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THE EXPRESSION OF THE CONCEPT OF "FRIENDSHIP" IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK PROVERBS

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Abstract. This article investigates the expression of the concept of "friendship" in English and Uzbek proverbs from a linguocultural, semantic, and comparative perspective. Proverbs are treated as compact cultural texts that preserve social experience, ethical norms, and collective evaluation. The aim of the research is to determine how the two proverbial traditions conceptualize friendship and to identify universal and culture-specific semantic features. The material consists of a purposive mini-corpus of English and Uzbek proverbs related to loyalty, trust, help in difficulty, sincerity, false friendship, and interpersonal responsibility. The study applies comparative-cultural analysis, semantic grouping, componential analysis, and contextual interpretation. The findings show that both English and Uzbek proverbs represent friendship as a moral value tested by adversity. However, Uzbek proverbs more strongly emphasize collectivism, emotional solidarity, frank advice, and loyalty, whereas English proverbs often highlight personal choice, practical reliability, boundaries, and caution against false friends. The article concludes that friendship is a universal human category, but each culture gives this category its own evaluative and metaphorical accents.

Keywords: friendship, proverb, English proverbs, Uzbek proverbs, linguoculturology, paremiology, concept, comparative analysis, cultural values, semantic field.

INTRODUCTION

Friendship is one of the most important concepts in human communication because it connects emotional closeness with moral responsibility. People usually judge friendship not by abstract definitions but by concrete behavior: who helps in difficult moments, who remains loyal, who tells the truth, and who disappears when support is needed. Such social judgments are often expressed through proverbs. Proverbs are short, memorable, and authoritative units of folk wisdom; therefore, they preserve a community's practical experience about interpersonal relations. The concept of friendship is especially suitable for comparative linguocultural analysis. English and Uzbek belong to different language families and have developed in different historical and cultural contexts. English proverbial tradition has been influenced by Anglo-Saxon, Biblical, classical, and modern social sources, while Uzbek proverbs are rooted in Turkic oral culture, Islamic ethics, agrarian life, family-centered values, and community solidarity. Nevertheless, both languages contain numerous proverbs about friends, enemies, loyalty, sincerity, companionship, and betrayal. In linguoculturology, a concept is understood as a culturally marked mental unit that includes knowledge, associations, images, emotions, and values. The concept of friendship contains several semantic components: trust, closeness, reliability, mutual help, sincerity, equality, and durability. It also includes negative oppositions, such as false friendship, hypocrisy, betrayal, envy, and selfish interest. Proverbs reveal these components not in theoretical form but through vivid social scenarios. For example, "A friend in need is a friend indeed" and the Uzbek "Do'st kulfatda bilinadi" both show that true friendship is recognized in hardship.

The relevance of the present study is determined by the growing interest in comparative paremiology and cultural linguistics. Proverbs are not only decorative expressions but also cultural texts that shape social behavior. They teach whom to trust, how to choose friends, how to respond to

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advice, and how to distinguish sincere support from false politeness. In translation and language teaching, such units are important because literal translation does not always convey cultural meaning. A proverb may have a close equivalent in another language, or it may require explanation because its metaphor belongs to a specific cultural worldview. The aim of this article is to analyze how the concept of friendship is expressed in English and Uzbek proverbs. The main tasks are to outline theoretical views on proverbs as linguocultural units, describe the research methodology, classify friendship-related proverbs into semantic groups, compare English and Uzbek examples, and discuss their cultural implications. The object of the research is English and Uzbek proverbs verbalizing friendship, while the subject is their semantic, pragmatic, and cultural features.

The hypothesis of the study is that the concept of friendship has a shared universal core in both languages, but its cultural periphery differs. The universal core includes loyalty, help in adversity, trust, and the recognition of false friends. The English periphery tends to emphasize practical reliability, careful choice, and personal boundaries. The Uzbek periphery tends to emphasize emotional solidarity, moral frankness, social support, and the value of having many friends. The following sections test this hypothesis through literature review, methodology, and comparative analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The study of proverbs belongs to paremiology, but modern research treats proverbs as interdisciplinary units situated at the intersection of linguistics, folklore, cognitive science, pragmatics, and cultural studies. A proverb is usually concise and stable, but its meaning is not simple. It may define a moral rule, criticize behavior, justify an opinion, or advise an interlocutor. In this sense, a proverb functions as a cultural argument supported by collective authority. When speakers quote a proverb, they do not only express personal opinion; they rely on inherited social wisdom. Comparative research on English and Uzbek proverbs shows that these units encode both universal experience and national-cultural specificity. Khamdamova notes that proverbs reflect moral lessons, cultural identity, social norms, traditional wisdom, and cross-cultural communication [4]. This point is essential for the present article because friendship proverbs also express general human ideas while preserving local cultural accents. A proverb about help, loyalty, or betrayal may have an equivalent in another language, but its imagery and pragmatic use can differ. A study directly connected with this topic is Atanazarova and Ziyayeva's work on English and Uzbek proverbs expressing the concept of friendship. The authors approach proverbs as units of paremiology and linguoculturology and apply comparative-cultural and componential methods [1]. Their research demonstrates that friendship proverbs can reveal similarities and differences between English and Uzbek cultural models. The present article develops this direction by arranging the selected proverbs into semantic domains and by interpreting how each domain contributes to the structure of the friendship concept.

