



Article

Expression of Cultural Relations in Proverbs with the Component “Horse”

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Abstract: Proverbs are a fundamental part of oral folk tradition, encapsulating the wisdom, cultural values, and social norms of a community. They have been an essential means of communication and cultural transmission throughout history. In the Turkic world, proverbs containing the “horse” component hold special significance due to the horse’s integral role in the cultures, traditions, and livelihoods of these people. Such proverbs are rich in cultural and historical meaning, reflecting the values, beliefs, and worldview of the community. While proverbs in general have been widely studied, there has been a lack of comparative linguocultural analysis of horse-related proverbs across different Turkic-speaking communities, particularly Uzbek and Turkish cultures. This study aims to analyze and compare Uzbek and Turkish proverbs that feature the horse as a central symbol, focusing on their linguistic and cultural meanings, as well as the social values they reflect. The study reveals that in both cultures, the horse is a symbol of strength, loyalty, and freedom, with its representation varying according to cultural contexts. Proverbs involving the horse reflect key social concepts such as labor, nobility, social relations, and gender roles. This research provides a linguocultural analysis of horse-related proverbs in Uzbek and Turkish, offering new insights into the cultural significance of the horse and its symbolic roles in the folk traditions of both societies. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how language and culture intersect, particularly in relation to cultural symbols, and highlight the importance of proverbs in preserving and transmitting cultural heritage across generations.

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1. Introduction

Proverbs are an important part of folk oral creativity. They reflect the nationality, traditions, and values of each people. This is especially evident in proverbs containing the “horse” component. Proverbs, which encompass many aspects of national culture, serve to describe, determine, and express the culture of the language in which they exist. The paremiological fund of a language contains national and cultural concepts, emotions, customs, information about famous ancestors, and even place names. Proverbs, which play a significant role in expressing the spiritual values, judgments, and worldview of a people, are cultural messengers passed down from generation to generation. They also embody crucial information about the richness of the language, its historical changes, and mental characteristics. Proverbs reflect a society’s past, its spiritual values, national way of thinking, beliefs, culture, and way of life. The worldview of the people, their attitude and judgments towards events, the customs and traditions that ensure national identity, artistic ingenuity, and the conclusions of centuries of experience all form the content of proverbs. Approved by society, filtered through centuries of thought and logic, tested by time,

proverbs have reached us as expressions that are short in form but extremely rich in meaning. It is precisely these features that distinguish proverbs from other genres [1].

Proverbs that reflect social values such as the customs, traditions, and beliefs of a people are the cultural codes of society. The striking similarity between Uzbek and Turkish proverbs draws attention. The reason lies in the close affinity of the two brotherly nations in terms of language, religion, history, lifestyle, and worldview. At times, people express thoughts that they cannot openly articulate through the imagery of animals in proverbs. In particular, zoonymic proverbs allow individuals to voice feelings or words that they cannot say directly to others by attributing them to animals. In this context, human characteristics are transferred to animals. Among the animals most frequently mentioned in the proverbs of Turkic peoples, the horse holds a prominent place. This is explained by the great significance of the horse in the lives of Turkic peoples, which were closely tied to hunting, agriculture, and military affairs. Information about customs, which form a part of our way of life, is transmitted from generation to generation through proverbs. In this process, zoonymic elements function as symbolic markers [2]. Proverbs especially encapsulate the semantic codes of customs in such cultural domains as wedding ceremonies, hospitality, values, friendship and enmity, and moral evaluation. According to linguocultural analysis, two fundamental layers can be distinguished in each proverb: from a linguistic perspective – lexical and grammatical formation; from a cultural perspective – mental and spiritual connotation.

Linguoculturology and paremiology are among the most important disciplines in the field of linguistics, each focusing on specific aspects of language and its interaction with culture. These two areas of study are closely intertwined, since language and culture do not exist independently of one another: culture is realized through language, and language is a vital tool for expressing cultural concepts, ideals, and values. Linguoculturology examines how different peoples perceive the same phenomena through the prism of their language. Paremiology is an essential element of linguoculturology, as paremiological units often serve as carriers of cultural concepts and symbols. Proverbs and sayings, are crucial bearers of cultural and historical meanings and act as a bridge between language, culture, and a people's worldview. They reflect not only an individual's inner perception of the world but also the social, historical, and cultural contexts in which these units were created.

