

CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS OF WEALTH IN UZBEK, RUSSIAN, AND
ENGLISH LINGUOCULTURES**Barno Alisherovna Mukhtorova**

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Abstract. This study examines the conceptual metaphors that structure the concept of *wealth* in Uzbek, Russian, and English proverbial and phraseological discourse. Drawing on Conceptual Metaphor Theory and a linguocultural approach, selected proverbs and idioms are analyzed according to their source domains, evaluative meanings, and culture-specific profiles. The comparison reveals several shared mappings: *Money is a powerful agent, money is a self-reproducing resource, wealth is an abundant substance or possession, time is money, and non-material values are wealth.* At the same time, the Uzbek material foregrounds unity, contentment, health, and moral legitimacy; Russian expressions display a marked ambivalence between money's social power and the superiority of friendship, reputation, and happiness; English expressions emphasize time, thrift, investment, and individual agency while also limiting money through ethical models. The findings show that universal metaphorical patterns are not culturally identical but receive distinct axiological profiling in each linguoculture.

Keywords: wealth concept, conceptual metaphor, linguoculture, proverb, phraseology, Uzbek, Russian, English, comparative analysis.

In cognitive linguistics, a concept is understood as a multidimensional mental structure that integrates knowledge, imagery, evaluation, and culturally shared experience. Accordingly, *wealth* is broader than the dictionary meanings of money, property, and income: it also includes social status, health, knowledge, reputation, friendship, unity, and contentment. In linguocultural studies, such concepts are examined as units through which a speech community organizes and evaluates experience [4; 5].

Conceptual Metaphor Theory, developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, treats metaphor not merely as a stylistic ornament but as a basic mechanism of thought. A relatively concrete source domain is systematically mapped onto a more abstract target domain, allowing speakers to understand one area of experience through another [1, pp. 3-6]. Kövecses further emphasizes that conceptual metaphors may have embodied and universal foundations, while their linguistic realizations and evaluations vary across cultures [2, pp. 4-6; 3].

The present topic is relevant because the same economic notion may carry different moral and emotional meanings in different societies. Previous studies



have compared the Russian and English concepts of wealth, but a three-way comparison involving Uzbek proverbial and phraseological material remains limited [10; 11]. The purpose of this study is therefore to identify shared conceptual mappings and culture-specific value orientations in Uzbek, Russian, and English. The material consists of selected proverbs, sayings, and idioms drawn from multilingual and national phraseological collections [6-9]. The methods include conceptual-metaphor analysis, semantic grouping, contrastive interpretation, and linguocultural commentary. The study is qualitative and identifies tendencies in the selected material rather than fixed psychological characteristics of entire nations.

A widespread model in all three languages is *Money is a powerful or speaking agent*. Uzbek *Pul gapirar* ("Money speaks"), Russian *Деньги говорят* ("Money speaks"), and English *Money talks* personify money as an agent capable of influencing decisions and social relations. The metaphor transfers human abilities speech, authority, and action to financial resources. Its evaluative meaning is ambivalent: it recognizes the practical force of money without necessarily presenting that force as morally legitimate.

A second shared model is *Money is a self-reproducing resource*. Uzbek *Pul pulni topar* ("Money finds money"), Russian *Деньга на деньгу набегаем* ("Money accrues to money"), and English *Money begets money* conceptualize capital as an organism, seed, or productive substance capable of generating more of itself. The mapping reflects the experience that existing resources provide access to further economic opportunities. It also implicitly represents inequality as cumulative: possession facilitates further possession.

Abundance is represented through spatial and material imagery. English *to be rolling in money* and Russian *купаться в деньгах* ("to bathe in money") construe wealth as a surrounding substance or environment. Russian *денег куры не клюют* ("even hens cannot peck up all the money") expresses excess through humorous hyperbole. Uzbek *itining tuvagi oltindan* ("even his dog's bowl is made of gold") uses a different source domain: wealth is luxurious possession, where excessive prosperity is inferred from the precious material of an ordinary household object. Thus, the three languages share the idea of superabundance but verbalize it through different cultural images.

