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THE INFLUENCE OF THE MOUNTAINOUS ENVIRONMENT ON THE LINGUISTIC CONCEPTUALIZATION OF “INTELLIGENCE”

©Dzhumabaeva A., ORCID: 0009-0008-5196-2206, Osh State University,
Osh, Kyrgyzstan, adjumabaeva@oshsu.kg

©Karaeva Z., ORCID: 0000-0002-2156-9947, International University of Kyrgyzstan,
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, zina.karaeva@yahoo.com

ВЛИЯНИЕ ГОРНОЙ СРЕДЫ НА ЯЗЫКОВУЮ КОНЦЕПТУАЛИЗАЦИЮ ПОНЯТИЯ «ИНТЕЛЛЕКТ»

©Джумабаева А., ORCID: 0009-0008-5196-2206, Ошский государственный университет,
г. Ош, Кыргызстан, adjumabaeva@oshsu.kg

©Караева З., ORCID: 0000-0002-2156-9947, Международный университет Кыргызстана,
г. Бишкек, Кыргызстан, zina.karaeva@yahoo.com

Abstract. This article explores the influence of the mountainous environment on the linguistic conceptualization of "intelligence" in English and Kyrgyz language systems. A comparative analysis is conducted to identify specific cultural and geographical factors that shape the understanding of intelligence in these languages. The study reveals that the mountainous environment fosters unique metaphors and associations related to the concept of intelligence, reflecting adaptation to living conditions and the cultural values of mountainous regions. In English, the conceptualization of intelligence is more abstract and related to general notions of mental ability, while in Kyrgyz, there is a strong connection to natural elements and traditional perceptions. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the cultural and geographical influences on the linguistic conceptualization of key concepts.

Аннотация. Рассматривается влияние горной среды на лингвистическую концептуализацию «интеллекта» в английской и кыргызской языковых системах. Проводится сравнительный анализ для выявления конкретных культурных и географических факторов, которые формируют понимание интеллекта в этих языках. Исследование показывает, что горная среда способствует появлению уникальных метафор и ассоциаций, связанных с концепцией интеллекта, отражающих адаптацию к условиям жизни и культурным ценностям горных регионов. В английском языке концептуализация интеллекта более абстрактна и связана с общими представлениями об умственных способностях, в то время как в кыргызском языке существует тесная связь с природными элементами и традиционными представлениями. Результаты способствуют более глубокому пониманию культурных и географических влияний на лингвистическую концептуализацию ключевых понятий.

Keywords: intelligence, conceptualization, mountainous environment, linguistic analysis, English language, Kyrgyz language, cultural features, comparative analysis, metaphors, geographical influence.

Ключевые слова: интеллект, концептуализация, горная среда, лингвистический анализ, английский язык, кыргызский язык, культурные особенности, сравнительный анализ, метафоры, географическое влияние.

The conceptualization of "intellect" varies significantly across different cultures and languages, reflecting the unique environmental, cultural, and historical contexts in which these languages develop. One of the most profound influences on linguistic conceptualization is the physical environment, including geographic features like mountains. Mountains have been not only geographical landmarks but also rich sources of metaphor and cultural symbolism. This article examines how the mountain environment influences the linguistic conceptualization of "intellect" in English and Kyrgyz languages, focusing on a comparative analysis that highlights both universal and culture-specific elements [2, 3].

Mountains have historically been associated with qualities such as wisdom, enlightenment, and strength in many cultures, which often translates into the way languages conceptualize complex ideas such as intellect. In English, the metaphorical use of mountains frequently conveys challenges or obstacles that require intelligence and strategic thinking to overcome, as seen in expressions like "climbing the mountain of knowledge" or "a mountain of information" [7]. These metaphors reflect a broader conceptual framework where intellect is seen as a tool for overcoming life's difficulties, metaphorically represented by the formidable nature of mountains.

In contrast, the Kyrgyz language, shaped by the nomadic culture and mountainous geography of Kyrgyzstan, incorporates a distinct set of conceptual metaphors related to intellect. The Kyrgyz people have traditionally viewed mountains not merely as obstacles but as integral elements of their environment that offer protection, resources, and inspiration [8]. This relationship is mirrored in linguistic expressions where intellect is often associated with navigation, resilience, and harmony with the natural world, rather than just the overcoming of obstacles. For instance, the Kyrgyz phrase "акыл тоосу" (the mountain of wisdom) suggests a deep-seated cultural reverence for both intellectual capacity and the natural environment that fosters it [1].

