

REALIZATION OF THE CONCEPT OF “JUSTICE” IN PROVERBS

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Abstract: The developing world is embarking on a massive research phase in the communications sphere to expand the flow of international relations. Also, proverbs are considered a reflection of a nation's worldview, moral values, and social norms, where justice occupies a central position. The study analyzes proverbs from different linguistic and cultural contexts to identify how justice is conceptualized, evaluated, and transmitted through figurative language. Special attention is given to semantic features, metaphorical expressions, and moral implications embedded in proverbs. The findings reveal that the concept of justice is commonly associated with honesty, fairness, social balance, and moral responsibility, serving both an educational and regulatory function in society. This research contributes to paremiology, cognitive linguistics, and cultural studies by highlighting the role of proverbs in shaping and preserving ethical concepts across cultures.

Key words: Justice, conceptualization, social reality, perception, traditional frameworks, legal frameworks, cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics.

Annotatsiya: Rivojlanib borayotgan dunyo xalqlararo munosabatlar oqimini kengaytirish uchun kommunikatsion sferada ulkan izlanishlar bosqichini o'z oldiga masala qilib qo'yimoqda. Shu jumladan, maqollar xalqning dunyoqarashi, axloqiy qadriyatlar va ijtimoiy me'yorlarini aks ettiruvchi til birliklari bo'lib, ularda adolat markaziy tushunchalardan biri hisoblanadi. Tadqiqotda turli tillarga mansub maqollar semantik va mazmuniy jihatdan o'rganilib, adolat tushunchasining obrazli ifodalanishi, baholanishi va tarbiyaviy ahamiyati aniqlanadi. Tahlillar natijasida adolat tushunchasi halollik, tenglik, ijtimoiy muvozanat va axloqiy mas'uliyat bilan uzviy bog'liqligi aniqlangan. Mazkur tadqiqot paremiologiya, kognitiv tilshunoslik va madaniyatshunoslik sohalari uchun nazariy va amaliy ahamiyatga ega.

Kalit so'zlar: Adolat, kontseptualizatsiya, ijtimoiy voqelik, in'ikos, an'anaviy asoslar, qonunchilik asoslari, kognitiv lingvistika, nutq tahlili, sotsiolingvistika.

Аннотация: Развивающиеся страны вступают в масштабный этап исследований в сфере коммуникаций с целью расширения потока международных отношений. Также, пословицы представляют собой концентрированное выражение народной мудрости, моральных ценностей и социальных норм, в которых идея справедливости занимает ключевое место. В исследовании анализируются пословицы различных языков с целью выявления семантических, образных и оценочных особенностей концепта справедливости. Особое внимание уделяется его нравственному и воспитательному потенциалу. Результаты исследования показывают, что справедливость в пословицах тесно связана с честностью, равенством, социальной гармонией и ответственностью. Работа вносит вклад в развитие паремологии, когнитивной лингвистики и межкультурных исследований.

Ключевые слова: Справедливость, концептуализация, социальная реальность, восприятие, традиционные рамки, правовые рамки, когнитивная лингвистика, дискурсивный анализ, социолингвистика.

Introduction. Language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a repository of a society's cultural values, ethical principles, and collective experience. Among linguistic units, proverbs occupy a special place as concise and figurative expressions of folk wisdom, reflecting the moral and social norms of a community.

Through proverbs, abstract concepts such as justice, honesty, and equality are preserved and transmitted from generation to generation, making them an important object of linguistic and cultural analysis. The concept of justice is one of the fundamental moral categories in human society. It regulates social relations, defines standards of right and wrong, and ensures balance within communities.

As a culturally significant concept, justice is deeply embedded in language and finds vivid expression in proverbs. These paremias not only describe just behavior but also evaluate injustice, warn against unfair actions, and promote moral responsibility. Therefore, the study of justice in proverbs allows for a deeper understanding of how societies conceptualize and verbalize ethical values. In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to the study of concepts within the framework of cognitive linguistics and linguoculturology. Scholars emphasize that proverbs function as cognitive models that encode collective knowledge and value systems. However, despite extensive research on paremiology, the concept of justice has not been sufficiently analyzed from a comparative and conceptual perspective. This gap highlights the relevance of the present study. The aim of this research is to analyze the occurrence and representation of the concept of justice in proverbs, focusing on their semantic, figurative, and evaluative features. The study seeks to identify the dominant themes associated with justice, examine metaphorical patterns, and reveal the moral and educational functions of proverbs in shaping social behavior. By addressing these objectives, the research contributes to the understanding of the interaction between language, culture, and ethical thought.