The mapping *Time is money* is also common: English *Time is money*, Russian *Время – деньги*, and Uzbek *Vaqt aqchadir, g'ofil bo'lma, qochadir* ("Time is money; do not be heedless, for it escapes"). The English and Russian forms state a direct equivalence between temporal and economic resources. The Uzbek proverb adds



an explicit didactic warning: time is not only valuable but irretrievable. This addition strengthens the moral dimension of resource management.

The most revealing group consists of metaphors that redefine wealth through non-material values. Uzbek *Sog'liq – tuman boylik* ("Health is immense wealth"), Russian *Здоровье дороже богатства* ("Health is more valuable than wealth"), and English *Health is better than wealth* establish health as true wealth. Similarly, Uzbek *Yaxshi nom boylikdan a'lo*, Russian *Добрая слава лучше богатства*, and English *A good name is better than riches* prioritize reputation over property. In these cases, economic vocabulary functions as a scale for evaluating moral, social, or physical well-being.

Uzbek proverbial discourse gives particular prominence to collective and ethical values. *Boylik boylik emas, birlik boylik* ("Material wealth is not true wealth; unity is wealth") realizes unity is wealth, while *Qanoat – zo'r boylik* ("Contentment is great wealth") conceptualizes inner sufficiency as a form of inexhaustible capital. These expressions do not reject material prosperity; rather, they subordinate it to solidarity, moderation, and moral balance.

Russian material shows a pronounced tension between the power of money and its limits. *He imей сто рублей, а имей сто друзей* ("Do not have one hundred roubles; have one hundred friends") conceptualizes friendship as capital, whereas *He в деньгах счастье* ("Happiness is not in money") denies a direct equivalence between financial wealth and well-being. The idiom *бросать деньги на ветер* ("to throw money to the wind") represents money as a light, disappearing substance and condemns waste. Russian phraseology therefore often presents wealth as socially effective but unstable and ethically insufficient.

English material more strongly foregrounds calculation, time, thrift, investment, and inherited opportunity. *A penny saved is a penny earned* maps saving onto earning, turning restraint into productive action. *To be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth* conceptualizes inherited privilege as a precious object received at birth. Yet the proverb *Money is a good servant but a bad master* restricts economic power through the model money is a servant or ruler: financial resources are beneficial when controlled but destructive when they control human conduct.

The comparison demonstrates that the cognitive core of *wealth* is largely shared. Money is represented as power, an active agent, a productive resource, a substance, and a measure of value. The principal differences lie in axiological profiling. In the selected Uzbek material, unity, contentment, health, and a good name receive especially strong emphasis. Russian expressions foreground



ambivalence, friendship, reputation, and the instability or misuse of money. English expressions give greater prominence to time, thrift, accumulation, individual agency, and inherited advantage. These contrasts should be treated as tendencies in historically formed phraseological corpora, not as immutable traits of individual speakers.

The analysis confirms that *wealth* has a universal economic core but is culturally reorganized through distinct systems of value. Shared conceptual mappings arise from common embodied and social experience, whereas their linguistic forms and evaluations reflect different historical and cultural priorities. Across all three linguocultures, material prosperity is acknowledged as a significant source of agency and opportunity, but it is not accepted as the highest human value. Health, reputation, friendship, unity, contentment, and ethical self-control repeatedly function as alternative or superior forms of wealth.

The study contributes to cognitive linguistics and linguocultural comparison by describing *wealth* through a model of universal conceptual schema and culture-specific axiological profile. Its findings may support intercultural communication, translation, bilingual lexicography, and the teaching of phraseology. Further research should test these observations on larger digital corpora and through associative experiments with contemporary Uzbek, Russian, and English speakers.

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