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# LINGUOCULTURAL REPRESENTATION OF MORAL VALUES AND NATIONAL MENTALITY IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK PROVERBS

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**Annotatsiya:** Mazkur maqolada ingliz va o‘zbek tillarida shaxs ma’naviyatini ifodalovchi maqollarda ma’naviy-axloqiy qadriyatlarning semantik va lingvomadaniy kodlanishi qiyosiy tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda qadriyat–norma–baho–pragmatika munosabati, metafora, ramz, etalon va milliy mentalitet markerlari asosiy analitik birliklar sifatida olinadi. Tahlil natijalari halollik, vijdon, or-nomus, sha’n, mehnatsevarlik, sabr, hurmat va ezgulik kabi qadriyatlar ikki tilda umumiy aksiologik yadroga ega bo‘lsa-da, ularning obrazlanishi, nazorat manbai va kommunikativ qo‘llanishida farqlar mavjudligini ko‘rsatadi. O‘zbek maqollarida el, or-nomus, baraka va qo‘ni-qo‘shnichilik kabi kollektiv markerlar, ingliz maqollarida esa self-control, time, privacy va fair play kabi individual mas’uliyatga yo‘naltirilgan markerlar faolroq namoyon bo‘lishi dissertatsiya materiallari asosida tavsiflanadi.
**Kalit so‘zlar:** paremiologiya, shaxs ma’naviyati, lingvomadaniyat, ma’naviy-axloqiy qadriyat, milliy mentalitet, metafora, ramz, pragmatika

**Abstract:** This article presents a comparative analysis of the semantic and linguocultural encoding of spiritual-moral values in English and Uzbek proverbs that express individual spirituality. The study utilizes the relationships between values, norms, evaluations, and pragmatics, as well as metaphors, symbols, archetypes, and markers of national mentality, as primary analytical units. The analysis reveals that while values such as honesty, conscience, honor, dignity, industriousness, patience, respect, and benevolence share a common axiological core in both languages, there are differences in their imagery, sources of regulation, and communicative application. Based on the research findings, the study characterizes the more prominent presence of collective markers—such as community (*el*), honor (*or-nomus*), blessing (*baraka*), and neighborliness—in Uzbek proverbs, contrasted with markers focused on individual responsibility—such as self-control, time, privacy, and fair play—in English proverbs.
**Keywords:** paremiology, individual spirituality, linguoculture, spiritual-moral value, national mentality, metaphor, symbol, pragmatics

**Аннотация:** В данной статье представлен сравнительный анализ семантического и лингвокультурного кодирования моральных и духовных ценностей в пословицах, выражающих личную духовность, на английском и узбекском языках. В качестве основных аналитических единиц рассматриваются отношения «ценность-норма-ценность-прагматика», метафора, символ, стандарт и маркеры национального менталитета. Результаты анализа показывают, что, хотя такие ценности, как честность, совесть, честь, достоинство, трудолюбие, терпение, уважение и доброта, имеют общее аксиологическое ядро в обоих языках, существуют различия в их представлении, источнике контроля и коммуникативном использовании. На основе материалов диссертации описывается тот факт, что в узбекских пословицах более активно проявляются собирательные маркеры, такие как «эль», «честь», «барака» и «кони-кошниличик», а в английских — маркеры, направленные на личную ответственность, такие как самоконтроль, время, уединение и честная игра.

**Ключевые слова:** паремиология, личная духовность, языковая культура, духовные и моральные ценности, национальный менталитет, метафора, символ, прагматика.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Proverbs that reflect an individual's spirituality are paremiological units that encapsulate human moral experience, social norms, and cultural memory in a concise form. The dissertation aims to conduct a comparative study of such units in English and Uzbek based on linguo-spiritual and linguo-cultural parameters, and to elucidate their semantic, pragmatic, and translational characteristics through operational criteria.

