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Linguo-Cognitive Features of Metaphorical Units In Uzbek And English Fashion Discourse

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Abstract: The article examines the linguo-cognitive characteristics of metaphorical expressions in Uzbek and English fashion discourse. It demonstrates that metaphors in fashion texts function as cognitive instruments reflecting personal identity, cultural values, social symbolism, and aesthetic perception rather than mere stylistic devices. The study analyzes conceptual metaphors such as “FASHION IS POWER,” “STYLE IS IDENTITY,” and contrasts them with Uzbek counterparts like “Clothing as the mirror of soul” and “Fashion as social aesthetics.” Findings show that English fashion metaphors prioritize creativity, individuality, and power, whereas Uzbek discourse emphasizes morality, cultural harmony, and collective identity.

Keywords: Fashion discourse, metaphor, conceptual metaphor, cognitive linguistics, cultural code.

Introduction: Fashion represents a communicative space where contemporary sociolinguistic processes, communicative practices, and aesthetic values intersect. From a linguistic perspective, fashion discourse possesses a multi-layered semantic structure in which metaphor functions as a key conceptual device. In fashion texts, metaphor serves as a linguo-cognitive mechanism that shapes an individual’s self-perception, defines their social role, and forms an aesthetic worldview.

According to Lakoff and Johnson’s conceptual metaphor theory, any metaphor exists not only within linguistic units but primarily within human cognition. Therefore, the study of fashion discourse through metaphors makes it possible to reveal not only semantic, but also cognitive, cultural, and discursive phenomena.

The purpose of this article is to investigate the linguo-

cognitive models of metaphorical units found in English and Uzbek fashion discourse, identify their conceptual bases, and determine their universal and nationally specific features through comparative analysis.

Theoretical Background. In fashion discourse, metaphor serves as one of the key conceptual mechanisms that enables the cognitive re-encoding of certain ideas, processes, and phenomena within human consciousness. This nature of metaphor is explained from the perspective of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory developed by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson. According to this theory, metaphor is “not merely a stylistic ornament, but a cognitive mechanism”. Metaphors are structured according to the source domain → target domain model in human cognition. For example: POWER → FASHION; SPIRIT → CLOTHING.

Furthermore, the semiotic foundations of fashion discourse are examined in Roland Barthes’ work “The Fashion System,” in which he demonstrates that the primary function of fashion language is to encode spiritual-aesthetic meaning. According to Z. Kövecses, metaphors may share universal features across cultures; however, national-cultural experience influences their specific linguistic realization.

Dominant Concepts in English Fashion Discourse

A) FASHION IS POWER

English

She conquered the runway. U podiumni zabt etdi.

A powerful fashion voice. Kuchli moda ovozi (uslub).

→ The main features of this metaphor are dominance, power, and social prestige.

B) STYLE IS IDENTITY

English

Dress who you are. Kimligingni kiyim orqali ifoda et.

Your look defines you. Qiyofang seni belgilaydi.

→ The fusion of personal identity and fashion

C) FASHION IS ART

English

A wearable masterpiece. Kiyiladigan durdona.

He sculpts fabrics. U matoni haykaltaroshdek ishlaydi.

→ Fashion is a creative process.

Dominant Concepts in Uzbek Fashion Discourse

KIYIM — KO’NGIL KO’ZGUSI

Uzbek

Libosi pok — ko’ngli pok Kiyim shaxsning axloqiy mezoni

Inson kiyimidan bilinadi Tashqi ko’rinish ichki dunyoni bildiradi

→ Ma’naviyat va axloq kategoriyalari asosiy dominanta sifatida.

In English: CLOTHING AS A MIRROR OF THE SOUL

Uzbek English

Libosi pok — ko’ngli pok Pure clothing reflects a pure heart.

Inson kiyimidan bilinadi A person is recognized by their attire.

→ Spirituality and morality serve as the dominant conceptual categories.

MODA — JAMOAT DIDINING KO’ZGUSI

O’zbek matni

“Zamon didi modada ko’rinadi”

“Did — jamiyatdan nishona”

→ Moda hamjamiyat qadriyatlarini aks ettiradi.

In English: FASHION AS A MIRROR OF PUBLIC TASTE

Uzbek text English

“Zamon didi modada ko’rinadi” The taste of the era is reflected in fashion.

“Did — jamiyatdan nishona” Taste is a sign of society.

→ Fashion reflects the values of the community.

