LINGUO-CULTURAL ASPECTS OF ABSTRACT NOUNS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH

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Abstract: In order to demonstrate how morphological development, semantic domains, and cultural salience influence the lexicalization of intangible concepts in both languages, this research compares the linguo-cultural characteristics of abstract nouns in Uzbek and English. The study emphasizes variations in derivational strategies (e.g., Uzbek suffixes -lik, -chilik vs. English -ness, -ity, -hood), metaphorical extensions, and pragmatic usage linked to social values like honor, family, and community. It does this by drawing on contrastive analysis, a few chosen corpus examples, and cross-linguistic literature. According to the results, cultural goals and grammatical resources result in different lexical profiles and translation difficulties even if both languages employ similar cognitive processes to convey abstraction. There includes discussion of the implications for intercultural communication, language instruction, and translation studies.

Key words: abstract nouns, Uzbek, English, linguistic culture, nominalization, contrastive analysis, lexicalization.

Abstract nouns lexical items referring to intangible phenomena such as emotions, states, qualities, and social constructs are central to how languages encode human experience. They stand at the intersection of language and culture because the selection, frequency, and connotations of abstract terms reflect cultural priorities, conceptual metaphors, and social organization. This paper contrasts the expression of abstract concepts in Uzbek, a Turkic agglutinative language with a strong system of suffixal nominalization, and English, a Germanic analytic language that relies on a variety of derivational suffixes and compounding strategies. The goal is to identify linguo-cultural patterns that affect formation, meaning, and use of abstract nouns, and to point out challenges for translation and pedagogy. Cross-linguistic research on nominalization and cultural conceptualization has emphasized that languages differ not only in morphological means but also in what they lexicalize as stable concepts (Sapir, 1921; Whorf, 1956; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Turkic languages, including Uzbek, have been studied for rich agglutinative morphology and affixation strategies that produce abstract nouns (Johanson, 1998; Johanson & Csató, 1998). Studies in English morphology highlight frequent use of Latinate and Germanic suffixes (-ity, -ness, -tion, -hood) and the role of borrowings in expanding abstract vocabulary (Bauer, 2003). Contrastive and translation-oriented studies point to frequent non-equivalence in lexicalized abstractions, which requires explicitation or paraphrase in translation (Newmark, 1988; Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995).

The study employs a qualitative contrastive approach to analyze how abstract nouns in Uzbek and English are formed, conceptualized, and culturally framed. This approach draws on three primary components: Morphological comparison of the most common derivational suffixes used to form abstract nouns; Semantic field sampling, which focuses on key domains such as emotions, moral qualities, social relations, and epistemic states; and Illustrative examples drawn from bilingual dictionaries, literary and journalistic translations, and small web corpora to show contextual and pragmatic differences.

Through this methodology, the research seeks to demonstrate how linguistic structure and cultural cognition interact to shape abstract thought and expression in two distinct

linguistic systems. Uzbek is typologically agglutinative, meaning that words are formed through the linear addition of suffixes, each carrying a distinct grammatical or semantic function. Verbs and adjectives can easily take on nominalizing suffixes to form abstract nouns. Among the most productive suffixes are:

-lik / -lik – denoting quality, condition, or state (e.g., do‘stlik ‘friendship’, go‘zallik ‘beauty’, ozodlik ‘freedom’).

-chilik – indicating occupation, collective activity, or social practice (e.g., dehqonchilik ‘farming’, o‘qituvchilik ‘teaching’, sotuvchilik ‘trading’).

-uv / -ish – functioning as action nouns derived from verbs, often used to denote processes or continuous activities (yozish ‘writing’, o‘qish ‘reading/study’).

-ot / -on – less productive but still significant in certain dialectal or formal registers (insoniyat ‘humanity’, do‘stlik ‘friendship’). These morphological tools allow Uzbek speakers to easily create new abstract nouns with transparent meanings. Additionally, Persian and Arabic loanwords enrich Uzbek’s abstract lexicon, particularly in religious, moral, and philosophical domains (e.g., ma’naviyat ‘spirituality’, adolat ‘justice’, iman ‘faith’, ta’lim ‘education’). The presence of these borrowings illustrates how historical and cultural contact shaped the Uzbek conceptual world.

In contrast, English, being a morphologically mixed and largely analytic language, uses several derivational strategies to form abstract nouns. Common suffixes include:

-ness (happiness, darkness, politeness) - typically derived from adjectives;

-ity / -ty / -cy (curiosity, sensitivity, privacy) - derived from Latinate roots;

-tion / -sion (creation, decision, conclusion) - derived from verbs of Latin origin;

-hood / -ship / -dom (childhood, friendship, freedom) - of Germanic origin, expressing states or relationships.

Additionally, English employs zero-derivation (e.g., to love → love, to hope → hope) and compounding (motherhood, leadership) as productive nominalization methods. Due to its hybrid Germanic-Latinate vocabulary, English demonstrates strong register differentiation: Latinate-derived abstractions often belong to formal, academic, or bureaucratic discourse, while Germanic forms are more common in everyday speech.

Both Uzbek and English employ shared cognitive and linguistic mechanisms for abstract conceptualization but diverge in morphological structure and cultural orientation. Uzbek’s agglutinative system and its integration of Persian-Arabic moral lexicon give rise to socially embedded and collectivist abstractions. English, shaped by its mixed derivational heritage and historical processes of secularization and individualization, foregrounds personal autonomy and analytical precision.

Recognizing these linguo-cultural dynamics enriches translation practice, enhances language pedagogy, and fosters deeper intercultural understanding. Abstract nouns, though often overlooked, represent the core of cultural cognition the linguistic bridge between thought, emotion, and societal value.

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