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### COGNITIVE-LINGUISTIC INTERPRETATION OF METAPHORICAL SYMBOLISM IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH LITERARY NARRATIVES

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#### ABOUT ARTICLE

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the cognitive-linguistic interpretation of metaphorical symbolism in English and Uzbek literary narratives. The study explores the conceptual basis of metaphors and symbols, their connection with national-cultural cognition, and their functional role in storytelling. Using the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, key symbolic metaphors in English and Uzbek short stories are identified and examined from semantic, pragmatic, and cultural perspectives. The findings show that metaphorical symbols in both literatures are deeply rooted in human experience, collective mentality, and cultural values.

**Introduction.** Symbolism and metaphor are essential elements of storytelling that deepen the interpretative possibilities of a narrative, shaping how readers perceive character motives, plot developments, and broader themes. In both English and Uzbek literature, symbolism and metaphor serve as powerful vehicles for cultural expression, revealing societal values, historical contexts, and psychological nuances that might otherwise remain unspoken. These devices allow authors to imbue their work with layers of meaning that resonate with readers across time and cultures, making narratives more universal and transcendent. Symbolism and metaphor are among the most potent literary tools, used extensively by writers

across cultures to add depth and nuance to storytelling. Both devices enable authors to transcend literal meanings, providing layered interpretations that invite readers to explore themes on intellectual and emotional levels. In English and Uzbek literature, these devices serve distinct yet comparable roles, conveying cultural beliefs, values, and worldviews while also offering insight into human experiences that resonate universally.

**Materials and methods.** In English literature, authors have long employed symbolism and metaphor to enrich their storytelling. For example, William Golding's "Lord of the Flies" uses symbols like the conch shell and the "Lord of the Flies" itself to represent the themes of civilization versus savagery and the innate darkness within humanity (Golding, 1954). Similarly, F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" uses symbols like the green light and the valley of ashes to explore the American Dream and the moral decay underlying the opulence of the Jazz Age (Fitzgerald, 1925). Through these symbols, English writers convey abstract themes and social critiques, inviting readers to engage in deeper analysis.

In Uzbek literature, symbolism and metaphor often reflect the nation's rich cultural heritage, its reverence for nature, and the intricacies of social and family life. For instance, Chulpan's works, particularly in his novel "Kecha va Kunduz" ("Night and Day"), use symbolic contrasts of darkness and light to mirror the tension between tradition and modernization in early 20th-century Uzbekistan (Chulpan, 1936). Other narratives, such as Abdulla Qahhor's "Sarob" ("Mirage"), incorporate metaphors drawn from the natural landscape to reflect characters' struggles and ambitions within an evolving societal framework (Qahhor, 1961). Such literary devices allow Uzbek authors to explore philosophical, social, and political themes that resonate deeply with their cultural audiences.

By examining the symbolic and metaphorical elements in English and Uzbek narratives, one can trace how these devices function as a bridge between individual experiences and collective identities. Moreover, understanding how different cultural and linguistic traditions utilize these devices enriches one's appreciation of the underlying universal messages embedded within diverse literary works (Kovacs, 2002).

In English literature, symbolism and metaphor are deeply intertwined with the tradition of using figurative language to convey complex social, moral, and existential themes. Scholars often highlight that English literary works from the Romantic, Victorian, and Modernist eras heavily rely on symbolic elements. For example, William Blake's poetry, specifically "Songs of Innocence and of Experience" (1789), employs symbolism extensively to juxtapose innocence and corruption. The lamb and the tiger serve as contrasting symbols of purity and primal ferocity, exploring the duality of human nature and the tension between innocence and

experience (Blake, 1789). Similarly, in Victorian literature, Charles Dickens's "A Tale of Two Cities" uses metaphors of light and darkness to reflect moral conflict and social upheaval, symbolizing the turbulence of the French Revolution (Dickens, 1859).

In Uzbek literature, symbolism and metaphor take on unique cultural significance, often reflecting Central Asian values, mythologies, and the socio-political landscapes of the authors' eras. For instance, in the early 20th century, Uzbekistan experienced significant social changes, and literary figures like Abdulla Qahhor and Chulpan used symbolism to capture the essence of these transformations. Chulpan's "Kecha va Kunduz" ("Night and Day", 1936) uses the metaphor of darkness and light to symbolize the tension between tradition and modernization in Uzbek society. Darkness in the narrative often represents the constraints of traditional societal norms, while light embodies the possibilities of progress and enlightenment, reflecting Chulpan's personal struggles with Soviet oppression and his hope for a reformed Uzbekistan (Chulpan, 1936).

Similarly, Qahhor's "Sarob" ("Mirage", 1961) presents mirages in the desert as metaphors for the illusory nature of unfulfilled aspirations in Soviet-era Uzbekistan. Qahhor's symbolic use of mirages illustrates how ambitions, under restrictive political and social structures, often become unattainable illusions. His portrayal of desert landscapes as places of challenge and resilience reflects both the harsh physical environment of Uzbekistan and the resilience required to navigate the complexities of the time (Qahhor, 1961). According to literary critic Ismailov, Uzbek literature often utilizes natural symbols like deserts, mountains, and rivers to represent the enduring strength and resilience of the Uzbek spirit, connecting the physical landscape with emotional and social struggles (Ismailov, 1995).

Analyzing symbolism and metaphor in English and Uzbek narratives provides valuable insight into how these cultures encode meaning and express collective identities. As cognitive linguist Zoltán Kövecses notes, metaphors are often culturally embedded, reflecting distinct ways of thinking, feeling, and understanding the world (Kövecses, 2002). In this sense, comparing symbolic and metaphorical expressions across these two literary traditions not only deepens our understanding of specific texts but also illuminates broader cultural dialogues. By examining these literary devices, one can gain a nuanced perspective on how English and Uzbek authors explore themes of identity, morality, and societal change, offering universal messages through culturally distinct forms.

