



## THE CONCEPT OF “WOLF” IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGE

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**Abstract:** The current article attempts to analyze the concept of “wolf” and its conceptualizations by native Uzbek people through the study of Uzbek idioms, set expressions, proverbs, sayings, and quotations with this component. The objective was to conduct the conceptual analysis in order to discern figurative-associative and evaluative meaning of the concept “wolf”. By presenting the cognitive model of this concept in the linguistic consciousness of the Uzbeks, its conceptualization is demonstrated, the associative nature of the concept “wolf” and its universal, ideological and ethno cultural features are manifested. It was found that the concept “wolf” has various conceptualizations, reflecting the Uzbeks’ naive national-linguistic picture of the world and evokes interpretations with positive and negative connotations as well.

**Key words:** concept, wolf, conceptualisation, linguistic, cultural, Uzbek, worldview

Although the objects and phenomena of the surrounding world are common to all people, each nation perceives these objects and phenomena in accordance with its worldview and character. The national outlook, national self-consciousness depend on the geographical position of each nation, its climate, spiritual culture. All political, social, cultural, spiritual, and historical changes in society are reflected in the language. According to Kaidar (2009), the most reliable and powerful force for the sustainable development of people is not only the language as a means of communication, but also its heritage and cumulative ability which transmits the knowledge about ethnic history, folk wisdom, national traditions and culture, the heritage of ancestors from generation to generation. Therefore, in a civilized society language is considered as one of the priceless human values.

This interrelation of language and culture has been the object of Ethnolinguistics until the term “Cultural Linguistics” was suggested by Sharifian (2017,p.2) to refer to recently developed discipline that “explores the relationship between language and cultural conceptualisations”.

The current article attempts to analyze the concept “wolf” and its conceptualisations by native Uzbek people through the study of Uzbek idioms, set expressions, proverbs,



sayings, and quotations. By presenting the cognitive model of the concept “wolf” in the linguistic consciousness of the Uzbek people, its conceptualisation in the traditional linguistic consciousness is demonstrated, the associative nature of the concept “wolf” and its universal, ideological and ethnocultural features are manifested. The objective is to analyze the national-linguistic picture of the world on the basis of the Uzbeks’ world view of this zoonym, to identify issues of development of the zoonym towards the level of the concept.

### **Linguistic considerations of the concept “Wolf”**

Although the concept “wolf” has been well researched in the field of literature (Abdiqalyq et al., 2021; Burnakova & Tsydenova, 2015; Khaybullina et al., 2018; Khazahkovich, 2009; Khusnullina, 2014), it has scarcely been studied linguistically (Gishkaeva et al., 2017; Jetibai et al., 2018). Even the linguistic studies are primarily based on the materials from folklore and belles-lettres and present interesting results contributing to Cultural Linguistics. For instance, the contextual semantic analysis of the zoonym “wolf” in Russian, English, Spanish, and Chechen languages, conducted by Gishkaeva et al. (2017) has revealed “valuable information that allows creating the national and psychological portrait of a linguistic identity”. More specifically, the research enabled to identify comparable and non-equivalent conceptualisations of the lexeme “wolf” with positive and negative connotations used by speakers of all four languages. Karasik (2001, p. 99) points out that the cultural concepts in linguistic research should be based on the scientific data from Cultural studies, History, Psychology, Ethnography. Similarly, Sharifian (2017) considers that cultural conceptualisations may be instantiated in “cultural art, literature, cultural events, folk songs...” (p. 6). Therefore, in this study, we will use not only dictionaries of idioms and proverbs for analysis but lean upon some literary and ethnographic materials as well.

According to Stepanov (2004, p. 40), the concept is “a micromodel of culture”, it generates it and is generated by it. Being a “clot of culture”, the concept has extra-linguistic, pragmatic, and cognitive information. Thus, the analysis of the concept “wolf” might contribute to deeper understanding of Uzbek culture and worldview. The conceptual study makes it possible to identify the cultural and national image of the world, preserved



in the ethno-lexicon and phraseology of any language. In linguistics, the term "concept" first appeared in the first half of the twentieth century in connection with the study of the problems of representing environmental phenomena through the language system. In scientific works there are various definitions of the concept.

