



# Comparative and Contrastive Analysis of the Peculiarities of the National Character in English and Uzbek Proverbs

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**Abstract:** This article is devoted to the comparative and contrastive analysis of the peculiarities of the national character of English and Uzbek people in the paremiological picture world. It is known that the comparison and contrast of English and Uzbek paremiological units make it possible to identify similar and different features of the spiritual world and the national identity of people belonging to two ethnic communities. In this study, about 3000 English and Uzbek proverbs and sayings have been analyzed. Based on them general and specific features of the English and Uzbek national character have been determined.

**Keywords:** comparative and contrastive analysis, national identity, paremiology, proverbs and sayings, ethnic communities, paremiological background, individualism, collectivism

## Introduction

It is generally believed that all humans have come from one single origin. However, they refer to different ethnic groups, that is nationalities. A nation is a community of people living in a certain area and having a common economic life, language, culture, national spirit and mentality (O'zbek tilining izohli lug'ati, 2020). National mentality means the inner state, experiences, feelings, psyche and spiritual world of a certain nation. The concept of the national psyche is related to the spiritual image. If the national psyche is an inner world, the national image is the external appearance of that inner world.

Each person, social group, or nation is created by its nature and has its spiritual world. The spiritual world is manifested in the form of a national spiritual image. The spiritual image includes such elements as national mentality, national character, national customs, traditions, and national feeling, and means the general "appearance" of a particular nation.

National character is the most important component of the spiritual image, that is, its core. According to M. Kuranov national character is a set of qualities of many people that belong to one culture (Kuranov, 2005). Whereas, Jandaldin defines the national character as "a set of specific psychological traits that have become more or less characteristic of one or another socio-ethnic community in the specific economic, cultural, and natural conditions of its development" (Jandaldin, 1971). S.M. Arutyunyan states that national character is national feelings and experiences, way of thinking, stable and national characteristics, and the uniqueness of traditions, formed under the influence of historical development and material living conditions (Arutyunyan, 1966). However, the definition given by V.G. Krisko is more complete and detailed: "national character is a set of stable psychological qualities that developed historically and they are moral manners and a conduct of behaviors that show nation's attitude towards social and living conditions, surroundings, labor, themselves and other ethnic groups, etc" (Krisko, 2008). It should be pointed out that national character is a relative concept because a characterization of a nation cannot be manifested in each member of the nation. For instance, in many sources it is said that French are flippant, the English – self-centered, the Russian - patient, etc. but we have already met courteous and deep-thinking French, selfless and dedicated English, and extremely impatient Russians ..."(Ter-Minasova, 2000). Above mentioned information claims that national character is controversial and contradictory. Therefore, a Russian linguist S. G. Ter-Minasova suggests a list of sources where national character of a nation can be manifested. They are following:

1. International jokes;
2. Classical literature;
3. Folklore; (Ter-Minasova, 2000)

Proverbs and sayings, which are examples of folk art, clearly show the spiritual world and national character of a certain nation. No wonder the philosopher V. Dal called proverbs and sayings "people's wandering intelligence" (Dal, 1984). Since proverbs are a reflection of national, spiritual values, ideological-political, moral, artistic-aesthetic, ecological, economic, and religious views of the people by means of them, it is possible to reveal the national character traits of a certain nation.

First and foremost distinctive features in Uzbek and English national character in the paremiological level of language can be noticed in the relationship of the individual to society and himself. As a result of the analysis of proverbs and sayings in both languages, it was revealed that collectivism and unanimity dominate in the Uzbek people, whereas individualism is peculiar to English. Comparative and contrastive analysis of the concept of "nation" at the paremiological level can prove what we have mentioned above. In the Uzbek language, the concept of "nation" means a group of people united into one society - a tribe, a nation, residents of a certain place, certain categories of people. Many are not divided into individuals Uzb: *"Ko'pni sevgan birni sevmas"*, *"Bir o'zing dono bo'lguncha, Ko'p bilan ahtnoq bo'l"*. In the English language, in understanding the concept of "people", the aspect of individuality is very important, i.e. a people are a set of individuals living in a community Eng: *"He travels fastest who travels alone"* (Muratova & Sentsov, 2011).

