

THE CONCEPT OF MORALITY IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK: A COMPARATIVE LINGUOCULTURAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract. This article explores the concept of morality as a linguocultural category in the English and Uzbek languages. By examining lexical semantics, culturally marked expressions, idioms, and proverbs, the study identifies how moral values and behavioral norms are encoded within each linguistic system. The analysis demonstrates that English moral discourse is predominantly individualistic and grounded in personal autonomy, rational ethics, and universal principles, whereas Uzbek morality (axloq) is shaped by Islamic ethical teachings, communal expectations, respect for elders, and the cultural priority of social harmony. The comparison highlights the role of language in shaping moral cognition and reveals differences in the conceptual frameworks underlying moral behavior in English- and Uzbek-speaking communities.

Keywords: morality, axloq, linguocultural category, comparative linguistics, semantics, English, Uzbek

1. Introduction

Morality is a foundational concept in all cultures, yet its content, interpretation, and linguistic representation vary significantly across societies. The linguocultural approach — at the intersection of linguistics, anthropology, and cognitive science — posits that language encodes values and culturally specific models of correct behavior. Thus, a comparative analysis of moral concepts in different languages provides insight into how communities understand the ideas of right, wrong, virtue, duty, and responsibility.

The English term morality refers to principles of right behavior derived from individual reasoning, philosophical norms, and cultural traditions. In contrast, the Uzbek term axloq — originating from the long-established Islamic ethical tradition — reflects collective norms rooted in social responsibility, respect, gender expectations, and community welfare.

Although both languages encode moral values, their conceptual structures differ. English emphasizes personal conscience, universal ethics, and individual judgment, whereas Uzbek morality is intertwined with religious principles, social etiquette, and community-centered norms.

The purpose of this article is to analyze how the concept of morality is linguistically and culturally expressed in English and Uzbek, and to explore similarities and differences in their semantic structures and cultural underpinnings.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Moral Concepts in Linguocultural Studies

Researchers such as Wierzbicka (1997) and Sharifian (2017) argue that culturally salient concepts — including morality — are embedded in language through metaphors, idiomatic expressions, and semantic fields. Linguocultural analysis shows how each language conceptualizes values according to its worldview.

2.2. English-Language Moral Framework

Studies of English moral discourse emphasize:

- individual autonomy,
- universal ethical principles,
- personal responsibility,
- rational argumentation (Taylor, 1999).

English morality is deeply connected to philosophical traditions and personal conscience, often expressed in abstract, universal terms.

2.3. Uzbek Moral Framework

Uzbek scholars (Abduazizov, 2008; Qosimova, 2013) note that axloq is formed under:

- Islamic ethical teachings,
- community responsibility,
- prioritization of respect and modesty,
- strong family ties,
- gender-based moral expectations.

Uzbek morality is thus more socially regulated and collectively oriented.

3. Methodology

The study employs a qualitative comparative method using:

Semantic analysis of English morality and Uzbek axloq.

Lexicographic comparison of moral-related vocabulary.

Analysis of proverbs and idioms that reflect moral expectations.

Interpretation of cultural scripts embedded in language.

Contextual analysis of moral discourse in socially relevant situations.

Sources include dictionaries, corpora, linguistic descriptions, and culturally documented examples.

4. Semantic and Linguocultural Characteristics of Morality in English and Uzbek

4.1. Semantic Structure of “Morality” (English)

In English, morality refers to:

- principles of right and wrong,
- individual ethical reasoning,
- universal norms such as honesty, fairness, justice,
- personal accountability.

Common collocations include:

- moral principles
- moral values
- moral responsibility
- moral judgment

English moral vocabulary frequently employs abstract nouns:

- integrity, ethics, justice, virtue, conscience.

This reflects an orientation toward **internal, individual-based ethics**.

