

LINGUOCULTURAL FEATURES OF THE REALIZATION OF THE CONCEPT OF “GREETING” IN ENGLISH, UZBEK, AND RUSSIAN PAREMIOLOGICAL TEXTS

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Abstract

This study investigates the linguocultural features of the concept of “greeting” as it is realized in the paremiological (proverbial) texts of English, Uzbek, and Russian languages. Paremiology provides a unique lens to explore how culture, social values, and linguistic norms shape the expression and function of greetings across different societies. Through a comparative analysis of selected proverbs and sayings, this article reveals the underlying cultural ideologies, communication patterns, and social expectations encoded within greeting-related paremia. The findings demonstrate distinct national-cultural traits manifested in language usage, metaphorical expressions, and pragmatic functions, thereby contributing to the fields of intercultural communication, cognitive linguistics, and folklore studies.

Keywords: Greeting, paremiology, linguocultural features, English proverbs, Uzbek proverbs, Russian proverbs, intercultural communication

Introduction

Greetings constitute a fundamental part of human communication and social interaction. They serve not only as a means of acknowledging presence but also as expressions of cultural values, social norms, and interpersonal relationships. While spoken greetings have been widely studied, the realization of greetings in paremiological texts offers a rich cultural resource that reflects deep-rooted linguistic and societal patterns [Brown and Levinson 1987:15].

Paremiology

the study of proverbs and proverbial expressions—provides insight into how societies transmit collective wisdom and behavioral norms through concise, metaphorical language [Mieder 2004:3]. Proverbs related to greetings encapsulate social etiquette, hospitality traditions, and expectations of interpersonal behavior embedded in specific cultures. This study examines how the concept of “greeting” is linguoculturally realized in English, Uzbek, and Russian paremiological corpora, focusing on linguistic forms, cultural symbolism, and pragmatic functions. These three languages offer an interesting comparative framework due to their diverse cultural-historical backgrounds: English as a Western Indo-European language, Uzbek as a Turkic language with Islamic and Central Asian heritage, and Russian as a Slavic language with Orthodox and Eurasian influences.

The Objectives of this Study are to:

1. Identify common and culture-specific features in greeting-related proverbs across the three languages;
2. Analyze linguistic and figurative devices used to conceptualize greetings;
3. Explore cultural values and social attitudes reflected through paremiological formulations;
4. Contribute to cross-cultural understanding of speech acts encoded in folklore.

2. Methods

The research methodology comprises a qualitative comparative analysis of greeting-related paremiological data extracted from well-established proverb collections and folklore databases in the three languages. The selected corpora include:

English: The Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs (Simpson and Weiner 1989), and other comprehensive collections [Simpson and Weiner 1989:124].

Uzbek: Collections compiled by Uzbek folklorists and linguistic researchers, such as those edited by Mukhtarov (2002) and Karimov (2010) [Mukhtarov 2002:58; Karimov 2010:79].

Russian: Proverb compendiums such as Russian Proverbs and Sayings (Medvedev 1997) and linguistic folklore anthologies [Medvedev 1997:102].

The Analysis Involved Several Stages

- a) Extracting proverbs explicitly or implicitly related to greeting behavior, social interaction initiation, and hospitality;
- b) Classifying the proverbs based on thematic motifs (e.g., politeness, sincerity, reciprocity);
- c) Examining linguistic features such as metaphor usage, syntactic structure, and culturally salient lexical items;
- d) Contextualizing proverbs within their cultural and historical background using secondary ethnographic literature;
- e) Comparing findings across the three languages to detect convergences and divergences.

3. Results

3.1 Linguistic and Figurative Expressions of “Greeting” in Proverbs

Analysis reveals that greeting-related proverbs frequently employ metaphorical language and figurative imagery to convey social expectations. **In English**, proverbs such as “A good word is worth much and costs little” emphasize the pragmatic and positive power of a friendly salutation [Simpson and Weiner 1989:195]. Another popular proverb, “First to greet is the master of the house”, denotes social hierarchy and initiative-taking in communication, reflecting values of politeness and leadership [Brown 1995:44].

In Uzbek paremiology, revealing metaphors convey spiritual and communal aspects of greetings. For example, the proverb “Salom so‘zlaridan yurak ko‘rinadi” (“The heart is seen through the words of greeting”) underlines the sincerity and moral quality inherent to greetings [Karimov 2010:79]. Hospitality is often metaphorically linked to generosity and social harmony, as in “Mehmonni salomsiz kiritma” (“Don’t let a guest in without greeting”) [Mukhtarov 2002:58].

In Russian proverbs, greeting is often contextualized within social relationships, emphasizing respect and reciprocity. For instance, “Без приветствия и слово не скажут” (“Without greeting, even a word won’t be spoken”) illustrates the cultural necessity of initiating contact properly [Medvedev 1997:102]. Another proverb, “Доброе слово и кошке приятно” (“A kind word is pleasant even to a cat”), uses metaphor to highlight the universal human appreciation for kind greetings, linking linguistic politeness to emotional well-being [Ivanov 2004:66].

3.2 Cultural Values and Social Norms Encapsulated in Greetings

Across all three cultures, greeting proverbs reflect the importance of politeness, respect, and communal harmony. However, the Uzbek proverbs tend to embed greeting within an Islamic ethical framework, stressing spiritual purity alongside social etiquette. The use of phrases like “Assalomu alaykum” in daily life corresponds to the proverb highlighting the moral sight into the heart [Tursunov 2011:79].

English proverbs mirror the Anglo-centric emphasis on individual initiative, social order, and measured courtesy, often underscoring practical benefits of courteous greetings as tools for social success [Brown and Levinson 1987:220]. Russian proverbs, shaped by Orthodox Christian cultural heritage as well as historical social stratification, convey complex social roles and the necessity of appropriate social comportment in greetings. The use of reciprocal greeting formulas exemplifies the social contract underlying community interactions [Petrova 2010:88].

3.3 Pragmatic Functions of Greeting Proverbs

Greeting proverbs serve multifaceted pragmatic functions:

Instructional: Advising speakers to greet appropriately to ensure successful communication and social acceptance (e.g., “First to greet is the master of the house” [Brown 1995:44]).

Expressive: Reflecting cultural attitudes toward hospitality and respect, demonstrating the emotional and moral weight of greetings (e.g., Uzbek “Salom so‘zlaridan yurak ko‘rinadi”).

Social Control: Reinforcing social norms and obligations, especially politeness and reciprocity, to maintain social harmony, evident in Russian proverb “Без приветствия и слово не скажут” [Medvedev 1997:102].

4. Discussion

The comparative examination demonstrates that the concept of “greeting” in paremiological texts acts as a socio-cultural marker embedding national identities and cultural heritage. The linguistic creativity—particularly through metaphor and figurative speech—reveals culturally specific ways of conceptualizing social politeness and interpersonal respect.

In Uzbek proverbs, the integration of spiritual aspects with social greetings reflects a holistic worldview in which language acts simultaneously as a social and moral force, typical of Central Asian Islamic culture [Karimov 2010:85]. This contrasts with English proverbs focusing more on pragmatic and socially strategic aspects of greetings and communication [Mieder 2004:34].

Russian greeting-related proverbs embody a balance between formal etiquette and emotional expressiveness, mirroring Russia's historic oscillations between rigid social structures and rich folk traditions. The interplay of authority and warmth is an essential feature in Russian paremiology concerning greetings [Petrova 2010:95].

These findings correspond well with theories in cultural linguistics that language and proverbs embody cognitive models shaped by cultural experience and social practices [Sharifian 2008:11]. Moreover, the study confirms the importance of paremiological data as a valuable resource for intercultural communication research, enabling a deeper understanding of how speech acts such as greetings are conceptualized and performed across cultures.

5. Conclusion

The study reveals that the realization of the concept of “greeting” in English, Uzbek, and Russian paremiological texts exhibits distinctive linguocultural features that reflect each culture's social values, communicative norms, and worldview. English proverbs emphasize politeness and social strategy, Uzbek proverbs highlight spirituality and communal integrity, while Russian sayings balance formality with emotional depth. These proverbs exemplify how greetings, as a speech act, are culturally instantiated in folk wisdom, permitting insights into intercultural pragmatics and ethnolinguistics. Further research might extend this comparative approach to other languages or explore the pragmatic use of greeting-related proverbs in contemporary speech communities.

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