

CULTURAL AND CONTEXTUAL VARIATION OF ANTHROPOMORPHIC METAPHORS IN THE ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

Ibragimova Shahlo Zavqiyevna

Master Student

Uzbekistan State World Languages Universi

ibragimovashahlo3@gmail.com

Abstract

Cultural and contextual variations in anthropomorphic metaphors, focusing on how different languages and societies attribute human characteristics to non-human entities. It examines the role of culture, environment, history, and social context in shaping metaphorical expressions, drawing on comparative studies and cognitive linguistic theories. Anthropomorphic metaphors, which imbue non-human entities such as animals, objects, or natural phenomena with human traits, emotions, or intentions, are a universal feature of language and thought. However, their expression and interpretation vary significantly across cultures and contexts due to differences in worldview, environment, and social practices. This article examines how cultural beliefs, historical contexts, and situational factors influence the use and perception of anthropomorphic metaphors. By analyzing examples from English and Uzbek linguistic traditions and social settings, it highlights the interplay between universal cognitive tendencies and localized cultural frameworks. The introduction provides a foundation by defining anthropomorphism and its metaphorical applications, followed by the main text, which explores variations in religious, literary, and everyday contexts. The conclusion synthesizes findings and suggests implications for cross-cultural communication.

Keywords: Anthropomorphism, metaphors, cultural variation, contextual influence, language.

Introduction

Annotatsiya:

Antropomorfik metaforalarning madaniy va kontekstual o'zgarishlari, turli tillar va jamiyatlarning insoniy xususiyatlarni insoniy bo'lmagan shaxslarga qanday bog'lashiga e'tibor qaratish. U qiyosiy tadqiqotlar va kognitiv lingvistik nazariyalarga asoslanib, metaforik iboralarni shakllantirishda madaniyat, atrof-muhit, tarix va ijtimoiy kontekstning rolini o'rganadi. Hayvonlar, narsalar yoki tabiat hodisalari kabi insoniy bo'lmagan mavjudotlarni insoniy xususiyatlar, his-tuyg'ular yoki niyatlar bilan

singdiradigan antropomorfik metaforalar til va fikrning universal xususiyatidir. Biroq, ularning ifodasi va talqini dunyoqarash, atrof-muhit va ijtimoiy amaliyotdagi farqlar tufayli madaniyatlar va kontekstlarda sezilarli darajada farq qiladi. Ushbu maqolada madaniy e'tiqodlar, tarixiy kontekstlar va vaziyat omillari antropomorfik metaforalardan foydalanish va idrok etishga qanday ta'sir qilishi ko'rib chiqiladi. Ingliz va Uzbek lingvistik an'analar va ijtimoiy holatlardan misollarni tahlil qilib, uning universal kognitiv tendentsiyalar va mahalliyashtirilgan madaniy doiralar o'rtasidagi o'zaro bog'liqlikni ta'kidlaydi. Maqolaning kirish qismida antropomorfizm va uning metaforik qo'llanilishi, so'ngra diniy, adabiy va kundalik kontekstdagi o'zgarishlar haqida maqolaning asosiy qismida yoritilgan. Xulosa qismida topilgan ma'lumotlar sintez qilinadi.

Kalit so'zlar: antropomorfizm, metafora, madaniy o'zgarish, kontekstual ta'sir, til

Аннотация:

