

LITERARY TEXT FROM THE LINGUOPOETIC PERSPECTIVE

ХУДОЖНІЙ ТЕКСТ В АСПЕКТІ ЛІНГВОПОЕТИКИ

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GUNEL BAYRAMOVA

Doctor of Philology, Associate Professor
Azerbaijan University of Languages (Azerbaijan)
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9808-0894>

POTENTIAL OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE
IN ITALIAN AND AZERBAIJANI:
IDIOMATICITY AND SEMIO-COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVES

У статті досліджується семантичний і когнітивний потенціал образної мови в італійській та азербайджанській із порівняльної перспективи, з аналізом універсальних і специфічних для кожної мови особливостей ідіоматичності. Метою дослідження є виявлення семіо-когнітивних моделей образної мови та визначення їхніх подібностей і відмінностей у культурно-історичному контексті, з'ясування того, як ці моделі формуються відповідно до типологічних структур обох мов і, зрештою, вироблення нових теоретичних узагальнень.

Методологія ґрунтується на принципах семіотичного, когнітивного та історико-порівняльного аналізу. Для аналізу застосовуються засади теорії концептуальної метафори, теорії ментальних просторів і концептуального блендингу (Фокон'є та Тернер). Дослідницький матеріал складається переважно з ідіоматичних одиниць, відібраних з італійської літератури (Данте, Петрарка тощо) та азербайджанської класичної поезії (Фізулі, Насімі та інші).

Результати дослідження показують, що в обох мовах образність головним чином вибудовується на концептуальних метафорах («життя = подорож», «емоція = тепло», «труднощі = тягар») та метонімічних моделях. В італійській мові ідіоматичність – тісно пов'язана з риторичною традицією – схильна підкреслювати художнє вираження абстрактних понять, тоді як в азербайджанській вона відображає семантичні прояви давніх тюрксько-міфологічних кодів. Порівняльний аналіз засвідчує, що образні вирази в обох мовах втілюють не лише культурну специфіку, але й універсальні когнітивні структури.

Вперше італійська та азербайджанська мови системно досліджуються у плані образної мови та ідіоматичності через семіо-когнітивні паралелі. Такий підхід дає змогу сформулювати нові теоретичні висновки у сферах лінгвістичної типології, культурної семантики та когнітивного моделювання. Отримані результати сприяють глибшому розумінню образності та ідіоматичності як у романістиці, так і в тюркологічних студіях.

Ключові слова: образна мова, ідіоматичність, семіо-когнітивний підхід, концептуальна метафора, метонімія, риторична та поетична традиція, італійська мова, азербайджанська мова.

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Introduction

Idiomaticity and semio-cognition, as the main components of figurative language, are essential mechanisms that reveal both the structural and conceptual nature of language. Idioms are not merely fixed expressions but also function as cross-cultural semantic encodings and embodiments of cognitive models. They serve as carriers of conceptual metaphors and metonymies that explain abstract concepts in human thought through concrete experiences



[Lakoff, Johnson, 1980; Gibbs, 2014]). From a semiotic perspective, idioms represent cultural codes as part of the sign system, while from a cognitive perspective, they reflect the interpretive activity of the mind. Thus, idiomaticity is defined not only by the fixity of phraseological units but also by their semio-cognitive essence: in the triad of sign—meaning—concept, idioms mark the intersection of language, culture, and thought.

Although metaphor was historically studied as an artistic device of rhetoric and poetics, for a long time it was not regarded as a central cognitive mechanism in linguistics, psychology, or communication studies. With the research of H. Pollio and colleagues [Pollio et al., 1977], metaphor began to be understood not merely as an ornamental figure but as a central mechanism of meaning construction in human cognition. Cognitive research demonstrates that speakers use thousands of metaphorical and idiomatic units in everyday interaction, confirming that figurativity is one of the fundamental structures of human thought. Hence, verbalization—i.e., the transformation of thought into a system of signs—can be seen as a semio-cognitive strategy that translates metaphorical-associative models into phonetic and graphic form [Bayramova, 2022].

According to cognitive linguistics [Lakoff, Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, Szabó, 1996], metaphors and idioms serve the conceptualization of abstract notions through concrete experiences. Gibbs [2014] emphasizes that the meaning of idioms is shaped not only by historical-lexical stability but also by psychological motivation. For this reason, figurative language—metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, simile, and idioms—does not serve merely an aesthetic-poetic function but also reveals the fundamental conceptual mechanisms of human cognition.

Comparative research has uncovered both the universality and local cultural variations of figurative languages [Barcelona, 2000; Kövecses, Benczes, 2010]. For example, conceptual metaphors such as ANGER IS FIRE, EMOTION IS A CONTAINER, and LOVE IS FIRE recur across different languages, though their expression varies in terms of lexical-semantic choices and stylistic nuances. In Italian, figurative expressions often draw on visual and body-related imagery, while in Azerbaijani they are typically rendered through verbs that highlight transformation and intensity. This demonstrates how universal cognitive models pass through cultural-philological filters to produce local forms.

Italian	Azerbaijani
<i>fumare dalle orecchie</i> – “to have smoke coming out of one’s ears”	<i>qazəbdən alışıb-yanmaq</i> – “to burn with anger”

The comparative study of figurativity in Italian and Azerbaijani is, therefore, a fruitful direction. Italian, rooted in an ancient rhetorical tradition (from Dante, Petrarca, and other classics to modern discourse), has developed a rich path of idiomatic-metaphorical models. Azerbaijani, with its agglutinative structure and strong oral-poetic heritage, enriches figurativity through syntactic flexibility and national-cultural codes. Analyzing these parallels reveals not only the intersection of universal and specific aspects in linguistics but also provides insight into the historical-cultural context of figurativity.

Thus, the study of idiomaticity and figurative language in Italian and Azerbaijani highlights the dual nature of figurative cognition: on the one hand, universal conceptual metaphors form the basis of human thought; on the other, local semiotic forms embody the specificity of languages and cultures. This dual perspective demonstrates that fully grasping the complex nature of figurative expressions requires the integration of cognitive linguistics with semiotics.

The relevance and scientific novelty of the article manifest precisely in this integration: Italian and Azerbaijani are, for the first time, systematically compared through semio-cognitive parallels in terms of figurativity. This approach goes beyond phraseological stability and stylistic analysis by uncovering cross-cultural conceptual models, thereby opening new theoretical perspectives at the intersection of Romance and Turkological studies.

Aim and methodology

This study is based on the synthesis of cognitive-semantic, semiotic, and comparative-historical approaches and aims to systematically investigate figurative language using examples from Italian and Azerbaijani. *The aim* of the study is to identify the semio-cognitive models of fig-

urative language and to determine their similarities and differences within a cultural-historical context, to establish how these models are shaped by the typological structures of both languages, and, ultimately, to develop new theoretical generalizations

First, the theoretical framework was defined. The conceptual foundation of the research is the theory of conceptual metaphor proposed by Lakoff and Johnson [1980]. According to this approach, metaphors and idioms serve the conceptualization of abstract domains (emotion, love, social relations, etc.) through concrete domains (fire, container, path, verticality). At the same time, drawing on Umberto Eco's [1976] semiotic approach and Panther & Thornburg's [2003] conceptual-pragmatic model, the study emphasizes the functionality of idioms not only as lexical units but also as carriers of socio-cultural codes. In parallel, explanations of tropes (metaphor, simile, hyperbole) and figures in classical rhetoric (Aristotle, *Poetics*) were taken into account for comparative analysis.

The text corpus was selected purposefully. From the Italian classical tradition, idiomatic and proverbial examples were drawn from Dante (*Divina Commedia*), Petrarch (*Canzoniere*), Ariosto (*Orlando Furioso*), and Manzoni (*I promessi sposi*) (e.g., *cader de la padella ne le brage, ambasciator non porta pena, fuori di sé*, etc.). Azerbaijani classical poetry was represented mainly by Fuzuli, as well as Nasimi, Vagif, and Zakir, with figurative units such as *can vermək* ("to give one's soul/life"), *ayağına düşmək* ("to fall at someone's feet"), and *sinə büryan olmaq* ("to have one's chest roasted with grief") included in the comparative material.

The method of analysis involved a multi-level approach. First, each idiom and poetic phrase was mapped according to the source domain → target domain model. For instance, in the expression *sinə büryan olmaq* ("to have one's chest burned"), the source domain is "fire / heat," while the target domain is "emotional burning." Through this semio-cognitive mapping, the study identified both the commonalities and differences of dominant models (FIRE / HEAT, CONTAINER, JOURNEY, UP / DOWN) in Italian and Azerbaijani texts. Second, parallel comparisons were carried out: semantic correspondences were revealed through examples from Petrarch and Fuzuli, Ariosto and Zakir, Manzoni and Vagif. Third, an intertextual approach was applied to trace the influence of classical cultural codes on figurative language. Finally, the discursive context was considered: in the Italian tradition, idioms are employed as *proverbio* with folkloric and normative functions, while in Azerbaijani poetry they are often associated with Sufism and mystical poetics.

