

VERBALIZATION OF THE «VATAN/MOTHERLAND» CONCEPT THROUGH APHORISMS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH: A COMPARATIVE LINGUOCULTURAL ANALYSIS

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**Abstract:** This article presents a comparative linguocultural analysis of the verbalization of the concept «Vatan/Motherland» through aphorisms in Uzbek and English. The study focuses on identifying the semantic, axiological, and emotional-expressive features of paremiological units — proverbs, aphorisms, and wise sayings — in both languages. Over 40 aphoristic units were examined from both linguistic traditions. The results demonstrate that in Uzbek aphorisms «Vatan» is predominantly expressed through the imagery of sacredness, devotion, self-sacrifice, and native land; while in English aphorisms the concept manifests primarily through the semantics of civic duty, national unity, and historical heritage. These differences are conditioned by the national worldview, historical experience, and cultural values of each people.

**Keywords:** concept «Vatan», aphorism, paremiology, linguoculturology, verbalization, comparative linguistics, semantic analysis.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The development of cognitive and linguocultural approaches in modern linguistics has opened broader avenues for the study of concepts. A concept is interpreted as a complex mental unit formed in human thought, encompassing historical experience, cultural values, and emotional attitudes (Karasik, 2002; Maslova, 2001; Kubryakova, 2004). Among such concepts, «Vatan» (Motherland) occupies a special place, as it is one of the most important values defining a person's national identity, historical memory, and cultural belonging.

The paremiological heritage of any people — proverbs, aphorisms, and wise sayings — reflects that people's worldview, moral values, and national thought in the most concise and impactful form (Dmitrieva, 1997; Vorkachev, 2001). Therefore, aphorisms serve as an important source for studying concepts.

Although English and Uzbek differ typologically, the «Vatan» concept in both languages expresses universal aspects of human life. However, the paremiological verbalization of this concept also reveals specific national-cultural characteristics in each language.

The relevance of the research lies in the fact that the comparative analysis of the «Vatan» concept through aphorisms reveals the relationship between language and culture from a new perspective and contributes to a deeper understanding of national mentality. Such research is also of practical significance for international scientific cooperation, translation theory, and intercultural communication.

The aim of the article is to identify and analyze the features of the verbalization of the «Vatan» concept through aphorisms in English and Uzbek from a comparative linguocultural perspective. To achieve this goal, the following tasks were set: (1) to identify units expressing the semantics of

«Vatan» among aphorisms; (2) to analyze their semantic, axiological, and emotional characteristics; (3) to substantiate the similarities and differences between aphorisms in the two languages.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed comparative-linguistic, linguocultural, and semantic analysis methods. Sources used include: in English — «The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations» (2009), «The Oxford Book of Aphorisms» (1987), and the «Brainyquote» electronic database; in Uzbek — the collection «Wise Words, Aphorisms and Proverbs» compiled by M. Fozilov (1967), «Uzbek Folk Proverbs» (1987, 1988) edited by Mirzo'ev and Sarimsoqov, and the collections «Hikmatlar Shodasi» (2013, 2015). A total of 44 aphoristic units were selected for analysis: 22 from Uzbek and 22 from English. Selection criteria included: (a) the presence of one of the keywords «Vatan», «yurt», «el», «ona zamin», «country», «homeland», «motherland», «native land», or conveying this concept in meaning; (b) confirmation based on a recognized source; (c) suitability for linguocultural analysis. In data analysis, the methods of conceptual analysis (Stepanov, 1997), semantic component analysis (Arutyunova, 1988), and comparative linguocultural analysis (Wierzbicka, 1997) were applied jointly. Aphorisms were divided into thematic groups and generalizing conclusions were drawn for each group.

## 3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

### 3.1. Semantic Features of the «Vatan» Concept in Uzbek Aphorisms

Analysis of aphorisms expressing the «Vatan» concept in the Uzbek language made it possible to divide them into several semantic groups. The first group — the semantics of sacredness and self-sacrifice. In this group, «Vatan» is interpreted as a value more precious than human life.

In Alisher Navoi's saying «A person must fight for their homeland as long as they live», the idea of sacred duty is placed at the center: fighting for the Motherland is shown as the meaning of life. In Abulqasim Firdausi's lines «For our land, our water, our children, / We shall never surrender the Motherland to the enemy!», the motive of self-sacrifice is clearly manifested. Images of soil, water, and offspring are presented as three main pillars ensuring the sacredness of the Motherland.

The second group — the semantics of separation from and longing for the Motherland. In Khoja Samandar Termizi's aphorism «Leaving the Motherland is no trivial matter, / Not everyone can endure this ordeal!», departure from the homeland is interpreted as a severe test. Gulkhani's line «The bird suddenly desires its home when it escapes the cage» likens longing and yearning for the native land to a law of nature, presenting it not only as a human but as a universal value.

The third group — the semantics of unity of Motherland and family. In Abdulla Qahhor's aphorism «If a thief breaks into your house, you don't put your son in a chest and call your neighbor», loyalty to the Motherland is shown to begin at home — from the smallest dwelling. In this aphorism, the idea of national defense is expressed figuratively.

