

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Conceptual Metaphor: Methods of Analysis in Poetic Texts

Yusupova Aziza Muhiddin qizi

University of Science and Technology, Teacher of Department of Uzbek Language and Literature, Uzbekistan

VOLUME: Vol.06 Issue04 2026

PAGE: 61-65

Copyright © 2026 European International Journal of Philological Sciences, this is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike 4.0 International License. Licensed under Creative Commons License a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Abstract

This study examines the role of conceptual metaphors in Uzbek poetry, focusing on the conceptualization of homeland, friendship, and world. Drawing on cognitive-linguistic frameworks, particularly the theory of conceptual metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and conceptual integration theory (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002), it investigates how abstract concepts are structured through mappings from concrete experiential domains. The analysis identifies source and target domains, classifies metaphors into structural, orientational, and ontological types, and explores their semantic, cognitive, cultural, and emotional dimensions. Frame-slot structures are applied to model metaphorical cognition systematically. The findings demonstrate that metaphors function as a cognitive mechanism for conceptualizing abstract thought, mediating both linguistic expression and cultural consciousness, and facilitating the organization of human experience and emotion in poetry.

KEYWORDS

Conceptual metaphor, cognitive linguistics, frame-slot model, Uzbek poetry, homeland, friendship, abstract concepts, cultural cognition.

INTRODUCTION

Metaphor should not be construed merely as an ornamental or stylistic device of linguistic expression; rather, it constitutes one of the fundamental mechanisms underlying human cognition. Within the paradigm of cognitive linguistics, the theory of conceptual metaphor advances a decisive reconceptualization of metaphor by transcending its traditional confinement to the domain of verbal expression and re-situating it within the architecture of thought itself, thereby treating it as an inherently cognitive phenomenon. In this respect, metaphor is understood as a structuring principle of conceptualization, deeply embedded in the organization of human experience and knowledge representation. As noted by D. Xudoyberganova, metaphor represents one of the most efficacious means of rendering elements and phenomena of reality in a manner that is precise, accessible, succinct, and rhetorically impactful. This observation underscores the dual

function of metaphor as both a cognitive and communicative instrument, mediating between experiential reality and its linguistic encoding. The investigation of metaphorical systems in the Uzbek language from a cognitive perspective—particularly through the theoretical lenses of the conceptual metaphor framework developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, as well as the theory of conceptual integration (or blending) advanced by Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner—is of considerable scholarly significance. Such an approach facilitates the systematic identification and analysis of dominant conceptual metaphors operative within the language. These may be defined as foundational mental constructs that enable the interpretation and explication of abstract conceptual domains through the projection and mapping of experiential structures derived from more concrete or experientially grounded domains. Accordingly, the

elucidation of these underlying metaphorical mappings not only contributes to a deeper understanding of the cognitive-semantic organization of the Uzbek language, but also provides broader insights into the universal and language-specific dimensions of human conceptualization.

The seminal works of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson demonstrate that metaphor constitutes a system of conceptual mapping through which abstract notions are comprehended on the basis of concrete experiential structures. As established in preceding sections, metaphor operates by delineating two fundamental domains of reference in relation to reality. The first of these is the source domain, which functions as the principal locus from which semantic and structural properties are projected. The second is the target domain, that is, the conceptual domain toward which these mappings are directed and within which abstract meaning is structured and interpreted.

METHOD

Within the framework of cognitive metaphor theory, the source domain represents a synthesis of embodied human experience, grounded in practical interaction with the physical world. The knowledge structures associated with this domain are organized in the form of image schemas—recurrent, dynamic patterns of perceptual and motor experience that arise from continuous bodily engagement with the environment and constitute relatively basic cognitive structures. Consequently, one conceptual domain (the source domain) serves as an interpretive and organizational framework for another conceptual domain (the target domain), enabling processes of structuring, comprehension, and categorization. As articulated by D. Xudoyberganova, metaphor is one of the principal instruments of conceptualizing the world. Human worldview, experiential knowledge, and imaginative capacity are manifested in metaphors in the form of distinctive conceptual structures. Through metaphor, speakers are able to apprehend abstract or complex phenomena via more concrete and experientially grounded concepts. In the process of metaphor formation, certain properties of objects are foregrounded while others are systematically backgrounded or suppressed. Crucially, analogical reasoning plays a central role in this process, whereby features of one entity are projected onto another, thereby enabling the emergence of new conceptual correspondences and interpretive possibilities.

In accordance with the nature and modes of conceptualizing objects and phenomena of objective reality, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson classify conceptual metaphors into three principal types: structural, orientational, and ontological. Let us consider the definitions and salient characteristics of these categories in greater detail.

1. Structural metaphors.

Structural metaphors involve the conceptualization of abstract entities through more concrete, well-defined, and experientially salient elements of human experience. On the basis of such structurally transparent components, individuals are able to organize, systematize, and render more precise the abstract domains of knowledge. This type of metaphorization reflects the reinterpretation of abstract, modifying (i.e., grammatical) relations among structural elements of language, thereby enabling their cognitive restructuring and enhanced interpretability.