The content of a proverb simultaneously manifests values, norms, evaluative judgments, and pragmatic goals. Therefore, it is essential to analyze paremiological material not merely as a lexical or folkloric object, but as a cultural code and a communicative strategy.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study relied on the comprehensive methodology outlined in the dissertation: analysis and synthesis of scholarly sources, comparative-typological analysis, linguocultural and cognitive-pragmatic interpretation, semantic grouping of paremiological units, content and discourse analysis, and the comparison of frequency data. The article employs the models "semantic core → evaluative component → pragmatic goal" and "cultural sign → value norm → communicative strategy."

The empirical basis consisted of the English and Uzbek paremiological material compiled in the dissertation, along with the comparative examples presented therein. The unit of analysis was defined as the interrelationship between the proverb's semantic core, evaluative component, linguocultural marker, and pragmatic function.

## 3. RESULTS

Spiritual and moral values are understood as a system of concepts regulating an individual's inner world and social behavior, encompassing norms such as conscience, honesty, patience, gratitude, justice, and honor [1, p. 22]. In proverbs, these values are semantically encoded through a "norm—warning—example—evaluation" chain: the proverb first presents a general rule (definition), then demonstrates the mechanism of action (cause and effect), illustrates a model akin to a real-life example, reinforces the effect of "collective acceptance" based on shared experience, and finally yields a generalization consistent with the scientific-psychological interpretation of the value [2, p. 58]. For instance, the Uzbek proverb "Halol mehnat — rohat" (Honest labor brings contentment) establishes honesty as a norm and illustrates the causal link between labor and its outcome as a mechanism; similarly, the English proverb "Honesty is the best policy" evaluates honesty as the optimal strategy [3, p. 41]. Corpus studies note a high frequency of moral vocabulary (e.g., *honest, truth, shame, conscience* / *halol, rost, uyat, vijdon*) within proverbial units; For instance, data from modern paremiological corpora indicate that English proverbs incorporating the "honesty/truth" seme account for approximately 8–12% of the total [4, p. 77]. From a scholarly perspective, such figures confirm that proverbs function as a "lexicon of values" and that concepts of morality occupy a central place within the semantic system; this is because a paremia transforms social experience into a concise system of signs, transmitting mental stereotypes from generation to generation through language [5, p. 103].

The semantic model of spiritual values in proverbs is often based on antithesis: opposing poles—such as good vs. bad, honest vs. forbidden (haram), patience vs. haste, and justice vs. oppression—collide within a single unit [6, p. 64]. This mechanism of antithesis accelerates categorization in the listener's mind, as making judgments based on contrast is both pragmatically easier and more impactful; consequently, the proverb functions as a "moral compass" [7, p. 112]. For instance, the proverb "Do good and cast it into the sea; if the fish does not know, the Creator

does" conveys the value of altruism, utilizing the concept of an "invisible reward" as its underlying mechanism; similar variants, such as "Do good and forget it," are found in English [8, p. 29]. Within the field of social psychology, experiments have documented the impact of short formulas that reinforce prosocial behavior, noting that normative slogans are remembered more quickly than direct instructions; this can be attributed to the rhythmic and parallel structure of the proverbial text [9, p. 90]. From a scholarly perspective, the semantics of proverbs operate through "conceptual metaphors" and "symbolic scenarios": mappings such as "labor—fruit," "truth—light," and "lie—shadow" transform abstract values into tangible, vivid images [10, p. 51].