Proverbs are also found in "Qutadghu Bilig", created a few years earlier than "Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk" [3][4]. However, in this work the proverbs do not appear in their original form, but rather adapted to the aruz poetic meter. The Turkish scholar Ahat Ustuner analyzed the proverbs in "Qutadghu Bilig" according to certain criteria and reported that the work contains 205 proverbs. On the basis of the same criteria, Ustuner identified 36 proverbs in "Hibbat al-Haqāyiq" [5]. In this study, scientific sources related to the topic were analyzed and compared. Descriptive, classificatory, comparative-historical, linguocultural, statistical, and comparative analytical methods were used in elucidating the subject.

2. Materials and Methods

"The paremiological corpus of a language may be regarded as a treasure chest filled with the pearls of popular wisdom and deeply rooted in the culture of its speakers. It is well established that proverbs and sayings have been extensively investigated in folklore studies as genre-specific texts. Their systematic analysis within linguistics – particularly in the field of linguoculturology – has only recently begun to attract scholarly attention. From a pragmatic perspective, proverbs serve a wide range of communicative functions: they may be employed to express irony, offer consolation, provide advice, give counsel, deliver instruction, issue warnings, voice criticism, and so forth. Nevertheless, not every proverb or saying is equally relevant for linguocultural inquiry. In this context, special emphasis

should be placed on those proverbial expressions that are intrinsically linked to the history, culture, daily life, and spiritual values of a given people or ethnic group". Specialists have noted that two proverbs appear in the inscriptions, the oldest written monuments of the Turkic language [6]. In both their literal and figurative meanings, proverbs uniquely convey important information about social life, human relations, social judgments, and moral standards. Among the animals of great significance in the lives of Turkic peoples, the horse can be said to occupy one of the foremost places. The role of the horse in the life of the Turkic peoples is also recorded in ancient written sources. For instance, in Mahmud al-Kashgari's "Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk", it is stated that since the horse served the Turks as a means of transport, an instrument of labor and battle, and its meat, milk, and hide were also used, numerous concepts related to the horse existed. There are words denoting the horse's color, age, sex, gait, qualities, harness, care, function, and feed, as well as many proverbs connected with the horse. "In the work, one can find 24 proverbs with the 'horse' component" [7].

3. Results and Discussion

In Uzbek proverbs, the horse appears under various names: ot (horse), toy (colt), toychoq (foal), arg'umoq (steed), tulpor (mythical winged horse), biya (mare), baytal (mare), yilqi (herd of horses), ayg'ir (stallion), qulun (foal), and others. In Turkish proverbs, the horse occurs as at (horse), aygır (stallion), beygir (a gelded or workhorse used for carrying loads), kısırak (mare), kulun (foal), tay (colt), küheylan (thoroughbred steed), and so on. In the Turkish language there are a great many proverbs associated with the horse. In them, the horse symbolizes nobility, perception, elegance, bravery, and loyalty. In most proverbs, the horse and the young man are depicted together, and special emphasis is placed on the importance of caring for the horse. "The Turks, for whom the horse held a special place in life, when speaking of the truths they observed and the experiences they gained over a lifetime, explained human affairs in relation to horses".

Advice on how to act in various life situations, as well as social judgments, have been preserved for centuries in proverbs with the "horse" component. An analysis of the collection Uzbek Folk Proverbs, which contains more than 13,000 proverbs, revealed that 263 of them include the "horse" component. Together with proverbs from other sources, their number exceeds 400. An examination of Ömer Asım Aksoy's "Dictionary of Proverbs and Idioms" (Atasözleri ve Deyimler Sözlüğü) showed that among 2,667 proverbs, 84 are "horse" proverbs. Taking into account proverbs from other sources, their number exceeds 500 [8]. These proverbs vividly portray human behavior through the positive and negative qualities of the horse, reflect social judgments and the subtle facets of human nature and psychology, and contain instructive advice.

