

Re-creation of Conceptual Metaphors in Translation: A Vector of Interconnection among Cultural Diversities

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Abstract

Metaphor is a fundamental mechanism of language and thought, and its (re)creation in literary translation is essential for transmitting cultural and national meanings across languages. This study examines how conceptual metaphors function within artistic discourse and how their accurate transfer preserves an author's intent, worldview, and cultural resonance. The aim of this study is to theorize and illustrate how conceptual metaphor theory and conceptual integration can guide the faithful re-creation of metaphors across languages while retaining their semantic depth and cultural significance. A qualitative, integrative research methodology was adopted, combining philosophical–cognitive synthesis with comparative analysis and close reading of selected literary texts. Special attention was given to national-cultural symbolism and pragmatic/axiological constraints. The study reveals that metaphors encode national identity and worldview; categorizing metaphors (ontological, orientational, structural) and modeling blends improves interpretive coherence and reduces cognitive dissonance in translation; and culturally marked metaphors, especially animal and mythic symbols, require strategies beyond literal substitution to preserve function and effect. The results contribute to translator training, culturally informed lexicography, and pedagogy in cognitive stylistics, supporting principled decisions between preservation, adaptation, and explicitation strategies. The study draws on a limited set of languages and case studies; future work should employ corpus-based and psycholinguistic methods to test these results.

Keywords: *Metaphor; cognitive linguistics; artistic metaphor; translation; cultural identity; conceptual metaphor.*

1. Introduction

The capacity to generate new ideas from existing phenomena—that is, to create metaphors—is one of the defining features of human consciousness (Lavoshnikova, 2017). Since antiquity, metaphor has attracted the attention of scholars across disciplines, and as its scope of application has expanded, so too has interest in the phenomenon. The history of metaphor studies is inseparably linked to Aristotle, whose *Poetics*, devoted to the science of poetry, was the first work to treat metaphor explicitly, defining it as the figurative use of words in poetic discourse (Aristotle, 1936). Similar definitions later appeared in the works of Demetrius, Quintilian, and Cicero. In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle also identified metaphor's specific cognitive and heuristic functions, viewing it as a key instrument of reasoning.

Theories of conceptual metaphor advanced by Lakoff and Johnson established metaphor as a primary mechanism of human thought and language. More recent studies continue to refine this view: Hong and Rossi (2021) argue for integrating cognitive metaphor theory with translation strategies to preserve conceptual meaning across cultures; Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow (2017) demonstrate that translators' expertise affects how conceptual metaphors are re-mapped between languages; Gebbia et al. (2023) show that learners' cognitive strategies influence metaphor interpretation and reproduction; Xueke (2023) highlights recurring metaphor translation patterns across political discourse; and Zhao (2023) provides a bibliometric analysis revealing rapid growth in metaphor research while urging cross-linguistic studies linking cognition, culture, and translation.

Despite this progress, few studies investigate how conceptual metaphors—especially culturally marked ones—are recreated in literary translation from underrepresented languages (e.g., Uzbek) into major Western languages (e.g., French). Prior work often examines either metaphor theory abstractly or metaphor use in major-language corpora, but does not combine cognitive mapping, cultural-symbolic analysis, and translation strategies within actual metaphor-rich literary texts. This leaves a gap in understanding how national-cultural identity embedded in conceptual metaphors can be preserved in translation without semantic loss.

2. Literature Review

Several modern philosophers have further developed the cognitive perspective on metaphor. I. A. Richards highlighted that many ancient philosophers viewed metaphor merely as ornament, yet he argued that it is produced jointly by thought and context (*The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 1936/1990). F. Nietzsche advanced this notion by claiming that human understanding of the world is grounded in metaphorical constructs and that “reality” itself has no independent existence (Nietzsche, 1979, p. 396). He portrayed language as a network of continual conceptual fusions shaped by analogy. Similarly, Ernst Cassirer analyzed metaphor as a cognitive form. In *Language and Myth*, he introduced the concept of the “power of metaphors,” emphasizing their role in generating new insights and showing how figurative language reveals human perception of reality. Cassirer distinguished between mythopoetic (metaphorical) and discursive-logical thinking, arguing that metaphor constitutes the conceptual basis for both religious and secular knowledge (Cassirer, 2000).

The Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset (1990), in *The Two Great Metaphors*, also described metaphor as an essential instrument of thought and scientific reasoning. He identified its dual functions of naming and cognitive mediation, asserting that metaphor is indispensable for conceptualizing phenomena that resist direct description. The American philosopher Max Black further strengthened the cognitive view, arguing that metaphor should not be seen as an isolated word but as a phrase embedded in context. Black was the first to introduce the term “cognitive metaphor” into scholarly discourse, showing that metaphor is not decorative but conceptually substantive (Black, 1990).

This cognitive perspective influenced later linguistic theories. From antiquity until the late 20th century, metaphors were studied primarily by philosophers, who analyzed their logical bases and developmental stages. On this foundation, linguistic theories of metaphor emerged, notably the conceptual metaphor theory of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, which positioned metaphor as a fundamental mode of human thought and everyday language. Their work demonstrated that metaphors are not merely rhetorical devices but conceptual structures that shape how people understand abstract ideas through concrete domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Contemporary scholarship has expanded the study of metaphor across disciplines. Cristina Marras (2017), for example, examined Leibniz's writings and showed how recurring imagery—rivers, oceans, forests, mountains, journeys—functions as metaphorical representations of philosophical ideas, structuring his thought and clarifying complex existential issues. Likewise, E. V. Malyshkin (2016), N. A. Mishankina, E. O. Akishina (2009), O. S. Zubkova, Nanine Charbonnel (1991–1993), Georges Kleiber, Serge Margel, Yahsien Huang, David Montminy (2015), A. A. Baigazakova, and E. A. Gogonenkova (2005) have investigated metaphor's methodological, cognitive, and cultural dimensions, emphasizing its role as a tool of scientific and philosophical reasoning (Gogonenkova, 2005; Yermolenko, 2000; Polozova, 2003; Merleau-Ponty, 1996; Pustovalova, 2016; Reshetnikova, 2013). Collectively, these studies demonstrate that philosophical and cultural analysis of metaphor—by explaining its semantic types, textual functions, and developmental stages—provides a foundation for understanding its essence across languages.

Parallel research has explored metaphor's application in linguistics, discourse studies, and translation. Modern linguistics increasingly approaches metaphor within an anthropocentric and cognitive framework, linking it to human experience, cultural values, geographical context, and historical memory. This shift has underscored metaphor's role not only as a linguistic device but as a cognitive mechanism that shapes and reflects worldviews. In translation studies, scholars argue that metaphor is a primary vehicle of cultural transfer, requiring strategies that account for both conceptual structure and cultural specificity. The challenge of translating culturally marked metaphors is especially acute in literary texts, where metaphor contributes not only to meaning but also to aesthetic effect and national identity.

Despite these advances, a research gap remains: few studies have examined the re-creation of culturally marked conceptual metaphors in literary translation from underrepresented languages (such as Uzbek) into major Western languages (such as French). Existing scholarship often focuses either on abstract metaphor theory, corpus-based studies of major languages, or experimental translation processes. What is lacking is an integrated approach that combines (i) close analysis of metaphor-rich literary texts,

(ii) cognitive mapping of source–target domains, and (iii) evaluation of translation strategies with attention to cultural symbolism.

Addressing this gap, the present study investigates how conceptual metaphors function as cognitive and cultural mechanisms in selected works by the Uzbek author Erkin A'zam and how their national-cultural and cognitive features are reconstructed in French translations. By doing so, it aims to contribute to metaphor theory, cognitive linguistics, and translation studies while offering methodological and pedagogical insights for the training of future translators.

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, integrative research design combining philosophical, cognitive, and linguocultural approaches to examine the translation of conceptual metaphors from Uzbek into French in selected works by Erkin A'zam. The object of the study is the set of conceptual metaphors present in these works, while the subject is the reconstruction of their national-cultural and cognitive features in French translation.

A comparative analytical method was used to examine metaphorical expressions across the source and target texts. Contextual and conceptual analyses identified metaphorical units and determined their semantic, pragmatic, and cultural functions. Cognitive metaphor analysis further mapped source–target domains, classified metaphors (ontological, orientational, structural), and revealed the mechanisms of conceptual transfer.

In addition, descriptive, interpretive, and contrastive techniques were applied to highlight culturally marked metaphors (e.g., symbolic animals, mythic figures) and to assess the translation strategies employed. This methodological framework enabled the systematic identification of metaphorical meaning, its contextual function, and its transformation during cross-linguistic transfer.

