

## COGNITIVE-SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF THE HEART CONCEPT IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK SOMATIC PROVERBS

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**Abstract:** *This article investigates the cognitive-semantic characteristics of the heart concept in English and Uzbek somatic proverbs. The research focuses on proverbs containing the somatic lexemes heart and yurak and analyzes them from the perspectives of cognitive linguistics and conceptual metaphor theory. The study identifies universal and culture-specific semantic features of the heart concept in both languages. The findings reveal that the heart symbolizes emotions, courage, kindness, spirituality, morality, and psychological states. English somatic proverbs mainly emphasize personal emotional experience, while Uzbek proverbs reflect collective morality and spiritual values.*


**Keywords:** *cognitive semantics, conceptual metaphor, somatic proverb, heart concept, paremiology, English language, Uzbek language.*

Language is one of the main instruments through which people conceptualize reality and express their cultural worldview. Proverbs, as a component of folk wisdom, preserve centuries of human experience, national traditions, and conceptual knowledge. Among different types of proverbs, somatic proverbs occupy a special position because they are based on body-part lexemes and reflect embodied human cognition. According to cognitive linguistics, human thinking is deeply connected with bodily experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Therefore, body parts frequently function as conceptual symbols in language. The heart is one of the most universal somatic components because it is associated with emotions, courage, morality, sincerity, spirituality, and psychological conditions.

The aim of this article is to analyze the cognitive-semantic peculiarities of the heart concept in English and Uzbek somatic proverbs. The research also seeks to identify the main conceptual metaphors underlying these proverbs and determine similarities and differences between the two linguistic cultures.

The theoretical foundation of this study is based on conceptual metaphor theory introduced by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By*. According to this theory, abstract concepts are understood through concrete bodily experience. Zoltán Kövecses (2010) states that emotions are largely conceptualized through bodily metaphors,





particularly through the heart. Similarly, Anna Wierzbicka (1992) emphasizes that conceptual meanings vary according to national culture and mentality. In Uzbek linguistics, somatic phraseology and paremiology have been studied by scholars such as Rahmatullayev and Mamatov. Their research demonstrates that somatic units play an important role in reflecting Uzbek national worldview, moral values, and cultural cognition. However, comparative cognitive-semantic studies devoted specifically to the heart concept in English and Uzbek somatic proverbs remain limited. Therefore, this article attempts to fill this gap.

The research applies comparative, descriptive, and cognitive-semantic methods. Proverbs containing the lexemes heart and yurak were collected from English and Uzbek paremiological dictionaries and phraseological sources.

The selected somatic proverbs were analyzed according to:

semantic meaning, conceptual metaphor, emotional function, moral evaluation, cultural symbolism. The study is based on conceptual metaphor theory and embodiment theory. Particular attention is given to metaphorical and metonymic mappings that structure the semantic meaning of the heart concept.

The analysis reveals that the concept of the heart in both English and Uzbek languages functions as an important cognitive and cultural symbol. In both linguistic traditions, the heart is closely connected with emotions, courage, morality, and spirituality. The identified meanings can be grouped into several semantic categories. First, the heart is widely conceptualized as the center of emotion. In English proverbs, expressions such as “Home is where the heart is” demonstrate that people emotionally belong to places they love, reflecting the conceptual metaphor HEART IS THE CENTER OF EMOTION. Similarly, the proverb “What comes from the heart goes to the heart” emphasizes sincerity and emotional influence, corresponding to the metaphor SINCERITY IS HEART. Other examples, including “Out of sight, out of heart” and “The way to a man’s heart is through his stomach,” show that love, affection, and emotional attachment are metaphorically located in the heart. Uzbek proverbs also strongly associate the heart with emotional experience. For example, “Yurakdan chiqqan gap yurakka yetadi” expresses the idea that sincere words deeply touch people emotionally.

Another important semantic field in both languages is courage and emotional strength. English proverbs such as “Fortune favors the brave heart”, “Great hearts conquer adversity” and “A stout heart conquers fortune” present the heart as a source of bravery, determination, and psychological resilience. These proverbs illustrate conceptual metaphors such as COURAGE IS HEART and EMOTIONAL STRENGTH IS HEART. Uzbek proverbs similarly emphasize courage through heart-related expressions. For instance, “Yurak bo’lsa yo’l topiladi”, “Yuraksiz bahodir bo’lmas”, “Yurak – botirga





yo'ldosh", "Yurakli bir o'lar, yuraksiz ming o'lar" directly associates bravery with the heart, supporting the metaphor BRAVERY IS HEART.

The analysis also demonstrates that the heart in Uzbek somatic proverbs frequently symbolizes morality and spirituality. Proverbs such as "Yuragi toza odamning yuzi yorug'" emphasize that honest and pure-hearted people gain social respect, while "Yurak bo'lsa, yo'l topiladi" connects determination and willpower with the heart. These examples show that the Uzbek worldview strongly links the heart with ethical values, sincerity, patience, and spiritual purity. English proverbs also contain moral symbolism, though less intensively. Expressions like "A kind heart is better than a fair face" highlight the importance of inner goodness over physical appearance, while "Cold hands, warm heart" suggests that kindness may exist beneath an emotionally distant exterior. In these examples, the heart symbolizes goodness, kindness, and moral character.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that the concept of the heart possesses both universal and culture-specific characteristics. Universal similarities arise from embodied human experience because emotions often influence heartbeat and bodily sensations. As a result, both linguistic cultures conceptualize emotions through the heart, supporting the embodiment theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Several universal conceptual metaphors are shared by both languages, including HEART IS EMOTION, HEART IS COURAGE, HEART IS A CONTAINER, GOODNESS IS HEART, and SINCERITY IS HEART. However, cultural differences influence semantic emphasis. English proverbs mainly focus on individual emotional experiences, psychological conditions, and personal relationships, where emotional attachment and internal feelings become central themes. In contrast, Uzbek proverbs strongly associate the heart with morality, spirituality, sincerity, bravery, patience, and collective social values.

The cognitive-semantic analysis of English and Uzbek somatic proverbs demonstrates that the heart concept plays a central role in both linguistic worldviews. In both languages, the heart symbolizes emotions, courage, kindness, sincerity, and psychological states. At the same time, significant cultural differences exist.

English somatic proverbs emphasize personal emotional experience and individual psychology, while Uzbek proverbs focus on morality, spirituality, honor, and collective values.

The study confirms that somatic proverbs are important linguistic units for investigating conceptual systems, embodied cognition, and national mentality.

The heart concept reflects universal human experience while simultaneously preserving culture-specific meanings.

Future research may investigate other somatic concepts such as head, eye, hand, and tongue in English and Uzbek paremiology from cognitive and linguocultural perspectives.





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