

COMPARATIVE LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF MYTHOLOGICAL UNITS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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Abstract

This paper presents a comprehensive comparative linguistic analysis of mythological units in English and Uzbek languages, examining their structural, semantic, and cultural dimensions. Drawing on contemporary research in cultural linguistics and comparative mythology, the study identifies key categories of mythological vocabulary including mythonyms, theonyms, cosmonyms, and demononyms. Through systematic analysis of etymological origins, semantic features, and cultural functions, the research reveals both universal patterns and language-specific characteristics. English mythological units predominantly derive from Greek-Roman and Germanic traditions, while Uzbek mythological vocabulary reflects Turkic, Persian, and Islamic influences. Both languages exhibit similar cognitive mechanisms in mythological conceptualization, demonstrating the interplay between universal cognitive constraints and cultural variation in linguistic systems.

Keywords: mythological units, comparative linguistics, English language, Uzbek language, cultural linguistics

1. Introduction

Mythological units represent a distinctive category of linguistic phenomena that encode ancient beliefs, cosmological worldviews, and cultural memory within language systems. These specialized lexical items—encompassing names of deities, mythical creatures, celestial bodies, and supernatural beings—serve as linguistic repositories of cultural heritage and provide valuable insights into the cognitive structures underlying human conceptualization of the world. The comparative study of mythological vocabulary across languages offers a unique window into understanding

how different cultures encode similar universal human experiences while maintaining distinctive cultural identities.

The English and Uzbek languages, representing distinct linguistic families and cultural traditions, provide a particularly compelling case for comparative analysis. English, as a Germanic language with substantial Latin and Greek influences, carries mythological vocabulary rooted primarily in Greco-Roman and Germanic traditions. Uzbek, as a Turkic language with significant Persian and Arabic influences, reflects the mythological heritage of Central Asian, Islamic, and ancient Turkic cultures. Despite these fundamental differences, both languages demonstrate systematic patterns in how mythological concepts are lexicalized and integrated into broader linguistic structures.

Recent scholarship has increasingly recognized the importance of mythological vocabulary in understanding linguistic worldviews and cultural cognition. Research has shown that mythological units are not merely archaic relics but active components of contemporary language that continue to shape metaphorical thinking, phraseological systems, and cultural discourse [9]. This study addresses a significant gap in comparative linguistic studies by providing systematic analysis of mythological units in English and Uzbek languages, identifying universal patterns and language-specific features in their structure, semantics, and cultural functions.

2. Literature Review

The study of mythological vocabulary has emerged as a significant area within cultural linguistics and ethnolinguistics. Contemporary scholarship emphasizes that mythological units constitute a fundamental component of the linguistic picture of the world, preserving ancient cognitive structures even when surface meanings have evolved. Research demonstrates that mythological semantics often remains implicit, hidden behind everyday meanings, yet continues to influence phraseological systems and metaphorical thinking [23].

Recent scholarship has developed sophisticated taxonomies for categorizing mythological vocabulary. Research on mythonyms identifies several key subtypes

including theonyms (names of gods), demononyms (demonic figures), mythoanthronyms (legendary heroes), mythonyms (mythical places), mythozonyms (mythical animals), and mythophytonyms (mythical plants) [9]. Studies of theonymic vocabulary reveal multiple layers of mythological formation influenced by successive cultural and religious systems [10].

Comparative studies have revealed both universal cognitive patterns and culture-specific encoding strategies. Research comparing English and Kazakh mythologemes demonstrates how languages encode spiritual and cultural continuity through mythological units [3]. Analysis of sacred dog symbolism in Kazakh and English identifies universal patterns alongside culture-specific features preserved in stable expressions [16]. Studies focusing on Turkic languages emphasize how concepts rooted in shamanism, animism, and Tengrism construct national identity and shape cognitive schemas [19].

Research on Uzbek cosmonyms traces etymological connections across Turkic languages, revealing shared roots and cultural significance [1]. Studies of idiomatic expressions in English and Uzbek reveal linguocultural information embedded in semantics, including structures of mythological knowledge [13]. However, comprehensive comparative analyses of mythological units in English and Uzbek remain limited, representing a significant opportunity for advancing understanding of cross-linguistic diversity.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in an integrative theoretical framework drawing upon cultural linguistics, cognitive semantics, and ethnolinguistic theory. The cultural linguistics paradigm posits that language is fundamentally shaped by and shapes cultural conceptualizations of reality. Within this framework, mythological units are understood as culturally-specific linguistic encodings that reflect and perpetuate particular worldviews [23].