Cognitive approaches are also relevant. Normuradova's analysis of English and Uzbek proverbs with animal components argues that proverbs reflect shared cognitive schemas as well as distinct cultural beliefs [3]. Although her material is different, the methodological principle applies to friendship proverbs as well. A proverb can map an abstract value onto a concrete image or situation: adversity becomes a test of loyalty, an old friend becomes a symbol of duration, and painful advice becomes a sign of sincere care. Thus, proverbs are not merely phrases; they are cognitive models of social behavior. Recent studies also show that proverbs remain active in contemporary discourse. Davis, Danforth, Mieder, and Dodds describe computational paremiology as a way of tracking proverb use in books, news, and social media [2]. Liu, Koto, Baldwin, and Gurevych emphasize that proverb understanding depends on cultural common ground, not only literal knowledge [5]. These findings

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support the need to interpret English and Uzbek proverbs contextually. A literal translation may preserve words but lose the social rule encoded in the proverb.

Uzbek-related research emphasizes the role of proverbs and phraseological units in preserving historical memory, spiritual culture, and social values. Akhmadjonova describes English and Uzbek proverbs as crystallized expressions of traditional knowledge and social norms [7]. Qosimova similarly stresses that phraseological units transmit cultural experience and reflect the worldview of a community [8]. These views are important for Uzbek friendship proverbs because they often connect friendship with collective solidarity, moral speech, and mutual assistance.

The theoretical basis of this article combines linguocultural analysis, semantic analysis, componential analysis, and comparative interpretation. Linguocultural analysis makes it possible to treat proverbs as cultural texts. Semantic analysis identifies key meaning fields such as loyalty, help, trust, false friendship, duration, and advice. Componential analysis reveals the internal structure of each proverb. For example, “A friend in need is a friend indeed” contains the components +friend, +need, +test, +true loyalty; the Uzbek “Do‘st kulfatda bilinadi” contains +friend, +hardship, +recognition, +real quality.

The research material consists of a purposive mini-corpus of forty proverbs and proverb-like sayings: twenty English and twenty Uzbek units. The selection was thematic, not statistical. The study included proverbs that explicitly refer to friends, friendship, enemies, loyalty, support, sincerity, and false companionship. English examples include “A friend in need is a friend indeed,” “Old friends and old wine are best,” “A faithful friend is a strong defense,” “Better an open enemy than a false friend,” and “A hedge between keeps friendship green.” Uzbek examples include “Do‘st kulfatda bilinadi,” “Do‘sting ming bo‘lsa ham oz, dushmaning bir bo‘lsa ham ko‘p,” “Do‘st achitib gapirar, dushman kuldirib,” and “Yaxshi do‘st jon ozig‘i.” The procedure included five stages. First, the proverbs were collected and normalized in standard spelling; Uzbek examples were given in Latin script. Second, each proverb was interpreted according to literal meaning, figurative meaning, and pragmatic function. Third, the proverbs were coded into semantic domains. Fourth, English and Uzbek examples were compared to identify similarities and differences. Fifth, the results were summarized in a qualitative discussion supported by a comparative diagram. The study is qualitative and interpretive; it does not claim to represent the full statistical distribution of all proverbs in both languages.

