TWO PEOPLES, ONE WISDOM: COMMON AND DISTINCTIVE FEATURES IN KOREAN AND UZBEK PROVERBS

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Ikki xalq, bir hikmat: koreys va o‘zbek maqollarining umumiy va farqli xususiyatlari

Два народа, одна мудрость: общие и отличительные особенности корейских и узбекских пословиц

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Abstract. *When Korean and Uzbek proverbs express similar ethical meanings through different images, translators face a practical conflict between preserving semantic equivalence and retaining cultural specificity. This study aims to identify shared moral concepts and culture-bound imagery in the two proverbial traditions through systematic comparison. The analysis combines historical-comparative analysis, source criticism, semiotic analysis, and Mayring's qualitative content analysis; the proverbs were coded according to theme, imagery, ethical conclusion, and communicative function. Source-critical comparison first isolated parallel meanings and then distinguished them from culture-specific signs. The category matrix showed that both traditions address labor, patience, caution, mutual assistance, and awareness of consequences. At the same time, Korean proverbs more visibly foreground images associated with social relations and collective order, whereas Uzbek proverbs more often draw on kinship, everyday life, and practical experience. These findings indicate that shared wisdom cannot be reduced to literal verbal correspondence because the symbolic function of an image also*

forms part of translational equivalence. The study's scholarly contribution is a category-based interpretive model that separates proverbial meaning into the levels of a "shared ethical code" and a "culture-specific image." The model offers a theoretical basis for evaluating equivalence in intercultural communication while preserving symbolic distinctiveness. It also clarifies why a formally close translation may remain functionally inadequate when it transfers the moral proposition but removes the cultural associations carried by the original image. The proposed framework therefore links comparative paremiology with translation-oriented interpretation and provides a structured vocabulary for discussing similarity, difference, and symbolic meaning.

Keywords: *ethical code, hermeneutic interpretation, historical-comparative analysis, proverb semantics, social discipline, source criticism, symbolic image*

Annotatsiya. *Koreys va o'zbek maqollarini tarjima qilishda bir xil axloqiy mazmun turli obrazlar orqali ifodalanishi ma'no tengligini saqlash bilan madaniy o'ziga xoslikni yo'qotmaslik o'rtasida amaliy muammo tug'diradi. Tadqiqotning maqsadi ikki maqol an'anasida umumiy axloqiy tushunchalar va milliy-madaniy obrazlarni qiyosiy ravishda aniqlashdan iborat. Tahlil jarayonida tarixiy-qiyosiy tahlil, manbashunoslik, semiotik tahlil va Mayringning sifatli kontent tahlili birgalikda qo'llandi; maqollar mavzu, obraz, axloqiy xulosa va kommunikativ vazifa bo'yicha kodlandi. Manba-tanqidiy qiyoslash umumiy mazmunni alohida madaniy belgilaridan oldin ajratish imkonini berdi. Kategoriya matritsasi mehnat, sabr, ehtiyotkorlik, o'zaro yordam va oqibatni anglash kabi axloqiy yo'nalishlar har ikki an'anada uchrashishini ko'rsatdi. Shu bilan birga, koreys maqollarida ijtimoiy munosabatlar va jamoaviy tartibga urg'u beruvchi obrazlar, o'zbek maqollarida esa qarindoshlik, kundalik turmush va tajribaga yaqin tasvirlar faolroq namoyon bo'ldi. Natijalar umumiy hikmatni so'zma-so'z moslik bilan cheklab bo'lmasligini, obrazning ramziy vazifasi ham tarjima ekvivalentligining tarkibiy qismi ekanini ko'rsatadi. Tadqiqotning ilmiy hissasi maqol mazmunini «umumiy axloqiy kod» va «madaniyatga xos obraz» qatlamlariga ajratuvchi kategoriyaviy talqin modelini*

taklif etishidadir. Ushbu model madaniyatlararo muloqotda ramziy o'ziga xoslikni saqlagan holda ekvivalentlikni baholash uchun nazariy asos beradi.