Культурные и контекстуальные вариации антропоморфных метафор, фокусирующиеся на том, как разные языки и общества приписывают человеческие характеристики нечеловеческим существам. В нем рассматривается роль культуры, окружающей среды, истории и социального контекста в формировании метафорических выражений, опираясь на сравнительные исследования и когнитивные лингвистические теории. Антропоморфные метафоры, которые наделяют нечеловеческие сущности, такие как животные, предметы или природные явления, человеческими чертами, эмоциями или намерениями, являются универсальной особенностью языка и мышления. Однако их выражение и интерпретация существенно различаются в разных культурах и контекстах из-за различий в мировоззрении, окружающей среде и социальных практиках. В этой статье рассматривается, как культурные убеждения, исторический контекст и ситуативные факторы влияют на использование и восприятие антропоморфных метафор. Анализируя примеры из английских и узбекских языковых традиций и социальных условий, в статье подчеркивается взаимосвязь между универсальными когнитивными тенденциями и локализованными культурными рамками. Во введении дается определение антропоморфизма и его метафорических применений, за которым следует основной текст, в котором рассматриваются вариации в религиозном, литературном и повседневном контекстах. В заключении обобщаются полученные результаты и предлагается их применение для межкультурной коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: антропоморфизм, метафоры, культурная вариативность, контекстуальное влияние, язык.

Anthropomorphism involves attributing human-like qualities—emotions, intentions, or physical traits—to non-human entities. In metaphor, this manifests as expressions like "the wind whispers" or "the city never sleeps," where natural or abstract entities are described with human characteristics. These metaphors are rooted in cognitive processes that help humans make sense of the world by relating unfamiliar phenomena to familiar human experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). However, the specific forms and meanings of anthropomorphic metaphors are not universal; they are shaped by cultural, historical, and contextual factors.

Anthropomorphic metaphors are one of the four types of metaphors. According to Lakoff & Johnson (1980), there are four categories of metaphors: Anthropomorphic Metaphor, Animal Metaphor, Concrete to Abstract, and Synesthetic Anthropomorphic. When comparing one notion to another, anthropomorphic metaphor transfers the aspects of human existence, such as behavior, nature, and human attributes, to inanimate objects. Anthropomorphic metaphors serve multiple purposes: they simplify complex phenomena, evoke emotional responses, and reflect cultural values. For instance, describing a storm as "angry" may resonate in cultures that associate nature with divine emotions, but the same metaphor might be less intuitive in societies with mechanistic views of the environment. This section explores how these metaphors vary across three key domains: religious and spiritual contexts, literary traditions, and everyday language use.

Anthropomorphic metaphors are prevalent in religious and spiritual discourse, where they bridge the gap between the divine or supernatural and human understanding. However, the nature and acceptability of these metaphors vary across cultures.

In religions like Christianity and Islam, anthropomorphic metaphors are used cautiously due to theological concerns about depicting God as human-like. For example, the Bible describes God with phrases like "the hand of God" or "God's wrath", but these are often interpreted as metaphorical to avoid literal anthropomorphism, which could imply imperfection or limitation. In Islamic tradition, the Quran uses terms like "Allah sees" or "Allah hears", but Islamic scholars emphasize that these are metaphorical, reflecting divine attributes rather than human forms.

The use of anthropomorphic metaphors in religious contexts is also shaped by situational factors. In times of crisis, such as natural disasters, cultures may intensify anthropomorphic language to personify nature's wrath or divine judgment. For example, in medieval Europe, plagues were often described as "God's punishment," reflecting a cultural tendency to interpret events through a moral lens (Cohn, 2002). In contrast, secular or scientific contexts may suppress such metaphors, favoring mechanistic descriptions like "climate patterns shift."

Regarding to anthropomorphic metaphors, anthropomorphic metaphors in literature reflect cultural aesthetics and philosophical outlooks, varying across genres and historical periods. In Western literature, anthropomorphic metaphors often serve allegorical or moral purposes. In fables, for instance, use animals with human traits—cunning foxes,

diligent ants—to convey moral lessons. Similarly, in English Romantic poetry, nature is frequently anthropomorphized to express emotional or spiritual connections. In Eastern traditions, anthropomorphic metaphors often blend human and non-human realms to reflect philosophical concepts. In Uzbek poetry, such as the works of Jaloliddin Rumi, mountains and rivers are described as "weeping" or "singing," embodying harmony between humans and nature (Babayev, 2024). These metaphors differ from Western ones in their emphasis on transcendence and unity rather than individual agency.

