

SOMATIC CONCEPTS “HEART” AND “LIVER” IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LINGUISTIC WORLDVIEWS: A COGNITIVE AND LINGUOCULTURAL STUDY

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19508410>

Ulugbek Madaminovich Kabilov

Teacher, Andijan State University

(ukabilov50@gmail.com) +998979941862

Abstract

This paper explores the cognitive and linguocultural representation of the somatic concepts *heart* and *liver* in English and Uzbek within the framework of linguistic worldview theory. The study aims to identify universal and culture-specific patterns in the metaphorical conceptualization of internal organs. The analysis is based on more than 270 lexical units, idioms, and fixed expressions drawn from contemporary English and Uzbek lexicographic sources. The findings demonstrate that the concept *heart* exhibits a stable universal semantic core in both languages, primarily associated with emotions, affection, sincerity, and courage. However, the Uzbek concept *yurak* reveals additional layers related to moral evaluation, spiritual values, and intuitive cognition. In contrast, the concept *liver* displays significant cross-cultural asymmetry: while English largely restricts *liver* to biological reference and marginal negative metaphorization, Uzbek extensively employs *jigar* as a key cultural symbol of emotional intimacy, kinship, bravery, and temperament. The study confirms that somatic concepts function as culturally embedded cognitive structures reflecting nationally specific value systems and modes of conceptualization.

Keywords

linguistic worldview, somatic concepts, heart, liver, cognitive metaphor, linguoculturology, English, Uzbek

The anthropocentric orientation of contemporary linguistics has shifted scholarly attention from language as an autonomous structural system to language as a reflection of human cognition, emotion, and culture. Within this paradigm, language is viewed as a medium through which individuals conceptualize reality, encode experience, and transmit culturally significant knowledge.

A central notion in this approach is that of the *concept*, understood as a complex mental formation integrating linguistic meaning, cultural memory, emotional evaluation, and cognitive categorization. Concepts form the backbone of

a linguistic worldview, structuring how members of a speech community perceive and interpret the world.

One of the most productive domains for conceptual analysis is the human body. Somatic concepts, derived from body parts and internal organs, provide a concrete experiential basis for metaphorical thinking. Through somatic metaphors, abstract phenomena such as emotions, ethical values, personality traits, and social relations are rendered cognitively accessible.

Among internal organs, *heart* and *liver* demonstrate contrasting patterns of metaphorical development across languages. While the heart is widely recognized as a cross-cultural symbol of emotional life, the liver exhibits strong cultural variability. In Uzbek linguistic culture, *jigar* functions as a highly productive metaphor of affection and kinship, whereas in English it remains largely peripheral. This asymmetry makes the comparative study of these concepts particularly relevant.

The present study seeks to examine how *heart* / *yurak* and *liver* / *jigar* are conceptualized in English and Uzbek, and how these conceptualizations reflect universal cognitive tendencies and culturally specific worldviews.

The research adopts an interdisciplinary methodological framework combining comparative linguistics, cognitive semantics, and linguocultural analysis. This integrated approach enables the examination of both semantic structure and cultural motivation.

The primary methods employed include:

- contrastive analysis to identify similarities and differences in somatic conceptualization;
- semantic and contextual analysis of idioms and metaphorical expressions;
- cognitive analysis of underlying conceptual metaphors and mappings;
- linguocultural interpretation of evaluative and symbolic meanings.

The empirical corpus consists of more than 270 lexical items, idioms, and phraseological units collected from authoritative sources, including the *Oxford English Dictionary*, *Cambridge Idioms Dictionary*, *Uzbek Explanatory Dictionary*, and specialized phraseological dictionaries. Only stable and widely attested expressions were included to ensure representativeness.

The analysis reveals that in both English and Uzbek, the heart is conceptualized as the primary center of emotional experience and inner life. This universality is reflected in a wide range of parallel expressions.