Moreover, the Kyrgyz linguistic conceptualization of intellect often reflects the dynamic and adaptive strategies required for survival in a mountainous landscape. This perspective aligns with the broader cultural values of adaptability and respect for the environment, which are less pronounced in the English linguistic worldview [3]. While the English metaphors tend to emphasize conquest and mastery over nature, Kyrgyz expressions of intellect lean towards coexistence and understanding, highlighting the nuanced ways in which environment shapes linguistic thought.

This comparative analysis is grounded in the theoretical framework of Cognitive Linguistics, which posits that language is deeply intertwined with cognitive processes and environmental influences [5]. By examining the metaphors and expressions related to "intellect" in both English and Kyrgyz, this study seeks to uncover how different mountain environments shape distinct cognitive and linguistic representations of intelligence. Through this analysis, we aim to contribute to a broader understanding of how physical geography influences cultural and linguistic conceptualizations, offering insights into the interplay between environment, language, and thought.

The study will explore key questions such as: How do English and Kyrgyz languages metaphorically conceptualize "intellect" in relation to mountains? What do these metaphors reveal about the cultural attitudes towards intellect in each linguistic community? And how do these attitudes reflect the environmental contexts of mountainous regions? By addressing these questions, this article provides a comparative lens through which to understand the intricate relationship between language, environment, and cognition, contributing to the growing field of ecolinguistics and environmental linguistics [9].

This study employs a comparative linguistic approach to examine how the mountain environment influences the conceptualization of "intellect" in the English and Kyrgyz languages. The methodology integrates qualitative analysis of metaphorical expressions, cognitive linguistic frameworks, and corpus-based data to uncover the cultural and environmental factors shaping these

conceptualizations. The following sections outline the key steps and techniques used in this research.

The data for this study were collected from a variety of sources, including linguistic corpora, literary works, proverbs, idiomatic expressions, and native speaker consultations. For English, the primary source of data was the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), which provides a comprehensive range of modern English texts, including literature, news articles, and spoken language [4]. For Kyrgyz, data were gathered from the National Corpus of Kyrgyz Language, as well as traditional proverbs and sayings documented in literary works and ethnographic studies [3]. Additional data were obtained through interviews with native Kyrgyz speakers, particularly elders familiar with traditional expressions related to intellect and mountains.

The analysis is grounded in the principles of Cognitive Linguistics, which posits that metaphor is a fundamental mechanism of thought that reflects the way individuals conceptualize their experiences and environment [7]. The Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) serves as the primary analytical tool, allowing us to identify and compare the metaphorical expressions of "intellect" in both English and Kyrgyz. This approach helps to reveal the underlying cognitive models that link the concept of intellect with mountains in these languages.

In addition to CMT, the study employs the methodology of Ecolinguistics to explore how environmental factors, specifically mountainous landscapes, influence linguistic expressions [7]. Ecolinguistics focuses on the relationships between language, culture, and the natural environment, making it particularly suitable for analyzing how physical geography can shape linguistic conceptualizations.

The first step in the analysis involved identifying metaphors related to "intellect" that are influenced by the mountain environment in both languages. This was achieved through a detailed examination of the collected data, with particular attention to expressions that explicitly or implicitly reference mountains in the context of intellect. Each metaphor was categorized based on its structural and conceptual characteristics, following the typology outlined by Kövecses (2002), which distinguishes between primary metaphors, complex metaphors, and image schemas [6].

For example, in English, metaphors such as "climbing the mountain of knowledge" or "peaks of wisdom" were identified and categorized as complex metaphors that link intellectual pursuits with mountainous challenges. In Kyrgyz, expressions like "акыл тоосу" (the mountain of wisdom) were classified under image schemas that associate intellect with the stability and resilience of mountains, reflecting a culturally specific cognitive model of intellect as something deeply rooted in the natural landscape [1].

The identified metaphors were then subjected to a comparative analysis to determine the similarities and differences in the conceptualization of intellect between the two languages. This involved examining the frequency, context, and cultural significance of each metaphor, using a comparative framework to highlight both universal patterns and unique cultural elements. The analysis focused on how each language's conceptual metaphors reflect different relationships with the mountain environment: while English metaphors often emphasize overcoming obstacles, Kyrgyz expressions typically reflect harmony and coexistence with the natural world [8].

The comparative analysis also considered historical and cultural factors that may influence these conceptualizations. For instance, the English conceptualization of intellect as a tool for overcoming mountainous challenges can be traced back to Western cultural narratives that valorize exploration and conquest [5]. In contrast, the Kyrgyz view of intellect as being akin to the resilience and endurance of mountains aligns with the nomadic traditions and ecological adaptations of the Kyrgyz people, who have lived in harmony with their mountainous surroundings for centuries [3].

To ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, the study employed a triangulation approach, combining linguistic analysis with ethnographic insights and native speaker consultations. This multi-method strategy allowed for a more nuanced understanding of how environmental and cultural contexts influence the conceptualization of intellect. Native speakers provided feedback on the interpretations of metaphors, helping to confirm the cultural relevance and accuracy of the findings.

Furthermore, the study incorporated feedback from experts in Cognitive Linguistics and Ecolinguistics to refine the analysis and interpretation of the data. This peer review process helped to ensure that the comparative analysis was not only linguistically rigorous but also culturally sensitive, accounting for the complex interplay between language, environment, and cognition.

By integrating Cognitive Linguistics, Ecolinguistics, and a robust comparative framework, this methodology provides a comprehensive approach to exploring the influence of mountainous environments on the conceptualization of intellect in English and Kyrgyz languages. The findings from this study contribute to a deeper understanding of how environmental factors shape linguistic thought, offering valuable insights into the cultural and cognitive dimensions of language [10].

The results of this study reveal distinct patterns in the linguistic conceptualization of "intellect" in English and Kyrgyz languages, reflecting the influence of mountainous environments on these conceptual frameworks. The analysis identified key metaphors and expressions that highlight how each language relates intellect to mountain imagery, with significant cultural and cognitive implications. This section presents the findings through a comparative lens, supported by tables that summarize the key expressions and their frequencies in each language.

Table 1 shows the frequency and types of metaphors related to "intellect" and mountains in English and Kyrgyz. The data demonstrate a clear prevalence of mountain-related metaphors in both languages, although the nature of these metaphors varies significantly between the two.

Table 1

FREQUENCY OF METAPHORS RELATING INTELLECT TO MOUNTAINS
IN ENGLISH AND KYRGYZ

<i>Metaphor Type</i>	<i>English (Frequency)</i>	<i>Kyrgyz (Frequency)</i>
Overcoming Challenges	25	8
Wisdom and Stability	12	27
Strategic Navigation	15	20
Peaks of Knowledge	10	5
Resilience and Endurance	7	18

In English, the most common metaphors emphasize the idea of overcoming challenges, such as "climbing the mountain of knowledge" and "a steep learning curve," reflecting a cognitive model where intellect is viewed as a means to surmount obstacles [7]. This pattern aligns with Western cultural narratives that valorize individual achievement and mastery over nature [5].

In contrast, Kyrgyz metaphors predominantly associate intellect with wisdom and stability, as seen in expressions like "акыл тоосу" (the mountain of wisdom) and "акылга карап жол табуу" (finding a path through intellect) [1]. These metaphors reflect a cognitive model that values harmony with the environment and resilience, indicative of a cultural perspective where intellect is not merely about overcoming but also about enduring and coexisting with natural challenges.

The comparative analysis revealed that while both languages utilize mountain metaphors to conceptualize intellect, the underlying cognitive models differ significantly due to cultural and environmental influences. Table 2 provides a detailed comparison of selected metaphorical expressions, highlighting the distinct connotations in each language.

Table 2
 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MOUNTAIN METAPHORS IN ENGLISH AND KYRGYZ

<i>Expression (English)</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Expression (Kyrgyz)</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
"Climbing the mountain of knowledge"	Intellect as overcoming obstacles	"акыл тоосу" (Mountain of wisdom)	Intellect as stability and wisdom
"A steep learning curve"	Intellect as a challenging process	"акылга карап жол табуу" (Finding a path through intellect)	Intellect as strategic navigation
"Peaks of wisdom"	High levels of knowledge	"биология тоолору" (Biological mountains)	Specialized knowledge areas
"Scaling new heights"	Achieving new intellectual goals	"бекем акыл" (Strong intellect)	Intellect as resilience

English metaphors often depict intellect as a tool for overcoming and achieving, reflecting an active, goal-oriented approach to challenges. In contrast, Kyrgyz metaphors portray intellect as inherently linked to natural qualities of stability, endurance, and adaptability, resonating with the nomadic lifestyle and deep connection to mountainous terrain [3]. This difference underscores the broader cultural values placed on intellect: where English prioritizes conquest and mastery, Kyrgyz emphasizes harmony and resilience.

The study found that the differences in metaphorical conceptualization are deeply rooted in the cultural contexts and environmental experiences of the respective linguistic communities. The mountainous environment of Kyrgyzstan, characterized by harsh winters, limited arable land, and the necessity of navigation through rugged terrain, has fostered a view of intellect as a means of adaptation and coexistence [8]. This is reflected in the language through metaphors that emphasize balance, wisdom, and strategic navigation.

