

LEXICAL AND SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF ANTONYMIC CORRELATED ITALIAN PROVERBS ON FRIENDSHIP AND LOVE

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Abstract

This article examines Italian proverbs that express the themes of friendship and love, focusing on their antonymic correlations through lexical and semantic analysis. The study explores how these proverbs encapsulate contrasting perspectives on relationships, highlighting both positive and negative aspects of friendship and love. By comparing these proverbs with their Uzbek equivalents, the research identifies cultural similarities and differences in proverbial wisdom. Furthermore, the study discusses translation challenges and the extent to which semantic equivalence can be maintained across languages. The findings demonstrate that proverbs not only reflect linguistic structures but also embody cultural values and societal norms.

Keywords: Italian proverbs, antonymic correlations, friendship, love, lexical analysis, semantic analysis, translation.

INTRODUCTION

Proverbs serve as a vital component of linguistic and cultural heritage, encapsulating the wisdom, experiences, and moral values of societies. They often convey deep philosophical meanings in a concise manner, making them an essential part of oral and written traditions. Among various themes explored in proverbial expressions, friendship and love hold a particularly significant place, as they reflect fundamental human relationships and social interactions. In many languages, including Italian, these concepts are frequently expressed

through antonymic proverbs—pairs of sayings that present opposing perspectives on the same topic.

The study of antonymic proverbs in Italian provides valuable insights into how contrasting views on friendship and love are framed within linguistic structures. Some proverbs emphasize the virtues of loyalty, sincerity, and devotion in relationships, while others highlight betrayal, deception, and the transient nature of emotions. For instance, *Chi trova un amico, trova un tesoro* – Who finds a friend, finds a treasure conveys the invaluable nature of friendship, whereas *Meglio soli che male accompagnati* – Better alone than in bad company warns against untrustworthy companions. Similarly, in matters of love, proverbs like *L'amore vince tutto* – Love conquers all project an idealistic view, whereas *Lontano dagli occhi, lontano dal cuore* – Out of sight, out of heart suggests a more pragmatic or skeptical approach to affection.

This study aims to conduct a lexical and semantic analysis of Italian proverbs that exhibit antonymic correlations related to friendship and love. By examining their linguistic structure and underlying meanings, the research seeks to uncover the philosophical and cultural implications embedded within these expressions. Additionally, the study draws comparisons with Uzbek proverbs, identifying cross-cultural parallels and differences in the conceptualization of friendship and love. Furthermore, the challenges associated with translating these proverbs into other languages are explored, particularly in terms of maintaining their semantic essence and cultural relevance.

The research employs a qualitative linguistic approach, analyzing a selection of Italian proverbs within the framework of antonymy and semantic opposition. The findings contribute to a broader understanding of how different cultures perceive human relationships through proverbial wisdom. Ultimately, this study reinforces the idea that proverbs are not merely linguistic artifacts but also reflections of social values, emotional experiences, and collective worldviews.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The study of proverbs as a linguistic and cultural phenomenon has been the subject of extensive research in paremiology. Scholars such as Mieder [5] emphasize that proverbs serve as a mirror of societal norms, values, and wisdom, offering insights into human relationships and behaviors. In particular, friendship and love—two fundamental human experiences—have been widely explored in various linguistic and cultural contexts through proverbial expressions. Italian proverbs, like those in many other languages, often convey opposing perspectives on the same theme, forming antonymic pairs. Studies by Gatti [2] and Rossi [9] highlight how Italian proverbs encapsulate the complexity of human emotions, portraying both idealistic and pragmatic viewpoints. The contrast between proverbs such as *Chi trova un amico, trova un tesoro* – Who finds a friend, finds a treasure and *Amico di tutti, amico di nessuno* – A friend to all is a friend to none exemplifies how friendship is depicted from different angles within the same cultural framework. Similarly, love-related proverbs like *L'amore vince tutto* – Love conquers all and *Lontano dagli occhi, lontano dal cuore* – Out of sight, out of heart illustrate how emotions can be perceived both as enduring and transient.

From a linguistic perspective, the concept of antonymy has been explored in-depth by Cruse [1], who categorizes antonyms into different types, including complementary, gradable, and converse antonyms. This classification is relevant to the study of antonymic proverbs, as the oppositional meanings they convey may either be absolute contrasts or exist along a spectrum of interpretation. Vinogradov and Nida [6] further emphasize the challenges of translating culturally bound proverbs while preserving their semantic and pragmatic meanings. Uzbek paremiology, as explored by Mamatov [4] and Obruyeva [8], similarly underscores the role of proverbs in shaping social attitudes, particularly in the domains of friendship and love. Despite extensive research on proverbs in various languages, comparative studies on antonymic correlations in Italian and Uzbek proverbs remain limited. This study aims to fill that gap by analyzing how these two languages conceptualize friendship and love through proverb pairs that express contrasting viewpoints.

