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LEXICO-SYNTACTIC STRUCTURE AND FORM–MEANING RELATIONS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK PROVERBS

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Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada shaxs ma’naviyatini ifodalovchi ingliz va o‘zbek maqollarining leksik-sintaktik qurilishi hamda shakl va ma’no o‘rtasidagi munosabatlar qiyosiy o‘rganiladi. Tahlil kalit aksiologik birliklar, imperativ va gnoma konstruktsiyalar, parallelizm, ellipsis, qiyosiy tuzilmalar, antiteza va ritmik ixchamlikka qaratiladi.
Kalit so‘zlar: leksik-sintaksis, maqol, parallelizm, ellipsis, imperativ, gnoma, antiteza, shakl–ma’no, pragmatik ta’sir

Abstract: This article presents a comparative study of the lexico-syntactic structure and the relationship between form and meaning in English and Uzbek proverbs that reflect individual spirituality. The analysis focuses on key axiological units, imperative and gnomic constructions, parallelism, ellipsis, comparative structures, antithesis, and rhythmic conciseness.
Keywords: lexico-syntax, proverb, parallelism, ellipsis, imperative, gnomic, antithesis, form–meaning, pragmatic impact.

Аннотация: В данной статье проводится сравнительное исследование лексико-синтаксической конструкции и взаимосвязи формы и значения английских и узбекских пословиц, выражающих личную духовность. Анализ сосредоточен на ключевых аксиологических единицах, повелительных и гномовых конструкциях, параллелизме, эллипсисе, сравнительных структурах, антитезе и ритмической компактности.
Ключевые слова: лексико-синтаксическая конструкция, пословица, параллелизм, эллипсис, повелительное наклонение, гном, антитеза, форма-значение, прагматический эффект

1. INTRODUCTION

Proverbs that reflect an individual's spirituality are paremiological units that encapsulate human moral experience, social norms, and cultural memory in a concise form. The dissertation aims to conduct a comparative study of such units in English and Uzbek based on linguo-spiritual and linguo-cultural parameters, and to elucidate their semantic, pragmatic, and translational characteristics through operational criteria. The study is significant because values, norms, evaluative judgments, and pragmatic goals are simultaneously manifested within the content of a proverb. Therefore, it is essential to analyze paremiological material not merely as a lexical or folkloric object, but as a cultural code and a communicative strategy.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

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The proverb materials were coded according to lexico-semantic and syntactic parameters. The structural classification distinguished between imperative, gnomic, conditional, cause-effect, comparative, and parallel constructions; the semantic analysis took into account key axiological units, evaluative polarity, and modal meaning. Comparative analysis was conducted based on the concepts of formal isomorphism, allomorphism, and pragmatic effect.

The empirical basis consisted of the English and Uzbek paremiological material compiled in the dissertation, along with the comparative examples presented therein. The unit of analysis was defined as the interrelationship between the proverb's semantic core, evaluative component, linguocultural marker, and pragmatic function.

3. RESULTS

The lexical-syntactic structure of proverbs refers primarily to the selection of words constituting the proverb text, their semantic weight, and the manner in which they are interconnected. In linguistics, this definition is articulated through the concepts of the "lexical layer" and the "semantic core," as the key lexemes most frequently recurring in proverbs—which express aspects of human spirituality—specifically serve categories related to ethical norms, social values, and the inner self [1, p. 58]. The underlying mechanism is that linguistic units do not merely "name" spiritual concepts but also perform functions of evaluation, norm-setting, and linkage to social experience; consequently, a single lexeme (such as *halol* [honest/lawful], *or* [honor/shame], or *vijdon* [conscience]) establishes the criterion for a value within a given context [2, p. 41]. In Uzbek proverbs, words such as *halol*, *harom* (forbidden/illicit), *or*, *nomus* (honor/dignity), *vijdon*, *odamgarchilik* (humanity/decency), *qanoat* (contentment), and *sabr* (patience) often occupy a central position, whereas in English proverbs, units such as "honesty," "pride," "conscience," "patience," and "humility" typically conceptualize spiritual qualities [3, p. 77]. Recent corpus-based studies have noted a high concentration of ethical vocabulary within the proverb genre, indicating that in certain collections, the proportion of units conveying spiritual-ethical meaning ranges from 30% to 45% [4, pp. 112–113]. From a scholarly perspective, this figure confirms the normative nature of paremiological discourse: the proverb conveys a model of "proper conduct" within society in a concise form; consequently, lexical choices often carry evaluative semantics and serve to regulate individual morality [5, p. 26].

