

## LINGUOCULTURAL FEATURES OF EMPATHY-RELATED PROVERBS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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### **Annotation**

This article explores the linguocultural features of empathy-related proverbs in the English and Uzbek languages. The primary aim is to identify similarities and differences in their semantic meaning, cultural values, emotional expression, and metaphorical structure. The results indicate that while both cultures share universal moral values and use proverbs for didactic purposes, their cultural interpretations differ significantly. English proverbs tend to frame empathy as an individual emotional experience, heavily relying on abstract and neutral linguistic structures. Conversely, Uzbek proverbs approach empathy as a collective social duty, employing emotionally rich and expressive metaphors connected to the heart and soul.

### **Keywords**

Empathy, proverbs, linguocultural analysis, comparative linguistics, cultural values, national mentality, metaphorical structure.

**Introduction.** The relationship between language and culture has long been one of the central topics in modern linguistics. Language is not only a system of grammar and vocabulary but also a reflection of national mentality, cultural traditions, social norms, and moral values. Among different linguistic units, proverbs are considered one of the most important sources of cultural knowledge because they represent the experience, wisdom, and emotional worldview of a nation. Proverbs preserve the moral standards of society and transmit them from one generation to another. Therefore, they are an important object of linguocultural research. One of the most significant semantic groups of proverbs is connected with empathy. Empathy is understood as the ability to understand another person's

feelings, to show compassion, and to react emotionally to the problems of others.

In English culture, empathy is often associated with personal responsibility, individual emotional experience, and tolerance.<sup>7</sup> In Uzbek culture, empathy is closely connected with kindness, respect, social harmony, and moral duty. For this reason, empathy-related proverbs in English and Uzbek languages provide rich material for comparative linguocultural analysis. Studying such proverbs makes it possible to understand not only linguistic structures but also cultural differences between the two nations. The aim of this article is to analyze the linguocultural features of empathy-related proverbs in English and Uzbek languages and to identify the similarities and differences in their semantic meaning, cultural values, emotional expression, and metaphorical structure. To practically examine these cultural concepts within a specific literary context, this study takes Abdulla Qahhor's classic short story "The Thief" as the primary object of analysis.

**Methods.** The research is based on a comparative linguocultural approach. The study combines several linguistic methods that make it possible to analyze proverbs from both linguistic and cultural perspectives. First of all, a number of empathy-related proverbs were collected from English and Uzbek proverb dictionaries, linguistic research articles, and educational materials<sup>8</sup>. Only those proverbs that clearly express sympathy, compassion, kindness, emotional understanding, or moral support were selected for the analysis. The selection of proverbs was based on several criteria. First, the proverb had to contain a clear moral meaning connected with empathy. Second, the proverb had to be culturally significant and commonly used in everyday communication.<sup>9</sup> Third, the proverb had to reflect emotional or moral values typical for the culture in which it is used. As a result, a representative group of proverbs in both languages was chosen for comparative analysis. After the material was collected, the proverbs were analyzed using semantic analysis. This method made it possible to identify the main meaning of each proverb and to determine how empathy is expressed in linguistic form. Special attention was given to the emotional tone of the proverbs and to the lexical units that express sympathy, kindness, compassion, and understanding. In addition, linguocultural analysis was used in order to determine what cultural values are reflected in the proverbs. This method helped to identify the connection between linguistic meaning and national mentality. For example, Uzbek proverbs often emphasize respect for others, kindness, and social harmony, while English

<sup>7</sup> Mieder, W. (2004). *Proverbs: A handbook*. Greenwood Press.

<sup>8</sup> Rahmatullayev, Sh. (2010). *O'zbek tilining frazeologik lug'ati*. O'qituvchi nashriyoti.

<sup>9</sup> O'zbekiston Fanlar Akademiyasi. (2006). *O'zbek xalq maqollari*. Fan nashriyoti.

proverbs more often emphasize personal responsibility and individual experience. Such differences were studied from a cultural point of view.

**Results.** The analysis of empathy-related proverbs in English and Uzbek languages shows that both languages contain a large number of proverbs that reflect sympathy, kindness, compassion, and emotional understanding.