Cognitive semantic theory provides tools for understanding how mythological concepts are mentally represented and linguistically encoded. This perspective

recognizes that mythological units reflect fundamental cognitive processes including categorization, metaphor, metonymy, and conceptual blending. Research demonstrates that mythological conceptualization involves systematic patterns including animism, anthropomorphism, and zoomorphism [12].

Ethnolinguistic theory provides a framework for understanding how mythological units function as repositories of cultural memory and markers of ethnic identity. Research demonstrates that mythological vocabulary constructs national identity, particularly through concepts rooted in traditional belief systems [19]. The comparative dimension draws upon linguistic typology to identify both universal patterns and language-specific features in mythological vocabulary [3], [16].

4. Methodology

This study employs a multi-method qualitative research design integrating comparative-contrastive analysis, etymological investigation, semantic analysis, and cultural-linguistic interpretation. The research adopts a descriptive-analytical approach examining mythological units in contemporary usage while investigating their historical origins and semantic evolution [17].

Data sources include etymological dictionaries, mythological reference works, corpus data, and scholarly literature for English [21]. For Uzbek, sources include specialized studies of cosmonyms, mythological vocabulary, and cultural-linguistic research on Turkic traditions [1], [9]. Additional comparative data derives from research examining mythological units in both languages [13], [22], [24].

The analysis employs several systematic methods: etymological analysis traces historical origins and semantic development [1], [8]; semantic analysis examines meaning structures, polysemy patterns, and semantic fields [9], [23]; structural-typological analysis investigates morphological composition and word-formation patterns [1]; cultural-cognitive analysis examines cultural knowledge and symbolic associations [19], [23]; and comparative-contrastive analysis systematically compares parallel phenomena [3], [13].

The study employs a comprehensive classification system including theonyms, demononyms, mythoanthronyms, cosmonyms, mythozoonyms, mythoponyms, and mythophytonyms [9]. Analytical criteria include etymological origin, semantic structure, morphological composition, cultural associations, functional characteristics, productivity, and frequency.

5. Comparative Analysis of Mythological Units in English and Uzbek Languages

5.1. Classification and Typology

Both English and Uzbek exhibit rich systems of mythological vocabulary encompassing theonyms, demononyms, cosmonyms, mythoanthronyms, mythozoonyms, mythoponyms, and mythophytonyms [9]. English mythological vocabulary draws predominantly from Greek-Roman and Germanic traditions. Theonyms include Zeus, Apollo, Thor, and Odin. Demononyms encompass demon, devil, goblin, and troll. Mythozoonyms include dragon, phoenix, unicorn, and griffin, many borrowed from Greek and Latin [27].

Uzbek mythological vocabulary reflects Central Asian cultural history, incorporating ancient Turkic, Persian, Arabic, and Islamic elements. Research on Uzbek cosmonyms reveals a rich system including Temir qoziq (North Star, literally "iron stake"), Cho'lpon (Venus), Yetti qaroqchi (Big Dipper, literally "seven robbers"), Quyosh (Sun), and Oy (Moon) [1]. These cosmonyms encode ancient astronomical knowledge and mythological beliefs.

Comparative analysis reveals similarities and differences in organization. Both languages maintain distinct categories for different mythological entities, suggesting universal cognitive patterns. However, relative prominence varies. English exhibits rich vocabulary for mythical creatures and classical deities, reflecting Greek-Roman mythology and medieval European folklore. Uzbek demonstrates extensive cosmonymic vocabulary, reflecting the importance of celestial observation in Turkic cultural traditions [1].

Structural composition differs between languages. English mythological vocabulary consists largely of borrowed monomorphemic forms (Zeus, Apollo, dragon) or compounds (werewolf, mermaid). Uzbek mythological units often employ descriptive compounds encoding mythological narratives, as seen in Yetti qaroqchi (seven robbers) or Temir qoziq (iron stake) [1].

5.2. Etymological Analysis

English mythological vocabulary derives primarily from Greek, Latin, and Germanic languages. Classical borrowings entered through Christian Latin influence, Norman French transmission, and Renaissance scholarly borrowing. Terms such as mythology (from Greek mythos + logos), demon (from Greek daimon), and phoenix (from Greek phoinix) exemplify this classical heritage [20]. Germanic vocabulary includes elf (Old English ælf), dwarf (Old English dweorg), and troll (Old Norse troll), reflecting indigenous Germanic traditions and Scandinavian influence [8].

