Conceptualization of Emotion in English and Uzbek: A Cognitive-Semantic Typology

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Abstract: This article investigates how emotions are conceptualized in English and Uzbek through a cognitive-semantic lens, with a particular focus on metaphor, metonymy, cultural models, and typological contrasts. Although both languages rely on embodied experience to structure emotional meanings, they diverge significantly in the imagery, metaphoric extensions, and cultural scripts associated with core emotions such as anger, love, fear, and sadness. Drawing on cognitive linguistics and cross-linguistic typology, the study argues that emotional meanings are not universal but culturally contoured. English foregrounds individual experience and psychological internalization, whereas Uzbek frequently encodes relational, social, and honor-based dimensions. Data from dictionaries, corpora, literary usage, and common phraseological units form the basis of analysis. The findings demonstrate that emotion conceptualization reflects deeper cultural orientations: English tends toward psychological individuation, while Uzbek emphasizes collectivist, honor-sensitive models grounded in the heart, liver, soul, and "inner world." These insights contribute to a broader understanding of how languages encode human experience differently.
Keywords: conceptual metaphor; cognitive semantics; emotion typology; English–Uzbek comparison; cultural scripts; embodiment; phraseological units; cross-linguistic cognition

Emotion is one of the most universal yet culturally variable domains of human cognition. Cognitive linguistics asserts that emotions are understood through conceptual structures formed by bodily experience and shaped by cultural knowledge [1]. The metaphorical and metonymic patterns used to talk about emotions reveal how speakers of a language categorize, evaluate, and reason about inner states. English and Uzbek offer a productive comparison

because they belong to different typological groups—English to the Germanic branch of Indo-European and Uzbek to the Turkic family—yet share many everyday emotional concerns. Despite this, each language maps emotions onto the body, the environment, and social relations in distinct ways, producing different cognitive-semantic profiles. The aim of this article is to compare the conceptualization of emotions in English and Uzbek and to identify typological regularities that characterize each system. The main research questions are:

1. How do English and Uzbek use metaphor and metonymy to conceptualize key emotions?

2. What cultural scripts underlie emotion expression in each language?

3. To what extent do bodily imagery and idioms reflect broader worldview differences?

This topic is academically valuable because emotional cognition is one of the core domains for testing the claim that linguistic meaning arises from embodied experience filtered through culture [2].

Theoretical Framework

The analysis is grounded in cognitive-semantic theory, especially the work of Lakoff and Johnson on conceptual metaphor [1], Langacker's view of construal and imagery [3], and Kövecses's cross-cultural emotion studies [2]. From these perspectives, emotions are not purely internal, private states; instead, they are conceptualized through metaphoric mappings that structure how speakers talk and think about them.

Three theoretical components guide this study:

Conceptual Metaphor: Emotions are often expressed through metaphors such as **ANGER IS HEAT**, **LOVE IS A JOURNEY**, or **FEAR IS COLD**. These mappings are grounded in bodily responses to emotions—heat, movement, shaking, or coldness.

Metonymy: Emotions may also be conceptualized metonymically—for example, **heart** standing for affection, **face color** for shame, or **voice trembling** for fear [2].

Cultural Scripts: Cultural norms influence how emotions can be displayed or suppressed. English emphasizes individuality and emotional privacy, while Uzbek values relational responsibility, respect, and social harmony [4].

Methodology: This study uses a qualitative comparative method. Data were collected from:

- English corpora (COCA, BNC)
- Uzbek dictionaries and phraseological collections
- Literary texts from both languages
- Common colloquial expressions used in daily communication

Emotions analyzed include anger, love, sadness, and fear because these are universal yet culturally variable categories. The expressions were grouped by metaphorical source domains (heat, container, force, journey, natural phenomena, etc.) and evaluated in terms of typological and cultural motivations. Analytical coding followed established procedures in

cognitive linguistics [3].

