

Comparative Analysis Of National-Cultural Features In Uzbek And English Humor

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Abstract: This paper compares the national and cultural characteristics of humor in Uzbekistan and England and gives them a study through the linguistic mechanisms, cultural values, and social norms of the societies concerned. The results show that Uzbek humor is very collective and puts a lot of emphasis on family ties, the custom of hospitality, and respect for seniors, and English humor displays it are even traits that go toward self-deprecation, understatement, irony, and individualistic values. Such a comparative approach is useful for communication across cultures and it helps to better understand pragmatics in the case of different cultures since it explains how humor is, on the one hand, a common human phenomenon and, on the other a specific cultural communication practice.

Keywords: Comparative humor studies, cultural linguistics, cross-cultural pragmatics, national humor traditions, cultural values in comedy.

Introduction: Humor is one of the most culture-oriented means of human communication, at the same time, serving as a form of entertainment and a way to express cultural values, social norms, and collective identity [1]. Looking at jokes through the lens of different languages and cultures offers a window into the perceptions, relations, and communication styles that are typical of various societies. Scholars have shown that humor is not simply a common human characteristic but rather a cultural phenomenon that is greatly different in its forms, functions, and even the communities' underlying mechanisms [2]. This research paper presents an analysis of Uzbek and English jokes that are similar in nature but different in terms of cultural national characteristics. It fills the gap in the field of comparative humor research that has primarily concentrated on Western humor traditions while almost entirely neglecting the Central Asian contexts [3].

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) is the main methodology used in this research, with collections of Uzbek and English jokes for analysis being the main textual data. The analytical framework combines cultural linguistics theory that investigates the interplay of language and culture, and humor studies

scholarship that looks at the social functions and cultural embeddedness of comedic discourse [4]. The analysis continues the tradition of ethnolinguistic humor research, viewing jokes as cultural texts loaded with shared knowledge, values, and social schemas typical of specific communities [5]. The materials for Uzbek jokes were sourced from the widely used humor website *Latifa.uz*, which is a major source of contemporary humor in oral and written forms in Uzbek culture. The English joke materials were taken from the major humor databases and academic collections of British and American jokes to make sure that the Anglophone humor traditions are adequately represented.

In the analytical approach, the researchers first pinpointed the recurring themes, character archetypes, narrative structures, power dynamics, and cultural references in the jokes from both cultures, and then they compared those elements in order to find the patterns that are characteristic of one culture or the other. Humor and culture have been interlinked through various research studies which have opened up some key theoretical bases that the current investigation can draw upon. Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory which is among the most important describes how the various dimensions of culture such

as individualism-collectivism, power distance, etc, can be manifested in different aspects of communication like humor, under the same framework [6]. The studies of ethnic humor have illustrated the roles that the jokes play in constructing in-group identity, intergroup relations negotiations, and cultural knowledge transmission from one generation to the next [7]. It is not that there has been no research at all into Central Asian humor traditions, but the area remains very limited while some researchers have studied the dynamics of Soviet and post-Soviet humor in the region, pointing out that both native cultural patterns and the Russian linguistic-cultural influence have been factors [8]. British humor has been a subject of extensive research with scholars being able to spot features like understatement, irony, self-deprecation, and clever wordplay as the main characteristics of the British comedic style, whereas American humor is mostly classified as direct, physical, and observational comedy [9].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The comparative analysis states categorically that the differences between the thematic focus, character representation, social dynamics, and humor mechanisms were not only superficial but also profound, thus reflecting the respective cultural values and worldviews of the two nations. The unit of humor analysis for the Uzbeks revealed family relationships as the most significant theme, especially the generations' relationship and the complex interweaving of family obligations that concern the whole clan. In the Romanian joke which is the best illustration of the theme under discussion, the mother-in-law (qaynona) is heard telling her son-in-law: "Agar sen meni erim bo'lganingda, senga zahar bergan bo'lardim" (If you were my husband, I would have given you poison), to which the son-in-law replies: "Agar siz meni xotinim bo'lganingizda, o'sha zaharni o'zim ichgan bo'lardim" (If you were my wife, I would have drunk that poison myself). This humor refers to the typical conflict between in-laws, which is a relationship with great cultural importance in Uzbekistan, where the traditional kinship system still governs the social hierarchy and structures.