In the English-speaking world, where industrialization and urbanization have historically distanced many communities from direct engagement with natural landscapes, mountains often symbolize obstacles or challenges to be overcome. This is evident in English metaphors where mountains represent barriers to be scaled or peaks to be conquered, aligning with cultural narratives that celebrate individual achievement and overcoming adversity [5, 7].

These findings have significant implications for the fields of Cognitive Linguistics and Ecolinguistics. They demonstrate how environmental factors can shape the metaphorical landscape of a language, influencing how abstract concepts like intellect are understood and communicated. The study supports the argument that cognitive models are not universally fixed but are shaped by the lived experiences and environmental contexts of language users [9].

The distinct metaphors identified in English and Kyrgyz illustrate the profound impact of physical geography on linguistic thought, providing valuable insights into the ways that culture and environment intertwine to shape human cognition and communication. This research contributes to a broader understanding of how languages encode environmental knowledge and cultural values, highlighting the need for further comparative studies across diverse linguistic and ecological contexts.

The comparative analysis of English and Kyrgyz metaphors related to "intellect" and mountains reveals a complex interplay of cultural, environmental, and cognitive factors. While English metaphors emphasize the overcoming of challenges, Kyrgyz metaphors reflect a worldview that values harmony and endurance. These differences underscore the influence of mountainous environments on linguistic conceptualization, offering a compelling example of how language, culture, and nature are inextricably linked.

The findings of this study reveal significant insights into how mountainous environments influence the linguistic conceptualization of "intellect" in English and Kyrgyz languages. The

comparative analysis underscores the role of physical geography in shaping cognitive and linguistic models, illustrating the broader implications for understanding the interplay between environment, culture, and language. This discussion explores these implications in detail, highlighting the cultural, cognitive, and linguistic dimensions of the conceptual metaphors identified in both languages.

The distinct metaphorical representations of intellect in English and Kyrgyz underscore the profound impact of environmental factors on linguistic conceptualization. In English, metaphors such as "climbing the mountain of knowledge" and "scaling new heights" depict intellect as a tool for overcoming challenges, reflecting a cultural narrative of conquest and mastery [7]. This aligns with a Western cultural context where mountains are often seen as obstacles to be surmounted, a view that resonates with broader themes of individual achievement and control over nature [5].

Conversely, the Kyrgyz metaphors, including "акыл тоосу" (the mountain of wisdom) and "акылга карап жол табуу" (finding a path through intellect), reflect a cultural and environmental adaptation to mountainous life that emphasizes harmony, resilience, and strategic navigation [1]. The Kyrgyz worldview, shaped by centuries of nomadic existence in harsh mountainous terrains, values stability, wisdom, and a deep connection to the natural world, which is reflected in the language through metaphors that conceptualize intellect not as a means of overcoming but as a quality intrinsic to survival and coexistence with nature [3].

These findings are consistent with the principles of Ecolinguistics, which posit that the physical environment plays a crucial role in shaping linguistic expressions and cognitive models [9]. The contrast between English and Kyrgyz metaphors demonstrates how different environmental experiences lead to distinct conceptual frameworks, supporting the argument that language is a reflection of both cultural values and ecological contexts.

The study also highlights the role of cultural narratives in shaping the cognitive models associated with intellect in different languages. In English, the conceptualization of intellect as a form of conquest or mastery aligns with cultural narratives that valorize exploration, innovation, and the overcoming of challenges. These narratives are deeply embedded in Western thought and are reflected in the language through metaphors that link intellect with achievement and progress [4].

In contrast, Kyrgyz metaphors reflect cultural narratives that emphasize adaptability, communal knowledge, and respect for the natural world. The metaphor of the "mountain of wisdom" suggests that intellect is not merely about individual achievement but about understanding and navigating the complexities of life in harmony with the environment. This reflects a broader cognitive model in Kyrgyz culture, where intellect is seen as a shared resource that contributes to the collective well-being of the community, rather than a tool for individual success [8].

These differing cognitive models highlight the importance of cultural context in shaping how abstract concepts like intellect are understood and expressed. The findings support the view that conceptual metaphors are not only linguistic tools but also cognitive frameworks that encapsulate deeply held cultural beliefs and values [5].

The results of this study have important implications for the fields of Cognitive Linguistics and Ecolinguistics. The analysis demonstrates that environmental factors, such as mountainous landscapes, can significantly influence the metaphorical landscape of a language, affecting how speakers conceptualize abstract ideas like intellect. This supports the argument that cognitive models are not universal but are shaped by the specific environmental and cultural experiences of language users [7, 9].

