

THE CONCEPT OF “HEALTH” IN UZBEK PROVERBS: A LINGUOCULTURAL INTERPRETATION

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Abstract. *This article analyzes the linguistic representations of the “health” concept in Uzbek folk proverbs and its correlation with the national worldview and cultural values. In Uzbek oral tradition, the notion of health is interpreted not merely as a physical condition but as a concept reflecting mental, moral, and social well-being. The interrelation between health and such values as happiness, labor, honesty, and cleanliness is examined through the conceptual system of language. Based on methods of linguocultural and cognitive analysis, the research identifies the semantic layers of the “health” concept and its role in the national way of thinking.*

Keywords: *concept of health, Uzbek folk proverbs, linguoculture, national worldview, conceptual system of language, lexicographic analysis, folk wisdom.*

Introduction. In human thought, health has always been recognized as one of the highest values. The folk wisdom “Sog‘ tanda – sog‘lom aql” (“A sound mind in a sound body”) defines the moral and ethical foundation of every society. Folk oral creativity, especially proverbs, serves as one of the essential sources reflecting the worldview, philosophy of life, and value system of the people. In Uzbek folk proverbs, the concept of “sog‘lik” (health) is manifested not only as a physical condition but also as a multifaceted concept denoting spiritual, social, and moral harmony.

Linguoculturology, one of the modern branches of linguistics, studies language in close connection with national culture and cognition. From this perspective, the concept of “sog‘lik” in proverbs reveals the people’s values related to a healthy lifestyle, diligence, honesty, purity, and goodness. This concept is expressed through stable semantic units in the language, embodying one of the key components of national cognition.

In today’s era of globalization, when the notion of human health is being widely discussed as a universal value, analyzing the Uzbek people’s national perceptions of “sog‘lik” is of great significance not only for linguistics but also for

cultural studies and psycholinguistics. The social, cultural, and moral meanings of health are revealed through the conceptual system embedded in language.

The relevance of this study lies in identifying the linguocultural, semantic, and lexicographic aspects of the “sog‘lik” concept in Uzbek folk proverbs, exploring its linguistic means of expression, and revealing its place in national cognition. Through this, the folk wisdom about health expressed in proverbs is interpreted according to modern linguoculturological principles.

Methodology. This article examines the features of expressing the concept of “sog‘lik” in Uzbek proverbs and explores their linguocultural aspects. The methodological basis of the study relies on linguoculturological, cognitive, and paremiological analysis methods. For analysis, extensive collections of Uzbek folk proverbs and lexicographic sources were selected. The following criteria were taken into account when selecting the material:

Presence of lexical units such as “sog‘lik”, “salomatlik”, “kasallik”, “omonlik”, “farovonlik”;

Widespread usage and documentation in various publications;

The role of health-related units among registered proverbs in lexicographic sources.

The primary sources include “O‘zbek xalq maqollari” (Tashkent: Fan, 1989) and “O‘zbek tilining izohli lug‘ati” (Tashkent: O‘zbekiston Milliy Ensiklopediyasi, 2006–2008).

The theoretical foundation of the research is based on the concept of linguoculturology, according to which language serves as the primary mirror of a people’s cognition, values, and worldview. Therefore, analyzing how the concept of “sog‘lik” is represented in the cultural memory of the people holds particular importance. As L. Kiseleva notes, “The concept of health in human cognition has a complex structure, manifesting not only in physiological but also in moral and social value systems, and language serves as a reflection of these perceptions.” Hence, this study aims to reveal how proverbs interpret health not merely as a physical state but as an expression of spiritual and moral harmony.

The lexical units related to “sog‘lik” in proverbs were analyzed, and their semantic fields were identified. The research also drew upon the theory of “conceptual metaphor.” According to this approach, the concept of health in folk cognition is represented through images such as “wealth”, “treasure”, “happiness”, and “purity.” For example, the proverbs “Sog‘liging – boyliging” and “Pokliging – sog‘liging” vividly illustrate such conceptual metaphors.