USLUB — MEZON

O’zbek matni

“Uslubi bilan ajralib turadi”

“Kishi uslubi — uning o’lchovi”

→ Uslub ijtimoiy saralanish mezoniga aylanadi.

In English: STYLE AS A MEASURE

Uzbek text English

“Uslubi bilan ajralib turadi” One stands out through their style.

“Kishi uslubi — uning o’lchovi” A person’s style is their measure.

→ Style becomes a criterion of social distinction.

Metaphors in fashion discourse serve not merely as decorative linguistic devices, but as influential communicative strategies that operate at cognitive, social, and cultural levels. They enable producers of fashion texts—designers, journalists, advertisers, and influencers—to convey evaluative meanings, construct aesthetic realities, and shape consumer identity. Below

are the major pragmatic functions of metaphors in fashion communication, expanded with explanatory notes and examples.

Evaluative Function. One of the primary pragmatic roles of metaphor in fashion is evaluation, whereby the metaphor assigns value judgments to clothing, style, and trends. Through metaphorical expressions, the aesthetic qualities, uniqueness, or ordinariness of objects are emotionally highlighted. This fosters an associative relationship between the garment and its implied status.

Examples:

“iconic dress”

“glamorous style”

“timeless silhouette”

Such expressions frame an item not simply as clothing, but as an object of cultural significance, stylistic excellence, and emotional appeal.

Implications:

Constructs positive connotations surrounding the fashion item

Enhances its symbolic capital

Encourages admiration by associating it with aesthetic perfection

The evaluative function thus produces semantic intensification, reinforcing the garment’s perceived desirability.

Persuasive Function. In fashion advertising and marketing discourse, metaphors play a central role in persuasion, aiming to influence consumer behaviour. Through metaphor, language evokes emotional imagery and inspires the audience to imagine themselves transformed by the product.

Examples:

“Unleash your beauty”

“Awaken your elegance”

“Let your style speak”

These metaphors prompt consumers to view fashion not as a superficial accessory, but as a means of personal empowerment and self-realization.

Implications:

Strengthens emotional engagement

Encourages consumption by promising symbolic benefits

Positions fashion as a transformative experience

Through such persuasive metaphors, fashion discourse blurs the boundary between material value (the clothing) and symbolic value (identity, confidence,

freedom).

Identification Function. Metaphors also perform an identification function, enabling individuals to establish and communicate their personal identity through fashion choices. Clothing becomes a metaphorical language through which the self is expressed.

Examples:

“Dress to express”

“Wear your story”

“Find yourself in fashion”

Here, metaphor equates fashion with self-disclosure, implying that style reveals inner personality traits, desires, and values.

Implications:

Constructs fashion as a medium of self-representation

Reinforces the link between personal identity and consumption

Encourages consumers to view fashion decisions as deeply meaningful

This aligns with contemporary cultural discourses that situate identity not as fixed, but performative and negotiable.

Social Differentiation Function. Another key pragmatic function of metaphor in fashion discourse is social differentiation, which positions fashion as a symbol of group belonging or distinction. Through metaphor, clothing is portrayed as a marker of status and exclusivity.

Examples:

“premium style”

“exclusive collection”

“couture for the elite”

These expressions communicate stratification within fashion spheres, suggesting that certain styles belong to high-status groups.

Implications:

Reinforces social hierarchies

Constructs fashion as an indicator of class, wealth, and access

Creates symbolic boundaries between “elite” and “ordinary” consumers

Thus, metaphor helps maintain the social semiotics of fashion, where clothing becomes an emblem of prestige and cultural capital.

Overall, metaphors in fashion discourse:

Shape aesthetic perception

Influence consumer choice

Construct and reinforce identity

Support symbolic hierarchies

Create emotionally rich imagery

Enhance memorability of fashion messaging

Therefore, the pragmatic functions of metaphors extend beyond description into the realm of persuasive, ideological, and cognitive action, making them indispensable tools within fashion communication.

