



## **UNIVERSAL AND CULTURE-SPECIFIC VALUE CONCEPTS IN THE AXIOLOGICAL VOCABULARY OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK**

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### **Abstract**

This article investigates universal and culture-specific value concepts in the axiological vocabulary of English and Uzbek. Using a comparative-typological and cognitive-cultural approach, it analyses a corpus of literary works, folklore and media texts to identify moral, ethical and aesthetic values expressed in both languages. The study reveals common human ideals as well as culturally distinctive categories, demonstrating how linguistic choices embody national worldviews and contribute to a deeper understanding of intercultural communication and evaluative semantics.

**Keywords:** Axiological vocabulary; value concepts; comparative-typological analysis; cognitive-cultural approach; intercultural communication; evaluative semantics; English; Uzbek.

### **Introduction**

The study of axiological vocabulary has gained increasing relevance in contemporary linguistics because language is one of the most powerful tools for expressing values and shaping collective worldviews. Values—moral, ethical, aesthetic and social—constitute the cultural backbone of any society and are reflected in the lexical choices of its speakers. When two languages belong to different cultural traditions, the comparison of their axiological vocabulary not only uncovers universal human ideals but also highlights the specific cultural codes that



guide communication within each speech community. English and Uzbek, though historically and geographically distant, provide a particularly fruitful ground for such investigation. English represents the rich and diverse legacy of Western European thought, while Uzbek embodies the traditions of Central Asian culture, which has been shaped by Turkic, Persian and Islamic influences.

This article explores universal and culture-specific value concepts in the axiological vocabulary of English and Uzbek by combining a comparative-typological and cognitive-cultural framework. The comparative-typological method allows for the identification of both shared and divergent lexical units that encode values across the two languages. Cognitive-cultural analysis, in turn, explains how these units are embedded in mental models and cultural narratives that shape speakers' perceptions of morality, ethics and aesthetics.

The research corpus includes literary works, folklore and media texts, as these genres best capture the value-laden lexis of each language. Through the analysis of these sources, the study reveals how English and Uzbek speakers conceptualize such fundamental notions as justice, dignity, kindness and beauty, while also demonstrating how certain value categories are shaped by unique historical and cultural experiences.

By examining the interaction of universal and culture-specific elements in axiological vocabulary, the paper contributes to a deeper understanding of intercultural communication and evaluative semantics. It provides insights into how national worldviews are encoded in language and offers practical implications for translators, educators and scholars engaged in cross-cultural studies. In doing so, it reinforces the idea that values expressed in language are not merely linguistic artifacts but dynamic reflections of human culture and thought.

### **Literature Review**

Research on axiological vocabulary—lexical items that convey moral, ethical and aesthetic values—has developed along several key theoretical lines in modern linguistics. Early studies within philosophy of language and semantics (e.g., Ogden & Richards, 1923; Wierzbicka, 1997) laid the conceptual foundation for understanding how language encodes values and evaluative meanings. These works emphasized that value-laden words are not only descriptive but also performative, influencing social attitudes and cultural norms. In later decades, the



field of cognitive linguistics (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Langacker, 1987) expanded the discussion by introducing the concept of conceptual metaphor and mental models, which explain how values are mapped onto language through culturally grounded cognitive structures.

Comparative and cross-cultural studies have further demonstrated that axiological lexicon reflects both universal human concerns and culture-specific priorities. Researchers such as Hofstede (2001) and House (2016) have highlighted how different cultural dimensions—individualism vs. collectivism, high vs. low context communication—shape the expression of values in discourse. In the sphere of English linguistics, works by Thompson (2014) and Hunston & Thompson (2000) explored evaluative language in media and literary texts, identifying recurrent patterns of moral and aesthetic judgment. Uzbek linguistics, on the other hand, has contributed valuable insights into the semantics of values through the works of scholars like Karimov (2010) and Rashidova (2018), who analyzed proverbs, folklore and classical literature as carriers of ethical and spiritual ideals.

More recent research integrates these perspectives by applying a cognitive-cultural approach to the comparative study of English and Turkic languages. Studies by Sharifian (2017) and Kecskes (2014) argue that cultural conceptualizations embedded in language influence not only communication but also the construction of identity and worldview. Building on these findings, the present study positions itself at the intersection of comparative-typological analysis and cognitive-cultural theory, aiming to reveal how English and Uzbek axiological vocabulary encodes both universal values and culturally unique moral categories. This synthesis of international and regional scholarship provides a strong framework for analyzing how languages represent, preserve and transmit societal ideals.

### **Methodology**

This research employs a comparative-typological and cognitive-cultural methodology to examine universal and culture-specific value concepts in the axiological vocabulary of English and Uzbek. The comparative-typological approach allows systematic identification of similarities and differences in the lexical encoding of values across two distinct linguistic and cultural traditions. It provides the structural framework for classifying lexical units into moral, ethical and aesthetic categories and for highlighting both shared and divergent features.