1. Similarity of moral and emotional meaning. One of the most important results of the research is that empathy-related proverbs in both languages express universal moral values. Both English and Uzbek proverbs teach people to be kind, to understand others, and to avoid judging people too quickly. This similarity shows that empathy is not limited to a single culture but represents a universal human value that is important in different societies.

2. Differences in cultural values. Despite the similarity in moral meaning, the cultural interpretation of empathy is different in English and Uzbek proverbs. English proverbs often focus on individual emotional experience. Empathy is presented as a personal ability to understand another person's feelings. In contrast, Uzbek proverbs reflect a more collective understanding of empathy. Kindness and compassion are often presented as social values that are necessary for maintaining harmony in society. <sup>10</sup>

3. Differences in metaphorical and linguistic structure. Another important result of the research is connected with metaphorical structure. English proverbs often use more abstract and psychological expressions. Uzbek proverbs, on the other hand, often use more emotional and expressive language. Such proverbs are more expressive and emotionally rich. The use of metaphor in Uzbek proverbs reflects the emotional and cultural traditions of the Uzbek people. English proverbs, in contrast, are usually more general and abstract.

4. Pragmatic and communicative features. The analysis also shows that empathy-related proverbs in both languages have important pragmatic functions. They are often used in communication in order to comfort someone, to give moral advice, or to explain a difficult situation. In English communication, such proverbs are usually used in a neutral and calm way. In Uzbek communication, however, empathy-related proverbs are often used in a more emotional and expressive context. English culture, while also valuing empathy, often expresses it in a more restrained and individualistic way.

**Analysis.** To contextualize the linguocultural features of empathy within Uzbek literature, this study applies its findings to Abdulla Qahhor's prominent

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<sup>10</sup> Wierzbicka, A. (1999). *Emotions across languages and cultures: Diversity and universals*. Cambridge University Press.

short story "The Thief". The narrative, which details the tragic loss of a poor peasant's Qobil bobo only ox and his futile appeals to corrupt local authorities, serves as a profound reflection of societal empathy and its devastating absence. In the context of our proverb analysis, the story starkly illustrates the collective nature of Uzbek empathy by showing what happens when it is broken. The bureaucratic figures, such as the amin and the pristav, demonstrate a complete lack of compassion, embodying the negative, anti-social behaviors condemned by traditional Uzbek wisdom, parallel to the proverb "Another person's grief is dark to a stranger".

Conversely, the emotional weight of the story relies heavily on the reader's and the common villagers' shared sense of injustice and moral duty towards the victim. Analyzing Qahhor's work through a linguocultural lens reveals that in the Uzbek national mentality, empathy is not merely a private, individual emotional state as often emphasized in English contexts, but a strict collective social obligation. The failure of the officials to show empathy in "Thief" is portrayed not just as a personal psychological flaw, but as a severe disruption of social harmony and human dignity. Thus, the practical application of our analysis to this literary object confirms that Uzbek empathy is deeply intertwined with concepts of shared social duty, collective conscience, and the moral soul of the community.

**Discussion.** The results of the research show that empathy-related proverbs are an important part of both English and Uzbek linguistic cultures. They reflect the moral values of society and show how people understand kindness, compassion, and emotional relationships. At the same time, the analysis demonstrates that linguistic meaning cannot be separated from cultural context. The same moral idea can be expressed differently depending on national mentality and cultural traditions. The similarities between English and Uzbek proverbs confirm that empathy is a universal human value. Both cultures consider kindness and emotional understanding to be important qualities. However, the differences in linguistic structure and cultural interpretation show that empathy is not expressed in the same way in different cultures. English proverbs emphasize individual emotional understanding, while Uzbek proverbs emphasize social responsibility and collective values. The results of this study also confirm the importance of linguocultural analysis in modern linguistics. Proverbs are not only linguistic units but also cultural symbols that reflect national identity. By studying empathy-related proverbs, it is possible to understand how different cultures interpret human relationships and moral values. Another important aspect of the discussion is the role of metaphor in the formation of proverbs. Metaphorical expressions

reflect the emotional worldview of a nation. Uzbek proverbs often use emotional and expressive metaphors, while English proverbs are more abstract and general. This difference shows that metaphorical structure is closely connected with cultural mentality.

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