Results and Discussion. Analyzing proverbs as one of the oldest forms of folk wisdom within the framework of paremiology is highly relevant today.

Through this method, the concept of health can be studied as a socio-moral symbol formed in the people's consciousness. Folklorists emphasize that "proverbs express folk understandings of medical knowledge and health in figurative form." In this sense, proverbs can be regarded as ancient linguocultural documents reflecting the people's notions of a healthy life.

Ludmila Kiseleva, analyzing the cultural differences in the concept of health across Russian and English languages, concludes that "every language interprets health through the prism of its own cultural experience and values." This idea finds confirmation in the analysis of Uzbek proverbs as well.

The collected proverbs on "sog'lik" were grouped thematically, including categories such as "health and wealth", "health and labor", "health and happiness", and "health and purity." Examples include:

"Tani sog'lik – tuman boylik," "Xalq sog'ligi – yurt boyligi," "Tani sog'ning joni bor";

"Tozalik – sog'lik garovi," "Sog' yuray desang, ozoda bo'l!" "Oq bo'lmasa bo'lmasin, pok bo'lsin."

The study focuses exclusively on Uzbek folk proverbs, excluding other oral genres such as songs, legends, and riddles. Comparative analysis with other languages was conducted only at a general level. In future research, exploring the concept of health across different genres and languages remains a promising direction.

Semantic Field of the Health Concept

1.1. Health and Laughter: "Kulgi – shifo, dardga da'vo," "Kulgi – sog'likdan nishon."

1.2. Moderate Lifestyle and Health: "Oz yemoq – tani sog'liq, oz demoq – hikmatga bog'liq," "Oz demoq – hikmatga lozim, oz yemoq – sihatga lozim."

1.3. Cleanliness and Health: "Tozalik – sog'lik garovi," "Sog' yuray desang, ozoda bo'l!" "Oq bo'lmasa bo'lmasin, pok bo'lsin," "Janda bo'lsa bo'lsin, ganda bo'lmasin."

1.4. Healthy Lifestyle and Prudence: "Sog'likka shoshil, soqqlikka shoshilma," "Saqlansang, sog' qolarsan," "Saqalangan – sog'lom bo'lar."

1.5. Health as Wealth and Source of Life: "Tani sog'lik – tuman boylik," "Xalq sog'ligi – yurt boyligi," "Sog'liging – boyliging," "Kimxob to'ning bo'lguncha, oltin boshing omon bo'lsin," "Sog'lik bo'lsa, beklik bo'lar," "Tani sog'ning – joni bor," "Tan salomati – jon rohati," "Sog' yurak – tog' yurak," "Tani sog'ga – kunda to'y," "Sog' odamga Suqrotning keragi yo'q," "Sog'ligim – boyligim, hastaligim – manglay qoraligim."

1.6. Health, Labor, and Active Life: “Sog‘ qush donin topib yer, sog‘ er nonin topib yer,” “Sovliq to‘yda kerak, sog‘liq kunda kerak,” “Tegara-toshing yov bo‘lsin, uying ichi sov (sog‘) bo‘lsin,” “Sog‘ bo‘lsin, o‘chog‘idan o‘t bermasin.”

1.7. Humanism and Mental Well-being: “Dushmaning bo‘lsa ham, dard ko‘rmasin,” “Och bo‘l, yalang‘och bo‘l, sog‘-u salomat bo‘l,” “Mol ketsin, pul ketsin, eson-sog‘likka ne yetsin?!” “Moling ketsa – ketsin, joning ketmasin,” “Molga balomat, boshga salomat,” “Molingga achinma, joningga achin.”

1.8. Illness, Pain, and Life Trials: “Kasalning yaxshi-yomoni yo‘q,” “Og‘riqda ko‘z og‘rig‘i yomon, har kimning o‘z og‘rig‘i yomon,” “Tan og‘risa, jon sezar,” “Og‘riq qayerda bo‘lsa, jon o‘sha yerda,” “Dard kelar-u, dard ketar, jon qadrini anglatar,” “Joni og‘rigan – Tangrisin qarg‘ar,” “Dard filni pashshadek qiladi,” “So‘ngan ko‘zga sulton ko‘rinmas,” “Kun ko‘rayin desang, sihating saqla!”

