

**INTERSEMIOTIC CHALLENGES IN TRANSLATING POETIC  
METAPHORS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF UZBEK AND ENGLISH  
LITERARY DISCOURSE**

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**Abstract**

Metaphors in poetry form a rich intersection of cognition, culture, and aesthetics. Translating them across languages—especially between Uzbek and English—poses unique challenges, as the translator must navigate between preserving semantic accuracy and evoking equivalent poetic resonance. This study explores how poetic metaphors are transferred, transformed, or reimagined in translation, drawing upon comparative literature, contrastive linguistics, and translation studies. This paper employs a multi-method approach that combines Conceptual Metaphor Theory, textual analysis, translator interviews, and corpus-based comparisons. We focus on works by Uzbek poet Abdulla Oripov and English Romantic poet William Wordsworth to explore similarities and divergences in metaphorical imagery. Key insights reveal that universal metaphors often translate with minimal adaptation, while culture-specific ones—such as those rooted in Sufi mysticism or pastoral English landscapes—require creative re-interpretation. In many cases, literal translation risks flattening emotional depth, while over-domestication erases cultural uniqueness. This research contributes to ongoing debates about the translator's role as both mediator and co-creator, offering a practical framework for metaphor translation that blends fidelity with cultural sensitivity. It also underscores the importance of interdisciplinary methods that unite linguistics, literary studies, and cognitive science.

**Introduction**

Metaphors are not merely linguistic ornaments; they are cognitive structures shaping the way cultures conceptualize reality. The Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) asserts that human thought itself is metaphorically structured. In poetry, metaphors condense complex emotions, philosophies, and cultural histories into a single image or phrase. In Uzbek literary tradition, particularly in the works of Abdulla Oripov, metaphors often intertwine nature with moral and

spiritual reflection. The steppe, wheat fields, and rivers symbolize not just physical realities but collective memory, resilience, and divine order. Sufi influences imbue many Uzbek metaphors with layered spiritual meanings. English Romantic poetry, as exemplified by William Wordsworth, frequently draws on natural imagery to express individual introspection, moral philosophy, and the sublime. While Uzbek metaphors often emerge from communal identity, English metaphors lean towards personal experience and inner consciousness.

Twenty key perspectives enrich this section: Metaphors bridge cognitive universals and cultural particulars. Uzbek poetry integrates oral tradition into metaphor creation. English Romanticism elevates nature to a moral force. Religious frameworks shape metaphor interpretation in both traditions. Political history influences metaphor choice in post-independence Uzbek poetry. Industrialization altered English metaphor landscapes. Uzbek agrarian imagery contrasts with English woodland imagery. Translation studies often overlook poetic rhythm's role in metaphor rendering. Reader reception studies reveal cultural bias in metaphor appreciation. Some metaphors act as untranslatable cultural symbols. Idiomatic metaphors in Uzbek are deeply tied to agricultural cycles. English metaphors often derive from classical mythology. Gender perspectives influence metaphor usage in both literatures. Oral performance traditions shape metaphor repetition patterns in Uzbek. Intertextuality reinforces metaphor meaning. Political censorship historically influenced metaphor coding in Uzbek poetry. Romanticism's rejection of industrialism strengthened natural metaphors in English. Sufi mysticism offers layered metaphorical interpretations. Translation choices can shift a metaphor's cognitive domain. Comparative studies reveal that metaphor density varies by poetic genre.

## **Methods**

This study adopts a multi-method research design:

Corpus Selection: 10 high-metaphor-density poems (5 Uzbek, 5 English).

Theoretical Framework: Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Identification Tool: Metaphor Identification Procedure (Pragglejaz Group).

Translation Analysis: Newmark's taxonomy of strategies (1988). Data Sources:

Published translations, translator annotations, scholarly critiques.

Qualitative Interviews: 3 professional translators with 15+ years' experience.

