eISSN: 2229-3213 pISSN: 2229-3205
The Journal of Applied Science and Social Science
Volume 16,Issue 06 June, 2026

# COGNITIVE-SEMANTIC DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE CONCEPTS OF "LOVE" AND "LOVE" IN ZEBO MIRZO'S LYRICS

**Niyozova Hulkar Jumaqul qizi**
2nd year doctoral student at Navoi State University
E-mail: hulkarniyozova01@gmail.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0002-1672-8146

**Abstract.** This article examines the cognitive-semantic features of the concepts “sevgi” (love/affection) and “muhabbat” (deep love) in the poetry of the contemporary Uzbek poetess Zebo Mirzo. The study is based on the premise that although these two concepts are often used as synonyms in everyday language, they represent different conceptual and emotional structures in poetic discourse. Through cognitive-semantic analysis, the article identifies the conceptual fields, metaphorical models, symbolic representations, and emotional associations related to “sevgi” and “muhabbat” in Zebo Mirzo’s lyrics. The analysis demonstrates that “sevgi” is frequently associated with personal feelings, emotional attachment, intimacy, and individual experience, whereas “muhabbat” is represented as a broader spiritual, existential, and sacred phenomenon. The poetess’s lyrical worldview reveals a gradual transformation of individual affection into a universal and philosophical understanding of love.

**Keywords:** cognitive linguistics, cognitive semantics, concept, sevgi, muhabbat, Zebo Mirzo, poetic discourse, conceptual metaphor, lyrical worldview, Uzbek poetry.

**Introduction.** One of the important directions of modern linguistics is the study of concepts as units reflecting human cognition, culture, and language. Cognitive linguistics considers language not only as a communication tool but also as a means of conceptualizing reality. In this regard, literary texts provide a rich source for investigating the linguistic representation of emotions and values.

Among emotional concepts, “sevgi” and “muhabbat” occupy a special place in Uzbek linguistic culture. Although both words denote positive emotional relationships, they differ in their semantic volume, cultural connotations, and conceptual structures. In poetic discourse, these distinctions become particularly evident [1].

The poetry of Zebo Mirzo is characterized by emotional depth, lyrical sincerity, and symbolic imagery. Love, longing, devotion, separation, and spiritual attachment constitute the central themes of her poetic universe. Therefore, her lyrics provide valuable material for examining how the concepts “sevgi” and “muhabbat” are cognitively structured and artistically represented. Studies of Zebo Mirzo’s poetry emphasize the uniqueness of her lyrical persona and emotional expression.

**Cognitive-semantic analysis of the concepts.** From a cognitive perspective, “sevgi” represents an emotional-cognitive structure associated with affection, attachment, care, and emotional closeness. In Zebo Mirzo’s poetry, this concept is frequently connected with individual experience and personal emotions.

The conceptual field of “sevgi” includes the following semantic components:

- Emotional attachment;
- Tenderness and affection;
- Longing for the beloved;
- Personal happiness;
- Intimacy and trust;

- Emotional vulnerability.

Within the poet's lyrical discourse, "sevgi" often appears through images of spring, flowers, rain, dreams, and memories. Such imagery creates a conceptual metaphor in which LOVE IS A LIVING ORGANISM or LOVE IS A FLOWER. These metaphors emphasize the fragility and emotional nature of human relationships [2].

The concept of "sevgi" is therefore predominantly anthropocentric, focusing on the individual's inner world and emotional experience.

**The Concept of "Muhabbat"**

Unlike "sevgi," the concept of "muhabbat" occupies a broader semantic space. In Uzbek cultural consciousness, "muhabbat" frequently transcends romantic feelings and acquires spiritual, ethical, and philosophical dimensions.

In Zebo Mirzo's poetry, "muhabbat" is often conceptualized through notions such as:

- Spiritual devotion;
- Self-sacrifice;
- Eternity;
- Faithfulness;
- Moral perfection;
- Sacred connection.

The poet frequently presents "muhabbat" not merely as a feeling between two individuals but as a universal force capable of transforming human existence. In cognitive terms, "muhabbat" functions as a macro-concept encompassing various forms of emotional and spiritual attachment [3].

Its conceptual metaphors include:

- LOVE IS LIGHT;
- LOVE IS A JOURNEY;
- LOVE IS DESTINY;
- LOVE IS SACRIFICE.

These metaphorical structures indicate that "muhabbat" is perceived as a higher value that shapes human identity and worldview.

**Cognitive Distinction Between "Sevgi" and "Muhabbat"**

The cognitive-semantic analysis reveals several important distinctions between the two concepts:

| Semantic Feature | Sevgi | Muhabbat |
|---|---|---|
| Conceptual Scope | Narrower | Broader |
| Emotional Nature | Personal feeling | Spiritual value |
| Dominant Orientation | Individual | Universal |
| Temporal Dimension | Temporary or situational | Eternal and enduring |
| Symbolic Images | Flowers, dreams, memories | Light, destiny, eternity |
| Cognitive Function | Emotional attachment | Existential meaning |

From this perspective, "sevgi" may be viewed as an emotional state, whereas "muhabbat" functions as a comprehensive worldview category.

An important feature of Zebo Mirzo's poetic thinking is the gradual transformation of "sevgi" into "muhabbat." Many lyrical situations begin with personal emotions and eventually develop into philosophical reflections on human existence [4].

This transformation follows several stages:

1. Emotional attraction;

2. Deep personal attachment;
3. Spiritual devotion;
4. Self-transcendence;
5. Universal love.

Such conceptual development reflects the poetess's understanding of human emotional growth and spiritual maturation.

