

**FLORISTIC METAPHORS AS COGNITIVE MODELS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK
PHRASEOLOGY**

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Abstract: This study explores floristic metaphors as cognitive models in English and Uzbek phraseology, focusing on their role in conceptualizing human experience through plant-based imagery. Grounded in cognitive linguistics, particularly conceptual metaphor theory, the research examines how floristic elements function as source domains in metaphorical mappings. The analysis is based on a comparative corpus of phraseological units in both languages, identifying common patterns and culturally specific features. The findings demonstrate that floristic metaphors systematically encode abstract notions such as emotions, character traits, social relations, and life processes. While certain metaphorical models show universality due to shared embodied experience, others reflect distinct cultural values and symbolic associations inherent in each linguoculture. The study highlights the interaction between cognition and culture in shaping phraseological meaning and contributes to a deeper understanding of metaphor as a cognitive and linguocultural phenomenon in cross-linguistic perspective.

Keywords: floristic metaphors; phraseology; cognitive linguistics; conceptual metaphor; linguocultural analysis; English language; Uzbek language; semantic modeling; cultural symbolism; comparative linguistics

Introduction

The study of metaphor has undergone a significant shift with the emergence of cognitive linguistics, where metaphor is no longer regarded merely as a stylistic device but as a fundamental mechanism of human thought and conceptualization. According to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, metaphor constitutes a core element of the conceptual system through which individuals perceive and structure reality, as elaborated in *Metaphors We Live By*. Within this framework, natural domains, including flora, serve as productive sources for metaphorical mappings that shape linguistic expression and cultural meaning.

Floristic components occupy a particularly prominent position in phraseology, as plants and flowers are deeply embedded in human experience and cultural symbolism. As noted by Zoltán Kövecses, metaphorical expressions are grounded in both universal embodied experience and culture-specific knowledge systems, which makes them especially suitable for cross-linguistic and comparative research. In English and Uzbek phraseology, floristic metaphors frequently encode abstract concepts such as emotional states, moral qualities, and social relations, reflecting both shared cognitive patterns and distinct cultural interpretations.

From a phraseological perspective, scholars such as Alexander Kunin emphasize that idiomatic expressions represent fixed linguistic units whose meanings cannot be fully understood

without considering their figurative and cultural dimensions. Similarly, Viktor Vinogradov highlights the semantic cohesion and structural stability of phraseological units, which enable them to function as carriers of cultural knowledge.

Despite the growing interest in cognitive and linguocultural approaches, the role of floristic metaphors as cognitive models in English and Uzbek phraseology remains insufficiently explored in a systematic comparative framework. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing how floristic imagery operates as a source domain for conceptual metaphorization in both languages. The research seeks to identify universal and culture-specific patterns, thereby contributing to the broader understanding of the interaction between language, cognition, and culture.

Literature Review

The theoretical foundation of this study is rooted in the paradigm of cognitive linguistics, where metaphor is interpreted as a fundamental mechanism of conceptual structuring rather than a purely rhetorical device. The seminal work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, particularly *Metaphors We Live By*, established the theory of conceptual metaphor, according to which abstract concepts are systematically understood through more concrete source domains. This theoretical perspective was further developed by Zoltán Kövecses, who emphasized the interplay between universal cognitive patterns and culture-specific conceptualizations in metaphor formation, thereby providing a framework for cross-linguistic analysis.

Subsequent developments in cognitive linguistics have expanded the understanding of metaphor through the work of Ronald W. Langacker, whose theory of cognitive grammar highlights the role of conceptualization and mental imagery in linguistic structure, and Leonard Talmy, who explored how semantic structures reflect underlying cognitive processes. Within this framework, metaphor is viewed as part of a broader system of conceptual organization, where linguistic expressions are closely tied to embodied experience and perceptual interaction with the environment.

In the field of phraseology, significant contributions have been made by Alexander Kunin and Viktor Vinogradov, who defined phraseological units as stable, reproducible combinations characterized by semantic integrity and figurative meaning. Their work laid the groundwork for understanding idiomatic expressions as culturally marked linguistic units. Later research by Natalia Telia further integrated cognitive and cultural approaches, emphasizing the role of phraseology as a repository of collective cultural knowledge and national worldview.