The laughter comes from the shared recognition of the relationship's trouble, and the way of presenting that through hypothetical framing is an indirect communication, which is so much a part of the collectivist values characteristic of Uzbek culture [10]. Conversely, English humor generally revolves around personal experiences, work situations, or abstract idea conflicts. One of the usual jokes in English could be, "I told my wife she was drawing her eyebrows too high. She looked surprised," which depends on language play

and personal observation rather than family dynamics. The father-son relationship is one of the most frequent subjects of Uzbek humor, with the father being depicted as a ruler whose insights or decisions are to be followed, even if they are amusing. The tale of a father who is sure that his son will marry a girl he has chosen who is later revealed to be the governor's daughter and who the son instantly gets a job as a bank manager just because he is the governor's son-in-law, mocks the practice of giving jobs and promotion based on family connections and also the social climbing through family connections.

This theme resonates deeply in societies where family networks significantly influence social mobility and opportunity. English jokes about parent-child relationships more commonly feature role reversals, children outwitting parents, or parents bewildered by modern youth culture, reflecting more egalitarian family structures. The representation of authority figures differs markedly between the two traditions. Uzbek jokes frequently feature interactions with police officers, government officials, and other authority figures, often portraying clever citizens navigating bureaucratic systems. The joke about the elderly cart driver showing his "documents" by lifting his donkey's tail and pointing to the "glove compartment" uses absurdist humor to comment on corruption and arbitrary authority while celebrating folk cleverness.

English marriage jokes more frequently focus on communication failures, individual frustrations, or the battle between the sexes as individuals rather than as embedded within larger family systems. The five-year-old boy joke about wanting five wives for household tasks but sleeping with his mother illustrates the strong mother-son bond in Uzbek culture and childhood innocence regarding adult relationships, themes presented with warmth and sentimentality rare in English children's jokes, which tend toward precocious misbehavior or clever responses to adult questions. Linguistic mechanisms also differ substantially. Uzbek jokes rely heavily on situational humor, character-based comedy, and narrative development, often requiring cultural context to appreciate fully. English jokes employ sophisticated wordplay, puns, double entendres, and linguistic ambiguity more frequently, as seen in jokes like "Time flies like an arrow; fruit flies like a banana" which plays on grammatical structure. This reflects the English language's rich homophonic potential and the cultural valorization of wit and cleverness in verbal performance. The train ticket joke, where Uzbeks share one ticket by hiding in the toilet while Jews attempt the same trick but are outwitted, exemplifies ethnic self-stereotyping humor common in Uzbek tradition. Such jokes acknowledge and play with

cultural stereotypes (Uzbeks as clever, Jews as business-savvy) in ways that would be considered problematic in contemporary English-speaking contexts where ethnic humor faces greater social restrictions. This difference reflects varying attitudes toward group identity, stereotyping, and the boundaries of acceptable humor across cultures.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis reveals that a clear-cut distinction exists between the cultural attributes of the nation represented in Uzbek and English jokes and these attributes are not only the mirror but also the reinforcement of the broader societal values, social structures, and worldviews. The characteristics of Uzbek laughter reflect the values of collectivism, the family hierarchy, respect for tradition, clever maneuvering in authority, and situational comedy that is deeply rooted in specific social scenarios of the culture. On the other hand, English humor puts individualism first, it includes linguistic wits, conceptual incongruity, self-deprecation, and abstract or observational comedy that does not rely heavily on the specific culture. Stylistic differences are thus accompanied by profound differences in understanding social relationships, authority, family, gender, and the individual's position in society.

Humor serves as a powerful mechanism for cultural transmission, encoding and reproducing cultural knowledge, values, and social norms through entertaining narratives that circulate widely within communities. For practitioners of intercultural communication, understanding these humor differences is essential, as jokes that resonate deeply in one culture may fall flat or even offend in another. The study's limitations include reliance on written joke collections rather than naturally occurring humorous interactions and the inherent difficulty of translating humor across languages. Future research should explore humor in additional Central Asian contexts, examine how globalization and digital media are influencing traditional humor patterns, and investigate how bilingual individuals navigate different humor systems.

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