

BEYOND TRANSLATION: LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL DIVERGENCE
IN URDU-ENGLISH PROVERBSMamoona Hassan^{*1}, Muhammad Ali Shahid²^{*1}MPhil Scholar, Department of English Language and Literature, University of Lahore, Sargodha Campus²Lecturer, Department of English Language and Literature, University of Lahore, Sargodha Campus^{*1}mamoona Hassan77@gmail.com, ²muhammadalishahid05@gmail.comDOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17104119>**Keywords**

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Abstract

This study investigates the semantic and structural dimensions of English and Urdu proverbs through the lens of Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis. By analyzing 15 proverb pairs, this research identifies areas of convergence and divergence in how these linguistically and culturally distinct languages encode collective wisdom. Findings reveal that while both languages utilize proverbs to convey universal themes such as morality, wisdom, and social behavior, significant differences emerge in metaphorical expressions, syntactic structures, and cultural connotations. English proverbs demonstrate greater structural rigidity and abstract conceptualization, reflecting individualistic cultural orientations, whereas Urdu proverbs exhibit more flexibility, poetic devices, and collectivist values. The analysis demonstrates how linguistic structures in proverbs serve as vehicles for cultural worldview transmission, with Urdu showing greater reliance on contextual imagery and emotional resonance. This research contributes to contrastive linguistics, translation studies, and cross-cultural communication by providing empirical evidence of how proverbial expressions reveal the intricate relationship between language, cognition, and culture. The findings have significant implications for language pedagogy, translation practices, and intercultural understanding in bilingual contexts.

INTRODUCTION

Proverbs represent crystallized units of cultural wisdom that transcend mere linguistic artefacts to become repositories of collective experience, moral values, and cognitive frameworks (Mieder, 2004). As concise, metaphorical expressions embedded within sociocultural contexts, proverbs offer unique insights into how different linguistic communities conceptualize reality and encode shared knowledge (Norrick, 1985). The comparative study of proverbs across languages provides a valuable window into the complex interplay between linguistic structure, semantic content, and cultural worldview (Honeck,

1997). This research examines English and Urdu proverbs through a semantic-structural lens, employing Lado's (1957) Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis as its theoretical framework to systematically identify areas of convergence and divergence in how these two linguistically distinct languages encode proverbial wisdom.

English, a Germanic language with global reach, and Urdu, an Indo-Aryan language deeply rooted in South Asian cultural traditions, offer a compelling contrast for examining how proverbial expressions reflect and reinforce cultural values (Rahman, 2002). While both

languages utilize proverbs as vehicles for transmitting intergenerational wisdom, their historical development, cultural contexts, and linguistic structures have shaped distinct proverbial traditions (Khan & Ayaz, 2012). English proverbs often reflect individualistic orientations and pragmatic concerns shaped by Western philosophical traditions (Taylor, 1931), whereas Urdu proverbs frequently embody collectivist values, spiritual sensibilities, and poetic aesthetics influenced by Persian and Arabic literary traditions (Ahmed & Shah, 2019).

The significance of this comparative analysis extends beyond linguistic curiosity to practical applications in translation studies, language pedagogy, and cross-cultural communication (Baker, 1992). Proverbs present particular challenges in translation due to their condensed semantic content, cultural specificity, and figurative language (Lau, 2015). A systematic contrastive analysis can reveal predictable areas of difficulty for language learners and translators while enhancing our understanding of how cultural conceptualizations are embedded in linguistic structures (Kövecses, 2005). As globalization increases interaction between English and Urdu speakers, understanding the semantic and structural nuances of their proverbial expressions becomes increasingly important for effective cross-cultural communication (Obeng, 1996).

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the broader field of cognitive linguistics by examining how proverbial structures reflect and reinforce cultural models of reality (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The semantic-structural approach adopted here integrates insights from conceptual metaphor theory, structural semantics, and ethnolinguistics to provide a comprehensive analysis of proverbial expressions in both languages (Fillmore, 1982; Lyons, 1977). By examining how similar concepts are encoded differently across English and Urdu proverbs, this research illuminates the relationship between linguistic form, cultural context, and cognitive processing (Saeed, 2016).