## Methodology

The signs of individualism and collectivism are reflected in the people's worldview, behavior, and even in folk proverbs. Proverbs being a part of folklore are regarded as vehicles of a nation's morality therefore, they are considered as means of transmitting moral ideas of previous ancestors, traditional wisdom, and knowledge. Formerly having arisen in individual consciousness, proverbs over time became a part of public consciousness. Expressing folk consciousness, they have remained as mirror reflections of the folk and its experience, world outlook, and cultural and spiritual values. Thus, it is justifiable to determine the national character of a nation via them (Makhsudova, 2023).

Unlike English proverbs, individualism has a negative connotation in Uzbek proverbs. On the contrary, they accentuate the benefits that come from collaboration and as well as the detrimental effects of individualism, uniqueness, eccentricity. For example: Uzb: *"O'z bilganingda bo'lma, El bilganidan qolma"*, *"O'zi uchun uxlagan, Birov uchun tush ko'rmas"*, *"O'zim bo'lay dema, o'zgalar g'amini ye"*, *"O'zim degan o'zaksiz qolar"*, *"O'zim degan o'rdan chiqmas"*, *"Kuch birlikda"*, *"It bo'l, qush bo'l, ko'p bo'l"*, *"Yolg'iz otning changi chiqmas, changi chiqsa ham dong'i chiqmas"*, *"Birlashgan o'zar, birlashmagan to'zar"*, *"Bo'linganni bo'ri yer, ayrilganni ayiq"*, *"Birlik bo'lmay, tiriklik bo'lmas"*.

The fact that the system of collectivism has been established in Uzbek society is also reflected in proverbs about patriotism. An analysis of proverbs and sayings of patriotism shows that the love of Uzbeks for the Motherland is manifested in honoring the land where umbilical cord blood was shed and serving it, without separating from their people and country: Uzb: *"Baliq suv bilan tirik, Odam-el bilan"*, *"Ayrilmagin elingdan, Quvvat ketar belingdan"*, *"Elning yirtig'iga yamoq bo'l, Uzuniga uloq bo'l"*, *"Elga qo'shilsang, er bo'lasan, Eldan ajralsang, yer bo'lasan"*.

Also, in Uzbek proverbs, the motherland is equated with mother, because for Uzbek people, the motherland is as dear and precious as a mother. Homeland, like mother, is the only one. It should be noted here that one of the most frequently occurring lexemes in Uzbek proverbs is the word "el" which means people, tribe and in the "Collection of Uzbek Folk Proverbs" compiled by T. Mirzaev, this lexeme occurs 407 times. Also, the lexeme "el" was used to evaluate almost all qualitative characteristics of a person studied in the research:

Uzb: *"Buzilgan elni botir tuzatar", "Qo'rqqoq bo'lma, botir bo'l, O'z elinga shotir bo'l", "Er yigit el aybini ochmas", "Vaysaqi elga dushman", "Yalqov elga or keltirar", "Yomon - o'z g'amida, Yaxshi - el g'amida", "Aqllidan el rozi, Bekorchidan dil norozi", "Shuxraparast el bo'lmas, Ko'lmak suvdan ko'l bo'lmas", "Yolg'on rostdan yengilar, To'g'ri elda tanilar", "Er qarisa - eli chida, Sher qarisa - g'or ichida", "Qo'ton bo'risiz bo'lmas, El - o'g'risiz".*

The priority of individualism and collectivism led to the formation of various values in both societies. This, in turn, was reflected in national character and proverbs. For example, the English way of life is built on the basis of free and fair competition, on the contrary, the Uzbek peoples' culture is based on the principle of mutual support and kindness: *"Fair play is a jewel", "Give and take is fair play", "We live by laws, not by examples",* Uzb: *"Avliyo ham qo'shnisini qo'llar", "Bir bolaga yetita qo'shni ota-ona", "Ota-xazina, aka-ukatayanch, Do'st esa-har ikkovi".*

The settlement of the system of collectivism in the Uzbek people is explained by the high economic demand for land in the territory of Central Asia since ancient times (Uzb: *"Yer olgan -er, Yer sotgan - qaro yer"*), and the priority of patriarchal relations in family and household management (Uzb: *"Xotin - bo'yin, er - bosh"*) (Isaqova, 2007).

