CONCEPTUAL METAPHORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF UGLINESS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK DISCOURSE

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***Abstract.** The concept of ugliness occupies a complex and multidimensional position within human cognition and linguistic expression. While often perceived as a purely aesthetic judgment, ugliness in discourse reflects deeper cultural, moral, and emotional evaluations encoded through language. This article explores the conceptual metaphorical structures underlying the notion of ugliness in English and Uzbek discourse within the framework of cognitive linguistics. Drawing on the theory of conceptual metaphor proposed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, the study analyzes how abstract perceptions of ugliness are structured through metaphorical mappings such as ugliness as moral corruption, disorder, or deviation from norms. A comparative analysis reveals both universal tendencies and culturally specific patterns in metaphor usage. English discourse often associates ugliness with immorality, darkness, and internal decay, while Uzbek discourse tends to emphasize social harmony, shame, and deviation from collective values. The findings demonstrate that ugliness is not merely a descriptive category but a culturally mediated conceptual construct that reflects broader ideological and emotional frameworks.*

***Keywords**: ugliness, conceptual metaphor, cognitive linguistics, discourse, English, Uzbek, evaluation, perception.*

Literature Review. The study of conceptual metaphor has become central in understanding how abstract concepts are structured in human cognition. The foundational work Metaphors We Live By by Metaphors We Live By established that metaphor is not only a linguistic device but also a cognitive mechanism shaping thought and perception. According to Lakoff and Johnson, abstract concepts such as beauty, morality, and ugliness are understood through more concrete experiential domains.

Subsequent research in cognitive linguistics has expanded this framework to include evaluative and aesthetic concepts. Scholars have argued that ugliness is rarely neutral; instead, it is frequently associated with negative moral, emotional, or social judgments. In English discourse, studies have shown that ugliness is metaphorically linked to darkness, disease, and corruption. Expressions such as "ugly truth," "ugly behavior," or "ugly situation" demonstrate how the concept extends beyond physical appearance into ethical and emotional domains.

In Uzbek linguistics, the concept of ugliness (often expressed through words such as xunuk, badbashara, or yoqimsiz) has been less extensively studied from a cognitive perspective, yet it is deeply embedded in cultural norms and social values. Uzbek discourse tends to integrate aesthetic evaluation with ethical judgment and social harmony. For example, describing behavior as "xunuk" often implies not only unpleasantness but also impropriety or shamefulness.

Recent comparative studies in linguoculturology emphasize that while some metaphorical patterns are universal, others are shaped by specific cultural

experiences. This aligns with the idea that language reflects both shared human cognition and culturally specific conceptualizations.

Analysis. One of the most prominent conceptual metaphors in both English and Uzbek discourse is: Ugliness as Moral Corruption

In English, phrases such as: "ugly intentions", "ugly side of humanity", "ugly crime" indicate that ugliness is mapped onto unethical or immoral behavior. Here, physical unattractiveness serves as a metaphorical source domain for moral negativity.

Similarly, in Uzbek: "xunuk ish" (ugly deed), "xunuk gap" (ugly speech)

These expressions reveal that ugliness is not limited to visual perception but extends to ethical evaluation. However, Uzbek discourse often carries a stronger social dimension, implying that such behavior disrupts communal harmony.

Another common metaphor is: ugliness is disorder. In English discourse: "an ugly mess", "ugly situation" conceptualize ugliness as lack of structure, imbalance, or chaos.

In Uzbek: "xunuk holat", "tartibsiz, xunuk ko'rinish"

The emphasis here is on the disruption of order and aesthetic balance. Uzbek discourse often reflects a cultural preference for harmony and symmetry, making disorder particularly salient as a marker of ugliness.

English frequently employs the metaphor: ugliness is darkness. Examples include: "dark and ugly thoughts", "ugly truth hidden in shadows". Darkness functions as a source domain representing fear, secrecy, and negativity.

35

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While Uzbek discourse also uses darkness metaphorically, it more often emphasizes emotional discomfort: "ko'ngilni xira qiladigan xunuklik" (ugliness that darkens the heart). Here, the metaphor shifts toward internal emotional states rather than purely visual darkness. Both languages conceptualize ugliness as deviation from accepted standards: ugliness is deviation. In English:"ugly duckling" (metaphor for abnormality or transformation); "ugly design".

In Uzbek, "me'yordan chiqqan xunuklik", "odobsiz, xunuk harakat". However, Uzbek discourse places greater emphasis on social and behavioral norms, where deviation often implies moral failure rather than mere aesthetic difference.

Conclusion. The conceptual metaphorical analysis of ugliness in English and Uzbek discourse reveals that ugliness is far more than an aesthetic category; it is a deeply embedded cognitive and cultural construct. Through metaphorical mappings such as ugliness as moral corruption, disorder, darkness, and deviation, both languages extend the concept beyond physical appearance into ethical, emotional, and social domains.

Despite significant overlaps, important cultural differences shape how ugliness is conceptualized. English discourse emphasizes individual evaluation and internal states, while Uzbek discourse highlights social harmony, collective norms, and moral propriety. These differences reflect broader cultural values and demonstrate how language encodes not only thought but also social ideology.Ultimately, the study confirms that conceptual metaphor serves as a powerful tool for understanding how abstract concepts like ugliness are structured

and communicated across languages. Further research could expand this analysis by incorporating corpus-based data and exploring additional languages, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of aesthetic and evaluative cognition.

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