

**CULTURAL AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF SIMILES AND COMPARISONS IN
PERSIAN AND UZBEK**

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Annotation

This article analyzes the linguocultural essence of similes and their role in national thinking. Similes are considered not only as artistic expressive devices, but also as linguocultural units that reflect a nation's worldview, cultural values, and mode of thinking. By comparing similes in different languages, special attention is paid to the system of national perceptions and images manifested through them. Based on examples from the Uzbek and Persian languages, the article examines national characteristics and cultural codes expressed through similes. In addition, the educational, aesthetic, and communicative functions of similes are also discussed.

Key words: simile, linguoculture, national thinking, cultural code, linguoculturology, metaphor, national perception, figurative expression, cultural heritage, phraseological units.

Since the late twentieth century, the anthropocentric approach to language study has become firmly established in world linguistics. Today, linguoculturology, which analyzes linguistic units in close connection with national culture, is emerging as a promising field of research. In recent years, considerable attention has been paid to studying language together with its bearer — the human being — as well as with their national mentality and culture. This, in turn, has created the need to reconsider fixed similes formed through the practice of comparison, which is one of the important manifestations of human thinking, from a new perspective. These expressions are now interpreted as significant linguocultural tools that reflect national mentality, since aspects such as folk thinking, values, and national moral norms have found vivid expression in stable linguistic units formed over centuries.

The issue of the relationship between language and thought, as well as between language and culture, has long attracted the attention of philosophers and linguists. However, in the nineteenth century, the comparative-historical approach, which dominated linguistics at that time, placed the issue of linguistic kinship at the center of scholarly attention. In the twentieth century, the system-structural approach developed, emphasizing the study of language primarily within the framework of its internal system, which led to a decline in attention to the human being as the language user. In contrast, late twentieth- and twenty-first-century linguistics increasingly view language as an anthropological phenomenon, strengthening the principle of studying linguistic phenomena in conjunction with the cognitive nature and national-cultural characteristics of human beings.

Simile and comparison play an important role in a person's process of understanding the surrounding environment and reality. Identifying similarities or differences between two or more objects or concepts

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through comparison is one of the most fundamental logical methods of perceiving the external world, and this phenomenon is encountered in almost all spheres of human activity. This process also finds expression through language, as comparison is one of the effective means of conveying thoughts clearly and comprehensibly through linguistic forms. Moreover, this method helps to understand less familiar features based on known characteristics. For example, since the hardness of stone is universally known, other objects are described and comprehended through similes such as “hard as stone” or “harder than stone.”

In expressing the worldview of Turkic peoples, similes occupy a special place, which is particularly emphasized in Mahmud al-Kashgari’s *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*. He writes: “When a woman gives birth, the midwife is asked whether she has given birth to a fox or a wolf. That is, whether the child is a girl or a boy. Girls are likened to foxes because they are considered cunning and persuasive, while boys are compared to wolves due to their bravery.” In this example, the simile constructions *girl like a fox* and *young man like a wolf* employ only the standards (fox and wolf), which allows them to be interpreted as shortened similes, that is, metaphors.

In addition, in *Qutadg’u Bilig* by Yusuf Khas Hajib, a work that comprehensively reflects the life of Central Asian peoples during the Karakhanid period, the following similes characterizing the qualities of rulers are recorded: “A ruler should possess the heart of a lion in battle... be stubborn like a wild boar; strong like a wolf; brave like a bear; like an ox..., like a hawk..., like a crow..., like a fox..., like a camel..., like a lion..., and like an owl.”

Simile is one of the most ancient and effective forms of human thinking and serves as an important tool for understanding reality. Since ancient times, humanity has relied on familiar concepts to explain unfamiliar phenomena, comprehending unclear or unknown objects by comparing them with well-known ones. In everyday life as well, when it is difficult to find precise words to describe a person or an object, people often resort to simile and comparison. Through this method, it becomes possible to highlight similarities of unknown or abstract phenomena, evaluate them figuratively, and express a personal attitude. In this way, individuals shape their worldview and express it through language.

Comparative constructions found in different languages emerged precisely as a result of this need. In this respect, Uzbek and Persian languages possess rich lexical and semantic resources. In Persian, expressions containing the component “مثل” (*mesl*, meaning “like,” “as,” “as if”) often carry strong poetic, figurative, and stylistic connotations and are widely used in literary discourse. In Uzbek, similar meanings are expressed through such means as *kabi* (like), *singari* (similar to), *xuddi* (exactly like), *go’yo* (as if), and *deya* (saying/as). The degree of semantic correspondence between these Uzbek forms and their Persian equivalents, the functional roles they perform, and the boundaries of their meanings are all considered topical issues in linguistic research.