The findings demonstrate that the concept of “sog‘lik” in Uzbek proverbs forms a multilayered semantic system. Within this system, health emerges not only as a physiological state but also as a cultural, ethical, spiritual, and social value.

Proverbs such as “Tani sog‘lik – tuman boylik” and “Sog‘liging – boyliging” show that health is regarded as superior to material wealth. Here, the concept of health is metaphorically represented as “capital” or “treasure”, encoded in the people’s consciousness as the highest value. This corresponds with A. Dundes’s theory describing folklore as a “cultural mechanism encoding values” (Dundes, 2010).

Proverbs like “Tozalik – sog‘lik garovi” and “Sog‘ yuray desang, ozoda bo‘l” equate health with purity, revealing that the Uzbek people perceive well-being as harmony between bodily and spiritual cleanliness. This aligns with Kiseleva’s (2016) concept of a “linguocultural health model,” where health is viewed as a cultural norm rather than merely a physical state.

Similarly, “Sog‘ odamga Suqrotning keragi yo‘q” and “Sog‘ yurak – tog‘ yurak” associate health with intellect, courage, and diligence. Thus, in Uzbek oral tradition, the concept of health integrates physical strength with moral and intellectual power, reflecting the national paradigm “a sound body – a sound soul.”

The proverb “Dushmaning bo‘lsa ham, dard ko‘rmasin” expresses health as a symbol of compassion and human solidarity, linking it with empathy and goodness in society.

In many proverbs, the concept of health appears in advisory form: “Kun ko‘rayin desang, sihating saqla,” “Saqlansang, sog‘ qolarsan.” Through these expressions, the people convey traditional notions of medical prevention, hygiene, and healthy lifestyle practices orally from generation to generation.

Overall, the concept of “sog‘lik” in Uzbek folk proverbs is semantically multilayered, linguoculturally complex, and axiologically central. It unites physical health, spiritual balance, moral purity, and social well-being within a single conceptual framework.

Conclusion. The study results show that the “sog‘lik” concept in Uzbek proverbs represents one of the most ancient and value-based layers of folk cognition. In the worldview of the Uzbek people, health is interpreted not only as a biological or physiological state but also as a symbol of moral, spiritual, and social stability.

Based on the analysis, the main semantic dimensions of the “sog‘lik” concept in folk proverbs can be summarized as follows:

Axiological layer – health as the supreme value of life, wealth, and happiness (“Sog‘liging – boyliging”).

Moral-spiritual layer – health associated with purity, honesty, and diligence (“Tozalik – sog‘lik garovi”).

Socio-psychological layer – health as a symbol of human unity, compassion, and kindness (“Dushmaning bo‘lsa ham, dard ko‘rmasin”).

Didactic layer – proverbs serve as moral instruction transmitting ideas of hygiene and healthy lifestyle (“Kun ko‘rayin desang, sihatning saqla”).

The findings confirm that “sog‘lik” functions as a central semantic and cultural value in Uzbek national cognition. Through language, this concept encodes the people’s understanding of well-being, happiness, cleanliness, and goodness. From a linguocultural perspective, the concept of health in Uzbek culture is grounded in the idea “tan salomatligi – jon osoyishtaligi” (“bodily health means spiritual peace”), reflecting the holistic nature of national thought.

Lexicographic analysis further demonstrates that health-related expressions are active and semantically rich components of the Uzbek linguistic system. Therefore, in Uzbek proverbs, “sog‘lik” appears as a universal yet nationally infused value, encoding cultural codes, principles of harmony between individual and society, and the philosophy of a healthy life.

The practical significance of this study lies in the fact that analyzing the concept of “sog‘lik” in Uzbek proverbs allows for a comprehensive understanding of the people’s integrated cultural system, encompassing medical, ethical, and moral values. This approach opens new methodological perspectives for modern linguistics, sociolinguistics, and cognitive linguistics.

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