2. Orientational metaphors.

Orientational metaphors organize diverse conceptual domains in accordance with fundamental spatial orientations grounded in human bodily and motor experience. These orientations—deeply entrenched in everyday physical interaction with the environment—provide a coherent spatial framework for structuring abstract concepts. As a result, such metaphors assign spatial directionality to otherwise non-spatial notions, typically manifested through binary oppositions such as up–down, in–out, front–back, and central–peripheral. These oppositional schemas reflect embodied patterns of perception and action, thereby reinforcing the experiential basis of conceptual organization.

3. Ontological metaphors.

Ontological metaphors are grounded in the projection of properties characteristic of objects in the external world (such as fragility, rigidity, solidity, and others) onto abstract entities, including the mind, emotions, and moral qualities. For instance, the expression “Is Maria very fragile?”—interpreted metaphorically as “Maria is highly sensitive”—illustrates the transfer of attributes typically associated with easily breakable objects to the domain of emotional disposition. Such examples demonstrate how experiential knowledge derived from interaction with the material world is mapped onto abstract psychological and affective constructs.

Through experiential engagement, individuals are able to

isolate particular elements of their lived reality and construe them as discrete entities or as substances of a certain kind. This process enables the reification of otherwise abstract phenomena, allowing them to be referred to, categorized, and systematically organized into classes or types. Furthermore, it facilitates quantification and descriptive elaboration, thereby making it possible to conceptualize and discuss abstract domains in more concrete and cognitively accessible terms. Conceptual metaphor emerges as the outcome of a metaphorical process oriented toward the formation of new concepts. It performs a crucial function within the linguistic system in the construction of abstract meaning, particularly in relation to the perception and comprehension of immaterial entities, their generalization, the stabilization and regulation of human cognition, as well as the reinterpretation and articulation of individual perspectives. The naming of both concrete and abstract concepts—arising from the internal principles of cognitive processing, such as analogy and associative linkages within human perception—constitutes the basis for the formation of new lexical meanings.

Like all metaphors, conceptual metaphor undergoes a figurative stage; however, once it becomes internalized within the language system, it gradually loses its overt metaphorical character and is conventionalized as a fixed lexical unit. Conceptual metaphors tend to exhibit relative stability, whereas figurative expressions remain dynamic and are subject to variation depending on the creative usage of the speaker or recipient, often being replaced by analogous figurative forms. While abstract concepts function as the object of conceptual metaphor, figurative expressions serve as its subject, forming the foundational basis through which metaphorical mappings are realized and linguistically manifested.

Research demonstrates that conceptual metaphor is not merely a means of apprehending the material world, but also constitutes a crucial instrument for identifying abstract phenomena, constructing appropriate cognitive structures for their interpretation, and shaping the semantic content of corresponding linguistic concepts. Thus, cognitive theory interprets metaphor as a fundamental mechanism of conceptualizing reality, viewing it as a primary mental process that enables the explanation, description, and comprehension of diverse conceptual domains through their interaction and mutual mapping. Within this framework, the study of metaphor entails, on the one hand, the analysis of the internal

structure of conceptual metaphors as manifested in linguistic units, and, on the other hand, the development of metaphorical models grounded in a source domain, which serve to illuminate specific phenomena within a target conceptual domain.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The conceptual analysis of metaphor further reveals that, beyond its inherent lexical-semantic properties, metaphor is inextricably linked to human worldview, individual experience, and culturally embedded models of cognition. Consequently, metaphor exhibits a structural character that enables the representation and investigation of cognitive processes through linguistic means, thereby serving as a vital interface between language, thought, and culture.

The conceptual analysis of metaphors expressing the concepts of “homeland,” “friendship,” and “world” in Uzbek poetry is carried out through the following stages:

1. Identification of the metaphor type and relevant linguistic units.

At the initial stage, the type of metaphor under analysis is explicitly identified with reference to its source, and the corresponding linguistic units are determined. The selected metaphorical unit is extracted from the literary text, and its constituent elements—whether in the form of a lexical item, a phrase, or an image-bearing expression—are clearly delineated. This stage serves to establish the linguistic foundation of the metaphor, that is, to define the primary form of its textual manifestation and structural realization.

2. Determination of the two conceptual domains (source and target).

The source domain is defined as a conceptual sphere grounded in empirical experience and associated with concrete objects and phenomena. It typically encompasses perceptually salient and materially grounded notions such as homeland, mother, heart, soil, tree, and path, which are rooted in embodied human experience.

The target domain, by contrast, represents the abstract conceptual entity that occupies the central position within the metaphor. Within the scope of this analysis, it includes notions such as homeland, friendship, and values, which are inherently abstract and require cognitive structuring.