Proverbs are an integral part of the phraseological system of a language and occupy a central place in the language and culture of any people. Their stability, metaphorical nature, depth of meaning, and universality make proverbs an important tool for expressing life experience, knowledge, moral and ethical norms, as well as a people's worldview. Through proverbs, one can gain a deeper understanding of how different cultures perceive fundamental values and problems of life.

The distinctiveness of proverbs lies in their metaphorical and symbolic nature, which makes them especially valuable for linguocultural studies. In every language, regardless of its historical and social context, proverbs and sayings reflect the characteristic features of a people, their worldview, traditions, and established customs. Their study makes it possible not only to understand individual cultural elements but also to conduct comparative research across cultures [9].

Proverbs, like other fixed expressions, often have a universal meaning, but at the same time one that is specific to each culture. In these expressions, not only traditions and views on different aspects of life are clearly manifested, but also symbolism, which may

differ significantly depending on language and cultural context. One striking example is the use of animals and their symbols in proverbs. The horse is an image that appears in many languages of the world and in various cultures.

The study of horse-related proverbs in Uzbek and Turkish allows us to uncover how this image is perceived in different cultures, what meanings are attributed to it, and what cultural and social features it reflects. In these cultures, the horse carries rich symbolism associated with labor, freedom, loyalty, wealth, as well as notions of social and military power [10]. However, despite the similarity of meanings, in each of these cultures the horse may have its own specific connotations and symbolize different cultural aspects.

Thus, the study of the linguocultural features of horse-related proverbs in Uzbek and Turkish constitutes an important contribution to understanding how national conceptions of the world are expressed through language and phraseology. This research makes it possible to view proverbs not only as elements of phraseology but also as a key to understanding cultural similarities and differences between peoples – an issue of particular relevance in the context of globalization and the pursuit of intercultural understanding.

1. Functions of Proverbs in Language and Culture

Proverbs perform several key functions, which makes them important not only from a lexical perspective but also from cultural and social ones. Among the main functions of proverbs, we can distinguish the following:

Moral and ethical function

Proverbs often express the moral principles, ethnic and cultural norms of society, as well as conceptions of good and evil, honesty and deceit, diligence and laziness [11]. These expressions serve as a kind of guide for life, teaching how to act in particular situations and what is right or wrong. Let us consider some of these ideas through proverbs.

On the basis of the parallelism between *horse* and *woman* in proverbs with the “horse” component, one can observe attitudes toward women, wives, and the expectations of society. For example: *Atta, avratta uqur vardir; Arpadir atı yediren, avrattır erkeği güldüren; Atına sahip olabilen karısına sahip olur.* For a people who considered the horse, homeland, and wife as sacred, there was the saying: *At kudümü, yurt kudümü, avrat kudümü.* This expresses the idea that these three should be honored and protected. At the same time, there exist proverbs of an opposite nature in both cultures: *Ostingdagi otingga ishonma, qo'yningdagi xotiningga ishonma // At ile avrata inan olmaz; Attan vefa gelir, avrattan vefa gelmez* – where distrust and dissatisfaction are expressed. In other cases, proverbs give warnings, such as: *Ot olsang oy kengash, xotin olsang yil; Yemiga chidasang ot ol, sarfiga chidasang xotin ol; Yomon ot bel qaritar, yomon xotin er qaritar; Avradı güzel, atı yorga ile yoldaş olma; Avrat attır, gemini boş tutma; Avrat, at, bağ, sahibini hep genç ister; Otning yomoni – ola, xotinning yomoni – balo; Yaya gözüyle at, bekâr gözü ile avrat alınmaz; Kız evladı yerine düşerse bir eyerli at, yerine düşmezse bir uyuz it; Kız ile gürüşme, kısrak ile yarışma.* Some proverbs express taking risks: *At ile avrat yiğidin bahtına.* Others give advice: *At alırsan arlıdan, kız alırsan çarlıdan al; Kız alırsan Söğüt'ten, at alırsan yürükten al; Anasını babasını dinlemeyen evlat, kocasını saymayan avrat, üzengi ile yürüyen at, kapında tutma; hiç durma sat; At alırsan kula al, avrat alırsan deli al; At alırsan önüne bak, karı alırsan arkasına bak; Güzelin başına, ağanın aşına, atın dişine bak.* Some reflect hope and consolation: *Oting yaxshi bo'lsa – bu dunyoning farog'i, xotining yaxshi bo'lsa – bu dunyoning charog'i.* Others express social norms and expectations: *Arazi eve yakın, at yere yakın, avrat ere yakın olmalı; At bacağı avrat kucağı (doldurmalı); Bir batman et ya avratta ya atta; At ile avradın yediği sayılmaz; Deh demeden yürürse at, gir oyna çık oyna, eve gelince yüzü gülerse avrat gir oyna çık oyna; Dokunmadan yürüyen at, dinden imandan çıkarmayan evlat, bir de iyi oldu mu avrat, ne murattır ne murat; Üzengiye ayak koyunca giden at, eve gelince yüze gülen avrat; Atın küçük başlısı, itin ince karınlısı, kadının uzun saçlısı; Atın nalçalısı, yemeğin salçalısı, kadının kalçalısı; Atın çekiç başlısı, güzelin sümbül saçlısı.* As the analysis shows, a large

