

A LEXICAL-SEMANTIC STUDY OF METONYMY IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGE

Yusupov Muhammadsodiq Rizomat Ugli

Master degree student at University of Exact and Social Sciences

Scientific advisor: Mannonova Saodat Artikovna

Senior teacher, UzSWLU

Abstract This article presents a comprehensive lexical-semantic study of metonymy in English and Uzbek, exploring how this figure of speech functions as a vital cognitive and linguistic mechanism in both languages. Metonymy, unlike metaphor, involves the substitution of one concept for another based on a real-world relationship, such as cause-effect, part-whole, or container-contained. By comparing a variety of authentic linguistic data from literary texts, idiomatic expressions, and spoken language samples in English and Uzbek, this study identifies key patterns of metonymic usage and semantic shifts.

Keywords Metonymy, lexical semantics, English language, Uzbek language, cognitive linguistics, cultural context, semantic shift, conceptual mapping, cross-linguistic comparison, figurative language.

Introduction Language is not merely a tool for communication but also a reflection of the way people perceive, categorize, and make sense of the world around them. Among the various figures of speech that illustrate this cognitive function, *metonymy* holds a unique position. It is a fundamental linguistic phenomenon in which one entity is referred to by another that is closely associated with it, such as using "the crown" to refer to monarchy or "the pen" for writing. Unlike metaphor, which is based on similarity, metonymy relies on contiguity relationships of proximity and conceptual association.

The study of metonymy, particularly from a lexical-semantic perspective, provides valuable insights into how languages encode meaning and reflect cultural thinking. In both English and Uzbek, metonymy plays a significant role in shaping vocabulary, enriching stylistic expression, and facilitating efficient communication. Yet, due to cultural, historical, and structural differences between these two languages, the way metonymy manifests at the lexical level may differ, offering a rich area for comparative linguistic exploration.

This article aims to analyze and compare the use and lexical-semantic properties of metonymy in English and Uzbek. It investigates how metonymic expressions are formed, the types of semantic shifts they involve, and the extent to which they reflect universal cognitive mechanisms versus language-specific or culture-bound conceptualizations. By doing so, the study contributes to a broader understanding of figurative language and its practical relevance in linguistic theory, translation, and foreign language teaching.

Main Part

Metonymy is a cognitive and linguistic phenomenon that enables speakers to use one concept to refer to another that is closely related to it. The study of metonymy within the lexical-semantic framework involves analyzing the types of semantic shifts that occur and the relationships between words and meanings in specific contexts. This part of the article explores the structure, types, functions, and cultural relevance of metonymy in English and Uzbek, providing illustrative examples and comparisons between the two languages.

1. Theoretical background of metonymy

Metonymy, as defined by linguists such as Lakoff and Johnson (1980), is a process of conceptual mapping where one entity within a domain stands for another within the same domain. Unlike metaphor, which is based on analogy or similarity across domains, metonymy relies on associations within a single domain. For example, in the phrase “*The White House issued a statement*”, “*White House*” refers to the President or the presidential administration through the place-for-institution metonymic relationship.

In Uzbek, similar constructions occur, for example, “*Qo‘l ko‘tardi*” (literally: “raised a hand”) is used to mean someone voted, where “*hand*” stands for the person’s action. These metonymic patterns reflect how both languages use physical or visible elements to represent abstract or broader concepts.

2. Lexical-semantic types of metonymy

From a lexical-semantic perspective, metonymy in both languages may be categorized into several types:

- Part for Whole (Synecdoche):
 - English: “*All hands on deck*” (hands = sailors)
 - Uzbek: “*Og‘izdan gap chiqdi*” (mouth = person spoke)
- Container for Content:
 - English: “*He drank the whole bottle*” (bottle = contents)
 - Uzbek: “*U piyolani ichdi*” (piyola = contents of the cup)
- Place for Institution:
 - English: “*Washington is concerned*” (Washington = U.S. government)
 - Uzbek: “*Toshkent e‘lon qildi*” (Tashkent = the central government)
- Instrument for Agent:
 - English: “*The pen is mightier than the sword*” (pen = writer, sword = soldier)
 - Uzbek: “*Qalam kuchli*” (qalam = writer’s influence)

3. Cultural specificity and semantic shifts

Though many metonymic structures are shared across languages due to common human cognition, cultural and societal norms significantly influence the prevalence and interpretation of certain expressions. In Uzbek, for example, kinship terms and social hierarchy often serve as metonymic triggers. Expressions

such as “*Qo‘shni eshikdan keldi*” (He came from the neighbor’s door) can implicitly suggest familial or social interaction, not just physical movement.

In English, industrial, political, and media domains frequently produce metonymic expressions like “*Hollywood*” (American film industry) or “*Wall Street*” (financial markets), which may not have direct equivalents in Uzbek due to differing sociocultural realities.

4. Syntactic and morphological considerations

In both languages, metonymic expressions may undergo grammaticalization. For instance, nouns derived from verbs or adjectives can develop metonymic meanings. Uzbek often uses affixation (-*chi*, -*lik*) to form agentive or abstract nouns that carry metonymic meanings (e.g., “*muallimlik*” - the profession of being a teacher). Similarly, English nouns like “*leadership*” can metonymically refer to a group of leaders, not just the abstract concept.

