

Article

Principles of Compiling an Anthropocentric Dictionary of Uzbek Metaphors

Durdona Khudoyberganova¹

1. Doctor of Philological Sciences, Professor Institute of Uzbek Language, Literature and Folklore, Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Abstract: This article discusses the significance of compiling an anthropocentric dictionary of Uzbek metaphors and outlines the principles underlying the development of such a dictionary.

Keywords: Anthropocentric dictionary, lexicographic interpretation of metaphor, conceptual metaphor, metaphorical model, linguocultural unit, pragmalinguistics, cognitive linguistics, linguoculturology.

Introduction

Metaphors, as products of human creative thinking, are recognized in general linguistics not merely as ornaments of speech but also as manifestations of the mental processes inherent in figurative cognition [1]. Metaphors likewise constitute linguistic units that reflect the national worldview and axiological perspectives of language users. Furthermore, words that acquire new meanings through metaphorical transfer may express the emotional and subjective attitude of the speaker and evoke specific associations in the listener, thereby influencing their emotions [2]. Consequently, metaphors reveal pragmatic and psychological characteristics as well. The cognitive, psychological, associative, linguocultural, and pragmatic features of metaphors mentioned above testify to their anthropocentric nature [3].

It should be noted that world linguistics has produced a vast number of theoretical and analytical studies devoted to metaphor [4]. Most of these investigations have approached metaphors from semantic, stylistic, pragmatic, linguocultural, and cognitive perspectives. In recent years, metaphors have also been studied extensively in Uzbek linguistics [5]. In particular, investigations conducted within the framework of the cognitive approach [6] have played an important role in revealing the anthropocentric character of these linguistic units, which serve as indicators of the expressive potential of the Uzbek language.

One of the ways to investigate metaphors is through the compilation of an anthropocentric dictionary of these units. An anthropocentric description of metaphors makes it possible to draw conclusions regarding language users' ways of perceiving reality, their cognitive activity, their axiological attitudes, and the linguistic means through which such attitudes are expressed—that is, the methods by which the linguistic worldview is constructed. It also enables the identification of metaphors as a systematic phenomenon. With this objective, the “Anthropocentric Dictionary of Uzbek Metaphors” was compiled at the Institute of Uzbek Language, Literature and Folklore of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan and published in 2025 [7, 8].

Citation: Khudoyberganova D. Principles of Compiling an Anthropocentric Dictionary of Uzbek Metaphors. International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics 2026, 5(3), 121-125.

Received: 10th Mar 2026

Revised: 11th Apr 2026

Accepted: 14th May 2026

Published: 11th Jun 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/>)

The *Anthropocentric Dictionary of Uzbek Metaphors* was designed to facilitate a deeper understanding of how the national figurative and associative thinking of Uzbek speakers, their ways of perceiving the world, their axiological attitudes toward reality, and their linguistic creativity are reflected in metaphors. To achieve this aim, metaphors in the dictionary are approached from cognitive, associative, linguocultural, and pragmastylistic perspectives. According to information available on the Internet, no dictionary of metaphors based on such a comprehensive approach has yet been compiled in world lexicography. The present article attempts to provide information on the principles employed in the compilation of this dictionary [9].

Methodology

The lexical corpus of the dictionary consists of words and word combinations used in a metaphorical sense whose figurative meanings have become conventionalized. These units were collected from the six-volume *Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language* (EDUL), as well as from literary works and periodical publications. The lexical stock is classified into three groups:

1. Metaphors related to human beings. This group includes metaphors referring to people, their characteristics, and their actions. Examples include such words as *wolf*, *falcon*, *flower*, *moon*, *honey*, *to sing*, and *to fly* when used figuratively.
2. Metaphors related to nature. This category comprises metaphors associated with natural phenomena, natural processes, and natural objects. Examples include the figurative uses of such words as *carpet*, *capricious*, *to cry*, *to roar*, and *to whisper*.
3. Metaphors associated with social relations. This group encompasses metaphors denoting social phenomena and concepts. Examples include figurative uses of the words *root*, *jewel*, *threshold*, *book*, *struggle*, and the expression *to paralyze*.