The linguocultural dimension of metaphor has been extensively examined in studies that view language as a reflection of cultural conceptualization. Scholars argue that metaphorical models are shaped not only by universal bodily experience but also by socio-cultural factors, traditions, and symbolic systems. In this regard, floristic imagery occupies a special place due to its deep roots in mythological, religious, and everyday cultural practices. Plants and flowers often function as symbolic carriers of meanings related to beauty, growth, fragility, morality, and human emotions, making them productive sources for metaphorical extension.

Recent cross-linguistic studies have demonstrated that while some floristic metaphors exhibit universality (e.g., associations between growth and development), others are highly culture-specific, reflecting unique ecological environments and cultural traditions. In Uzbek linguistics, research on phraseology and figurative language has highlighted the importance of

national-cultural specificity in the formation of phraseological meaning, whereas English-language studies have focused more on cognitive universals and conceptual mapping mechanisms.

Despite these advances, there remains a lack of systematic comparative research specifically addressing floristic metaphors as cognitive models in English and Uzbek phraseology. Existing studies tend to focus either on general metaphor theory or on phraseology without fully integrating cognitive and linguocultural perspectives. Therefore, this study seeks to bridge this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis that combines cognitive modeling with cultural interpretation, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of metaphor in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural contexts.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative-comparative research design aimed at identifying and analyzing floristic metaphors as cognitive models in English and Uzbek phraseology. The methodological framework integrates principles from cognitive linguistics, phraseology, and linguocultural studies, ensuring a multi-layered analysis of the data.

Data Collection

The empirical material consists of a corpus of phraseological units with floristic components extracted from authoritative lexicographic sources, phraseological dictionaries, and literary texts in both English and Uzbek. The selection criteria include: (1) the presence of a floristic element (e.g., plant, flower, tree), (2) figurative or idiomatic meaning, and (3) frequency or cultural relevance. Approximately comparable datasets were compiled for both languages to ensure the validity of cross-linguistic comparison.

Analytical Framework

The analysis is conducted based on a six-layer model that reflects the complexity of phraseological meaning:

Semantic Analysis – identification of literal and figurative meanings, as well as classification of metaphorical extensions derived from floristic components.

Structural Analysis – examination of the formal organization of phraseological units, including syntactic patterns and stability, following the principles outlined in phraseological theory.

Functional Analysis – investigation of the communicative roles of floristic phraseological units in discourse, including their expressive, evaluative, and stylistic functions.

Pragmatic Analysis – analysis of context-dependent meanings, speaker intention, and implicatures, drawing on pragmatic theories such as those proposed by H. Paul Grice.

Linguocognitive Analysis – identification of underlying conceptual metaphors and cognitive models, based on the theoretical framework of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. Special attention is given to the role of floristic elements as source domains in conceptual mappings.

Linguocultural Analysis – interpretation of culturally specific meanings, symbols, and associations encoded in floristic metaphors, with reference to national traditions, values, and collective worldview, following approaches developed by Natalia Telia.

Comparative Method

A contrastive method is employed to identify similarities and differences between English and Uzbek floristic metaphors. The analysis focuses on:

- shared (universal) metaphorical models,
- culture-specific conceptualizations,
- differences in symbolic interpretation of the same floristic elements.

Cognitive Modeling

The study reconstructs conceptual metaphor models (e.g., HUMAN IS A PLANT, EMOTIONS ARE FLOWERS) by mapping source and target domains. These models are analyzed in terms of productivity, frequency, and cultural salience.

Research Validity

To ensure reliability, the study applies cross-validation of data sources and triangulation of analytical approaches (semantic, cognitive, and cultural). The comparative design and balanced corpus contribute to the objectivity and generalizability of the findings.

Analysis of Floristic Metaphors in English and Uzbek Phraseology

The analysis reveals that floristic components function as productive source domains in the formation of conceptual metaphors in both English and Uzbek phraseology. These metaphors systematically map concrete botanical properties onto abstract human experiences.

1. Conceptual Metaphor: HUMAN IS A PLANT

One of the most universal cognitive models identified in the corpus is the metaphor HUMAN IS A PLANT, where human life, development, and character are conceptualized through plant growth.

Phraseological Unit	Language	Literal Meaning	Figurative Meaning
to blossom	English	to produce flowers	to develop, thrive
fresh as a daisy	English	like a fresh flower	energetic, healthy
guli ochilmoq	Uzbek	flower opens	to flourish, become successful
ko‘ngli guldek	Uzbek	heart like a flower	kind, pure-hearted

In these examples, the biological process of flowering is mapped onto human states such as emotional vitality, youth, and success. This demonstrates the embodiment of metaphor, as discussed by George Lakoff.