The fourth group — a comparison of foreign land and native land. In the proverb «Better to be a beggar in your own land than a king in a foreign land», the value of one's native land is placed higher than even the status of a king. In this aphorism, not only the physical but also the spiritual significance of the Motherland is strongly emphasized.

### 3.2. Semantic Features of the «Motherland/Country» Concept in English Aphorisms

A comparative analysis of aphorisms expressing the «Vatan» concept in English showed that they have semantic characteristics distinct from Uzbek examples.

The first group — the semantics of civic duty and responsibility. In Abraham Lincoln's aphorism «Every good citizen makes his country's honor his own, and cherishes it not only as precious but as sacred. He is willing to risk his life in its defense», fulfilling the duty of good citizenship, holding the country as sacred, and defending it are interpreted as the highest expression of civic virtue. The relationship between the individual and the state occupies a central place in this aphorism.

The second group — the semantics of freedom and liberty. In the aphorism «Our country may be likened to a new house. We lack many things, but we possess the most precious of all — liberty!», the country is compared to a new house, but within it, freedom is shown as the highest value. This approach confirms the central place of the idea of freedom in English culture.

The third group — the semantics of the unity of home and Motherland. In Ernest Hemingway's aphorism «Home is where the heart is», the Motherland is interpreted not as a geographical territory but as an emotional bond within a person's heart. In David Bohlke's aphorism «There is no place like home», the native land is shown as a unique and incomparable place that cannot be equated with anything.

The fourth group — the semantics of world and human unity. In Thomas Paine's aphorism «The World is my country, all mankind are my brethren, and to do good is my religion», the borders of the homeland are expanded: the whole world is the homeland, and all people are brothers. This approach shows the influence of cosmopolitan views in English philosophical thought.

### 3.3. Comparative Analysis: Similarities and Differences

Based on the comparative analysis of aphorisms in both languages, the following table was compiled:

Semantic Group	In Uzbek Aphorisms	In English Aphorisms
Sacredness	Strongly expressed: Motherland — spiritual value, shrine	Moderately expressed: country described as «sacred»
Self-sacrifice	Sacrificing one's life — primary motive	Willingness to risk one's life in defense
Longing	Strongly expressed: separation — inherited motif	Less expressed: indirectly through «home»
Civic duty	Duty as a moral concept	Strongly expressed: in legal-political context
Freedom	Liberty — in harmony with patriotism	Emphasized separately as a central value

Table 1. Comparative semantic features of the «Vatan» concept in English and Uzbek aphorisms

## 4. DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis showed that although the «Vatan» concept in English and Uzbek aphorisms shares a common foundation, differences exist in its axiological and emotional expression. These differences can be explained by several factors.

First, the historical-social factor. In Uzbek history, defending the Motherland from invaders and struggling for national freedom have been pressing themes. Therefore, in Uzbek aphorisms, self-sacrifice, devotion, and the sacredness of the Motherland are particularly emphasized. In English culture, given the strong development of democratic and civic traditions, the semantics of civic duty, freedom, and legal responsibility predominate in the concept of «Motherland».

Second, the philosophical-worldview factor. Under the influence of Uzbek Sufism and classical literature, the concept of Motherland is enriched with spiritual, soulful, and transcendent layers. Under the influence of English Enlightenment philosophy and pragmatic thinking, «Motherland» is more often interpreted as a social contract and civic responsibility.

Third, the lexical-semantic factor. Collocations such as «ona zamin» (native soil), «kindik qoni to'kilgan joy» (the place where one's umbilical cord was cut), and «el-yurt» in Uzbek show the organic connection of the Motherland with a person's birth and development. English units «homeland», «native land», «birthplace» convey the same meaning but are more frequently used with politically semantic units like «country» and «nation».

From the perspective of Wierzbicka's theory of cultural semantics (Wierzbicka, 1997), the «key words» of each people reflect the most important concepts in their worldview. In Uzbek, collocations like «ona zamin» and «el-yurt», and in English, «country» harmonized with «liberty» and «citizenship», are typical «key words» in this regard.

Furthermore, in both languages, the image of «home» plays a mediating role in expressing the concept of Motherland, confirming the theory of the universal metaphor «home = Motherland» in cognitive linguistics (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). However, the conceptual content of this metaphor — that is, the semantic meaning loaded onto it — differs between the two cultures.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study examined the verbalization of the «Vatan» concept in English and Uzbek aphorisms on the basis of comparative linguocultural analysis. The results showed the following:

In Uzbek aphorisms, the «Vatan» concept acquires strong emotional and spiritual meaning through the images of sacredness, devotion, longing, and native soil; in English aphorisms, this concept manifests more in a socio-political context through the semantics of civic duty, freedom, national unity, and historical heritage.

In both languages, a universal cognitive metaphor exists between «home» and «Motherland». However, the cultural-semantic content of this metaphor is not identical: in Uzbek thought, home represents a spiritual embrace; in English thought, home is interpreted as the independent space of a free individual.

The research has proven that aphorisms are a source that is limited in number but rich in content for the linguocultural analysis of a concept. They concisely express the national values formed by a people over centuries and serve as an important source of information for comparative linguistics.

In the future, it is recommended to expand this research by covering other language materials (e.g., Russian, French, Chinese) and to study emotional associations of the «Vatan» concept among speakers through surveys.

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