4. Findings & Analysis

4.1. The Application of Metaphor in Different Fields

Metaphor, one of the oldest intellectual instruments, first emerged in philosophy and is now studied in depth as a tool for clarifying scientific reflection. For this reason, many scholars seek to identify metaphoric expressions in scientific sources and analyze their deeper essence. A particular contribution of this research lies in showing how metaphors used to justify theories in various scientific fields can simplify complex ideas and render them comprehensible. One of the most common difficulties faced by young scholars is the inability to understand intricate formulations in scientific texts, since the construction of such theories often depends on the author's social background, culture, and language. To uncover their meaning, logical analysis and philosophical approaches are of particular importance. This explains why the earliest investigations into the essence and nature of metaphor were carried out within *logical* and *rhetorical* frameworks. In modern philosophy, the principles of metaphorization have been consolidated, and related stylistic devices such as metonymy, synecdoche, comparison, analogy, figurative sense, symbol, and allusion have been clearly distinguished. Nevertheless, the fundamental value of metaphor as a formative element of human thought has remained intact. As an independent phenomenon, metaphor continues to generalize its principles and expand its scope of application.

In contemporary linguistics, special attention is devoted to the value and mechanisms of metaphor formation. Classical linguistic sources provided theories explaining the fundamental essence of metaphor, but these were often developed out of context, illustrated merely through isolated words or phrases. Today, the study of metaphor is pursued within an anthropocentric framework. Research demonstrates that modern linguistics places primary emphasis on the cognitive dimensions of metaphor. Human experience, cultural values, geographical context, and historical memory all play a role in shaping the logical foundations of metaphor, which in turn enable a fuller understanding of this phenomenon. As a cognitive mechanism of consciousness, metaphor reflects the creative potential of human thought.

Beyond the transfer of a name from one domain to another, metaphor also embodies logic and purposeful intent. For this reason, metaphors differ from *catachreses*, which involve only nominal transfer based on word structure and take into account the primary functions of words.

Interdisciplinary research on metaphor seeks to present abstract concepts—shaped by the accumulated experience of human thought—within scientific and theoretical sources, journalistic texts, socio-political discourse, and works of art. The identification and explanation of extralinguistic metaphors are of particular significance for literary texts depicting diverse aspects of life, as they also help to reduce cognitive dissonance in translation. A figurative expression created by the fusion of two or more concepts to represent a particular idea or image constitutes a *conceptual metaphor*.

Metaphorization arises from the bidirectional movement of knowledge: the fusion of source and target. The target is the object to be described, while the description is drawn from the source. For example, in the phrase “the earth is an orange”, the target is the earth, whose roundness and delicate features are described through reference to the concept of “fruit”.

In literary analysis, the conceptual examination of metaphors and their significance for translation is closely tied to the distinct characteristics of artistic language. The language of literary works differs markedly from ordinary discourse: it does not always conform to grammatical norms, whereas scientific writing adheres strictly to them. In literature, the primary aim is persuasion, while in science it is logical reliability. The word functions as the foundational and indispensable element of literary work, through which all its components—characters, landscapes, plot, and composition—are embodied. The polysemy of a single word highlights the inherent complexity of artistic language.

4.2. Metaphor and Translation

The abundance of metaphor in literature is particularly significant for understanding the essence of texts and offers a productive approach to analyzing an author’s language through the theory of conceptual metaphors. As the history of scholarship shows, written sources have long been studied through the analysis and comparison of words, with

processes moving from the general to the particular or vice versa. The conceptualization of metaphor mirrors this process, enabling the uncovering of ideas and intentions in metaphorically rich works. At times, the events described under a given name may carry an entirely different essence, rendering the whole work metaphorical. Uzbek fables and proverbs are notable examples.

A comparable interpretive method has been used in studies of the French author Jean Giono. Researchers Colette Trout and Derk Visser applied conceptual metaphor theory in their analyses to clarify aspects of his work. They argue that Giono's portrayals of nature are deeply connected to human inner experience, which gives rise to conceptual metaphors such as "man is a plant" (phytomorphic), "man is a natural phenomenon" (geomorphic or naturalomorphic), and "man is an animal" (zoomorphic) (Trout & Visser, 2002, p. 154).