Nevertheless, the scientific novelty of the article lies precisely in the fact that the figurative language material of Italian and Azerbaijani has, for the first time, been comparatively systematized on the basis of a semio-cognitive model.

The Semio-Cognitive Convergence of Idioms in Italian and Azerbaijani Classics

The Models "LOVE = JOURNEY" and "LOVE = FIRE"

Approaches to figurative language have varied throughout history and have been shaped within different scholarly traditions. In traditional literary studies, figurative language has been understood as a collection of stylistic devices such as metaphor, simile, hyperbole, litotes, metonymy, and others, interpreted mainly at the level of aesthetic effect. In Italian literature, the *dolce stil novo* tradition—especially the poetry of Dante and Petrarch—revealed both the aesthetic and the philosophical-cognitive functions of figurative language. Petrarch presents love as "the fire burning within the heart":

"Chi può dir com'egli arde è in picciol foco" ("Who can say how he burns in that small fire") [Petrarch, 1739, p. 134].

This expression relies on the depiction of emotion as fire hidden in a container, forming a hybrid semantic projection in which the models MIND / HEART IS A CONTAINER and EMOTION IS FIRE converge. In Azerbaijani classical poetry, figurative language also functions as an aesthetic device but is distinguished by its philosophical, mystical, and esoteric dimensions.

The works of Fuzuli and Petrarch are particularly noteworthy in this respect, and their comparative semio-cognitive analysis opens new scholarly perspectives. Fuzuli's famous couplet:

Ey Füzuli, qılmazam tərki-təriqi-eşq kim, / Bu fəzilət daxili-əhli-kəmal eylər mənə (“O Fuzuli, I shall never abandon the path of love, / For this virtue makes me one of the people of perfection”) [Fuzuli, 2005, p. 300].

shows that love is conceptualized not only as an emotional state but also as a path of spiritual development and cognition. Here the expression “*tərki-təriqi-eşq*” indicates the decision to choose the path of love and never abandon it. Figuratively, this points to the metaphor LOVE = JOURNEY. The concept of “*təriq*” in classical Eastern poetry symbolizes both external and internal journeys. At the semantic level, the “*path of love*” expresses not merely physical movement but also the process of spiritual perfection; the expression “*əhli-kəmal*” refers to the travelers on this path—those who have reached a stage of spiritual maturity.

From a semiotic perspective, the sign “*path*” carries multiple layers of meaning: at the denotative level, it is simply a trajectory of movement; at the connotative level, the path of love symbolizes a process of spiritual development. Thus, the sign “love = path” functions both as a metaphor and as a semiotic code. Cognitively, in line with Lakoff and Johnson’s [1980] theory of conceptual metaphor, this corresponds to the model LIFE / LOVE IS A JOURNEY. In this mapping, the source domain consists of path, movement, and traveler; the target domain consists of love, spiritual development, and perfection. In this framework, taking the path of love is presented as a prerequisite for inner growth. Cognitively, human experience is structured through the image of a journey: the starting point is entering love, the path continues through encounters with obstacles, and the endpoint is reaching perfection. This semio-cognitive projection clearly shows that Fuzuli saw love not only as an emotional experience but also as the foundation of spiritual maturity.

Petrarch’s *Canzoniere* offers a similar example with deep semantic and cognitive potential:

“Chi può dir com’egli arde è in picciol foco” (“Who can say how he burns in that small fire?!”) [Petrarch, 1739, p. 135].

Here “*arde*” (to burn) does not refer to mere physical burning but to the inner fire of love. The phrase “*picciol foco*” (small fire) highlights the idea that true love’s fire is immeasurably vast and beyond expression. The semiotic center of this line is the sign “*fire*.” At the denotative level, fire means physical burning; at the connotative level, it expresses the intensity of love; at the symbolic level, it represents inner experience, the hidden, inexpressible energy in the human heart. Thus, fire here is not only a metaphor but also a symbol, simultaneously conveying the intensity of love and its ineffability.

Cognitively, this line is grounded in the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS FIRE. The source domain is physical burning, fire, and heat; the target domain is love, inner feeling, and emotional intensity. This mapping shows that the greatness of love cannot be expressed in words: the speaker can only speak of a “small fire,” since the great fire remains hidden in the depths of the heart. What emerges here is the tension between cognitive limitation and the overwhelming force of experience.

Consequently, an intriguing parallel arises between Fuzuli and Petrarch. Both poets depict love through the image of fire, but in different styles.

“Yanan eşq atəşinə atəşi-duzəxdən eyməndir” (“Compared to the burning fire of love, even the fire of hell is frightening”) [Fuzuli, 2005, p. 101].

Fuzuli portrays love as a hyperbolically powerful and destructive flame while Petrarch presents it as an inner burning that cannot be expressed in words. In both cases, love is conceptualized through figurative language as both a semiotic sign and a cognitive metaphor, demonstrating different cultural manifestations of the universal structure LOVE IS FIRE (Fig. 1).

On the left, the “*Love = Journey*” model for Fuzuli is presented, while on the right, the “*Love = Fire*” model for Petrarch is shown. Each is divided into semantic, semiotic, and cognitive levels. At the center, the universal model (LOVE IS FIRE / JOURNEY) that unites both poetic worldviews is displayed. The diagram clearly illustrates how the two poets’ distinct approaches emerge as cultural manifestations nourished by the same root.

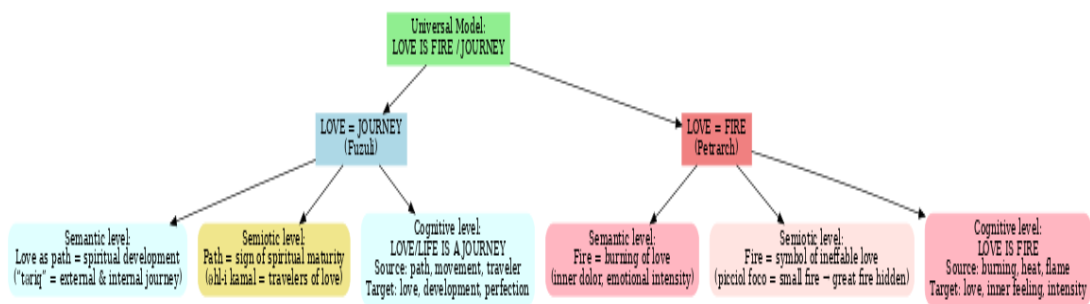


Figure 1. Tree Diagram of the Concept of Love.

The Models “LOVE = DIVINE ILLUMINATION” and “BEAUTY = ANGEL”

If in previous section love was conceptualized through the models “LOVE = JOURNEY” and “LOVE = FIRE,” structured along the scales of movement and heat, the focus here shifts to the ways beauty is represented. In this case, aesthetic depiction transcends purely human boundaries and is charged with divine codes: beauty is conveyed through the image of the angel, the semantics of light, and transcendent overtones. Through these models, “beauty” is constructed not merely as an aesthetic category but as a bearer of sacred value.

The role of figurative language in cognition can be consistently explained through conceptual metaphor theory [Lakoff, Johnson, 1980], conceptual blending [Fauconnier, Turner, 2002], as well as semiotic approaches [Eco, 1976; Langacker, 1987]. These perspectives demonstrate that abstract domains such as “beauty” are transferred into concrete conceptual mappings via cultural codes (angel, light, purity). Idiomaticity reflects the lexicalization of these mappings as stable expressions within the language system (e.g., *mälaksima*, *angelica forma*). The metaphor—metonymy interface [Barcelona, 2000] reinforces this stabilization: the sign “*angel*” functions both as a metaphorical elevation (from human to higher being) and as a metonymic transfer (angel → purity/light). Within frame semantics, the “angel” frame evokes scenarios of sinlessness and divine closeness.

“*Ey mälaksima ki, sändan özgä heyrandır sana. / Həq bilir, insan deməz hər kim ki, insandır sana*” (“O angel-faced one, everyone is amazed by you. / God knows, whoever is human would not call you human”) [Fuzuli, 2005, p. 44].

In this couplet, the beloved’s face is likened to that of an angel. Her beauty is so extraordinary that the category of “human” is insufficient to describe her. From a semiotic perspective, the angel in Islamic culture signifies sinlessness, purity, and a superhuman essence. The cognitive model is BEAUTY IS DIVINITY—beauty presented as a divine quality. CATEGORY BLENDING (HUMAN + ANGEL) generates a hybrid concept: the beloved embodies both human and angelic categories. Idiomatically, *mälaksima* (“angel-faced”) is already a lexicalized idiomatic metaphor that elevates beauty to a superhuman level [Gibbs, 2014]. The formula “*insan deməz*” (“no one would call her human”) excludes the beloved from the human frame and shifts her into the angelic frame. This transformation creates a semiotic opposition between the sacred (angel) and the human, maximizing the aesthetic value of beauty. Metonymic supports also operate here: *angel* → *purity*, *sinlessness*, *light*; all of these qualities are semantically loaded into the beloved’s face. Cognitively, a blending of the human and angelic spaces occurs, producing the “angel-human” hybrid concept in which beauty is presented as an ethical-ontological ideal [Fauconnier, Turner, 2002]. Thus, beauty is not only an aesthetic representation but also a normative value—her face is perceived as an exemplar of purity. Idiomatically, *mälaksima* functions as a fixed epithet that activates the frame of “superhuman beauty” in the reader’s mind. Scalar intensification also takes place: ordinary beauty is elevated to angelic beauty, intensifying the overall impact.