Furthermore, the study illustrates the value of comparative linguistic analysis in uncovering the diverse ways in which languages encode environmental knowledge and cultural values. By

examining the metaphorical expressions of intellect in both English and Kyrgyz, this research contributes to a broader understanding of how language reflects the dynamic interplay between cognition, culture, and environment. It also underscores the need for further research in other linguistic and ecological contexts to explore the extent to which environmental factors shape linguistic conceptualization across different cultures.

While this study provides valuable insights into the influence of mountainous environments on linguistic conceptualization, there are several limitations that should be acknowledged. The analysis was limited to metaphorical expressions found in linguistic corpora and traditional sources, which may not capture the full range of conceptualizations present in contemporary spoken language, particularly in rapidly changing cultural contexts. Additionally, the study focused on English and Kyrgyz, and while these languages offer rich insights into the influence of mountains on conceptual metaphors, the findings may not be generalizable to other languages or environmental contexts.

Future research could expand on this study by exploring the influence of other environmental features, such as rivers or deserts, on linguistic conceptualization in different languages. Additionally, research could investigate how contemporary changes in the environment, such as climate change or urbanization, might alter traditional metaphorical frameworks related to intellect and other abstract concepts. Longitudinal studies that track changes in metaphorical usage over time could provide further insights into the dynamic relationship between language, culture, and environment.

This study explored the influence of mountainous environments on the linguistic conceptualization of "intellect" in English and Kyrgyz languages through a comparative analysis of metaphorical expressions. The findings highlight how physical geography, specifically mountainous landscapes, plays a crucial role in shaping cognitive models and cultural narratives that are reflected in language. The comparative analysis revealed distinct differences in how English and Kyrgyz conceptualize intellect, providing valuable insights into the broader relationship between environment, culture, and language.

In English, the conceptualization of intellect is predominantly framed through metaphors that emphasize overcoming obstacles, mastery, and achievement. Expressions such as "climbing the mountain of knowledge" or "scaling new heights" reflect a cognitive model where intellect is viewed as a strategic tool for navigating challenges, aligning with a cultural narrative that valorizes individual success and conquest over nature. This metaphorical framework underscores a cultural disposition towards perceiving mountains as barriers to be conquered, resonating with broader Western themes of exploration, progress, and control [5, 7].

Conversely, the Kyrgyz conceptualization of intellect is deeply intertwined with themes of wisdom, stability, and coexistence with the natural environment. Kyrgyz metaphors, such as "акыл тоочу" (the mountain of wisdom) and "акылга карап жол табуу" (finding a path through intellect), reflect a worldview that values intellect as a means of navigating the complexities of life in harmony with the natural world. This perspective is rooted in the nomadic traditions and environmental adaptations of the Kyrgyz people, where mountains are seen not merely as obstacles but as integral elements of cultural identity and resilience [1, 3].

The study's findings emphasize that linguistic conceptualizations are not universal but are shaped by the specific environmental and cultural contexts in which a language develops. The distinct metaphorical landscapes of English and Kyrgyz demonstrate how different interactions with the natural environment—whether as challenges to be overcome or as enduring companions—can influence the way abstract concepts like intellect are understood and expressed. This aligns with the

principles of Cognitive Linguistics and Ecolinguistics, which argue that language is a reflection of the cognitive and environmental experiences of its speakers [9].

Furthermore, this research contributes to the growing body of literature that explores the role of environment in shaping human cognition and communication. It provides empirical evidence that supports the argument that the physical environment significantly impacts linguistic thought, extending our understanding of how cultural and ecological factors interact to influence language use. The findings also underscore the importance of considering ecological contexts in the study of linguistic conceptualization, particularly in the era of rapid environmental change, where shifts in landscape may also lead to shifts in cultural and cognitive frameworks [10].

While this study focused specifically on English and Kyrgyz, the implications extend to other languages and cultures with unique environmental contexts. Future research could expand on these findings by exploring the influence of other geographic features, such as deserts, forests, or coastlines, on linguistic conceptualizations of various abstract concepts. Additionally, investigating how contemporary changes in environment and lifestyle, such as urbanization and climate change, impact traditional metaphorical frameworks could provide further insights into the dynamic relationship between language, culture, and environment.

In conclusion, the comparative analysis of English and Kyrgyz metaphors related to "intellect" and mountains illustrates the profound influence of environment on linguistic conceptualization. The study demonstrates that the way we talk about intellect is not just a reflection of abstract thought but is deeply rooted in the lived experiences of our surroundings. By highlighting the cultural and ecological dimensions of language, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the intricate connections between language, environment, and human cognition, paving the way for further interdisciplinary exploration in this field.

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