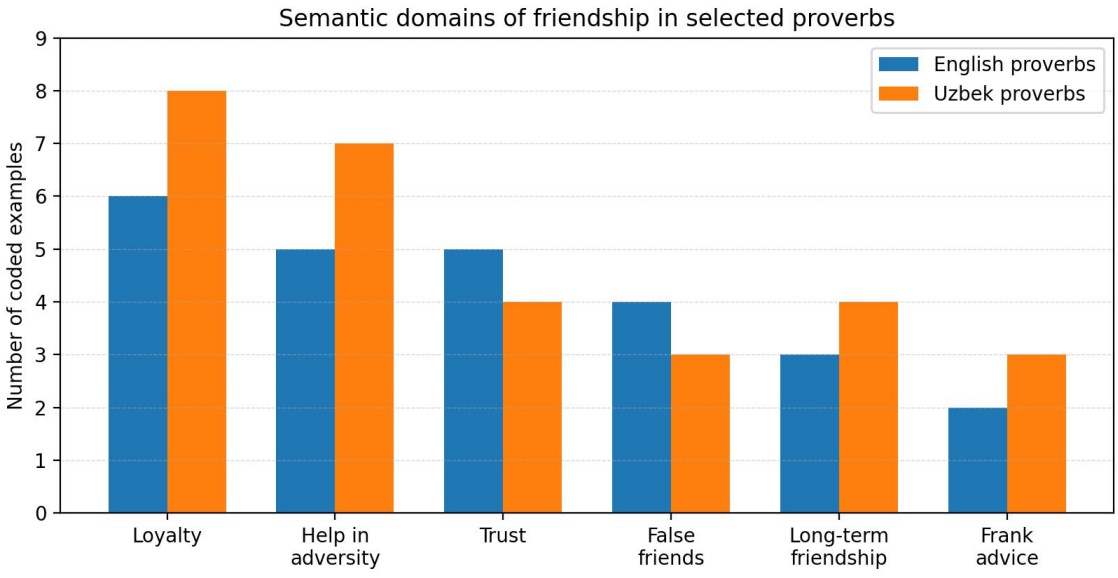


Figure 1. Semantic domains of friendship in selected English and Uzbek proverbs

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis shows that the concept of friendship in both English and Uzbek proverbs is organized around a universal moral core. This core includes loyalty, help in difficult situations, trust, sincerity, and the ability to distinguish true friends from false ones. The strongest evidence appears in equivalent proverbs. English "A friend in need is a friend indeed" and Uzbek "Do'st kulfatda bilinadi" express almost the same rule: friendship is revealed not in comfort but in hardship. Need or misfortune becomes a social test through which the real quality of a friend is recognized.

The first semantic domain is loyalty. English proverbs represent loyalty through reliability and constancy. "A faithful friend is a strong defense" presents a friend as protection, while "Old friends and old wine are best" links friendship with duration and proven value. Uzbek proverbs also place loyalty at the center, but the tone is often more communal. "Do'sting ming bo'lsa ham oz, dushmaning bir bo'lsa ham ko'p" suggests that friends are a social treasure and that even one enemy can be dangerous. Friendship is therefore imagined not only as personal affection but also as social strength.

The second domain is help in adversity. This domain is very strong in both languages, but it appears especially prominent in Uzbek examples. Uzbek culture traditionally attaches importance to mutual support among relatives, neighbors, and friends; therefore, proverbs often judge friendship through assistance in difficult situations. "Do'st kulfatda bilinadi" is short but powerful because it presents hardship as the measuring instrument of friendship. English proverbs share the same idea but often formulate it through individual experience: a person discovers who a true friend is when he or she is in need.

The third domain is trust. In English proverbs, trust is frequently connected with prudence and careful selection. Sayings such as "Trust not a new friend nor an old enemy" warn that social trust must be earned through experience. This does not reject friendship; it recommends caution. Uzbek proverbs also warn against careless trust, especially when a person acts as a friend but behaves like an enemy. However, Uzbek proverbs more often connect trust with emotional closeness and moral obligation. A friend is expected not only to be reliable but also to share burdens and speak sincerely.

The fourth domain is the contrast between true and false friendship. English "Better an open enemy than a false friend" directly opposes visible hostility and hidden betrayal. The proverb teaches that hypocrisy is more dangerous than open enmity because it hides danger behind friendly appearance. Uzbek proverbial thinking contains similar warnings, but one of its strongest models is communicative: "Do'st achitib gapirar, dushman kuldirib." This proverb means that a true friend may speak painful truth, while an enemy may flatter. The criterion of friendship is not pleasant words but moral intention. This difference reveals an important cultural accent. In many English proverbs, the false friend is unreliable, hypocritical, or dangerous. In Uzbek proverbs, false friendship is also dangerous, but the contrast between friend and enemy is often connected with speech ethics. A true friend has the right and responsibility to give frank advice. The Uzbek proverb legitimizes criticism when it is motivated by care. Thus, friendship includes not only emotional support but also ethical correction. A person who only pleases another may not be a true friend if he or she avoids necessary truth. The fifth domain is duration. English proverbs often praise old friendship: "Old friends and old wine are best." The metaphor suggests that friendship, like wine, becomes more valuable with time. Uzbek proverbs also value long-lasting friendship, but they tend to emphasize endurance through hardship and loyalty across changing circumstances. In both languages, old friendship is respected because it has been tested. However, English examples often express duration through aesthetic or practical comparison, whereas Uzbek examples express it through moral constancy and social endurance.