Uzbek mythological vocabulary exhibits different etymological stratification reflecting Central Asian cultural history. Research identifies three primary layers: ancient Turkic, Persian, and Arabic influences [1], [10]. Ancient Turkic vocabulary includes cosmonyms and terms for natural phenomena. Persian influence contributed mythological vocabulary related to epic traditions and Zoroastrian cosmology. Arabic influence, primarily through Islamic transmission, introduced mythological and religious terminology.

Comparative analysis reveals interesting convergence and divergence patterns. Both languages have dragon-like creatures with different etymological origins. English dragon derives from Greek drakon through Latin draco, originally meaning "serpent." Uzbek ajdarho derives from Persian azhdahā, reflecting Persian mythological traditions [6]. Despite different origins, both encode similar conceptual content involving large, serpentine creatures.

5.3. Semantic Features and Structural Characteristics

Semantic analysis reveals universal patterns and language-specific features. English mythological vocabulary exhibits extensive polysemy and metaphorical

productivity. Phoenix has extended from a mythical bird to metaphorically represent renewal and rebirth. Titan has extended from Greek giants to mean any person of great size or achievement. This semantic productivity demonstrates how mythological vocabulary remains active in contemporary English [21].

Research on English mythological vocabulary reveals systematic semantic fields organized around conceptual domains. Analysis identifies animistic concepts (natural phenomena with souls), cosmogonic concepts (world structure and creation), and mythonymic concepts (specific named entities) [30]. Uzbek mythological vocabulary similarly exhibits rich semantic structures. Cosmonyms reveal multiple meaning layers combining astronomical, mythological, and cultural significance. Cho'lpon (Venus) functions simultaneously as astronomical designation, mythological entity, and cultural symbol [1].

Both languages employ anthropomorphism and zoomorphism in mythological conceptualization. Research on fire mythology in Yakut demonstrates how fire is conceptualized as a living, anthropomorphic being with metaphorical models including "material object," "source of light and heat," and "living creature" [5]. Similar patterns appear in English mythological vocabulary.

Both languages demonstrate semantic opposition and complementarity. English exhibits pairs such as god/devil, angel/demon, and heaven/hell, reflecting dualistic cosmological structures. Uzbek mythological vocabulary includes oppositional pairs such as Quyosh (Sun) and Oy (Moon), encoding complementary cosmological principles [23].

5.4. Cultural-Cognitive Dimensions

Cultural-cognitive analysis reveals how mythological units encode distinctive worldviews and cultural values. English mythological vocabulary reflects layered cultural history incorporating pre-Christian Germanic paganism, classical Greco-Roman civilization, and Christian traditions. Classical vocabulary (Zeus, Apollo, Olympus) evokes ancient Greek and Roman civilization. Germanic terms (elf, dwarf, troll) connect to medieval folklore and Northern European traditions [27].

Research demonstrates that mythological vocabulary continues to shape contemporary cultural discourse and metaphorical thinking. Mythological references appear extensively in literature, popular culture, and everyday language, serving as cultural touchstones [30]. Uzbek mythological vocabulary encodes Central Asian Turkic cultural heritage, reflecting ancient cosmological beliefs and astronomical knowledge. *Temir qoziq* (North Star) encodes an ancient cosmological concept of the celestial sphere rotating around a fixed point [1].

Comparative research on Turkic mythological vocabulary reveals how these units construct national identity and cultural continuity. Concepts rooted in shamanism, animism, and Tengrism form collective memory and symbolic systems maintaining cultural distinctiveness [19]. Both languages demonstrate how mythological vocabulary participates in cognitive structuring of experience, providing frames and schemas that organize understanding [23]

English mythological vocabulary shows particular elaboration in supernatural beings and mythical creatures, reflecting European folklore and literary traditions. Uzbek demonstrates extensive cosmonymic development, reflecting cultural importance of celestial observation, agricultural cycles, and navigation in Central Asian societies [1]. Research comparing sacred dog symbolism identifies universal patterns (guardian and protector) alongside culture-specific features [16].

6. Discussion of Findings

The comparative analysis reveals several significant patterns contributing to theoretical understanding of linguistic diversity, cultural cognition, and the relationship between language and mythology. The analysis demonstrates substantial universal patterns despite fundamental differences in linguistic structure and cultural background. Both languages maintain systematic taxonomies distinguishing theonyms, demononyms, cosmonyms, and mythozonyms [9], suggesting universal cognitive principles in organizing mythological knowledge.