Persian stands out for the diversity of its means of expressing comparativity. These include such units as “مثل” (*mesl*, like), “چون” (*chun*, as if), “مانند” (*mānad*, similar to), “همچون” (*hamchun*, just like), and “همانند” (*hamānand*, resembling). These elements are typically used to compare adjectives, verbs, or entire phrases. Persian similes are especially significant for creating poetic and figurative meanings. In particular, in literary texts, these devices generate deep semantic content and strong imagery.

The phenomenon of comparativity in Persian is not merely part of the grammatical system; it also occupies a special place in the cultural and aesthetic layer of the language. In general, similes that express similarities and differences between objects or events constitute one of the most interesting and complex aspects of Persian. Through these means, relational distinctions between two or more objects are established.

Although Uzbek also possesses devices for expressing comparison, Persian comparative expressions are distinguished by their specific semantic and stylistic features. Especially expressions formed with the component “مثل” are often used not only for direct comparison but also for irony, sarcasm, or the creation of artistic imagery. These characteristics demonstrate the wide usage and stylistic richness of comparative devices in Persian.

The means of expressing comparativity in Persian are diverse in both form and content and are characterized by semantic and stylistic richness. Among them are direct similes (e.g., شیر مثل – *like a lion*, ماه مثل – *like the moon*), ironic expressions (e.g., روباه مثل – *like a fox*, implying cunning), and poetic similes (e.g., نسیم مثل – *like a breeze*, expressing delicacy and lightness). Such expressions fully reveal the artistic

and poetic potential of the Persian language and testify to the richness of its expressive resources.

Comparativity in Persian, that is, the phenomenon of comparing objects or events, goes beyond grammar and holds significant cultural and aesthetic value. Various means are used to express comparativity:

1. “از” (*az*, from/than) and the suffix “تر-” (*-tar*, -er) — these are the most common grammatical comparative markers in Persian. *Az* often indicates relative inferiority or lesser degree, while *-tar* denotes relative superiority or a higher degree.
2. The component “مثل” (*mesl-e*, like/as) — one of the main elements expressing simile in Persian, conveying meanings such as “like,” “similar to,” or “resembling.” It is used in a wide range of contexts, from poetic discourse to everyday speech, for example: مثل شبنم مثل (*like dew*), مثل برف مثل (*like snow*).
3. “از بیش” (*bish az*, more than) and “بیشتر” (*bishtar*, more) — these units are mainly used to compare quantities or degrees and to express numerical or quantitative superiority.
4. Comparison through numbers and numerals — in Persian, characteristics such as size, speed, and quantity of objects may also be compared using numerical expressions.
5. Poetic images and metaphors — comparativity in Persian often appears in metaphorical and figurative forms. For example, expressions such as آسمان مثل ها چشم (“eyes like the sky”) or سنگ مثل قلب (“a heart like stone”) convey similarities through poetic imagery.

Thus, Persian comparative devices constitute a rich layer not only of grammatical units but also of semantic, cultural, and stylistic elements. They are widely used in literary texts, everyday speech, and poetic expression, revealing the artistic capacity and aesthetic power of the language.

In the Uzbek language as well, there are numerous linguistic means for expressing comparativity, that is, the meanings of comparison and simile. Among the most frequently used are *kabi* (like), *dek* (as), *singari* (similar to), *go 'yo* (as if), *xuddi* (exactly like), and *deya* (saying/as). Through these devices, a person or state is compared with another person or state, and similarities or differences are identified.

Structural Aspects

From a structural perspective, comparative devices mainly occur within word combinations, compound sentences, and complex sentences with subordinate clauses. The following patterns are commonly observed:

Noun + *kabi/singari/dek* constructions:

For example: “like a tiger,” “white like snow.”

These constructions clearly express the semantic relationship between the subject and the predicate, that is, the relational meaning between compared elements.

Semantic Aspects

From a semantic point of view, similes convey meanings such as similarity (e.g., “shines like a star”), equality (e.g., “her voice is as gentle as her mother’s”), and difference (e.g., “this situation is seemingly different from the previous one”).

Therefore, these devices are widely used not only in everyday communication but also in literary works, endowing the text with imagery and expressiveness.