This study employs a **qualitative** linguistic approach to analyze antonymic proverbs related to friendship and love in Italian. The methodology involves several key steps. First, a corpus of Italian proverbs was compiled from various linguistic and cultural sources, while Uzbek equivalents were selected from published collections and scholarly works. The proverbs were then analyzed lexically and semantically based on Cruse's [1] antonymy framework, distinguishing between complementary, gradable, and converse antonyms. For example, *L'amore vince tutto* – *Love conquers all* and *Lontano dagli occhi, lontano dal cuore* – *Out of sight, out of heart* demonstrate a gradable antonymic relationship. A comparative analysis was conducted with Uzbek proverbs to assess cultural similarities and differences in the portrayal of friendship and love, such as the Italian proverb *Meglio soli che male accompagnati* – *Better alone than in bad company* and its Uzbek counterpart *Yomon do 'st boshga g'am* – *A bad friend brings sorrow*. Additionally, translation challenges were addressed using Nida's [6] translation theory to determine the most effective equivalence strategy—literal, dynamic, or functional. The findings highlight linguistic patterns, semantic oppositions, and cultural insights, offering a deeper understanding of how different cultures express human relationships through proverbs. This study provides a comprehensive linguistic and cultural analysis of antonymic proverbs in Italian and Uzbek, shedding light on their structural, semantic, and translational aspects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of Italian proverbs related to friendship and love revealed that antonymic correlations in proverbial expressions often serve to highlight contrasting attitudes toward relationships. These proverbs not only convey traditional wisdom but also reflect cultural values regarding loyalty, trust, and the transient nature of emotions.

For instance, friendship is often portrayed as a valuable and lasting bond, as seen in the proverb:

- Chi trova un amico, trova un tesoro. – Who finds a friend, finds a treasure.

However, a contrasting proverb offers a more cautious view:

- Amico di tutti, amico di nessuno. – A friend to all is a friend to none. [9]

These antonymic proverbs illustrate two opposing perspectives: one that idealizes friendship as a rare treasure and another that warns against superficial friendships. Similarly, in the context of love, we observe antonymic pairs such as:

- L'amore vince tutto. – Love conquers all. [5]
- Lontano dagli occhi, lontano dal cuore. – Out of sight, out of heart. [2]

The first proverb promotes an optimistic view, suggesting that love can overcome obstacles, whereas the second suggests that distance leads to emotional detachment. These examples demonstrate that Italian proverbs often present both idealistic and pragmatic perspectives on love and friendship.

A comparative analysis with Uzbek proverbs revealed both similarities and cultural distinctions. Like Italian proverbs, Uzbek proverbs also emphasize the importance of trust and sincerity in relationships. For instance, the Uzbek equivalent of *Chi trova un amico, trova un tesoro* is:

- Yaxshi do'st – yarim davlat. – A good friend is half of one's wealth.
- Similarly, a proverb that mirrors *Meglio soli che male accompagnati* – Better alone than in bad company is:

- Yomon do'st boshga g'am. – A bad friend brings sorrow.

Both languages recognize the significance of friendship but warn against false friends. However, in the case of love, some distinctions emerge. While Italian proverbs often emphasize emotional endurance or instability, Uzbek proverbs tend to be more instructive and moralistic:

- Muhabbat ko'r bo'lsa, aql unga yo'l boshchi bo'lsin. – If love is blind, let reason be its guide.
- Sevgi – sabr bilan sinaladi. – Love is tested by patience.

These proverbs reflect a more pragmatic approach to love, highlighting wisdom and patience rather than idealizing passion.

One of the key challenges in proverb translation lies in preserving both the lexical structure and cultural connotations. Some Italian proverbs have direct Uzbek equivalents, allowing for **literal translation**, such as:

- L'amore vince tutto → Sevgi hamma narsani yengadi.

However, other proverbs require **dynamic equivalence**, where the meaning is retained but the wording differs. For example:

- Lontano dagli occhi, lontano dal cuore – Out of sight, out of heart does not have a direct Uzbek equivalent but can be conveyed as *Ko'zdan uzoq – ko'ngildan uzoq*. – Far from sight, far from heart.

Some proverbs require **functional equivalence**, where the cultural meaning is adapted rather than directly translated. For instance, the Uzbek proverb *Muhabbat ko'r bo'lsa, aql unga yo'l boshchi bo'lsin* – *If love is blind, let reason be its guide* does not have an exact Italian counterpart but conveys a similar message to *L'amore è cieco* – *Love is blind*.

The findings indicate that both Italian and Uzbek proverbs provide a nuanced understanding of friendship and love, with antonymic pairs offering opposing but complementary viewpoints.

The presence of both **idealistic** and **cautious** perspectives within each culture suggests that proverbs function as a means of conveying **practical wisdom** rather than absolute truths. The study highlights that cultural values shape the way friendship and love are expressed proverbially. Italian proverbs tend to emphasize romantic ideals and emotional contrasts, whereas Uzbek proverbs often integrate moral guidance and practical wisdom. Despite these differences, both languages recognize the dual nature of relationships, illustrating the universality of human experiences. In terms of translation, the research underscores the complexity of transferring cultural meaning across languages. While some proverbs have direct equivalents, others require cultural adaptation to maintain their intended message. The study confirms Nida's theory that semantic and cultural equivalence must be prioritized over literal translation when dealing with proverbs.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study provide valuable insights into how Italian and Uzbek cultures perceive friendship and love through proverbial expressions. The presence of antonymic proverbs suggests that every society acknowledges the complexity of human relationships, offering both optimistic and cautious perspectives. The comparative analysis reveals striking similarities, particularly in valuing sincere friendships and warning against betrayal, while differences arise in the way love is conceptualized. Finally, the translation analysis highlights the need for careful linguistic and cultural adaptation to preserve the essence of proverbs across languages.

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