Literature review. The scholarly study of proverbs has a long tradition within linguistics and folklore studies. One of the earliest systematic discussions of proverbs is found in the work of Archer Taylor (1931), who defined proverbs as concise, traditional expressions conveying general truths or moral judgments. Taylor emphasized their social function as carriers of collective experience. Later, Wolfgang Mieder (1985, 2004) significantly expanded paremiological research by highlighting the cultural, pragmatic, and ideological dimensions of proverbs. Mieder argued that proverbs function as “miniature texts” that encode moral values and regulate social behavior, making them an important source for studying ethical concepts such as justice.

From a philosophical perspective, the concept of justice has been central to Western and Eastern thought since antiquity. Aristotle (4th century BC) conceptualized justice as fairness and proportional equality in social relations in *Nicomachean Ethics*. In modern philosophy, John Rawls (1971) redefined justice as fairness within social institutions, emphasizing moral equality and ethical responsibility. Although these works are not linguistic in nature, they provide a theoretical foundation for understanding justice as a universal yet culturally mediated concept that finds expression in language.

The linguistic study of abstract concepts gained prominence with the development of cognitive linguistics in the late twentieth century. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson

(1980), in *Metaphors We Live By*, demonstrated that abstract moral concepts are structured through metaphorical thinking. Later, Zoltán Kövecses (2002, 2010) expanded this view by showing how cultural context shapes the metaphorical realization of moral values such as justice, morality, and fairness. These studies suggest that language, particularly figurative language, plays a crucial role in conceptualizing ethical norms.

Within linguoculturology, concepts are viewed as culturally significant mental units reflected in stable linguistic forms. Scholars such as V. A. Maslova (2001) and Yu. S. Stepanov (2004) emphasized that concepts represent a synthesis of meaning, value, and cultural memory. According to Stepanov, moral concepts like justice occupy a central position in the conceptual sphere of any culture and are frequently verbalized through folklore genres, especially proverbs. Numerous studies have addressed moral and ethical values in proverbs across different languages. For example, Permyakov (1988) analyzed the logical and semantic structure of proverbs, noting their evaluative and normative functions. Comparative studies by Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen (2005) demonstrated that while proverbs often express universal moral ideas, their imagery and emphasis vary across cultures. Research on English, Russian, and Turkic proverbs has shown that justice is commonly associated with honesty, truth, divine judgment, and social balance (e.g., Mieder, 1997; Abdullayeva, 2018).

In Uzbek linguistics, scholars such as Sh. Rahmatullayev (2006) and N. Mahmudov (2010) have examined proverbs as reflections of national mentality and moral values. Their studies indicate that justice in Uzbek proverbs is closely linked with concepts of *halollik* (honesty), *insofililik* (fairness), and *ijtimoiy tenglik* (social equality). However, these works tend to address justice indirectly within broader discussions of ethics and worldview rather than as a central analytical category. Despite the substantial body of research in paremiology, cognitive linguistics, and linguocultural studies, a focused and systematic analysis of the concept of justice in proverbs remains limited. Existing studies often prioritize structural, stylistic, or general moral aspects of proverbs, leaving the conceptual, metaphorical, and evaluative dimensions of justice underexplored. The present research seeks to fill this gap by providing a detailed analysis of how the concept of justice is represented in proverbs and how it functions as a carrier of moral and cultural meaning.

Research Methodology. The present study adopts a qualitative descriptive research design grounded in cognitive linguistics and linguocultural analysis. This approach is appropriate for examining the semantic, conceptual, and evaluative features of the concept of justice as reflected in proverbs. A comparative-analytical method is also employed to identify both universal and culture-specific representations of justice. The data for this research consist of proverbs containing explicit or implicit references to justice, fairness, honesty, law, equality, and moral judgment. Proverbs were collected from authoritative paremiological sources such as Archer Taylor's *The Proverbs*, Wolfgang Mieder's proverb collections and studies (1997, 2004), V. I. Dal's *Explanatory Dictionary of the Living*

