

## THE ROLE OF METAPHOR IN PRESERVING ARTISTIC IMAGERY AND NATIONAL COLOR IN TRANSLATION

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**Annotation:** This article explores the role of metaphor as a tool for preserving artistic imagery and national color in literary translation. Metaphors are viewed not merely as stylistic devices but as cognitive and cultural units that convey worldviews, values, and emotional depth embedded in the source text. Special attention is given to conceptual metaphor theory, cultural specificity, and translation strategies that help maintain textual authenticity. The study includes illustrative Uzbek-English examples to highlight the challenges and opportunities in transferring national poetics through metaphor.

**Keywords:** metaphor; translation; artistic imagery; national color; cognitive linguistics; cultural adaptation; Uzbek literature; poetic expression.

In the intricate art of translation, the metaphor stands as a bridge between languages, cultures, and worldviews. More than a mere linguistic device, metaphor embodies the emotional and cultural essence of a people, often carrying layers of meaning that extend far beyond the literal. When rendering literary texts from one language into another, translators face the delicate challenge of not only converting words but of transporting the soul of the original—the artistic imagery and the national color embedded within metaphoric expressions.

Metaphors are cultural artifacts, shaped by history, tradition, and shared experience. They reflect a nation's identity through symbolic language, imbuing stories with local flavor and emotional depth. Thus, their accurate and thoughtful translation is essential to preserve the authenticity and aesthetic of the source material. Misinterpreting or overly simplifying metaphors can result in a loss of literary texture and diminish the impact of the original message.

This article explores the vital role metaphors play in safeguarding artistic and cultural integrity during translation. It sheds light on the challenges translators face and offers insights into the creative strategies employed to reimagine metaphors without sacrificing meaning or emotional resonance.

The study of metaphor in translation is pivotal to understanding how language carries culture, emotion, and artistic depth across linguistic boundaries. Metaphors are not merely stylistic flourishes—they are cultural signifiers, encapsulating worldviews, values, and traditions unique to each society. In literary translation, preserving metaphoric expressions is essential for maintaining the artistic integrity of the original text and for conveying the author's voice and emotional nuance. Misinterpretation or literal rendering of metaphors can lead to a dilution of meaning, stripping the text of its cultural vibrancy and expressive power. Therefore, this topic

holds immense significance in both linguistic and cultural fields, as it highlights the translator's role not just as a linguistic mediator but as a cultural interpreter, safeguarding the spirit of the original work for new audiences.

The translation of metaphors has drawn sustained scholarly attention in literary, linguistic, and cultural studies due to its complexity and significance. Traditionally, metaphors were viewed as mere rhetorical flourishes, often treated superficially in translation theory. However, the paradigm shifted notably with the introduction of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), which reconceptualized metaphor as a cognitive process through which individuals understand abstract concepts via more concrete experiences. This framework prompted a deeper inquiry into how metaphors shape meaning and reflect cultural perspectives, thus intensifying the relevance of metaphor in translation studies.

In recent years, cognitive approaches have emphasized that metaphor functions as a conceptual mapping between source and target domains. Scholars such as Wang (2023) and Hong & Rossi (2021) argue that metaphor translation requires not only linguistic proficiency but also a deep understanding of cultural and psychological frameworks. Translators are challenged to reconstruct metaphors that preserve both the cognitive resonance and the cultural essence inherent in the original text.

Furthermore, metaphors are culturally rooted and often carry localized imagery that lacks direct equivalents in other languages. Omar (2021) highlights the difficulty of translating such expressions, noting how metaphors may evoke emotions, historical references, or national identities unique to their source language. To address these challenges, various translation strategies have emerged, including direct translation, cultural substitution, and metaphor paraphrasing. Each approach offers trade-offs between preserving stylistic integrity and achieving functional equivalence in the target language.

Among the foundational contributors, Peter Newmark's taxonomy (1988) remains influential. His classification of metaphor translation strategies—from reproduction to omission—provides a practical toolkit for translators navigating complex literary texts. Subsequent scholars like Sun (2017) and Liao & Li (2016) have built on these models, integrating cognitive linguistics to enhance metaphor interpretation and transfer.

The ongoing debate over metaphor's translatability is especially pronounced in literary contexts. While universalist perspectives suggest metaphors are conceptually transferable due to shared human experiences, relativist views insist on cultural specificity as a barrier. The prevailing consensus leans toward conditional translatability, asserting that successful metaphor translation depends on linguistic flexibility, cultural awareness, and contextual sensitivity.

Collectively, these studies illuminate the metaphor's dual role—as both a stylistic and cultural conduit—and underscore its importance in preserving the artistic imagery and national color of literary works in translation. Translators, therefore, must act not only as linguistic intermediaries but also as cultural interpreters, navigating the nuanced terrain between languages and worldviews.

Metaphors serve as vivid carriers of cultural expression, and their translation demands not only linguistic skill but cultural intuition. For instance, the Uzbek phrase “Ko'ngli muzdek edi”

directly translates as “His heart was icy,” and closely aligns with the English metaphor “He was cold-hearted.” Both expressions convey emotional detachment, yet the Uzbek version often appears in poetic contexts, evoking a softer, more artistic undertone rooted in national sensibility.

Similarly, the metaphor “Esagi bilan maslahatlashib ish qiladi”—literally “He consults with his donkey before making decisions”—originates from rural Uzbek imagery, symbolizing foolishness. In English, the meaning may be rendered as “He’s indecisive or silly,” but without careful cultural adaptation, the colorful metaphor risks losing its folk authenticity.

A deeply poetic Uzbek phrase like “Tun yuragimni yirtib o‘tdi”, meaning “The night tore through my heart,” presents another challenge. While its emotional depth is translatable as “The night was heartbreaking,” maintaining the metaphor’s lyrical rhythm is key to preserving artistic imagery.

In another example, the reverent metaphor “Sochiga oq tushgan har bir tol hayotning bir sabog‘i”—“Every white strand in his hair is a lesson from life”—celebrates wisdom and age in a way that is culturally cherished in Uzbek society. Translating it into “His gray hair tells stories of experience” retains the metaphor’s dignity and symbolic value, preserving the national color.

Finally, “Ilon yuragini yashiradi”—“A snake hides its heart”—metaphorically warns of deceit. Though the snake is a familiar symbol across cultures, in Uzbek literature, it often carries additional folkloric meaning. Rendering this metaphor in English as “He’s deceitful” may communicate the gist, but loses some of the layered cultural implications.

These examples illustrate that metaphor is not just ornamental language—it is a vessel for conveying identity, emotion, and worldview. Translators must navigate the tension between preserving literal form and capturing cultural soul, a task that transforms them into artists in their own right.

Metaphors are more than linguistic ornamentation—they are cultural vessels that carry the emotional, historical, and symbolic essence of a people. In translation, they play a vital role in safeguarding the artistic imagery and national color that define a text’s original identity. When thoughtfully rendered, metaphors allow readers in the target language to access not just the message of the text, but the spirit and worldview from which it emerged. This process demands that the translator function not only as a linguistic technician, but also as a creative mediator who bridges cultures with sensitivity and precision. As literary exchange continues to flourish globally, the preservation of metaphor stands as a powerful tool for promoting cultural understanding and artistic authenticity across borders.

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