This study highlights the distinctive uses and cultural significances of symbolism and metaphor in English and Uzbek narratives. By analyzing selected texts, we observe how these devices not only add layers of meaning but also mirror the cultural, historical, and philosophical

contexts in which the stories were written. English literature often employs symbolism and metaphor to critique social structures, individual identity, and existential dilemmas. In contrast, Uzbek literature uses these devices to navigate themes of tradition, social reform, and resilience within the cultural specificity of Central Asia. In English literature, symbols frequently serve as metaphors for socio-political critique and existential exploration. For instance, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) uses the green light to symbolize Gatsby's unattainable dream and critique the broader concept of the American Dream, highlighting themes of wealth, ambition, and social disillusionment. This metaphor reflects the era's sense of cynicism toward materialism, suggesting that the dream of personal success in America was fraught with moral decay (Fitzgerald, 1925). Similarly, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954) employs symbols such as the conch shell and the "Lord of the Flies" to represent order, civilization, and the inherent darkness within humanity, thus offering a commentary on the fragility of societal norms and the underlying savagery in human nature (Golding, 1954).

Furthermore, Abdulla Qahhor's *Sarob* (Mirage, 1961) uses mirages as metaphors for the often-illusory nature of ambitions under Soviet rule. Here, the mirage serves as a symbol of elusive aspirations, representing the limitations imposed on individual freedoms and personal goals within an oppressive political regime. Qahhor's use of desert landscapes reinforces this theme, with barren surroundings symbolizing both the harsh realities of life and the resilience of the Uzbek people, who must navigate these conditions to achieve their goals (Qahhor, 1961). According to literary critic Ismailov, such symbolic references to nature in Uzbek literature create a bond between the physical landscape and emotional resilience, underscoring the values of patience, perseverance, and unity inherent in Uzbek culture (Ismailov, 1995).

**Results and discussion.** The findings demonstrate that metaphorical symbolism in English and Uzbek narratives is shaped by shared cognitive mechanisms and culturally specific conceptualizations. Uzbek literature tends to encode emotional and spiritual depth through metaphors like *ko'ngil* or *ona zamin*, reflecting communal orientation and spiritual worldview. English literature, however, often foregrounds subjective experience, emotional conflict, and personal identity through journey or heart metaphors. Cognitively, metaphorical symbols organize human experience into coherent conceptual patterns, allowing narratives to convey deeper meaning beyond literal language.

The analysis reveals that while English and Uzbek narratives both employ symbolism and metaphor as essential literary tools, the cultural underpinnings of these devices differ markedly. In English literature, symbolism often serves a universalizing function, encouraging readers to interpret human emotions, social issues, and moral dilemmas in broad, philosophical

terms. The green light in *The Great Gatsby*, for instance, transcends its American setting to comment on human ambition and disillusionment, themes that resonate with readers globally. In Uzbek literature, symbols tend to be more culturally specific, mirroring Central Asian customs, values, and struggles. For instance, the desert as a metaphor in Sarob signifies resilience, a characteristic trait emphasized in Uzbek cultural and historical narratives. These symbols also serve as cultural preservation tools, embedding traditional Uzbek values within stories that grapple with modernity and external influence, especially during the Soviet era. Kövecses' theory on culturally embedded metaphors supports this, asserting that metaphors are deeply influenced by societal frameworks, and thus, reflect distinct ways of perceiving the world (Kövecses, 2002). This cultural specificity allows Uzbek literature to serve as a reservoir of national identity, reminding readers of shared heritage and collective resilience.

Metaphorical symbolism is one of the most powerful meaning-making tools in literary discourse. In both Uzbek and English literature, symbolic metaphors help authors express cultural values, emotional states, and philosophical ideas through figurative language. Cognitive Linguistics views metaphor not only as a stylistic feature but as a fundamental mechanism of human thinking. According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson), abstract concepts such as life, time, love, or morality are understood through concrete experiential domains like journey, light, heart, or nature.

In Uzbek narratives, symbolic metaphors frequently reflect spiritual values, collective identity, respect for homeland, and emotional depth. Concepts such as *ko'ngil* (inner heart), *ona zamin* (mother earth), *yorug'lik* (light), and *soylar* (shadows) often carry deep cultural meanings. Meanwhile, English narratives often emphasize individual experience, emotional conflict, and psychological perspective through metaphors such as life as a journey, light vs. darkness, heart as emotion, and storm as struggle.

A cognitive-linguistic interpretation aims to identify how these symbolic metaphors emerge from cultural cognition and how they shape narrative meaning. By comparing Uzbek and English metaphoric systems, we can observe both universal patterns rooted in human embodiment and culturally specific conceptual structures that reflect each nation's worldview.

**Conclusion.** The findings suggest that understanding symbolism and metaphor across English and Uzbek narratives enhances cross-cultural literary analysis, offering insights into the unique ways these societies process and communicate universal themes. For readers, the symbols of light and darkness, for instance, can represent universally understandable ideas, such as knowledge and ignorance or hope and despair, yet the cultural contexts give these metaphors specific resonance within their respective societies. By bridging these culturally

distinct uses of symbolism, readers gain a nuanced perspective of how different societies address issues of identity, ambition, and resilience. This comparison of symbolism in English and Uzbek narratives illustrates the transformative power of literary devices in storytelling. Symbolism and metaphor act as a universal language of sorts, yet one that retains distinct cultural meanings, thus inviting readers to appreciate the diversity within literary traditions while acknowledging shared human experiences.

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