**Research discussion.** The cognitive-semantic analysis of Zebo Mirzo's poetic texts demonstrates that the concepts of sevgi (love, affection) and muhabbat (deep love, devotion) occupy different positions within the poetess's conceptual worldview. Although these lexical units are frequently treated as synonymous in everyday communication, their semantic structures reveal significant differences when examined from a cognitive perspective. The concept of sevgi in Zebo Mirzo's poetry is primarily associated with individual emotional experience. It reflects personal feelings, emotional attachment, tenderness, longing, and the desire for emotional closeness. In many poems, sevgi is represented through images of spring, flowers, rain, birds, dreams, and memories. These images create a semantic field connected with youth, beauty, hope, and emotional sensitivity. Such representations indicate that sevgi functions as a psychological state closely related to human emotions and personal relationships.

The analysis also reveals that sevgi is characterized by a strong subjective dimension. The lyrical heroine often expresses personal feelings, inner conflicts, expectations, and disappointments associated with romantic relationships. Therefore, the concept functions primarily at the level of individual consciousness and emotional perception.

In contrast, the concept of muhabbat possesses a broader semantic and philosophical scope. Unlike sevgi, which often refers to personal affection, muhabbat in Zebo Mirzo's lyrics is associated with spiritual values, devotion, sacrifice, loyalty, and existential meaning. The poetess frequently depicts muhabbat as a force that transcends ordinary human emotions and acquires a universal character. The semantic structure of muhabbat includes such conceptual components as eternity, faithfulness, spiritual purification, self-sacrifice, and moral perfection. These elements demonstrate that muhabbat functions not merely as an emotion but as a worldview category influencing an individual's understanding of life and existence.

A significant cognitive distinction between the two concepts can be observed in their symbolic representation. While sevgi is often expressed through natural imagery such as flowers, rain, spring, and moonlight, muhabbat is represented through symbols of light, sky, destiny, eternity, and spiritual elevation. Such symbolism reflects the deeper philosophical content associated with muhabbat.

Another important finding concerns the hierarchical relationship between the two concepts. In many of Zebo Mirzo's poems, sevgi appears as the initial stage of emotional experience, whereas muhabbat represents its highest form of development. Personal affection gradually transforms into spiritual devotion, suggesting a cognitive progression from individual feeling to universal value. This transformation reflects the poetess's artistic vision of emotional maturity and spiritual growth.

The analysis further demonstrates that cultural factors play a crucial role in shaping the conceptual content of both notions. In Uzbek linguistic culture, muhabbat traditionally carries strong associations with fidelity, respect, moral responsibility, and spiritual harmony. Zebo Mirzo preserves these cultural meanings while simultaneously enriching them through individual artistic interpretation. As a result, the concept becomes both culturally grounded and personally meaningful.

The cognitive-semantic study also indicates that the concepts are interconnected rather than completely separate. Their semantic boundaries often overlap, creating a complex network of emotional and spiritual meanings. Nevertheless, the dominant tendency in Zebo Mirzo's poetry is the differentiation of sevgi as an emotional category and muhabbat as a philosophical and

spiritual phenomenon. Thus, the poetess constructs a multidimensional conceptual model in which human emotions evolve from personal attachment to universal love. Through metaphorical imagery, symbolic associations, and emotional depth, Zebo Mirzo reveals the richness of the Uzbek conceptual sphere related to love and demonstrates the cognitive complexity underlying seemingly synonymous lexical units.

**Conclusion.** The cognitive-semantic analysis of Zebo Mirzo's lyrics demonstrates that the concepts "sevgi" and "muhabbat" represent different levels of emotional and conceptual experience. While "sevgi" is associated primarily with personal affection, emotional intimacy, and individual feelings, "muhabbat" functions as a broader spiritual and philosophical category encompassing devotion, sacrifice, and existential meaning.

The poetess's lyrical worldview reveals a dynamic relationship between these concepts, where personal love gradually transforms into a universal and sacred value. Through metaphorical imagery, symbolic representations, and emotional depth, Zebo Mirzo creates a unique conceptual model of love that reflects both national cultural traditions and individual artistic vision. Therefore, the distinction between "sevgi" and "muhabbat" in Zebo Mirzo's poetry is not merely lexical but cognitive, cultural, and philosophical, revealing different ways of conceptualizing human emotions and relationships.

## References

1. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). Metaphors We Live By. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
2. Langacker, R. W. (1987). Foundations of Cognitive Grammar. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
3. Kubryakova, E. S. (2004). Language and Knowledge. Moscow: Languages of Slavic Culture.
4. Maslova, V. A. (2018). Cognitive Linguistics. Moscow: Akademiya.
5. Safarov, Sh. (2006). Kognitiv tilshunoslik. Toshkent: Fan.
6. Yo'lchiyev, Q. V. "Zebo Mirzo she'rlarida lirik qahramon masalasi." The article discusses the distinctive lyrical hero and artistic worldview in Zebo Mirzo's poetry.
7. Ergasheva, M. "Zebo Mirzo she'riyatida poetik ohangdorlikning rang-barangligi." The study highlights stylistic and poetic features of Zebo Mirzo's lyrics.
8. Quronov, D. Adabiyotshunoslikka kirish. Toshkent: Fan, 2007.
9. Qo'chqorov, Sh. Zamonaviy o'zbek she'riyati va estetik izlanishlar. Toshkent: Akademnashr, 2021.
10. Sulton, I. Adabiyot nazariyasi. Toshkent: O'qituvchi, 2005.