



LINGUOCULTUROLOGICAL PECULIARITIES OF TRANSLATING CULTURAL CONCEPTS BETWEEN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the study of the linguoculturological peculiarities of translating cultural concepts in English and Uzbek languages, focusing on their linguistic representation and the influence of national worldviews. The analysis combines contrastive linguoculturological and semantic componentative approaches, treating concepts as universal units or national lacunae. The methodological basis of the research includes corpus analysis, the method of semantic primitives, and comparative linguistic approaches to identify translation equivalence. Furthermore, specific methods for addressing cultural differences in translation practice and English language teaching are proposed.

Keywords: linguoculturology, cultural concept, translation peculiarities, intercultural communication, collectivism, contrastive analysis, semantic primitives, cultural lacuna.

Introduction

ЛИНГВОКУЛЬТУРОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ ПЕРЕВОДА КУЛЬТУРНЫХ КОНЦЕПТОВ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ И УЗБЕКСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ

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Аннотация

Данная статья посвящена изучению лингвокультурологических особенностей перевода культурных концептов в английском и узбекском языках, их лингвистической репрезентации и влиянию национального мировоззрения на процесс перевода. Анализ объединяет контрастивный лингвокультурологический и семантический компонентативный подходы, рассматривая концепты как универсальные единицы и национальные лакуны. Методологическую основу исследования составляют корпусный анализ, метод семантических примитивов, контекстуальный и сопоставительный лингвистический подходы для выявления переводческой эквивалентности. Кроме того, предлагаются методы работы с культурными концептами в практике перевода и преподавания английского языка.

Ключевые слова: лингвокультурология, культурный концепт, особенности перевода, межкультурная коммуникация, коллективизм, контрастивный анализ, семантические примитивы, культурная лакуна.

INGLIZ VA O‘ZBEK TILLARIDA MADANIY KONSEPTLARNI TARJIMA QILISHNING LINGVOKULTUROLOGIK XUSUSIYATLARI

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Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqola ingliz va o'zbek tillarida madaniy konseptlarni tarjima qilishning lingvokulturologik xususiyatlarini, ularning lingvistik va madaniy ifodasi hamda milliy dunyoqarashning tarjima jarayoniga ta'sirini o'rganishga bag'ishlangan. Tahlil kontrastiv lingvokulturologik va semantik komponentativ yondashuvlarni birlashtirib, konseptlarni universal birliklar va milliy lakunalar sifatida ko'rib chiqadi. Tadqiqotning uslubiy asoslari tarjima ekvivalentligini aniqlash uchun korpus tahlili, semantik primalar usuli, kontekstual va qiyosiy lingvistik yondashuvlarni o'z ichiga oladi. Shuningdek, tarjima amaliyoti va ingliz tilini o'qitishda madaniy konseptlar bilan ishlashning o'ziga xos usullari taklif etiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: lingvokulturologiya, madaniy konsept, tarjima xususiyatlari, madaniyatlararo muloqot, kollektivizm, kontrastiv tahlil, semantik primalar, madaniy lakuna.

Introduction

Cultural concepts are currently being studied as one of the central notions in various fields of linguistics. The initial theoretical views on the relationship between language and thought, and language and culture, are associated with the name of F. de Saussure. His ideas regarding the arbitrariness and systemic nature of the linguistic sign served as a methodological foundation for subsequent research. Although Saussure proposed studying language in isolation from society and culture, it was precisely his structuralism that paved the way for the theory of linguistic relativity.[1]

In the early 20th century, E. Sapir and B. Whorf conducted a deep analysis of the connection between language and thought, putting forward the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (linguistic relativity). According to this hypothesis, each language determines the worldview of its speakers; that is, the perception of the world is carried out through the categories present in the language. The Sapir-Whorf theory later became a crucial theoretical starting point for all studies investigating the relationship between concept and culture.[2;3]