Results and Discussion

Considering the integrated perspective of the above-mentioned fields as the most appropriate approach for revealing the essence of metaphor, we adopted this method in describing the relevant units and sought to accomplish the following tasks in each dictionary entry [10, 11]:

1. To identify the conceptual model of the linguistic metaphor (i.e., to establish the conceptual metaphor);
2. To record the metaphorical meaning of the linguistic metaphor;
3. To determine the place of the metaphor in Uzbek cognitive and linguocultural thought;
4. To demonstrate the cognitive process underlying the formation of the metaphor;
5. To identify the principal factors contributing to metaphor formation;
6. To provide stable linguocultural units containing the metaphor as supporting evidence;
7. To determine the pragmastylistic functions of the metaphor;
8. To present illustrative examples confirming the lexical meaning of the metaphor.

In addition, in the interpretation of metaphors occupying an important place in Uzbek linguoculture as cultural concepts, information was provided on the image schemas and cognitive mechanisms underlying their formation. Furthermore, the relationship of these metaphors to archetypes embedded in the consciousness of language users, as well as to the cognitive and sociocultural category of “one’s own versus the other,” was elucidated [12].

As noted above, metaphor is, above all, a unit of thought and a means of understanding the world. According to theories in cognitive linguistics, the intersection of two conceptual domains gives rise to a third, new domain—the conceptual metaphor. This

mental construct is subsequently transferred into language in the form of a linguistic metaphor [13]. Linguists frequently describe the process of linguistic metaphor formation through the notion of the cognitive iceberg. Within this framework, the visible part of the iceberg represents the linguistic metaphor, whereas its invisible part corresponds to the mental processes underlying the emergence of cognitive and conceptual metaphors. Therefore, in anthropocentric lexicographic interpretation, the metaphorical model of a figuratively used lexical item should be identified first [14].

A metaphorical model is a schematic relationship between conceptual domains existing or emerging in the minds of language users and may be expressed by the formula "X-Y". Metaphorical models reveal the specific features of the cognitive activity of language users. For example, the verb *akillamoq* ("to bark"), when used figuratively to refer to a person who talks incessantly and meaninglessly, represents a metaphor based on the "Human-Animal" model. The conceptual metaphor underlying the use of the verb denoting a dog's action in relation to human speech is "A Human Being Is a Dog." In other words, within the cognitive process of the language user, human behavior is compared with the behavior of a dog. The predicate *akillamoq* functions as the linguistic expression of this comparison. Consequently, the cognitive approach is of considerable importance in the interpretation of metaphors [15].

A linguocultural approach also occupies a significant place in the anthropocentric interpretation of metaphors. It is well known that metaphorical meanings invariably contain ethnocultural components. This necessitates the description of such units from a linguocultural perspective. In our linguocultural analysis, we intended to elucidate the position occupied by the linguistic unit within the conceptual sphere of Uzbek language users, its function as a linguocultural concept, and its axiological dimensions, that is, its relation to values. Furthermore, we considered it necessary to include stable expressions containing the lexical item (or phrase) under consideration as linguistic evidence within the dictionary.

Metaphors give rise to stereotyped representations entrenched in the minds of language users. For instance, the figurative use of the verb *akillamoq* ("to bark") with reference to a person evokes the concept of *dog* in the listener's mind. In the consciousness of Uzbek speakers, the word *dog* is associated with both positive stereotypes (*A dog is loyalty, a wife is affliction; loyal as a dog*) and negative ones (*the dog's hind leg; dog-fed*). In this particular metaphor, the negative axiological attitude of language users becomes salient. Such an evaluative stance is also reflected in linguocultural units such as *Bo'ynidan bog'langan it ovga yaramas* ("A dog tied by the neck is useless for hunting"), *itday quturmoq* ("to rage like a dog"), *itday qopmoq* ("to snap like a dog"), and *it yotish, mirza turish* ("to sleep like a dog and rise like a scribe"). Therefore, psychological and associative approaches should also be employed in the interpretation of metaphors.