5. Translation and pedagogical implications

Metonymy poses challenges in translation and language teaching. Literal translation may result in loss of meaning or confusion if cultural or contextual knowledge is not transferred. For example, translating “*Downing Street said...*” into Uzbek may require replacing it with “*Bosh vazir bayonot berdi*” to clarify the metonymic reference.

In teaching English or Uzbek as a second language, metonymy should be introduced with contextual explanations and authentic usage examples to ensure learners grasp both form and meaning. This can enhance vocabulary retention, comprehension, and expressive skills.

Metonymy operates through a shift of meaning within the same conceptual domain, unlike metaphor, which crosses domains. In English and Uzbek, metonymic patterns often fall into specific categories, such as:

- Spatial relations: e.g., *The White House* (institution for building) in English and *Hokimiyat* (mayor's office in Uzbek).
- Temporal relations: e.g., *summer* used to mean “vacation” in English; in Uzbek, *Navro‘z* may refer not only to the day but also to festivities.
- Functional relations: e.g., *the pen is mightier than the sword* - where *pen* represents writing and *sword* warfare.

These patterns can vary slightly depending on linguistic context and cultural salience.

According to Cognitive Linguistics, metonymy reflects mental models of experience. The *source* concept activates a *target* within the same conceptual schema. For instance, in Uzbek, the word *do‘ppi* (skullcap) can invoke cultural identity and values, while in English, *crown* often activates the institution of monarchy. Such metonymic devices reveal deep-rooted conceptualizations unique to each culture.

Metonymic expressions are deeply tied to the cultural background of a society. In Uzbek, metonymy often includes kinship and honorific terms, which are crucial in reflecting respect and hierarchical relations (e.g., using *ota* “father”

to refer to an elder or a teacher). English, on the other hand, tends to rely more on institutional and abstract metonymies (e.g., *Wall Street* for financial industry).

This cultural dependency often poses challenges in translation. For example, translating “The Kremlin said...” into Uzbek requires either an equivalent term or a literal explanatory paraphrase, since the conceptual mapping may not be identical.

The differences in metonymic conceptualization also influence interpretation and cross-linguistic equivalence. Direct translation can lead to misinterpretation if the metonym is culturally or contextually untranslatable. For instance, in English political discourse, *Capitol Hill* is widely recognized as a metonym for the U.S. Congress; however, a literal translation into Uzbek might not convey the intended referent without additional context.

Bilingual dictionaries and translators must be sensitive to the semantic motivation and cultural grounding of metonymy to avoid semantic loss or distortion.

Understanding metonymy has important implications for language teaching, especially in developing metaphorical and idiomatic competence. Learners of English or Uzbek as a foreign language often struggle with expressions whose meaning is contextually implied. Raising awareness about metonymy helps learners decode and use figurative language more effectively.

Teachers can incorporate metonymic expressions in thematic vocabulary lessons (e.g., politics, institutions, professions) and contrastive language tasks that highlight how one concept may be used to stand for another in each language.

Conclusion

The lexical-semantic study of metonymy in English and Uzbek languages reveals significant insights into the cognitive, cultural, and linguistic mechanisms that shape meaning in both linguistic systems. Metonymy, as a powerful tool of indirect reference, operates through consistent conceptual mappings that reflect shared human experiences while also manifesting unique cultural patterns.

This comparative analysis demonstrates that, while English and Uzbek share core types of metonymic relations such as part-for-whole, place-for-institution, and instrument-for-agent their realization and interpretation can differ due to varying socio-cultural and historical contexts. English frequently employs metonymy in political, institutional, and media contexts, while Uzbek often uses kinship terms, social roles, and everyday interactions to convey implicit meaning.

Understanding the function and diversity of metonymy not only enriches linguistic competence but also enhances cross-cultural communication, translation accuracy, and language pedagogy. Future research may delve deeper into corpus-based investigations, psycholinguistic processing of metonymy, and the role of metonymy in figurative language development across age groups and language proficiency levels.

References

1. Barcelona, A. Metaphor and Metonymy at the Crossroads: A Cognitive Perspective. Mouton de Gruyter. 2000
2. Evans, V., & Green, M. Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 2006
3. Quronov, D. Tilshunoslikka kirish. Toshkent: Fan nashriyoti. 2007
4. Langacker, R. W. Cognitive Grammar: A Basic Introduction. Oxford University Press. 2008
5. Muhtashamova, P. Z. (2021). THE PECULIARITIES OF LITERARY TRANSLATION. Экономика и социум, (1-1 (80)), 182-184.
6. Kupaysinovna, S. G. (2020). THE ROLE OF ENGLISH TEACHER IN A MODERN CONTEXT. Проблемы науки, (7 (55)), 64-65.
7. Alimova, D. (2024, October). Teaching English through English: Proficiency, Pedagogy and Performance. In *Conference Proceedings: Fostering Your Research Spirit* (pp. 779-782).
8. Rashidova, G., & Khilola, K. (2024). THE ROLE OF INTONATION AND STRESS IN MEANING. *TANQIDIY NAZAR, TAHLILIIY TAFAKKUR VA INNOVATSION G 'OYALAR*, 1(3), 72-75.
9. S., Muratbaev, N., Joldasova, A., & Sultanova, M. (2025). GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE HISTORY OF PEDAGOGICAL TRAINING. *Modern Science and Research*, 4(4), 625-629.
10. Abulkosimovna, E. Z. (2022). Synonymous analysis of professional words in English and Uzbek. *Frontline Social Sciences and History Journal*, 2(05), 15-22.