METAPHOR TRANSFER IN ENGLISH–UZBEK TRANSLATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS HEADLINES: STRATEGIES AND PRAGMATIC SHIFTS

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Received: 03.02.2026
Revised: 04.02.2026
Accepted: 05.02.2026

Key words:
Metaphor transfer, environmental news headlines, English–Uzbek translation, translation strategies, pragmatic shifts, cognitive metaphor, media discourse, environmental communication.

Abstract. This thesis investigates the transfer of metaphors in the English–Uzbek translation of environmental news headlines, with particular attention to translation strategies and pragmatic shifts. Environmental headlines frequently rely on metaphors to compress complex ecological issues into concise and persuasive messages. However, differences in linguistic structure, cultural background, and pragmatic conventions between English and Uzbek often result in shifts during translation. The study is based on a comparative analysis of English environmental news headlines and their Uzbek translations, employing cognitive metaphor theory and translation-oriented discourse analysis. The findings show that translators use various strategies, including metaphor preservation, substitution, explicitation, and omission. These strategies frequently lead to pragmatic shifts that influence the evaluative tone, emotional intensity, and communicative intent of the translated headlines. The research underscores the role of cultural and pragmatic factors in metaphor transfer and highlights the need for functional equivalence rather than literal reproduction. The results contribute to metaphor studies, translation theory, and environmental media discourse by offering insights into how metaphorical meaning is reshaped in cross-linguistic headline translation.

Introduction. In recent decades, environmental issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and sustainable development have become central topics in global media discourse. News media play a crucial role in shaping public awareness and attitudes toward these issues, particularly through headlines, which function as the primary point of contact between the text and the reader. Environmental news headlines are designed to be concise, attention-grabbing, and persuasive, often relying heavily on metaphorical language to compress complex scientific and political information into a limited textual space.

Metaphors in environmental headlines are not merely stylistic ornaments; they serve as powerful cognitive and pragmatic tools that frame ecological problems in specific ways. Conceptual metaphors such as CLIMATE CHANGE AS WAR, NATURE AS A PATIENT, or ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS AS A DISASTER influence how readers perceive urgency, responsibility, and possible solutions. By activating familiar conceptual domains, metaphors guide interpretation and emotional response, making them especially effective in headline discourse.

When environmental news headlines are translated from English into Uzbek, metaphor transfer becomes a challenging task. English and Uzbek differ not only in linguistic structure but also in cultural models, media conventions, and pragmatic norms. A metaphor that is highly conventional and persuasive in English media may sound unnatural, overly dramatic, or pragmatically inappropriate in Uzbek. As a result, translators often modify metaphorical expressions, leading to pragmatic shifts that affect tone, emphasis, and communicative intent.

Previous research in cognitive linguistics and translation studies has extensively examined metaphor use in discourse and its cross-linguistic variation. However, relatively little attention has been paid to the translation of metaphors in environmental news headlines, particularly in the English–Uzbek language pair. Existing studies tend to focus on literary translation or general news discourse, leaving headline translation underexplored despite its high pragmatic impact and communicative significance.

This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing how metaphors are transferred in the English–Uzbek translation of environmental news headlines. The research focuses on identifying dominant metaphor types, examining translation strategies employed by translators, and analyzing pragmatic shifts that occur during the translation process. By adopting a corpus-based and contrastive approach grounded in cognitive metaphor theory, the study seeks to reveal how metaphorical meaning is preserved, transformed, or reduced in cross-linguistic media communication. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to translation studies, metaphor theory, and environmental communication by offering insights into the interaction between metaphor, pragmatics, and culture in headline translation. Moreover, the study provides practical implications for translators, journalists, and media professionals involved in the translation and localization of environmental news, emphasizing the importance of functional and pragmatic equivalence over literal accuracy.

Literature Review. The study of metaphor has long occupied a central position in linguistics, cognitive science, and translation studies. Early rhetorical approaches viewed metaphor primarily as a stylistic or ornamental device. However, the seminal work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) revolutionized metaphor research by introducing the concept of metaphor as a fundamental cognitive mechanism through which humans conceptualize abstract experiences. Their theory of conceptual metaphor has since provided a theoretical foundation for analyzing metaphor use across languages, genres, and cultures, including media and environmental discourse.

Subsequent research in cognitive linguistics has expanded this framework, emphasizing the role of metaphor in discourse construction and social meaning-making. Kövecses (2010) highlights that metaphor usage is strongly influenced by cultural models, social context, and communicative goals. This perspective is particularly relevant to environmental discourse, where metaphors shape public understanding of complex ecological phenomena such as climate change, pollution, and sustainability.

Environmental discourse has received increasing scholarly attention in recent years. Studies by Charteris-Black (2011) and Nerlich et al. (2010) demonstrate that metaphors in environmental communication are ideologically loaded and pragmatically motivated. WAR, DISASTER, and MEDICAL metaphors, for instance, frame environmental problems as urgent threats requiring immediate action. These metaphorical frames influence not only public perception but also policy discourse and media agendas.

Within media studies, headlines represent a unique and highly condensed form of discourse. According to Bell (1991) and Dor (2003), headlines serve both informational and persuasive functions, combining semantic compression with pragmatic impact. Metaphors in headlines intensify emotional appeal and guide reader interpretation within a limited textual space. Semino (2008) argues that metaphor usage in headlines is often more conventionalized yet pragmatically strategic than in longer news texts, making their translation particularly complex.

Corpus-based approaches have significantly enriched metaphor and translation research. Charteris-Black (2004) and Steen et al. (2010) demonstrate how systematic corpus analysis allows researchers to identify metaphor patterns, frequency, and variation across genres and languages. In the context of translation, corpus-based studies enable the comparison of source texts and target texts, revealing shifts in metaphor usage and pragmatic orientation.

