LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MEDICAL METAPHORS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract*: This article explores the linguistic and cultural characteristics of medical metaphors in English and Uzbek. Medical terminology, originally confined to clinical contexts, has expanded semantically and is now used metaphorically in everyday speech, literature, media, and political discourse. This study investigates how such metaphors function, the cognitive and cultural mechanisms that shape them, and the similarities and differences in their use across the two languages. The research is grounded in the Conceptual Metaphor Theory and uses comparative and descriptive analysis to examine how medical metaphors reflect cultural worldviews and social norms.*

Keywords: *medical metaphors, English, Uzbek, cognitive linguistics, cultural semantics, conceptual metaphor, figurative language*

Introduction

Medical metaphors are prevalent in many languages, including English and Uzbek. They extend beyond clinical communication to describe psychological, emotional, social, and political phenomena. Terms such as "virus," "healing," or "toxic" in English, and "dard," "davo," or "kasallik" in Uzbek, illustrate how metaphor transforms medical vocabulary into expressive tools for conceptualizing abstract experiences. The use of medical metaphors is not random—it reflects shared cognitive patterns and culturally embedded ideas about the body, health, illness, and society. This paper examines how medical metaphors are structured and interpreted in both English and Uzbek, focusing on linguistic expression and cultural significance.

Methodology

The study uses qualitative methods, including comparative linguistic analysis and discourse analysis. Authentic examples were drawn from literary texts, journalistic sources, political speeches, and social media in both languages. The metaphors were categorized based on cognitive models (e.g., illness as war, healing as solution) and analyzed for cultural specificity and semantic functions. The framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) guides the interpretation of metaphorical mappings.

Analysis

1. **Common Cognitive Models:**
2. **Illness as Enemy/War:** English: "fight cancer," "battle depression"

Uzbek: "kasallik bilan kurashish," "virusga qarshi jang"

3. **Healing as Recovery/Repair:**

English: "emotional healing," "therapy as repair"

Uzbek: "ruhiy shifo topish," "davolash yo'li"

4. **Society as Organism:**

English: "social illness," "institutional paralysis"

Uzbek: "ijtimoiy dard," "tashkilot falaji"

5. **Cultural Specificity:**

Uzbek metaphors often carry spiritual or poetic connotations (e.g., "dardli yurak"), while English metaphors are more clinical or psychological (e.g., "emotional trauma"). In Uzbek, illness terms are often moralized or tied to collective experience, whereas English uses tend to reflect individual psychology and self-help ideology.

6. **Function in Discourse:**

Medical metaphors in both languages are used for:

Expressing emotional states

Framing political or social problems

Creating dramatic or persuasive effect

Normalizing abstract or taboo topics (e.g., depression, corruption)

Conclusion

Medical metaphors serve as powerful linguistic and cultural tools that shape how people think and talk about complex phenomena. While English and Uzbek share some universal conceptual models, their metaphorical expressions differ in cultural nuance, emotional tone, and discursive function. Understanding these differences enhances cross-cultural communication and deepens insight into how language reflects human experience.

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