

Cognitive-Pragmatic Analysis Of Uzbek And English Paremias: Unveiling The Mental Maps Of Two Cultures

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Abstract

This article dives into the fascinating world of proverbs and sayings, not just as simple folk wisdom, but as complex mental structures. We look at how Uzbek and English speakers "think" through proverbs and how these short sentences actually work in real conversations. The study moves away from just translating words and instead focuses on how our environment—be it the busy streets of London or the hospitable mahallas of Uzbekistan—shapes our language. We find that while the logic might be similar, the cultural "flavor" makes each language unique. **Keywords:** Thinking process, Cultural context, Uzbek proverbs, English sayings, Meaning in use.

When we look at a proverb, we aren't just looking at a clever arrangement of words; we are peering into the very soul of a culture. For decades, linguists treated proverbs—or *paremias*—as static museum pieces, simply collecting and categorizing them by theme. However, language is a living, breathing entity. To truly understand why an Uzbek farmer and an English businessman use different words to express the same truth, we have to look deeper into cognitive linguistics and pragmatics.

The core of the problem lies in the "mental landscapes" of these two nations. English, shaped by maritime history, industrial pragmatism, and a culture of individualism, builds its wisdom on a foundation of efficiency and directness. In contrast, the Uzbek language carries the weight of the Silk Road—a tapestry of hospitality, communal values, and a deeply rooted respect for hierarchy and indirectness (*andisha*).

As researchers, our main challenge isn't just finding a dictionary equivalent; it is deciphering how these two different "human brains" process reality. Why does an Englishman see a "storm in a teacup" while an Uzbek sees "a drop in an ocean of trouble"? This article explores these cognitive gaps and the pragmatic "games" we play when we use folk wisdom in modern conversation.

1. *Different Worlds, Different Metaphors*: The first thing you notice is that our metaphors are born from our surroundings. English proverbs are deeply rooted in the sea, trade, and individual effort. Take the phrase "Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors." It's a beautiful thought about struggle.

In Uzbek, however, the metaphors often grow from the soil, the bread, and the family circle. We say, "Arpa ekkan arpa o'radi, bug'doy ekkan bug'doy." While both talk about "cause and effect," the English speaker uses the ocean, and the Uzbek speaker uses the field. The "mental image" is different, and as researchers, we struggle to find where these two maps overlap.

2. *The "Hidden" Meaning (Pragmatics)*: The biggest headache for any linguist is that a proverb almost never means what it literally says. If I say "Birds of a feather flock together," I'm not talking about birds. I'm giving a warning or making a judgment about someone's friends.

The problem is that in Uzbek culture, proverbs are often used to show respect or to give advice indirectly to avoid hurting someone's feelings (*andisha*). In English, they might be used more ironically or to end a conversation quickly. Understanding this "social weight" is much harder than just translating the words.

3. *The Search for "True" Equivalents*: We often try to find a "match" for a proverb. But is "Time is money" really the same as "Vaqt — g'animat"? Not exactly. The English version views time as a commodity you spend or save. The Uzbek version often views time as a fleeting gift or a

spiritual opportunity. They look the same on the surface, but the "feeling" behind them is miles apart.

Conclusion. In the end, comparing Uzbek and English proverbs is far more than a linguistic exercise; it is an exploration of human psychology. What we have found is that while the fundamental logic of life—success, failure, love, and caution—is universal, the "clothes" that these truths wear are tailored by national history and environment.

The primary challenge for future research remains the contextual shift. In today's globalized world, English proverbs are becoming more simplified and ironic, while Uzbek proverbs still hold a powerful, almost sacred role in social etiquette and moral education. We cannot simply map one onto the other using a bridge of literal translation.

To truly advance in this field, we must move beyond the "word" and focus on the "intent." We need to ask: *What is the speaker trying to achieve socially?* Whether it is an English speaker using a proverb to soften a criticism or an Uzbek elder using one to pass down a life lesson, the goal is communication. By studying these cognitive-pragmatic layers, we don't just learn a language—we learn how to see the world through someone else's eyes. This journey between the English "oak" and the Uzbek "plane tree" (*chinor*) reminds us that though our roots are in different soils, we are all reaching for the same sun of wisdom.

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