portion of Turkish proverbs with the “horse” component belong to this group. This reflects the society’s attention to family and its strict demands.

In Uzbek culture, the issue of morality and discipline is also emphasized. For example: *Odobi yo’q yigit – yugani yo’q ot* (An ill-mannered youth is like a bridleless horse). To restrict and control the limitless physical activity of a horse, a bridle is used. Proverbs such as *Ot minsang, yugan sol, yugan solmasang, piyoda qol* and *Ot tizgini kimda bo’lsa, shunga bo’ysunadi* are not without reason. A horse without a bridle can run wherever it pleases; this state is compared to an ill-mannered youth whose actions disturb those around him.

Laziness is condemned in nearly every society, and in Uzbek horse-related proverbs this theme is also given special attention: *Erinchoq eshikka chiqsa, ot yollaydi; Ot bo’lsang-u, kishnamasang, odam bo’lsang-u ishlamasang* (If you are a horse but do not neigh, if you are a man but do not work – said of the idle and lazy); *Otning yomoni – surinchak, odamning yomoni – erinchak; Yotaversa, ot ham ozar* (If it keeps lying down, even the horse will waste away).

Another theme is the value of care and protection for animals, which have always been humans’ faithful companions and helpers. For instance: *Bin atin varsa bin dinlen; bir atin varsa in dinlen; Bin atin varsa inişte in, bir atin varsa yokušta bin; At düz ovada, ester (katır) kayalıkta makbuldür* – emphasizing that horses move freely and efficiently on plains, using less energy and observing the surroundings better. Meanwhile, the proverb *Otga do’st kabi boq, dushman kabi min* highlights the need to raise and train horses with affection while riding them with caution.

Cognitive function

Proverbs generalize the life experience of a people; they are a kind of metaphorical image that contains information about the world, about how people interact with nature, and about their relations with one another. Proverbs often serve as universal models for solving various life problems. The life experience and keen observation of our ancestors provided the basis for the creation of many proverbs. For example, the Uzbek sayings *Qo’y olsang – yomg’irda ol, ot sotsang – yomg’irda sot* (If you buy a sheep, buy it in the rain; if you sell a horse, sell it in the rain) and *Dovulli kun qush solma, yog’inli kun ot olma* (On a stormy day do not release a bird, on a rainy day do not buy a horse) reflect this. The explanation is as follows: when sheep are caught in the rain, their wool becomes matted, making them look thin and small, so they are sold cheaply; horses, on the other hand, look glossy and beautiful when wet, so their price rises. For this reason, horse traders would often deliberately wet the horses before bringing them to the market so they appeared more attractive and fetched higher prices [12]. The Turkish proverb *Yağmurda düşmanın koyunu, dostun atı satılsın* (May your enemy’s sheep and your friend’s horse be sold in the rain) is based on the same observations. In this saying we see two contrasts: enemy vs. friend, sheep vs. horse. To wish well for a friend and ill for an enemy is a typically human trait. Because rain makes the horse’s coat shine and looks beautiful, while the sheep’s fleece looks ugly and makes it appear scrawny, the sheep sells cheaply, whereas the horse fetches a higher price. Another Uzbek proverb says: *Yomg’irda ot tanlama, hayitda qiz* (Do not choose a horse in the rain, nor a girl during a festival). It cautions that in the rain all horses look beautiful, just as during a holiday all girls appear especially attractive because of adornments, and thus errors in judgment may occur. Similar Turkish sayings such as *At alacaksan yazın al, kız alacaksan gezin (güzün) al* (If you buy a horse, buy it in summer; if you marry a girl, do so in autumn) and *At alırsan yazın, deve alırsan güzün, kız alırsan gezin, ha gezin* (Buy a horse in summer, a camel in autumn, and a girl in autumn) emphasize that every task has its proper time and that patience and attention lead to a good outcome. In summer, fodder is abundant and pastures allow horses to roam freely, making them healthy and strong. Thus, buying a horse in summer is economically advantageous. Camels shed in spring and summer, and by autumn their true condition becomes clear, making it a favorable time for purchase.