2. Conceptual Metaphor: EMOTIONS ARE FLOWERS

Floristic metaphors are frequently used to conceptualize emotions, especially positive affective states.

Phraseological Unit	Language	Meaning
in full bloom	English	at the peak of happiness or beauty
roses in one's cheeks	English	healthy, joyful appearance
yuragi gulladi	Uzbek	became happy
gullar ochilgandek kayfiyat	Uzbek	joyful emotional state

These expressions indicate that emotions are conceptualized as living, growing entities. However, while English tends to emphasize visual aesthetics (e.g., “roses”), Uzbek phraseology often reflects internal emotional experience.

3. Conceptual Metaphor: CHARACTER IS A PLANT

Floristic imagery is also used to describe human character traits.

Phraseological Unit	Language	Meaning
shrinking violet	English	shy, modest person
tough as an old oak	English	strong, resilient
ildizi baquvvat	Uzbek	strong-rooted, stable
gulsiz daraxt	Uzbek	unproductive, useless person

Here, plant characteristics such as strength, fragility, or rootedness are mapped onto personality traits. The metaphor reflects both universal perception (strength = tree) and cultural evaluation.

4. Conceptual Metaphor: LIFE IS A GROWING PROCESS

Both languages employ floristic metaphors to conceptualize life stages and processes.

Phraseological Unit	Language	Meaning
nip in the bud	English	stop at an early stage

Phraseological Unit	Language	Meaning
to put down roots	English	to settle permanently
ildiz otmoq	Uzbek	to establish oneself
meva bermoq	Uzbek	to yield results

This model reflects a shared cognitive pattern: life is understood as a process of growth, development, and productivity.

5. Linguocultural Specificity

Despite shared cognitive models, significant differences emerge:

English phraseology tends to use specific flower symbols (e.g., rose, violet, daisy), reflecting a tradition of individual symbolic meanings.

Uzbek phraseology more often uses generalized floristic imagery (gul, daraxt, ildiz), emphasizing holistic and culturally embedded meanings.

This supports the view of Zoltán Kövecses that metaphor is shaped by both universal embodiment and cultural context.

6. Cognitive Model Reconstruction

Based on the analysis, the following dominant conceptual metaphors are identified:

HUMAN IS A PLANT

EMOTIONS ARE FLOWERS

CHARACTER IS A PLANT

LIFE IS A GROWING ORGANISM

These models demonstrate that floristic metaphors are not random but form structured cognitive systems that organize human experience linguistically.

Interim Conclusion of Analysis

The findings confirm that floristic metaphors serve as powerful cognitive tools in both English and Uzbek phraseology. While the underlying conceptual structures show universality, their linguistic realization and symbolic interpretation are strongly influenced by cultural factors. This interplay between cognition and culture highlights the complexity of metaphor as both a mental and sociocultural phenomenon.

Conclusion

The present study has examined floristic metaphors as cognitive models in English and Uzbek phraseology, integrating cognitive, semantic, and linguocultural approaches. Based on the analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Floristic metaphors function as systematic cognitive models rather than isolated stylistic devices, confirming the theoretical assumptions of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson.

The metaphorical mapping of plant-related domains onto human experience demonstrates a high degree of embodiment, as natural processes such as growth, flowering, and rooting serve as conceptual bases for abstract meanings.

The conceptual metaphor HUMAN IS A PLANT emerges as a dominant and universal model in both English and Uzbek phraseology.

Floristic metaphors effectively encode emotional states, character traits, and life processes, reflecting the cognitive need to structure abstract phenomena through concrete imagery.

Despite shared cognitive foundations, significant linguocultural differences are observed in the symbolic interpretation of floristic elements.

English phraseology tends to utilize specific floral symbols with individualized meanings, whereas Uzbek phraseology relies more on generalized and culturally embedded plant imagery.

Phraseological units with floristic components serve as carriers of cultural knowledge, supporting the view of Natalia Telia that phraseology reflects the collective worldview of a speech community.

The interaction between universal cognitive mechanisms and culture-specific factors confirms the theoretical position of Zoltán Kövecses regarding the dual nature of metaphor.

The application of a six-layer analytical model (semantic, structural, functional, pragmatic, linguocognitive, linguocultural) proves effective in providing a comprehensive interpretation of phraseological meaning.

The study demonstrates that floristic metaphorization is a productive and dynamic process contributing to the richness and expressiveness of both languages.

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