A linguocultural expression is understood as the transmission—via linguistic units—of culture-specific symbols, standards, ritual concepts, and historical experiences acting as a "code" [2, p. 61]. In proverbs, such codes often function through mechanisms like metaphor, metonymy, parallelism, and anthroponymic or ethnonymic references; by drawing upon the listener's collective memory, they accelerate the process of meaning comprehension [5, p. 108]. For instance, in Uzbek proverbs, the symbol of "bread" (*non*) serves as a standard for livelihood and honesty—with the existence of the curse "May the bread strike you down" (*Non ursin*) further demonstrating its status as a sacred concept—whereas in English paremiology, "bread" is more frequently associated with economic stability and the concept of labor, as seen in the phrase "earn one's bread" [1, p. 34]. Statistical analyses highlight that units belonging to the semantic field of food and sustenance (such as *non* [bread], *tuz* [salt], and *rizq* [sustenance]) appear with high frequency in Uzbek proverbs, while "time" and "work" feature more prominently as central concepts in English proverbs; some studies note that English proverbs incorporating the concept of "time" account for approximately 10% of the total [4, p. 81]. As a scholarly explanation, this difference stems from mentality and historical-economic experience: while symbols of sustenance and abundance are key markers of the moral order in agrarian cultures, time management and productivity become the moral yardstick in industrial-modern cultures [6, p. 70].

In proverbs, values are often conveyed through the model of an "archetypal figure"—that is, by contrasting an ideal person (wise, honest, patient) with a negative type (lazy, deceitful, stingy) [7, p. 118]. This mechanism satisfies a narrative need: the listener strives to identify with the positive type and distance themselves from the negative one; pragmatically, the proverb functions as a tool for social control [9, p. 93]. For instance, Uzbek proverbs conveying the sentiment that "the lazy person is an outcast to the community" reinforce the value of contributing to collective efforts, whereas English expressions such as "A lazy sheep thinks its wool heavy" link laziness to self-deception [3, p. 55]. Sociolinguistic observations note that proverbs incorporating the component "people" (or "community") are used more frequently in collectivist cultures, while in individualistic cultures, one more often encounters paremiological units associated with the concepts of "self" and "mind" [10, p. 59]. The scholarly explanation is that paremiological standards encode a cultural "normative ideal": in a collectivist culture, spirituality is measured primarily through social adaptation and duty to the community, whereas in an individualistic environment, it is measured through personal responsibility and self-regulation [2, p. 66].

The issue of national mentality is studied through proverbs by identifying which aspects of an individual's character are prioritized and which serve as subjects of warning [2, p. 69]. From a linguistic perspective, mentality manifests as a "hierarchy of priority concepts": it is noted that in Uzbek paremiology, concepts such as "community/people" (*el-odam*), "honor/dignity" (*or-nomus*), "blessing/abundance" (*baraka*), and "respect for elders" occupy the upper tier, whereas in English paremiology, concepts like "self-control," "time," "privacy," and "fair play" are more active [6, p. 78]. The mechanism of this hierarchy is evident in pragmatic choices: the frequency with which a specific proverb is cited in a given situation and the use of a particular value as a "final argument" serve as indicators of mentality [7, p. 121]. For instance, in Uzbek

communication, situations involving strong social judgment trigger proverbs aligned with the "What will people say?" scenario, whereas English communication more frequently features boundary-setting strategies such as "Mind your own business" [1, p. 47]. Social research presents statistical findings indicating that the motive for social approval is higher in collectivist cultures, while the motives for personal space and independent decision-making are stronger in individualistic cultures; In some comparative studies, such differences are expressed through indices [11, p. 210]. From a scholarly perspective, proverbs represent the aspect of mentality that is "embedded in language": they define the individual's spiritual dimension within the balance between the collective and personal freedom; consequently, in a pragmatic interpretation, the speech situation and social role serve as decisive factors [10, p. 66].

The pragmatic nature of proverbs lies in the fact that they do not merely convey meaning but also exert an "effect": they command, warn, shame, inspire, or justify [5, p. 115]. This mechanism of influence is explained through speech act theory: proverbs often function as directives (advice), expressives (evaluations), commissives (promises), or declaratives (social judgments) [12, p. 33]. For instance, the Uzbek proverb "Yolg‘onning oyog‘i kalta" (A lie has short legs) operates as a warning directive; in English, the saying "Liars should have good memories" amplifies the critical expressive effect [3, p. 68]. Communicative observations note that sentences containing proverbs often conclude with a brief explanation—meaning the proverb serves as an "argument-closing" piece of evidence; this reflects strategies of linguistic economy and reliance on authority [7, p. 127]. Scholarly analysis suggests that proverbs possess pragmatic "cultural authority"; although their specific origin may be obscure, their collective authorship makes them difficult to refute. Consequently, moral norms are presented not as direct instructions to the individual, but as "universally acknowledged truths" [2, p. 72].