The formation of every metaphor is conditioned by a particular pragmatic purpose. Along with subjective evaluation, metaphors inherently convey emotional and expressive meanings. This characteristic is especially evident in figurative metaphors. At the same time, metaphors exhibit stylistic differentiation according to functional varieties of language. For example, the metaphor *akillamoq* is predominantly used in colloquial speech and serves the pragmatic function of expressing the speaker's negative subjective attitude. Accordingly, it was deemed necessary to explain the pragmastylistic features of metaphors in the dictionary.

Below, we present several dictionary entries interpreted in accordance with the principles outlined above.

Spirituality Is a Tree

ROOT. Meaning: *foundation, basis, source.* "They set out to destroy our tangible and intangible monuments, which testify to the greatness of our history and to the strength of the roots of our spirituality." (*From a newspaper*) "The historical roots of our people's

spirituality go back to the ancient stone inscriptions, legends, myths, narratives, and epics created on our land, that is, to oral folk literature.” (Oyina.uz)

This metaphor, associated with social relations, emerged through the comparison of the concept “foundation or basis of a particular socio-spiritual phenomenon” with that of the “root of a tree.” The conceptual metaphor SPIRITUALITY IS A TREE, formed in the cognitive activity of language users, provided the cognitive basis for establishing an analogy between two seemingly unrelated conceptual domains. The expression of the notion “foundation of spirituality” by means of the word *root* is grounded in experiential knowledge regarding the crucial role played by roots in the flourishing growth of trees (the deeper and stronger the roots, the more vigorously the tree grows). As a result of this mental process, the word *root* acquired a new meaning denoting “foundation,” “basis,” or “source.”

The metaphor *root* belongs to the phytomorphic linguocultural code. The association of this lexical item with the concepts of foundation and basis in Uzbek linguoculture is reflected in such phraseological units as *to take root*, *strong roots*, *to strike at the root*, and *to eradicate the root*. The metaphor *root* is predominantly employed in journalistic discourse with the purpose of creating imagery.

A Human Being Is an Animal

DOG. Meaning: a wicked or bad person.

“The voices of the crowd kept roaring incessantly: ‘Come out here, you dogs!’” (Oybek, *Blessed Blood*)

In the minds of Uzbek speakers, the metaphor *dog* evokes both negative and positive ethnocultural stereotypes. On the one hand, the dog is regarded as a faithful companion and a loyal guardian of the household. On the other hand, it is perceived as an animal that may fail to recognize even its owner and is incapable of appreciating kindness. The latter image constitutes the basis for the metaphorical model A HUMAN BEING IS A DOG, which gave rise to the metaphor *dog*.

This metaphor belongs to the nominative field of the concept *human* and serves as one of its evaluative components. In Uzbek linguoculture, the word *dog* is used figuratively in numerous stable expressions characterizing a person negatively and indicating someone possessing undesirable qualities. These include such proverbs and sayings as:

- *A dog remains a dog and tears the hem of the coat;*
- *A dog barks at the moon;*
- *A dog does not recognize its own father;*
- *One cannot take a bone from a dog’s mouth;*
- *A tiger does not eat a dog’s leftovers;*
- *Dogs bark, but the caravan moves on;*
- *A dog’s growl is its greeting;*
- *No light comes from a dog, nor footwear from a flea.*

Similarly, similes such as *to bite like a dog*, *to wander like a dog*, *to be humiliated like a dog*, and *to go mad like a dog* are applied to human beings and express negative attitudes. Conversely, expressions such as *A dog is loyalty*, *a wife is affliction* and *loyal as a dog* highlight the positive aspect of the dog, namely, its faithfulness.

