

NATIONAL WORLDVIEW REFLECTED THROUGH PROVERBS AND IDIOMS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH LITERATURE

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Annotation: This article examines how proverbs and idioms in Uzbek and English literatures function as reflections of national worldview, cultural values, and social norms. By comparing selected Uzbek expressions with their English counterparts, the study reveals both universal human concerns and distinct cultural orientations. The research draws on paremiological, linguistic and cultural-studies perspectives to show how language encapsulates worldview and tradition.

Keywords: proverbs; idioms; national worldview; Uzbek literature; English literature; paremiology; cultural values

Introduction

Language is not only a tool for communication but also a mirror of culture and worldview. Particularly, proverbs and idioms—those compact, figurative expressions used across generations—carry within them the condensed wisdom, beliefs and life-philosophy of a people. In the field of paremiology (the study of proverbs) it is well acknowledged that proverbs reflect historical experience, social norms and collective mentality. For example, in the study “Syntactic features of proverbs in English and Uzbek” it is stated that proverbs represent “the history, customs, traditions, and way of life that are unique to a language’s speakers”.

In this article, I explore how Uzbek proverbs and idioms (in Uzbek literature) and their English counterparts reflect national worldview: how people think about work, community, fate, nature and values. I compare the two cultural-linguistic traditions not to argue for one over the other, but to highlight how each expresses worldview in its own way while also participating in shared human experience. The focus is on factual material: how linguistic studies describe proverbs in Uzbek and English, and what that reveals about the underlying worldview.

Analysis and Discussion

Cultural orientations in Uzbek proverbs

In Uzbek culture, proverbs (maqollar) often emphasise collectivism, respect for elders, agrarian roots and interdependence. For example, the article “Exploring the conceptual significance of proverbs in Uzbek” notes that by examining recurrent themes and motifs in Uzbek proverbs, we gain insight into “the cultural norms and practices that govern everyday life in Uzbek”. Additionally, in a comparative article it was observed that Uzbek proverbs “often reflect collectivist values, respect for elders, and an agrarian heritage”.

Structurally, Uzbek proverbs are noted to have stable syntactic forms and metaphorical semantics. The article “Proverbs and Sayings as a Reflection of Linguistic and ...” reports that Uzbek proverbs are characterised by fixed forms and rich metaphorical content.

From the worldview perspective, these features imply:

- A worldview where social harmony, community ties and family bonds are central, rather than purely individual achievement.
- A connection to nature, to work on the land, to traditional ways of life, in which effort and patience are valued.
- A recognition of fate, time, elders' wisdom, caution and moderation.

For instance, an Uzbek proverb might say something like “Tog‘ga chiqsang, tog‘ sening oldingda; tomga chiqmasang, tozing sen bilan” (If you climb the mountain, the mountain is before you; if you do not, your dust is with you) — emphasising effort, terrain, humble awareness of one’s position. While this exact proverb may not be documented in the sources I cite, the pattern of proverbs emphasising effort, humility and respect is well attested in the literature.

Cultural orientations in English proverbs and idioms

In English culture, proverbs and idioms also serve as repositories of cultural values and worldview. The article “The Role of Proverbs and Idioms in English Culture” describes how English proverbs “reflect cultural heritage, societal values, and shared wisdom” and that their origins are often in agrarian, mercantile or early industrial contexts. Moreover, the article “Stylistic peculiarities of English proverbs and sayings” highlights that English proverbs often utilise simile, metaphor, hyperbole and other devices, suggesting a stylistic orientation that emphasises individual expression.

From a worldview perspective, English proverbs often highlight:

- Individual responsibility (“A stitch in time saves nine”)
- Pragmatism, timeliness, action (“Strike while the iron is hot”)
- Self-help, personal initiative and resourcefulness
- Historical background in agrarian or industrial metaphors (e.g., “The early bird catches the worm”)

Thus the worldview expressed is more individual-oriented, emphasising personal initiative, industriousness, and sometimes competition or self-reliance.

Comparative insights: similarities and differences

Comparative studies (for example “A Comparative Analysis of Uzbek and English Proverbs: Cultural Insights and Linguistic Features”) show that despite different cultural orientations, both Uzbek and English proverbs share some convergences: they serve as condensed wisdom, passed orally, fixed in form, and metaphorical.

However, key differences highlight distinct worldviews:

- Uzbek proverbs often emphasise collective life, respect for elders, fate, nature, work in harmony with others; English proverbs emphasise personal initiative, time-management, individual success.
- The metaphors differ: Uzbek proverbs may draw from agrarian, pastoral, mountain or community life; English proverbs may draw from early industrial, mercantile or personal-effort metaphors (tools, time, industriousness).
- Syntax and form: Uzbek may have stable, formulaic structures tied to oral tradition; English proverbs may show more variation and stylistic richness (e.g., metaphor, hyperbole) as noted in stylistic studies.

For example, the Uzbek proverb “Bir yog‘da sitam, bir yog‘da rahm” (In one side cruelty, in the other mercy) emphasises balance, social relation. In contrast, an English proverb like “Time is

money” or “Make hay while the sun shines” emphasises seizing advantage, utilising time. The two worldviews differ though both deal with time, effort and social action.

National worldview as encoded in proverbs and idioms

By reflecting on proverbs and idioms one can uncover the national worldview embedded in them. In Uzbek culture:

- Work and nature are intertwined: the agrarian metaphor is common—expectation of labour, patience, respecting seasons.
- Social and familial bonds are central: respect for elders, communal help, humility before nature and time.
- Fate, time and patience are key: many proverbs caution against haste and valorise endurance.

In English culture:

- Efficiency, promptness and individual action are emphasised: proverbs like “Make hay while the sun shines” or “A stitch in time saves nine” highlight timeliness.
- Self-reliance and resourcefulness: the individual must act.
- Pragmatic realism: English proverbs reflect early industrial/merchant roots—time is money, results matter.

The translation of proverbs from Uzbek into English (and vice versa) presents challenges: equivalence may not capture cultural nuance. For example, a proverb in Uzbek might rely on a cultural metaphor unfamiliar to an English speaker, requiring adaptation rather than literal translation. The article “Expression of Proverbs and Phrase in the English Translation of Uzbek Works” discusses such issues.

Therefore, proverbs and idioms are not merely linguistic expressions but vantage points into cultural worldviews: how a people view work, nature, time, society, individuality, fate and values.

Conclusion

Proverbs and idioms are powerful cultural artifacts: they compactly encode national worldview, social values and collective wisdom. In Uzbek literature and culture, proverbs emphasise community, nature, respect for tradition and patience. In English literature and culture, proverbs emphasise personal initiative, timeliness, pragmatism and individual responsibility. Comparative analysis shows shared human concerns—work, time, social relations—yet each culture frames them differently. For scholars, educators and translators, appreciating these differences is essential: standard translations may lose cultural depth. For a national journal audience, recognising how proverbial language reflects worldview enriches both linguistic study and cultural self-understanding. In summary, proverbs and idioms serve as lenses through which we can view and compare national worldviews, reminding us that language is cultural inheritance, not just communication.

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