The Turkish saying *Düşün deli gönül, düşün, at mı alınır kışın, onun da parası peşin; düşün düşün, kötüdür işin, hiç adam beygir mi alır kışın?* (Think, oh foolish heart, think: is a horse ever bought in winter, and with cash up front? Think, think, your business will go badly – who in his right mind buys a horse in winter?) uses a rhetorical question to express denial: one does not buy horses in winter, nor does one pay in advance. Other proverbs are based on ancient beliefs and rituals. *Boshi bosh bo'lsin, tuyog'i tosh bo'lsin; Boshing bosh bo'lsin, baqalchog'ing tosh bo'lsin* (May your head prosper, may your hoof be like stone) originate in a custom: when livestock (a horse, cow, sheep, or goat) was bought from the market and brought home, women would rush out joyfully, spread a cloth before the animal, rub a whetstone in flour, and strike the animal's head and hooves three times, uttering blessings. The head ritual meant "May you be the first of many animals in my herd," and the hoof ritual meant "May your hoof be strong and enduring, may you multiply." Elders would also recite these proverbs figuratively as blessings for newly married brides [13].

The Turkish proverb *Ağustosun on beşinden sonra ere kaftan, ata çul* (After August 15, a robe for the man and a blanket for the horse) emphasizes the need to care for the health of both people and animals as the weather cools toward the end of summer. Similarly, sayings such as *Sunbula tug'sa, ot semirar; Sunbula tug'ar sumpayib, ot semirar qampayib* (When Virgo rises, horses grow fat and sleek) indicate that during the Virgo period (August 22 – September 21), harmful insects disappear, the days become cooler, grasses ripen and grow more nutritious, and as a result livestock gain weight and their coats become glossy.

Pragmatic function

Proverbs are widely used in everyday speech as a means of conveying ideas with minimal effort. They allow speakers to express complex concepts accurately and concisely, without lengthy explanations. This makes proverbs a convenient and effective tool of communication.

For example, the Turkish saying *Akrabaya at ver dost ol, kız ver düşman ol* (Give a horse to a relative and you gain a friend; give him a daughter and you gain an enemy) illustrates clearly that a horse, as a valuable gift, strengthens relationships, while marriage alliances within kinship may sometimes lead to discord. Similarly, the proverbs *At beslenir kız istenir; At beslenirken kız istenirken* (A horse is trained while a girl is courted), *At alırsan binip al, kız alırsan bilip al* (If you buy a horse, ride it first; if you take a wife, know her well), *At alırsan taydan al, kız alırsan soydan al* (Buy a horse from a colt, choose a girl from her family), and *At alırsan yazın, deve alırsan güzün, kız alırsan sevin, dul alırsan gezin ha gezin* (Buy a horse in summer, a camel in autumn, a girl with joy, and if you marry a widow, make inquiries) all highlight the parallelism between horses and brides. They emphasize the importance of family relations, careful choice of a spouse, attention to lineage, and the need to investigate a widow's circumstances before marriage. The proverb *Beda bersang toyga ber, kasir-kusur chaynasin, qizni bersang, yoshga ber, ishqı bilan o'ynasin* (If you give alfalfa, give it to a colt so it can chew its imperfections; if you give a bride, give her to a young man so he can play with love) underscores the significance of youth in marriage [14]. Another Turkish proverb, *Atın iyisini genç, kadının iyisini ihtiyar alır* (A young man takes the best horse; an old man takes the best wife), reflects cultural observations: a young man, being strong and agile, is suited to owning the finest horse, while an older man, experienced and often wealthy, is able to have the best wife.