The sixth domain is the social value of companionship. Uzbek proverbs frequently represent friends as a form of wealth or spiritual nourishment. "Yaxshi do'st jon ozig'i" presents a good friend

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as food for the soul. This metaphor emphasizes emotional and spiritual support. English proverbs also value companionship, but they often stress the quality of friends rather than their number. This contrast suggests that Uzbek proverbial discourse more strongly foregrounds social abundance and solidarity, whereas English proverbial discourse more strongly foregrounds selective trust and practical reliability.

Metaphorical representation also differs. English friendship proverbs use images such as need, defense, old wine, hedges, and false friends. The proverb "A hedge between keeps friendship green" is especially meaningful because it conceptualizes friendship through a boundary metaphor. A hedge is not hostility; it is a respectful distance that protects relations from conflict. Uzbek proverbs use images of hardship, bitter truth, soul nourishment, and the opposition between friend and enemy. These images create a more emotionally intense model in which friendship is connected with life support, sincerity, and community. The pragmatic functions of these proverbs are diverse. In English, a friendship proverb may advise careful choice of companions, explain disappointment, or praise a reliable friend. In Uzbek, friendship proverbs may perform the same functions, but they are also often used to strengthen solidarity, remind a person of duty, or justify frank advice. When someone says "Do'st achitib gapirar, dushman kuldirib," the proverb frames criticism as friendly care rather than hostility. In this way, a proverb becomes a communicative tool that regulates interpersonal behavior. The diagram shows the main tendencies in the selected mini-corpus. Loyalty and help in adversity are the strongest semantic domains in both languages. Uzbek examples show a slightly stronger concentration on loyalty and adversity-based help, while English examples show relatively stronger attention to trust, caution, and boundaries. Since the corpus is small and purposive, the diagram should be read as an illustration of qualitative tendencies rather than as a statistical conclusion. Still, it supports the observation that English and Uzbek proverbs share a core but differ in cultural emphasis.

From a translation perspective, the material demonstrates both equivalence and non-equivalence. Some proverbs have close functional equivalents: "A friend in need is a friend indeed" can be translated as "Do'st kulfatda bilinadi." Other proverbs require explanation. "A hedge between keeps friendship green" may sound unusual if translated literally into Uzbek because its boundary metaphor belongs to a specific cultural logic. The translator must decide whether to use a functional equivalent, paraphrase the idea, or preserve the metaphor with explanation. Therefore, translating proverbs is also translating values. The results are useful for language teaching and intercultural communication. Friendship proverbs can be used in English classes to teach vocabulary, metaphor, cultural meaning, and pragmatic use. Students may compare equivalent proverbs, classify their semantic components, and discuss situations in which each proverb can be used. Such tasks develop not only language competence but also cultural awareness. Learners understand that a proverb is not simply a sentence; it is a culturally authorized way of evaluating behavior.

Overall, the analysis confirms the hypothesis. The concept of friendship in English and Uzbek proverbs has a shared universal core centered on loyalty, help, trust, and the recognition of false friends. However, the cultural periphery differs. English proverbs tend to conceptualize friendship through tested reliability, prudent trust, personal choice, and boundaries. Uzbek proverbs tend to conceptualize it through adversity-based loyalty, emotional closeness, frank moral speech, and social solidarity. These differences do not create absolute opposition; they show how two cultures give different accents to a common human value.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of English and Uzbek proverbs shows that friendship is a universal moral concept expressed through culturally specific images and evaluations. In both languages, a true friend is recognized by loyalty, support in hardship, sincerity, reliability, and long-term constancy.

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The equivalent pair “A friend in need is a friend indeed” and “Do‘st kulfatda bilinadi” demonstrates that different languages can formulate the same social wisdom. At the same time, English proverbs often emphasize practical reliability, careful choice, respectful boundaries, and caution against false friends, while Uzbek proverbs more strongly emphasize solidarity, emotional closeness, frank advice, and the social value of many friends. The study confirms that proverbs are compact cultural models rather than simple decorative expressions. They define what friendship should be, how it can be tested, and how false friendship can be recognized. The findings may be useful for comparative linguistics, translation studies, and English language teaching because they show that proverb interpretation requires attention to both semantic equivalence and cultural context. Future research may expand the corpus, include oral data from different regions, and examine how friendship proverbs are transformed in modern digital communication.

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