Great Russian Language (1863–1866), Sh. Rahmatullayev's collections of Uzbek proverbs (2006), Contemporary English proverb dictionaries and online corpora. A purposeful sampling method was used to select proverbs that explicitly or metaphorically encode the concept of justice. Approximately 80–120 proverbs were identified and categorized based on key semantic markers such as fairness, honesty, equality, punishment, moral responsibility, and social order. Proverbs with ambiguous or marginal relevance were excluded from the final dataset. Semantic Analysis was used to identify core meanings and lexical components related to justice within the proverbs. Metaphorical Analysis, based on the framework of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), examined figurative models through which justice is expressed. Linguocultural Analysis explored how cultural values, historical context, and national mentality influence the interpretation of justice. To ensure validity, proverbs were analyzed within their cultural and contextual frameworks rather than in isolation. Reliability was enhanced through cross-referencing multiple scholarly sources and comparing interpretations across languages. Recurrent semantic patterns were identified to minimize subjective interpretation. As the study is based on publicly available linguistic data, no ethical risks involving human subjects were involved. All sources were properly acknowledged to maintain academic integrity.

Analysis and results. The analysis of the selected corpus of proverbs demonstrates that the concept of justice occupies a central position in proverbial discourse across languages. Out of the analyzed proverbs, the majority explicitly or implicitly address justice through lexical units such as justice, fairness, right, truth, law, and honesty, as well as through metaphorical and evaluative expressions. The frequency of justice-related proverbs confirms the importance of moral regulation in traditional societies, where proverbs function as tools of social control and ethical instruction. Semantic analysis reveals that the concept of justice in proverbs is structured around several dominant semantic fields. The most recurrent features include fairness and equality, where justice is presented as balanced treatment of individuals; honesty and truthfulness, which emphasize moral integrity as a prerequisite for justice; and punishment and reward, reflecting the idea that just behavior leads to positive outcomes while injustice results in consequences. These semantic components form a stable core of the justice concept and are consistently repeated across different cultural contexts. Also, the study identified a range of metaphorical models used to conceptualize justice in proverbs. Justice is frequently portrayed as a balance or scale, symbolizing equality and impartial judgment. Another common metaphor presents justice as a path or straight line, suggesting moral correctness and guidance. In some proverbs, justice is personified as a judge or ruler, reinforcing its authoritative and normative role. These metaphors simplify abstract moral ideas and make them accessible to everyday understanding. Furthermore, proverbs expressing justice often carry a strong evaluative component. Just actions are positively marked and associated with peace, social harmony, and divine approval, while injustice is condemned and linked

to disorder, shame, or eventual punishment. The analysis shows that proverbs not only describe justice but also prescribe moral behavior, reinforcing accepted norms within society. This evaluative function highlights the didactic role of proverbs in shaping ethical consciousness.

Comparative analysis reveals both universal and culture-specific aspects of the justice concept. Universally, justice is associated with honesty, fairness, and moral responsibility. However, cultural differences emerge in emphasis and imagery. For example, in Uzbek proverbs, justice is closely connected with communal harmony and moral duty, while in English proverbs it is often linked to individual responsibility and legal order. Russian proverbs frequently emphasize patience and moral endurance in the face of injustice. These distinctions reflect historical and cultural experiences unique to each linguistic community. All in all, the concept of justice is a core moral value systematically represented in proverbs. Justice in proverbs is constructed through stable semantic components such as fairness, honesty, and moral accountability. Metaphorical models play a key role in verbalizing the abstract nature of justice. Proverbs function as moral regulators by evaluating and guiding social behavior. While the concept of justice is universal, its linguistic realization reflects cultural specificity.

Conclusion. The present study has examined the occurrence and linguistic representation of the concept of justice in proverbs, highlighting its role as a key moral and cultural value encoded in language. Through semantic, conceptual, and linguocultural analysis, the research has demonstrated that proverbs serve as an effective medium for preserving and transmitting ethical norms related to justice across generations. Also, the study contributes to paremiology, cognitive linguistics, and linguocultural studies by offering a focused analysis of justice as a conceptual category in proverbs. The results may be useful for further comparative research, translation studies, and language teaching, particularly in exploring how moral values are embedded in phraseological units. Future research may expand the corpus, include quantitative methods, or explore additional moral concepts to gain a deeper understanding of ethical representation in language.

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