



CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR MODELS IN PROVERBS WITH  
PHRASEOLOGICAL PATTERNS: THE CASE OF HEAD IN UZBEK AND  
ENGLISH

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**Abstract:** *This paper presents a cognitive-typological analysis of conceptual metaphor models within proverbs that involve the lexical-semantic field of “head” in Uzbek and English. Phraseological units, particularly those of metaphorical nature, represent not only fixed expressions within a language, but also encapsulate cultural heritage and cognitive frameworks through which human beings perceive and structure their reality. The metaphoric use of somatic components—especially the head—is a key example of how bodily experience is mapped onto abstract domains such as intelligence, leadership, emotional balance, and responsibility.*

The head, as the location of the brain and major sensory organs, is naturally central in cognitive metaphorization across cultures. The Oxford English Dictionary lists at least 74 distinct senses of the word “head”, ranging from anatomical references to metaphorical expressions of power and control, such as “head of state”, “lose one’s head”, or “keep a cool head”. Uzbek phraseology reflects similar metaphorical richness: expressions like “bosh og‘rig‘i bo‘lmoq” (“to become a headache”) and “boshini egdi” (“he lowered his head”) encode emotional and moral connotations grounded in shared cultural values.

Drawing from Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson), the study reveals how somatic metaphors operate as embodied schemas. For instance, the proverb “two heads are better than one” in English is semantically and conceptually mirrored in Uzbek as “bir kalla – kalla, ikki kalla – tilla”. Both express the cultural belief in the cognitive value of collective reasoning, but the Uzbek version introduces “gold” (tilla) as an evaluative metaphor, enriching the conceptual frame with socio-economic value.

Proverbs bridge the gap between abstract ideas and real-life reasoning. They often serve as compressed narratives where metaphor and culture intersect. For example, the HEAD metaphor is not simply about the body part—it evokes conceptual domains such as REASON IS CONTROL, THINKING IS SEEING, and RESPONSIBILITY IS A BURDEN. These are realized through mappings like:

- HEAD = MIND (to use one’s head, “bosh bilan ish qilmoq”);
- HEAD = SOURCE OF GUIDANCE (“at the head of the table”, “boshda turmoq”);
- HEAD = EMOTIONAL STATE (“hot-headed”, “boshidan chiqib ketdi”).





The research also shows that metaphorical blends within proverbs—such as Kövecses's “blended space” model—reveal culturally shaped conceptualizations. Metaphor like “to put heads together” illustrates how abstract concept of cooperation, decision-making, or identity are grounded in embodied experience.

Through this contrastive analysis, the paper argues that somatic metaphorization in proverbs not only reflects cognitive processes but also offers insight into national worldview. Such metaphors are pivotal in forming the phraseological picture of the world, contributing to cultural identity and cognitive discourse structures.

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