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Article

A Corpus-Assisted Linguocultural Analysis of Character-Related Wise Sayings in English and Uzbek Fiction

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Abstract: This article examines how character-related wise sayings are selected, framed, and made culturally meaningful in Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice and Abdulla Qodiriy's O'tkan kunlar. A small comparable corpus was compiled from public-domain electronic texts, comprising 122,000 English tokens and 89,158 Uzbek tokens. Candidate units were retrieved through a hybrid procedure that combined lexical seeds, generalising constructions, and traditionalising markers with close contextual reading. Fifty-seven units met the operational definition of a self-contained proverbial, aphoristic, or maxim-like statement that evaluates a relatively stable human disposition or socially consequential conduct. The English subcorpus contained 30 units (2.46 per 10,000 tokens), while the Uzbek subcorpus contained 27 (3.03 per 10,000). Frequency alone therefore showed only a modest difference. The stronger contrast concerned cultural packaging. In the English text, 16 of 30 items concerned self-regulation and inner disposition, and only one unit was introduced as an inherited saying. In the Uzbek text, evaluative domains were more evenly distributed, including communal ethics, experience, reciprocity, and self-mastery; 16 of 27 units carried an overt traditionalising or authoritative frame such as emish, deydirlar, deganlar, bobolar, maqol, or a cited hadith. In both novels, most units occurred in character speech, where they functioned not as detachable moral truths but as acts of self-presentation, persuasion, rebuke, consolation, and irony. The findings support a corpus-assisted view in which quantitative retrieval and close reading are mutually corrective. They also show that character-related wisdom in fiction is culturally distinctive less because one tradition is more proverbial than the other than because each assigns authority to evaluation differently.

Key Words: corpus stylistics; cultural linguistics; paremiology; character evaluation; wise sayings; English fiction; Uzbek fiction

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1. Introduction

Fiction rarely evaluates character by description alone. A narrator may label a person proud, prudent, hypocritical, or generous, yet fictional evaluation is often more memorable when it is compressed into a portable sentence: a proverb, maxim, aphorism, or apparently general truth. Such sentences seem to step outside the immediate episode. They convert a local judgment into a claim about people, motives, or conduct, and they invite readers to test that claim against the developing plot. Because the claim is voiced by a narrator or a character, however, it cannot be treated as a transparent statement of the author's moral position. A wise saying in fiction is simultaneously a cultural formula, a speech act, and an instrument of characterisation [1]

This double status makes character-related wise sayings a productive site for contrastive linguocultural research. Paremiology has long treated the proverb as a concise traditional formulation that carries social experience and gains force through repeatability.

Cultural linguistics, in turn, asks how recurrent linguistic forms activate culturally distributed conceptualisations rather than merely naming isolated concepts [2]. Evaluation studies show that value is encoded not only in explicitly approving or disapproving adjectives, but also in stance, attribution, comparison, and the management of voices. When these perspectives are brought into literary analysis, the object is no longer only what a saying means in a dictionary. The relevant question becomes who uses it, with what claim to authority, at what moment, and with what consequences for the reader's understanding of a character.

Corpus stylistics offers a way to keep that inquiry empirically grounded. Its contribution is not the replacement of interpretation by counting. Rather, electronic retrieval makes patterns visible, while close reading explains why a formally similar sentence may function as sincere counsel in one scene and comic self-exposure in another [3]. Corpus-assisted discourse studies likewise treat recurring forms as entry points for contextual explanation rather than as conclusions in themselves [4]. A corpus-assisted design is especially appropriate for wise sayings because the category is partly conventional and partly contextual. Some units identify themselves through expressions such as old saying, maqol, deganlar, or deydirlar. Others are newly coined within the novel but acquire proverb-like force through generic reference, balanced syntax, present-tense predication, or a claim to universal validity.

