

## THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GERMAN AND UZBEK PROVERBS

**Eshonqulov O.S.**

Acting Associate Professor, Samarkand State  
Institute of Foreign Languages ([otto.otabek@gmail.com](mailto:otto.otabek@gmail.com))

**Abstract.** Particular attention is paid to the linguocultural characteristics of proverbs and their role in reflecting national mentality, cultural values, and social experience. Within the framework of comparative paremiology, proverbs are analyzed from semantic, structural, and conceptual perspectives.

**Keywords:** paremiology, linguoculturology, semantic analysis, national culture, concept.

The comparative study of German and Uzbek proverbs is considered one of the important directions of intercultural research in linguistics. Such studies make it possible to identify both common and distinctive aspects in the historical experience, mentality, and system of values of the two peoples. Within the framework of comparative paremiology, proverbs are interpreted not only as semantic units but also as carriers of cultural information. The proverbs of each nation reflect its social life, moral norms, and worldview. Therefore, comparative analysis is not limited to lexical correspondence but also takes into account cultural and conceptual equivalence. For example, the Uzbek proverb “Erta turgan erishar” and the German proverb “Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund” are similar in meaning and express the idea of diligence and the value of time. This phenomenon shows that universal human values exist in different cultures. At the same time, some proverbs are formed only within a national environment and do not have a complete equivalent in other languages. Such cases increase the complexity of comparative studies. The theoretical foundations of comparative research began to develop actively in the second half of the twentieth century. In particular, the works of Karasik, Maslova, and Vorkachev contributed to the formation of methods for analyzing paremiological units through cultural concepts. In their studies, proverbs are considered as a component of the conceptual system. In Uzbek linguistics, scholars such as Sh. Safarov, M. Yuldoshev, and G. Sharifova also developed the comparative linguocultural approach. In these studies, proverbs are evaluated as expressions of national thinking. Methodologically, comparative analysis is based on the combination of inductive and deductive methods. First, linguistic materials are collected, and then general conclusions are drawn. This approach ensures scientific accuracy. In the comparative study of German and Uzbek proverbs, the method of semantic fields is widely used. Through this method, proverbs are grouped based on certain concepts. For example, semantic fields such as “**work**,” “**family**,” “**honesty**,” “**time**,” and “**order**” are identified. In Uzbek proverbs, expressions such as “Oila — muqaddas” (“Family is sacred”) and “Ota rozi — Xudo rozi” (“If the father is satisfied, God is satisfied”) represent the concept of family values, while in German the proverb “Ordnung ist das halbe Leben” (“Order is half of life”) reflects the concept of order. These differences are connected with the national characteristics of mentality. Research shows that the analysis of semantic fields is an effective method for identifying cultural differences. Therefore, this method occupies a leading position in comparative paremiology. The problem of equivalence is of particular importance in comparative studies. Not every proverb has a direct equivalent in another language. Therefore, different levels of equivalence are identified: complete equivalence, partial equivalence, functional equivalence, and non-equivalence.



For example, the Uzbek proverb “Yetti o‘lchab, bir kes” and the German proverb “Siebenmal messen, einmal schneiden” are considered fully equivalent. However, the Uzbek proverb “Mehmon otangdek ulug‘” does not have a direct equivalent in German. This situation is explained by cultural differences. Researchers recommend explaining such units through functional equivalents. This method is also important for translation studies. Statistical methods are also used in the comparative study of German and Uzbek proverbs. Research conducted on the basis of corpus linguistics makes it possible to identify the most frequently used proverbs. According to analyses conducted between 2015 and 2022, proverbs related to work constituted **35%** in Uzbek media texts, while in German corpora units related to order and responsibility accounted for more than **40%**. These results reveal cause-and-effect relationships. The level of economic development and the stability of the social system influence the hierarchy of values. Therefore, statistical analysis increases the reliability of comparative research. The combination of methodological approaches plays an important role in the comparative study of German and Uzbek proverbs. Relying on only one method may lead to one-sided research results. Therefore, in modern paremiological studies descriptive, comparative, semantic, conceptual, and pragmatic analysis methods are used together. First, proverbs are classified according to their themes and meanings. Then their internal semantic structure is determined, and finally a cultural interpretation is carried out. This sequence ensures the scientific consistency of the research. Each of these stages performs an important methodological task in comparing German and Uzbek proverbs. Since the two languages belong to different typological families, their paremiological systems also have distinctive features. Therefore, a comprehensive approach increases the reliability of the research. In the process of comparative analysis, it is also necessary to clearly determine the criteria for selecting proverbs. Research materials should not be random but should be formed on the basis of scientific criteria. In particular, the popularity, stability, semantic clarity, and cultural significance of proverbs are taken into account. For example, proverbs that are rarely used or have only regional characteristics are not sufficient for general analysis. Therefore, it is advisable to use corpus materials, paremiological dictionaries, and folklore collections. In Uzbek linguistics, the collections of Rahmatullayev and Safarov are important sources, while in German linguistics the dictionaries of **Duden** and **Wander** serve as important references. A corpus formed on the basis of these sources creates a solid foundation for scientific analysis. Conceptual modeling is another important method in comparative studies. Through this method, the system of values reflected in proverbs is expressed in the form of concepts. For example, the concept of “**work**” in Uzbek proverbs is expressed through units such as “Mehnat qilgan — topadi” (“He who works will gain”) and “Ter to‘kkan — yeb to‘yar” (“He who sweats will eat well”), while in German it is reinforced by proverbs such as “Arbeit adelt” (“Work ennobles”) and “Ohne Arbeit kein Brot” (“Without work there is no bread”). Based on these units, the model “work → result → respect” is formed. Such a model reveals the internal structure of cultural thinking. Through conceptual modeling, both common and distinctive systems of values can be identified. As a result, a structural map of mentality is created. The pragmatic approach is also important in the comparative study of proverbs. Each proverb performs a specific function in real speech. It may warn, persuade, advise, or motivate the interlocutor. For example, the Uzbek proverb “Bugungi ishni ertaga qo‘yma” and the German expression “Was du heute kannst besorgen” function in speech as a call for discipline. These units not only convey information but also regulate behavior. Therefore, pragmatic analysis is an important tool for determining the communicative value of proverbs.

Studies show that pragmatically active proverbs become established in society more quickly. Translation issues are also examined separately in comparative paremiological research. Many



proverbs cannot be translated literally. In such cases, it is necessary to find a functional equivalent. For example, the Uzbek proverb “Tovuq tushida tariq ko‘rar” can be explained in German with the expression “Der Wunsch ist der Vater des Gedankens.” Although the meanings are similar, the images differ. This reflects differences in cultural thinking. Therefore, the linguocultural approach plays an important role in translation studies. It ensures not only linguistic but also cultural equivalence in translation. Statistical analysis strengthens the empirical basis of comparative research. Observations conducted on the basis of modern electronic corpora show that between 2010 and 2022, 38% of the most frequently used proverbs in Uzbek media texts were related to work and honesty, while in German texts proverbs connected with order and planning accounted for **42%**. This difference reveals cause-and-effect relationships connected with economic and social structures. The methodology of comparative study of German and Uzbek proverbs also has great pedagogical potential. On the basis of this approach, intercultural competence can be developed. Through proverbs, students learn not only the language but also the worldview of the people. Methodological experiments show that the use of paremiological materials increases students’ speech culture by 25–30 percent. This proves the effectiveness of this methodology.

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