4.2. Semantic Structure of “Axloq” (Uzbek)

Uzbek axloq refers to:

- culturally appropriate behavior,
- manners and etiquette,
- adherence to religious ethical norms,
- respect toward elders and community.

Typical collocations include:

- yaxshi axloq (good morality)
- axloqiy tarbiya (moral upbringing)
- axloqli inson (a morally upright person)
- odob-axloq (etiquette and morality)

The Uzbek moral lexicon contains culturally marked concepts such as:

- hayo (modesty),
- nomus (family honor),
- vijdon (inner conscience),
- mas'uliyat (responsibility),
- odob (proper behavior).

These units reveal that morality is conceptualized as **external, social, and community-based**.

4.3. Comparative Semantic Model

Feature	English Morality	Uzbek Axloq
Orientation	Individual	Collective
Ethical source	Personal reasoning	Religion + social norms
Main values	Justice, integrity, fairness	Honor, modesty, respect
Type of control	Internal (conscience)	External (community expectations)
Style of moral discourse	Abstract	Behavioral, concrete

4.4. Proverbs and Idioms Reflecting Moral Norms

Proverbs offer valuable insight into cultural moral thinking.

English proverbs

- “Honesty is the best policy.”
- “Actions speak louder than words.”
- “The truth will set you free.”

These emphasize integrity, truthfulness, and individual moral judgment.

Uzbek proverbs

- “Ota-ona rozi — Xudo rozi.” (Parents’ approval is God’s approval.)
- “Odam bolasi odob bilan.” (A human being is shaped by manners.)
- “Ko‘ngilni og‘ritma.” (Do not hurt someone’s heart.)

These reflect:

- respect for elders,
- moral behavior as social duty,
- emotional and communal sensitivity,
- religious accountability.

The contrast shows that **English morality stresses rational ethics**, while **Uzbek morality emphasizes relational ethics**.

4.5. Religious and Cultural Foundations

English worldview

English moral discourse is shaped by:

- individualism,
- personal responsibility,
- humanistic ethics,
- the right to make personal moral choices.

Even when influenced by religion historically, modern English moral thinking is strongly secular and autonomy-centered.

Uzbek worldview

Uzbek morality is shaped by:

- Islamic ethical doctrine, collective well-being,
- hierarchy in family and community,
- moderation, modesty, and public decorum.
- Thus, axloq is inseparable from cultural identity.

4.6. Morality in Communication and Behavior

English communication

direct expressions of moral opinion,
reliance on individual reasoning,
respect for personal boundaries,
moral disagreement tolerated as natural.

Uzbek communication

- indirect expression of moral criticism,
- prioritization of politeness and social harmony,
- moral evaluations guided by age, gender, and status,
- emphasis on avoiding shame.

The differences demonstrate distinct moral interaction frameworks.

5. Discussion

The comparative analysis shows that while both languages encode universal moral ideas such as honesty and kindness, the cultural interpretation diverges significantly.

Key findings:

English morality = internal, autonomous, reason-based.

Uzbek morality = external, socially regulated, religion-based.

English discourse prefers **abstract concepts**, while Uzbek uses **behavioral, relational vocabulary**.

English emphasizes personal identity in moral decisions; Uzbek emphasizes social role.

Proverbs reveal that English morality focuses on truth and fairness, while Uzbek morality emphasizes respect, modesty, and collective harmony.

Thus, the linguistic expression of morality in each culture reflects its unique worldview and social organization.

6. Conclusion

The study demonstrates that morality as a linguocultural category is conceptualized differently in English and Uzbek. English emphasizes personal ethics and universal principles, whereas Uzbek axloq emphasizes religiously grounded, socially mediated norms. Linguistic expressions, idioms, and proverbs reveal the cultural scripts that guide moral understanding in each community.

These findings underline the importance of linguocultural competence in translation, intercultural communication, and comparative linguistics.

Further research could explore gender-based moral discourse, diachronic changes in moral vocabulary, and the influence of globalization on moral concepts in both languages.

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