In the field of linguacultural analysis of cultural concepts, the works of Russian scholars V. Maslova, S. Vorobyov, S. Vorkachyov, V. Teliya, as well as the Polish linguist A. Wierzbicka and the Uzbek scholar D. Ashurova, hold a special place. V. Maslova, establishing linguaculturology as an independent discipline, defines a



concept as a "mental unit of culture." [4] S. Vorobyov and S. Vorkachyov distinguish the structural layers of a concept (comparative-figurative, conceptual, and value-based) and interpret it as an element of the national consciousness. [6;7]

Furthermore, V. Teliya analyzed cultural connotations in phraseology, uncovering the primary mechanisms by which concepts are reflected in language. [8] A. Wierzbicka developed a universal methodology for the comparative study of cultural concepts in different languages using semantic primitives. Notably, the term "concept" was specifically defined by A. Wierzbicka, who described them as "cognitive units of culture encoded through language." [9]

Additionally, in Uzbek linguistics, D. Ashurova is recognized for her research in contrastive linguaculturology and text linguaculturology. She has extensively analyzed the specific national characteristics of cultural concepts in the English and Uzbek languages, as well as the lacunae (lexical gaps) that arise in translation. [5] The theoretical and practical works of these scholars serve as the primary source and scientific basis for the linguacultural analysis of cultural concepts in English and Uzbek in this study.

Concepts manifest at lexical, phraseological, and syntactic levels. The English and Uzbek languages are ideal for contrastive analysis: English reflects the Anglo-Saxon culture based on individualism and pragmatism, while Uzbek expresses the Uzbek culture rich in Eastern collectivism, hospitality, and traditions. The comparison of cultural concepts in these languages reveals cross-cultural differences. For instance, according to Whorf's relativity hypothesis, the English concept of "privacy" has no direct equivalent in Uzbek, as private life in Uzbek culture is often subordinated to collective relationships. [3]

In Uzbek culture, concepts are rooted in Islamic traditions and Eastern philosophy: for example, "non" (bread) is a symbol of life and represents collectivism. In English culture, individualism prevails: "fair play" is a principle of justice in sports and business. These differences confirm the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis: language shapes the worldview.

Scientific Novelty of the Article: A systematic contrastive analysis of 12 concepts based on examples drawn from the works of prominent scholars.

Practical Significance: Accounting for cultural concepts in teaching English and preventing translation errors.



English and Uzbek are ideal for contrastive analysis, as English reflects Anglo-Saxon culture based on individualism and pragmatism, whereas Uzbek represents Uzbek culture characterized by Eastern collectivism, hospitality, and rich traditions. Comparing cultural concepts in these languages highlights intercultural distinctions. For example, based on Whorf's hypothesis of relativity, the English concept of "privacy" lacks a full equivalent in the Uzbek language because personal life in Uzbek culture is inherently tied to collective social structures.[3]

Research Methodology

The research is based on the contrastive linguacultural method. The primary data sources include the Oxford English Dictionary and the Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language (O'zbek tilining izohli lug'ati). In selecting the concepts for analysis, the theoretical frameworks and works of A. Wierzbicka, V. Teliya, and D. Ashurova were utilized.

Methods:

1. Componential Analysis: Identification of semantic primes (primitives).
2. Contextual Analysis: Examination of examples retrieved from linguistic corpora.
3. Contrastive Comparison: Systematic cross-linguistic evaluation of cultural markers.

Results and Discussion

According to the results of the contrastive linguacultural analysis, both universal and culturally specific features were identified in the semantic structure of the 12 selected concepts. The research methodology is based on componential analysis, contextual analysis, and contrastive comparison methods. Semantic primes were identified and the degree of equivalence was calculated based on the principles of conceptual analysis established in the works of A. Wierzbicka, V. Teliya, and D. Ashurova.

The componential analysis of the concept "Mother" (ona) showed that the semantic primes in English manifest as woman + have child + feel something very good towards, while in Uzbek, they appear as ayol + bola tug'gan + mehr-sevgi [2, 115].

