

## COGNITIVE METAPHORS AND LINGUACULTURAL SYMBOLS IN TOPONYMS (A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES)

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**Abstract:** *This paper explores how cognitive metaphors and linguocultural symbols are embodied in toponyms of English and Uzbek languages. As linguistic signs deeply rooted in history and culture, place names reflect the conceptualizations, values, and experiences of a nation. Using a cognitive linguistic framework, the study analyzes metaphorical and symbolic meanings in both languages, examining their role in shaping national identity. The comparative approach reveals that English toponyms tend to emphasize physical environment, function, and social structure, while Uzbek toponyms are more symbolically and spiritually motivated, reflecting harmony with nature and cultural traditions.*

**Keywords:** *toponymy, cognitive metaphor, linguocultural, symbolic meaning, national identity, conceptualization*

**Аннотация:** *В данной статье рассматривается, каким образом когнитивные метафоры и лингвокультурные символы воплощаются в топонимах английского и узбекского языков. Как языковые знаки, глубоко укоренённые в истории и культуре, названия мест отражают концептуализацию, ценности и опыт нации. Используя когнитивно-лингвистический подход, исследование анализирует метафорические и символические значения в обоих языках, рассматривая их роль в формировании национальной идентичности. Сравнительный анализ показывает, что английские топонимы в большей степени акцентируют физическую среду, функциональное назначение и социальную структуру, тогда как узбекские топонимы более символичны и духовно мотивированы, отражая гармонию с природой и культурными традициями.*

**Ключевые слова:** *топонимия, когнитивная метафора, лингвокультурный, символическое значение, национальная идентичность, концептуализация.*

Toponyms, as integral elements of a nation's linguistic and cultural heritage, serve as keys to understanding collective cognition and identity. They are not merely geographical identifiers but also cognitive maps that reveal how people conceptualize their surroundings.





In both English and Uzbek contexts, place names contain layers of metaphorical and symbolic meaning, shaped by distinct cultural histories and worldviews.

The study of cognitive metaphors in toponyms originates from the idea proposed by Lakoff and Johnson that metaphor is not just a linguistic ornament but a fundamental mechanism of human thought. Likewise, linguocultural analysis considers names as reflections of collective experience, value systems, and national mentality. The comparison between English and Uzbek toponyms allows researchers to observe how different cultures encode their perception of nature, geography, and spirituality through language. Understanding these mechanisms helps reveal not only linguistic variation but also the deep cognitive structures underlying national identity. Research on toponymy has been approached from various linguistic, cultural, and cognitive perspectives. E. Sapir [1, 54] and B. L. Whorf [17, 62] emphasized the influence of language on perception, known as linguistic relativity. Their ideas provided the foundation for exploring how place names reflect the worldview of a linguistic community.

A.V. Superanskaya regarded toponyms as cultural texts, asserting that every geographical name encodes historical and cultural memory. Similarly, E.M.Pospelov argued that geographical names are linguistic witnesses of human civilization, containing ethnographic and social information.

In the field of cognitive linguistics, Lakoff and Johnson proposed that metaphorical thinking structures human cognition, influencing naming patterns. Langacker introduced the concept of image schemas that underlie linguistic meaning, such as container, path, and source-goal. In Uzbek linguistics, scholars such as S. Rakhmatullaev, A. Khodjayev, and M. Hakimov explored the cultural and semantic nature of Uzbek place names, linking them to local traditions, colors, and natural elements. Their research emphasizes the symbolic and associative features of toponyms in the Uzbek worldview. Thus, existing scholarship indicates that both cognitive metaphor theory and linguocultural analysis provide effective frameworks for understanding the semantic depth and cultural meaning of toponyms. English place names often emerge from conceptual metaphors that reflect the practical, descriptive, and territorial mindset of early settlers. Examples include: Oxford (“ford of oxen”) – metaphor of labor and rural livelihood, Cambridge (“bridge over the River Cam”) – metaphor of connection and development, Greenwich (“green settlement”) – metaphor of fertility and life, Newcastle – metaphor of human construction and progress. These examples show that English toponyms frequently arise from the metaphor NATURE IS POSSESSION and PLACE IS HUMAN ACTIVITY, indicating an anthropocentric worldview [19, 52]. Uzbek toponyms are more symbolically and spiritually charged, reflecting harmony with the environment. For example: Guliston (“land of flowers”) – metaphor of beauty and prosperity, Navbahor (“new spring”) – metaphor of renewal and rebirth, Qiziltepa (“red hill”) –





metaphor of strength and endurance, Ko'kgumbaz ("blue dome") – metaphor of heaven and spirituality. These names reveal cognitive models such as NATURE IS SPIRIT, COLOR IS VALUE, and PLACE IS SOUL, demonstrating how the environment is conceptualized through cultural symbolism [20, 23]. The results confirm that cognitive metaphors and symbols in both languages are shaped by geography, history, and cultural experience. However, their orientation differs:

English toponyms highlight function, activity, and social structure.

Uzbek toponyms emphasize emotion, nature, and spiritual harmony. For instance, Oxford represents human work and practicality, while Qiziltepa reflects the natural landscape and its cultural meaning. The English naming tradition, rooted in Anglo-Saxon and Norman heritage, mirrors feudal and descriptive cognition, whereas the Uzbek one expresses symbolic, poetic cognition tied to ancient Turkic, Persian, and Islamic influences [21, 63].

Moreover, color-based metaphors (Blackpool, Whitehaven, Qoradaryo, Oqtosh) illustrate shared cognitive mechanisms across cultures but distinct cultural values. In English, colors denote visibility and differentiation, while in Uzbek they imply moral and spiritual dimensions (purity, fertility, endurance). The study also found that both languages share image schemas such as container (Cambridge, Qal'ai Hisor) and path (Stratford, Qo'shko'prik), confirming universal cognitive patterns within culturally specific realizations [22, 18].

The analysis demonstrates that toponyms function as cognitive and cultural texts encoding a nation's worldview. Both English and Uzbek place names employ metaphor and symbolism, yet their semantic focuses differ. English toponyms reflect human-centered pragmatism, while Uzbek ones represent a harmonious, spiritual relation with nature. This contrast reveals that metaphor and symbol are not only linguistic devices but also cognitive tools that construct national identity. Through toponyms, societies express their collective perception of the world, connecting geography with culture, language, and history.

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