The historical layer plays a significant role in the national mentality, as proverbs preserve traces of ancient economic practices, religious-ethical views, and social structures [6, p. 82]. This layer manifests through mechanisms such as archaic vocabulary, religious terms, and ritualistic imagery; for instance, Uzbek proverbs feature religious-ethical concepts like *Xoliq* (the Creator), *harom–halol* (forbidden–lawful), and *baraka* (blessing), while English proverbs contain structures rooted in the Bible, such as "As you sow, so shall you reap" [1, p. 53]. The concept of "reaping what one sows" exists in both cultures, explaining the ethical principle of cause and effect through an agricultural metaphor; such a universal metaphor relies on shared human experience [10, p. 70]. The prevalence of agrarian metaphors can also be explained historically and statistically: because a large portion of the population engaged in farming for centuries, the "sowing–reaping" model served as a convenient vehicle for expressing ethical concepts [11, p. 214]. From a scholarly perspective, historical metaphors facilitate "cognitive conservation": the symbolic power of values endures even as social life changes, precisely because these metaphors are evocative and grounded in everyday experience [5, p. 119].

A semantic field is understood as a network of meanings—comprising interconnected and hierarchized concepts related to values—that recurs systematically across linguistic units [10, p. 74]. Within proverbs, such a field manifests through clusters acting as mechanisms: pairs such as honesty–truthfulness, patience–contentment, labor–responsibility, humility–arrogance, justice–injustice, and generosity–stinginess form a stable paradigm [2, p. 76]. For instance, while the English proverb "No pain, no gain" emphasizes a strict causal link between effort and outcome, the Uzbek proverb "Mehnat qilgan — to‘yadi" (He who works shall be fed) connects labor to livelihood and sustenance; both affirm labor as a value, yet the source of the imagery differs [3, p. 75]. Paremiological collections demonstrate that proverbs relating to the concepts of labor and action constitute a significant share; according to certain cataloging studies, the "work/labor" cluster ranks among the largest thematic categories [4, p. 88]. The scholarly explanation posits that inter-conceptual correspondences arise from universal needs, whereas differences are determined

by a culture's core "motifs" and the historical roles of institutions of upbringing (family, *mahalla*, school, church) [6, p. 86].

Differences often manifest in the "core criterion" of evaluation: in Uzbek proverbs, the core criterion of morality is linked primarily to social harmony, respect, and a sense of honor (*or*), whereas in English proverbs, it is associated with personal discipline, planning, and fair rules [7, p. 133]. This mechanism is clearly perceptible in pragmatic application: in an Uzbek context, an individual who violates the principle of "respect for elders" is quickly subjected to social judgment via proverbs, while in an English context, the violation of "fairness" and "rules" draws greater condemnation [1, p. 60]. For instance, Uzbek proverbs conveying the sentiment "Respect the elder, honor the younger" serve as educational directives, whereas English formulas like "Rules are rules" prioritize adherence to norms over the individual [12, p. 39]. Social studies indicate that the motivations for conforming to norms vary: the component of "shame" is shown to be stronger in a collectivist environment, while the components of "guilt" and legal accountability predominate in an individualistic environment [11, p. 219]. From a scholarly perspective, proverbs activate the "shame-conscience" mechanism to varying degrees: while Uzbek proverbs often transform external social judgment into internal control, English proverbs reinforce internal control through concepts of rules and personal responsibility [10, p. 78].