“Non era l’andar suo cosa mortale/ Ma d’angelica forma; e le parole/ Sonavan altro che pur voce umana” (“Her motion was not of mortal thing, but angelic form, and her words sounded of something other than a merely human voice”) [Petrarch, 1739, p. 88].

The poet presents beauty by lifting it out of the limits of ordinary human existence and situating it within an angelic framework. The phrase *“angelica forma”* (“angelic form/appearance”) indicates that the beloved’s external image is not mortal but suffused with transcendent qualities. Even her simple movements and gestures (*andar suo*) are not described as *cosa mortale* (“a mortal thing”). Her words and voice (*parole*) do not sound like those of a mere human but seem to emanate from a higher, spiritual source.

Semiotically, *angelico* is conditioned by the cultural codes of Christian iconography. This sign encompasses not only the semantics of “light and radiance” but also layers of meaning linked to “spiritual mediation and transcendent manifestation.” The female figure is thus integrated into the *donna angelicata* model, the central construct of *stilnovist* poetics. Yet this integration surpasses the aesthetic frame and acquires theological-semiotic functionality. Such an image serves as a bridge between divinity and humanity and, as a result, transcends the function of mere aesthetic description, becoming instead a theophany—a literary-aesthetic manifestation of divine glory. Light metaphorically operates here as one of the main semiotic supports: the woman’s form encodes not only external beauty but also “illumination,” the bearer of superhuman radiance.

At the cognitive level, the same process is observed. A blending occurs between the human and angelic domains: behaviour, appearance, and voice transcend human limits and ascend to a higher, angelic level. In conceptual mapping, this activates the LIGHT and ELEVATION image-schemas. Thus, beauty becomes a symbol of spiritual ascent through an upward vector, within the framework of illumination and radiance.

From an idiomatic perspective, *d’angelica forma* already functions in Petrarch’s discourse as a fixed epithet. Once this expression is used, it immediately activates in the reader’s mind a scenario of divine-spiritual beauty, automatically transferring the female figure into a superhuman context. At the same time, a scalar intensification mechanism is triggered: ordinary beauty is elevated to the “angelic” level, and the contrast between mortal and non-mortal increases the intensity. Consequently, the woman’s figure is not only a source of aesthetic pleasure but also an indicator of metaphysical ascent and spiritual perfection.

Both Fuzuli and Petrarch conceptualize beauty along the same universal mapping: BEAUTY → ANGELIC. Each poet elevates the nature of the beloved from the merely human to the angelic category, yet the semantic-semiotic mechanisms of elevation and their cultural codes differ. In Fuzuli, the face is directly projected into the “angel” frame, such that the epithet *mālaksima* presents external appearance as the sign of divine light: the transition from “human” to “angel” is coded as a normative-ethical ascent. In Petrarch, elevation takes place primarily through the semantics of radiance: *d’angelica forma* turns the beloved into the bearer of a transcendent glow; the expressions *andar suo* and *parole* extend this radiance into the domains of physical appearance, behaviour, and voice, thereby surpassing human boundaries. Thus, in Fuzuli, sacralization rests on a change of ontological category, whereas in Petrarch, it rests on raising human experience to a transcendent level through the schemas of LIGHT and ELEVATION.

From a semiotic perspective, Fuzuli’s couplet constructs a clear sacred/profane opposition: the sign “angel,” in the cultural encyclopedia of Sufi gnosis, metonymically conveys qualities such as purity, sinlessness, and distance from guilt. These qualities are loaded into the semantic layer of the face, and the beloved’s value is maximized by acquiring an ethical status. The formula *“insan demāz”* (“one would not call her human”)—that is, even the name of the category is not applied—functions both as semantic negation and as a reinforcement of category boundaries. Here, although conceptual blending (human + angel) creates a hybrid figure, the outcome is the dominance of “angelicness” at the expense of “humanness.” In Petrarch’s lyric, the lexeme-semiotic unit *angelico*, as noted above, activates layers of meaning rooted in iconographic traditions. Here, the semantics of light, radiance, and spiritual mediation integrate the woman into the *donna angelicata*

model, while simultaneously inscribing upon her the aesthetic trace of divine glory. The female figure thus emerges not only as the object of love poetry but also as a sacralized aesthetic symbol. At this point, Petrarch's poetic discourse transforms "beauty" into a theophany—the concrete literary manifestation of divine presence—and reconfigures the metaphor of light as a semiotic marker of divine illumination. The line "*parole ... altro che pur voce umana*" (words ... nothing but mere human voice) detaches the source of her voice from human physiology and brings it closer to divine acoustics. Meaning here is not limited to lexical content but acquires metaphysical value in the very timbre of the sound.

Cognitively, both texts operate through the mechanism of blending, but with different weights. In Fuzuli, blending unites the centers of "human" and "angel," producing the hybrid "angel-human" concept. This concept carries an ethical-ontological norm: the beloved is not only "beautiful" but also an exemplar of purity. In Petrarch, blending functions more at the modal level: behaviour (*andar*), form, and voice (*parole*) move from the mortal mode into the non-mortal. The LIGHT and ELEVATION image-schemas permeate all layers of embodied experience. Consequently, in Fuzuli, elevation takes the form of a rigid categorical shift, whereas in Petrarch, it is realized as the dynamic poetics of gradient radiance.

Metaphorical outcomes further clarify this difference. In Fuzuli, beauty is equated with sacralization, and the proportion "human < angel" is explicitly constructed; hyperbolic rhetoric (not merely "like an angel" but directly "an angel") elevates scalar intensification to its peak. In Petrarch, however, aesthetic-spiritual illumination comes to the fore: form, gait, and voice are progressively extended into a spectrum not limited to the human; beauty is read as the aesthetic embodiment of divine manifestation (*theophany*). This re-establishes the woman's beauty as spiritual mediation and creates for the poetic subject a "spiritual optics" that elevates the self as well.

The metonymic supports are shared: in both traditions, the sign *mālāk/angelico* carries qualities such as purity, light, and exaltation, thereby stabilizing the metaphorical mapping. Yet the centers of gravity differ: in Fuzuli, the pair "purity-sinlessness" strengthens the ethical norm, while in Petrarch, the triad "light–radiance–mediation" intensifies aesthetic and theological brilliance. At the idiomatic level, *mālaksima* and *angelica forma* are already lexicalized epithets. This stability produces an immediate conceptual effect for the reader: once the expression appears, the cultural encyclopedia is activated and interpretation accelerates. As a result, although both poets share the same universal model, Fuzuli realizes it along the line of ontological sacralization, whereas Petrarch realizes it through spiritual illumination and the framework of *donna angelicata*. In the former, the category boundary is abolished, and a leap is made from "human" to "angel"; in the latter, human experience ascends step by step into the non-mortal realm through "light." These differences simultaneously demonstrate how Eastern Sufi semantics and Western Christian iconography operate in poetry as thought-algorithms: one actualizes the archetype of ANGELIC BEAUTY through an ontological decree, while the other does so through an aesthetic-mystical module in different cultural languages.

Both *mālaksima* and *angelica forma* are idiomatized metaphors: as fixed expressions, they generate rapid conceptual activation in discourse. This stability enables the reader/listener to mobilize the cultural encyclopedia [Eco, 1976]: once "angel" is invoked, scenarios of purity, light, and elevated being are immediately opened. Such idioms ensure cognitive economy and intensify poetic effect [Gibbs, 2014].

Thus, Fuzuli and Petrarch share the same universal model (BEAUTY ↔ ANGELIC) but realize it through local semiotic codes along different aesthetic-ethical vectors: ontological elevation and sacralization in Fuzuli, illumination and theophany in Petrarch. In both cases, idiomatic stability reinforces the semio-cognitive mapping and produces rapid and profound interpretation in the reader's mind.

In the poetics of Fuzuli and Petrarch, fixed epithets such as *mālaksima* and *angelica forma* are not merely descriptive elements but idiomatic signs that activate the deeper semio-cognitive mechanisms of discourse. These epithets no longer function as ordinary words but as "sign-packages," automatically triggering in the reader's mind the frame of superhuman beauty.