English-Uzbek comparative work on proverbs has often concentrated on thematic equivalence, translation, national-cultural symbols, or the classification of ready-made folk sayings. Those questions remain important, but they can leave aside the fictional ecology in which wisdom is voiced. A novel does not merely store proverbs. It gives them speakers, motives, addressees, and narrative consequences. The present study therefore examines wise sayings as discourse events within two socially observant novels: Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice and Abdulla Qodiriy's O‘tkan kunlar. Both works organise major conflicts around marriage, reputation, family authority, social rank, and the difficult interpretation of conduct. This shared thematic ground makes them useful for a focused exploratory comparison, even though they belong to different historical and linguistic settings.[5]

The study addresses three questions. First, which evaluative domains organise character-related wise sayings in the English and Uzbek subcorpora? Second, how frequently are these units presented as inherited or collectively authorised knowledge? Third, what discourse functions do they perform when placed in narrator discourse or character speech? The analysis does not claim that one novel represents an entire language or culture. Its aim is narrower: to demonstrate a transparent method and to identify contrasts that can be tested in a larger multi-author corpus.

2 Materials and Methods

2.1 Research design and corpus

The research used a corpus-assisted comparative case-study design. The term corpus-assisted is used deliberately: automated searching supported the retrieval stage, but final inclusion and interpretation depended on contextual reading. The approach follows the general corpus-linguistic principle that quantitative patterns gain explanatory value when they are related to attested contexts [6]. It also follows corpus-stylistic practice in treating character speech, narrator comment, and local textual function as distinct analytical environments.

The Table 1. corpus contained one novel in each language. Pride and Prejudice was obtained from Project Gutenberg, and O‘tkan kunlar was obtained from the multilingual Wikisource edition. Project boilerplate, editorial headers, image labels, and the Uzbek author's preface were removed. Chapter divisions were retained because they belong to the reading structure, but headings were not counted as wise-saying tokens unless the same wording also occurred in running discourse. Orthographic forms in quotations were preserved, apart from the removal of obvious line-break hyphenation. Tokenisation used

a Unicode-aware word pattern that retained apostrophes and internal hyphens. The resulting corpus comprised 211,158 tokens.

Table 1. Corpus composition and retained wise sayings[7]

Subcorpus	Work	Tokens	Retained units	Units per 10,000
English	Austen, Pride and Prejudice	122,000	30	2.46
Uzbek	Qodiriy, O‘tkan kunlar	89,158	27	3.03
Total	Two novels	211,158	57	2.70

2.2 Operational definition and retrieval

A character-related wise saying was operationally defined as a clause or sentence that (a) presents itself as repeatable beyond the immediate event; (b) evaluates a relatively stable disposition, a pattern of conduct, or a socially consequential relation; and (c) performs a proverb-like, maxim-like, or aphoristic function in context. This definition includes canonical proverbs and religious maxims, but also authorial or character-generated aphorisms. It excludes ordinary descriptions of a single character, momentary emotional exclamations, plot-specific information, and idioms that do not express an evaluative proposition. The distinction is consistent with corpus-based phraseological work that separates institutionalised multiword units from broader contextual patterning [8]

Retrieval proceeded in three passes. The first pass searched language-specific character terms. English seeds included pride, vanity, humility, character, disposition, temper, manners, wise, fool, honesty, and kindness. Uzbek seeds included fe’l, tabi’at, odob, kamtar, manman, kibr, mag‘rur, aql, ahmoq, insof, vijdon, rost, yolg‘on, mard, nomard, yaxshilik, and yomonlik, with apostrophe variants normalised for searching. The second pass searched genericising patterns such as every, always, never, one cannot, a person, and there is no in English, and har kim, hech kim, kishi, odam, hech qachon, and generic present-tense constructions in Uzbek. The third pass targeted traditionalising frames: old saying and proverb in English; maqol, emish, deydirlar, deganlar, deganlaridek, bobolar, and religious quotation frames in Uzbek.