Aesthetic and Artistic Significance

The Uzbek language is lexically rich, and comparative devices are used with strong aesthetic value in folk proverbs, idiomatic expressions, poetic texts, and prose works.

For instance, the expression “like a hungry wolf” conveys not only a state of hunger but also creates a powerful and vivid image.

Comparativity Across Linguistic Units

Units expressing comparativity occur in all parts of speech in Uzbek (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, etc.). Through their grammatical and semantic potential, they perform the function of comparison.

Intensification of similarity — in comparative expressions, devices are sometimes used to strengthen the degree of comparison. The main purpose of such constructions is to make similarity or difference more explicit. For example: “Until today, no one has run as fast as him.”

Identification of similarity and difference — the primary function of comparative constructions in Uzbek is not only to compare similarities but also to highlight differences. Through comparative means,



similarities or contrasts between two entities are expressed more precisely. For example: “These two people think differently.”

Uzbek comparative constructions, on the one hand, possess distinctive morphological and syntactic forms that grammatically mark comparison or simile. On the other hand, from a semantic perspective, comparative devices are extremely rich and multilayered, generating numerous figurative and metaphorical meanings. These two aspects of comparative expressions are fully manifested in all linguistic contexts—sentences, speech, and written discourse.

Cultural and Sociolinguistic Factors

Comparative constructions in Uzbek and Persian are closely linked to cultural and sociolinguistic factors. Issues such as how cultural heritage, language change, and traditions have influenced the formation and expression of comparative constructions are examined. Through an in-depth analysis of these factors, it becomes possible to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subtle influence of cultural values, linguistic diversity, and historical heritage on the richness and complexity of comparative constructions in Uzbek and Persian.

Cultural values and beliefs exert a significant influence on the formation and use of comparative constructions in both Uzbek and Persian. Rooted in rich cultural traditions and social norms, these languages display their distinctive features through comparative expressions that reflect the cultural values and beliefs of their speakers.

One of the most important cultural factors shaping comparative constructions is the high value placed on hospitality and generosity in Uzbek and Persian cultures. Hospitality is highly esteemed in Central Asian and Persian societies, and this value is linguistically expressed through comparative expressions emphasizing kindness and generosity. For example, idiomatic expressions in both languages may compare someone’s hospitality to that of a kind host or a welcoming community, thereby elevating hospitality as a valued virtue.

On the other hand, in cultures that place greater emphasis on individual achievement and success, comparative constructions may develop in a different direction. In such contexts, comparative expressions highlight personal accomplishments and ambitions, reflecting the cultural significance attributed to individual success. For instance, Uzbek and Persian comparative constructions may liken someone’s achievement to that of a renowned figure or a successful entrepreneur, thereby emphasizing values such as fame and success.

Cultural values and beliefs undoubtedly exert a deep influence on the formation and usage of comparative constructions in Uzbek and Persian. Deeply rooted in cultural traditions and social norms, these languages reveal their unique characteristics through comparative methods that reflect the cultural values and beliefs of their speakers.

Another significant cultural factor in shaping comparative constructions is the emphasis on hospitality and generosity in both Uzbek and Persian cultures. In Central Asian and Persian societies, hospitality is highly valued, and this value manifests itself in comparative expressions highlighting generosity and compassion. For example, idiomatic expressions in Uzbek and Persian compare a person’s hospitality to that of a kind host or a welcoming community, reinforcing hospitality as a moral virtue.

Conversely, in cultures that prioritize individual achievement and success, comparative constructions may emphasize different qualities. In such cultures, comparative expressions underscore personal accomplishments and ambitions, reflecting a cultural belief in the importance of individual success. For example, comparative constructions in Uzbek and Persian may compare someone’s achievement to that of a famous personality or a successful entrepreneur, thereby illustrating values related to ambition and success.

Religious and spiritual beliefs also play an important role in the formation of comparative constructions. In Uzbek and Persian cultures, religious and spiritual beliefs often shape social norms and values. Comparative constructions employ religious metaphors and allegorical expressions to convey moral principles. For instance, idiomatic expressions in Uzbek and Persian may compare someone’s patience to that of a prophet or a revered saint, demonstrating cultural respect for spiritual virtues.

Moreover, cultural values and beliefs influence the selection of cultural expressions and metaphors used in comparative constructions. Idiomatic expressions in Uzbek and Persian often draw on cultural

symbols, historical events, and elements of oral folklore to convey meaning. For example, comparative constructions may refer to traditional stories, proverbs, or folk heroes that reflect the rich heritage and distinctive identity of Uzbek and Persian cultures.