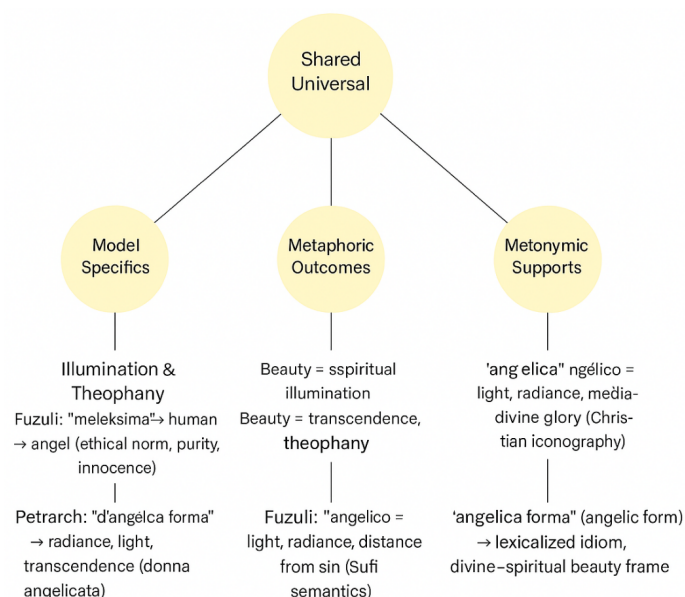


Figure 2. Comparative semantic-semiotic map for Fuzuli and Petrarch.

The functional mechanism of idiomaticity manifests itself across different linguistic levels. At the lexical level, both epithets are stabilized: they transcend the semantic load of words and are transformed into a poetically codified system of signs. Fuzuli's *mələksima* immediately evokes in the reader the image of angelic beauty, while Petrarch's *angelica forma* equates beauty with an unearthly radiance. At the syntactic level, different rhetorical models emerge: in Fuzuli, the paradoxical formula "*insan deməz*" ("one would not call her human") categorically negates the human category and emphasizes ontological transcendence; in Petrarch, the opposition "*mortale ≠ angelico*" confronts mortal and non-mortal spheres, deepening the difference through contrast. At the prosodic level, both poets employ rhythm and assonance to elevate depiction to the highest emotional power: in Fuzuli, the musicality of the couplet reinforces the semantic leap, while in Petrarch, the harmony of the lines strengthens the impression that the woman's gait and voice emanate from a non-mortal source.

Thus, in both Fuzuli and Petrarch, fixed epithets such as *mələksima* and *angelica forma* function not simply as poetic ornaments but as crystallized idiomatic signs that structure figurative cognition. While they share the same universal mapping of BEAUTY → ANGELIC, their realization differs: Fuzuli emphasizes ontological transcendence through categorical negation and hyperbolic rhetoric, whereas Petrarch stresses spiritual illumination through contrastive syntax and the harmony of prosody. In both cases, idiomatic stability guarantees rapid conceptual activation, allowing the reader to access a culturally coded encyclopedia of meanings. This reveals how figurative idioms serve as semiotic-cognitive operators that bridge aesthetic experience with ethical and metaphysical dimensions.

"Speme che fiorisce" (blossoming hope) and "Qamət bükülməsi" (to be bowed with grief): Two Poetic Models of Hope

In this subsection, Petrarch's "*Speme che fiorisce*" [Petrarch, 1739] (blossoming hope) and Fuzuli's "*qamət bükülməsi*" [Fuzuli, 2005] (to be bowed with grief) are retained in their original languages, since both expressions function not merely as lexical units but as culturally embedded semiotic codes [Eco, 1976; Lotman, 1990]. The Italian expression encodes the concept of hope through the life-cycle schema of the plant domain (HOPE IS A PLANT); here, the processes of seed, growth, and blossoming operate as metaphors for expectation and vital energy [Lakoff, Johnson, 1980; Barolini, 2014]. By contrast, the Azerbaijani expression conceptualizes hope within corporeal and quantitative frameworks (HOPE IS A SUBSTANCE / RESOURCE and LIFE IS A JOURNEY):

the bending of the body under the weight of longing metaphorically signifies depletion, loss of strength, and the fading of life energy [Fuzuli, 2005; Kövecses, 2010]. Preserving both idioms in their original languages highlights the specificity of their cultural-semiotic systems while also underscoring their participation in the universal metaphorical mapping of “hope” [Gibbs, 2014].

Let us examine comparatively, from a semio-cognitive and idiomatic perspective, Petrarch’s line:

Amor, quando fioria mia speme (“Love, when my hope was blossoming”) [Petrarch, 1739, p. 228]

alongside Fuzuli’s couplet:

Büküldü qamätim hasrat yükündən, vəh ki, aləmdə / Ümidim əksilib hər ləhzə yüz min, həsrätim artar (“My stature is bent under the burden of longing – alas, in this world, / My hope diminishes with every moment by hundreds of thousands, while my sorrow grows”) [Fuzuli, 2005, p. 136].

In Petrarch, “*fioria mia speme*” (my hope was blossoming) conveys the life-giving power of hope; hope here expands, develops, and carries the energy of spring [Barolini, 2014]. In Fuzuli, by contrast, hope is presented in the opposite direction: “*Ümidim əksilib hər ləhzə yüz min*” (My hope diminishes every moment by hundreds of thousands) – hope is conceived as a resource, a storehouse, but one that steadily decreases and becomes depleted. Thus, in Petrarch, hope appears as a process of expansion and flourishing, while in Fuzuli it appears as contraction and exhaustion.

From a semiotic perspective, Petrarch’s central sign is the flower; the sign of blossoming symbolizes both the beginning of life in nature and, at the same time, its transience [Panofsky, 1962]. In Fuzuli, the sign is the body (*qamät*): the bending of the body is directly associated with despair. An upright posture signifies vitality and strength, while bending conveys depletion and loss of energy. Thus, in Petrarch, the flower signals the opening of hope, whereas in Fuzuli, the body denotes the collapse under the burden of hopelessness.

In the cognitive framework, Petrarch employs the metaphor HOPE IS A PLANT: hope begins as a seed, develops, blossoms, and withers [Lakoff, Johnson, 1980]. In Fuzuli, the conceptualization HOPE IS A SUBSTANCE / QUANTITY is foregrounded: hope is thought of as a reserve that diminishes at every moment, while longing increases. At the same time, the LIFE IS A JOURNEY model is also activated: the bending of the body symbolizes the traveler’s loss of strength along the path [Kövecses, 2010; Fauconnier, Turner, 2002].

From the perspective of idiomaticity, both poets’ expressions have become fixed images in their respective traditions. In Italian lyric poetry, the “blossoming of hope” (*speme che fiorisce*) immediately evokes associations of spring, youth, and joy [Barolini, 2014]. In Fuzuli, “*qamätin bükülməsi*” is a conventional metaphor associated with sorrow, longing, and the burdens of life [Gölpınarlı, 1985]. In both cases, the expressions function not merely descriptively but as ready-made codes of the cultural encyclopedia [Eco, 1976].

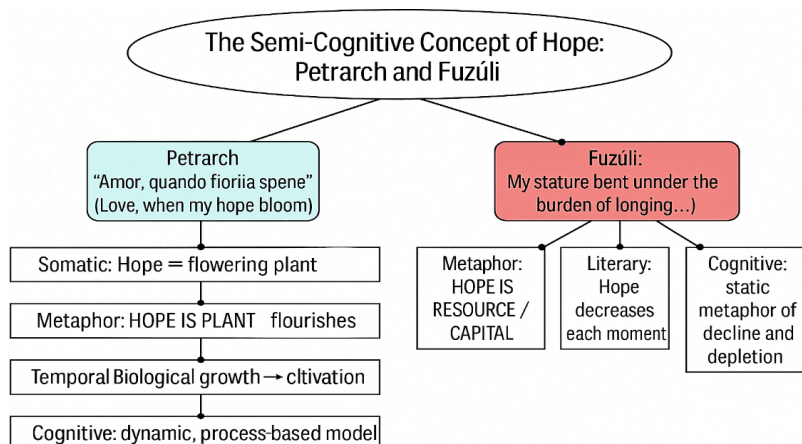


Figure 3. A Semio-Cognitive Concept of Hope in Petrarch and Fuzuli

In the comparative outcome, in Petrarch hope is linked to the life-giving energy of nature through the metaphor of blossoming and turns into a celebration of the optimism generated by love. In Fuzuli, however, hope is presented through the metaphors of stature and measure as a human state that weakens and bends under the weight of longing. Thus, both poets signify the same emotional domain—“hope”— through different semiotic models: for Petrarch, hope is a blossoming flower; for Fuzuli, it is a diminishing force that bends the human being. Although the cognitive mapping rests on the same conceptual metaphor system (hope = natural process, vital force), the directions differ: in Western poetics, development and unfolding are emphasized, whereas in Eastern poetics, exhaustion and breaking come to the fore.

Petrarch encodes hope through the metaphor of blossoming, linking it to nature’s vital energy and the optimism of love. Fuzuli, by contrast, depicts hope as a diminishing force that bends under longing. Both poets draw on the same conceptual metaphor system (hope as life force), but Western poetics foregrounds growth and unfolding, while Eastern poetics highlights exhaustion and decline.