Despite extensive research on metaphor and translation, studies focusing on environmental news headline translation remain limited, particularly in less-studied language pairs such as English–Uzbek. Existing research on Uzbek translation has primarily addressed literary texts or general journalistic discourse, with little attention paid to metaphor transfer and pragmatic shifts in headlines. This gap underscores the need for a focused investigation into how ecological metaphors are translated and adapted for Uzbek media audiences. In summary, previous literature establishes the cognitive, cultural, and pragmatic significance of metaphors in environmental discourse and highlights the complexity of metaphor translation. However, the intersection of environmental metaphors, headline discourse, and English–Uzbek translation remains underexplored. This study builds on cognitive metaphor theory, media discourse analysis, and translation studies to provide a comprehensive examination of metaphor transfer strategies and pragmatic shifts in environmental news headlines.

Discussion. The analysis of English environmental news headlines and their Uzbek translations reveals that metaphor transfer is a complex and pragmatically

sensitive process rather than a straightforward linguistic substitution. The findings confirm that metaphors in headlines function as cognitive, evaluative, and persuasive tools, and their translation often results in pragmatic shifts that reshape meaning in the target language.

Metaphor Transfer Strategies. The study demonstrates that translators employ a range of strategies when dealing with metaphors in environmental news headlines. Metaphor preservation is observed mainly in cases where the source metaphor is culturally familiar and conceptually accessible to Uzbek readers, such as WAR or DISASTER metaphors. Preserving these metaphors allows translators to maintain the urgency and emotional intensity of the original headline. However, metaphor substitution and explicitation are more frequently used when English metaphors are abstract, technologically oriented, or culturally specific. For instance, MACHINE or SYSTEM metaphors are often replaced with more concrete or explanatory expressions in Uzbek to ensure clarity and readability. This shift reflects a preference for pragmatic effectiveness over strict semantic equivalence. Metaphor omission, although less frequent, occurs in cases where metaphorical expressions may sound unnatural, overly dramatic, or pragmatically inappropriate in Uzbek media discourse. Such omissions reduce rhetorical impact but increase informational transparency, aligning the headline with local journalistic norms.

Pragmatic Shifts in Translation. One of the most significant findings of this study is the presence of pragmatic shifts resulting from metaphor transfer. These shifts affect several discourse dimensions, including emotional tone, evaluative stance, and persuasive force. English headlines often employ strong metaphors to dramatize environmental issues and provoke immediate emotional responses. In Uzbek translations, this dramatization is frequently softened, resulting in a more neutral or informative tone. These pragmatic shifts are not necessarily translation losses; rather, they reflect adaptive strategies aimed at achieving functional equivalence. Translators adjust metaphorical framing to meet the expectations, cultural values, and interpretative conventions of the target audience. This supports the view that headline translation prioritizes communicative intent and audience reception over literal metaphor reproduction.

Cultural and Cognitive Factors. The contrastive analysis highlights the influence of cultural and cognitive models on metaphor usage and translation. English media discourse tends to conceptualize environmental problems as conflicts or crises requiring intervention, while Uzbek discourse often favors metaphors associated with care, balance, and resource management. These differences shape translation choices and explain why certain metaphors are transformed or reinterpreted. From a cognitive perspective, shared conceptual metaphors facilitate metaphor transfer, whereas culture-specific mappings require adaptation. Translators act as mediators who negotiate between these conceptual systems, ensuring that metaphorical meaning remains accessible and pragmatically appropriate.

Implications for Translation and Media Studies. The findings underscore the importance of pragmatic competence and cultural awareness in translating

environmental news headlines. Translators must evaluate not only metaphorical meaning but also its potential impact on readers. In environmental communication, where headlines play a key role in shaping public perception and engagement, inappropriate metaphor transfer may distort urgency, responsibility, or risk perception. Overall, this study demonstrates that metaphor transfer in English–Uzbek environmental news headlines is a dynamic process involving strategic choices and pragmatic adjustments. These results contribute to translation studies by highlighting the role of pragmatics in metaphor translation and to media discourse studies by revealing how metaphorical framing is reshaped across languages and cultures

Conclusion. This study examined the transfer of metaphors in the English–Uzbek translation of environmental news headlines with a focus on translation strategies and pragmatic shifts. The findings confirm that metaphors in headlines function not only as linguistic devices but also as cognitive and pragmatic tools that frame environmental issues, influence emotional response, and guide reader interpretation. The analysis revealed that metaphor preservation, substitution, explicitation, and omission are the primary strategies employed by translators. Metaphor preservation is typically used when conceptual mappings are culturally shared and pragmatically effective in the target language, particularly in the case of WAR and DISASTER metaphors. In contrast, more abstract or technologically oriented metaphors often undergo substitution or explicitation to enhance clarity and cultural acceptability in Uzbek media discourse. A key outcome of the study is the identification of pragmatic shifts resulting from metaphor transfer. These shifts affect evaluative tone, emotional intensity, and persuasive force, often leading to a reduction of dramatization in the target headlines. Such changes should not be viewed solely as translation loss but rather as adaptive strategies aimed at achieving functional and communicative equivalence. Overall, the study highlights the importance of cultural awareness and pragmatic sensitivity in headline translation. By demonstrating how metaphorical meaning is reshaped across languages, this research contributes to cognitive metaphor theory, translation studies, and environmental media discourse. The findings also offer practical insights for translators and journalists involved in the localization of environmental news, emphasizing the need to balance metaphorical impact with clarity and audience expectations.

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