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A multilayer semantic-cognitive interpretation of adjective combinability and ethnocultural stereotypes in structurally different languages

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Abstract. The article investigates adjective combinability and ethnocultural stereotypes in English, Russian, and Uzbek from semantic, cognitive, and linguocultural perspectives. The study demonstrates that adjective semantics represents a multilayer conceptual system connected with perception, evaluation, discourse, and national worldview. Particular attention is paid to phraseological units and metaphorical constructions reflecting collective cultural consciousness. The research proposes a multilayer semantic-cognitive model explaining how adjective meaning develops from semantic nucleus toward conceptual, pragmatic, evaluative, and phraseological realization. The findings indicate that adjective semantics is shaped simultaneously by universal cognitive mechanisms and national-cultural specificity.

Key words: adjective semantics, cognitive linguistics, ethnocultural stereotypes, conceptual metaphor, semantic transformation, phraseology, linguistic worldview, pragmatics

Аннотация. В статье исследуются сочетаемость прилагательных и этнокультурные стереотипы в английском, русском и узбекском языках с семантической, когнитивной и лингвокультурологической точек зрения. Исследование показывает, что семантика прилагательных представляет собой многослойную концептуальную систему, связанную с восприятием, оценкой, дискурсом и национальной картиной мира. Особое внимание уделяется фразеологизмам и метафорическим конструкциям, отражающим коллективное культурное сознание. В работе предлагается многослойная семантико-когнитивная модель, объясняющая развитие значения прилагательных от семантического ядра к концептуальной, прагматической и фразеологической реализации.

Ключевые слова: семантика прилагательных, когнитивная лингвистика, этнокультурные стереотипы, концептуальная метафора, семантическая трансформация, фразеология, языковая картина мира, прагматика

Annotatsiya. Mazkur maqolada ingliz, rus va o‘zbek tillarida sifatlar birikuvchanligi hamda etnomadaniy stereotiplar semantik, kognitiv va lingvomadaniy nuqtayi nazardan tadqiq etiladi. Tadqiqot natijalari sifat semantikasi idrok, baholash, diskurs va milliy dunyoqarash bilan bog‘liq bo‘lgan ko‘p qatlamli konseptual tizim ekanligini ko‘rsatadi. Maqolada frazeologik birliklar va metaforik konstruksiyalar orqali jamoaviy madaniy ongning ifodalanishi tahlil qilinadi. Shuningdek, sifat ma’nosining semantik yadrodan konseptual, pragmatik va frazeologik realizatsiyagacha rivojlanishini tushuntiruvchi ko‘p qatlamli semantik-kognitiv model taklif etiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: sifat semantikasi, kognitiv lingvistika, etnomadaniy stereotiplar, konseptual metafora, semantik transformatsiya, frazeologiya, til manzarasi, pragmatika

Introduction. In contemporary linguistic science, language is conceptualized not solely as a semiotic system for interpersonal communication but as a multifaceted cognitive-cultural construct that externalizes fundamental mechanisms of human conceptualization, collective memory, and worldview formation. Within this paradigm, adjective semantics occupies a privileged position, actively mediating categorization, axiological evaluation, affective modulation, and conceptual schematization. Empirical investigations into adjectival combinability demonstrate that adjectives transcend their conventional

status as grammatical adjuncts. Instead, they function as repositories of sedimented collective experience, ethnocultural stereotypes, and national-psychological archetypes. Stabilized adjective-noun collocations and phraseological units thus constitute linguistically crystallized cultural models deeply entrenched in the collective consciousness.

Drawing on cognitive linguistics, lexical meaning is understood as an emergent phenomenon arising from the dynamic interaction among perceptual grounding, conceptual blending, embodied simulation, and pragmatic negotiation in discourse. Consequently, the semantic architecture of adjectives resists reductionist analysis confined to isolated lexical or morphosyntactic levels. A comprehensive account necessitates a multilayered integrative framework encompassing cognitive, pragmatic, and linguocultural dimensions. The theoretical and empirical stakes of such inquiry are particularly salient in contrastive studies of typologically divergent languages such as English, Russian, and Uzbek. Although certain semantic transformations are underpinned by universal cognitive principles (e.g., prototype theory, conceptual metaphor, and image-schema projection), their surface realizations and collocational preferences are profoundly modulated by language-specific cultural ontologies and ethnocognitive worldviews. The primary objective of this article is to conduct a fine-grained semantic-cognitive analysis of adjective combinability and associated ethnocultural stereotypes, culminating in the proposal of a multilayered integrative semantic-cognitive model that elucidates the mechanisms underlying the formation, entrenchment, and cross-linguistic variation of adjectival meaning.