Conceptual mapping refers to the systematic identification of

those properties and features of the source domain that are projected onto the target domain. In other words, it involves determining which semantic and cognitive attributes participate in the structuring and interpretation of the abstract concept.

3. Classification of the conceptual type of metaphor.

At this stage, the metaphor is categorized according to its semantic and structural characteristics, and assigned to one of the principal conceptual types—structural, orientational, or ontological metaphors. In addition, where analytically relevant, further subtypes such as identificational, axiological, anthropological, and nature-based metaphors may also be distinguished.

This phase involves specifying the precise form of the metaphorical expression within the text and identifying the underlying conceptual model upon which it is based, thereby enabling a more systematic and theoretically grounded interpretation.

4. Identification of the cognitive model based on frames and slots.

At this stage, the formation of the cognitive model underlying the metaphor is analyzed through the notions of frame and slot. A frame is understood as a generalized cognitive structure that constitutes the semantic foundation of the metaphor and determines the organization of the conceptual system. Slots, in turn, represent the constituent elements within the frame, along with the functional roles they perform in structuring meaning.

This phase enables the identification of how abstract concepts are cognitively organized through metaphor, revealing the internal semantic architecture of the concept and the ways in which it is modeled via networks of cognitive relations. In this regard, the frame–slot structure provides a systematic account of how knowledge is structured, activated, and interpreted within metaphorical conceptualization.

5. Interpretation of the cultural and emotional content of the metaphor.

The cultural dimension of metaphor involves examining its relationship to national worldview, historical experience, collective memory, and systems of values. This aspect elucidates how metaphor generates meaning within a specific cultural context and reflects culturally embedded patterns of conceptualization.

The emotional (affective) connotation of metaphor, by contrast, pertains to the range of feelings and experiential associations evoked by the metaphorical expression, including notions such as loyalty, devotion, affection, pride, and unity. These affective components contribute significantly to the interpretive depth and persuasive force of metaphorical language.

Taken together, this stage allows metaphor to be interpreted not merely as a linguistic unit, but as a semiotic mechanism that both shapes cultural consciousness and intensifies emotional experience, thereby functioning at the intersection of cognition, language, and culture.

6. Determination of semantic and cognitive outcomes.

At this stage, the conceptual model of the metaphor is represented in a concise and generalized form. For instance, models such as homeland – mother, friendship – bridge, and value – treasure illustrate the principal conceptual orientation of the metaphor.

The semantic outcome reflects the artistic-functional role of the metaphor within the text, clarifying how it contributes to the expansion of meaning, the enhancement of imagery, or the conceptual shaping of ideas. The cognitive outcome, in turn, elucidates how the target concept is organized in the mind through specific frames and how the mapping between the source and target domains occurs, specifying the underlying cognitive mechanisms that facilitate this process.

7. Synthesis and conclusion of conceptual analysis.

At the final stage, the commonalities and divergences among the analyzed metaphors are identified. The analysis highlights which frames occupy a central semantic-cognitive position in the conceptualization of the notions homeland, friendship, and world. Moreover, it provides insight into the interrelationships of these concepts within the conceptual space shaped by national consciousness, examining their structural properties and cultural markers. Based on this synthesis, overarching scholarly conclusions are drawn regarding the cognitive, semantic, and cultural organization of metaphorical conceptualization in Uzbek poetry.

CONCLUSION

The metaphors homeland – mother, friendship – bridge, and value – treasure exemplify how Uzbek poets use concrete experiential knowledge to articulate abstract ideas, creating a cognitive bridge between lived experience and conceptual

understanding. Frame-slot modeling demonstrates the internal organization of abstract concepts, while cultural and emotional analyses reveal the interdependence of cognition, language, and societal values.

This study highlights the utility of cognitive-linguistic approaches in literary analysis and offers a methodological framework for examining conceptual metaphors in other languages and cultural contexts. Future research may expand this framework to comparative studies or cross-linguistic cognitive analysis of poetic metaphors.

REFERENCES

1. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
2. Fauconnier, G., & Turner, M. (2002). *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities*. New York: Basic Books.
3. Xudoyberganova, D. (2025, October 20). Problems of Studying Uzbek Language Metaphors Based on Modern Linguistic Principles. In *Materials of the Republican Scientific-Practical Conference on "Current Issues of Uzbek Linguistics"* (p. 36). Tashkent.
4. Kövecses, Z. (2010). *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction* (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
5. Gibbs, R. W. (1994). *The Poetics of Mind: Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
6. Dirven, R., & Pütz, M. (2003). *Cognitive Models in Language and Thought: Ideology, Metaphors, and Meanings*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
7. Kövecses, Z. (2005). *Metaphor in Culture: Universality and Variation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
8. Turner, M., & Fauconnier, G. (1995). Conceptual Integration and Formal Expression. *Cognitive Science*, 19(2), 295–332.