Another significant feature of lexical units in proverbs reflecting personal character is the encoding of moral "contrast" through antonymic and synonymic pairs. From a definitional standpoint, this phenomenon constitutes "lexical opposition," wherein meaning is sharpened through pairs such as "good–bad," "lawful–unlawful" (*halol–harom*), "humble–arrogant," and "patience–impatience" [6, p. 90]. The mechanism functions by intensifying evaluation and creating a need for choice in the addressee's mind: the proverb's text presents a moral dilemma and favors the positive pole [7, p. 64]. For instance, in the Uzbek paremiological system, within structures like "Honest labor brings contentment" (*Halol mehnat — rohat*), the lexeme "halol" (honest/lawful) signifies a positive value, whereas in the English proverb "Honesty is the best policy," "honesty" is conceptualized as a normative strategy; in both cases, the lexical core reinforces the moral model [8, p. 51]. Statistically, antonymic structures in paremiological dictionaries are shown to constitute a significant portion of the total proverb corpus; some studies place the share of proverbs containing contrasting pairs within the 18–25% range [4, p. 119]. The scholarly explanation is that moral concepts are often perceived through a binary structure: the concept of *or* (sense of shame/honor) is delimited by *uyat* (shame)

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and *sharmanda* (disgrace), while *kamtarlik* (humility) is contrasted with *kibr* (arrogance); consequently, lexical opposition persists as a stable model of linguocultural memory [9, p. 138].

Another significant aspect of the lexical layer in proverbs is the way metaphorical naming and figurative language give "form" to spiritual qualities. By definition, a metaphor facilitates the perception of an abstract spiritual concept by linking it to a concrete object, phenomenon, or natural process [10, p. 73]. As a mechanism, metaphor serves to derive universal conclusions from personal experience: for instance, inner states such as intention, sincerity, and conscience are modeled through the concepts of *ko‘ngil* (soul/heart) or *yurak* (heart), while in English, images such as "heart," "path," and "light" represent spiritual guidance [11, p. 201]. By way of example, in the Uzbek expression *Ko‘ngil ko‘ngildan suv ichar* ("Soul drinks water from soul"), the word *ko‘ngil* functions as the center of personal spirituality; conversely, the English proverb "A good heart is better than all the heads in the world" prioritizes spiritual quality over intellect and reflects the concept of the "heart" [3, p. 82]. Quantitative analyses indicate a high prevalence of proverbs containing figurative components—specifically, that metaphorical units account for approximately 40% of proverbs dealing with spiritual and moral themes; these figures are linked to the poetic economy of the paremiological genre [6, p. 96]. Scholarly analysis indicates that metaphor is the most active instrument of the linguocultural code: it embeds the spirituality of the individual into the collective experience of the people through universal human images—such as "heart," "light," "path," and "heavy/light"—resulting in a proverb that, despite its brevity, is semantically multilayered [12, p. 55].

By definition, the syntactic structure of proverbs encompasses their sentence construction, predicative center, component order, and intonational-logical emphasis. In proverbs that express an individual's moral character, the syntax is often concise, rhythmic, and memorable—qualities that are fundamental to their paremiological function [1, p. 61]. The underlying mechanism involves packing maximum semantic content into minimal grammatical form to facilitate the rapid transmission of social experience; consequently, elliptical constructions, parallel structures, and brief predicative units predominate [5, p. 29]. Imperative sentences such as the Uzbek "Yaxshilik qil — dengizga ot" ("Do good and cast it into the sea") and the English "Do good and fear no one" serve as moral guidelines and are syntactically readily assimilated [3, p. 79]. Research indicates that imperative and gnomic (general judgment) sentences constitute a significant portion of the paremiological corpus; some classifications note that such structures may account for as much as 50–60% of the total [7, p. 66]. From a scholarly perspective, the imperative and general judgment forms present moral norms as direct "instructions," thereby reinforcing their didactic and regulatory roles in shaping an individual's moral character [2, p. 45].

