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## **A linguocultural and comparative study of wise sayings related to human character in English and Uzbek literary works**

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**Annotation** *This article examines the linguocultural and comparative characteristics of wise sayings related to human character in English and Uzbek literary traditions. The study focuses on aphorisms, proverbs, maxims and other short text forms that represent moral judgement, social behaviour and culturally approved personality traits. Using a qualitative comparative method, the article analyses how concepts such as honesty, wisdom, pride, justice, humility, speech, knowledge and responsibility are verbalized in English and Uzbek literary and paremiological material. The results show that both traditions share universal ethical concerns, yet they encode them through different cultural images and stylistic mechanisms. English wise sayings often foreground individual responsibility, rational self-control and pragmatic action, whereas Uzbek sayings tend to emphasize social harmony, collective duty, respect for speech, justice and moral upbringing. The article argues that short didactic forms are not merely decorative elements of literature but linguocultural signs that preserve national values and transmit models of human character across generations.*

**Keywords** *Wise sayings, aphorism, proverb, human character, linguoculturology, comparative analysis, English literature, Uzbek literature*

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## **Ingliz va o'zbek badiiy asarlarida inson xarakteriga oid hikmatli so'zlarning lingvomadaniy va qiyosiy tadqiqi**

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**Annotatsiya** *Ushbu maqolada ingliz va o'zbek badiiy adabiyoti an'analarida inson xarakteriga oid hikmatli so'zlarning lingvomadaniy va qiyosiy xususiyatlari tadqiq qilinadi. Tadqiqotda aforizmlar, maqollar, hikmatli iboralar va boshqa qisqa matn shakllari insonning axloqiy qiyofasi, ijtimoiy xulqi hamda madaniyat tomonidan ma'qullanadigan fazilatlarini ifodalovchi birliklar sifatida tahlil qilinadi. Sifatli qiyosiy metod asosida halollik, donolik, g'urur, adolat, kamtarlik, so'z mas'uliyati, bilim va burch kabi tushunchalarning ingliz va o'zbek adabiy-paremiologik materiallarida qanday ifodalanishi o'rganiladi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, har ikki adabiy an'anada umuminsoniy axloqiy qadriyatlar mavjud bo'lsa-da, ularning obrazli va uslubiy ifodalanishida milliy-madaniy farqlar ko'zga tashlanadi. Ingliz hikmatli so'zlarida individual mas'uliyat, ratsional o'zini boshqarish va amaliy harakat kuchliroq namoyon bo'lsa, o'zbek hikmatli so'zlarida ijtimoiy hamjihatlik, jamoaviy burch, so'zga hurmat, adolat va tarbiya g'oyalari ustuvordir. Bunday yondashuv hikmatli so'zlarning milliy dunyoqarash, adabiy ifoda va madaniyatlararo anglashdagi o'rnini ochishga xizmat qiladi.*

**Kalit so'zlar** *Hikmatli so'zlar, aforizm, maqol, inson xakteri, lingvomadaniyatshunoslik, qiyosiy tahlil, ingliz adabiyoti, o'zbek adabiyoti*

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## **Лингвокультурологическое и сопоставительное исследование мудрых изречений о характере человека в английских и узбекских литературных произведениях**

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**Аннотация** *В статье рассматриваются лингвокультурологические и сопоставительные особенности мудрых изречений, связанных с характером человека, в английской и узбекской литературных традициях. Основное внимание уделяется афоризмам, пословицам, максимам и другим кратким текстовым формам, которые отражают нравственную оценку, социальное поведение и культурно одобряемые черты личности. На основе качественного сопоставительного метода анализируется репрезентация таких понятий, как честность, мудрость, гордость, справедливость, скромность, речь, знание и ответственность. Результаты показывают, что обе традиции выражают общечеловеческие нравственные ценности, однако используют различные культурные образы и стилистические средства. Английские изречения чаще подчеркивают индивидуальную*

*ответственность, рациональный самоконтроль и практическое действие, тогда как узбекские изречения акцентируют социальную гармонию, коллективный долг, уважение к слову, справедливость и нравственное воспитание. Делается вывод, что краткие дидактические формы являются важными лингвокультурными знаками, сохраняющими национальные ценности и передающими модели человеческого характера последующим поколениям. Такой подход позволяет раскрыть роль мудрых изречений в формировании национального мировидения, литературной выразительности и межкультурного понимания. Это также усиливает научную значимость сопоставительного анализа в современной филологии.*

**Ключевые слова** *Мудрые изречения, афоризм, поговорка, характер человека, лингвокультурология, сопоставительный анализ, английская литература, узбекская литература*

## Introduction

Wise sayings occupy a special place in literary and cultural communication because they express broad human experience in a concise and memorable form. In every linguistic community, people use short didactic texts to evaluate behaviour, define virtues and warn against socially undesirable qualities. Such units are especially important in the study of human character, since they reveal how a culture understands honesty, wisdom, courage, modesty, pride, responsibility and justice. For this reason, aphorisms, proverbs and maxims may be regarded not only as stylistic ornaments but also as condensed cultural texts (Mieder, 2004; Wierzbicka, 1997).

The relevance of the present study is connected with the increasing interest in the relationship between language, culture and cognition. Cultural linguistics views language as a medium through which communities store, organize and transmit their cultural conceptualizations (Sharifian, 2017). From this perspective, wise sayings are valuable research material because they combine linguistic form, moral content and cultural experience. In English and Uzbek literary traditions, such sayings often function as interpretive keys to the moral world of a text. They summarize the author's ethical position, characterize literary

heroes and offer readers a culturally recognizable model of proper or improper conduct.

English and Uzbek literary traditions provide rich material for comparative study. English literature contains many compact expressions that reflect human reason, individual choice, self-control, social role and moral responsibility. Uzbek literature gives particular attention to justice, speech ethics, education, spiritual purity and collective responsibility. Although the two traditions differ historically and typologically, they share a common interest in evaluating the moral quality of the person.

The aim of this article is to analyse the linguocultural features of wise sayings related to human character in English and Uzbek literary works and to compare their thematic, stylistic and cultural characteristics. The objectives are: to define wise sayings as short text forms; to identify the main character-related concepts expressed through them; to examine their linguistic and stylistic devices; and to reveal similarities and differences between English and Uzbek cultural interpretations of human character.

## Literature review

The theoretical basis of this research is formed by works in cultural linguistics,

linguoculturology, paremiology and comparative linguistics. Language is not only a system of grammar and vocabulary; it also reflects the social experience and symbolic practices of its speakers. Crystal (2010) emphasizes that language is closely related to identity, society and cultural expression. Therefore, the study of short moral expressions requires attention to both linguistic form and cultural meaning.

Paremiology, the study of proverbs and related forms, provides an important foundation for this article. Mieder (2004) describes proverbs as traditional, concise and memorable statements that express wisdom or social experience. Although aphorisms and proverbs are not identical, both forms may serve similar communicative functions: they generalize experience, guide behaviour and transmit values. Aphorisms are often associated with identifiable authors and literary contexts, whereas proverbs usually belong to collective folk tradition. However, in actual literary usage, the boundaries between aphorism, proverb, maxim and saying are often flexible.

From a cognitive-linguistic point of view, wise sayings are significant because they organize abstract moral ideas through images and conceptual metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphor is not merely a decorative device but a basic mechanism of thought. This idea is relevant to sayings such as "Actions speak louder than words" or "A word is an arrow," where moral evaluation is expressed through concrete images of sound, movement or physical effect. Such metaphors help speakers understand invisible character traits through visible and culturally familiar experiences.

Cultural linguistics also explains why similar moral ideas may be expressed differently across languages. According to Sharifian (2017), linguistic units can reflect cultural schemas, categories and values shared by a speech community. In this sense, wise sayings about character are not random expressions. They are culturally

conventionalized models that show what a community considers admirable, dangerous, shameful or desirable in human behaviour.

The cultural representation of language is also important in language learning and intercultural communication. Alptekin (2006) notes that language is connected with cultural representation and cannot be fully understood without cultural context. This view is relevant to the present study because English and Uzbek wise sayings may seem equivalent at the level of general meaning, yet their cultural associations, images and pragmatic force can differ.

Wierzbicka (1997) demonstrates that key words and culturally loaded expressions reveal the core values of a community. Her approach is useful for analysing character-related concepts such as honesty, justice, shame, pride, wisdom and duty. These concepts are not always expressed through direct definitions; they are often transmitted through culturally familiar sayings, literary images and evaluative formulas.

### Methods

This study uses a qualitative comparative method. The research material consists of English and Uzbek wise sayings, aphoristic statements, proverbs and short didactic expressions related to human character. The selected examples represent such semantic fields as honesty, truth, pride, speech, knowledge, justice, responsibility, modesty and action. The focus is not on counting the frequency of each unit, but on interpreting its linguocultural meaning and its role in the representation of character.

The analysis follows three main criteria. First, each saying is examined thematically: what character trait it evaluates and whether the evaluation is positive or negative. Second, the linguistic form is analysed, including metaphor, antithesis, parallelism, personification, hyperbole and brevity. Third, the cultural meaning is interpreted by considering the worldview, value system and communicative tradition reflected in the

expression. This combination of criteria makes it possible to connect form, meaning and culture.

The comparative aspect of the research is based on identifying both similarities and differences. Similarities show universal moral concerns shared by English and Uzbek cultures, while differences reveal national and cultural specificity. Since proverbs and aphoristic units are highly dependent on cultural context, the study treats them as compact discourse units rather than isolated sentences. This position corresponds to paremiological and cultural-linguistic approaches, where short texts are viewed as carriers of collective wisdom and cultural conceptualization (Mieder, 2004; Sharifian, 2017).

### Results

The analysis shows that both English and Uzbek traditions possess a rich set of wise sayings related to human character. In both languages, the most frequent moral fields include honesty, wisdom, humility, diligence, justice, speech ethics and responsibility. These fields demonstrate that human character is evaluated through stable cultural oppositions such as truth versus lie, wisdom versus ignorance, modesty versus pride and action versus empty words.

In English material, wise sayings often emphasize practical behaviour and individual responsibility. The expression "Honesty is the best policy" presents truthfulness as a practical and ethical principle at the same time. The word "policy" gives the saying a pragmatic tone, suggesting that honesty is not only morally correct but also socially useful. Similarly, "Actions speak louder than words" evaluates a person not by declarations but by visible behaviour. The contrast between "actions" and "words" reflects the cultural preference for practical proof and personal accountability.

Another common English pattern is warning against pride and overconfidence. "Pride goes before a fall" uses a short cause-and-effect structure to teach moral caution.

The saying suggests that arrogance leads to failure because it blinds a person to reality. Such expressions are linguistically simple but culturally powerful: they connect character with consequence. English wise sayings often function through directness, antithesis and pragmatic clarity.

In Uzbek literary and cultural tradition, wise sayings about human character often focus on moral responsibility before the community. A saying such as "Haqiqat uzoq yashaydi, yolg'on tez o'ladi" ("Truth lives long, lies die soon") personifies truth and falsehood as living entities. This personification gives moral ideas an almost spiritual dimension. Truth is imagined as lasting and strong, while lies are temporary and weak. The cultural implication is that moral purity has a deeper and longer life than deception.

The theme of speech ethics is especially strong in Uzbek moral-didactic expressions. The saying "A word is an arrow: once released, it does not return" uses the image of an arrow to show the irreversible effect of speech. The metaphor is culturally meaningful because it connects language with action: speech is not harmless; it can wound, protect, destroy or guide. Another Uzbek expression, "Til kichik, lekin tog'ni yiqitar" ("The tongue is small, but it can bring down a mountain"), uses hyperbole to express the enormous influence of words. In this respect, Uzbek wise sayings often treat language as a moral action rather than a neutral instrument.

Justice is also a central concept in Uzbek character evaluation. The expression "Kuch adolatdadir" ("Strength is in justice") connects power with moral legitimacy. Here, strength is not understood as physical force alone; it is valid only when it is based on fairness. Education and moral upbringing form another important semantic field. In Uzbek cultural interpretation, a good person is not only intelligent but also well-brought-up, respectful and socially responsible. Therefore, wisdom is closely connected with tarbiya, that is, moral and social education.

The comparison shows that English and Uzbek sayings share many themes. Both traditions praise honesty, wisdom, modesty and responsibility, and both criticize pride, laziness, ignorance and empty speech. However, the cultural direction of these values is different. English sayings often emphasize individual choice, personal effort and practical consequences. Uzbek sayings more frequently emphasize the person's relationship with society, family, speech etiquette and moral duty.

### **Analysis**

The first important similarity is the universality of moral opposition. Both English and Uzbek wise sayings are built around pairs such as truth and lie, wisdom and ignorance, humility and pride, action and empty speech. These oppositions simplify complex moral experience into memorable formulas. They help communities distinguish acceptable behaviour from unacceptable behaviour.

The second similarity is the use of metaphor as a cognitive and cultural mechanism. English sayings often use metaphors of movement, sound, policy or performance. Uzbek sayings often use metaphors of nature, weapon, light, mountain, mirror and road. These images are not accidental. They come from the historical experience, literary tradition and everyday life of each culture. Therefore, metaphor becomes a bridge between thought and culture (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

The main difference lies in the cultural orientation of character. In English sayings, the individual is often presented as an autonomous moral agent who must act, choose, work and control personal pride. In Uzbek sayings, the individual is more often understood as part of a social and spiritual network: family, community, teacher, nation and moral tradition. This does not mean that English culture ignores society or that Uzbek culture ignores individuality. Rather, it means that the dominant emphasis of the short didactic forms is different.

Another difference concerns the role of speech. English wise sayings also value speech and silence, but Uzbek materials give speech a particularly strong ethical status. The frequent use of images related to the tongue, word, arrow and mountain indicates that verbal behaviour is a key marker of character. A person who speaks wisely is morally mature, while careless speech may reveal ignorance or arrogance.

Finally, the two traditions differ in their stylistic atmosphere. English aphorisms often appear analytical, witty and concise. Uzbek sayings often sound poetic, emotionally warm and socially instructive. These features are connected with the broader literary history of each language. English literary aphorism developed strongly in essays, drama and philosophical prose, while Uzbek wisdom has deep roots in classical poetry, oral tradition, ethical instruction and pedagogical writing.

### **Discussion**

The findings indicate that wise sayings should be studied as small but complete cultural texts. Their form is short, but their meaning is dense. A proverb or aphorism can contain a model of behaviour, a warning, a social expectation and an aesthetic image at the same time. This explains why such expressions remain active in literature, education and everyday speech.

The results also support the idea that language preserves cultural conceptualizations. When a culture repeatedly associates good character with truth, justice, self-control or speech responsibility, these values become stabilized in linguistic memory. Cultural linguistics helps explain this process because it treats language as a repository of culturally shared meanings (Sharifian, 2017). Wise sayings are especially effective in this function because they are memorable, repeatable and easy to transmit across generations.

The role of culturally loaded words is also visible in the comparison. Concepts such as truth, honour, justice, tarbiya, pride and

responsibility have general meanings, but their emotional and cultural associations vary from one language community to another. Wierzbicka's view that key words reflect cultural values is therefore relevant to the interpretation of character-related sayings (Wierzbicka, 1997). In Uzbek materials, the idea of *tarbiya* carries a broad moral and social meaning, while English examples often stress personal responsibility and visible action.

The study is also relevant to intercultural communication and language education. Learners may translate a proverb literally, but the cultural force of the expression may be lost without background knowledge. For example, an English-speaking learner may understand the literal meaning of a saying about the tongue and the mountain, but may not immediately recognize its strong ethical warning about speech behaviour. This supports the view that cultural representation is an important part of language understanding (Alptekin, 2006).

Overall, the discussion confirms that the comparison of English and Uzbek wise sayings reveals both common human values and culture-specific ways of expressing them. The shared values show that moral thinking has universal foundations, while the differences show that every culture organizes these values through its own linguistic images, historical memory and communicative norms.

### **Conclusion**

The study confirms that wise sayings related to human character are important linguocultural units in both English and Uzbek literary traditions. They preserve collective experience, express moral evaluation and

transmit culturally approved models of personality. Although the analysed sayings are short in form, they contain complex meanings about human behaviour, social relations and ethical values.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that English and Uzbek traditions share universal moral concerns: honesty, wisdom, modesty, responsibility and the superiority of deeds over empty words. At the same time, they differ in cultural emphasis. English wise sayings tend to highlight individual responsibility, rational self-control and practical action. Uzbek wise sayings more strongly emphasize justice, speech ethics, social harmony, education and collective responsibility.

The linguistic analysis shows that both traditions rely on metaphor, antithesis, personification and brevity, yet the images chosen by each culture are different. English examples frequently use pragmatic and philosophical structures, while Uzbek examples often employ poetic imagery and oral-traditional rhythm. These differences reveal that language does not simply express moral ideas; it shapes the way those ideas are culturally understood.

In conclusion, wise sayings about human character should be studied as small but powerful texts that unite language, culture and cognition. Their analysis contributes to linguoculturology, comparative literary studies and intercultural communication. Further research may expand the corpus of examples and examine how such sayings function in modern media, education and everyday speech.

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