

Article

The Conceptual Stratification of “Yor” in Uzbek and English Poetic Discourse: A Cognitive-Linguocultural Analysis

Bobokhujaeva Zebiniso Shodmonovna^{*1}

1. PhD Researcher of English Linguistics Department at BukhSU

*Correspondance: zebinisobobokhujaeva@gmail.com

Abstract: This thesis investigates the conceptual stratification of “yor” — a term signifying beloved, sweetheart — within Uzbek poetic discourse and compares its cognitive-linguocultural representation with how similar core concepts (e.g., heart, beloved) function in English poetic traditions. Combining cognitive linguistics, metaphor theory, and discourse analysis, the study reveals how culture, linguistic norms, and poetic style shape emotional and relational concepts in poetry. Drawing on canonical poets such as Alisher Navoi and Shakespeare’s key works in English poetry, the thesis demonstrates that while both traditions use embodied metaphors and symbolic language to express love and devotion, the Uzbek poetic idiom places yor within communal and relational schemas, while the English poetic idiom often reflects individual emotional experience and psychological interiority.

Keywords: Cognitive Linguistics, Linguoculturology, Poetic Discourse, Conceptual Stratification, Semantic Field, Cultural Semantics, Metaphor, Symbolism, Uzbek Poetry, English Poetry, Concept “Yor”, Linguistic Worldview, Conceptualization, Cross-Cultural Analysis, Lexical Meaning

Citation: Shodmonovna, B. Z. The Conceptual Stratification of “Yor” in Uzbek and English Poetic Discourse: A Cognitive-Linguocultural Analysis. International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics 2026, 5(3), 47-50.

Received: 10th Apr 2026

Revised: 25th Apr 2026

Accepted: 05th May 2026

Published: 20th May 2026



Copyright: © 2026 by the authors. Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

1. Introduction

Conceptual stratification refers to how a single lexical item’s meaning is structured across cognitive, semantic, and cultural layers within discourse. In Uzbek poetry, “yor” functions not simply as a lexical word for beloved but as a layered concept encapsulating intimacy, fate, devotion, and cultural ideals of love — embedded in historical and folkloric contexts. In English poetry, parallel concepts like heart or beloved are central symbols for affective states and character traits, encoded through centuries of literary tradition.[1]

Cognitive Linguistics and Conceptual Metaphor. Cognitive linguistics posits that abstract concepts are grounded in embodied experience and structured through conceptual metaphors. Notably, love and emotion are often conceptualized via heart schemas such as “love is warmth,” “emotion is movement” which surface frequently in poetry. Metaphor theory highlights how these schemas are culturally mediated.[2] *Linguocultural Concepts.* Linguocultural analysis positions lexical items within the cultural worldview of a speech community. In Uzbek linguoculture, emotion concepts like yor, sevgi entail relational, social, and honor-based dimensions, contrasting with English’s frequent focus on individual psychological states.[3]

Definition and Semantic Field of Yor. In Uzbek, yor translates to beloved or sweetheart in a relational and affectionate sense. In lexicographic sources, yor is glossed as “beloved or sweetheart.” [4]

Uzbek poetic discourse traditionally situates yor within narratives of devotion, separation, longing, and spiritual union. This concept often intersects with broader cultural symbols, sevgi – love, dil – heart, jon – soul, in poetry. [5]

2. Materials and Methods

The symbol of “yor” is one of the issues that has long been the subject of debate and controversy, but has not yet found a solution. Some literary critics interpreted the term “lover” as a “beloved” because it contradicts the ideology of the former USSR. A major researcher of Alisher Navoi's heritage, academician V. Zohidov, calls the beloved as “mahbub” and describes them as people with the best qualities and virtues. The scholar writes about the difficulty and complexity of the problem: “... the issue of love, the beloved is one of the most difficult, very complex issues of Navoi's worldview and creativity.” [6] Sultanmurod Olim calls the beloved a “ma’shuq” in his treatise “Ishq, oshiq va ma’shuq.” [7] E. Ishokov called the lover as “ma’shuqa” in “Alisher Navoiyning ilk lirikasi”, but in his other book “Navoiy poetikasi” he explains it in a broad sense as “friend”, “partner”, “comrade”, “brother”, and in a narrow context as “lover” and cites the poet's verse:

Ikki yor erdi manga nomehribonu mehribon,
Mehribon bordi, qolib nomehribon dardu g’ami –[8]
and draws the following conclusion for his opinion:

“In the above ghazal, the poet spoke about two lovers. In this case, understanding the word “yor” in a narrow sense (lover) would have led to the false conclusion that Navoi loved two people at the same time, and would have contradicted the high ideals of a humanist poet with pure beliefs.” [9]