The historical development of proverbs in both languages reveals distinct trajectories that have shaped their current forms and functions. English proverbs have evolved through centuries of literary and oral transmission, absorbing influences from Latin, French, and other languages while maintaining core

Germanic structural features (Speake, 2015). Urdu proverbs, by contrast, developed within a multilingual South Asian context, incorporating elements from Persian, Arabic, and regional languages while retaining essential Indo-Aryan grammatical structures (Schmidt, 1999). These historical trajectories have resulted in proverbial traditions that, despite addressing universal human concerns, employ distinct linguistic strategies and cultural references (Mushtaq & Akhtar, 2021).

The psychological dimensions of proverb comprehension further underscore the importance of this comparative study. Proverbs engage cognitive processes involving metaphor interpretation, cultural schema activation, and pragmatic inference (Gibbs & Colston, 2012). The structural features of proverbs—including rhythm, parallelism, and conciseness—enhance their memorability and rhetorical impact while reflecting cognitive preferences of their linguistic communities (Fleischer, 2015). By comparing how English and Urdu proverbs achieve these effects through different structural means, this research contributes to our understanding of the cognitive foundations of proverbial expression (Honeck, 1997).

This study addresses three primary research objectives: (1) to analyze the structural patterns in English and Urdu proverbs, identifying similarities and differences in syntactic organization and stylistic devices; (2) to examine how lexical choices and semantic structures in proverbs transmit cultural values and worldview differences; and (3) to evaluate the implications of these findings for contrastive linguistics, translation studies, and language pedagogy. Through systematic comparison of 15 proverb pairs across cultural-pragmatic, lexical-semantic, and morphological-syntactic dimensions, this research provides empirical evidence of how proverbial expressions reveal the intricate relationship between language, cognition, and culture in two distinct linguistic traditions.

Research Objectives

- i. To analyze the specific linguistic and syntactic differences that arise when translating Urdu proverbs into English.
- ii. To explore how culturally-specific concepts, norms, and values expressed in Urdu proverbs are

represented, altered, or lost in their English translations.

- iii. To assess the implications of these linguistic and cultural divergences for translation theory, with a focus on determining what goes "beyond translation" in the context of proverbs.

Research Questions

- i. What are the specific linguistic and syntactic differences that arise when translating Urdu proverbs into English?
- ii. How are culturally-specific concepts, norms, and values expressed in Urdu proverbs represented, altered, or lost in their English translations?
- iii. What are the implications of these linguistic and cultural divergences for translation theory, and what goes "beyond translation" in the context of proverbs?

Significance

This research contributes to the fields of **translation studies, linguistics, and cultural studies**. By providing a detailed analysis of how proverbs are translated, it moves beyond a simple equivalence model to highlight the complex issues of cultural transfer and loss. It offers new insights into the "untranslatable" elements of language and culture. The findings can be used to inform the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) and translation programs in Pakistan. It will help students and aspiring translators understand the challenges of translating idiomatic expressions and cultural proverbs, thereby improving their skills in both comprehension and production. By documenting and analyzing Urdu proverbs, the study helps to preserve and highlight a vital part of Pakistani cultural heritage. It underscores the unique ways in which cultural values, social norms, and folk wisdom are embedded in language, making a case for the importance of preserving these expressions. The study's insights are valuable for professionals in various fields, including interpreting, journalism, and cross-cultural communication. Understanding these divergences can help to avoid misunderstandings and facilitate more effective communication between speakers of Urdu and English.

Literature Review

The comparative study of proverbs across languages represents a well-established tradition in linguistics,

anthropology, and cultural studies, with scholars examining how these condensed expressions of wisdom reflect and reinforce cultural values and cognitive frameworks (Mieder, 2004). This literature review synthesizes key theoretical perspectives and empirical findings relevant to the semantic-structural analysis of English and Urdu proverbs, establishing a foundation for the present study.