2. Historical experience of the people through proverbs

Proverbs accumulate and transmit the historical experience of a people. Each generation contributes to their development, adapting them to current conditions, yet preserving the core content that was relevant in the past. Therefore, by studying proverbs, one can not only understand moral and ethical principles but also identify key historical moments, such as social organization, forms of economy, and the relationship between

humans and nature. For instance, proverbs about the horse in agrarian and nomadic societies reflect not only the symbolism of strength and diligence but also the specific lifestyle of communities where the horse was an indispensable part of everyday life.

Looking at Turkish history, it is evident that horses played a crucial role in the global victories of the Ottoman Empire, which once ruled across three continents. The proverb *Osmanlı'nın ayağı üzengide gerek* (The Ottoman's foot must always remain in the stirrup) can be seen as a concise expression of the principle that shaped Ottoman life. Preserving a state, expanding its borders, and spreading religion was not easy – it required constant vigilance and readiness for action. Similarly, *Osmanlı'yı at yıkar, Türk'ü inat* (The Ottoman falls by the horse, the Turk by stubbornness) reflects both the Ottomans' boundless affection for horses and the Turkish people's characteristic trait of persistence.

Uzbek proverbs such as *Giyranda kulib yig'lar, Toy bersang, erib yig'lar; Toy berib yig'latdim, ot berib tindirolmadim* capture traditions of mourning. In the past, there were professional mourners called *giyranda*, hired to cry and recite elegies during funerals. With their moving words, they evoked genuine grief among relatives and the community. For their services, mourners were given gifts – sometimes money, clothing, or livestock ranging from horses and foals to sheep and goats [15]. Occasionally, if a mourner exaggerated his act to the point of exhausting the audience, he was paid even more to stop. Thus, the proverb not only reflects a historical practice but also serves metaphorically to describe individuals who, like mourners, excessively amplify their craft or speech for personal gain.

Other Turkish proverbs such as *Ağanın gözü ata tımardır* (A lord's gaze is grooming for a horse), *Ağaya at, insana ad yakışır* (A horse suits a lord, a name suits a man), *Güzelin başına, ağanın aşına, atın dişine bak* (Examine the head of a beauty, the food of a lord, and the teeth of a horse), *Ak at ile cahil ağaya kulluk çetindir* (Serving a white horse or an ignorant lord is difficult), *At ağasına göre şahlanır* (A horse rears according to its master), and *Genç ağaya kır ata hizmet etmek güçtür* (Serving a young lord or a spirited horse is difficult) reveal how horses were symbolically tied to figures of power and prestige in Turkish society.

Proverbs also capture perceptions of social classes, as there have always been both the rich and the poor in every society. Their starkly different lifestyles are reflected in sayings such as *Amirning oti oltin qoziqda, faqirning oti doim yoziqda* (The wealthy man's horse is tied to a golden stake, the poor man's horse is always grazing), *Ikki boy quda bo'lsa, o'rtada yo'rg'a ot yuradi, Ikki kambag'al quda bo'lsa, o'rtada to'rova yuradi* (When two rich men are in-laws, a trotting horse passes between them; when two poor men are in-laws, a food sack passes between them), *Boy bolasi – boydakkina, egarlagan toydakkina* (The child of the rich is always pampered, like a well-saddled foal), and *Azobli qulni ot ustida it qopar; Kambag'alni ot ustida it qopar* (Even when riding a horse, the suffering slave or poor man is bitten by a dog), all of which metaphorically describe class inequalities.

