

ENGLISH AND UZBEK PROVERBS AND SAYINGS AS CARRIERS OF CULTURAL METAPHORS

Adilova Nasiba

Master's Student at The University of Exact and Social Sciences

Abstract

This article examines English and Uzbek proverbs and sayings as carriers of cultural metaphors. Proverbs are considered significant linguocultural units that reflect a nation's historical experience, worldview, values, and mentality. The study provides a comparative analysis of metaphorical images found in English and Uzbek proverbs and explains their semantic and cultural characteristics through illustrative examples.

Keywords: Proverbs and sayings, metaphor, culture, linguoculture, comparative analysis.

Introduction

In modern linguistics, the study of language in close connection with culture has become one of the most actual and rapidly developing areas. Proverbs and sayings occupy a special place in this field, as they represent a condensed form of collective wisdom accumulated over centuries. They serve not only as linguistic units but also as cultural symbols that transmit national values, traditions, and ways of thinking from generation to generation.

Metaphor plays a crucial role in the formation of proverbs. Through metaphorical imagery, abstract ideas are expressed in concrete, vivid forms that are easily understood and remembered by speakers. As George Lakoff and Mark Johnson note, metaphor is not merely a stylistic device but a fundamental mechanism of human cognition [1, 45-b.]. Therefore, analyzing proverbs as metaphorical expressions allows us to gain deeper insight into the cultural worldview of a particular linguistic community.

English and Uzbek proverbs reflect different historical, social, and cultural experiences. English proverbs often reveal pragmatism, individual responsibility, and rational thinking, while Uzbek proverbs tend to emphasize collectivism, respect for elders, moral values, and harmony with nature. These differences

become especially evident when examining the metaphorical images embedded in proverbs.

PROVERBS AS LINGUOCULTURAL UNITS

Proverbs are stable expressions with figurative meanings that convey moral lessons or practical advice. They are deeply rooted in the everyday life and cultural traditions of a people. According to V.A. Maslova, proverbs function as “cultural memory units” that preserve national experience in a verbal form [2, 112-b.].

In Uzbek culture, proverbs are closely connected with oral folk creativity and have long been used as an educational tool. For example:

“Yetti o‘lchab, bir kes.”

This proverb metaphorically represents the idea of careful decision-making. The act of measuring symbolizes thoughtful consideration, while cutting implies action. The metaphor reflects the Uzbek cultural value of prudence and responsibility. In English, a similar idea is expressed through the proverb:

“Measure twice, cut once.”

Here, we observe a shared metaphor based on craftsmanship. Despite cultural differences, both languages use the same metaphorical image, which suggests universal human experience [3, 78-b.].

METAPHORICAL IMAGES IN ENGLISH PROVERBS

English proverbs frequently employ metaphors drawn from everyday activities, animals, and nature. For example:

“The early bird catches the worm.”

In this proverb, the bird symbolizes a proactive person, while the worm represents success or opportunity. The metaphor emphasizes the cultural value of punctuality and initiative, which are highly appreciated in English-speaking societies.

Another example:

“Don’t put all your eggs in one basket.”

This metaphor warns against risk by comparing life decisions to carrying eggs. The image reflects a rational and pragmatic worldview, encouraging careful planning and diversification [4, 56-b.].

METAPHORICAL IMAGES IN UZBEK PROVERBS

Uzbek proverbs often contain metaphors related to agriculture, family, and social relations, which reflects the agrarian roots of Uzbek culture.

“Daraxt ildizi bilan mustahkam.”

The tree metaphor symbolizes a person or nation, while the roots represent ancestry and traditions. The proverb conveys the idea that strength comes from strong cultural and familial foundations.

Another example:

“Birlik bor joyda tiriklik bor.”

Here, unity is metaphorically associated with life itself. This reflects the collectivist nature of Uzbek society, where social cohesion is seen as a key to survival and prosperity [5, 91-b.].

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL METAPHORS

When comparing English and Uzbek proverbs, it becomes evident that while some metaphors are universal, others are culture-specific. Universal metaphors often arise from shared human experiences, such as work, nature, or family life. Culture-specific metaphors, however, are shaped by historical conditions, geography, and social structures.

For instance, animal metaphors in English often focus on individual traits, whereas in Uzbek proverbs they frequently highlight social roles and moral lessons. This difference illustrates how metaphor serves as a mirror of cultural mentality.

CONCLUSION

The present study has demonstrated that proverbs and sayings play a vital role as carriers of cultural metaphors in both English and Uzbek languages. They function not only as fixed linguistic expressions but also as repositories of collective memory, cultural values, and national worldview. Through metaphorical imagery,

proverbs transmit deeply rooted concepts related to morality, behavior, social relations, and life experience.

The comparative analysis of English and Uzbek proverbs reveals that metaphor serves as a universal cognitive mechanism; however, the choice of metaphorical images and their interpretations are strongly influenced by cultural context. English proverbs predominantly reflect values such as individualism, practicality, self-reliance, and time efficiency. These cultural traits are often expressed through metaphors related to work, animals, and everyday activities, emphasizing rational thinking and personal responsibility.

In contrast, Uzbek proverbs frequently embody collectivist values, respect for elders, social harmony, and moral integrity. Metaphors found in Uzbek proverbs are closely connected with nature, agriculture, family ties, and community life. This reflects the historical and socio-cultural background of the Uzbek people, where cooperation and unity have been essential for survival and social stability.

The study also highlights that some metaphors are universal due to shared human experiences, such as labor, family, and nature. Proverbs like “*Measure twice, cut once*” and “*Yetti o‘lchab, bir kes*” illustrate how similar metaphorical concepts can emerge independently in different cultures. Such parallels confirm the idea that metaphor is a fundamental cognitive tool common to all human beings, while its cultural realization varies.

Moreover, understanding proverbs as linguacultural units contributes significantly to intercultural communication. Learners of a foreign language who are familiar with culturally embedded metaphors can better interpret meanings, avoid misunderstandings, and develop cultural sensitivity. Therefore, incorporating proverb analysis into language teaching and translation studies is highly beneficial. In conclusion, proverbs and sayings should be regarded as an essential part of linguistic and cultural heritage. Their metaphorical nature provides valuable insight into national mentality and cultural identity. Further research in this field may focus on a broader range of languages, diachronic analysis of proverb metaphors, or their application in modern discourse. Such studies will continue to strengthen the connection between language, thought, and culture.



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