Proverbial-Institutional Codes and Scalar Intensification: A Semi-Cognitive Comparison of Italian and Azerbaijani Classics

It is worthwhile to compare, within a semicognitive framework, how proverbial-institutional codes and scalar intensification function in two parallel traditions (Italy: Ariosto, Manzoni; Azerbaijan: Vaqif, Zakir). The analytical foundation lies in conceptual metaphor and frame semantics (FIRE / HEAT, CONTAINER, JOURNEY, VERTICALITY) [Lakoff, Johnson, 1980; Fillmore, 1982; Kövecses, 2010], as well as in blending theory [Fauconnier, Turner, 2002]; the cultural encyclopedia explains how proverbial and sacred codes become normalized [Eco, 1976; Lotman, 1990]. Section 2.1 will trace proverb/institutional code and social norm in the Ariosto—Manzoni ↔ Vaqif—Zakir line; Section 2.2 will present methodological synthesis and findings in the Dante—Petrarch ↔ Nasimi—Fuzuli line, based on thermal, cosmic, and spatial metaphors.

Proverbial-Institutional Code and Social Norm: Ariosto—Manzoni ↔ Vaqif—Zakir

Building on the models of “angelic beauty” and “hope” outlined above, we now move to the vector of the social normativization of figurativity, tracing how proverbial-institutional codes are legitimized within literary texts. Within this framework, the Ariosto—Manzoni line is compared with the Vaqif—Zakir parallels, highlighting how scalar intensification and vertical spatial metaphors intersect with social hierarchy and emotional expression.

Ariosto’s:

Cader de la padella ne le brage (“To fall from the frying pan into the embers”) [Ariosto, 1573, p. 126]

Azerbaijani equivalent:

Aydan qaçıb quyuya düşmək (“To flee from the bear and fall into the pit”) [Adilov & Yusifov, 2019; Hüseyinov, 2013]

is explicitly marked with the author’s intratextual note *sovente in proverbio il vulgo dice* (“as is often said among the people...”, or “as the proverb goes”), which confirms its direct status as *proverbio* [Ariosto, 1573, Canto XIII]. Here the model WORSENING IS HEAT / COOKING is active: the situation “heats up,” “temperature” rises, and consequently things pass into a worse stage. This is a classic example of scalar intensification [Lakoff, Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010]. The intratextual legitimization of the proverbial code builds a bridge of intertextuality (folk wisdom ↔ written literature): Ariosto transforms folkloric normativity into a mechanism of poetic composition [Eco, 1976; Lotman, 1990].

In Azerbaijani classics, Vaqif and Zakir bring out the social-emotional codes of the figurative system in sharp form.

Həmişə sinə büryandır, könül viran ("My breast is always burning, the heart is in ruins") [Vaqif, 2004, p. 202].

Ey güli-xəndan, fərağından sənın qan ağlaram ("O smiling flower, from your separation I weep blood") [Vaqif, 2004, p. 153].

Xəstə Vaqif ölsə, canına fəda ("If the sick Vaqif dies, let it be a sacrifice for your soul") [Vaqif, 2004, p. 79].

Düşüb ayağına sən o zalımın / Söylədinmi necaliyin halımın? ("Falling at the feet of that cruel one, / Did you tell of my state, of how I fare?") [Zakir, 2005, p.164].

In Vaqif, expressions such as *sinə büryan olmaq* (to have a burned breast), *qan ağlamaq* (to weep blood), *fəda olmaq* (to sacrifice oneself) synthesize the mappings EMOTION IS FIRE / HEAT and BODY IS CONTAINER: the body is the "inner space," the chest a carrier of heat; "*büryan*" marks the culmination of scalar intensity [Lakoff, Johnson, 1980; Gibbs, 2014]. The formula *can vermək / fəda olmaq* ("to give one's soul / to sacrifice oneself") unites LIFE / SELF IS A VALUABLE COMMODITY and SACRIFICE IS TRANSFER: the "soul" (*can*) is the highest value, and sacrifice is coded as transfer or offering [Füzuli, 2005; Kövecses, 2010]. In Zakir, *ayağına düşmək* ("to fall at someone's feet") structures social hierarchy through the VERTICALITY metaphor: power is above, submission is expressed by downward motion; SUBMISSION IS DOWNWARD MOTION [Lakoff, Johnson, 1980].

Thus, cultural-linguistic specificity manifests itself in two directions. In the Italian corpus, visual-theatrical narrative emphases (Ariosto's hyperbolic situationality, Manzoni's integration of ethical normativity into narration) and the normalization of proverbial-institutional codes within the literary text are particularly noticeable [Ariosto; Manzoni; Eco, 1976]. In the Azerbaijani corpus, however, the mystical-emotional layer (the fusion of Sufi esotericism with the semantics of *soul/fire/heart*) and the expressive elasticity enabled by the agglutinative structure bring fine modulation of scalar intensity to the fore [Füzuli, 2005; Kılıç, 2021]. These differences demonstrate how the universal models (FIRE /HEAT, CONTAINER, JOURNEY, VERTICALITY) pass through local filters to assume diverse stylistic and aesthetic forms [Lakoff, Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010].

The "*padella / brage*" chain transfers folk wisdom into the epic-poetic context, while Manzoni brings juridical-ethical norm into realist prose; in both cases the "*proverb*" asserts its status within the text and provides the reader with an interpretive key [Ariosto 1573; Manzoni, 1844]. In Azerbaijani classics, the *can* ("soul") knot becomes, in culturosemiotic terms, not merely biological life but a measure of metaphysical value. In Füzuli and Vaqif, the act of sacrifice is interpreted as esoteric union [Füzuli, 2005; Vaqif, 2004]. These intertextual crossings activate, in frame-semantic terms, the sequences *institution* → *role* → *norm* and *subject* → *inner space* → *social outcome*, confirming the discursive flexibility of figurativity [Fillmore, 1982; Eco, 1976].

The cognitive outcome here is two-layered: the first layer is universality, the second locality. At the universal level, the model EMOTION IS FIRE shows that Vaqif's "*burned breast*" aligns with Ariosto's "*padella / brage*" in sharing the same scalar mechanism; the mapping SELF / HEART IS CONTAINER brings Manzoni's *fuori di sé* ("to be outside oneself") together with the Azerbaijani *içi yanmaq* ("to burn inside"), both encoding the overflowing of the container, i.e. emotional excess; and SOCIAL POWER IS UP confirms that Zakir's *ayağına düşmək* ("to fall at someone's feet") codes submission through downward motion [Lakoff, Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010]. The second, local layer highlights stylistic-cultural differences: in Italian figurativity, visual theatricality, proverbial-institutional normativization, and the staging of narrative tempo in figurative language are prominent, whereas in Azerbaijani classics mystical-soteriological semantics (the sacredness of "fire," the heart as secret space) and the morphosyntactic plasticity of the agglutinative structure allow for delicate gradations of figurative intensity [Gölpınarlı, 1985; Füzuli, 2005].

Such a logical conclusion also consolidates our methodological thesis: figurativity can only be properly understood if three parallel axes are employed simultaneously – (i) precise mapping of source/target domains (conceptual metaphor and mental spaces), (ii) intratextual explanation

of semiotic stratification (denotative–connotative–symbolic), and (iii) integration of discursive-cultural context (Sufi esotericism, proverbial normativity, institutional ethical frameworks) into the production of poetic meaning [Lakoff, Johnson, 1980; Fauconnier, Turner, 2002; Eco, 1976; Lotman, 1990]. Through this convergent methodological structure, the argument is established in a consistent and comparative manner, extending from the Fuzuli–Petrarch–Dante–Nasimi line to the Ariosto—Manzoni—Vaqif—Zakir line.

When tracing the semiocognitive intersections of idioms in Italian and Azerbaijani classical traditions, we see how the figurative resources of both literatures integrate personal emotional experience with social-normative codes within the same text [Eco, 1976; Lotman, 1990]. These intersections, on the one hand, project embodied experience into conceptual mappings—such as HEAT / FIRE, CONTAINER, JOURNEY / VERTICALITY—onto linguistic units; on the other hand, they integrate social order and moral values into poetic discourse through cultural carriers like proverbs and sacred signs [Lakoff, Johnson, 1980; Gibbs, 2014]. It is precisely this dual process that transforms idioms from mere lexical items into living indicators of semiocognitive mechanisms.

In Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, the expression *cader de la padella ne le brage* ("to fall from the frying pan into the embers") appropriates folk wisdom to hyperbolically model the hero's critical situation [Ariosto, 1573, p. 126]. The operative mechanism here is the mapping WORSENING IS HEAT / COOKING: the passage "from the pan to the embers" activates a thermal scalar model, "increasing heat" to describe the staged dynamics of worsening [Kövecses, 2010]. Heat here is not merely a physical attribute but a cognitive indicator of the dramatic degree of the situation; the idiom accelerates this indicator, thereby intensifying narrative tempo [Gibbs, 2014]. In this construction, the proverb gains an intratextual legitimizing function: for the reader, it provides both an interpretive key and a normative signal [Eco, 1976].

In Qasim bey Zakir's poetic discourse, the idiom *düşüb ayağına* ("falling at one's feet") encodes the vertical semiocognitive model of social hierarchy: SUBMISSION IS DOWNWARD MOTION. The downward movement symbolizes supplication, obedience, and recognition of "status difference"; this is a sociopolitical reading of a body-oriented spatial metaphor [Zakir, 2005; Lakoff, Johnson, 1980]. Thus, while in Ariosto scalar thermal intensification dramatizes individual situational panic, in Zakir vertical spatial mapping depicts the discipline of social relations. In both cases, the idiom functions as a normative code shaping both emotional states and social structure.