Literature review. In modern cognitive linguistics, language is conceptualized as a dynamic cognitive-cultural apparatus that manifests embodied perception, conceptual blending, and the construction of shared worldviews, thereby positioning adjective semantics as a key area of scholarly investigation. Rather than serving merely as syntactic adjuncts, adjectives play an instrumental role in categorization processes, scalar axiological judgments, affective framing, and schematic organization. This is substantiated by usage-based approaches that highlight their contribution to construal mechanisms, including profiling, scanning, and perspectivization. Frännhag systematically outlines the interpretive operations of English adjectives via material, mapping, and semantic dimensions, demonstrating their capacity to support kind identification, element specification, and identity assignment through prototype-driven radial networks and image-schematic mappings. Building upon this foundation, Hamawand applies corpus-informed cognitive semantics to examine suffixal competition in adjective formation (such as -ic versus -ical), uncovering meaning distinctions grounded in experiential bases, conceptual metaphor, and non-compositional structures as opposed to purely syntactic rules. In the domain of computational semantics, Raskin and Nirenburg propose a microtheory that prioritizes scalar properties, encyclopedic knowledge integration, and hierarchical feature organization, thereby contesting Vendler's traditional taxonomy through an emphasis on semantic primitives over distributional patterns. The phenomenon of adjectival combinability, evident in conventionalized collocations and phraseological constructions, sheds light on the entrenchment of ethnocultural stereotypes in collective cognition. These fixed adjective-noun combinations function as linguistically encoded cultural models, retaining imprints of historical experiences, environmental interactions, and sociopsychological patterns, in alignment with frame-semantic and script-theoretic perspectives on lexical meaning.

Contrastive and cross-linguistic research emphasizes the coexistence of universal cognitive principles and significant ethnocultural variations across typologically distinct languages including English, Russian, and Uzbek. Although prototype theory, conceptual blending and embodied simulation underpin general mechanisms of semantic extension and collocational patterning, surface manifestations differ substantially owing to structural distinctions: English displays considerable positional versatility and zero-conversion, Russian imposes agreement requirements in gender, number, and case through intricate inflectional systems, while Uzbek employs agglutinative morphology (e.g., suffixes such as -li, -siz, -cha) integrated with Turkic-style compounding. Analyses of phraseological inventories and collocational behaviors disclose culture-specific idiomatic preferences—English leaning toward precision-driven fixed phrases, Russian toward metaphorically

rich expressivity, and Uzbek toward communal and relational conceptualizations informed by Central Asian cultural frameworks—thereby illustrating the interplay between adjectival semantics and national cognitive models. The integration of ethnocultural stereotypes into adjectival semantics has been critically examined via sociocognitive and discourse-oriented methodologies, revealing how evaluative attributes convey attributional biases, collective attitudes, and culturally conditioned perceptual schemas influenced by historical discourses and sociocultural frames. Investigations into color adjectives, intensifiers, and emotional qualifiers across media and literary corpora affirm both cross-linguistic diversity in English, Russian, and Uzbek contexts and the underlying role of embodied cognition and cultural embodiment. Nonetheless, existing scholarship identifies a notable deficiency in multilayered integrative models that effectively unify lexical semantics, cognitive mechanisms, pragmatic dynamics, and intercultural differences within a coherent theoretical structure. While frameworks inspired by lexical concepts and cognitive models theory, dynamic systems perspectives, and corpus-based construction grammar provide valuable groundwork, fully elaborated models dedicated to adjective combinability in triadic English-Russian-Uzbek comparisons continue to be insufficiently developed.

Overall, the body of research reviewed here confirms that adjectival meaning arises from the convergence of pan-human cognitive processes and culturally particular ontologies, thereby calling for detailed semantic-cognitive scrutiny to foster more sophisticated integrative models. The current study aims to address this gap through the formulation of a multilayer semantic-cognitive model supported by empirical cross-linguistic evidence.

Research methodology. The present study employs an integrative qualitative-comparative research design grounded in cognitive linguistics, ethnolinguistics, semantic theory, and pragmatics in order to investigate adjective combinability and ethnocultural stereotypes in English, Russian, and Uzbek. The methodological framework is constructed within the paradigm of contemporary cognitive-semantic linguistics, which interprets lexical meaning as a dynamic phenomenon emerging through the interaction of conceptualization, embodied experience, discourse context, and cultural cognition. The empirical corpus of the study consists of adjective-noun collocations, phraseological units, metaphorical constructions, and evaluative expressions extracted from English, Russian, and Uzbek literary texts, publicistic discourse, phraseological dictionaries, explanatory lexicographic sources, and contemporary media materials. The multilingual dataset was selected according to semantic relevance, frequency of usage, metaphorical productivity, and ethnocultural markedness. Particular attention was devoted to stable adjectival constructions reflecting collective cultural models and national stereotypes.

