

USE OF METAPHORS AND CULTURAL SYMBOLS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK TOURISM TEXTS

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Abstract. Tourism discourse plays a significant role in shaping the perception of destinations through language. This article explores the use of metaphors and cultural symbols in English and Uzbek tourism texts, focusing on how they influence audience perception and cultural representation. By analyzing selected tourism materials, the study highlights similarities and differences in metaphorical expressions and symbolic references across the two languages. The findings demonstrate that while English tourism texts tend to use universal and globally recognizable metaphors, Uzbek tourism discourse relies more heavily on culturally embedded symbols and traditional imagery.

Key words: tourism discourse, metaphor, cultural symbols, Uzbek language, English language, pragmatics, linguaculture

Introduction

Tourism texts are not merely informative; they are persuasive by nature. Their primary goal is to attract visitors, create appealing images, and construct a desirable identity of a place. One of the most effective linguistic tools used in this process is metaphor, along with culturally significant symbols that resonate with the target audience.

In both English and Uzbek tourism discourse, metaphors and symbols function as bridges between language and culture. However, the way they are employed reflects different cultural priorities, historical backgrounds, and communicative strategies [1]. This article aims to examine how metaphors and cultural symbols are used in English and Uzbek tourism texts and how they contribute to meaning-making and persuasion.

Literature Review and Methodology

The study of metaphor has long been associated with cognitive linguistics, particularly with the idea that metaphors shape how people think and perceive reality. In tourism discourse, metaphors are often used to create emotional connections and vivid imagery [2]. Cultural symbols, on the other hand, serve as markers of identity, tradition, and authenticity.

For this research, a qualitative analysis was conducted on a selection of tourism brochures, websites, and promotional texts in both English and Uzbek. The texts were examined to identify recurring metaphors and symbolic elements. Special attention was given to how these linguistic features reflect cultural values and communicative intentions.

Discussion

One of the most noticeable features of English tourism texts is the frequent use of universal metaphors. Destinations are often described as “hidden gems,” “paradises,” or “gateways.” These metaphors are easily understood by an international audience and are designed to evoke curiosity and desire. For example, calling a city a “melting pot”

emphasizes diversity, while describing a beach as “a slice of heaven” creates an image of perfection and escape.

In contrast, Uzbek tourism texts tend to rely more on culturally specific metaphors and symbols[3]. References to historical figures, traditional architecture, and local customs are common. For instance, cities like Samarkand and Bukhara are often portrayed as “pearls of the Silk Road,” which is not just a metaphor but also a culturally loaded symbol connected to history, trade, and heritage. Such expressions carry deeper meaning for those familiar with the region’s past.

Another important difference lies in the use of cultural symbols. English tourism discourse often highlights globally recognized symbols such as luxury, comfort, and adventure. Words like “escape,” “journey,” and “experience” are frequently used to appeal to modern travelers seeking personal fulfillment.

On the other hand, Uzbek tourism texts emphasize hospitality, tradition, and authenticity. Cultural symbols such as “mehmondo‘stlik” (hospitality), traditional cuisine, and national crafts are central to the narrative. These elements are not only descriptive but also serve as invitations to experience a unique cultural environment.

Despite these differences, there are also similarities. Both English and Uzbek tourism texts use metaphors to simplify complex ideas and make them more relatable [4]. They also aim to create emotional engagement and positive associations with the destination. However, the choice of metaphors and symbols is shaped by the target audience and cultural context.

Results

The analysis reveals that metaphors and cultural symbols are essential components of tourism discourse in both languages [5]. English texts prioritize accessibility and global appeal, often using widely understood metaphors. Uzbek texts, in contrast, focus on cultural depth and authenticity, using symbols that reflect national identity and historical continuity.

These findings suggest that effective tourism communication depends on a balance between universal appeal and cultural specificity. Understanding this balance can help improve the quality of tourism texts and make them more engaging for diverse audiences.

Conclusion

Metaphors and cultural symbols play a crucial role in shaping tourism discourse. They influence how destinations are perceived and experienced by potential visitors. While English tourism texts tend to favor universal metaphors that appeal to a broad audience, Uzbek tourism discourse emphasizes culturally rich symbols that highlight tradition and identity.

The study demonstrates that language in tourism is not neutral; it is deeply connected to culture and communication strategies. Future research may explore how these linguistic features impact tourists’ decision-making and cross-cultural understanding.

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