Ambasciator non porta pena [Manzoni, 1844, p. 89] → Azerbaijani: "*Elçiyə zaval yoxdur*" ("The messenger bears no blame") institutionalizes role through proverb: the envoy is not an individual but a protected role. In other words, the mapping INSTITUTION IS PERSON / ROLE comes into play, and figurativity becomes a social code articulating a juridical-ethical framework. Here the proverb is not just a phrase of cultural memory but a linguistic unit of the social contract [Eco, 1976].

In Molla Panah Vaqif, the formula *can vermək / fəda olmaq* ("to give one's soul / to sacrifice oneself") measures emotional value through the act of sacrifice: LIFE / SELF IS A VALUABLE COMMODITY and SACRIFICE IS TRANSFER [Vaqif, 2004; Füzuli, 2005; Kövecses, 2010]. The *can* ("soul") is the highest value; *vermək* ("to give") activates the semantics of presentation and transfer. This semantics shows that love is not only a psychological state but becomes an ethical act producing social value. Thus, in Italian classics the proverb turns into the expression of socio-political norm, while in Azerbaijani classics sacrifice becomes the semiocognitive measure of individual-social value. Both traditions orient figurative resources toward norm-construction, though the sources and aims of the norm differ [Lotman, 1990].

Observations on the proverbial-institutional order reveal the dependence of norm-construction on figurative resources. The next step, therefore, is to extend this framework along thermal, cosmic, and spatial metaphors by turning to the Dante—Petrarch ↔ Nasimi—Fuzuli line.

The comparative analysis shows that idioms in both Italian and Azerbaijani classics serve not only as figurative expressions but also as normative codes. In Ariosto and Manzoni, proverbs legitimize social norms and intensify narrative dynamics; in Vaqif and Zakir, idioms integrate mystical-emotional semantics with hierarchical and sacrificial codes. Thus, figurativity emerges as a dual mechanism—simultaneously encoding embodied emotional experience and institutionalized cultural values.

Thermal, Cosmic, and Spatial Metaphorics: Dante—Petrarch ↔ Nasimi—Fuzuli; Methodological Synthesis and Findings

Having identified the intratextual functions of proverbs and institutional roles, attention now turns to the clusters of energy/fire, container, and space. In Dante and Petrarch, thermal-cosmic semantics are central, whereas in Nasimi and Fuzuli, body- and space-based models expand the poetic map.

Chi può dir com'egli arde è in picciol foco (“Who can say how he burns is in a small fire”) [Petrarch, 1739, p. 218].

This formula expresses the intensity of love at the boundary between the sayable and the unsayable through litotes. Within the LOVE IS FIRE model, *picciol foco* (little flame; small fire) acts as a metapoetic signal: language can name the “small fire,” but the “great fire”—transcendent intensity—remains beyond the limits of expression [Petrarch, *RVF* 140; Kövecses, 2010]. Here, the iconic (heat, burning), indexical (sign of intensity), and symbolic (spiritual energy) layers of “fire” overlap, problematizing the very power of poetic expression [Panofsky, 1962]. In Fuzuli, by contrast, the chain *yanmaq / alışmaq / arımək* (“to burn / to ignite / to melt”) uses a hyperbolic thermal lexicon to display both the destructive and purifying—soteriological—aspects of love; fire is sacralized in Sufi semantics [Fuzuli, 2005; Gölpınarlı, 1985]. The agglutinative structure of Azerbaijani and the aspectual-modality flexibility of its verb system (iterativity, intensification, modal emphasis) allow this hyperbole to be modulated across fine scalar gradations [Kövecses, 2010]. Consequently, both poets share the same LOVE IS FIRE skeleton, but in Petrarch fire appears as latent intensity problematizing expression itself, while in Fuzuli it is conceptualized as sacralized and hyperbolic energy; together they form a “figurative → metafigurative reflection” spiral.

L'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle (“The Love that moves the sun and the other stars”) [Dante, 1891, p. 719].

This verse elevates figurativity from the psychosemantic plane to cosmic teleology: LOVE IS ENERGY / FORCE. In the source domain lies physics and cosmic mechanics, in the target domain love as ontological principle. Such mapping turns the poetic image into an argument of metaphysical meaning. Figurative language here is not merely descriptive but also the poetic articulation of causal logic [Eco, 1976].

In Nasimi, the heart-centered discourse deepens the EMOTION IS A CONTAINER model with socio-ethical weight: stable formulas such as *könül açmaq* (“to open one’s heart”), *içini tökmək* (“to pour out one’s inside”), *sirr saxlamaq* (“to keep a secret”) code the opening and closing of the container as circulation rules for information and emotion [Nasimi, *Divan*, 2004; Lakoff, Johnson, 1980]. Thus, Dante expands figurativity globally with energy metaphorics, while Nasimi internalizes it at a micro-psycho-social level through spatial metaphorics. Both lines confirm the sequence *embodied experience* → *conceptual mapping* → *discursive norm* [Fauconnier, Turner, 2002].

After analyzing individual textual cases, we now move to methodological synthesis: integrating conceptual metaphor, blending, and frame semantics, we generalize cross-linguistic productivity under unified models.

The “body and space” cluster is particularly clear across languages. In Italian vernacular: *avere il cuore in gola* (“to be terrified, anxious”; Azerbaijani equivalent: *ürəyi ağzına gəlmək* [Qocayev, Mammadova, 2022] — “the heart comes to the mouth”), activates the mapping HEART / SELF IS A MOVING CONTENT; *rimanere di sasso* (“to be petrified, shocked”; Azerbaijani *donub qalmaq*) activates EMOTION IS RIGIDITY / IMMOBILITY; *fumare dalle orecchie* (“to fume with anger”; Azerbaijani *qəzəbdən tüstülənmək*) activates ANGER IS FIRE / HEAT [Kövecses, 2010; Gibbs, 2014]. In Azerbaijani, idioms such as *ürəyi ağzına gəlmək* (“the heart comes to the mouth”), *ürəyi partlamaq* (“the heart bursts”), *içi yanmaq* (“to burn inside”), *özündən çıxmaq* (“to go out of oneself”) realize the templates BODY / SELF IS CONTAINER and EMOTION IS FORCE / HEAT in varying degrees [Lakoff, Johnson, 1980].

Table 1

Cognitive Mapping of Italian and Azerbaijani Idioms

Italian Idiom	English Translation	Azerbaijani Equivalent	English Translation	Cognitive Mapping
avere il cuore in gola	“to be terrified, anxious”	ürəyi ağzına gəlmək	“the heart comes to the mouth”	HEART / SELF IS A MOVING CONTENT
rimanere di sasso	“to be petrified, shocked”	donub qalmaq	“to freeze/turn rigid”	EMOTION IS RIGIDITY / IMMOBILITY
fumare dalle orecchie	“to fume with anger”	qəzəbdən tüstülənmək	“to smoke/fume with anger”	ANGER IS FIRE / HEAT

The container template in both language families is coded through physiological markers (heart, chest) as well as discursive signals (*özündən çıxmaq* – “to lose oneself”), modeling the notion of “limit / rule.” Overflowing is semanticized as the transgression of the norm, functioning as a linguistic model of both emotional discipline and social behavioural frames [Gibbs, 2014].

The model of scalar intensification provides a distinct framework for operationalizing these intersections. The gradation of the thermal lexicon forms an explicit scale in Azerbaijani (*isti* → *qızmar* → *yandırıcı* → *büryan*) and in Italian (*caldo* → *bollente* → *rovente*). In both languages, intensification at the discourse level is reinforced by adverbials and particles (AZ: *lap...*, *tamamilə*; IT: *più*, *sempre più*, *del tutto*, *appena*) [Kövecses, 2010; Gibbs, 2014]. From the perspective of construction grammar, iterative and intensive morphemes, serial verb constructions, and stress patterns provide syntactic support for the scale [Goldberg, 1995]. This framework demonstrates how the same conceptual skeleton can be measured in different languages through lexical-grammatical resources and offers stable indicators for corpus-based comparison.

At the level of discourse functions, the Italian line – exemplified by Ariosto and Manzoni – stages the proverbial-institutional code as a “rule” associated with cultural institutions [Manzoni; Ariosto; Lotman, 1990]. In the Azerbaijani line—Fuzuli, Nasimi, Vaqif, Zakir—the semantics of *fire / soul / heart* create a “moral economy” through sacral-ethical coding; figurativity encodes spiritual-ethical order and draws values such as sacrifice, secrecy, and purification to the center of poetic meaning [Fuzuli, 2005; Nasimi, *Divan*; Vaqif, 2004; Zakir, 2005]. In both corpora, figurative language functions as norm-construction, but the type of norm differs: in the Italian corpus, institutional-legal legitimation; in the Azerbaijani corpus, sacral-ethical discipline [Eco, 1976; Lotman, 1990].