Analysis

Anger Conceptualization: Both languages conceptualize anger as heat, pressure, and loss of control. In English, expressions such as *"boil with anger," "hot-tempered," "burst with rage"* reproduce the **ANGER IS HEAT IN A PRESSURIZED CONTAINER** metaphor [1]. The container is usually the body as a whole. In Uzbek, similar patterns appear: *"g'azabdan qaynamoq," "ichiga sig'may qolmoq," "lovullab ketmoq."* However, Uzbek frequently specifies internal organs, especially the liver (*jigar*) and heart (*yurak*). For example, *"jigari kuyib ketdi"* ("his liver burned with anger") links anger to internal burning, which reflects culturally specific somatic mapping [4]. Where English tends to conceptualize anger as **explosive**, Uzbek imagery often emphasizes **internal suffering** or **burning**, revealing a more inward, relational evaluation of the emotional event.

Love Conceptualization: English heavily relies on the **LOVE IS A JOURNEY** metaphor: *"their relationship went off track," "we are at a crossroads,"* and *"they drifted apart."* This metaphor encodes love as movement, progress, and directionality [2]. Uzbek, however, favors metaphors of **union and destiny**: *"ko'ngli tushmoq," "ko'ngillar uyg'un bo'ldi,"* *"taqdir ularni uchrashtirdi."* The concept of *ko'ngil* ("heart-mind-soul") is essential in Uzbek emotional semantics. Unlike the English *heart*, which is largely sentimental, *ko'ngil* reflects a holistic model involving emotion, intuition, moral value, and social appropriateness [4]. Thus, while English portrays love as a path chosen by individuals, Uzbek describes it as a deep harmony or fate-driven connection.

Sadness Conceptualization: In English, sadness is typically associated with downward movement or heaviness: *"feeling down," "her spirits sank," "a heavy heart."* These metaphors express **SADNESS IS DOWN** and **SADNESS IS WEIGHT** [1]. Uzbek uses similar downward metaphors (*"ko'ngli cho'kdi," "ruhi tushdi"*), yet also draws heavily on metaphors of **emptiness** and **brokenness**: *"ichidan bo'shab qoldi," "ko'ngli sinib ketdi."* The use of *ko'ngil* again points to a culturally shaped emotional center located not just in the body but in the moral self. This suggests that sadness in Uzbek is often tied to social disappointment, honor, and relational strain, rather than purely internal emotional decline.

Fear Conceptualization: English commonly uses metaphors of **coldness** (*"frozen with fear," "a cold shiver ran down her spine"*) and **loss of bodily control** (*"shaking with fear," "her heart raced"*) [2]. Uzbek conceptualizations include *"eti jimirlab ketdi"* ("his skin shivered"), *"yuragi orqasiga tortdi"* ("his heart pulled back"), and *"qoni qochdi"* ("his blood fled"). These vividly somatic expressions reflect strong embodiment where fear is described through rapid internal bodily changes. The Uzbek expressions foreground physical transformations that appear more intense and visible than in English, aligning with a narrative style that portrays emotions as concrete bodily events.

Discussion

The analysis reveals both shared cognitive foundations and culturally specific elaborations.

Shared Embodiment: Both languages use bodily responses—heat, movement, trembling, heaviness—to understand emotion. This supports the cognitive-semantic claim that emotions derive from universal bodily experience [1].

Cultural Divergence: However, the languages diverge in how these bodily metaphors are elaborated:

- **English** emphasizes *psychological interiority*, individuation, and personal agency.
- **Uzbek** highlights *interpersonal relationships*, honor, social resonance, and somatic localization (heart, liver, soul).

The centrality of _ko'ngil_ in Uzbek creates a conceptual system that integrates emotion with moral value, whereas English typically separates emotion from ethical judgment.

Typological Implications

Typologically, English uses more abstract and trajectory-based metaphors, while Uzbek relies on embodied organs and culturally significant bodily imagery. These findings support cross-linguistic research showing that emotions are culturally conceptualized cognitive constructs rather than purely biological experiences [2], [4].

This study demonstrates that although English and Uzbek share universal embodied grounding for emotions, they diverge significantly in cognitive-semantic patterns shaped by culture. English relies on metaphors of movement, containment, and psychological states, while Uzbek foregrounds somatic imagery, the centrality of the heart and _ko'ngil,_ and the relational dimension of emotional experience. These differences highlight how language encodes culturally specific models of self, society, and human experience. Further research could incorporate corpus-based frequency analysis, discourse studies, or psycholinguistic experiments to measure how speakers interpret these metaphors in real time.

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