All automatically retrieved candidates were inspected in their full sentence and surrounding dialogue or narration. A unit was retained only when its generalising force remained active in context. Repeated occurrences of the same wording were counted once when they formed an immediate echo of the same proposition, but they were counted separately when a new speaker reused the formula for a distinct interactional purpose. The final inventory contained 57 units. Because the study was conducted as a pilot by one primary coder, no independent inter-coder coefficient is reported. To reduce interpretive drift, inclusion was checked in a second contextual pass against the same written definition. This limitation is addressed again in the conclusion.

2.3 Coding and analysis

Each retained unit was coded for language, textual voice, formal source, evaluative domain, and local discourse function. Textual voice distinguished narrator discourse from character speech. Formal source distinguished an overtly traditionalised or authoritative unit from an unframed aphoristic generalisation. The traditionalised category required an explicit cue in the text, not the researcher's prior knowledge that an expression was proverbial. This conservative decision prevents familiar-looking parallel syntax from being automatically equated with inherited folklore.[9]

Five evaluative domains emerged during coding. Self-regulation covers pride, vanity, anger, reason, restraint, nafs, and the control of desire. Social perception concerns

reading character, reputation, inherited disposition, deception, and judgments of competence. Relational conduct includes reciprocity, marriage, family conflict, complaint, and the obligation not to wish harm. Communal ethics includes counsel, legitimate authority, public-mindedness, and the condemnation of self-interested rule. Experience and persistence contains sayings about time, adversity, movement, hope, and endurance. These domains are analytical groupings rather than claims that a saying possesses only one possible meaning.

Raw counts and normalised frequencies per 10,000 tokens were calculated. Given the small number of texts and the non-random sample, the quantitative results are descriptive; no inferential test was applied. Qualitative interpretation then examined representative concordance lines in relation to speaker identity, plot position, and evaluative uptake. Translation of Uzbek examples is functional rather than metrical. It preserves the evaluative relation needed for comparison while acknowledging that sound patterning and historical orthography cannot be reproduced fully in English.[10]

3 Results

3.1 Frequency and distribution across evaluative domains

The table 2. two subcorpora produced similar rates of relevant units. The English text contained 30 units, or 2.46 per 10,000 tokens; the Uzbek text contained 27, or 3.03 per 10,000. The difference of 0.57 units per 10,000 is too small, in this dataset, to support a claim that one novel is simply more proverbial than the other. The distribution across evaluative domains is more informative.[11]

Table 2. Evaluative domains in the retained inventory

Evaluative domain	English n	English %	Uzbek n	Uzbek %
Self-regulation and inner disposition	16	53.3	6	22.2
Social perception and reputation	7	23.3	5	18.5
Relational conduct and reciprocity	6	20.0	6	22.2
Communal ethics and authority	0	0.0	5	18.5
Experience and persistence	1	3.3	5	18.5
Total	30	100.0	27	100.0

More than half of the English units were assigned to self-regulation and inner disposition. This concentration is driven by the novel's recurrent analysis of pride, vanity, resentment, anger, reason, and self-knowledge. The Uzbek distribution was flatter. Self-regulation and relational conduct each accounted for six items, while social perception, communal ethics, and experience each accounted for five. The difference is not an opposition between an 'individualistic' English text and a 'collectivist' Uzbek text. Such labels would be disproportionate to the evidence. What the table shows is that the selected Austen novel repeatedly turns generalisation inward, toward the calibration of personal judgment, whereas Qodiriy's novel more often connects disposition to household reciprocity, public counsel, authority, and endurance.

3.2 Individualised aphorism and traditionalised authority

The Table 3. clearest formal contrast concerned attribution. Only one English item carried an explicit traditionalising frame: Elizabeth's announcement that she knows 'a very fine old saying' before quoting 'Keep your breath to cool your porridge.' Sixteen Uzbek units, by contrast, were introduced through markers such as emish, deydirlar, deganlar, bobolar, or maqol, or through the explicit citation of a hadith. Thus, 3.3% of the English

inventory and 59.3% of the Uzbek inventory overtly presented the proposition as socially inherited or authoritatively sourced.[12]

Table 3. Voice and overt traditionalising frames

Feature	English n	English %	Uzbek n	Uzbek %
Character speech	27	90.0	21	77.8
Narrator discourse	3	10.0	6	22.2
Overt traditionalising or authoritative frame	1	3.3	16	59.3

This difference is visible in the texture of the statements. Austen's speakers frequently formulate definitions or personal laws in real time. Mary's reflections divide pride from vanity; Darcy describes the permanence of his good opinion and proposes a defect in every disposition; Elizabeth converts moral judgment into an agile counter-maxim. Their authority arises from wit, logic, confidence, or social position, and the surrounding dialogue often tests or unsettles that authority.