Social Hierarchy and Power Dynamics

Social structure and power relations significantly influence the formation and use of comparative constructions in Uzbek and Persian. These languages reflect the social systems and power balances characteristic of their societies. By examining social hierarchy and power dynamics, the distinctive features of comparative expressions in these languages can be identified.

One such feature is the association of certain qualities or virtues with social status. In hierarchical societies, individuals or groups with higher status are often associated with qualities such as wisdom, leadership, or authority. Comparative constructions in Uzbek and Persian commonly express someone's behavior or traits by comparing them to respected figures in society, such as elders, community leaders, or religious authorities. For example, someone's wisdom may be emphasized by comparing it to that of a respected elder or a renowned scholar, thereby reinforcing cultural respect for age and experience.

Furthermore, social hierarchy and power dynamics influence the formation of gender-related comparative constructions, reflecting societal comparisons of male and female behavior. In patriarchal societies, gender roles are clearly defined, and men and women are expected to exhibit gender-appropriate traits and behaviors. Comparative constructions in Uzbek and Persian may reinforce these stereotypes and roles by comparing behavior according to culturally prescribed gender norms. For instance, men may be likened to lions to emphasize bravery and leadership, symbolizing strength and dominance, while women may be compared to caring maternal figures, highlighting nurturing qualities.

Linguistic Diversity and Dialectal Variation

Language change and dialectal variation play an important role in the formation and use of comparative constructions in Uzbek and Persian. These languages are linguistically rich and diverse, and regional dialects and speech varieties provide nuanced and distinctive expressions of comparativity. The influence of language change and dialectal variation on comparative expressions reveals several unique features in their formation and usage.

One of these aspects is the variation of comparative constructions and idiomatic expressions across different regions or communities. Changes in pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax lead to differences in the formation and interpretation of comparative constructions. For example, certain dialects of Uzbek may employ distinctive idiomatic expressions for comparison, while in Persian, unique comparative expressions emerge under the influence of regional culture and linguistic traditions. These regional variations reflect the linguistic diversity of Uzbek and Persian and demonstrate the continuous process of language change and development.

Language change and dialectal variation illustrate the dynamic processes of linguistic evolution and adaptation. As comparative constructions spread across different dialects and regions, new linguistic forms and expressions emerge, undergoing modification and renewal. The diffusion and adaptation of language in Uzbek- and Persian-speaking communities reflect the ongoing interaction between language, culture, and society, demonstrating the resilience and adaptability of these languages in response to diverse social and cultural factors.

Another important feature is the incorporation of traditional metaphors and allegories into comparative constructions. Uzbek and Persian frequently draw on historical events, folklore, and religious beliefs to convey meaning. Comparative expressions often include traditional metaphors and allegorical language to depict similarities or differences between objects. For instance, someone's strength or endurance may be compared to that of a legendary hero or a revered figure, using cultural narratives and folklore as expressive resources. Such traditional metaphors and allegories make the language more vivid, expressive, and culturally rich, highlighting the cultural heritage and values of Uzbek- and Persian-speaking communities.

Similarly, comparative constructions serve to express cultural values and norms transmitted from generation to generation. The idiomatic expressions and cultural references used in these constructions are often based on shared cultural experiences and beliefs that embody collective wisdom and tradition. For example, a person's generosity or hospitality may be compared to that of a historical figure or a cultural

symbol, thereby expressing the cultural value placed on generosity and communal spirit. Such cultural features play an important role in reinforcing social norms and values, preserving cultural heritage, and conveying diverse comparative expressions through language.

Based on the factors analyzed above, it can be concluded that comparative devices in Persian and Uzbek constitute a rich layer not only of grammatical units but also of semantic, cultural, and stylistic elements. They are widely used in literary texts, everyday speech, and poetic expression, revealing the artistic potential and aesthetic power of language. Moreover, cultural and sociolinguistic factors play a crucial role in the formation, usage, and interpretation of comparative constructions in Uzbek and Persian. These factors reflect broad cultural values, social norms, and linguistic comparative structures, thereby revealing the cultural richness and diversity of these languages. By gaining a deeper understanding of the cultural and sociolinguistic dimensions of comparative constructions, we can better comprehend the complex and dynamic interactions among language, culture, and belief within Uzbek- and Persian-speaking communities.

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