Comparative Table of Uzbek and English Fashion Metaphors

No	Conceptual Metaphor	Conceptual Metaphor	Conceptual Metaphor	Conceptual Metaphor
1	FASHION IS POWER	<i>She conquered the runway. A powerful fashion statement.</i>	—	Moda hukmronlik va ta'sir kuchiga ega
2	STYLE IS IDENTITY	<i>Dress who you are. Her outfit speaks volumes.</i>	<i>Kishi uslubi – uning o'lchovi.</i>	Uslub shaxsiy identitet ifodasi
3	FASHION IS ART	<i>A wearable masterpiece. He sculpts fabrics.</i>	<i>Liboslarimiz— qadriyatlarimiz ko'zgusi.</i>	Moda ijodiy-estetik jarayon
4	FASHION IS A JOURNEY	<i>Explore your style. Fashion leads you to new places.</i>	—	Moda o'sish va tajriba maydoni
4	FASHION IS A JOURNEY	<i>Explore your style. Fashion leads you to new places.</i>	—	Moda o'sish va tajriba maydoni
5	CLOTHING AS A MIRROR OF SOUL	—	<i>Libosi pok — ko'ngli pok. Inson kiyimidan bilinadi.</i>	Kiyim axloq va ruhiy holat ko'zgusi
6	FASHION AS A MIRROR OF SOCIETY	—	<i>Zamon didi modada ko'rinadi. Did — jamiyatdan nishona.</i>	Moda jamiyat didi va qadriyatlarini aks ettiradi
7	STYLE AS MEASURE	—	<i>Uslubi bilan ajralib turadi.</i>	Uslub — ijtimoiy saralanish mezon
8	CLOTHING IS LANGUAGE	<i>Her clothes speak for her.</i>	<i>Kiyim ham gapiradi.</i>	Kiyim – kommunikativ vosita
9	FASHION IS FREEDOM	<i>Liberating fabrics. Free your style.</i>	—	Moda erkinlik maydoni
10	FASHION IS EMOTION	<i>This dress is poetry in motion.</i>	<i>Nafosat libosda namoyon.</i>	Moda hissiy-estetik tajriba refleksi
11	FASHION IS PERFORMANCE	<i>Runway is a stage.</i>	—	Moda sahnalashtirilgan ko'rinish
12	FASHION IS LIFESTYLE	<i>This look defines your life.</i>	<i>Libos — yashash tarzi ko'zgusi.</i>	Moda kundalik hayot falsafasi

13	TREND IS FLOW	<i>Trends come and go.</i>	<i>Moda oqimi kuchaydi.</i>	Moda oqim va harakat sifatida
14	COLOR IS MOOD	<i>Bold colors speak loud.</i>	<i>Rang kayfiyatni belgilaydi.</i>	Rang — ruhiy holat
15	ACCESSORIES ARE POWER	<i>Statement accessories.</i>	<i>Taqinchoq — nafosat ramzi.</i>	Aksessuarlar obraz kuchaytiradi

Metaphors in fashion discourse represent a key linguistic and cognitive mechanism through which abstract concepts related to clothing, style, and aesthetics are interpreted via concrete experiential domains. They reveal how language structures cultural knowledge and how individuals cognitively conceptualize fashion. A comparative examination of English and Uzbek fashion metaphors demonstrates substantial contrasts in their conceptual framing, semantic orientation, cultural foundations, and pragmatic functions.

Cognitive-Linguistic Analysis. According to the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), metaphor is primarily a cognitive mechanism; linguistic expression is merely its surface realization. In fashion discourse, metaphors function based on the source domain → target domain model. Examples: FASHION IS POWER; CLOTHING AS A MIRROR.

Here, the source domain shapes the conceptual understanding of fashion, adding new semantic–emotional dimensions to it.

English Fashion Metaphors. The dominant source domains are Power, War, Art, Identity, indicating that fashion is cognitively perceived as:

a field of competition,
a space of self-expression,
a creative act.

Example: She conquered the runway. Source: War → Target: Fashion

→ Fashion is conceptualized as a battlefield, implying dominance and status.

Uzbek Fashion Metaphors The main source domains are Spirituality, Morality, Society. Example: Libosi pok — ko'ngli pok.

→ Clothing symbolizes one's moral state. Thus, English fashion metaphors reflect an individualistic cognitive model, whereas Uzbek fashion metaphors reflect a collectivist mental framework centered on cultural and moral values.

Semantic Analysis. Metaphors create extended semantic meanings and re-categorize fashion concepts. In English. Semantics tends toward connotation + intensification. Fashion acquires value-

added meanings associated with art, innovation, autonomy.

Example: iconic dress → carries the enriched meaning of symbolic cultural importance. In Uzbek: Semantics is oriented toward moral–social evaluation. Clothing signals inner purity or social belonging.