The next difference in the national character of the English and Uzbek people can be noted in their attitude towards guests and hospitality. This is reflected in the number, scope, and semantics of paremiological units expressing the concept of "hospitality". In English 12 proverbs on this topic have been found, while in Uzbek this indicator comprises 103. Also, the topic of proverbs and sayings about hospitality in Uzbek is broader than in English; While in Uzbek paremiological units the main focus is on the venerability of the guest, the virtues of hospitality, the rules for receiving a guest, and how to behave when visiting a guest. whereas in English, the main emphasis is placed on the rules of etiquette between guest and host.

According to English proverbs, it is emphasized not to go where you are uninvited, in case you go you will not be warmly welcomed (*"An unbidden guest knows where to sit", "An unbidden guest must bring his stool with him", "Fish and guest smells in three days"*). Here it is noteworthy to mention that the word "guest" itself in the explanatory dictionaries of the English language is described as "a person who visits someone's house according to an invitation of a host and lives there temporarily". [LDOCE, CALD].

In Uzbek proverbs, it is recommended not to go to an uninvited place as well, and not to stay at the host's place for a few days. But unlike the English (*"Who comes uncalled, sit unserved"*), the door of the Uzbeks is always open for any guest, and the host must treat them with excessive care and attention and show all the signs of respect. Uzbeks believe that you should be careful with treating guests because even small gesture or utter might offend them: Uzb: *"Mehmon-aziz, mezbom-laziz", "Mehmonga ko'ngling ko'rini ber, uying to'rini ber" "Borini bergan uyalmas", "Mehmonni itini tur dema".*

So, although both people are considered hospitable, there is a great difference in their attitudes and views towards guests and hospitality. These were formed based on people's values, traditions and national character.

## Result

The next distinctive feature in the national character of Uzbek and English is in the representation of the concept of shame and its importance in human's life. It can be proven by analyzing the concept of "shame" at the paremiological level of both languages. According to 18 proverbs expressing the concept of shame in English, the following factors that make people feel shame:

1. Lying: *"Tell the truth and shame the Devil";*
2. Being ashamed of your poverty: *"Poverty is not shame, but being ashamed of it is";*
3. Not learning from mistakes: *"Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me";*
4. Betrayal: *"Who is a cuckold and conceals it, carries coals in his bosom";*
5. Late marriage: *"Single long, shame at length"*. The origin of this proverb goes back to the Middle Ages. During this period in England, the late marriage of a girl or remarrying of a widow brought disgrace. The abovementioned proverb is the result of such values and beliefs. Yet this proverb has lost its relevance due to changes in society.

In English, the feeling of shame is closely related to the concept of conscience. Both notions are bound by feeling of guilt. A sense of conscience is awakened in a person when he is ashamed of his actions. Therefore, the English believe that "He has no shame, has no conscience". Apart from it, shame is closely connected with the concept of honor: *"Better die with honor than live with shame"*. For the English people, a good name is considered an honor: *"Good name is better than riches", "Good name is sooner lost than won", "A good name is won by many acts but lost by one", "A good name second inheritance"*. Unlike the English, honor for Uzbeks is protecting their homeland and family and not tainting their reputation: Uzb: *"Tug'ilgan yering – yering Vataning, Vataning – nomusing", "Pul ketsa ketsin obro' ketmasin", "Ayoling– nomusing", "Pardali qiz-pariga tengsiz"*.

Besides, in English shame is considered as a negative feeling that prevents a person from getting achievements: *"A shy man will never achieve anything", "Bashfulness is an enemy to poverty", "Dumb folks get no lands", "He that cannot ask, cannot live"*.

In the paremiological fund of the Uzbek language, the concept of shame is reflected in 99 proverbs, which is 5 times more than English language. Their comparative and contrastive analysis shows that the concept of shame in the Uzbek language is more extensive than in the English language. Around the semantic field of the concept "shame", lexemes such as Uzb: *"andisha", "nomus", "hayo", "ibo", "sharm"* are combined, forming a semantic unity. A study of English proverbs led to the conclusion that not all notions of the concept "shame" listed above exist in the English language. For example, there is no literal translation of the term *"andisha"* in English. Certain shades of the meaning of this concept can be revealed using words such as shame, conscience, respect, honor in English. But these words cannot convey the full meaning of the concept of *"andisha"* in the Uzbek language.

