THE REPRESENTATION OF HUMAN CHARACTER AND MORAL VALUES IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK FOLK PROVERBS

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Abstract: *Folk proverbs reflect the collective wisdom, moral principles, and cultural experiences of a nation. They provide valuable insights into how people understand human character and evaluate individual behaviour. This study explores the representation of human character and moral values in English and Uzbek folk proverbs, focusing on honesty, wisdom, patience, generosity, pride, and hypocrisy. The aim is to identify how these qualities are expressed through proverbial language and to examine the similarities and differences between the two cultural traditions. The study demonstrates that English and Uzbek proverbs share several fundamental moral principles, while their imagery and emphasis may reflect distinctive cultural perspectives.*

Keywords: *folk proverbs, human character, moral values, English, Uzbek, cultural identity, paremiology.*

Proverbs are an essential component of a nation’s intangible cultural heritage. They preserve accumulated life experience and communicate social expectations concerning appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. Through short but meaningful expressions, proverbs praise positive personal qualities and criticise behaviour considered harmful or unacceptable.

The study of human character in English and Uzbek proverbs is important because it reveals how language reflects cultural attitudes towards morality. Although both cultures value honesty, wisdom, patience, and generosity, their proverbial expressions may differ in imagery, emphasis, and the ways in which moral lessons are communicated.

One of the central moral qualities represented in folk proverbs is honesty. The English proverb “Honesty is the best policy” presents honesty as a reliable principle for personal conduct. A related Uzbek expression is “Rost so‘z - to‘g‘ri so‘z,” which emphasises the value of truthful speech. Both expressions associate honesty with moral integrity, although they approach the concept from slightly different perspectives.

Wisdom and experience are also frequently evaluated in proverbial language. The English proverb “Experience is the best teacher” suggests that people acquire knowledge through practical experience. Similarly, the Uzbek saying “Yetti o‘lchab, bir kes” encourages careful consideration before taking action. While the English proverb highlights learning through experience, the Uzbek proverb emphasises prudence and thoughtful decision-making. These examples demonstrate how proverbs communicate related moral lessons through different forms of expression.

Another important theme is patience. The English proverb “Patience is a virtue” presents patience as a desirable personal quality. In Uzbek culture, the saying “Sabr tagi - sariq oltin”

associates patience with a valuable outcome. Both proverbs encourage self-control and perseverance, but the Uzbek expression uses a metaphor of gold to highlight the potential reward of enduring difficulties.

Folk proverbs also criticise negative character traits such as pride, dishonesty, and hypocrisy. By exposing the consequences of inappropriate behaviour, they serve as informal instruments of moral education. Their concise structure and memorable imagery make moral judgements easier to communicate across generations.

The comparison suggests that proverbs do more than describe individual qualities: they establish cultural expectations and encourage particular patterns of behaviour. Their meanings are shaped by shared experience, social values, and the figurative resources of each language.

Conclusion

The representation of human character in English and Uzbek folk proverbs reveals both universal moral concerns and culture-specific ways of expressing them. Honesty, wisdom, patience, and responsible behaviour are valued in both traditions, while proverbial imagery provides distinctive ways of presenting these qualities. Negative traits are similarly criticised through concise expressions that communicate social disapproval and moral guidance.

The study of character-related proverbs contributes to comparative paremiology and linguocultural research by demonstrating how moral values are preserved and transmitted through language. Further research involving a systematically collected corpus of English and Uzbek proverbs would help establish more detailed patterns of similarity and difference.

References

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