Telia (1996, p. 78) defines concept as "a set of information related to a particular object" whilst Kubryakova et al. (1997, p. 28) explains that "the concept is a semantic unit of the image of the universe formed in the human mind". Forming the idea that "a concept is a cognitive unit that reflects reality in the mind of a person", Kaliuly (2009,p.19) argues that each ethno-cognitive symbol has its place in the national conceptual system, the development of concepts in the mind of an individual varies depending on the level of background knowledge about the world, some other object or phenomenon.

The system of concepts in any language is stored in the form of a set of information about the environment. This set of information creates a linguistic picture of the world. We can say that in the development of Cognitive Linguistics, there are two main directions in the study of conceptual problems. The first direction is the linguocultural direction. For example, Akhmetzhanova (2016), Mankeeva (2014), Maslova (2004), Vezhbitskaya (1996) consider the concept from the point of view of Cultural Linguistics.

The general conclusion of these researchers is the recognition of the concept as a cultural phenomenon, a linguistic form of national culture. For instance, Maslova (2004, p. 40) explains the rationale for considering the concept as a cultural fact The concept has a complex structure, since, on the one hand, it includes everything that belongs to the structure of the concept, and on the other hand, the structure of the concept includes what makes it the fact of culture - the original form, or etymology, compressed to the main features of the historical content; contemporary associations; evaluations, connotations.

All culture consists of a set of concepts and conceptual relations. The core of culture should be the notion of "concept", guided by the principle that the language system is necessary to designate the most valuable part of cultural concepts (Maslova, 2007, p. 74). The second direction is the semantic direction (Stepanov, 2004; Vorkachev, 2003). According to these scientists, the meaning of the concept is formed by the semantics of the linguistic symbol. Representatives of this trend also analyze the difference between words



and concepts, notions and terms. For example, the analysis of the semantic structure of a word involves the interpretation of the denotative, signified, connotative and intra-semantic structure (archiseme, differential seme, potential seme) while conceptual analysis involves image-associative signs and cognitive aspects within one definite linguistic symbol. Based on the definitions and clarifications given by the various directions mentioned above, the characteristics of the concept can be described as follows: - concept - the main semantic unit that stores relevant information in the linguistic consciousness and processes it; - concept - an ethno-cultural unit that reflects the national worldview of the particular ethnicity; - concept reflects the national values of the world; - concept is marked by language; - concept reflects the background knowledge and mentality of the individual.

Karasik (2002, p. 127) claims that the concept consists of three parts: conceptual and material parts; descriptive-associative part; evaluation. After that, we structurally classify the concept. That is, the components of the conceptual structure include: conceptual meaning, figurative-associative meaning and evaluative meaning. The concept "wolf" in the recognition and perception of the environment and the assertion of what is perceived in the linguistic consciousness contributed to the formation of many set expressions through metaphorical, metonymic approaches. It should be noted that in the conceptual studies important part belongs to metaphors and metonymy. As Temirgazina et al. (2020) pointed out, "in conceptual metonymy A replaced B, while in conceptual metaphor A is understood as B". In view of that, vocabulary, mostly exposed to metaphorization and metonymizing are related to "human body, animals, plants, food, forces" (Kovecses, 2011, cited in Temirgazina et al., 2020) **"Wolf" in mythology**

Myth is the oldest genre of folklore. The image of a wolf in mythological and folklore works is considered as an image of a Totem. Every nation attempts to identify their origin through mythological works, legends and fairy tales because this type of work reflects a primitive image of the universe (a naive picture of the world). Each ethnic group is aware of the surrounding world and creates its own linguistic image of the world. Thus, the previous research on the concept "wolf" highlights the importance of considering both positive and negative conceptualisations of the concept wolf (Burnakov & Tsydenova,



2015) Legends, fairy tales, proverbs, set expressions, phraseological units formed in connection with the concept "wolf" may indicate the perception of the wolf as a cultural phenomenon for the Uzbek people.

