

COGNITIVE FOUNDATIONS AND CONCEPTUAL MANIFESTATION OF NEGATIVE EMOTION LEXIS

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Abstract

This article explores the cognitive foundations of negative emotion lexis and its conceptual manifestation in language. Within the framework of cognitive linguistics, emotions such as fear, anger, envy, and hatred are analyzed in terms of their linguistic expression and cultural connotations. The study emphasizes the role of metaphor, metonymy, and cultural factors in shaping the conceptualization of negative emotions.

Keywords

negative emotion, cognitive linguistics, concept, emotional lexis, cultural connotation.

Introduction: Language is not only a means of communication but also a cognitive tool that encodes and transmits human emotions. Among the most salient categories of emotional vocabulary are negative emotions, which reflect the inner states of fear, anger, sadness, envy, hatred, and disappointment. These emotions are linguistically shaped by cultural practices, social norms, and collective memory. From a cognitive perspective, negative emotions function as conceptual structures that shape perception, communication, and worldviews.

The study of negative emotion lexis is significant for several reasons. Firstly, emotions are universal, but their expression varies across languages and cultures. Secondly, emotional vocabulary provides insight into the relationship between language, thought, and culture. Finally, negative emotions carry pragmatic and cultural weight, often serving as a means of regulating social behavior. This research aims to identify the cognitive foundations of negative emotion lexis and to analyze how they manifest conceptually in English and Uzbek. It seeks to demonstrate how metaphor and metonymy act as key mechanisms in structuring the conceptualization of emotions, while also revealing cultural specifics in emotional expression.

Analysis and Results: The analysis of negative emotion lexis reveals that emotional expressions are not random but systematically structured within cognitive domains. Based on cross-linguistic data from English and Uzbek, four dominant conceptual domains emerge: Threat, Conflict, Loss, and Inequality.

The study applies cognitive linguistic methods, including conceptual analysis, semantic mapping, and cultural comparison. Metaphor and metonymy are considered as primary cognitive mechanisms through which negative emotions are expressed in language. Comparative analysis of English and Uzbek negative emotion lexis is employed to reveal universal and culture-specific features. The data were drawn from dictionaries, corpora, and literary texts in both English and Uzbek. Expressions such as “boiling with anger” in English and “ko’zi qizidi” in Uzbek were examined to highlight shared embodied metaphors and culture-specific interpretations. This methodological design allows for a comprehensive understanding of how negative emotions are encoded and conceptualized in language.

1. Threat Domain: Fear and Anxiety

Fear and anxiety are conceptualized as responses to perceived danger or instability. In English, idioms such as “my heart skipped a beat”, “frozen with fear”, and “scared stiff” conceptualize fear as physical immobility and disruption of bodily rhythm. Uzbek expressions such as “yuragi orqaga tortildi” (the heart pulled back) and “qonlari muzlab ketdi” (blood froze) highlight the same embodied experience of paralysis. These linguistic parallels demonstrate the universality of fear as a bodily-based metaphor.

2. Conflict Domain: Anger and Hostility

Anger is one of the most elaborately structured emotions in language. English idioms like “boiling with anger”, “hot-tempered”, and “burst into rage” draw on heat and pressure metaphors. Uzbek provides equivalent imagery: “ko’zi qizidi” (his eyes turned red), “qonni qaynadi” (his blood boiled), and “g’azabdan portladi” (burst with anger). These examples suggest a shared conceptual metaphor: “**Anger is heated fluid in a container**”. The human body is conceptualized as a vessel, and uncontrolled anger is seen as liquid reaching boiling point.

3. Loss Domain: Grief and Sadness

Sadness and grief are associated with experiences of emptiness and heaviness. In English, expressions like “broken heart”, “cry one’s eyes out”, and “weighed down with sorrow” embody the metaphor “**Sadness is a burden**”. Similarly, in Uzbek, “dili vayron bo’ldi” (his soul was ruined), “yuragi ezildi” (his heart was crushed), and “ko’z yosh to’kdi” (shed tears) link sadness to physical destruction

and heaviness. The metaphorical mapping reflects the embodied perception of emotional pain as a physical burden.

4. Inequality Domain: Envy and Jealousy

Envy and jealousy are frequently conceptualized through metaphors of consumption and destruction. In English, “green with envy”, “eaten up by jealousy”, and “burning with envy” emphasize physical processes of corrosion and heat. Uzbek parallels include “ichini yedi” (ate him from inside), “ko’zi qizg’ondi” (his eyes begrudged), and “rashk alangasi yoqdi” (the flame of jealousy burned). These examples highlight how envy is embodied as an internal destructive force.

Cross-Linguistic Patterns

The comparative analysis reveals that while English and Uzbek share universal embodied metaphors rooted in bodily experiences, cultural variations emerge in moral and pragmatic framing. In English, emotional expressions are often descriptive and dramatized, whereas in Uzbek, many expressions carry evaluative or didactic undertones. For example, anger is often associated with loss of dignity, while patience and self-control are culturally valorized. This indicates that linguistic expression of emotions is both universal and culturally specific.

Summary: Negative emotions cluster around four main conceptual domains:
2. Embodied metaphors such as “ANGER IS HEAT”, “FEAR IS COLDNESS”, and “SADNESS IS A BURDEN” are shared across languages.
3. Cultural specifics determine the moral evaluation and pragmatic use of emotional vocabulary.

4. Uzbek expressions often emphasize social harmony and moral restraint, while English favors dramatization and vivid imagery.

In English, expressions such as 'heart sank' (fear), 'boiling with anger' (rage), and 'green with envy' (jealousy) demonstrate conceptual metaphors that link emotions with physical or color-based imagery. In Uzbek, idioms such as 'yuragi orqaga tortildi' (fear), 'ko’zi qizidi' (anger), and 'ichini yedi' (envy) show similar conceptualizations, grounded in bodily experience and cultural evaluation.

Discussion: The findings confirm that negative emotions are conceptualized through embodied experience and cultural interpretation. While universal patterns such as threat and conflict are found across languages, specific expressions differ depending on cultural values. In Uzbek, patience and restraint are culturally encouraged, hence negative emotions often carry didactic or moralizing connotations. In English, metaphorical framing often emphasizes physiological and color associations.

Conclusion: Negative emotion lexis is rooted in cognitive structures and conceptualized through metaphor, metonymy, and cultural evaluation. The study highlights the interplay between universal human experience and culture-specific linguistic expression. Further research may focus on cross-linguistic comparison of additional languages to better understand the global and local patterns of negative emotion conceptualization.

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