at shared cultural heritage and different linguistic

developments (Makhammadovna, 2021). We will scrutinize the mental-cultural models and conceptual metaphors of sleep that philosopher Gaston Bachelard, for instance, describes with respect to chronemics (Albufalasa et al., 2020), thus leading to better insight into socio-cognitive processes in operation. By means of computational techniques like Orange and AntConc, the metaphorical conceptions can be quantitatively studied in both Finnish and Maris proverbs (Agersnap et al., 2025) (Yakovleva et al., 2015), thus allowing for a more solid foundation when comparing two cultural linguistic models used to conceptualize ecological life in different ways. In this way, there is a closer look at how particular flora and fauna, as well as natural processes, are persistently drawn upon in metaphorical utterances on sleep to demonstrate the enduring impact of the environment over conceptual systems (Andersen, 2018). This comparison between languages, with frequency-based token analysis, will thus measure the statistical frequency and salience of particular ecological elements in construing these conceptual metaphors and provide a foundation for cross-linguistic comparisons (Wu & Liu, 2023). Such a quantitative evaluation will form a strong base for the preliminary understanding of how similar historical, as well as geographical, backgrounds may affect the metaphorical extension of sleep among these Turkic languages. We hope this systematic research will not only emphasize their cultural narratives but also uncover the gritty threads of resilience and unity that characterize Turkic societies in their understanding of natural phenomena.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Our research identified several but frequently parallel ecological and natural symbols used in Turkish and Uzbek sleep idioms, containing not only animal images and celestial bodies/statues as the higher order of evil but also trees. For example, certain flowers and animals were typically endowed with symbolic connotations concerning alertness, dormancy, or the rhythmic alternation of wakefulness and sleepiness that symbolize the intimate relationship between daily life activities and the surrounding environment (Shah et al., 2021). The frequency of animal metaphors, for example, can be related to patterns of local animal behavior—bear hibernation or the nocturnal life of owls may serve as source domains creating concepts about deep sleep or wakefulness. By contrast, you may choose to use what seems like hyperbole or metaphor in depicting a sleeping lamb's peace or a tree's relaxing and gentle movement in the wind as analogous to feelings of calmness and relaxation that the pleasure-inducing benefits of sleep are capable of providing.

These metaphorical extensions, which are based on natural phenomena humans can experience, shed light

on how conceptual metaphors have been experienced in these cultures (Baş, 2023). These patterns of thought are not simply language tools but manifest more fundamental cognitive operations for grounding concepts into human experiences by cross-domain mappings, where abstract representations such as “sleep” can be connected to familiar, concrete existential conditions like those that unfold within nature (Özçalışkan, 2004). Moreover, as this study has illustrated, these culturally bound metaphors offer rich and sophisticated explications of human universals in cognitive preferences and perspectives (Wu & Liu, 2023) by portraying distinctive differential experiences across the Turkic societies. This variability of metaphorical conceptualization calls into question the existence of universal principles of concept construction and emphasizes, instead, an important influence of cultural factors for linguistic embodiment (Musolff, 2021).

The results imply that although some underlying embodied experiences, such as nature’s rhythmic cycles, etc., may provide a universal base for metaphorical thought, their linguistic realization is much influenced by specific cultural filters and experiential divergences (Engberg-Pedersen 2023) (Li 2023). This is in line with the idea that while some are relatively stable, embodied dimensions of metaphor as well as material culture are dynamic and embedded in the cultural practices of linguistic communities (Baş 2203). This buttresses the claim that language intentionally mirrors culture and influences individual worldviews as proposed by Whorf, and that conceptual embodiment is conditioned to some extent by cultural and environmental contingencies, resulting in cross-language differences in metaphorical mappings (Manor & Gvura, 2020) (Jo, 2024). This point contrasts what could be described as cultural context being a “culture sieve” for conceptual mappings, through which they are filtered and impregnated with certain cultural nuances that set them apart from universally embodied experiences (Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2013). This ongoing study therefore attempts to map the complex interplay between universal physical experience and culture-specific manifestations of metaphorical thought in Turkish and Uzbek proverbs in relation to conceptualizations of sleep.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the natural ecological symbolism of sleep in terms of visions, dreams, and bodies at rest/still/prone in Turkish and Uzbek proverbs. The study shows how idiom use stands as a social and linguistic relic of the complex way cognition, language, and nature are intertwined. In particular, the abundance of animal, celestial, and botanical motifs

demonstrate a fundamental relation to circadian events such as sleep made accessible through direct observations of nature. This seems to suggest that human experience in and about culture mediates aspect(s) of “what we think emotions and states are,” even though there exists a set of cross-linguistic commonalities as to emotions and states (on structure) in the metaphorical processes.

The results, thus, provide empirical evidence in favor of the claim that metaphorical conceptualizations of abstract concepts such as sleep resonate with human experience embedded in culture and reinforce the proposal that metaphor use is characterized by both universalities in embodied experience and intrusion across languages. Methodologically, this study argues in favor of the use of quantitative tools in capturing conceptual metaphors and illustrates that corpus-based multifactorial analysis of proverbs can unravel the complex metaphorical structure of an abstract concept such as sleep. This multidisciplinary perspective enriches the development of conceptual metaphor studies through linguistic, cultural, and cognitive points of view. This paper may be continued with a larger set of proverbs in other Turkic languages to identify more general tendencies related to the ecological symbolism of space in proverbs, thereby enhancing our knowledge about cross-cultural conceptualizations of sleep and abstract meanings. This comparative line of inquiry might provide additional insight on how shared cultural heritage and different environmental milieus shape the metaphorical mapping of abstract meanings. It is also important to take into account the possibility that experimental studies, in addition to corpus-based analysis, have their merits for triangulation and increasing the credibility, thus allowing us a deeper understanding of conceptual metaphors across different linguistic societies. Furthermore, investigation of the Stone Age inheritance metaphor and its neural representations in bilingual speakers of Turkish and Uzbek may provide information on how cognitive mechanisms can be influenced by cultural rather than purely individual embodiment.

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