Methodologically, the study combines several complementary analytical approaches. First, the research applies cognitive-semantic analysis in order to identify the conceptual mechanisms underlying adjective meaning formation and semantic extension. Within this framework, adjectival semantics is interpreted through prototype theory, conceptual categorization, image-schema projection, and conceptual metaphor theory. The study particularly relies on the assumption that many abstract adjectival meanings emerge through embodied perceptual experience and later undergo metaphorical reinterpretation in discourse. Second, the research employs conceptual metaphor analysis to examine how physical, perceptual, and sensory experiences motivate abstract semantic structures. For example, semantic transformations observed in constructions such as bright future, heavy heart, white lie, and strong argument are analyzed through conceptual chains linking perceptual domains with evaluative and emotional meanings. The analysis demonstrates that metaphorical extension constitutes one of the principal mechanisms of adjective semantic development across the investigated languages. Third, the article utilizes a comparative-typological approach aimed at identifying both universal cognitive patterns and language-specific ethnocultural distinctions in adjective combinability. English, Russian, and Uzbek were selected due to their typological divergence and distinct linguistic structures. English predominantly demonstrates analytical and positional flexibility in adjective usage; Russian relies on inflectional agreement systems involving gender, number, and case; Uzbek exhibits agglutinative derivational patterns and Turkic-style attributive structures. Comparative analysis enables the identification of shared cognitive models alongside culturally conditioned semantic variation. The

research additionally incorporates linguocultural analysis, which focuses on adjective constructions as linguistic manifestations of national mentality and collective cultural consciousness. Within this framework, phraseological units and evaluative collocations are interpreted as carriers of ethnocultural stereotypes, social values, and historically entrenched conceptual models. This approach allows the study to examine how language preserves and transmits culturally specific perceptions of reality. From a pragmatic perspective, the study applies contextual-discursive analysis in order to investigate the role of communicative context in semantic interpretation. Since adjectives are highly context-sensitive lexical units, their semantic realization frequently changes depending on discourse conditions, speaker intention, evaluative orientation, and sociocultural environment. Thus, the same adjective may acquire distinct connotative and pragmatic meanings in different communicative situations. An important methodological contribution of the article is the development of a multilayer semantic-cognitive model of adjective semantics. The proposed model integrates six interconnected analytical components:

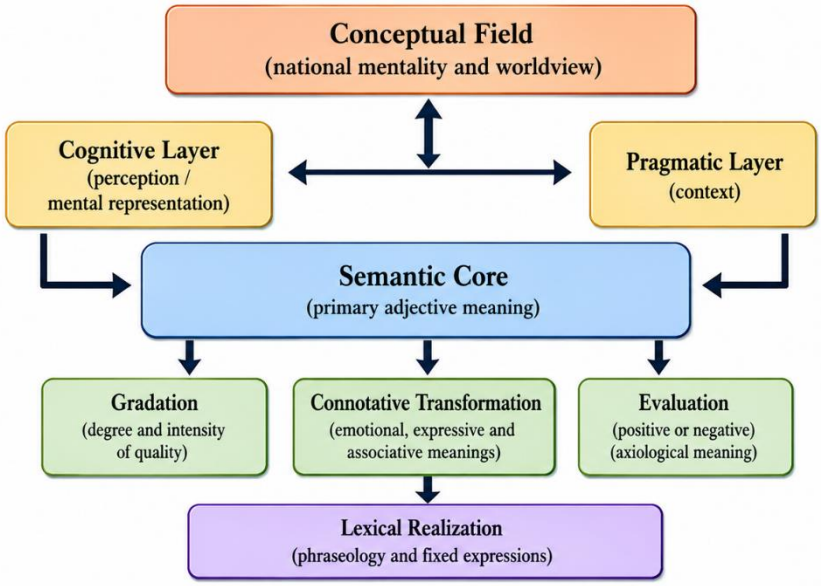


Figure 1. Multilayer semantic-cognitive model of adjective meaning formation

This model was constructed through inductive generalization of cross-linguistic semantic data and functions as an integrative explanatory framework for analyzing adjective meaning formation and semantic transformation. The model allows adjective semantics to be interpreted not as an isolated lexical phenomenon, but as a multidimensional interaction between cognition, discourse, evaluation, and ethnocultural worldview. The reliability of the research is ensured through triangulation of semantic, cognitive, comparative, and linguocultural methods. Cross-linguistic comparison and contextual verification of adjective constructions further contribute to the validity of the analytical conclusions. The interdisciplinary methodological design enables a comprehensive examination of adjective combinability as both a linguistic and cognitive-cultural phenomenon.