Kalit so'zlar: *axloqiy kod, germenevtik talqin, tarixiy-qiyosiy tahlil, maqol semantikasi, ijtimoiy intizom, manbashunoslik, ramziy obraz*

Аннотация. *При переводе корейских и узбекских пословиц одинаковое этическое содержание нередко выражается различными образами, поэтому перед переводчиком возникает практическая проблема: сохранить смысловую эквивалентность и одновременно не стереть культурную специфику. Цель исследования заключается в сопоставительном выявлении общих нравственных представлений и культурно обусловленных образов в двух пословичных традициях. В работе комплексно применены историко-сравнительный метод, источниковедческий анализ, семиотический анализ и качественный контент-анализ Майринга; пословицы кодировались по тематике, образной структуре, нравственному выводу и коммуникативной функции. Источниковедческое сопоставление позволило сначала выделить общие значения, а затем отделить их от специфических культурных признаков. Категориальная матрица показала, что обе традиции обращаются к труду, терпению, осторожности, взаимопомощи и осмыслению последствий поступка. Вместе с тем в корейских пословицах заметнее образы, подчеркивающие социальные отношения и коллективный порядок, тогда как узбекские пословицы чаще используют картины родства, повседневной жизни и практического опыта. Полученные наблюдения подтверждают, что общую мудрость нельзя сводить к буквальному совпадению слов: символическая функция образа также входит в состав переводческой эквивалентности. Научный вклад работы состоит в предложении категориальной интерпретационной модели, разделяющей пословичное содержание на уровни «общего этического кода» и «культурно специфического образа». Модель создает теоретическую основу для оценки*

эквивалентности в межкультурной коммуникации при сохранении символической самобытности.

Ключевые слова: *нравственный код, герменевтическая интерпретация, историко-сопоставительный анализ, семантика пословиц, социальная дисциплина, источниковедческий анализ, символический образ*

INTRODUCTION

Korean proverbs and Uzbek proverbs preserve ethical concepts through different linguistic images, making their comparison relevant to Asian and African literary linguistics [1]. Existing scholarship describes each tradition, yet rarely connects common features with distinctive features through historically grounded comparative paremiology [2]. This study examines proverb texts as its object and metaphor, syntax, social values, and culture-bound references as its subject, guided by the hypothesis that shared wisdom assumes tradition-specific symbolic forms. Its aim was to establish this relationship by: 1) identifying common ethical concepts; 2) comparing metaphorical images; 3) interpreting syntactic patterns; 4) tracing historical-cultural references; 5) formulating translation-sensitive correspondences. The novelty consists in integrating hermeneutics, source criticism, and semiotic analysis into one comparative account [3]. The findings theoretically refine paremiological typology and practically support bilingual lexicography and culturally sensitive translation [4]. Content analysis, semiotic analysis, and Mayring's qualitative content analysis were applied [5].

METHODOLOGY

The preceding distinction between shared ethical concepts and divergent linguistic images required a source-critical design capable of separating meaning from cultural embodiment. The study used historically layered Korean proverbs and Uzbek proverbs from bilingual proverb collections, historical dictionaries, archival materials, and reliable translations. Korean proverbs were treated as fixed paremiological utterances whose figurative force depends on culturally recognizable situations, while Uzbek proverbs were examined as concise oral-literary units

preserving collective experience. This definition followed the genre-oriented account of proverbial structure proposed by Dundes [6]. Comparative paremiology provided the principal framework: common features denoted recurrent ethical concepts, social evaluations, and communicative functions, whereas distinctive features denoted culture-bound metaphors, objects, and historical references. Mieder's classification of proverbs as socially transmitted wisdom supported this analytical separation [7].

Table 1 *— Analytical criteria for Korean and Uzbek proverbs*

Criterion	Korean proverbs	Uzbek proverbs
Meaning	Ethical and pragmatic function	Ethical and social function
Imagery	Culture-bound objects and animals	Culture-bound labor and household images
Comparison	Shared concept or function	Shared concept or function

Source: compiled by the author

As shown in Table 1, historical-comparative analysis was applied diachronically to inherited imagery and synchronically to contemporary semantic use. Hermeneutic reading interpreted each proverb through lexical meaning, implied evaluation, communicative situation, and intercultural context. Source criticism compared variant wording, translation choices, attribution, and textual stability before interpretation. Mayring's qualitative content analysis organized manifest expressions and latent meanings through deductive categories of ethics, labor, family, and social conduct, followed by inductive coding of recurring images. Semiotic analysis distinguished denotative reference from connotative value and examined syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations, including icon, index, and symbol functions. Korean and Uzbek materials were therefore compared neither by formal resemblance alone nor by literal translation, but by the relation between proverbial

meaning and culturally situated imagery. This procedure prepared the subsequent interpretation of parallel concepts, syntactic patterns, and culture-bound references.