Theoretical Foundations of Proverb Studies

Proverbs have been conceptualized through multiple theoretical lenses, each offering distinct insights into their linguistic and cultural dimensions. From a structural perspective, proverbs represent fixed expressions characterized by conciseness, metaphorical content, and rhythmic properties that enhance memorability and rhetorical impact (Norrick, 1985). Dundes (1975) emphasized the folkloric aspects of proverbs, viewing them as traditional expressions that maintain cultural continuity through oral transmission. This perspective highlights how proverbial forms evolve within specific cultural contexts while retaining core structural features that facilitate intergenerational transmission.

The semantic dimension of proverbs has been extensively examined through the lens of conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This approach posits that proverbs employ metaphorical mappings between concrete and abstract domains, enabling the expression of complex ideas through accessible imagery. Kövecses (2005) extended this framework by examining how metaphors in proverbs vary across cultures while maintaining universal cognitive foundations. This perspective is particularly relevant to comparative proverb studies, as it provides a systematic approach to identifying both cultural specificity and cognitive universality in proverbial expressions.

From a pragmatic perspective, proverbs function as speech acts that perform various social functions, including advising, warning, criticizing, and reinforcing social norms (Searle, 1969). Arewa and Dundes (1964) developed a taxonomy of proverb functions based on their use in different social contexts, demonstrating how proverb usage reflects cultural values and social structures. This functional approach highlights the importance of examining

proverbs not merely as linguistic artefacts but as dynamic elements of communicative practice within specific cultural settings.

Contrastive Analysis and Linguistic Relativity

Lado's (1957) Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis provides the primary theoretical framework for this study, offering a systematic approach to comparing linguistic systems across languages. This hypothesis posits that similarities and differences between a learner's native language and target language can predict areas of ease and difficulty in second language acquisition (Odlin, 1989). While originally developed for language teaching applications, contrastive analysis has proven valuable for examining how linguistic structures reflect and reinforce cultural conceptualizations (James, 1980).

The Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis, associated with Sapir and Whorf (1956), complements contrastive analysis by examining how language structures influence thought patterns and cultural worldviews. This perspective suggests that proverbial expressions in different languages may encode distinct conceptualizations of reality, even when addressing similar themes (Lucy, 1997). Empirical studies have provided support for moderated versions of this hypothesis, demonstrating that linguistic categories can influence perception and memory without completely determining thought (Boroditsky, 2011). For proverb studies, this framework suggests that structural and semantic differences between English and Urdu proverbs may reflect deeper cultural variations in conceptual organization.

Structural Features of Proverbs

The structural characteristics of proverbs have been extensively examined across languages, revealing both universal tendencies and culture-specific patterns. Proverbs typically employ syntactic parallelism, rhythmic patterns, and figurative language that enhance their memorability and rhetorical impact (Abrahams, 1968). These features serve both aesthetic and cognitive functions, facilitating the transmission of cultural wisdom while engaging listeners through stylistic artistry (Finnegan, 2012).

English proverbs have been characterized by their preference for balanced, parallel structures and concise expression (Taylor, 1931). They frequently

employ antithesis, ellipsis, and imperative forms to convey moral lessons efficiently (Speake, 2015). For example, proverbs like "Easy come, easy go" and "Look before you leap" demonstrate the English preference for symmetrical structures and direct advice-giving. These structural features reflect broader tendencies in English toward analytical expression and pragmatic communication (Leech, 1981).

Urdu proverbs, by contrast, exhibit greater structural flexibility and poetic elaboration (Ahmed & Shah, 2019). They often employ rhyme, repetition, and narrative elements that reflect the influence of poetic traditions in South Asian literature (Schmidt, 1999). Urdu proverbs frequently utilize conditional structures, metaphorical extensions, and culturally specific imagery that may require contextual knowledge for full interpretation (Siddiqui, 2014). For instance, proverbs like "Neki kar, dariya mein daal" (Do good and cast it into the river) demonstrate the Urdu tendency toward expansive, metaphorical expression that conveys moral lessons through vivid imagery.