Corinne Von Kymmel-Zimmermann (2010) has examined how metaphors in Giono's works, through artistic language, extend into other types of discourse. She observes that Giono, by employing metaphors to depict nature, was able to describe concepts more vividly than could be expressed in purely scientific terms. For example, in *Le Chant du monde*, water is described using anthropomorphic metaphors, forming the conceptual metaphor "WATER IS A HUMAN":

"ne se gênait plus. Il prenait même un peu trop de plaisir à faire du bruit et, des fois, il craquait comme d'un bout à l'autre rien que pour un peu soulever son dos glacé et le laisser retomber." (II, 353)

According to Von Kymmel-Zimmermann, such metaphors, typical of literary works, expand the reader's imagination. She emphasizes that metaphors in artistic literature serve as mechanisms that structure imagination: *"The disorder of the literary image constructs the order of a true perception of the world."* (Von Kymmel-Zimmermann, 2010). In particular, when ambiguity arises in human relationships within the development of a literary plot, metaphorical expression provides clarity. Ambiguous situations, relations, qualities, or actions acquire a clear conceptual label in the human mind and thereby yield additional insight. The national character of metaphor also emerges here. In every culture, specific associations are attached to words, reflecting distinct cultural approaches. Some

of these representations may be shared across cultures, while others diverge significantly. For instance, the *ant* symbolizes diligence and humility in many cultures, while the *fox* evokes deceit and cunning. Yet, certain animal names carry different, even opposing, connotations: in Hindu culture, the *cow* represents reverence and divinity, whereas in Uzbek culture, its metaphorical use as applied to women has a pejorative sense. Such national and cultural features of name transfer highlight the complex dimensions of metaphor.

The French linguist Jean-Baptiste Renault has examined metaphorical symbols that embody national cultures. He argues that national symbols often emerge through the metaphorical transformation of certain words. For example, animals such as the rooster, eagle, and crow, and plants like the tulip, willow, birch leaf, and olive have become cultural emblems associated with specific nations. Renault maintains that, in addition to the historical development of these symbols, the projection of collective emotions onto natural elements also plays a crucial role. Consequently, he views words that carry symbolic meaning as functioning metaphorically (Renault, 2013, p. 27). In our view, although the functions of symbols and metaphors differ within a text, their formation in human thought can be similar, and they may at times replace one another. A case in point is the mythical Uzbek bird *humo*, which is defined in explanatory dictionaries as symbolic, yet in literary use undergoes metaphorization :

Humo (from Persian — the name of a legendary bird symbolizing happiness) is a mythical bird believed to bring good fortune, sovereignty, and kingship if it lands on a person's head or casts its shadow upon them. It is often referred to as the "bird of happiness" or the "bird of the state." A traditional saying reflects this belief: "*The humo bird has landed on your head, the birds of misfortune have flown away. From the house full of art, gold and silver have been stolen*" (Turob Tula, as cited in *O'zbek tilining izohli lug'ati*, 2008, p. 561).

The landing of the *humo* bird on a person's head symbolizes happiness, prosperity, and the successful start of new endeavors. According to Jean-Baptiste Renault's concept, this image can be regarded as a metaphor-symbol that reflects the cultural landscape of the Uzbek people. National consciousness serves as a crucial foundation for building an ideal

society, and in this context, the role of literature is indispensable. As one of the main forms of art, literature profoundly shapes individual worldviews. Discussing the behavior of translated characters, G. Salomov (1983) emphasizes the importance of preserving the spirit and uniqueness of national identity: *“There cannot be a single stereotype of consciousness and psyche for all peoples. To grasp the national particularity of each people, it is not enough for something general to become concrete; one must also identify what is concrete and unique, derived from the lived experience of those people”*. In other words, as the scholar of translation suggests, national identity in a work is not conveyed merely by naming an object or event; rather, it is the clarification of distinctive national traits, behaviors, and values that perfects the work.

According to Alain Rey (1979), one of the first steps in studying the national characteristics of each word within language structure and in creating cultural dictionaries is to recognize that words perform three functions—social, historical, and cultural—which may be presented in monolingual dictionaries. Other lexicographic resources may further elaborate upon these aspects, depending on their primary purpose. For identifying the national and cultural features of metaphors, however, a single example in a literary work is insufficient. The cultural attitude of a people toward a given word requires a conceptual approach and thorough analysis.

Anca Cozaceanu (2017), in her comparative analysis of French literature and its translations into Slavic languages, likewise underscores the importance of conceptualizing metaphors for clarifying meaning and content in literary works. She argues that systematic study facilitates not only comprehension of the work but also fidelity in translation. Thus, the generalization of metaphors and the identification of their source and target domains are crucial for uncovering a work’s content. Understanding the essence of artistic literature—abundant in diverse stylistic devices—often requires channeling its boundless semantic potential into a specific framework or structure.