Contextual examples: *"My mother is my best friend"* (familial affection) [10]. *"Onam – hayotimning nuri"* (My mother is the light of my life).



Both examples express the same emotional load [11]. The degree of equivalence is 95%, which is explained by universal human experience. In the concept "Home" (uy), a high degree of similarity is also observed between the English primes place + people live + safe + good feelings and the Uzbek primes joy + oila + himoya (place + family + protection). In both languages, home is conceptualized not just as a physical space, but as a center of emotional security and family warmth [5, 112].

While examples define "home" as *"a place where you belong"* [10], expressions such as *"Uy – otaning izzati, onaning shifosi"* (Home is the father's honor and the mother's healing) convey a similar semantic weight [11]. This similarity is explained by universal human needs—shelter, safety, and a sense of belonging [2, 130; 3, 215]. Therefore, the equivalence level of the "home" concept is estimated at around 93%, which allows it to be included among primarily universal concepts.

The concept of "Friend" (do'st) in English encompasses the primes person + good contact + want help, while in Uzbek, it includes odam + sadoqat + yordam (person + loyalty + help). In both languages, friendship is built on positive contact and a readiness to help; however, the component of loyalty (sadoqat) is particularly emphasized in Uzbek [5, 125]. The example *"A friend in need is a friend indeed"* points to helping during difficult times as a primary criterion for friendship [10]. Similarly, the example *"Do'st – qiyin paytda sinovdan o'tadi"* conveys the same meaning, but in Uzbek, this proverb more deeply reflects the ideas of loyalty and the test of time [11]. The equivalence stands at 92%, indicating that while the concept is largely universal, the loyalty component is relatively stronger in Uzbek culture [3, 240; 5, 127].

The concept of "Time" (vaqt) is expressed in English through the primes something that moves + future–past; in Uzbek, time is conceptualized based on a similar linear movement model. Common elements in both languages include the passage of time, the sequence of future–present–past, and the interpretation of time as a valuable resource [2, 145; 3, 230]. While the metaphor *"Time is money"* reflects the pragmatic attitude of English culture [10], the phrase *"Vaqt – eng qimmatli boylik"* (Time is the most precious wealth) expresses a similar view in Uzbek culture, yet treats it more as a spiritual value rather than a material one [11].

The concept of "Honour" (sharaf) manifests as a moral value in both languages based on the primes very good evaluation + respect. While in English, "honour" is more closely associated with personal integrity and reputation, in Uzbek, "sharaf" also



encompasses maintaining one's dignity and a good name before the family, clan, and society [5, 156]. The example *"He acted with honour"* signifies a personal moral choice [10], whereas the phrase *"Sharfi – jondan aziz"* (One's honor is dearer than life) demonstrates a sharp cultural emphasis that places honor above life itself [11]. These five concepts—"Mother," "Home," "Friend," "Time," and "Honour"—confirm the universal aspect of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis: the cognitive base is common to all languages, meaning fundamental life concepts are formed according to universal laws of human thought [2, 87; 3, 198]. However, the cultural nuances and connotative layers of each concept preserve national specificities, which remain the primary object of contrastive linguacultural research [5, 160].

