

RESEARCH ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS

A Cognitive Map Of Aesthetic Evaluation: A Comparative Study

Inoyatova Dilnoza Ilkhomovna

Teacher of the department of Foreign language teaching methodology, Uzbekistan

Received: 23 October 2025 **Accepted:** 14 November 2025 **Published:** 19 December 2025

ABSTRACT

The present study explores the cognitive organization of aesthetic evaluation through a comparative analysis of American and Uzbek linguistic cultures. Drawing on the principles of cognitive linguistics and linguoculturology, the research conceptualizes aesthetic evaluation as a structured mental construct reflected in language. The notion of a cognitive map is employed to model the internal configuration of evaluative meanings, including the interaction of conceptual domains such as beauty, ugliness, value, normativity, and emotional response. By analyzing lexical, phraseological, and metaphorical data from both English and Uzbek, the study identifies universal and culture-specific parameters shaping aesthetic judgment. The findings demonstrate that while aesthetic evaluation operates through shared cognitive mechanisms, its conceptual hierarchy and semantic salience are deeply influenced by national cultural values. The study contributes to comparative cognitive semantics by offering a systematic model for mapping evaluative concepts across cultures.

Keywords: Cognitive map; aesthetic evaluation; linguocognitive analysis; cultural conceptualization; evaluative semantics; comparative linguistics.

Introduction

Aesthetic evaluation has long attracted scholarly attention within philosophy, psychology, and linguistics. In cognitive linguistics, evaluation is treated not merely as a subjective reaction but as a structured conceptual phenomenon embedded in human cognition. The evaluative dimension of meaning has been examined through categories such as appraisal, stance, and axiological judgment, emphasizing the interaction between cognition and cultural experience.

Linguocultural studies highlight that aesthetic values are culturally mediated and encoded in language through conventionalized expressions, metaphors, and discourse patterns. Researchers argue that concepts such as beauty and ugliness function as value-laden mental constructs shaped by collective experience and cultural norms. Comparative studies further demonstrate that aesthetic

judgments differ across cultures in terms of metaphorical motivation, emotional intensity, and moral association.

However, despite growing interest in evaluative concepts, the internal cognitive organization of aesthetic evaluation remains underexplored. Existing studies tend to focus on isolated lexical items or metaphors, rather than modeling the broader conceptual system underlying evaluative meaning. The present research addresses this gap by proposing a cognitive map that captures the relational structure of aesthetic evaluation in American and Uzbek cultural contexts.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a qualitative comparative methodology grounded in cognitive semantic analysis. The empirical data consist of evaluative lexical units, phraseological

expressions, and conventional metaphors related to aesthetic judgment in English and Uzbek. The data were collected from explanatory dictionaries, phraseological sources, and authentic language materials. The analytical procedure includes the following stages:

1. Conceptual identification of aesthetic evaluation markers in both languages.
2. Semantic categorization of the data according to evaluative polarity (positive/negative), intensity, and emotional coloring.
3. Cognitive mapping, whereby conceptual domains and their interrelations are modeled as a structured network.
4. Comparative interpretation to identify convergences and divergences in cognitive organization.

The notion of a cognitive map is used metaphorically to represent the mental layout of evaluative concepts, including central nodes (core values) and peripheral zones (context-dependent associations).

DISCUSSION

The analysis reveals that aesthetic evaluation in both American and Uzbek cultures is organized around a shared cognitive core involving perception, emotional response, and value judgment. In both systems, aesthetic assessment is closely linked to notions of normativity and social acceptability, indicating the evaluative function of aesthetics beyond mere sensory perception. At the same time, significant cultural differences emerge in the conceptual emphasis and associative patterns. In American English, aesthetic evaluation tends to foreground individual perception, originality, and emotional expressiveness. Evaluative expressions often highlight personal stance and subjective experience, reflecting a cognitively salient model of individual-centered judgment.

In contrast, Uzbek aesthetic evaluation demonstrates a stronger orientation toward social harmony, moral value, and collective norms. Evaluative meanings are frequently intertwined with ethical and behavioral assessments, suggesting an integrated cognitive model in which aesthetic judgment is inseparable from moral evaluation.

These differences indicate that the cognitive map of aesthetic evaluation is not uniform but culturally stratified.

While the basic cognitive mechanisms are universal, the salience of particular conceptual links varies according to cultural priorities.

RESULTS

The study yields the following key results:

1. Aesthetic evaluation can be modeled as a multidimensional cognitive map consisting of perceptual, emotional, axiological, and cultural components.
2. Both English and Uzbek share a universal evaluative core, confirming the cognitive nature of aesthetic judgment.
3. Cultural specificity manifests in the hierarchical arrangement of conceptual domains within the cognitive map.
4. American aesthetic evaluation emphasizes individual cognition and emotional response, whereas Uzbek evaluation prioritizes social and moral coherence.
5. The proposed cognitive map provides an effective framework for comparative analysis of evaluative concepts across languages and cultures.

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