The following make Uzbeks feel ashamed:

- not seeing younger than you through merciful eyes: Uzb: *"Kattani uyalgisi kelsa, kichikka tegar";*



- not keeping strong bonds with relatives: Uzb: *“Ko’rmagan yot sezilar, Ko’rishmasang uyat bo’lar”*;
- treating the father with disrespect: Uzb: *“Ota bilan orsiz talashar”*;
- leaving your motherland: Uzb: *“Vatandan yiroqlashgan – nomusdan o’lar”*;
- not welcoming the guest: Uzb: *“Mehmon kelsa et pishar et pishmasa bet pishar”*; *“Borini bergan uyalmas”*; *“Erta borsang et pishar, Kechga qolsang bet pishar”*;
- telling a lie: Uzb: *“Yolg’onchida or bo’lmas, To’g’ri so’zli xor bo’lmas”*;
- stealing: Uzb: *“Yo’qlikning uyati yo’q, O’g’irlik uyat”*;
- being arrogant: Uzb: *“Kamtar yetar murodga, Manman qolar uyatga”*;
- laziness: Uzb: *“Yalqov elga or keltirar”*;
- impatience: Uzb: *“Sabr etgan yetar murodga, Besabr qolar uyatga”*;
- cowardice: Uzb: *“Qo’rqoqda uyat bo’lmas”*;
- stinginess: Uzb: *“Xasis hayosiz bo’lar, Yeri giyohsiz bo’lar”*;
- vanity: Uzb: *“Orsiz qo’lim sunganda, orli betim uyaladi”*.

The phenomenon of shame is a cultural code that controls social relations and moral standards in Uzbek society. According to writer Abdulla Qahkhor, "Shame is more powerful than strict law". The law catches the criminal's hand and blocks his path only when he sees him and when he suspects him. But shame always stands above the immoral, dishonest criminal and gets in the way of improper behavior. You may circumvent the law, but you can not circumvent the shame because the law is outside of man, and shame is inside of the man (Qahhor, 1966).

So, it can be derived that shame is considered a positive trait for the Uzbek people, it controls people, and it goes from positive to negative only when it exceeds the amount. (Uzb: *“Uyalgan yigit qizdan quruq qolar”*). In English society, shame is more negative, and as in Uzbek society, the function of controlling is performed by law and the value "fair play". (Malakhova, 2021).

## Discussion

Like many peoples in the world, the Uzbek and English peoples love children, but there are similarities and differences in their views towards children and their upbringing. A comparison and contrast of the English and Uzbek proverbs with the seme "chil" allows us to identify allomorphic and isomorphic features belonging to these two ethnic communities. According to the analysis of 54 English English and 138 Uzbek proverbs with the seme "child," the following have been revealed:

E. Allworth in his book "Modern Uzbeks" mentions basic traits of the Uzbek ethnic group and accentuates that Uzbeks have a great affection and love for children (Allworth, 1990). The birth of a baby in Uzbek family is a great joy, happiness, and god's blessing. As well as it is thought that it imbues and strengthens a family. In wedding ceremonies elders lift their hand in supplication and say "May your house be full of cries and smiles of babies". It shows how Uzbek people are fond of children. Love for children is also expressed in Uzbek proverbs. According to them a child is considered a blessing, wealth, dignity, and support for parents:

**A child is precious and endearing:** “Uzb: Bol shirin, boldan bola shirin” (Honey is sweet but a child is sweeter than honey), “Uzb: Bola-xondan ulug” (A child is greater than king), “Uzb: Farzandim –asal qandim” (A child is my honey candy);

**A child is a wing and wealth of parents:** Uzb: “Bolasi ko’p boy bo’lar, bolasi yo’q quruq soy” (He who has a lot of children is wealthy, he who does not have is a river without water), Uzb: “Davlatning boshi farzand” (A child is a great wealth), Uzb: “Olti og’illining olti arshda moli bor” (He who has six sons has wealth in six heavens);