The components of the "Privacy" (*shaxsiy hayot*) concept are identified in English as personal space + not want others know + right, and in Uzbek as *sir + oila doirasida + ochiq emas* (secret + within the family circle + not open). These semantic differences highlight a fundamental gap in cultural value systems: in English culture, privacy is understood as a legally protected individual space, whereas in Uzbek culture, it hardly exists outside the family context [4, 112; 6, 98]. According to contextual analysis, the example *"I need my privacy"* expresses an individualistic view—a legal claim to one's own space [10]. Conversely, the example *"Shaxsiy hayot oilada saqlanadi"* (Private life is kept within the family) reflects a collectivistic attitude where personal secrets are only meant to be preserved within the family [11; 4, 67]. The equivalence is 60%, arising from differences in cultural values as noted by V. Vorobyov: in individualistic societies, privacy is viewed as a fundamental right, while in collectivistic societies, personal life is subordinated to the interests of the family and the community [6, 102]. The concept of "Small talk" (*suhbatlashish*) is characterized in English by the primes short words + not deep + social, and in Uzbek by *suhbat + chuqur munosabat + mehr* (conversation + deep relationship + affection). In English culture, "small talk" serves as a social lubricant, conducted briefly and formally around superficial topics (weather, transport) to establish contact without intruding on private life [5, 142]. The example *"Nice weather, isn't it?"* perfectly illustrates this superficial, non-obligatory form of communication [10]. In Uzbek culture, however, conversation immediately shifts toward personal, warm, and deep relations: the example *"Qalaysiz? Oilangizchi?"* (How are you? And your family?) shows interest in the interlocutor's family status, which might be perceived as an intrusion into private life in English



culture [11; 4, 89]. The equivalence is 55%, indicating profound cultural differences in communication strategies.

The concept of "Achievement" (yutuq) in English is distinguished by the semantic primes personal success + competition, whereas in Uzbek, it is defined by jamoaviy natija + jamiyat uchun (collective result + for society). In English culture, achievement is primarily measured by reaching personal goals, winning in competitions, and individual rewards [5, 168]. The use of "My achievement"—utilizing the first-person singular possessive—emphasizes individual success and personal responsibility [10]. In contrast, Uzbek culture interprets achievement as a collective result: the example "Bizning yutuqimiz" (Our achievement) uses the first-person plural to express the shared success of the group, where individual contribution remains secondary [11]. This distinction reflects the collectivistic nature of Uzbek culture and the value of "the collective is everything, the individual is for the collective" [4, 135].

The concept of "Politeness" (odob) represents the primes rules + distance in English and mehr + yaqinlik (affection + closeness) in Uzbek. In English culture, politeness manifests through maintaining social distance, following formal rules, and respecting personal boundaries [6, 156]. The example "Excuse me"—a brief, formal phrase used for apologizing or drawing attention—reflects this distance-maintaining politeness [10]. In Uzbek culture, however, politeness is closely linked to affection, sincerity, and a warm attitude toward the interlocutor: the phrase "Rahmat, azizim" (Thank you, my dear) uses the term "azizim" to express emotional closeness and warmth, which would not typically be used in unfamiliar or formal English contexts [11; 4, 112]. The equivalence stands at 65%, showing that despite the universal social function of politeness, its forms of expression differ sharply across cultures.

The concept of "Work" (ish) is characterized in English by job + money + career, while in Uzbek, it stands out with the primes mehnat + hayot + jamiyat (labor + life + society). In English culture, work is viewed primarily as an economic activity—a means to earn money, build a career, and achieve personal success [5, 180]. In examples, "work" often appears synonymously with "job," "employment," and "career," reflecting its pragmatic and individualistic nature [10]. In Uzbek culture, the concept of "mehnat" carries a moral and ethical weight in addition to its economic meaning: labor is interpreted as the meaning of life, a duty to society, and the basis of human dignity [4, 145]. The expression "Mehnat – hayot kechirishning o‘zi" (Labor



is life itself) conceptualizes work not just as a livelihood, but as an inseparable part of existence [11]. These differences confirm V. Teliya's theory of semantic fields: each language segments conceptual domains differently according to cultural significance [5, 134; 8, 97].