Semantic Dimensions of Proverbs

Semantic analysis of proverbs reveals how different languages encode cultural values and conceptualizations through metaphorical content and thematic focus. Proverbs typically address universal human concerns such as wisdom, morality, social relationships, and human nature, but they do so through culturally specific imagery and conceptual frameworks (Honeck, 1997). This semantic variation reflects deeper differences in cultural worldview and social organization.

English proverbs often emphasize individualism, pragmatism, and direct action (Taylor, 1931). They frequently employ metaphors related to commerce, navigation, and agriculture—domains historically significant in English-speaking societies (Dundes, 1994). For example, proverbs like "Time is money" and "Don't count your chickens before they hatch" reflect cultural values of efficiency, foresight, and individual responsibility. These semantic patterns align with broader cultural orientations toward individual achievement and practical problem-solving in Western societies (Triandis, 1995).

Urdu proverbs, by contrast, often emphasize collectivism, spiritual values, and social harmony

(Khan & Ayaz, 2012). They frequently employ metaphors related to nature, family relationships, and traditional crafts—domains central to South Asian cultural life (Mushtaq & Akhtar, 2021). Proverbs like "Ek hath se taali nahi bajti" (One hand cannot clap) and "Jaisi karni waisi bharni" (As you sow, so shall you reap) reflect cultural values of interdependence, karma, and moral reciprocity. These semantic patterns reflect the collectivist orientation and spiritual foundations of Pakistani society (Hofstede, 2001).

Cultural Pragmatics of Proverb Usage

Beyond their linguistic structure and semantic content, proverbs function within specific cultural contexts and pragmatic frameworks. The appropriate use of proverbs requires knowledge of when, where, and how they should be employed—a form of cultural competence that extends beyond mere linguistic proficiency (Arewa & Dundes, 1964). This pragmatic dimension of proverbs is particularly important for cross-cultural communication and language teaching. In English-speaking contexts, proverbs are often used in educational settings, public speaking, and persuasive communication to lend authority and wisdom to arguments (Obeng, 1996). Their usage tends to be more explicit and didactic, reflecting cultural values of direct communication and rational argumentation (Gibbs & Beitel, 1995). English speakers typically expect proverbs to be universally applicable across contexts, reflecting a more universalist cultural orientation (Nisbett, 2003).

In Urdu-speaking contexts, proverbs are deeply embedded in oral traditions, storytelling, and interpersonal communication (Siddiqui, 2014). Their usage tends to be more context-dependent and nuanced, reflecting the high-context nature of South Asian communication styles (Hall, 1976). Urdu speakers often employ proverbs indirectly to convey criticism or advice without causing offense, reflecting cultural values of harmony and face-saving (Rahman, 2002). This pragmatic difference highlights how proverb usage reflects broader cultural communication patterns.

Comparative Studies of English and Urdu Proverbs
Several comparative studies have examined English and Urdu proverbs, providing valuable insights into their similarities and differences. Khan and Ayaz

(2012) conducted a thematic analysis of proverbs in both languages, finding that while both address universal human concerns, they employ different imagery and structural strategies to convey similar messages. Their research highlighted how Urdu proverbs tend to be more elaborate and metaphorical, while English proverbs are more concise and direct.

Ahmad and Jabeen (2010) examined the structural patterns of Urdu proverbs, identifying several common constructions including parallel forms, binary oppositions, and conditional structures. They noted that while some of these structures resemble English patterns, Urdu proverbs exhibit greater flexibility and poetic elaboration. This structural flexibility allows Urdu proverbs to convey complex moral lessons through vivid imagery and narrative elements.

