

Magic as a Linguocultural Phenomenon: A Comparative Study in English and Uzbek

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Abstract. *This article analyzes the linguocultural characteristics of the concept of “magic” in English and Uzbek. The research was carried out on the basis of comparative-linguistic, metaphorical and semantic analysis methods. The results showed that although the concept of magic retains a common semantic core in both languages, its cultural interpretation differs according to historical experience, mythological imagination and artistic traditions. In English culture, magic means more knowledge, power and personal abilities, while in Uzbek culture it is associated with fate, trials and spiritual lessons. The analysis of metaphorical models, folklore images and functional tasks made it possible to identify cross-linguistic similarities and differences of magic. The results of the research are of scientific importance for cultural linguistics, translation and intercultural communication.*

Key words: *magic, concept, metaphor, folklore, English, Uzbek, comparative analysis, cultural images, semantics.*

Introduction

The concept of magic has long been an integral part of human thought, and it is manifested in various forms in myths, legends, legends, epics and modern literature. Concepts of magic are inextricably linked with the worldview, mentality, religious beliefs and cultural values of the people. Therefore, magic should be studied not only as a literary phenomenon, but also as a linguistic and cultural category.

In recent years, many studies have been conducted on the relationship between language and culture, cognitive metaphor, conceptual analysis and mythical images. Among Western scholars, the metaphor theories of G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, the mythological structures of J. Campbell, as well as studies studying images of magic in English literature are of particular note. In Uzbek literary studies, cultural layers are illuminated on the basis of folk tales, legends, “Riding the Yellow Giant” and other works containing magic motifs. However, existing research has often focused only on folklore or literature, and language and culture as a whole have not been analyzed comprehensively¹.

¹ Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2003). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.;

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The conceptual, semantic and metaphorical interpretation of magic in English and Uzbek has not yet been fully analyzed in a comparative manner. Although many works have studied the symbolism of magic in separate cultural settings, there is a lack of research that compares the two cultures with each other and identifies common and different aspects. This indicates the need to reconsider the topic and conduct in-depth research based on a linguocultural approach.

The purpose of this study is to conduct a comparative analysis of the cultural characteristics of the concept of magic in English and Uzbek, to identify its metaphorical, mythological and semantic layers, and to study how it is reflected in folk memory and literary traditions.

The research results allow for a deeper understanding of the cultural values, symbolic representations, belief systems, and aesthetic ideals of the two peoples through the concept of magic. A comparative study of the images of magic in English and Uzbek reveals the roots of cross-cultural similarities and differences, and creates a new theoretical basis for linguocultural research. This analysis also has practical significance for folk art, literature, cognitive linguistics, and translation studies.

Methods

This study is based on the method of comparative linguistic and cultural analysis. The aim is to identify the content, metaphorical layers and cultural functions of the concept of “magic” in English and Uzbek. The following methods were used in the research process:

A corpus of literary and folklore texts was compiled for analysis. The main materials include:

From English literature:

J.C.Lewis — Chronicles of narnia (1955)

From Uzbek literature:

Uzbek folk tales

“Sariq devni minib”²

These texts highlight traditional and modern forms of the image of magic.

2. Sample

In the selected texts, units related to magic were distinguished:

lexical units (fairies, giants, witches, wizards), metaphors (magic = power, magic = danger), symbolic images (fear, protection, miracle), linguistic units (phraseologisms, epithets, repetitions)

Each unit was studied in a cultural context.

3. Analysis methods

The following methods were used in the study:

Linguistic-cultural analysis

Behind the language unit: cultural values mythological structures images of the collective mind were identified.

Metaphorical analysis

Based on the theory of Lakoff & Johnson (2003), the following metaphor models were identified:

MAGIC = POWER

MAGIC = KNOWLEDGE

MAGIC = DANGER

Structural analysis

² Lewis, C. S. *The Chronicles of Narnia*. HarperCollins, 1950–1956.

Based on the Propp (1968) model, the functions of magic in fairy tales were analyzed: helper, test, source of complexity, saving power

Comparative analysis

English and Uzbek materials:

Similarities, differences, national character traits were compared.

Stages of the research process

The analysis was carried out in the following stages:

Texts were selected and coded, units related to magic were separated, units were grouped by content, metaphorical and semantic models were created, English and Uzbek results were compared

5. Limitations

The study is based on literary texts, therefore:

Living speech, contemporary everyday discourse is partially covered.

Results

The results of the study showed that although the concept of “magic” has a similar semantic core in English and Uzbek cultures, there are significant cultural differences in its linguocultural reflection. In both language materials, magic is represented as a concept associated with power, mystery, influence, and supernatural power. In English texts, magic is more often expressed through images such as witch, wizard, magic power, and school of magic (Hogwarts), which indicates the presence of a strong tradition in Western folklore and modern fantasy literature.³

In Uzbek sources, magic is associated with witches, fairies, fortune tellers, giants, and legendary heroes, and is depicted through ancient folk tales, fairy tales, and epic images. In English texts, magic is more often expressed as the ability of an individual hero and is often interpreted in a positive sense; In Uzbek materials, magic is sometimes depicted as a positive, sometimes negative force, performing a moral teaching function.