Example: Inson kiyimidan bilinadi → physical appearance reflects personality. Thus, semantic mechanisms in English emphasize aesthetic individuality, while in Uzbek they highlight ethical and social norms.

Pragmatic Analysis. Metaphors fulfill communicative purposes in discourse.

In English Metaphors: Persuasion, Self-expression, Brand identity construction;

Example: Dress who you are → encourages identity construction.

In Uzbek Metaphors: Social evaluation, Moral judgement. Collective identity building. Example: Libosi pok — ko'ngli pok → emphasizes ethical judgment.

Thus, metaphors in English motivate self-realization, whereas in Uzbek they serve as tools of social–moral commentary.

Linguocultural Analysis. Metaphors encode cultural knowledge and worldview. English Cultural Code, Reflects:

Individual freedom

Innovation

Personal creativity

Hence metaphors: Fashion is freedom; Style is identity → Promote self-projection and autonomy.

Uzbek Cultural Code. Reflects: Social unity, Morality, Cultural heritage.

Hence metaphors:

Clothing as a mirror of the soul

Fashion as a reflection of society

→ Emphasize collective values and moral harmony.

Thus, metaphors serve as cognitive-cultural artifacts that shape how people conceptualize fashion.

Discourse Analysis. In discourse, metaphor constructs: ideology, value system, communicative direction.

English Fashion Discourse Positions fashion as:
a dynamic artistic arena,
a field of performance and identity formation.

Discursive styles: advertising, journalism, influencer communication.

Uzbek Fashion Discourse

Positions fashion as:

a reflection of collective taste,
a marker of cultural morality.

Discursive tendencies:

evaluative,
didactic.

Typological Comparison

Parameter	English	Fashion	Metaphors
Uzbek Fashion Metaphors			
Conceptual center	Individuality, Morality, Society		Power
Semantic orientation	Aesthetic–creative Ethical–aesthetic		
Pragmatic purpose	Persuasion, Evaluation, Social order		Identity
Discursive style	Expressive	Didactic	
Cultural base	Individualism	Collectivism	

General Conclusion

A comparative linguistic analysis of English and Uzbek fashion metaphors reveals that:

English fashion metaphors highlight individuality, creative freedom, and empowerment, framing fashion as a personal and artistic domain.

Uzbek fashion metaphors foreground morality, social harmony, and cultural identity, framing fashion as a social and spiritual phenomenon.

Linguistically, fashion metaphors:

expand conceptual domains,
enrich semantic content,
reinforce cultural ideologies,
shape discursive practices.

This demonstrates that metaphor is not merely a rhetorical figure but a fundamental cognitive–cultural mechanism through which fashion is conceptualized, interpreted, and communicated.

Conclusion. The metaphorical representations employed in English and Uzbek fashion discourse differ significantly in their conceptual domains, cultural codes, cognitive characteristics, and pragmatic functions. In English fashion discourse, metaphors

predominantly foreground individuality, power, innovation, and creativity, thereby constructing fashion as a dynamic space for personal expression and social distinction. These metaphors promote the perception of fashion as an artistic, identity-forming, and empowering phenomenon, reflecting the value system of Western consumer culture, where self-expression and autonomy play central roles.

In contrast, metaphors found in Uzbek fashion discourse tend to emphasize spirituality, moral values, aesthetic harmony, and collective identity. Fashion is viewed not merely as a tool of self-presentation but as a reflection of social ethics, cultural heritage, and communal norms. Consequently, metaphors in Uzbek discourse present clothing as a moral indicator, a cultural artifact, and a marker of social coherence, reinforcing collectivist principles traditionally associated with Eastern societies.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that the linguo-cognitive nature of fashion metaphors is deeply rooted in the collective worldview and mental structures of each linguistic community. These metaphors encode cultural knowledge and experience, shaping how individuals perceive beauty, evaluate taste, and negotiate identity within their social environment. Moreover, the study of metaphors in fashion discourse provides insight into how societies conceptualize aesthetics, power relations, social stratification, and personal identity.

Overall, the investigation of metaphor within fashion discourse contributes to a deeper understanding of the interaction between language, cognition, and culture. It reveals that fashion language operates not only at the level of verbal expression but also as a cognitive tool that structures thought, reinforces cultural ideologies, and influences communicative behavior. Such findings highlight the importance of metaphor as a key mechanism for interpreting fashion as both a linguistic phenomenon and a cultural practice.

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