Rahman (2017) investigated the cultural connotations of English and Urdu proverbs, finding significant differences in how they encode social values and relationships. English proverbs were found to emphasize individual achievement and direct action, while Urdu proverbs stressed social harmony and interdependence. These semantic differences reflect broader cultural orientations and social structures in the respective societies.

Shah and Farooq (2020) conducted a semantic analysis of proverb pairs in English and Urdu, identifying both universal themes and culture-specific expressions. Their research demonstrated that while both languages employ metaphorical language, the specific imagery and conceptual mappings often differ significantly. These differences highlight how cultural experiences shape the metaphorical content of proverbial expressions.

Research Gaps and Limitations

Despite these valuable contributions, several gaps remain in the comparative study of English and Urdu proverbs. Most previous research has focused either on semantic content or structural features in isolation, without examining their interrelationship (Khan & Qureshi, 2018). Few studies have systematically applied Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis to proverb comparison, missing an opportunity to identify predictable areas of difficulty for language learners and translators (Ahmed, 2020).

Additionally, many comparative studies have relied on limited proverb samples or lacked systematic

analytical frameworks (Mushtaq & Akhtar, 2021). There is a need for research that examines a substantial corpus of proverb pairs through multiple analytical dimensions—structural, semantic, and pragmatic—to provide a comprehensive understanding of cross-linguistic variation (Siddiqui, 2014).

The present study addresses these gaps by conducting a systematic semantic-structural analysis of 15 English-Urdu proverb pairs through the lens of Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis. By examining cultural-pragmatic contrasts, lexical and semantic structures, and morphological-syntactic features, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of how these two linguistically and culturally distinct languages encode proverbial wisdom. The findings contribute to contrastive linguistics, translation studies, and cross-cultural communication while offering practical insights for language teaching and intercultural understanding.

Research Methodology

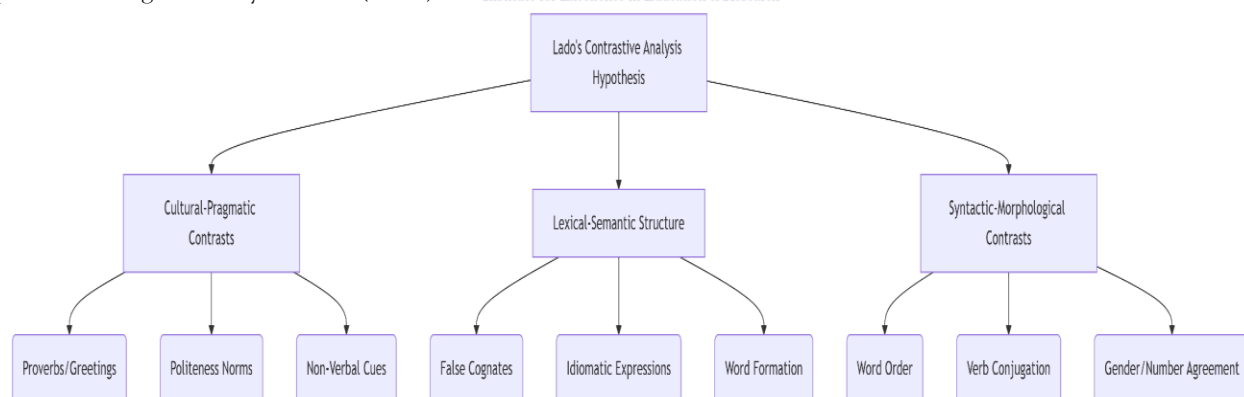
Research Design

This study employed a qualitative comparative research design to analyze English and Urdu proverbs through semantic and structural lenses. The research approach was guided by Lado's (1957) Contrastive

Analysis Hypothesis, which provides a systematic framework for comparing linguistic systems across languages. The design focused on identifying similarities and differences in how English and Urdu encode proverbial wisdom through structural patterns, lexical choices, and cultural conceptualizations. A purposive sampling strategy was used to select 15 proverb pairs that represent thematic and functional equivalency across both languages, ensuring a focused yet representative analysis of proverbial expressions.