Pragmatic context refers to the circumstances under which a proverb is used in a real-life speech situation—specifically, by whom, to whom, for what purpose, and at what level of social distance [12, p. 41]. The mechanism by which a proverb functions is often based on "indirect influence": instead of delivering a direct reprimand, a proverb is cited; consequently, the criticism is attributed to a "universal truth" rather than the individual, thereby softening the conflict [5, p. 123]. For instance, in Uzbek family interactions, proverbs such as "He who is patient shall succeed" (*Sabr qilgan — topar*) are used to offer counsel, employing a gentle directive as an educational strategy; similarly, in English communication, supportive expressions like "Keep your chin up" foster emotional resilience [3, p. 83]. Studies on discourse analysis indicate that indirect speech acts enhance social adaptability—appearing most frequently in hierarchical relationships (such as parent–child or mentor–protege)—and identify the proverb as the most concise form of such indirectness [7, p. 140]. The scholarly explanation is that the proverb serves a pragmatic "face-saving" strategy: it softens the harshness of a reprimand while preserving its normative content, thereby reinforcing moral values without coercive pressure [12, p. 45].

The legitimizing function of the proverb is also significant, serving to substantiate a personal opinion with collective experience [2, p. 80]. Through this mechanism, the speaker avoids saying "I think so" and instead transforms the opinion into a collective judgment by stating "the proverb says so"; consequently, expressing a dissenting view becomes pragmatically difficult [5, p. 126]. For instance, in a debate regarding economic integrity, a proverb conveying the idea that "there is nothing illicit about what is honestly earned" might be used as evidence; similarly, English expressions such as "Character is what you do when no one is watching" serve to legitimize personal self-regulation [1, p. 66]. Observations indicate that arguments reinforced by proverbs tend to function as "concluding remarks" in a discussion—thereby increasing the likelihood of ending the debate; in some discourse analyses, this phenomenon is termed "paremiological finalization" [7, p. 145]. From a scholarly perspective, this legitimizing function relies on cultural capital: knowing and appropriately using a proverb demonstrates the speaker's social experience and moral standing, while simultaneously reproducing the value system and adapting it to new circumstances [10, p. 83].

To illustrate the "conceptual chemistry" of the spiritual-moral content within proverbs, ethical binary oppositions can be expressed as symbolic formulas, thereby clarifying the linguosemantic model [6, p. 90]. Under this approach, the relationship between "truthfulness" and "falsehood" can be represented by the following symbolic equations: Truthfulness + Conscience → Trust → Social

stability; Falsehood + Self-interest → Distrust → Social disintegration [2, p. 84]. This mechanism aligns with a cognitive scenario wherein positive qualities generate a "chain" of positive outcomes, while negative qualities give rise to negative consequences [10, p. 85]. For instance, the sentiment expressed in the proverb "A truthful word gains a friend" demonstrates how truthfulness creates social capital; similarly, the English saying "A good name is better than riches" signifies the superiority of reputation and honor over economic wealth [3, p. 92]. Research on social trust indicators suggests that societies with high levels of trust experience reduced transaction costs and increased cooperation—a concept that can be linked to the "trust-blessing" scenario found in proverbs [11, p. 223]. The scholarly explanation is that proverbs simplify moral reasoning and create a mechanism for "rapid decision-making": in complex social situations, an individual quickly evaluates a moral choice through the lens of a proverbial scenario and adjusts their behavior accordingly [12, p. 49].