Parallelism is a widespread syntactic phenomenon in proverbs; by definition, it is a method of reinforcing meaning through the sequential repetition of identical or similar grammatical patterns. The mechanism functions by creating rhythm and symmetry through parallel structures; consequently, the moral judgment resonates with the authority of a "law" and becomes easier to memorize [6, p. 92]. For instance, in Uzbek paremiology, a parallel structure approaching chiasmus—such as "Odam el bilan, el odam bilan" (A person with the community, the community with the person)—portrays the relationship between the individual and society as a spiritual unity; meanwhile, a concise parallel construction in English like "Easy come, easy go" instills the importance of behavioral prudence and life balance [3, p. 84]. Statistical observations indicate that proverbs employing parallelism constitute between 20% and 35% of the total corpus; notably, the proportion of parallelism is higher within the

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category of proverbs emphasizing moral instruction [4, p. 121]. Scholarly analysis suggests that parallel syntax also expresses—at a formal level—the concept of "balance" associated with an individual's moral character: the symmetry of form reinforces the underlying ideas of moderation and order [9, p. 141].

Elliptical structure—the omission of certain sentence elements—is a key syntactic feature of proverbs; by definition, they are concise constructions where meaning is filled in through context and a shared knowledge base. The mechanism relies on the addressee's presuppositions: a member of society mentally reconstructs the omitted parts using shared experience and cultural knowledge, allowing the content to be conveyed quickly and effectively [10, p. 75]. For instance, in the Uzbek proverb "Yaxshi otga bir qamchi" (A good horse needs only one whip), the predicative explanation is minimal, while in the English "Once bitten, twice shy," the cause-and-effect relationship is highly condensed, yet the meaning remains clear [11, p. 206]. Statistical data indicate a high frequency of ellipsis within the paremiological genre; some studies note that elliptical or incomplete-sentence proverbs account for up to 30% of the total, thereby confirming the genre's principle of economy [7, p. 68]. From a scholarly perspective, ellipsis facilitates the acceptance of moral categories as "self-evident" norms: a proverb does not re-prove a universally known truth but rather activates it as a concise signal to guide individual behavior [12, p. 58].

The relationship between form and meaning refers to the degree of correspondence—or lack thereof—between a proverb's grammatical-syntactic structure and its semantic, axiological, and pragmatic content. In linguo-ethical research, this relationship is examined by analyzing the extent to which the "mold" (structural form) reinforces the ethical value and the specific codes used to convey the linguo-cultural layer [2, p. 49]. The underlying mechanism is that the proverb's form (imperative, declarative, conditional, or comparative) dictates the direction of its meaning: the imperative form reinforces a direct moral requirement, the conditional construction highlights cause and effect, and the comparative model intensifies the evaluative aspect [1, p. 64]. For instance, in Uzbek, the conditional relationship appears in various abbreviated forms of the "If... then..." structure, whereas in English, the "If you..., you..." model frequently conveys a normative strategy; in both languages, the conditional structure presents the moral consequence as a "law" [3, p. 88]. Research indicates that conditional and cause-effect proverbs account for approximately 15–25% of the total, implying that moral didactics are often explained through the concept of "consequence" [6, p. 98]. The scholarly interpretation is that an individual's moral character is frequently linked to the concepts of responsibility and outcome; Conditional syntax, in turn, logically formalizes this very connection and gives formal expression to the moral choice [9, p. 144].

Isomorphism and allomorphism denote the degree of correspondence between form and meaning in the proverbs of two languages: isomorphism refers to a similar form conveying a similar meaning, whereas allomorphism involves different forms expressing the same or a closely related meaning. In terms of mechanism, while isomorphism is linked to universal human experience and universal moral categories, allomorphism is explained by differences in cultural context, historical development, and linguistic systems [10, p. 79]. For instance, the fact that the concept of "honesty" is evaluated positively in both languages indicates an isomorphic semantic core; however, the fact that the Uzbek concept of *or-nomus* (honor/dignity) intersects primarily with collective reputation and social control, whereas the English concepts of "privacy" and "self-respect" align differently, reveals an allomorphic cultural profile [11, p. 212]. Comparative quantitative studies note a high degree of

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correspondence regarding general moral concepts (approximately 60–70%) and greater divergence regarding culture-specific concepts (30–40%); these figures provide quantitative confirmation of linguocultural distinctiveness [4, p. 127]. From a scholarly perspective, isomorphism reflects paremiological universals, while allomorphism reflects the mentality and value hierarchy of an ethnic group; When expressing an individual's spirituality, it is precisely these proportions that require caution in translation and interpretation [12, p. 62].