**A child makes the man:** Uzb: “Yigitning chirog’i-qizi bilan o’g’li” (Children are man’s lamp that illuminates road), Uzb: “Odam mevasi-farzand” (The fruit of a man is a child). English people value the child very much as well and they surpass this feeling over other feelings: *“The best smell is bread, the best savor is salt, the best love that of children”, “He that has no children knows not what is love”, Uzb: “Farzand-jonga payvand”, “Bola ko’ngilning guli, ko’zning nuri”, “Farzanding-davlatning, Fazilating-ziynating”;*

However, children being a joy in the family in the meantime are considered unnecessary troubles and financial burden due to English proverbs: *“Children are certain cares and uncertain comforts”, “Little children little sorrows, big children big sorrows”, “He who has a wife and children has given hostages to fortune”, “Children, when a little make parents fool”, “When great mad”, “Wife and children are bills of charges”, “Children suck mother when they are young and father when they are old”, “Building and marrying of children are great wasters”.*

According to the last proverb, the English believe that marrying a son or a daughter or building a house is an action that requires a lot of money. But Uzbeks consider marrying their son and sheltering him as their parental obligation. They dream of seeing their children grow up and see their wedding, and always mention it in their supplications that sound in the Uzbek language as: Uzb: *“iloxim to’yingni ko’rish nasib etsin”*. In Uzbek folk proverbs the negative characteristics of children are mentioned as well. Such negative character traits are attributed to bad children, that is, in Uzbek, proverbs with the same “child” are classified into good and bad child. It is noteworthy to mention that Uzbeks wish for the health of his child, even if that child is the black sheep of the family: Uzb: *“Yomon bo’lsa ham omon bo’lsin”*. English is considered a well-disciplined nation, therefore proverbs expressing guidelines on parenting and child-rearing take one of the central places among proverbs about children. In these proverbs, it is emphasized that pampering a child too much will lead to bad consequences. So it is OK to use whipping method for disciplining purposes: *“Train up children in the way he should go”, “Better unborn than unbred”, “A child may have too much of his mother’s blessing”, “He that coddles his child provides his enemy”, “Spare the rod and spoil the child”, “The rod breaks no bones”, “The kick of the dam hurts not the cold”*. In the Uzbek language, the following proverb can be found opposite to the last three proverbs: Uzb: *“So’ksang beti qotar, ursang eti”*.

It is important to note that the changes taking place in society can also be reflected in proverbs. The following proverb can be an example of this: *“It is a wise child that knows its own father”* Uzb: *(O’zini otasini tanigan bola aqlidir)*. Currently, the British government is concerned about the changing family system in society. Because the number of divorces, single-father, single-mother families, and families living together without formal marriage

is increasing in numbers year by year. Between 1996 and 2006, the number of families living together without formal marriage increased by 4%, that is, 3 million families in England now live in this way. If this happens, this number will be 3.8 million by 2031. According to 2021 data, almost 31% of the population of England are single parent families (Office for National Statistics). In addition, England ranks first in Europe in terms of the number of family divorces (Shomurotova, 2012). As can be seen above, children in many families live far away from their father or mother. Sometimes they don't even know who the father is. This proverb may have arisen as a result of the changes taking place in the English family system.

## Conclusion

So, the comparative and contrastive study of paremiological units in English and Uzbek languages proves the existence of different features in the national character of the two peoples.

One episode clearly shows the difference in the national character of Englishmen and Uzbeks: "If an Englishman gets into the compartment of a carriage, he would leave without having into contact with a fellow passenger until the end of the journey. What about Uzbeks! On the contrary, they would get to know each other closely and get to know each other's whole lives" (Shomurotova, 2012). In this small episode, if such personality traits of British people as self-restraint, not showing their emotions openly, and keeping personal boundaries in their relations with people do not allow them to start a conversation with a companion, the cordiality, frankness, and sociability of Uzbeks encourage them to talk to their companion and ask how he is doing. English and Uzbek proverbs also encourage a person to possess the character traits listed above. Of course, the distinctions in character traits of these two nations are determined by having different socio-economic experiences, historical development, geographic living conditions, culture, values, religions, and languages.

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