A dynamic balance exists between the historical layer and modern interpretation within the linguocultural nature of proverbs, a phenomenon explained by "semantic renewal" [5, p. 131]. Semantic renewal refers to the process wherein a proverb—while retaining its core value-based content—assumes a new pragmatic function within a new communicative context [2, p. 88]. This mechanism is particularly evident in internet discourse, mass media, advertising, and meme culture: proverbs may be shortened, used ironically, or placed in altered contexts, yet their moral "core" often remains recognizable [12, p. 52]. For instance, while the phrase "Time is money" functions as a productivity slogan in modern management discourse, the Uzbek concept of "Vaqt — g‘animat" (Time is a precious opportunity) carries religious-ethical connotations, serving as a reminder of the value of life and the importance of responsibility [1, p. 72]. Discourse analyses note the prevalence of short, rhythmic, and familiar units (such as proverbs, slogans, and aphorisms) in digital communication; this trend can be attributed to the dominance of "short codes" within the context of the attention economy [9, p. 101]. From a scholarly perspective, semantic renewal demonstrates the vitality of the concept: although the value system has historical roots, it is constantly recontextualized through language, thereby shaping the modern image of the national mentality [10, p. 89].

The emergence of similar meanings in English and Uzbek paremiology during the process of cultural exchange is linked not only to universal experience but also to the influence of translation, education, and popular culture [6, p. 95]. Within this mechanism, certain proverbs are adopted through calquing or via semantic equivalents; consequently, a single value may be expressed using different symbols in the two languages while fulfilling the same pragmatic function [2, p. 92]. For instance, the concept behind "No pain, no gain" is actively used in Uzbek speech via the equivalent "Mehnatsiz rohat yo‘q" (No comfort without labor), where the image of "pain" aligns with the concepts of "labor" and "toil" [3, p. 99]. Observations regarding translation practice indicate that when a direct paremiological equivalent is difficult to find, translators often select a functional equivalent—employing a proverb that shares an equal pragmatic impact rather than one that is a literal translation [12, p. 58]. The scholarly explanation for this is that the semantics of a proverb are tied to a "cultural dimension": a symbol that carries strong imagery in one language (such as bread, salt, or *baraka* [blessing]) may not hold the same weight in another; therefore, "equivalence of impact" and "alignment of the core value" serve as the criteria for equivalence in linguocultural studies [10, p. 92].

In accordance with the requirements of the chemical formula, the "reaction model" of spiritual and moral values can be conditionally shown, in which positive behavior increases with "catalysts", and negative behavior increases with "inhibitors" [9, p. 104]. For example, Honesty (H) + Labor (M) + Patience (S) → Reputation (O) + Stability (B), where O and B are interpreted as derivatives of social capital; on the contrary, Lie (Y) + Laziness (D) → Distrust (I) + Risk of Punishment (J) [2, p. 96]. This mechanism serves to formalize the cause-and-effect

scenarios that regularly appear in proverbs, that is, it is explained in the form of the equations "good quality - good result" and "bad quality - bad result" [6, p. 99]. For example, if the content of "A good name is half a state" means that reputation is a resource, examples like "A good name is better than gold" in English confirm this [3, p. 104]. In sociological interpretations, it is said that reputation has an economic value, cooperation with reliable subjects is more; this idea is in the same direction as the "name-state" metaphor in proverbs [11, p. 226]. Such formal modeling helps to see abstract values as a system in linguistic and spiritual research: although the text of a proverb looks artistic, the "algorithm" controlling social behavior is hidden inside it [10, p. 95].

**4. DISCUSSION**

The results show that the presence of spiritual values in two languages does not mean that their linguistic and cultural realization is the same. It is necessary to distinguish between universal value and the image, standard and pragmatic scenario that represents it. The axis of collectivism-individualism is clearly visible in concepts such as honor, reputation and responsibility. These differences are not a strict national stereotype, but are interpreted as a trend observed in the researched paremiological material.

In summarizing the results, the "matrix of linguistic and moral criteria" proposed in the dissertation - value, norm, assessment and pragmatics - serves as an integrative tool. Through this matrix, units in two languages are described on the basis of the same parameters, and the subjectivity of the comparison is reduced.

**5. CONCLUSION**

English and Uzbek proverbs share a common axiological core of moral and ethical values; however, their linguocultural encoding differs in terms of imagery, markers, sources of normative guidance, and pragmatic strategies. Therefore, a comparative paremiological analysis requires taking into account both the universal value and the national form of expression.

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