However, the lexeme "buri" can acquire strong stylistic colour when used as a symbol archetype in particular contexts, thus becoming the synonym of Kok Buri. It is generally known that blue wolves do not exist in nature, but the concept "Kok Buri" (Blue Wolf) was created to denote that wolf was perceived as a sacred animal in the historical memory of the Turkic peoples. Wolf as a totemic animal is primarily presented in Turkic folklore, along with Uzbek, for example, also in Bashkir mythology (Khusnullina, 2014), Khakas religious and mythological literature (Burnakov & Tsydenova, 2015). It is evident that the concept wolf is rather complicated as it includes both positive and negative characteristics of the animal. The archetype of wolf with positive connotations goes back to Kok Buri whereas the archetype with negative connotations reflects its predatory nature and is associated with evil and cruelty of people. Evidently, the archetypes in folklore are based on ethnocultural beliefs about the animal. In Turkic folklore, including Uzbek, the image of a wolf is painted in three different colors. They are: blue wolf, white wolf, and black wolf. In general, the colors themselves have their own national symbolic meaning for each nation.

The white-black-blue image of a wolf clearly shows our people's unique understanding of the structure of the world. For the Uzbek people, white is always a symbol of goodness, blue means "powerful, holy, sacred", and black is considered a symbolic sign of evil and wickedness..

It is noteworthy that in the Uzbek tales, the white wolf is also described as very smart, always leading the hero, sacred animal with the ability to speak. As it was mentioned, in the linguistic consciousness of the Uzbek people, white colour means good intentions, white mood; "blue wolf" indicates the concepts of "pure, holy, strong, powerful", whereas the gray wolf is often violent, constantly depicted as a hungry, stupid, gullible animal that becomes a victim of deception. This is evidenced by many Uzbek fairy tales, such as "The Mouse and the Wolf", "The Fox and the Wolf".



In Uzbek mythology, our ancestors, who remained among the wolves, made a living by drinking wolf milk and by playing with his puppies. Perhaps that is why the wolf was so close to the Uzbek people. Although people knew how dangerous the wolves were, they were considered sacred animals. On the basis of the formed mythological legends, fairy tales, phraseological and paremiological fund of the Uzbek language, the following cognitive aspects of the “wolf” image are revealed: - Images of wolves and sheep, wolves and hares, wolves and dogs are used to convey the opposite concepts of good and evil; - the rural life; - the image of a wolf is considered in society as an unpleasant, negative action; - In most proverbs, the wolf is perceived as a symbol of pride and arrogance; determines the outlook of the people. In a word, the wolf is a complex image that reflects the religious beliefs and worldview of the Uzbek people, presented in the form of a totem, an allegorical background or a predator. We see that in the linguistic consciousness of ancient Uzbeks there was a stereotype that wolf is "a predatory, strong, tenacious, blue animal living in freedom."

The connotative meaning of the word reflects the internal psychological state of a person, positive and negative qualities. For set expressions, figurativeness is characteristic, since here the change in meaning is carried out in metaphorical, metonymic ways.

Connotative meaning consists of emotion and evaluation. When expressing a certain concept, information is stored in memory in the form in which it is perceived in the mind of a person, and is expressed in the language of the people. Looking at any word, a person relies on his knowledge, culture and spiritual knowledge in order to convey the association or idea formed in his mind about this world through language. This is reflected in the lexical, phraseological, and paremiological structures of the language. The conceptual analysis of the concept “wolf” conducted in this article enabled to identify the cultural and national image of the world, preserved in the ethno-lexicon and phraseology of Uzbek language and to discern figurative-associative and connotative meaning of the concept “wolf”. The traditional conceptualisations of the lexeme “wolf” by native Uzbek people were revealed through the analysis of Uzbek idioms, set expressions, proverbs, sayings, and quotations with this component. By presenting the cognitive model



of this concept in the linguistic consciousness of the Uzbeks, its conceptualisation is demonstrated, the associative nature of the concept “wolf” and its universal, ideological, and ethnocultural features are manifested. It was found that the concept “wolf” has various conceptualisations, reflecting the Uzbeks’ naive national-linguistic picture of the world and evokes interpretations with positive and negative connotations as well. Therefore, the lexeme "wolf" in the linguistic consciousness of the Uzbek people can be recognized as a concept that has a national and cultural background. Due to the presence of both evaluative and national-cultural features, this concept is considered as belonging to linguocultural phenomena.

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