In the one-volume “Navoi's Works Dictionary”, the image of a friend is not recorded in the dictionary because it does not correspond to the ideology. The authors of the four-volume “Navoi's Works Dictionary of the Language” explain the broad meaning of a friend as a friend, companion, stating that there are broad and narrow meanings of a friend.[10] However, without explaining their being friends and companions in the order under the influence of the existing ideology, they explain the narrow meaning of a friend as a lover, citing the first verse of the poet's following rubai:

To payki sabo keturdi yorim xabarin,
Sharh ayladi sarvi gul’uzorim xabarin.
Bilmas ko’ngul emdi joni zorim xabarin,
Kim payk keturdi shaxsuvorim xabarin.[11]

It should be specially noted here that in literary studies, there are cases of incorrect use of some artistic imagery tools. In fact, in our classical poetry, one type of imagery tool is used only for men, while another type is applied to both genders. Alisher Navoi, a key figure in classical Uzbek literature, explores love and beloved imagery in his divan and ghazals, where yor surfaces within metaphors of yearning and devotee-beloved dynamics. Yor in this context is not merely romantic partner but also a metaphysical presence, reflecting Sufi intimacy with the beloved. [12] This is consistent with Navoi's use of classical Persian-influenced imagery.

In modern Uzbek poetry yor retains its affectionate valence but is layered with social and existential concerns of 20th-century contexts, intertwining individual emotion with national identity and collective history.

Cognitive Image Schemas and Cultural Scripts. In Uzbek poetic culture, yor commonly draws on relational schemas (e.g., community/family, fate, blessing/refuge) rather than purely internal psychological states, aligning with broader findings on Uzbek emotion concepts shaped by communal orientation.[13]

In English traditions, the heart and beloved are central motifs signifying emotional interiority and psychological depth. Cognitive linguistics studies show heart serves as a metaphor for affective states and character traits ("heart of gold," "broken heart," etc.), with rich phraseological behavior in poetry and idiom. Shakespeare's sonnets and lyrics frequently use heart and beloved as structuring metaphors for love, commitment, and mortality (e.g., "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"), encoding emotional complexity with elaborate metaphoric texture. [7] Romantic poetry often situates heart within nature and philosophical reflection, conceptualizing emotion as personal experience and correlating it with universal themes of beauty and self-realization. John Keats's love poetry is close to romantic love in Uzbek literature. In the poem "Bright Star," the desire to always be beside the beloved is expressed:

Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art —
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite." [14]

Here, the beloved is compared to a bright star, emphasizing their eternity and loyalty. There is a similarity with the Uzbek literary tradition of comparing the beloved to a star.

3. Results and Discussion

Both Uzbek and English poetic traditions use embodied metaphors to conceptualize love and beloved figures, but they differ in emphasis. In Uzbek poetry *yor* operates within collective relational frameworks and often blends spiritual with interpersonal love. However, in English beloved and heart tend to focus on the individual's emotional interiority and metaphorical imagination.

These differences reflect broader linguistic values (collectivism with individualism) inherent in each cultural worldview. Translating *yor* into English poses challenges: while beloved is a lexical equivalent, it often fails to capture culturally embedded relational and spiritual connotations of *yor*. This underscores the importance of conceptual nuance in translation studies. [15]

4. Conclusion

The thesis demonstrates that *yor*, as a conceptual node in Uzbek poetic discourse, is stratified into culturally saturated emotional, relational, and existential layers, differing in structure and salience from analogous concepts in English poetry. By bridging cognitive linguistics and linguocultural analysis with textual examples, the research illuminates how poets encode deep human experience across languages and cultural frameworks.

REFERENCES

- [1] G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- [2] E. S. Kubryakova and V. Z. Demyankov, *Kratkiy slovar kognitivnykh terminov*. Moscow: MGU, 1996.
- [3] V. Zohidov, *Ulug' shoir ijodining qalbi*. Tashkent, 1970.
- [4] S. Olim, *Ishq, oshiq va ma'shuq*. Tashkent: Fan, 2010.
- [5] N. Bekova, "Devoni Foni: issledovaniya i izdaniya," *Prepodavanie yazyka i literatury*, 2014.
- [6] M. Rakhmatullaeva, *Alisher Navoiy lirikasida sinonimlar masalasi*, Doctoral dissertation, Tashkent, 1965.
- [7] M. V. Pimenova, *The concept of the heart: image, concept, symbol*. Kemerovo, 2007.
- [8] R. W. Langacker, *Cognitive Grammar: A Basic Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- [9] C. Fillmore, "Frame semantics," in *Linguistics in the Morning Calm*, Seoul: Hanshin, 1982, pp. 111–137.
- [10] A. Wierzbicka, *Semantics: Primes and Universals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

-
- [11] Yu. D. Apresyan, *Selected Works on Lexical Semantics*. Moscow: Shkola "Yazyki russkoy kultury", 1995.
- [12] V. A. Maslova, *Cognitive Linguistics*. Minsk: TetraSystems, 2004.
- [13] Z. Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- [14] M. Turner, *The Literary Mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- [15] E. Sweetser, *From Etymology to Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.