



---

## HOW ZOONYMS ARE USED IN METAPHORICAL UNDERSTANDING

Ahmedova Nodira Djavadullaevna  
Teacher of UzSwlu, 3rd Faculty

---

### Abstract

This article explores the zoonyms and the usage of zoonyms in metaphorical understanding. The place, the role of zoonyms in linguistic area as well as in culture, history and language are also discussed with clear examples and explanations

**Keywords:** Zoonyms, Metaphor, metaphorical expression, social role, human behavior, cognitive and linguistic significance, ethnolinguistic heritage.

### Introduction

Zoonyms are words that denote animals which can also many distinctive nations use zoonyms in metaphorical expression related to their own culture. Zoonyms in metaphorical expressions habitually describe human behavior, character, emotions and social roles.

Such expressions reflect how humans perceive animals and transfer their traits, attitudes to themselves – a process include the cognitive metaphor theory and cultural symbolism. For instance, the metaphor – Strong as a horse which the physical power of horses are comparing to humans and humanity accept this expression to themselves. Horse is zoonym in this expression. According to Conceptual Methaphor theory of Lakoff and Johnson, concrete ideas or thoughts assists to understand abstract ideas. Animals have vivid, observable behaviors; therefore, they become powerful source domains for conceptual metaphors about humans. These expressions encode human experience using animal treats that everyone knows.



---

## **Main metaphorical functions of zoonyms**

Describing a character and personality. Many zoonyms depicts and help to symbolize personality which are different. Lion is seen as a symbol of leadership(common). Lion zoonym is leading to used in metaphor as Brave as lion or The king of forest. Moreover, Owl wisdom such as A wise old owl which simplify complex human qualities through familiar animal imagery.

Expressing social role as well as emotions

Zoonyms can convey affection, insult, social attitude or mock. A good example for this area could be little bunny or chicken which symbolize shy, fearful andnot brave people. A pig zoonym that is very common and well-known in many cultures, nations utilized it for insult, negative judgment or disgust to each other. Zoonyms serve emotional and evaluative purposes in language.

Proverbs and idioms

Zoonyms appear frequently in idioms and proverbs:

Do not count your chickens before they hatch.

Let the cat out of the bag. Every dog has its day.

These idioms often carry moral or practical lessons, illustrating how animals represent human experience metaphorically.

Cognitive and linguistic significance

Zoonymic metaphors help us: Categorize complex human behavior through simple, vivid imagery. Preserve folk wisdom in language. Reveal how culture and cognition interact. In essence, zoonyms mirror both universal human thinking (shared animal traits) and culture-specific associations.

Zoonyms as ethnolinguistic heritage

In Turkic cultures, bo'ri (wolf) was sacred and symbolic of tribal protection. The word qirg'iz (Kyrgyz) itself may have historical links to animal totems. Some Indo-European names contain ancient zoonymic roots "Leonard" leo "lion". Thus, studying zoonyms helps reconstruct proto-cultural thinking. Moreover, zoonyms also used as a symbol of nation and culture. For example, wolf used to be the Turkic tribe which maintain Asian nations. Even now, central Asian countries show a wolf gestures with their fingers for symbol. It shows that zoonyms are not visible and necessary inly in linguistics but also in many spheres of life.



---

## **Conclusion**

Zoonyms, far beyond their surface function as mere animal names, represent one of the most vibrant and meaningful layers of human language. Their metaphorical power bridges the natural and social worlds, reflecting how people conceptualize themselves, others, and their environment through animal imagery. Across cultures and linguistic systems, zoonyms function as semantic mirrors of human character, emotional states, moral judgments, and collective worldviews.

## **References**

1. Alekseevo, M.A (2014) Zoonyms Metaphors in English and Russian cognitive and cultural aspects
2. Zykova, I. V. (2017).Conceptual Metaphor and Linguocultural Specificity of Animal Names.
3. Makhmudova, D. A. (2018).Metaphorical Usage of Zoonyms in the English and Uzbek Languages.
4. Kryukov, S. A. (2012).Ethnolinguistic Symbols in the Lexicon of the Turkic Peoples.
5. Yusupova, N. R. (2020).Zoonymic Metaphors in the English and Tatar Linguistic Worldview