The pragmatic aspect of the relationship between form and meaning is also significant in proverbs; by definition, a proverb is characterized by its communicative situation, its persuasive power, and its orientation toward influencing the audience's behavior. The mechanism lies in the fact that a proverb often functions as an argument: it serves as a "ready-made judgment" when presenting evidence in a dispute, providing moral instruction, justifying oneself, or issuing a warning; consequently, its syntactic conciseness amplifies its pragmatic impact [5, p. 33]. For instance, the English phrase "Actions speak louder than words" encourages the assessment of an individual's moral character through practical behavior; similarly, in the Uzbek context, proverbs conveying the sentiment "Not by words, but by deeds" fulfill this same pragmatic function, measuring morality against a practical standard [3, p. 91]. Statistically, proverbs with a didactic-pragmatic function are highly active in everyday speech; sociopragmatic studies indicate that their frequency of use in educational contexts is two to three times higher, as social control is exercised subtly through language [7, p. 71]. The scholarly explanation for this is that an individual's morality is constructed within society not only through internal conviction but also through communicative practice; The proverb, functioning as a form of "collective authority," links individual opinion to a shared value, thereby reinforcing a moral norm [1, p. 67].

The evaluative and modal meaning within a proverb constitutes a semantic layer that expresses a normative stance—specifically, "how one ought to be"—as well as attitudes regarding necessity, possibility, desire, or prohibition. The underlying mechanism involves modal units (e.g., *kerak*, *lozim*; *must*, *should*, *may*, *can*) and evaluative adjectives (e.g., *yaxshi*, *yomon*; *good*, *bad*) positioning an individual's character on a normative scale and providing "guidelines" for behavior [2, p. 53]. For instance, in Uzbek proverbs, units promoting "humility" often appear alongside evaluative lexemes such as "good" or "noble," whereas in English, constructions like "should" or "better" highlight the priority of moral choice [11, p. 219]. Statistically, it has been noted that the proportion of proverbs containing modal and evaluative components within the category of moral paremias can reach 55–70%; this indicates a high degree of normativity, particularly in proverbs concerning personal character [6, p. 101]. From a scholarly perspective, the modal-evaluative layer reinforces the language's axiological function: the proverb does not merely describe but also prescribes, recommends, and warns, thereby shaping a discourse of moral upbringing [9, p. 148].

The lexical-syntactic expression of evaluation is often achieved through comparative and gradational constructions. By definition, a comparative construction establishes a moral priority by comparing two values using markers such as "-dan ko‘ra" (than), "better than," or "as… as" [10, p. 83]. The mechanism involves the comparison clearly indicating a "choice" in the mind of the addressee: the proverb prioritizes one value over another, thereby creating a moral hierarchy and reinforcing its educational impact [5, p. 37]. For instance, the semantic model exemplified by the English phrase "Better to be humble than to be proud" favors humility over arrogance; similarly, in Uzbek, proverbs extolling humility present the "humble person" as a model of positive character [3, p.

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93]. Statistically, it has been shown that paremiological units conveying comparative-hierarchical meaning constitute 12–20% of the moral corpus, appearing most frequently in pairings such as "humility–arrogance" and "patience–impatience" [4, p. 131]. This implies that categories of morality are arranged hierarchically within a culture; The syntax of the proverb reinforces this order through formal comparative devices and clearly expresses a normative assessment [12, p. 66].

One of the tools that reinforces modality and evaluative judgment is the use of negative constructions; by definition, elements such as "emas" (not), "yo‘q" (no), "never," and "no" are employed to convey moral prohibitions and warnings. The mechanism functions by "bounding" an individual's behavior: the proverb rejects socially unacceptable conduct and points toward a positive path, thereby strengthening moral immunity [1, p. 70]. For instance, while Uzbek proverbs warning against associating with bad company ("Yomon bilan yurma") encourage the individual to choose their moral environment wisely, the English proverb "Never judge a book by its cover" rejects rashness and superficial assessment, calling instead for attention to inner essence [11, p. 223]. Statistical data indicate that negative proverbs appear frequently in contexts of social control and upbringing, with some studies showing that prohibitive paremiological units constitute between 10% and 18% of the total [7, p. 74]. From a scholarly perspective, negative constructions delineate the "negative boundaries" of moral norms: society uses language to encode not only what is good but also what is impermissible, and the proverb transmits this code in a concise, memorable, and authoritative form [2, p. 56].

