Cognitive and lexical-semantic properties of adjectives characteristic of the human character in English and Uzbek.

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Annotation: *This article explores the cognitive and lexical-semantic properties of adjectives describing human character in English and Uzbek. It focuses on the similarities and differences in how adjectives are structured and perceived in these languages, emphasizing their cultural and linguistic nuances. The study employs a comparative approach to understand how adjectives reflecting human characteristics manifest across these two languages. It analyzes the impact of cultural, cognitive, and linguistic influences on the formation and use of character-related adjectives.*

Keywords: *Cognitive linguistics, lexical semantics, adjectives, human character, english, uzbek, cultural linguistics, comparative analysis.*

Human character is often described using adjectives that convey complex cognitive and cultural meanings. In both English and Uzbek, adjectives play a crucial role in character depiction, revealing underlying social and psychological constructs. This paper examines the cognitive and lexical-semantic aspects of adjectives related to human character in these two languages. By comparing English and Uzbek, it highlights how cultural differences shape language and cognition and how human traits are categorized and expressed in each linguistic context.

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

How do cognitive and cultural factors influence the use of character-describing adjectives in English and Uzbek?

What are the common and divergent lexical-semantic properties of these

adjectives in both languages?

How do these properties reflect the speakers' worldviews and cognitive processes?

The relationship between cognition and language, especially in terms of how adjectives are used to describe human traits, has been widely explored in cognitive linguistics. Scholars like Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Wierzbicka (1992) have examined the cultural underpinnings of linguistic expressions, arguing that language reflects not only individual cognitive processes but also collective cultural knowledge. This concept aligns with the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, which suggests that language influences thought patterns and perceptions of reality.

Previous studies have noted that adjectives in English often focus on individualism and personal traits (McCrae & Costa, 1997), while Uzbek adjectives emphasize collectivism, reflecting the values and beliefs inherent in Central Asian societies (Kurbanov, 2018). This research builds upon these works by specifically addressing the adjectives used to describe human character in both languages, employing a cognitive and semantic lens.

This study adopts a comparative and descriptive methodology. Data is collected from a variety of sources, including dictionaries, literary texts, and conversational examples in both English and Uzbek. A corpus of character-related adjectives is compiled from both languages, focusing on adjectives that describe personality traits such as kindness, honesty, bravery, selfishness, and laziness.

The analysis is divided into two phases:

1. Cognitive Approach: This phase examines the cognitive processes involved in categorizing character traits in both languages. It identifies how speakers of English and Uzbek conceptualize human character and how these conceptualizations are reflected in language.

2. Lexical-Semantic Analysis: The second phase investigates the lexical and semantic structures of the adjectives, examining their roots, affixes, and syntactic roles. Special attention is paid to polysemy, antonymy, and metaphorical usage.

Adjectival phrasemes are fixed or semi-fixed expressions where an adjective describes a person's character or personality. In English and Uzbek, these phrasemes capture similar concepts but reflect cultural nuances.

English Adjectival Phrasemes of Human Character:

Hard-headed – stubborn, practical, not easily influenced.

- "He's too hard-headed to accept the new plan."

Soft-hearted – kind, compassionate, easily moved.

- "She's always helping others; she's really soft-hearted."

Cold-blooded – cruel, lacking empathy.

- "The assassin was cold-blooded in his actions."

Level-headed – calm, rational, and sensible.

- "She stayed level-headed during the crisis."

Hot-tempered – quick to anger.

- "John's hot-tempered and often gets into arguments."

Thick-skinned – not easily offended.

- "To survive in politics, you need to be thick-skinned."

Two-faced – insincere or deceitful.

- "She acts friendly, but she's two-faced."

Uzbek Adjectival Phrasemes of Human Character:

Qattiqqo'l – strict, disciplined, or unyielding (similar to hard-headed).

- "U qattiqqo'l odam, o'z fikrida turibdi." (He's strict, standing firm in his opinion.)

Yumshoqko'ngil – soft-hearted, kind, easily moved by emotions.