This panorama brings us to a synthetic conclusion. The universal skeleton—LOVE IS FIRE, EMOTION IS A CONTAINER, LOVE IS ENERGY / FORCE, WORSENING IS HEAT / COOKING, SOCIAL POWER IS UP / SUBMISSION IS DOWN—remains stable across languages as cognitive templates of embodied experience. Yet local filtering—in the Romance tradition through visual-theatrical and institutional-proverbial emphases, and in the Turkic—Azerbaijani tradition through mystical-soteriological and aspectual-intensive emphases— “dresses” this skeleton in different forms [Lakoff, Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010].

From this, one may conclude that universality and specificity are not opposing poles but resemble the trunk and branches of the same tree. The semicognitive intersections of idioms appear precisely on these branches: in one tradition, social norms are solidified as proverbs; in the other, sacrifice and secrecy become measures of spiritual value [Eco, 1976; Lotman, 1990]. Thus, the bridge between the idiomatic stability of figurative language and its semicognitive depth forms a continuous trajectory from universal cognitive mechanisms of language to their cultural-historical realizations. This trajectory establishes a solid analytical framework for understanding the multi-lingual architecture of both poetic form and socio-ethical order [Fauconnier, Turner, 2002].

This stage of analysis shows that both Italian and Azerbaijani classics construct figurative language through universal conceptual templates rooted in the deep structures of human cognition. Most importantly, these universals are filtered through specific cultural contexts, resulting in diverse poetic forms. The conceptualization of emotion through images of fire and heat appears in Ariosto’s “*cader de la padella ne le brage*” as a spiral progression, while in Vaqif’s “*sina büryan*” (“my breast is burned”) it manifests as a gradation of emotional intensity along a thermal scale [Vaqif, 2004]. This observation aligns with Gibbs’s view that emotions are metaphorically transposed from embodied experience [Gibbs, 2014].

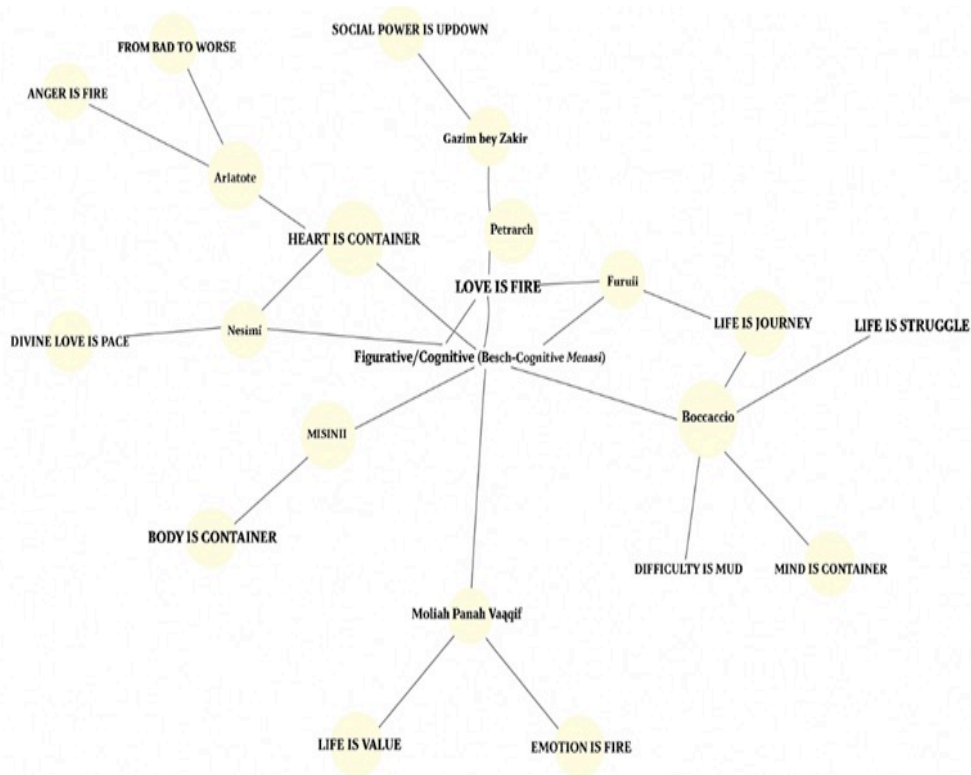


Figure 4. Figurative Language as a Semio-Cognitive Nexus: Italian and Azerbaijani Classics

The container model of mind and self is represented in Manzoni's *fuori di sé* ("to be outside oneself") and in Azerbaijani classical poetry in *içi yanmaq* ("to burn inside"), both modeling the body's interior as a vessel for emotions, thereby confirming Lakoff and Johnson's *Mind is a Container* mapping [Lakoff, Johnson, 1980]. The vertical metaphor of social power distribution codes submission as downward movement in Zakir's *ayağına düşmək* ("to fall at someone's feet"), while in Manzoni the proverb legitimizing the envoy's "immunity from punishment" turns institutional role into metonymic representation. Panther and Thornburg's conceptual-pragmatic approach clarifies how such formulas allow the transition from situational to institutional levels [Panther, Thornburg, 2003].

Against the background of universals, cultural specificity appears in layers. In the Italian tradition, idioms often declare their status as *proverbio* within the text, bringing literary discourse into dialogue with folklore and legitimizing socio-political norms through literary language [Manzoni; Ariosto; Eco, 1976]. In the Azerbaijani classics, by contrast, figurative language serves as a primary code of mystical and emotional experience: the formula *can vermək* ("to give one's soul") transcends biological finality and becomes an esoteric marker of love and devotion, reflecting the strong impact of Sufi semantics [Fuzuli, 2005; Gölpınarlı, 1985].

A parallel reading of the two literatures reveals the following: semicognitive models serve as a universal skeleton, but the "muscles and skin" of this skeleton are shaped by local poetic codes [Lakoff, Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010]. In Italian examples, visual-theatrical structuring, rhythmic tension in narration, and the intratextual legitimization of folklore through *proverbio* come to the fore. In Azerbaijani examples, spiritual-emotional intensity, Sufi esotericism, and the notion of "moral economy" (*soul / fire / heart*) charge figurativity not only with aesthetic but also with ethical and ontological meaning [Fuzuli, 2005; Nasimi, *Divan*].

These investigations theoretically demonstrate that idioms and metaphors are not ornamental embellishments but operative mechanisms of cognition. Metaphors and idioms crystallize conceptual structures into vivid representations; metonymy and proverbs function at both

situational and institutional levels in codifying social norms; poetics, in turn, reinforces these models through cultural narrativization, stabilizing the value system of both individual and collective consciousness [Eco, 1976; Lotman, 1990; Panther, Thornburg, 2003]. Thus, the comparison of figurative languages reveals not only poetic differences but also how the architecture of cognition manifests across languages [Lakoff, Johnson, 1980; Fauconnier, Turner, 2002].

Both Italian and Azerbaijani classics structure figurative language through universal conceptual models—fire / heat, container, verticality—yet these are refracted through distinct cultural filters. In Italian texts, idioms often legitimize institutional and socio-political norms (*proverbio* status, narrative dramatization). In Azerbaijani texts, figurativity encodes mystical-emotional depth and sacral-ethical values (*can / od / könül*). Thus, idioms and metaphors function not as ornament but as cognitive mechanisms, bridging embodied experience with cultural-historical meaning systems.

Conclusion and Scientific Novelty

In summarizing the findings, it is crucial to emphasize the stability of the cognitive basis: in both the Italian and Azerbaijani corpora, idioms and metaphors embody fundamental mechanisms of human cognition and confirm the cross-linguistic functionality of conceptual metaphor theory [Lakoff, Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010; Gibbs, 2014]. The synthesis between universality and locality is clearly visible: while models such as EMOTION IS FIRE, MIND / SELF IS A CONTAINER, LIFE / LOVE IS A JOURNEY, SOCIAL POWER IS UP recur across the texts of both cultures, in the Romance tradition idioms often appear in the form of *proverbio*, embedded in socio-political and narrative codes, whereas in Azerbaijani classics encyclopedic words like *can* (soul), *od* (fire), and *sinə* (chest) generate culturosemiotic layers in mystical-emotional contexts. This cultural filtering endows universal templates with new aesthetic forms [Eco, 1976; Gölpınarlı, 1985].

On the intertextual level, Ariosto's *padella / brage* aligns with Vaqif's *sinə büryan*, Manzoni's *ambasciator non porta pena* parallels Vaqif's *can vermək* formula, and Petrarch's *picciol foco* corresponds to Fuzuli's metaphor of the *fire of love*. These concrete examples demonstrate that texts in different languages are constructed upon the same underlying skeleton [Ariosto, 1573; Manzoni, 1844; Petrarch, *RVF* 140; Vaqif, 2004; Fuzuli, 2005]. Within this panorama, proverbs, sayings, and idioms become linguistic units of cultural self-affirmation: in Italian, codes related to norms and institutions are legitimized within the literary text, while in Azerbaijani, love and devotion are symbolized as sacral-ethical values [Lotman, 1990; Eco, 1976].