(1) Vanity and pride are different things ... Pride relates more to our opinion of ourselves; vanity to what we would have others think of us.

Mary's definition classifies inner motive and public image, but its sententious confidence also characterises Mary as a performer of borrowed seriousness.

(2) Nothing is more deceitful ... than the appearance of humility.

Darcy's maxim shifts evaluation from visible modesty to concealed motive; it is a claim about character reading as much as about humility.

(3) There is ... in every disposition a tendency to some particular evil, a natural defect, which not even the best education can overcome.

The universal quantifier every and the noun disposition give a local exchange the scale of moral psychology.[13]

In O‘tkan kunlar, the speaker frequently invokes a voice older or wider than the immediate self. The evidential particle emish distances the proposition from individual invention; deydirlar and deganlar assign it to an indefinite community; bobolar locates it in ancestral experience; and maqol names the genre directly. These frames do not remove speaker agency. On the contrary, a character selects a traditional formula because it can lend pressure, tact, legitimacy, or emotional compression to a present argument.

(4) Yurgan daryo, o‘lturgan bo‘ryo emish.

The one who moves is a river; the one who sits still is a mat.

Akram hoji uses a rhythmic opposition to praise mobility and enterprise. Emish presents the judgment as received knowledge rather than personal boasting.

(5) Pichoqni o‘zingga ur, og‘rimasa o‘zgaga sol.

Put the knife to yourself; if it does not hurt, apply it to another.

The bodily image turns empathy into a practical test and supplies moral force to an argument about imposing pain on another person.

(6) Sut bilan kirgan jon bilan chiqar.

What enters with milk leaves only with life.

The proverb construes an ingrained habit as part of the person, linking character to early formation and the difficulty of change.

3.3 Character speech as evaluative action

Most items in both novels occurred in character speech: 90.0% in the English text and 77.8% in the Uzbek text. This result matters because a spoken wise saying does more than state a value. It also positions the speaker. In Pride and Prejudice, sententiae are often competitive. Speakers classify others, defend a self-image, or seize control of a conversation. Mary's polished definitions display her desire for intellectual distinction; Darcy's maxims protect the coherence of his self-concept; Mrs Bennet's 'Those who do not complain are never pitied' converts grievance into a general law that excuses further complaint. The proposition and the portrait of its speaker work together.[14]

The Uzbek examples likewise perform local acts. 'Kengashlik ish tarqamas' presents consultation as a safeguard, but in its scene the formula also participates in a political dispute about collective action. 'Qars ikki qoʻldan chiqadir' distributes responsibility across both sides of a conflict and can therefore console, accuse, or evade responsibility depending on who utters it. 'Biravga yomonliq sogʻinma' and 'yaxshiliqni qoʻlingdan berma' operate as maternal counsel in a tense household. Their imperative form does not merely name kindness; it tries to regulate future conduct.

(7) Kengashlik ish tarqamas.

A matter handled through counsel does not fall apart.

The saying raises consultation from a tactical preference to a communal norm.

(8) Qars ikki qoʻldan chiqadir.

A clap comes from two hands.

Parallel responsibility is condensed into an image that can mediate interpersonal conflict.

(9) Kishining dunyoda doʻsti yoʻq, magar nafsiga oʻzi doʻst; kishining dunyoda dushmani yoʻq, magar nafsiga oʻzi dushman.

A person's truest friend and enemy are found in the self and its desire.

Balanced negation and repetition turn nafs into the central site of moral agency.