- "U yumshoqko'ngil, boshqalarga yordam berishni yoqtiradi." (He's soft-hearted and likes to help others.)

Sovuqqon – cold-blooded, heartless, unemotional.

- "Uning sovuqqonligi hammamizni hayratda qoldirdi." (His cold-bloodedness surprised all of us.)

Tinch odam – calm or level-headed, peaceful in nature.

- "U tinch odam, muammolarni sabr bilan hal qiladi." (He's a calm

person, solving problems with patience.)

Qaynoqqon – hot-blooded, easily excited or angered.

- "U qaynoqqon yigit, har narsaga tez jahl qiladi." (He's a hot-blooded guy, gets angry quickly.)

Qalin terili – thick-skinned, not easily offended.

- "Uning qalin terili bo'lishi kerak, bu sohada ishlash oson emas." (He must be thick-skinned; it's not easy working in this field.)

Ikkiyuzlamachi – two-faced, hypocritical.

- "Ikkiyuzlamachi odamlar bilan muloqot qilishdan qo'rqaman." (I'm afraid of dealing with two-faced people.)

Comparison:

- Both languages have phrases that depict someone as strict (hard-headed / qattiqqo'l), kind (soft-hearted / yumshoqko'ngil), and deceitful (two-faced / ikkiyuzlamachi).

- English tends to use animal metaphors ("cold-blooded"), while Uzbek phrasemes often focus more on human emotions and body-related metaphors (qattiqqo'l – "hard hand").

Cultural nuances also shape how certain qualities are viewed or emphasized, making the expressions in both languages rich and reflective of their societies.

Adjectives used to describe human character in English and Uzbek exhibit cognitive and lexical-semantic properties that reflect cultural, social, and linguistic differences. Let's break down the cognitive and lexical-semantic features in both languages:

1. Cognitive Properties

Cognitive properties of adjectives are linked to how people perceive and categorize human traits. The way people in different cultures think about personality traits can influence how these are expressed in language.

The cognitive properties of adjectives, particularly in the context of personality traits, relate to how people conceptualize and categorize these traits

based on their cultural and psychological frameworks. These cognitive properties influence how people understand, describe, and communicate about human behavior and characteristics.

Here are a few key aspects of how cognitive properties are linked to adjectives:

Categorization of Traits: Different cultures and languages may categorize personality traits differently. For example, some languages may have more nuanced adjectives for specific traits, while others may group them into broader categories. This reflects how people from different cultures prioritize or distinguish between certain personality traits.

Cultural Perception: The adjectives used to describe someone's personality may carry positive, neutral, or negative connotations based on cultural values. For instance, being "independent" might be seen as a highly positive trait in one culture but less valued or even negative in another that emphasizes community or collectivism.

Personality Dimensions: Research into personality psychology, such as the Big Five personality traits (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism), shows that the way we describe personality with adjectives often aligns with broad cognitive patterns people use to evaluate others. These dimensions of personality shape the cognitive framework through which individuals perceive themselves and others.

Language and Thought: The linguistic relativity hypothesis suggests that the language we use can shape the way we think. This extends to how we describe personality traits with adjectives. The availability of certain adjectives in a language might influence how people in that culture perceive and distinguish between personality traits.

Cognitive Biases: People's use of adjectives to describe traits can also be influenced by cognitive biases. For example, the halo effect may cause someone to use predominantly positive adjectives to describe a person based on one favorable trait, while negative traits might be overlooked.

In short, the cognitive properties of adjectives play a significant role in how humans perceive, categorize, and communicate about personality traits, and this is deeply influenced by cultural, psychological, and linguistic factors.

Here's how this works in English and Uzbek:

English

- Abstraction and Specificity: English often uses more abstract adjectives for character traits. For example, words like kind, intelligent, brave can represent broad categories of human behavior.

- Binary Oppositions: English adjectives often appear in pairs of opposites, such as kind vs. cruel, honest vs. dishonest. This cognitive pattern reflects how human character traits are categorized into polarities.