Linguocultural markers are lexical units and images within proverbs that refer to the national way of life, historical experience, traditions, and social institutions. The underlying mechanism is that the expression of an individual's moral character relies on general ethical norms, yet these norms are often "reinforced" by national realities; for instance, codes such as labor, neighborliness, a sense of shame and honor, and the offering of blessings frequently appear in Uzbek paremiology, whereas codes like individual responsibility, time, personal space, and legality are common in English paremiology [9, p. 152]. For example, in Uzbek proverbs, the concept of "labor" is often linked to "bread," reinforcing the ideas of honesty and livelihood; in English, however, the concept of "time" is used to convey discipline and responsibility as moral values [3, p. 96]. Statistical data indicate that proverbs containing distinct linguocultural markers constitute approximately 25–40% of the moral-ethical category; these figures demonstrate how cultural profiles are transmitted through paremias [4, p. 135]. The scholarly explanation is that a paremia functions as "cultural memory": judgments regarding an individual's character do not remain abstract but transform into real-life evidence through national imagery and realities, thereby bringing ethical norms closer to everyday experience [12, p. 70].

Interconceptual adaptation is by definition a process related to the extent to which form and content are preserved when transferring a spiritual concept from one language and culture to another. The mechanism is that a "functional equivalent" of a proverb is found in translation or comparative analysis: sometimes there is a directly corresponding proverb, and sometimes the meaning is preserved and the image changes, because the linguistic and cultural codes are different [10, p. 86]. For example, the concept of "honesty" can correspond directly to "honesty" in English, but it is difficult to give the concept of "honor" with a complete equivalent, it is often expressed through partially comprehensive units such as "honor", "dignity", "self-respect"; this case is a practical form of allomorphism [11, p. 229]. In digital translation studies, paremia equivalence is shown to be around 35-50% of fully matched cases, 40-55% of partially matched cases, and 5-15% of mismatched cases;

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these indicators quantitatively represent the complexity of inter-concept adaptation [6, p. 105]. The scientific explanation is that although the concepts of personal spirituality are universal, their cultural profile may be different; in proverbs, this profile is manifested through image, syntax and lexical choice, therefore, a comparative analysis requires a joint view of the form-meaning relationship [1, p. 73].

Another aspect of linguocultural markers relates to historical layers and social institutions. By definition, a historical layer consists of elements within a proverb that preserve traces of ancient lifestyles, trades, customs, or social relations [5, p. 41]. The underlying mechanism involves historical experience "distilling" into a general moral precept: for instance, Uzbek proverbs promote diligence, patience, and contentment through imagery rooted in ancient agriculture and animal husbandry, whereas English proverbs reinforce responsibility and honesty through imagery associated with craftsmanship and mercantile culture [9, p. 156]. By way of example, the "labor–bread" association in Uzbek culture is historically linked to an agrarian economy and reinforces the concept of honest livelihood as a spiritual value; meanwhile, the English proverb "A stitch in time saves nine"—stemming from a historical context of craftsmanship—conveys the moral and disciplinary importance of taking proactive measures [3, p. 98]. Statistically, although the proportion of proverbs featuring historical imagery is limited relative to the total corpus, it reaches 10–20% within the moral-ethical stratum; these figures demonstrate how historical experience has become embedded in educational discourse [7, p. 76]. The scholarly explanation is that a proverb encapsulates social knowledge that has withstood the test of time: while historical realities may change, the moral norms conveyed through them are passed down from generation to generation, ensuring linguocultural stability [2, p. 59].

4. DISCUSSION

The form of a proverb is not merely a shell detached from its meaning. Parallelism and rhythm reinforce semantic contrasts, while ellipsis condenses the generalized judgment. Imperative constructions convey a prescriptive quality, whereas gnomic forms create the effect of a universal truth. Consequently, merely transferring the lexical meaning during translation may fail to fully preserve the proverb's communicative power.

In summarizing the findings, the "matrix of linguo-ethical criteria"—comprising values, norms, evaluations, and pragmatics—proposed in the dissertation serves as an integrative tool. This matrix allows for the characterization of linguistic units from both languages based on identical parameters, thereby reducing subjectivity in the comparison.

5. CONCLUSION

The conceptual content of English and Uzbek proverbs is shaped through the interplay of lexical choice and syntactic conciseness. Parallelism, ellipsis, the use of the imperative mood, and comparative structures reinforce the normative and didactic functions of proverbs. A comprehensive consideration of the form-meaning relationship is essential for comparative paremiology and translation.

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