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THE CONCEPT OF HOME IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK PROVERBS: COGNITIVE LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract. Proverbs represent an essential component of cultural heritage, preserving the collective knowledge, beliefs, and values of a society. They function not only as linguistic units but also as reflections of national identity and cultural cognition. Among the numerous cultural concepts encoded in proverbs, the concept of home occupies a central position because it is associated with family relationships, emotional security, social responsibility, and cultural traditions. Although English and Uzbek proverbs have developed in different historical, geographical, and social contexts, both linguistic communities demonstrate a strong conceptualization of home as a place of protection, unity, and moral education. This study investigates the conceptual representation of home in English and Uzbek proverbs from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. The research aims to identify the major conceptual domains associated with home and to compare their linguistic realization in both languages. The analysis is based on the principles of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Cognitive Semantics, which explain how abstract concepts are structured through human experience and cultural knowledge.

The findings reveal that both English and Uzbek proverbs conceptualize home as a symbol of safety, family solidarity, personal identity, emotional comfort, and material prosperity. Nevertheless, cultural differences influence the prominence of these conceptual categories.

Keywords: cognitive linguistics, concept, home, proverb, English, Uzbek,

conceptual metaphor, culture.

Language is one of the most powerful instruments through which people perceive, organize, and transmit knowledge about the surrounding world. Cognitive linguistics[1] views language as an integral part of human cognition rather than an autonomous system of grammatical rules. According to this perspective, linguistic expressions are closely connected with conceptual structures formed through people's physical, social, and cultural experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Proverbs provide valuable material for investigating these conceptual structures because they preserve centuries of collective experience in a concise linguistic form. The concept of home occupies a unique place in every culture. It is commonly associated with physical shelter, emotional warmth, family relations, social identity, and spiritual values. In cognitive linguistics, concepts are regarded as mental structures that organize human knowledge and experience. As Langacker (1987) argues, meaning is grounded in conceptualization rather than isolated lexical definitions.

Likewise, Kövecses (2015) emphasizes that conceptual metaphors reveal how abstract ideas are understood through concrete human experiences. The notion of home illustrates this cognitive

[1] Cognitive Linguistics studies the relationship between language, thought, and human experience rather than treating language as an isolated formal system.

mechanism particularly well because it extends beyond a physical building to symbolize protection, belonging, family, morality, and identity.

Previous studies have examined proverbs from lexical, semantic, stylistic, and cultural perspectives (Mieder, 2004; Wierzbicka, 1997). Other scholars have investigated conceptual metaphors[2] in different languages (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2015). Nevertheless, comparatively little attention has been devoted to the cognitive analysis of the concept of home in English and Uzbek proverbs. Existing research generally focuses on translation or cultural comparison without exploring the underlying conceptual structures that motivate proverbial meanings.

This study seeks to bridge this gap by addressing the following research questions:

What conceptual domains constitute the concept of home in English and Uzbek proverbs?

Which conceptual features are shared by both linguistic cultures?

What culture-specific conceptual differences can be observed?

How does cognitive linguistic theory explain these similarities and differences?

The relationship between language and human cognition has become one of the central concerns of modern linguistic research. Unlike traditional linguistic approaches that primarily focus on grammatical structures, cognitive linguistics considers language as an inseparable part of human conceptualization. Meaning is not viewed as an isolated linguistic phenomenon; rather, it emerges from people's interaction with the physical, social, and cultural world. According to Langacker (1987), linguistic expressions reflect the conceptual structures stored in the human mind, making language an important source for understanding cognitive processes.

Paremiologists have long recognized proverbs as an important source for investigating national mentality. Mieder (2004) defines proverbs as concise traditional statements expressing collective wisdom, moral principles, and practical experience. Because proverbs are transmitted over generations, they preserve cultural knowledge more effectively than many other linguistic forms. Their figurative language also makes them particularly suitable for cognitive-semantic analysis. In English, numerous proverbs demonstrate the symbolic value of home. Expressions such as "East or West, home is best" or "An Englishman's home is his castle" conceptualize home as the safest and most valued place in human life. These proverbs emphasize privacy, independence, and personal responsibility, reflecting cultural values commonly associated with English-speaking societies.

Although a number of studies have explored metaphor, culture, and proverbs separately, relatively few investigations have compared the concept of home in English and Uzbek proverbs from a cognitive linguistic perspective. Most previous research has concentrated on lexical meaning, translation equivalence, or stylistic characteristics, leaving the underlying conceptual structures insufficiently examined. This gap justifies the present study, which combines cognitive semantics with comparative paremiology to identify both universal and culture-specific representations of the concept of home. By integrating Conceptual Metaphor Theory[3], Cognitive Grammar[4], and cultural semantic analysis, the present research seeks to demonstrate that proverbs

[2] Conceptual Metaphor Theory, introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), explains how people understand abstract concepts through more concrete experiences.

[3]Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposes that abstract concepts are systematically understood through more concrete experiences.

[4] Langacker's Cognitive Grammar explains that linguistic meaning is grounded in conceptualization rather than in formal grammatical structures alone.

are not only linguistic expressions but also cognitive models reflecting how societies perceive family, identity, security, and everyday life.