Narrator-voiced units had a different effect. Austen's 'angry people are not always wise' is brief enough to resemble an external moral, yet it also sharpens the comic failure of Miss Bingley's strategy. In Qodiriy, narrator-mediated proverbs such as 'Kampirning dardi gʻoʻzada, sichqonning koʻzi donlik koʻzada' diagnose self-interest while maintaining a recognisably oral rhythm. Narrator use therefore creates a momentary alliance with communal knowledge, but irony may remain active: the saying can expose a mismatch between what a character claims and what the narrative has shown.

3.4 Shared linguistic mechanisms

Despite the difference in cultural framing, the two corpora rely on several shared mechanisms. The first is generic reference. English one, a person, every disposition, and people correspond functionally to Uzbek kishi, odam, har kim, and the generic singular. These forms detach evaluation from a named individual and present it as a type of human behaviour. The second mechanism is gnomic tense or tenseless predication. A statement such as 'Angry people are not always wise' does not describe a single episode; it proposes a recurrent relation between emotion and judgment. Uzbek forms such as chiqadir, hozirlaydir, and chiqar perform a comparable generalising function.

The third shared mechanism is antithesis. Pride is opposed to vanity; apparent humility to concealed self-display; friend to enemy; yaxshilik to yomonlik; movement to stasis. Antithesis makes an evaluative boundary easy to remember and easy to reuse. The fourth is embodied imagery. The Uzbek inventory contains knives, hands, milk, blankets, rivers, and arrows. The English inventory is less image-dense and more definitional, but it still uses everyday conduct - dancing, writing, laughing, complaining, walking a distance - to infer character. Experimental work on proverb comprehension has likewise shown that

figurative schemas can guide mental imagery (Gibbs et al., 1997). In both novels, wise sayings transform abstract evaluation into a compact relation that readers can carry from one scene to another.

4 Discussion

4.1 What the quantitative contrast does and does not show

The small difference in normalised frequency cautions against a simple cultural hierarchy. O'tkan kunlar contains slightly more retained units per 10,000 tokens, but the principal finding is not numerical abundance. It is the source from which a saying claims validity. Austen's novel tends to stage wisdom as a debatable achievement of individual speech. Qodiriy's novel more frequently gives evaluation a collective genealogy. The contrast is therefore between modes of authorisation: the speaker's analytical voice on one side, and socially remembered or religiously anchored precedent on the other.

This result refines the common practice of treating proverbs as detachable containers of national character. A traditional marker does not guarantee agreement, and an unmarked aphorism is not culturally neutral. In both novels, a wise-sounding statement can reveal vanity, rigidity, compassion, or practical intelligence. Fiction supplies what a decontextualised proverb list cannot: uptake. Readers observe whether another character accepts the formula, mocks it, resists it, or proves it wrong through action. The plot can ratify a saying, narrow it, or expose it as self-serving.

The English concentration on self-regulation is consistent with the novel's sustained interest in pride, judgment, resentment, and self-correction. Yet the apparently inward vocabulary is socially consequential. Pride concerns rank and recognition; vanity concerns the imagined gaze of others; humility can be a performance; anger distorts interaction. The evaluative centre is personal disposition, but the evidence for that disposition lies in conversation and social conduct. The distinction between inner and outer is thus a problem within the novel, not a stable separation imposed by the analysis.

The Uzbek corpus distributes its sayings across nafs, reciprocity, household relations, public counsel, competence, and endurance. Here character is repeatedly evaluated through the consequences it produces for others. The condemnation of noahl leadership connects personal inadequacy to communal disaster. 'Pichoqni oʻzingga ur' makes fairness depend on imagining another's pain. 'Qars ikki qoʻldan chiqadir' treats conflict as relational. Even proverbs about habit - 'Sut bilan kirgan jon bilan chiqar' - become meaningful because habit shapes family life and obligation. These patterns suggest that the novel's proverbial discourse binds moral psychology to networks of kinship and authority.