Contextual Analysis: Historical, cultural, and religious frameworks. Reception Study:

Reader surveys to assess metaphor impact. Interdisciplinary Integration: Semiotics,

cognitive linguistics, literary criticism. Validation: Cross-checking with bilingual

experts. Twenty extended methodological notes includes. Selecting poems across multiple decades for diachronic analysis. Including both direct and indirect metaphors. Balancing male and female poetic voices. Considering performance context for Uzbek oral poems. Testing metaphor comprehension among bilingual audiences. Using computational tools for metaphor frequency analysis. Annotating metaphor types in bilingual parallel corpora. Comparing human and machine translation outputs. Documenting translator decision-making processes. Identifying cases of metaphor deletion or addition. Measuring reader emotional response to different translations. Comparing metaphor interpretation in academic vs. casual readership. Using focus groups for qualitative feedback. Including non-literal imagery in metaphor scope. Cross-referencing metaphor themes with historical events. Exploring translator's personal style influence. Analysing publisher/editor influence on final translation. Considering ideological shifts in metaphor choice post-translation. Mapping metaphor networks within single poems. Evaluating the success of cultural substitution strategies.

## **Results**

Analysis revealed distinct translation patterns: Universal metaphors (e.g., "light as knowledge") translate smoothly. Culture-specific metaphors often lose depth in literal translation. Uzbek agricultural metaphors require creative cultural substitution. English pastoral metaphors sometimes need contextual adaptation. Sufi mystic imagery benefits from paratextual explanation. Natural imagery is more translatable than idiomatic expressions. Sound-based metaphors are hardest to retain cross-linguistically. Translators balance fidelity with aesthetic flow. Paratextual glosses improve reader comprehension. Some metaphors resist translation entirely, requiring omission or reinterpretation.

Twenty further observations: Translators often merge two metaphors to preserve imagery density. Semantic compression occurs when translating from Uzbek to English. Expansion occurs when translating English metaphors into Uzbek. Historical metaphors need footnotes to remain meaningful. Translators sometimes domesticate flora/fauna references. Certain metaphors gain unintended humor post-translation. Imagery of death differs significantly between the traditions. Religious metaphors carry varying emotional weight. Political metaphors are frequently neutralized. Use of alliteration can shift metaphor perception. Lexical gaps necessitate metaphor re-framing. Some metaphors retain rhythm better than meaning. Emotional metaphors risk melodrama if over-literal. Nature metaphors have higher universal recognition. Urban imagery in English requires rural substitutions in Uzbek. Translators

occasionally use visual equivalence strategies. Interlingual homophones create accidental metaphors. Dialectal variations influence metaphor comprehension. Translator's personal philosophy can reshape metaphor intent. Bilingual poets produce more culturally hybrid metaphors.

## **Discussion**

The discussion highlights the delicate balance between preserving meaning and cultural authenticity. Literal translation often strips metaphors of their emotional and cultural resonance, while excessive adaptation risks distorting the original. The translator becomes a cultural mediator and a creative writer. Twenty discussion insights: Translation of metaphors is an act of interpretation. Over-domestication risks cultural erasure. Over-foreignization risks alienating readers. Metaphor translation intersects with postcolonial theory. Cultural literacy is essential for accurate metaphor transfer. Visual metaphors transfer more easily than auditory ones. Religious metaphors require sensitivity to interfaith contexts. Historical knowledge informs metaphor comprehension. Some metaphors carry gendered connotations. Emotional equivalence may override literal meaning. Semiotic frameworks help map metaphor layers. Collaborative translation can improve metaphor handling. Paratext can restore lost meaning without altering the poem. Political climate influences metaphor acceptability. Digital tools can assist metaphor identification but not interpretation. Poetic meter sometimes takes precedence over metaphor fidelity. Symbolic imagery can have multiple valid translations. Cross-cultural workshops improve metaphor translation skills. Metaphor clusters create cumulative meaning requiring holistic translation. Reader familiarity with source culture affects interpretation success.

## **Conclusion**

Metaphor translation between Uzbek and English poetic traditions is a cognitively and culturally complex act. Successful translation depends on balancing fidelity to the source text with creative adaptation for the target audience. Key conclusions include: Universal metaphors require minimal adaptation. Culture-specific metaphors demand creative solutions. Translator empathy enhances metaphor resonance. Poetic rhythm must be considered alongside meaning. Paratextual aids improve comprehension. Historical and cultural literacy is vital. Collaborative methods yield better translations. Semiotic and cognitive theories enhance analysis. Reader reception studies guide strategy choice. Training in metaphor theory benefits translators.

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