Analysis and results. A productive example from everyday communication that effectively illustrates the proposed multilayer semantic-cognitive model is the phraseological construction *warm welcome*. This expression is widely used in daily discourse and demonstrates how adjective semantics develops from physical perception toward abstract interpersonal and cultural meaning.

At the level of the semantic core, the adjective *warm* primarily denotes moderate or pleasant physical temperature. Its original meaning belongs to the domain of tactile sensory perception. Within the cognitive layer, warmth is experientially associated with physical comfort, safety, protection, and emotional stability. Human cognition systematically interprets positive interpersonal relations through bodily experience. As a result, physical warmth becomes cognitively connected with friendliness and emotional closeness. At the level of the conceptual field, many linguistic cultures conceptualize

positive social interaction through temperature metaphors. Consequently, the adjective undergoes metaphorical reinterpretation according to the following conceptual trajectory:

WARMTH → COMFORT → SAFETY → EMOTIONAL CLOSENESS → FRIENDLINESS.

The cross-linguistic recurrence of this metaphor demonstrates that interpersonal relations are frequently conceptualized through embodied sensory experience.

The pragmatic layer reveals that adjective meaning changes depending on communicative context. In literal usage, *warm* refers to physical temperature (*warm water*, *warm weather*). However, within interpersonal discourse it functions metaphorically, expressing hospitality, kindness, and positive social attitude.

The process of connotative transformation plays a central role in the semantic development of the expression. The adjective gradually loses direct reference to physical temperature and acquires emotional and evaluative meaning. Warmth becomes associated not with tactile sensation but with sincerity and emotional openness.

Simultaneously, the phraseological unit performs an evaluative function because it encodes positive axiological meaning. The expression not only describes social interaction but also positively evaluates the communicative behavior of the participants.

At the stage of lexical realization, the construction becomes fixed as a stable phraseological unit frequently used in everyday communication, media discourse, public speaking, and intercultural interaction. Through repeated usage, the expression becomes part of collective linguistic consciousness and functions as a culturally recognizable communicative formula. The functioning of the phraseological unit can be observed in authentic discourse examples:

"The guests received a warm welcome from the local community."
"She thanked everyone for the warm welcome and support."
"Visitors are always given a warm welcome at the hotel."

These examples demonstrate that the adjective *warm* no longer refers to physical temperature. Instead, it functions as a conventionalized evaluative marker expressing friendliness, hospitality, emotional openness, and positive interpersonal relations.

Thus, the phraseological unit *warm welcome* clearly demonstrates how adjective semantics emerges through the interaction of perception, cognition, metaphorical conceptualization, pragmatics, and cultural evaluation within the framework of the proposed multilayer semantic-cognitive model.

Conclusion. The present study has demonstrated that adjective combinability constitutes a multidimensional semantic and cognitive phenomenon shaped by the interaction of perceptual experience, conceptual metaphor, pragmatics, evaluation, and ethnocultural worldview. The comparative analysis of English, Russian, and Uzbek adjective constructions and phraseological units confirms that adjective semantics extends far beyond its primary denotative function and actively participates in the formation of culturally marked conceptual structures. The findings reveal that phraseological units such as *warm welcome*, *blind loyalty*, *heavy heart*, and *bright future* emerge through systematic conceptual transformations grounded in embodied cognition. In these constructions, perceptual features including temperature, weight, light, and vision are metaphorically projected onto emotional, ethical, and social domains. Such semantic development reflects both universal cognitive mechanisms and language-specific cultural interpretations.

A major contribution of the study is the proposed multilayer semantic-cognitive model, which integrates semantic nucleus, conceptual field, cognitive layer, pragmatic layer, gradation, connotative transformation, evaluation, and lexical realization into a unified analytical framework. The model demonstrates that adjective meaning formation is dynamic and hierarchical, developing from primary sensory perception toward abstract conceptual and evaluative interpretation fixed in discourse and phraseology. The research further confirms that phraseological adjective constructions function as repositories of collective cultural memory and ethnocultural stereotypes. Their semantic stability reflects the conventionalization of culturally significant conceptual models within linguistic consciousness. Consequently, adjective semantics should be interpreted not only as a lexical or

grammatical category, but also as a linguocognitive and linguocultural construct embedded within communicative practice.

Future research may expand the present framework through corpus-based quantitative analysis, discourse-pragmatic investigation of evaluative adjective constructions, and computational modeling of semantic transformation across typologically different languages.

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