4.2 Linguocultural implications

From a cultural-linguistic perspective, the difference lies not only in lexical content but in the construal of the speaking subject. The English aphoristic voice often says, in effect, 'this is the distinction I can formulate.' Its linguistic resources include abstract nouns, definitional clauses, and universal quantifiers. The Uzbek traditionalised voice often says, 'this is what experience, elders, people, or authoritative teaching has already established.' Its resources include evidential and quotative frames, parallel clauses, embodied images, and genre labels. Both are socially situated, but they stage epistemic ownership differently. This emphasis on culturally salient lexical and discursive choices follows the broader insight that key words organise evaluative scripts rather than merely naming equivalent objects across languages.

The category of nafs is especially important. Translating it simply as self, ego, or desire captures only part of its evaluative range. In the selected saying about being one's own friend and enemy, nafs names an inner force that can be cultivated or allowed to become destructive. Its moral logic overlaps with Austen's concern for self-command, but its cultural and religious resonances differ. A responsible comparison therefore looks for

functional correspondences without claiming lexical identity. Pride and kibr, humility and kamtarlik, self-command and nafsni tiyish can enter similar evaluative relations while remaining embedded in different cultural scripts.

The data also support Norrick's view that proverb meaning cannot be reduced to a fixed paraphrase. In fictional dialogue, the same compact form can perform several actions. A proverb may soften a difficult proposal by making it sound customary; it may intensify criticism by transferring blame from the speaker to communal judgment; it may protect the speaker from direct responsibility; or it may display wit. Corpus-assisted retrieval identifies the recurring forms, while discourse analysis explains these shifts in force.

4.3 Literary functions

Four literary functions recur across the corpus. First, wise sayings characterise the speaker. A person who repeatedly turns conversation into definitions presents a different social self from one who appeals to ancestral wisdom. Second, they condense conflict. A long dispute over responsibility can be compressed into 'a clap comes from two hands.' Third, they foreshadow or reinterpret action. Statements about ingrained habit, resentment, or self-interest become interpretive keys when later choices confirm or complicate them. Fourth, they create tonal doubleness. The formal shape of wisdom invites assent, while the surrounding scene may produce irony.

That doubleness is central to both authors. In Austen, the polished maxim is vulnerable to dramatic contradiction. A speaker may be verbally exact and morally incomplete. In Qodiriy, the proverb's collective authority may be honoured, strategically deployed, or placed beside conduct that violates it. Neither novel uses wise sayings as ornamental folklore. They are part of the machinery by which readers infer character and judge the adequacy of judgment itself.[15]

5 Conclusion

This pilot study compared 57 character-related wise sayings in a 211,158-token corpus drawn from Pride and Prejudice and O‘tkan kunlar. The normalised frequencies were close: 2.46 units per 10,000 English tokens and 3.03 per 10,000 Uzbek tokens. The more consequential contrast was qualitative. The English inventory concentrated on self-regulation and social perception and usually presented wisdom as an unframed aphorism produced by an individual speaker. The Uzbek inventory distributed evaluation more evenly across self-mastery, reciprocity, communal ethics, social perception, and experience, and it frequently signalled inherited or authoritative knowledge through quotative and evidential frames. Both novels place most wise sayings in character speech. This finding prevents a simplistic reading of such units as direct authorial morals. Their value lies in interaction: they persuade, rebuke, console, rationalise, display intelligence, expose pretension, and guide interpretation. The corpus-assisted procedure proved useful because it combined breadth of retrieval with the safeguards of close contextual reading. Counts identified patterns; dialogue and narration explained what those patterns did. The study has four limitations. It uses one novel per language, the texts are historically non-contemporaneous, Uzbek historical spelling complicates automated retrieval, and the final coding was not independently replicated. The results should therefore be read as hypotheses for expansion rather than population-level cultural facts. A larger study should include several authors and periods, use an externally reviewed bilingual coding manual, report inter-coder agreement, and compare original fiction with translations. It would also be useful to distinguish canonical proverbs from novel-generated aphorisms through independent paremiographic verification.

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