3. Worldview through Proverbs

Proverbs serve not only as carriers of moral norms but also as expressions of a people's unique worldview. Language reflects fundamental concepts such as life and death, good and evil, success and failure, work and rest. Proverbs shape the way people perceive the world, including their views on social relations, their relationship with nature, and even their interactions with other nations.

Through proverbs, one can observe how a people understand life's most important events such as age, love, death, and child-rearing [16]. For example:

- *Yuguruk otga yol bitmas, Toq yigitga mol bitmas* (A restless horse never grows fat, a single man never gains wealth) reflects society's preference for marriage as the foundation of family and life.

- *Yaxshi otga qamchi kerakmas, Yaxshi qizga – sovchi* (A good horse needs no whip, a good girl needs no matchmaker) highlights that a well-mannered, virtuous girl is admired by all and quickly finds a family.
- *Yigit obro'si – arg'umog'i, kelin obro'si – chaqalog'i* (A young man's honor is his steed, a bride's honor is her child) conveys that having a swift horse brings status to a man, while having a child is a virtue for a woman.

Traces of attitudes toward the elderly are also found in proverbs:

- *Yaxshi odam qarisa ham, so'zi aynimas, Yaxshi ot qarisa ham, yurishi aynimas* (A good man's word does not falter with age, a good horse's gait does not change with age).
- *Qari ot ko'p yo'l bilar* (An old horse knows many roads).
- *Ot qarisa – oxurda, It qarisa – chuqurda* (When the horse grows old, it stays at the manger; when the dog grows old, it ends in the pit).

These sayings indicate that although physical strength diminishes in old age, wisdom and experience increase, allowing the elderly to guide others. Conversely, other proverbs show the hardships of aging:

- *It qarisa, qopolmas, Ot qarisa, chopolmas* (An old dog cannot bark, an old horse cannot run).
- *Ot qarisa, devonaga tushar* (An old horse falls into madness).
- *Yalnzlıktan dogru so'zium mat oldu, kartlıgımda aygır başım at oldu* (From loneliness my words became bitter, in old age my proud stallion became just a horse).

A universal human value is appreciating the blessings of life and the good people around us. Proverbs with the horse component express the inevitability of punishment for those who fail to appreciate what they have:

- *Ot xo'rlagan toy minar, Toy xo'rlagan – tayoq* (He who despises the horse will end up riding a foal; he who despises the foal will ride a stick).
- *Ot qadrini bilmagan yayov o'tar, Yor qadrini bilmagan – yesir* (He who does not value the horse will walk on foot, he who does not value a friend will become a captive).
- *Ot qadrini bilmasa, yayov ko'rar jazosin, El qadrini bilmasa, yovlar berar jazosin* (If one does not value the horse, he will be punished by walking; if one does not value the people, he will be punished by enemies).

4. Moral and Ethical Norms in Proverbs

Proverbs play an important role in transmitting moral and ethical norms. They prescribe how one should behave in various situations based on the values accepted in society. These norms often deal with honesty, diligence, respect for elders, modesty, patience, and justice.

In human relations, it is necessary to follow certain rules. In the Turkic world, the tradition of giving gifts is widespread. During joyful events, when a guest arrives or when visiting others, gifts are always exchanged. Whether the gift is pleasing or not, it should be accepted with gratitude and without complaint. This idea is reflected in the Turkish proverb:

- *Beleş atın dişine (yaşına, yularına, dizginine) bakılmaz* (One does not look at the teeth [age, bridle, reins] of a free horse).

Uzbek has similar sayings:

- *Baxshish qilingan otning tishiga boqilmas* (One does not look at the teeth of a gifted horse).
- *Siyilangan otning tishiga qaralmas* (One does not check the teeth of a presented horse).

The figurative meaning of these proverbs is that when something is given freely and sincerely, one should be thankful and not examine its flaws or value. Otherwise, people may mock such behavior.