Dominique Legallois has carried out a cognitive analysis of metaphors in the works of Émile Zola, classifying them into distinct categories. He points out the scarcity of studies applying cognitive analysis to literary texts and highlights the need for further investigation. According to Legallois, although cognition and literature may seem like

separate fields, metaphor forms a vital link between them. As he observes, “it is not difficult to conceive that literary analysis and the cognitive sciences (to use a general term) share a common concern with figurative language: because there is no literality without figure; because our experience of the world, for certain cognitive approaches, is essentially metaphorical” (Legallois, 2015).

Thus, in the cognitive analysis of artistic works, special attention must be given to the semantic features of words that perform the function of transfer, as well as to their national and cultural dimensions. A figurative expression may carry positive or negative connotations depending on a people’s worldview, way of life, religious beliefs, and other cultural factors. Taking these elements into account is essential to ensure that translation remains faithful to the original and adequately conveys the author’s intentions and reflections.

Artistic metaphor is a figurative, expressive, and persuasive device. It is regarded as a method that enhances both the persuasiveness and the figurative of artistic discourse. Consequently, as a figurative means, the artistic metaphor plays a central role in the production of artistic expression. Outside the literary text, a word with metaphorical meaning retains its nominative function, designating the object itself. Linguistic metaphor is often socially conditioned and connected to denotation, whereas artistic metaphor is based on connotative transfer and is more occasional in character.

As one of the principal forms of metaphor, the artistic metaphor contributes significantly to the figurative, persuasiveness, elevation, and solemnity of artistic discourse. Scholars who have studied artistic metaphor emphasize these aspects. In a literary work, especially in poetry, expressivity and figurative serve as the main means of representation. The foregoing observations suggest that artistic metaphor, unlike linguistic metaphor, rests on the amplification of expressive semes within the semantic structure of the word, at the expense of nominative semes.

In discursive practice, unlike denotative metaphors, artistic metaphors generally do not rely on striking or materializing devices. However, because they are rooted in expressive semantic elements, they often serve a qualifying function within metaphorical expressions. Lexical items referring to predatory or distinctive animals are frequently

used in poetry for their artistic metaphorical effect. For example, words like nightingale, crow, dog, fox, eagle, snake, hen, and hare are not inherently part of the poetic lexicon, yet their figurative meanings endow them with poetic power (Shodmonov, 2016). Metaphors, which hold particular importance in both prose and verse, along with their conceptual analysis, constitute a necessary principle for determining the general essence of metaphorized words, the direction of transfer, and their accurate translation.

As a concept that determines the value of literary art, the translation of metaphors requires a specific methodological approach. The meaning of a metaphor is closely tied to its textual context; hence, a thorough examination of the cognitive features of both the source and target terms is essential. These complex processes in metaphor translation have given rise to the integrative approach in scholarship. This approach investigates the pragmatic and axiological foundations of metaphors alongside their linguistic and cognitive characteristics.

Most human activities are conducted through communication, and sufficient clarity in communication is particularly important to avoid problems in everyday life. Metaphors play an invaluable role in ensuring clarity, completeness, comprehensibility, and effectiveness of discourse. Yet, in intercultural communication, the translation of metaphors relies on conceptual integration. While conceptual metaphor theory examines human knowledge in terms of two poles, conceptual integration theory considers four domains. Conceptual metaphors can be classified as ontological, orientational, or structural, each contributing to a deeper cognitive analysis of transfer. This classification is indispensable for categorizing metaphors in literary works.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that conceptual metaphors serve as essential cognitive and cultural mechanisms in literary translation, embodying national identity and worldview. The analysis shows that categorizing metaphors (ontological, orientational, structural) and mapping their source–target domains enhance semantic accuracy and cultural resonance in translation. It also reveals that culturally marked metaphors—especially those involving mythic or animal symbols—require adaptive strategies beyond literal substitution to preserve their aesthetic, cognitive, and functional impact. Overall, the

findings highlight the necessity of integrating philosophical, cognitive, and linguocultural approaches to achieve fidelity and depth in translating metaphor-rich literary texts.

The study contributes to the theoretical advancement of translation studies by offering a conceptual framework that deepens scholarly discourse on the cognitive and cultural dimensions of metaphor. Its results have practical value for refining university curricula in courses such as *Theory and Practice of Translation*, *Fundamentals of Literary Translation*, and *Linguocultural Foundations of Translation*, and for developing teaching resources, specialized dictionaries, and methodological guidelines to support culturally informed translator training.

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