In English, typical examples include:

a broken heart (emotional suffering),

from the bottom of one's heart (sincerity),
to have a kind heart (benevolence),
to lose heart (loss of courage).

Comparable Uzbek expressions include:

yuragi ezilmoq (to experience deep emotional pain),
chin yurakdan (with sincere intention),
yuragi keng (kind and generous),
yuragi yetmaslik (to lack courage).

These parallels point to a shared conceptual metaphor:

The heart is the center of emotional and moral experience - this metaphor appears to be grounded in universal embodied cognition, where emotional states are perceived as internal physiological experiences.

Despite its universal core, the Uzbek concept *yurak* demonstrates a broader semantic scope than its English counterpart. In Uzbek, the heart functions not only as an emotional center but also as a locus of moral judgment and spiritual value.

Examples include:

yuragi pok (morally pure),
yuragi nurli (spiritually enlightened),
yuragi bilan sezmoq (to intuitively perceive),
yuragi qora (morally corrupt).

In English, such meanings are rarely expressed through the heart metaphor and are instead lexicalized through abstract terms such as *conscience*, *morality*, or *intuition*. This difference reflects a culturally specific integration of ethical and spiritual domains into somatic conceptualization in Uzbek.

At the basic level, both English and Uzbek conceptualize the liver as a biological organ. In addition, both languages exhibit limited negative metaphorical usage.

English examples include:

liver disease (medical reference),
lily-livered (cowardly).

Uzbek examples include:

jigar kasalligi (medical reference),
jig'iga tegmoq (to irritate or provoke emotionally).

These examples indicate a minimal shared semantic base, primarily grounded in physical and evaluative meanings.

The most pronounced divergence emerges in the Uzbek conceptualization of *jigar*. In Uzbek linguistic culture, *jigar* functions as a central metaphor for emotional closeness, kinship, and personal value.

Representative examples include:

jigarim (a term of deep affection),

jigarband farzand (beloved child),

jigarli yigit (brave and resolute young man),

jig'ariga tegmoq (to affect one's emotional state).

In English, these semantic domains are not associated with *liver* and are instead expressed through *heart* or abstract relational vocabulary. This asymmetry highlights the culturally embedded nature of somatic metaphorization.

The findings demonstrate that somatic concepts are shaped by an interaction between universal embodied experience and culturally specific value systems. The universality of the heart metaphor reflects shared human physiology and emotional cognition. At the same time, the Uzbek extension of *yurak* into moral and spiritual domains indicates a culturally specific worldview in which ethical qualities are conceptualized through the body.

The concept *liver* illustrates even more clearly the role of culture in shaping conceptual structure. While English marginalizes liver metaphors, Uzbek elevates *jigar* to a key symbol of intimacy and personal significance. This difference underscores the importance of linguocultural factors in metaphor formation and conceptual prominence.

This study has shown that the somatic concepts *heart / yurak* and *liver / jigar* function as cognitively and culturally significant elements of English and Uzbek linguistic worldviews. The concept *heart* exhibits a stable universal semantic core, while its Uzbek realization incorporates additional moral and spiritual dimensions. In contrast, the concept *liver* represents a culturally marked phenomenon whose metaphorical productivity in Uzbek has no direct counterpart in English.

The results confirm that somatic metaphors serve as powerful indicators of national value systems and cognitive models, highlighting the necessity of linguocultural analysis in cross-linguistic research.

REFERENCES:

1. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
2. Kövecses, Z. (2010). *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
3. Wierzbicka, A. (1997). *Understanding Cultures through Their Key Words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

4. Evans, V. (2009). *How Words Mean*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sharifian, F. (2017). *Cultural Linguistics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
5. Oxford English Dictionary. (2023). Oxford University Press.
6. Cambridge Idioms Dictionary. (2022). Cambridge University Press.
7. Rahmatullaev, Sh. (2006). *Uzbek Phraseology*. Tashkent.
8. Uzbek Explanatory Dictionary. (2020). Tashkent: National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan.