

**SEMANTIC AND FIGURATIVE-CULTURAL FEATURES OF RUSSIAN AND UZBEK PROVERBS****Sheraliyeva Shokhidakhon Valijon qizi**

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E-mail: [sheraliyevashokhidaa@icloud.com](mailto:sheraliyevashokhidaa@icloud.com)**Abstract**

The article presents a comparative linguocultural analysis of the semantic and figurative-cultural features of Russian and Uzbek proverbs. The study identifies both universal and nationally specific characteristics of paremias in the two languages. Particular attention is paid to the generalization of meaning, anthropocentrism, didacticism, and the imagery system of proverbs. Using numerous concrete examples, the author demonstrates parallels and divergences in the themes of labor, friendship, family, respect for elders, hospitality, and attitudes toward fate and luck. Structural, stylistic, and cultural-historical differences reflecting the mentality of the two peoples are thoroughly analyzed. The conclusion emphasizes that proverbs serve as a powerful means of preserving cultural identity and promoting intercultural dialogue in the era of globalization.

**Keywords**

proverbs, maqollar, semantic features, figurative-cultural features, Russian proverbs, Uzbek proverbs, linguoculturology.

**Introduction**

Proverbs and sayings are among the oldest and most stable genres of oral folk art. They concentrate the collective life experience, worldview, moral values, philosophical reflections, and cultural memory of a nation. Being concise, rhythmically and grammatically organized utterances, they are passed down from generation to generation and function as universal moral guidelines in various life situations. In Russian and Uzbek languages (where proverbs are called *maqollar*), these linguistic units not only vividly reflect the national mentality and value system but also demonstrate universal features of human perception of the world. This duality makes proverbs a highly valuable object for comparative linguocultural research.

Proverbs originated in deep antiquity, reflecting the daily life, traditions, historical events, social relations, and interaction with nature of each people. For the Russian people, proverbs are closely connected with the peasant agricultural way of life, harsh climatic conditions, communal (*obshchina*) spirit, and Orthodox Christian traditions. For the Uzbek people, they are linked with ancient traditions of hospitality, strong family structures, caravan trade along the Great Silk Road, nomadic heritage, and the profound influence of Islamic culture and Sufi philosophy.

The study of proverbs allows us to understand how language shapes the linguistic picture of the world, preserves cultural identity, and transmits wisdom across generations in the conditions of rapid globalization and intercultural interaction.

**Materials and Methods**

The research material consists of a substantial corpus of proverbs from both languages. More than 350 Russian proverbs were drawn from classical and authoritative collections, including V.I. Dal's fundamental work "Proverbs of the Russian People", M.A. Rybnikova's "Russian Proverbs and Sayings", and V.P. Anikin's studies on Russian folk oral creativity. For the Uzbek language, over 300 *maqollar* (proverbs) were selected from academic collections



compiled by E. Mamanazarov, F.I. Ismailova, Sh. Almamatova, as well as from modern linguistic studies published in Uzbekistan.

The selection criteria focused on the most frequently used, semantically rich, and culturally representative proverbs. Preference was given to proverbs that have direct or partial equivalents in the other language, as well as those that clearly demonstrate national specificity.

The following research methods were systematically employed in the study: comparative-contrastive method – to identify similarities, differences, and unique features between Russian and Uzbek proverbs; linguocultural analysis – to reveal the connection between language units and the cultural worldview of the two peoples; semantic and component analysis – to determine the deep meaning and semantic structure of proverbs; structural and stylistic analysis – to examine syntactic constructions, rhythmic organization, and stylistic devices; thematic classification – to group proverbs according to key thematic categories (labor, friendship, family, respect for elders, hospitality, fate and luck, etc.); contextual-interpretive method – to analyze the use of proverbs in real communicative situations.

Special attention was paid to identifying full equivalents, partial analogues, and cultural lacunae (gaps) between the two proverb systems. Quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis were combined to ensure the reliability and depth of the results.

### Results

The semantics of proverbs in both Russian and Uzbek languages is characterized by a high degree of generalization, figurative (metaphorical) meaning, anthropocentrism, and pronounced didacticism. A proverb is almost never tied to a single concrete situation; instead, it refers to an entire class of similar events and situations, functioning as a universal piece of advice, moral evaluation, or generalized life lesson (1, p. 5).

Russian proverbs frequently employ laconic syntactic constructions, one-member sentences, impersonal forms, and sharp semantic oppositions. These features significantly increase their expressiveness and universal applicability. The frequent absence of a grammatical subject makes the statement applicable to any person, thereby enhancing its generalized nature. Classic examples include: «Делу время, потехе час» (There is a time for work and a time for play) – emphasizing the priority of labor over entertainment through rhythmic contrast; «СЫТЫЙ ГОЛОДНОГО НЕ РАЗУМЕЕТ» (The well-fed does not understand the hungry) – highlighting social differences through the metaphor of satiety and hunger; «Без труда не вытащишь и рыбку из пруда» (No pain, no gain) – underscoring labor as the foundation of success (2, pp. 10–12).

Uzbek proverbs (*maqollar*) are equally characterized by generalization but often integrate specific national-cultural realities, which gives their semantics a particularly vivid and distinctive national flavor. They demonstrate a harmonious dialectical unity of form and content, where the artistic image serves as the main vehicle for conveying deep philosophical or moral meaning. Typical examples include: «Mehmon kelar eshikdan, rizqi kelar teshikdan» (A guest enters through the door, but his sustenance comes through a crack) – metaphorically emphasizes that a guest brings blessing, prosperity, and good fortune to the house; «Yetti marta o'lachab, bir marta kes» (Measure seven times, cut once) – a direct equivalent stressing the importance of caution and thoughtfulness; «Gap desang qop-qop, ish desang Samarqanddan top» (If it's words – as much as you want; if it's work – you have to go as far as Samarkand) – a sharp ironic criticism of laziness and empty talk, using the toponym “Samarkand” to create a vivid geographical contrast (3, pp. 12–14).

Comparative analysis reveals numerous semantic parallels in universal thematic spheres such as labor, friendship, caution, family relations, respect for elders, and hospitality. At the same time, distinct stylistic differences emerge: Uzbek proverbs typically display a more positive, soft, harmonious, and optimistic tone, reflecting Eastern cultural traditions of politeness and respect. Russian proverbs, by contrast, are characterized by greater pragmatism, directness, realism, and frequent use of irony or even sarcasm (4, p. 8).



Imagery constitutes the core of the cultural specificity of proverbs, acting as the primary mechanism through which national worldview, historical experience, moral values, and emotional attitudes are encoded and transmitted across generations.

Russian proverbs are deeply rooted in the images of traditional peasant daily life, the nature of Central Russia, dense forests, vast fields, wide rivers, and agricultural labor. The most frequent symbols include bread, axe, birch tree, oak, bear, wolf, horse, crow, and the long Russian winter. These images reflect such national traits as pragmatism, physical and spiritual endurance, collectivism, resilience in the face of difficulties, and a slightly ironic, sometimes skeptical attitude toward life and human weaknesses. Notable examples include «Хлеб – всему голова» (Bread is the head of everything) – emphasizing the sacred importance of bread as the basis of life; «Не руби сук, на котором сидишь» (Don't saw off the branch you are sitting on) – a vivid warning against shortsighted actions; «Два медведя в одной берлоге не уживутся» (Two bears cannot live in one den) – illustrating the impossibility of sharing power or territory (5, p. 20).

Uzbek proverbs (*maqollar*), in turn, are exceptionally rich in bright Eastern poetic imagery: majestic mountains, fast-flowing rivers, endless desert caravans, blooming gardens and orchards, horses, camels, and detailed family and ritual scenes. Key cultural symbols include *kelin* (daughter-in-law), *mehmon* (guest), *to'y* (wedding feast), *ot* (horse), *choy* (tea), and *non* (bread). These proverbs embody core national values such as sincere hospitality, profound respect for elders, strong family unity, patience, wisdom, and harmonious coexistence with nature. This imagery was shaped by the ancient Silk Road trade routes, Islamic spiritual traditions, Sufi philosophy, and centuries of interaction between nomadic and settled ways of life. Striking examples are: «Kelinni kelganda ko'r, sepini yoyganda ko'r» (Judge a daughter-in-law when she arrives, and her dowry when it is laid out); «Mehmon otangdan ulug'» (A guest is dearer than a father) – one of the highest expressions of hospitality; «Tog' bilan tog' qovushmas, odam bilan odam qovushar» (Mountains do not meet, but people do) – a beautiful metaphor for human relationships (3, pp. 14–16).

Clear parallels exist in the themes of respect for elders and friendship. Uzbek sayings such as «Otalar so'zi – aqlning ko'zi» (The words of fathers are the eyes of reason) and «Qari bilganni pari bilmas» (Even a fairy does not know what an old person knows) use respectful, optical, and highly poetic imagery. Russian equivalents like «Старый ворон даром не каркнет» (An old raven does not croak in vain) and «Молодой работает – старый ум даёт» (The young work, the old give wisdom) are more practical and often rely on animal imagery.

Differences are particularly noticeable in the portrayal of women and family life, as well as in the concepts of luck and fate. Russian proverbs frequently combine the glorification of hard work with elements of fatalism and irony. Uzbek proverbs, on the contrary, place greater emphasis on inner harmony, patience, tolerance, and faith in divine providence («Omad yurakka bog'liq» – Luck depends on the heart; «Sabir – kaliti» – Patience is the key).

### Discussion

The comparative analysis demonstrates both a profound unity in reflecting universal human values and clearly distinct national identities shaped by different historical, geographical, and cultural paths. Russian proverbs stand out for their laconicism, pragmatism, directness, and close connection with the harsh realities of northern peasant life. They often employ irony and sarcasm as effective tools for social criticism. Uzbek proverbs are characterized by colorful metaphoricity, expressive hyperbole, rhythmic parallelism, and a reflection of classical Eastern values – warm hospitality (*mehmondo'stlik*), strong extended family ties (*oila*), and deep respect for elders and tradition.

These differences are rooted in a complex combination of factors: the communal agricultural culture of Russia with its long, cold winters and Orthodox Christian influence versus



the dynamic trade culture of Uzbekistan along the Great Silk Road, combined with Islamic ethics, Sufi humanism, and centuries-old family-centered traditions.

Structurally and stylistically, Russian proverbs frequently rely on rhyme, alliteration, and sharp antithesis («Слово – не воробей, вылетит – не поймаешь» – A word is not a sparrow, once flown it cannot be caught). Uzbek proverbs predominantly use syntactic parallelism, repetitions, and melodic rhythm, which make them especially suitable for oral transmission and easy memorization in the Eastern cultural tradition.

### Conclusion

The semantic and figurative-cultural features of Russian and Uzbek proverbs reveal a deep unity in expressing fundamental universal human values – labor, friendship, wisdom, family, respect for elders, and caution – while simultaneously maintaining a pronounced and distinctive national character. Russian proverbs tend to be laconic, pragmatic, realistic, and closely tied to peasant life and the challenges of a harsh climate. Uzbek proverbs are poetically rich, metaphorically vivid, optimistic, and vividly reflect Eastern traditions of hospitality, family harmony, spiritual wisdom, and inner balance.

In today's globalized and rapidly changing world, proverbs continue to function as a living cultural bridge between generations and different nations. They promote mutual understanding, cultural tolerance, and the successful preservation of intangible cultural heritage, once again confirming that folk wisdom remains one of the most effective and time-tested instruments of intercultural dialogue and moral education.

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