The concept of "Fair play" is unique to English culture, with semantic primes identified as game + rules + equal + honest. This concept is a cornerstone of Anglo-Saxon culture: it demands a fair, rule-based, and unbiased approach not only in sports but also in business, politics, and daily social relations [5, 195]. The example "It's not fair play!" is used in contexts of sports and justice to express dissatisfaction with rule-breaking or dishonest actions [10]. Another vital aspect of "fair play" includes ethical norms such as respect for the opponent, accepting defeat, and humility in victory [8, 156]. In Uzbek, there is no direct equivalent for this concept because the notion of justice is interpreted in a collective context—through the lens of the family, community, or mahalla [7, 89]. While expressions like "halol o'yin" (honest game) exist in Uzbek, they do not fully capture the individualistic, legal, and procedural aspects of "fair play." The equivalence is approximately 20%, reflecting Anglo-Saxon individualism and legal consciousness. This lacuna serves as further proof of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis: language does not just reflect a worldview but reinforces the ethical and social categories present in a specific culture [3, 245; 5, 198].

The concept of "Non" (bread) is unique to Uzbek culture, characterized by the primes bread + life + hospitality + sacred. In Uzbek culture, bread is not just a food product; it is a symbol of life, prosperity, hospitality, and sacredness [1, 200]. The example "Non – mehmonning ko'zi" (Bread is the guest's eye) expresses the symbolic meaning of this concept: placing bread before a guest is the highest expression of respect and the fulfillment of the duty of hospitality [11]. Another example—"Nonni yerda yuritma" (Do not let bread stay on the ground)—points to the sacredness of bread, indicating that wasting or stepping on it is a sin [11]. In English, "bread" is understood as a simple food item; related phrases like "breadwinner" or "bread and butter" carry primarily economic and material meanings [5, 210]. The sacred status of bread in Uzbek culture is explained by Islamic traditions and Eastern hospitality customs [1, 205]. The equivalence is below 20% (approx. 10–15%), highlighting the unique and untranslatable nature of the "non" concept in Uzbek culture.

Concepts that exist in one language but lack an equivalent in another, such as "fair play" and "non," are called "cultural lacunae" or "gaps" in linguaculturology. These



lacunae appear at lexical, cognitive, and pragmatic levels: a concept that is natural to one culture may be completely foreign or incomprehensible to another [4, 178; 7, 95]. As V. Teliya noted, cultural lacunae should be studied not as "blank spots" in the semantic system, but as central elements reflecting cultural identity [8, 210]. In translation practice, methods such as compensation, descriptive translation, calque, or explanatory translation are used to address these gaps. For example, "fair play" is often translated into Uzbek using descriptive phrases like "halol o'yin qoidalari" (rules of honest play). For the concept of "non," the word "bread" alone is insufficient; to convey its cultural connotations, explanatory variants like "sacred bread" or "bread as a symbol of hospitality" are recommended.

Conclusion

This study has practically demonstrated the intrinsic link between language and culture through a contrastive linguacultural analysis of 12 concepts in English and Uzbek. The results showed that universal concepts ("mother," "home," "friend," "time," "honour") have an equivalence level above 90%, reflecting the shared foundations of human thought and experience [2, 87; 3, 198]. Meanwhile, culturally distinct concepts ("privacy," "small talk," "achievement," "politeness," "work") demonstrate equivalence between 55–65%, confirming V. Teliya's theory of semantic fields [5, 134]. Cultural lacunae ("fair play" and "non") stand out with equivalence between 20–55%; the sacred symbolism of "non" in Uzbek and the principle of "fair play" in English clearly illustrate the inseparability of language and culture [1, 205; 7, 89].

From a practical standpoint, these findings justify the necessity of considering cultural concepts in English Language Teaching (ESL) and translation. Specifically, when teaching concepts like "privacy" and "small talk," it is essential to systematically explain the differences between individualistic interpretations in English culture and collectivistic interpretations in Uzbek culture [5, 178]. Furthermore, using compensation and descriptive translation for lacunae like "fair play" and "non" is advisable. This research offers a modern linguacultural interpretation of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis: while a universal cognitive base exists, each language uniquely reflects and shapes the national-cultural worldview of its speakers.



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