RESULTS

The source-critical comparison identified parallel ethical concepts before separating culture-bound imagery in Korean proverbs and Uzbek proverbs. Korean "가는 말이 고와야 오는 말이 곱다" and Uzbek "Yaxshi gap bilan ilon inidan chiqadi" both connect verbal conduct with social reciprocity, although their figurative scenes differ [8]. The shared feature is therefore semantic rather than lexical: respectful speech functions as a social value in both traditions.

Table 2 *— Comparative distribution of analytical categories*

Category	Korean proverbs	Uzbek proverbs
Ethical reciprocity	6	6
Labor and perseverance	5	5
Animal imagery	4	3
Culture-bound references	3	5

Source: compiled by the author

The category distribution in Table 2 records convergence in ethical reciprocity and labor, while culture-bound references remain more numerous in Uzbek proverbs. Dadaboyev's comparison of labor concepts similarly associates diligence with communal welfare in both traditions [9]. This parallel confirms the hypothesis that one wisdom can be verbalized through separate linguistic systems.

Distinctive features emerge most clearly through metaphorical images and syntactic organization. Korean proverbs frequently employ compact conditional or antithetical constructions, whereas Uzbek proverbs often intensify evaluation through parallelism, rhyme, and culturally recognizable domestic imagery [1]. Kim relates Korean animal imagery to agrarian experience and hierarchical social perception, while Uzbek materials more often connect animals, household labor, and

moral reputation [10]. The contrast concerns not the ethical principle itself, but the semiotic route through which experience becomes proverbial meaning.

Hermeneutic reading also separates literal reference from figurative function. In the Korean expression "호랑이 굴에 가야 호랑이 새끼를 잡는다," the tiger's den encodes risk accepted for achievement; the Uzbek equivalent "Tavakkal qilgan tog' oshar" foregrounds resolve through a culturally marked mountain image [11]. Their syntactic patterns preserve parallel exhortation, yet their lexical units activate different historical imaginaries. Boqiyeva's comparative analysis confirms that formal resemblance alone cannot establish complete paremiological equivalence [2].

Thus, common features substantiate shared ethical wisdom, whereas distinctive features preserve cultural memory through metaphor, syntax, and reference. These findings provide a textual basis for examining how translation and intercultural communication negotiate equivalence without erasing symbolic specificity.

DISCUSSION

The category matrix reveals that shared ethical meanings persist when Korean proverbs and Uzbek proverbs encode them through dissimilar cultural images. Korean proverb scholarship associates such imagery with social experience and metaphorical cognition [12], whereas Uzbek research connects proverbial meaning more explicitly with national mentality [13]. This convergence supports the hypothesis, yet Kim's comparative account cautions that Central Asian and Korean materials require historically situated interpretation rather than formal matching [8].

The results presented above therefore indicate that cultural memory mediates equivalence: a translator may preserve ethical force while adapting animal, household, or labor imagery for intercultural communication. Kispál's contrastive study similarly treats functional correspondence as more informative than lexical identity [14], while Chernova emphasizes national-cultural specificity within comparative paremiology [15]. The present interpretation extends both positions by linking symbolic divergence to worldview formation.

The data underlying the analysis are collated in Table 3.

Table 3 *— Interpretive implications of comparative categories*

Category	Korean proverbs	Uzbek proverbs
Ethical meaning	Relational conduct	Communal responsibility
Symbolic emphasis	Social hierarchy	Labor and kinship

Source: compiled by the author

The table clarifies the practical value of culturally sensitive equivalence for bilingual proverb dictionaries and language teaching. Limitations include historically uneven sources, translation-mediated wording, and selective archival representation. Subsequent research should test these interpretations through larger diachronic corpora and reception-based translation analysis.

CONCLUSION

The category-based interpretation establishes that Korean proverbs and Uzbek proverbs articulate shared ethical wisdom through distinct metaphorical images, syntactic patterns, and culture-bound references. Within comparative paremiology, this synthesis demonstrates that common features indicate convergent social values, whereas distinctive features preserve historically formed linguistic worldviews. The study's specific contribution is a historically grounded and hermeneutically controlled account connecting shared proverbial meaning with culture-specific form, rather than reducing equivalence to lexical similarity. Bilingual annotated proverb collections should identify semantic parallels alongside cultural annotations, while translation and language teaching should apply culturally sensitive equivalence principles. Subsequent research should examine how younger speakers interpret these proverb forms across digital intercultural communication.

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