Turkic peoples show special respect for parents. This is clearly expressed in the Uzbek proverb: *Otangni ko'rsang, otdan tush* (When you see your father, dismount from your horse). Similarly, the Turkish proverb *Baban varken dost tanı, atın varken yol tanı* (Know your friends while your father is alive, and know the road while you have a horse) highlights the importance of a father in life and stresses that a son should distinguish friends from enemies while his father is still alive. A child – particularly a son – is traditionally expected to assume the role of his father. He is obliged to accomplish what his father did not have the opportunity to complete, and to bring to conclusion what his father had initiated. “The proverb states: *Yelka “yag’iri” otga meros, ota “yag’iri” o’g’ilga meros* (The sore on the horse’s shoulder is an inheritance, just as the father’s sore is an inheritance for his son) [17]. The term *yag’ir* denotes a “wound.” The frequent chafing of a horse’s shoulder, which leaves it perpetually wounded, served as the basis for the emergence of this proverb. Within its metaphorical framework, the horse’s sore represents toil and hardship, while the father’s sore, in line with this meaning, symbolizes the burdens of life. Thus, the proverb reflects the notion that the responsibility of sustaining and providing for the household is passed down from father to son as a form of inheritance”.

Proverbs also emphasize the importance of valuing close relatives. For example:

- *Oltmish qulon ot bo'lmas, Tug'ishgani yot bo'lmas* (Sixty foals may not make a horse, but one's sibling will never be a stranger).
- *Og'a-ining yomonlab, qani tuqqan topgani, arg'umoqni yomonlab, qani tulpor topgani* (If you disparage your brother, can you find another sibling? If you disparage your steed, can you find another swift horse?).

On the other hand, bitter truths about step-relations are reflected in proverbs such as:

- *Otadoshim, otga min* (My stepbrother, mount the horse),
- *Otasi boshqa, otdan tush* (The one with a different father, dismount),
- *Otasi boshqa ot bermas* (He with another father will not give a horse),
- *Otasi yov ot bermas* (The enemy's son will not give a horse).

Thus, proverbs embody ethical principles and moral guidelines that help people navigate society, interact with one another and with the world around them, and uphold the principles of honesty and justice.

The image of the horse is among the most ancient and symbolic in world culture. In different languages and cultures, the horse is perceived as an important symbol of strength, diligence, loyalty, and independence. This is especially true for peoples who historically relied on horses as the main means of transportation, labor, and warfare. The horse played a crucial role in the lives of farmers, nomads, and warriors, often serving as a metaphor for expressing many social, moral, and cultural concepts [18].

In nomadic cultures such as those of the Uzbeks and Turks, the horse was of utmost importance. It was the main means of transportation in the steppes, used to carry people, livestock, and goods. Beyond survival, the horse symbolized freedom and independence. In these traditions, the horse often represents dynamism, speed, and movement, which were vital for nomadic peoples who traveled vast distances as part of their lifestyle.

For Turkish and Uzbek cultures, where the horse also played a key role in military life, it became associated with victory, determination, and the spirit of struggle. In these cultures, the horse symbolized not only agrarian life but also military power, courage, and the determination to defend one's land and people.

The horse thus stands out as one of the most vivid and multifaceted cultural symbols across nations. Its reflection in vocabulary, phraseology, and especially in proverbs, shows

its significance in the linguistic worldview as a bearer of numerous cultural concepts and life values. Proverbs with the horse component embody both universal and culture-specific meanings, making them invaluable for comparative studies of languages and cultures.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides a comprehensive analysis of horse-related proverbs in Uzbek and Turkish cultures, revealing the profound symbolic significance of the horse as a representation of strength, labor, loyalty, and freedom. The findings highlight the striking similarities and subtle differences in how the two cultures conceptualize the horse, with both cultures associating the horse with nobility, work ethic, and social status. These proverbs not only reflect the historical and cultural importance of the horse in everyday life but also serve as crucial carriers of social values, customs, and moral teachings. The study underscores the vital role of proverbs in transmitting cultural knowledge and shaping the worldview of communities. The implications of this research suggest that proverbs are integral to understanding the cultural fabric of societies, and their study can enhance cross-cultural understanding, particularly in a globalized world. Further research could explore the evolution of these proverbs across different historical periods and their influence on contemporary language use, as well as comparative studies with other cultures that have similar symbolic representations of animals in their proverbs.

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