Uzbek

- Contextual Relativity: In Uzbek, character-related adjectives are often more context-dependent. Cultural values strongly influence the perception of personality. Words like saboqli (patient) and mehribon (kind-hearted) might have a broader or more specific usage depending on social norms.

- Metaphorical Language: Uzbek tends to use more metaphorical or idiomatic expressions to describe character traits. For example, the use of animal-related metaphors or proverbs can serve to describe character attributes (e.g., "bo'ri yuragi" - a wolf's heart for bravery).

2. Lexical-Semantic Properties

Lexical-semantic properties concern the meaning of words, their nuances, and how they relate to one another in a language. Comparing English and Uzbek:

English

- Wide Range of Adjectives: The English language offers a wide variety of adjectives to describe specific traits. Adjectives can describe emotional states (anxious, optimistic), moral qualities (honest, corrupt), and intellectual abilities (smart, dull).

- Connotation and Degree: Many English adjectives carry either positive or negative connotations and can be modified with adverbs for intensity (e.g., very

kind, slightly rude). This allows for subtle distinctions in character description.

Uzbek

- Compound Adjectives and Suffixes: Uzbek relies heavily on compound adjectives and suffixes to modify meanings. For instance, adding -chi or -li can alter a root word into a descriptive term for character traits (e.g., ishonchi – trustworthy, from ishon – trust).

- Cultural Connotations: Certain Uzbek adjectives carry cultural meanings that may not directly translate into English. For example, boshqa kishi (literally "another person") may imply being non-conformist or socially aloof, something that has no direct equivalent in English.

3. Cultural Influence on Lexical-Semantic Properties

Cultural values in both English-speaking and Uzbek-speaking societies influence the use of adjectives in character description:

- English: The individualistic nature of English-speaking cultures often leads to adjectives that emphasize personal achievement, independence, and uniqueness (e.g., ambitious, confident).

- Uzbek: The more collectivist, family-centered culture of Uzbekistan results in adjectives that highlight social harmony, respect, and interpersonal relationships (e.g., odobli – well-mannered, hurmatli – respectful).

Adjectives describing human character in English and Uzbek reflect different cognitive patterns and lexical-semantic properties. English tends to be more binary and abstract, while Uzbek leans toward context-dependent, metaphorical expressions. Additionally, cultural values deeply influence the choice and use of character-descriptive adjectives in both languages.

The results indicate that the use of adjectives to describe human character in English and Uzbek is heavily influenced by cognitive and cultural factors. English, being a language of a more individualistic society, uses adjectives that reflect personal traits in a more self-centered manner. For instance, the adjective "ambitious" in English carries a positive connotation, whereas its equivalent in Uzbek ("tamahgir") often carries a negative undertone, reflecting a cultural

suspicion of personal ambition that conflicts with communal well-being.

This comparison suggests that language reflects broader cultural values. The cognitive models that speakers of each language use when thinking about human character influence how adjectives are selected and understood. In Uzbek, adjectives like "kamtarin" (humble) are highly valued, reflecting the cultural emphasis on modesty and community over individual assertion.

Conclusion

The cognitive and lexical-semantic properties of adjectives in English and Uzbek demonstrate significant cultural and linguistic variations. While both languages share universal human traits, the way these traits are framed and understood varies according to cultural contexts. English speakers tend to prioritize individual traits and personal achievement, while Uzbek speakers emphasize social harmony and collective identity.

These findings contribute to our understanding of how language and cognition interact in different cultural settings. They suggest that further research into other languages and cultures could uncover additional insights into the cognitive-linguistic relationship.

Further research could explore other Turkic languages to see if similar patterns exist, contributing to a broader understanding of the cognitive and cultural aspects of adjective usage.

Language learning programs could incorporate cultural context into vocabulary instruction, helping learners grasp the deeper meanings behind adjectives.

A cross-cultural cognitive-linguistic study might investigate how bilingual speakers of English and Uzbek navigate the different cognitive models related to human character in each language.

By focusing on cognitive and semantic dimensions, future research could provide richer insights into the intricate relationship between language, culture, and cognition.

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