The metaphor *dog* is mainly employed in literary and colloquial styles to convey speakers’ negative attitudes in an emphatic and expressive manner.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of Uzbek metaphors demonstrates the distinctive features of the national figurative thinking characteristic of members of the Uzbek linguocultural community, while at the same time revealing the operation of certain linguistic universals

within these units. Metaphors vividly reflect language users' ways of perceiving the world, their national imagery and associative patterns of thought, their life experiences, their attitudes toward cultural values, and their broader cultural worldview.

Uzbek speakers have attached particular importance to expressing their inner world through metaphors. In this regard, metaphors function as one of the most effective means of conveying axiological attitudes and generating emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic effects. In Uzbek metaphors, animal imagery serves as a means of modeling human behavior and expressing society's attitudes toward moral norms. Metaphors associated with society vividly and expressively represent concepts related to spiritual values, knowledge and enlightenment, the national and cultural heritage inherited from ancestors, and the meaning of human existence. In metaphors concerning nature, one of the oldest modes of human cognition—linguistic anthropomorphism—has been employed for artistic purposes.

REFERENCES

- [1] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, A. N. Baranov, Ed. Moscow, Russia: Editorial URSS, 2004.
- [2] Shakhnoza Makhmaraimova, *The Cognitive Aspect of Theomorphic Metaphors in the National Linguistic Worldview*, Ph.D. dissertation abstract, Karshi, Uzbekistan, 2018.
- [3] Shakhnoza Makhmaraimova, *An Anthropocentric Study of Uzbek Metaphors (Nominative Aspect)*, D.Sc. dissertation in Philology, Karshi, Uzbekistan, 2020.
- [4] Anatoly P. Chudinov, *Political Linguistics*. Moscow, Russia: Flinta; Nauka, 2012. Available: <https://studfile.net/preview/9107652/>
- [5] *Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language*, Vols. I–VI, A. Madvaliyev and D. Khudoyberganova, Eds. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Gafur Ghulam Publishing and Printing Creative House, 2022.
- [6] Dilbar Khudoyberganova, *Anthropocentric Dictionary of Uzbek Metaphors*. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Fan va Innovatsiya Publishing House, 2025.
- [7] I. Ismoilov, "Nizomiy 'Iskandarnoma'sining o'zbek adabiyotshunosligida o'rganilishi," Uzbekistan: Language and Culture, vol. 4, no. 4, 2019.
- [8] I. Ismoilov, "Iskandar oynasi," *Oltin Bitiglar–Golden Scripts*, vol. 4, no. 4, 2019.
- [9] I. Ismoilov, "The image of 'The Mirror of Iskandar' in the poetry of Alisher Navai and its comparative analysis," unpublished article.
- [10] I. Ismoilov, "About the Talismans of Iskandar (Alexander) by Alisher Navoi," *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 139–145, May 2021, doi: 10.21744/ijllc.v7n3.1488.
- [11] I. Ismoilov, "'Boburnoma' as a Literary Source," *American Journal of Social Sciences and Humanity Research*, vol. 5, no. 11, pp. 128–130, 2025, doi: 10.37547/ajsshr/Volume05Issue11-32.
- [12] Q. S. Makhmudov, "Forms of Quick Management of Manufacturing in the Conditions of Market Relations," 2023.
- [13] K. Makhmudov, "Key Concepts Regarding the Quality of Services and Its Management," 2023.
- [14] K. Makhmudov, "The Need to Introduce Quality Systems in the Field of Services," *European Journal of Business Startups and Open Society*, vol. 2, no. 7, pp. 11–14.
- [15] S. M. Ro'zimurodov, "Transformation of the Culture of Modern Economic Thinking in the Family: Problems and Solutions (The Case of Uzbekistan)," in *Scientific Collection of Karshi State University under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovations of the Republic of Uzbekistan*, p. 88.