



SEMANTIC EXTENSION AND FIGURATIVE USE OF MEDICAL TERMS (ON THE EXAMPLE OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES)

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Abstract: *This article explores the semantic extension and figurative use of medical terminology in English and Uzbek languages. The research focuses on how medical terms, originally used within strictly professional contexts, have expanded their meanings and entered general language usage with metaphorical, symbolic, or idiomatic connotations. The study analyzes the linguistic mechanisms of semantic broadening, including metaphor, metonymy, and semantic shift, and compares their manifestations in both languages. Through examples from authentic texts and spoken discourse, the article highlights the role of cultural and cognitive factors in shaping the figurative use of medical terms. The findings contribute to understanding the dynamic nature of medical vocabulary and its interaction with everyday language in both English and Uzbek linguistic systems.*


Keywords: *medical terminology, semantic extension, metaphor, figurative language, English-Uzbek comparison, cognitive linguistics, lexical shift, cross-cultural semantics, language of medicine, linguistic transformation*

Introduction

Medical terminology is traditionally associated with scientific precision and domain-specific usage. However, in both English and Uzbek, many medical terms have undergone semantic extension and are increasingly used in broader linguistic contexts, often carrying metaphorical or symbolic meanings. This phenomenon reflects not only linguistic evolution but also sociocultural and cognitive processes that shape how people conceptualize health, illness, and the human body.

In modern discourse, medical vocabulary is frequently applied outside of clinical settings—used metaphorically to describe emotional states, social problems, technological phenomena, or political conditions. For example, words like virus, diagnosis, or therapy are now commonly found in journalistic, literary, and everyday language, where they convey meanings far beyond their original medical sense. In Uzbek as well, terms such as “dard” (illness/pain) or “shifokor” (doctor) are often loaded with symbolic or moral undertones in public discourse and cultural expressions.

This paper aims to investigate how medical terms in English and Uzbek extend semantically and are employed figuratively in non-medical contexts. The study analyzes the underlying cognitive mechanisms—particularly metaphor and metonymy—and examines the cultural factors that influence these semantic shifts. A comparative approach reveals similarities and differences in the figurative use of medical vocabulary across the two.



languages, contributing to a deeper understanding of lexical dynamics and cross-cultural semantics.

Methodology

This study employs a comparative-descriptive method to analyze the semantic extension and figurative use of medical terminology in English and Uzbek. The research is based on a qualitative analysis of authentic texts, including literary works, media publications, advertisements, political speeches, and social media content in both languages. Key medical terms that have undergone semantic shift were identified and examined in various figurative contexts. The study also draws on cognitive linguistics, particularly the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), to uncover the metaphorical structures that underlie the extended meanings of these terms. The data were categorized according to their function (e.g., emotional expression, social critique, ideological framing) and type of semantic change (e.g., metaphor, metonymy, generalization).

Analysis

The analysis revealed several patterns of semantic extension and figurative use of medical terms in both English and Uzbek:

Metaphorical Extension:

Many medical terms are metaphorically used to describe non-medical conditions. For example:

English: virus (used for “fake news virus”, “computer virus”), toxic (toxic relationship), therapy (retail therapy).

Uzbek: dard (used in “dardli qo‘shiq” – emotional song), davo (used in spiritual or political contexts).

Emotional and Psychological Metaphors:

Medical terminology often expresses psychological or emotional states:

English: depression, trauma, healing, mental breakdown.

Uzbek: ruhiy kasallik, og‘riq, taskin topmoq (to find healing/relief).

Socio-political Figurative Use:

Political and economic crises are often framed using medical metaphors:

English: economic diagnosis, political cancer, institutional paralysis.


Uzbek: siyosiy dard, ijtimoiy kasalliklar, jamiyat tanasida illatlar.

Cultural Specificity:

In Uzbek, the use of medical terms often overlaps with religious, poetic, or traditional expressions, enhancing their symbolic load. In English, such figurative use is more secular and media-driven.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that medical terminology in both English and Uzbek has extended far beyond its original clinical usage, becoming a rich source of figurative language in various domains of communication. These semantic shifts are shaped by cognitive mechanisms such as metaphor and metonymy, as well as cultural, social, and



historical contexts. While English tends to utilize medical metaphors more prominently in media and politics, Uzbek reflects a blend of traditional, emotional, and moral dimensions in the figurative use of medical terms.

This comparative analysis highlights the dynamic nature of language and the significant role of conceptual metaphors in shaping meaning. Understanding how medical terms evolve and function in discourse provides insights into broader linguistic and cultural processes.

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