From the standpoint of scientific novelty, the value of the study is manifested on three levels. First, Italian classical idioms and Azerbaijani phraseology have been presented in parallel within a unified semiocognitive model; this shifts the comparison beyond mere poetic description toward conceptual mapping [Lakoff, Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010]. Second, a referenced corpus has been established along the Dante—Petrarch—Ariosto—Manzoni ↔ Nasimi—Fuzuli—Vaqif—Zakir axis, with examples systematically mapped across source and target domains, thus grounding the comparison empirically [Dante, 1891; Petrarch, 1739; Ariosto, 1573; Manzoni, 1844; Nasimi, 2004; Fuzuli, 2005; Vaqif, 2004; Zakir, 2005]. Third, semiotics (levels of the sign: denotative, connotative, symbolic), cognitive linguistics (source → target mappings), and discourse analysis (institutional and esoteric codes) have been integrated to create a three-axis methodological construct [Eco, 1976; Lotman, 1990; Fauconnier, Turner, 2002].

In addition, the conceptual mapping of expressions such as *can vermək* (“to give one’s soul”), *sinə büryan olmaq* (“to have a burned breast”), and *ayağına düşmək* (“to fall at someone’s feet”) is offered not only as poetic imagery but as cognitively grounded interpretation. To operationalize these insights, annotation criteria such as “thermal scales,” “container overflow,” and “vertical motion” have been proposed, providing a practical basis for corpus- and NLP-oriented research [Kövecses, 2010; Goldberg, 1995].

Practical Implications and Limitations

The practical implications are multifaceted. In language pedagogy, mapping idioms across source and target domains, as well as unpacking their denotative-connotative-symbolic layers, enables modular teaching in which learners acquire idioms not by rote, but through the deeper logic of conceptual models [Littlemore, 2009]. In translation studies, equivalence

should be ensured less by lexical parity and more by model alignment; for instance, *fumare dalle orecchie* and *qazəbdən tüstülənmək* both activate the ANGER IS FIRE mapping, which enhances consistency in translation. Otherwise, mapping errors may occur in cross-linguistic transfer [Gibbs, 2014; Kövecses, 2010]. In lexicography, enriching each idiom entry with fields such as “Conceptual Model,” “Discourse Function,” and “Scalar Degree” would strengthen the format of explanatory-cognitive dictionaries [Panther, Thornburg, 2003]. In corpus linguistics and NLP, creating annotation layers for metaphors and idioms—such as THERMAL_SCALE, CONTAINER_STATE, VERTICAL_MOVE, and INSTITUTION_ROLE—provides a basis for automatic detection and explainable modeling [Goldberg, 1995]. In cultural heritage and communication, a commented corpus of proverbs and phraseologisms could serve as a reliable platform for intercultural training and cultural diplomacy [Eco, 1976; Lotman, 1990].

Naturally, the study also has its limitations. The corpus is primarily limited to classical texts; modern press, cinema, and social media discourses have not yet been systematically included. Large-scale statistical measurements of model frequencies and scalar gradations have not been conducted, nor have fine dialectological variations been addressed. Real-time comprehension and usage experiments—i.e., psycholinguistic testing—remain topics for future research [Gibbs, 2014].

Accordingly, the future directions include expanding the corpus to incorporate modern materials; undertaking multilingual comparisons that integrate Romance languages (French, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian) and Turkic languages (Azerbaijani, Turkmen, Uzbek, Tatar, etc.); conducting psycholinguistic measurements such as reaction time and memory retention; experimenting with conceptual labels as guiding signals in multilingual transformer models for metaphor/idiom detection; and piloting a “figurative language laboratory” in the university setting [Fauconnier, Turner, 2002; Kövecses, 2010].

Taken together, these arguments demonstrate that figurative language in both Italian and Azerbaijani classical literature operates along a consistent chain: from embodied experience to conceptual mapping, and from there to cultural-discursive norm. Universals provide the skeleton of this chain, while local codes give it form. As a result, idioms and metaphors emerge not merely as poetic embellishments, but as concrete representational mechanisms of both cognitive architecture and social order. This interpretation thus offers an extensible framework that is effective in both theoretical (cognitive-semiotic integration) and practical (didactics, translation, lexicography, NLP) domains. These results align closely with established theoretical foundations [Eco, 1976; Lakoff, Johnson, 1980; Fauconnier, Turner, 2002; Kövecses, 2010; Gibbs, 2014].

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POTENTIAL OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN ITALIAN AND AZERBAIJANI: IDIOMATICITY AND SEMIO-COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVES

Gunel M. Bayramova, Azerbaijan University of Languages (Azerbaijan)

E-mail: gunelf.bayramova@gmail.com

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Key words: *figurative language, idiomaticity, semio-cognitive approach, conceptual metaphor, metonymy, rhetorical and poetic tradition, Italian, Azerbaijani.*

This article presents a comparative analysis of figurative language in Italian and Azerbaijani, arguing that idioms operate as semio-cognitive devices linking embodied experience to cultural-historical norms. Integrating conceptual metaphor theory, mental spaces and blending, frame semantics, and semiotics, the study models cross-linguistic mappings across FIRE / HEAT, CONTAINER, JOURNEY, VERTICALITY, and ENERGY. *The aim* of the study is to identify the semio-cognitive models of figurative language and to determine their similarities and differences within a cultural-historical context, to establish how these models are shaped by the typological structures of both languages, and, ultimately, to develop new theoretical generalizations. The study is based on the synthesis of cognitive-semantic, semiotic, and comparative-historical *methods*.

The corpus concentrates on canonical texts (Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, Manzoni; Nasimi, Fuzuli, Vagif, Zakir) and on established Azerbaijani phraseology. Methodologically, idioms are treated as stabilized sign-packages with layered denotative, connotative, and symbolic values; each item is mapped from source to target domains and situated in discourse frames that mediate social roles and ethical normativity.

Findings reveal robust universals alongside salient local filters. Universally, emotional and evaluative meanings recruit shared schemas—ANGER IS FIRE / HEAT, MIND / SELF IS A CONTAINER, LIFE / LOVE IS A JOURNEY, SOCIAL POWER IS UP / SUBMISSION IS DOWN, LOVE IS ENERGY / FORCE—realized through language-specific resources: graded thermal lexicons (Italian *caldo*→*bollente*→*rovente*; Azerbaijani *isti*→*qızmar*→*yandırıcı*→*büryan*), container states and overflow, and vertical-motion patterns. Locally, Italian discourse foregrounds visual-theatrical staging and intratextual legitimization of folk wisdom as *pro-verbio* (e.g., Ariosto's "*cader de la padella ne le brage*"; Manzoni's "*Ambasciator non porta pena*"), encoding institutional and juridical norms. Azerbaijani classics privilege mystical-soteriological semantics around *can / od / könül* and exploit agglutinative morphology to fine-grade intensity (e.g., *sinə büryan olmaq, içi yanmaq, can vermək, ayağına düşmək* – *En.literal* "to have one's breast burned," "to burn inside," "to give one's soul / life," "to fall at someone's feet"). Parallel readings align Petrarch's "*picciol foco*" with Fuzuli's "*eşq ataşi*," (the fire of love) and Manzoni's *fuori di sé* (to be outside oneself) with Azerbaijani *özündən çıxmaq* (to go out of oneself).

Analytically, idioms function on two interconnected planes. At the psychosemantic level, they crystallize embodied experience into portable mappings; at the socio-discursive level, they normalize roles and values, turning proverbs and fixed epithets into interpretive institutions. The proposed three-axis framework — (i) source→target mapping, (ii) semiotic stratification, (iii) discursive-cultural embedding—yields a reproducible procedure for comparison. Practical implications span didactics (model-based teaching of idioms), translation (equivalence by mapping rather than lexical parity), lexicography (dictionary fields for conceptual model, discourse function, scalar degree), and NLP (annotation layers such as THERMAL_SCALE, CONTAINER_STATE, VERTICAL_MOVE, INSTITUTION_ROLE). Limitations include a classical-text focus and the absence of psycholinguistic testing; future work will expand to modern media, broaden Romance/Turkic coverage, and evaluate model-guided annotation in multilingual transformer pipelines.

In sum, figurative language in both traditions emerges as a semio-cognitive nexus: universals provide the skeleton (FIRE / HEAT, CONTAINER, JOURNEY, VERTICALITY, ENERGY), while local codes dress it in culturally specific forms. Idioms and metaphors thus act not as ornament but as operational mechanisms that bridge cognition and cultural order, offering a unified account of how poetic form encodes social and ethical meaning.

In addition, the article operationalizes its claims with a replicable annotation scheme that links idiom tokens to explicit source–target mappings, scalar degrees, and discourse functions, enabling quantitative corpus work and explainable NLP. By aligning parallel examples (e.g., Petrarch—Fuzuli; Ariosto—Zakir; Manzoni—Vaqif), the study demonstrates how identical conceptual skeletons yield distinct stylistic realizations under divergent cultural constraints. This dual lens—universal templates filtered by local codes—offers practical guidance for curriculum design, translator training, and culturally aware language technologies. As such, the framework advances an integrated, testable agenda for future research at the intersection of cognitive linguistics, semiotics, and comparative philology.

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