Both languages employ similar cognitive mechanisms including anthropomorphism, zoomorphism, and metaphorical mapping [5], [12]. The

persistence of mythological vocabulary in contemporary language use represents another universal pattern. Despite secularization and scientific worldviews, both languages maintain active mythological lexicons participating in metaphorical thinking, phraseological systems, and cultural discourse [13], [23].

The analysis also reveals substantial language-specific features reflecting distinctive cultural histories and linguistic structures. Etymological stratification differs fundamentally, with English drawing from Greek-Roman and Germanic sources while Uzbek reflects Turkic, Persian, and Arabic influences [1], [8], [27]. Relative elaboration of different categories varies. English exhibits rich vocabulary for mythical creatures and classical deities. Uzbek demonstrates extensive cosmonymic vocabulary [1].

The findings demonstrate that mythological vocabulary functions as a repository of cultural memory and marker of ethnic identity. Research on Turkic mythological vocabulary emphasizes how these units construct national identity and maintain cultural continuity [19]. The layered nature reflects historical processes of cultural contact, religious transformation, and linguistic borrowing [10].

The comparative analysis has significant implications for translation studies and intercultural communication. Mythological units often lack direct equivalents due to culture-specific associations and semantic structures. Research emphasizes challenges of conveying mythological meanings in interlingual communication, noting difficulties related to cultural lacunae and semantic non-equivalence [2]. Effective intercultural communication involving mythological references requires cultural competence beyond linguistic knowledge.

The study demonstrates the value of integrative methodological approaches combining etymological analysis, semantic investigation, cognitive-linguistic interpretation, and cultural analysis [1], [9], [13]. The comparative framework reveals patterns not evident from examining either language in isolation, contributing to theoretical understanding of linguistic diversity and cultural variation.

7. Conclusion

This comparative linguistic analysis of mythological units in English and Uzbek languages has revealed both universal patterns in mythological conceptualization and distinctive features reflecting specific cultural and linguistic characteristics. The study demonstrates that mythological vocabulary constitutes a significant component of linguistic systems, encoding cultural memory, structuring cognitive representations, and participating actively in contemporary language use.

The analysis identified major categories of mythological units present in both languages, including theonyms, demononyms, cosmonyms, mythoanthronyms, mythozonyms, mythonyms, and mythophytonyms [9]. This parallel classification suggests universal cognitive principles in organizing mythological knowledge. Etymological investigation revealed fundamental differences in source languages and historical processes. English mythological units derive primarily from Greek-Roman and Germanic sources [8], [27]. Uzbek mythological vocabulary exhibits stratification reflecting ancient Turkic, Persian, and Arabic influences [1], [10].

Semantic analysis demonstrated that mythological units in both languages exhibit rich polysemy, metaphorical productivity, and integration into phraseological systems. Both languages employ similar cognitive mechanisms including anthropomorphism, zoomorphism, and metaphorical mapping [5], [12]. However, language-specific features reflect distinctive cultural emphases, with English showing elaboration in vocabulary for mythical creatures and classical deities, while Uzbek demonstrates extensive cosmonymic vocabulary [1].

The cultural-cognitive analysis revealed that mythological vocabulary functions as a repository of cultural memory and marker of ethnic identity. Mythological units encode worldviews, belief systems, and cultural values, maintaining connections to ancestral traditions [19]. The integration into phraseological systems ensures transmission across generations and ongoing relevance in contemporary discourse [13], [23].

The findings have significant theoretical implications for understanding the relationship between language, culture, and cognition. The study supports perspectives

emphasizing both universal cognitive constraints on mythological thinking and the role of cultural variation in shaping linguistic systems. Practical implications emerge for translation studies, intercultural communication, and language teaching. The analysis demonstrates that mythological units often lack direct equivalents across languages due to culture-specific associations [2].

This research contributes to scholarship on cultural linguistics, ethnolinguistics, and comparative mythology. By providing systematic comparative analysis of mythological units in English and Uzbek—languages representing distinct linguistic families and cultural traditions—the study advances understanding of linguistic diversity and the role of mythology in shaping linguistic worldviews. Future research directions include expanding scope to more comprehensive inventories, examining additional language pairs to identify broader typological patterns, and conducting empirical studies of how contemporary speakers understand and use mythological vocabulary.

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