Literary anthropomorphism also varies by context within a culture. In modern Western literature, anthropomorphic metaphors may be used ironically or satirically, as in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, where animals embody human political flaws (Orwell, 1945). In contrast, children's literature across cultures often uses anthropomorphism straightforwardly to engage young readers, as seen in "Alice in Wonderland" featuring talking animals like the White Rabbit (Lewis Carroll, 1865).

Moreover, anthropomorphic metaphors in everyday language reveal how cultural and contextual factors shape mundane communication. In English, common expressions like "the car is tired" or "the clock is ticking" anthropomorphize objects to convey familiarity or urgency. In contrast, in Uzbek usage of anthropomorphic metaphors to reflect a worldview where all entities—animate or inanimate—are interconnected. For example, in Uzbek poems or proverbs a mountain can be described as "standing proudly," emphasizing its spiritual agency (Mirzayev, 2012).

Environmental factors influence anthropomorphic metaphors in everyday speech. In urban settings, technology is frequently anthropomorphized, with English speakers describing computers as "crashing" or "behaving," reflecting reliance on digital systems. Social contexts also matter: during economic crises, markets are often described as "nervous" or "confident," mirroring human emotions (Lakoff, 1993).

English metaphors often reflect individualism, rationality, and a scientific worldview. For example, expressions like "Time flies" or "The wind whispers" personify abstract concepts or natural phenomena with human actions, emphasizing observation and detachment. English also incorporates technological metaphors, such as "The computer froze," reflecting modern, industrialized contexts. In contrast, Uzbek metaphors are deeply rooted in collectivism, agrarian traditions, and a close relationship with nature. Expressions like "Daryo g'azablandi" (The river became angry) or "Yer xafa bo'lsa, hosil bo'lmaydi" (If the land is upset, there will be no harvest) personify natural elements to convey moral and communal lessons. These metaphors emphasize harmony with nature and collective well-being. Both languages use anthropomorphic metaphors to simplify complex ideas and evoke emotional resonance, but the choice of metaphorical domains—technological vs. natural, individualistic vs. collective—reflects distinct cultural worldviews.

The variation in anthropomorphic metaphors can lead to cross-cultural misunderstandings. For example, an English speaker might find the Uzbek metaphor "the moon is lonely" poetic but vague, while a Uzbek speaker might find the English phrase "the

economy is booming" overly mechanistic. These differences highlight the need for cultural sensitivity in translation and communication.

Understanding cultural and contextual variations in anthropomorphic metaphors is crucial for effective communication, especially in globalized contexts. In literature, translation must preserve the cultural nuances of metaphors; for example, rendering an Uzbek poem's "singing river" as a literal description risks losing its philosophical depth. In advertising, anthropomorphic metaphors must align with cultural values—using a "friendly" product mascot may resonate in the U.K. but seem childish in cultures that value restraint. In intercultural settings, awareness of metaphor variation can prevent misinterpretations. For instance, negotiators from different cultures may use anthropomorphic metaphors differently when discussing markets or policies, leading to confusion if not addressed. Educators and communicators should thus emphasize cultural literacy to bridge these gaps.

In conclusion, anthropomorphic metaphors are a universal cognitive phenomenon shaped by human experience, but their forms and meanings are profoundly shaped by cultural and contextual factors. English and Uzbek metaphors illustrate how cultural values—individualism vs. collectivism, technological vs. natural orientation—influence metaphorical expression. Furthermore, contextual factors such as physical environment, social setting, and historical background dynamically shape metaphor use in discourse. In religious contexts, they reflect theological boundaries or spiritual worldviews; in literature, they embody aesthetic and philosophical traditions; and in everyday language, they reveal environmental and social influences. These variations highlight the interplay between universal cognitive tendencies and localized cultural frameworks. As globalization increases cross-cultural interactions, understanding these differences is essential for effective communication, translation, and mutual understanding. Future research could explore how digital media and globalized languages influence the evolution of anthropomorphic metaphors, potentially creating hybrid forms that blend cultural traditions.

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