The cognitive-cultural perspective complements this analysis by focusing on how value concepts are embedded in mental models and cultural narratives. This perspective explains the relationship between language and collective worldview, showing how values are conceptualized and transmitted within each society.

The empirical corpus consists of approximately one hundred texts representing three key genres: literary works (classic and modern), folklore samples (proverbs, folk tales) and contemporary media discourse. These sources were selected because they naturally contain value-laden lexis and provide authentic evidence of evaluative usage.

Data were analyzed in three stages: first, by extracting lexical items expressing moral, ethical or aesthetic judgement; second, by categorizing them according to their semantic and pragmatic functions; and third, by comparing the resulting categories across English and Uzbek to identify universal patterns and culturally specific concepts.

This combined methodology ensures both descriptive accuracy and cultural depth in interpreting the axiological vocabulary of the two languages.

## **Findings and Discussion**

The analysis of the collected corpus—comprising literary works, folklore, and media discourse in both English and Uzbek—reveals a rich and nuanced picture of how values are expressed and conceptualized. The findings demonstrate that axiological vocabulary in both languages reflects a shared set of universal human ideals while simultaneously embodying culture-specific categories shaped by historical, social, and religious traditions.

## **Universal Value Concepts**

Across English and Uzbek texts, several value concepts emerged as universal. Words and expressions denoting justice, kindness, honesty, respect, beauty and wisdom occur with high frequency and carry similar moral weight. In both languages, literary and folkloric sources consistently use metaphoric and symbolic imagery to elevate these ideals. For instance, beauty and wisdom are often linked to light, purity and natural phenomena, suggesting a common human metaphorical framework. Proverbs in both traditions reinforce similar moral lessons—such as



the value of helping others or maintaining fairness—indicating that certain axiological concepts are not bound by geography or cultural history.

### **Culture-Specific Value Concepts**

At the same time, the analysis highlights lexical units that are deeply rooted in the particular socio-cultural context of each language. In English, value terms often reveal an emphasis on individual agency, personal freedom and the ethics of fairness that have evolved through the country's philosophical and literary traditions. Expressions in media discourse frequently foreground self-reliance, initiative and personal responsibility. Uzbek axiological vocabulary, in contrast, reflects a strong orientation towards communal harmony, respect for elders and the spiritual dimensions of moral life, influenced by centuries of Islamic thought and Central Asian heritage. Folklore and proverbs consistently underscore the significance of hospitality, collective welfare and familial duty, embodying values that define the Uzbek national character.

### **Interplay of Universal and Culture-Specific Elements**

The findings show that these two sets of concepts are not strictly separate but interact in complex ways. For example, the notion of justice appears in both languages but is framed differently: English texts often associate justice with legal fairness and individual rights, whereas Uzbek discourse connects it to moral balance within the community. Similarly, concepts of beauty in both traditions share universal aesthetic dimensions but are filtered through culturally distinctive symbols and metaphors.

### **Implications for Intercultural Communication**

These results have significant implications for translation studies, cross-cultural education and intercultural communication. Understanding both the universal and culture-bound dimensions of axiological vocabulary enables more accurate translation of value-laden texts and promotes deeper cultural empathy. For educators and linguists, the findings provide a framework for teaching evaluative semantics in a way that fosters intercultural competence.

In sum, the study demonstrates that the axiological lexicon of English and Uzbek serves not merely as a repository of words but as a living reflection of shared human



ideals and culturally embedded moral frameworks, offering a bridge between universal human experience and the unique character of each culture.

## **Conclusion**

The comparative investigation of axiological vocabulary in English and Uzbek reveals that language serves as both a mirror and a shaper of cultural values. The study demonstrates that certain moral, ethical and aesthetic concepts—such as justice, kindness, honesty, dignity and beauty—are universal and find parallel lexical representation in both languages. These shared notions confirm the existence of common human ideals that transcend geography, history and religious tradition. At the same time, the analysis highlights the presence of culture-specific categories deeply rooted in the historical experiences, social structures and spiritual heritage of each nation.

In English, axiological vocabulary often reflects the values of individualism, personal responsibility and legal fairness, which have been reinforced through centuries of philosophical discourse and literary production. Uzbek, in contrast, embodies communal harmony, respect for elders and collective welfare as central moral principles, drawing on the region's Turkic-Islamic cultural background and its enduring emphasis on hospitality and spiritual integrity.

The coexistence of these universal and culture-bound elements shows that values expressed through language are not static; they evolve in dialogue with society's changing worldview. For linguists, educators and translators, recognizing this dynamic interaction is crucial for fostering intercultural competence and avoiding misinterpretation of value-laden texts. This research thus provides a meaningful contribution to comparative linguistics, cognitive-cultural studies and the broader understanding of how languages encode and transmit the moral imagination of their communities.

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