Based on preliminary observations, the proverbs were classified into five major conceptual categories:

- Home as a Symbol of Safety
- Home as the Centre of Family Life
- Home as Personal Space and Identity

These conceptual categories emerged repeatedly during the analysis and therefore served as the principal framework for interpreting the collected data.

Home as a Symbol of Safety[5]. The analysis demonstrates that one of the most dominant conceptualizations in both English and Uzbek proverbs is the perception of home as a place of safety and protection. Regardless of cultural background, home is consistently portrayed as a secure environment where individuals find physical shelter, emotional stability, and psychological comfort. This shared conceptualization reflects a universal human experience, suggesting that the need for safety is one of the fundamental cognitive motivations underlying the concept of home. A well-known English proverb, "East or West, home is best" emphasizes that no place can replace one's own home, regardless of external attractions or material advantages. The proverb expresses the cognitive metaphor HOME IS THE SAFEST PLACE, where emotional attachment outweighs geographical location or economic conditions. Similarly, the proverb "An Englishman's home is his castle[6]" conceptualizes home as a private and protected territory. The metaphor of a "castle" highlights security, independence, and personal autonomy, reflecting values traditionally associated with English society.

Uzbek proverbs convey a similar conceptual meaning, although their cultural emphasis differs slightly. The proverb "O'z uying – o'lan to'shaging" suggests that even modest living conditions in one's own home are preferable to luxury elsewhere. Rather than focusing on material comfort, the proverb underlines emotional belonging and personal dignity. From a cognitive perspective, both languages activate the conceptual domain of PROTECTION when referring to home. However, the linguistic realization differs. English proverbs often stress individual ownership, privacy, and legal independence, whereas Uzbek proverbs highlight emotional attachment, family solidarity, and spiritual well-being[7].

Home as the Centre of Family Life. The second major conceptual category identified in the corpus is home as the centre of family relationships. Unlike the previous category, which primarily emphasizes protection, this conceptualization highlights interpersonal relationships, moral education, emotional support, and social responsibility within the family. In English paremiology, family life is often represented through proverbs stressing mutual care and responsibility. Expressions such as "Charity begins at home" indicate that moral values should first be practiced within one's own family before extending to society. Here, home functions as the primary environment in which ethical behaviour, compassion, and social responsibility are learned. Uzbek proverbs place even greater emphasis on family unity and collective harmony. Proverbs such as "Oila tinch – yurt tinch" illustrate the belief that social stability begins within the family. Although

[5] The metaphor HOME IS THE SAFEST PLACE emerges repeatedly in both English and Uzbek proverbial traditions, although each culture highlights different aspects of security.

[6]The expression An Englishman's home is his castle reflects historical concepts of privacy, legal ownership, and personal autonomy in English culture.

[7] Uzbek proverbs frequently conceptualize home through family relationships and collective well-being rather than through individual ownership alone

the proverb refers directly to the family rather than the house itself, it conceptually links domestic harmony with national prosperity.

Home as Personal Space and Identity. Another significant conceptual domain identified in the corpus is the representation of home as a symbol of personal identity and individual belonging. From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, home is not merely a physical location but also a cognitive space through which individuals define themselves, preserve their memories, and construct their social identity. This conceptualization appears in both English and Uzbek proverbs, although its cultural interpretation differs considerably. In English proverbial discourse, the concept of home is frequently associated with individuality and personal freedom. The proverb "There is no place like home" expresses the irreplaceable value of one's own home regardless of external circumstances. Although simple in structure, the proverb reflects a complex cognitive model in which home becomes the centre of personal identity, emotional attachment, and self-recognition.

Uzbek proverbs reveal a similar conceptual pattern but place stronger emphasis on social identity rather than individual identity. Proverbs such as "Har kimning o'z uyi – o'ziga aziz" indicate that home is closely connected with honour, family reputation, and ancestral heritage. In Uzbek culture, one's home symbolizes not only the individual but also the history, traditions, and dignity of the entire family. From the viewpoint of cognitive semantics, these proverbs instantiate the conceptual metaphor HOME IS IDENTITY. While English proverbs emphasize individual ownership and self-expression, Uzbek proverbs associate identity with family lineage, respect for ancestors, and social responsibility.

The findings support the theoretical assumptions of Cognitive Linguistics and Conceptual Metaphor Theory, demonstrating that proverbial expressions are not merely stylistic devices but reflections of deeply embedded conceptual structures. The analysis confirms that metaphorical models such as HOME IS SAFETY, HOME IS FAMILY, and HOME IS IDENTITY organize people's understanding of domestic life and shape cultural patterns of thought. Consequently, proverbs provide important evidence for investigating the interaction between language, cognition, and culture. From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes to the fields of cognitive linguistics, comparative paremiology, cultural semantics, and intercultural communication by expanding current knowledge of conceptual representation in two linguistically and culturally distinct communities.

In conclusion, the concept of home represents far more than a physical place in both English and Uzbek proverbial traditions. It serves as a cognitive symbol of security, identity, emotional attachment, moral values, and cultural continuity.

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