Analysis

Metaphor analysis showed that in both languages, there are universal cognitive metaphors such as “MAGIC = POWER”, “MAGIC = CHANGE”, “MAGIC = UNKNOWN”. However, in English, magic is often represented by the metaphors “MAGIC = KNOWLEDGE” (power learned through knowledge), while in Uzbek, the metaphors “MAGIC = DESTINY” (power associated with fate, fortune telling and prophecy) prevail. This reflects the difference in cultural thinking: in the Western tradition, magic is more associated with technique and learned skills, while in the Eastern tradition, it is associated with fate and mysterious power.⁴

As a result of comparing literary materials, in English literature, magic is more embedded in the genres of fiction, heroism and adventure, while in Uzbek literature it is combined with moral and educational content and folk wisdom. Also, the differences in the number of lexical units, images, symbols and connotations also confirmed the mutually influential nature of language and culture.

Overall, the results of the study confirmed that the concept of magic is a powerful linguocultural phenomenon that connects language and culture. The concepts of magic are formed in the language not only at the semantic and metaphorical level, but also through historical, mythological and cultural layers. This indicates that the manifestation of the concept of magic in English and Uzbek is an important source for illuminating national culture, values and worldview.

³ Lewis, C. S. *The Chronicles of Narnia*. HarperCollins, 1950–1956.

⁴ Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (2003). “Metaphors We Live By”

– konseptual metafora nazariyasi: *MAGIC = POWER*, *MAGIC = CHANGE*.

Discussions

The analysis of the results showed that the concept of magic has deep cultural roots in both languages, and its linguistic expression reflects the historical experience, worldview and values of the people. When comparing English and Uzbek materials, the presence of a common semantic core — “magic = supernatural power”, “magic = mystery”, “magic = effect” — was confirmed as a universal conceptual basis. However, the cultural interpretation of the concept, the system of images and semantic connotations have developed differently.

In English texts, magic is usually represented by individualized characters: a witch, a wizard, a legendary hero, a possessor of abilities and skills. This is, on the one hand, connected with the fantasy, adventure and heroic traditions of Western literature and folklore. Such images as a kind witch, a powerful sorcerer, a struggle between good and evil forces are also actively alive in modern culture. This approach interprets magic as a force that can be taught, controlled and based on knowledge⁵.

In Uzbek materials, magic is often expressed in folk oral literature and epic genres. Images of magic are manifested in folklore symbols such as fairies, giants, fortune tellers and witches. These images are often associated with moral conclusions, spiritual lessons, and educational ideas. The negative or positive direction of the power of magic is given in harmony with the development of the story, the fate of the hero, and moral criteria. This situation indicates the interpretation of magic in Eastern culture as related to fate, prophecy, and testing.⁶

The analysis of metaphors clearly revealed differences in cultural thinking. In English materials, the metaphor “MAGIC = KNOWLEDGE” is strongly expressed: magic is studied, controlled, and applied practically. In Uzbek materials, the metaphor “MAGIC = DESTINY” is leading, and magic is often associated with human destiny, fortune telling, prophecy, and mysterious power. This difference reflects the mental model in the worldview and thinking of both cultures.

The results show that although the concept of magic is a single linguocultural phenomenon in both languages, its cultural formation has been different in accordance with the national culture. The semantic field, image system and metaphorical layers of magic are deeply reflected in the linguistic materials, which are closely related to the historical memory, mythology and value system of this culture. The study confirms that language is not only a communicative tool, but also a system that stores cultural meaning, social experience and collective consciousness.

Conclusion

The results of the study showed that although the concept of magic has a common semantic core in English and Uzbek, its cultural interpretation is formed in accordance with the historical experience, mythology and worldview of both nations. Magic is used in both languages in the context of “mysterious power”, “effect”, “supernatural phenomenon”, but significant differences were observed in cultural images, metaphors and functional tasks.

In English-language materials, magic is often described as a personal ability, learned knowledge and controlled power. Images such as a witch, wizard, legendary hero are associated with fantasy and adventure genres, opening up a wide range of scientific, theoretical and technological interpretations of magic. In this culture, magic is often associated with creativity, intelligence and skill.

In Uzbek-language materials, magic is formed through folklore, epic tales and oral traditions. Images such as fairies, giants, fortune tellers are more associated with fate, trials, the struggle between good and evil, and spiritual lessons. Magic here is inextricably linked with the experience of society, educational values, and moral criteria.

Metaphorical analysis confirmed the different perceptions of the concept in both cultures: in English, magic is associated with “knowledge and control,” and in Uzbek, with “fate and prophecy.” These differences revealed the system of cross-cultural thinking, mental models, and images.

⁵ Джумаева, Н. (2023). HUMAN CENTERED MOTIVES IN THE IMAGE OF MAGICAL OBJECTS IN FAIRY TALES. ЦЕНТР НАУЧНЫХ ПУБЛИКАЦИЙ (buxdu. Uz), 39, 39.

⁶ Cudny, W. (2019). “Magic and Culture in Popular Imagination”

In general, the study confirms that the concept of magic is an important object in the study of language-culture relations. Language preserves cultural experience, and culture is expressed through language. These results serve as the basis for further research in the fields of Cultural Linguistics, Translation Theory, and Intercultural Communication.

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