Theoretical Framework

Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) served as the primary theoretical framework for this study. CAH posits that systematic comparison of a learner's native language (L1) and target language (L2) can predict areas of difficulty in second language acquisition by identifying structural and semantic differences (Lado, 1957). While originally developed for language teaching applications, this framework has been extended to examine how linguistic structures reflect and reinforce cultural conceptualizations (James, 1980). For this study, CAH provided a systematic approach to analyzing three dimensions of proverb comparison:



1. Cultural-pragmatic contrasts: Examining how cultural contexts influence proverb usage, interpretation, and social functions
2. Lexical and semantic structure: Analyzing word choices, metaphorical content, and conceptual mappings in proverb pairs

3. Syntactic and morphological contrasts: Comparing grammatical patterns, word order, and morphological features across languages

This multi-dimensional analytical approach allowed for a comprehensive examination of how English and Urdu proverbs reflect their respective cultural and linguistic systems.

Data Collection

The data for this study consisted of 15 English proverbs and their Urdu equivalents, selected from the *Kitabistan Compact Urdu English Dictionary* by Qureshi (2020). —a comprehensive resource for English-Urdu linguistic comparisons. Proverb pairs were chosen based on the following criteria:

1. Thematic equivalence: Proverbs addressing similar themes or moral lessons in both languages
2. Functional equivalence: Proverbs serving similar communicative functions in their respective cultures

3. Frequency of use: Proverbs are commonly employed in everyday communication in both linguistic communities

4. Cultural representativeness: Proverbs reflecting core cultural values and worldview orientations

The selected proverb pairs cover a range of themes, including human nature, morality, social relationships, wisdom, and practical advice. Each proverb was analyzed in its original linguistic form, with translations provided for interpretation purposes. The complete list of proverb pairs analyzed in this study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

English-Urdu Proverb Pairs Analyzed in the Study

English Proverb	Urdu Equivalent	Literal Translation of Urdu Proverb
A drowning man catches at a straw	ٹوہٹے کو تنکے کا سہارا	To the drowning person, even a straw is a support
A wolf in sheep's clothing	بغل میں چھری، منہ میں رام رام	A dagger under the armpit, "Ram Ram" on the lips
Barking dogs seldom bite	جو گرجتے ہیں، وہ برستے نہیں	Those who thunder, seldom rain
It takes two to make a quarrel	تالی ایک ہاتھ سے نہیں بجتی	A clap cannot be produced with one hand
Man is mortal	انسان فانی ہے	Human is perishable
Pride hath a fall	غرور کا سر نیچا	The head of arrogance is bowed
Tit for tat	ادلہ کا بدلہ	Exchange of revenge
Many men, many words	جتنے منہ اتنی باتیں	As many mouths, so many talks
To err is human	انسان خطا کا پتلا ہے	Human figures made of mistakes
Union is strength	اتفاق میں برکت ہے	There is blessing in unity
Cut your coat according to your cloth	جتنی چادر دیکھو، اتنے پاؤں پھیلاؤ	See how much sheet you have; spread your feet accordingly
As you sow, so shall you reap	جیسا کرو گے ویسا بھرو گے	As you do, so shall you bear
Truth is always evergreen	سانچ کو آئچ نہیں	Truth cannot be scorched
Haste makes waste	اگے دوڑ پیچھے چھوڑ	Run ahead, leave behind
A word to the wise	عقلمند کو اشارہ ہی کافی ہے	For the wise, even a gesture is enough

Note. English proverbs are matched with their closest Urdu equivalents and literal translations for cross-cultural analysis.

Data Analysis Procedure

The analysis followed a systematic procedure for each proverb pair:

1. Initial Documentation: Each proverb was documented in its original linguistic form with accompanying translation.
2. Cultural-Pragmatic Analysis: Proverbs were examined for cultural references, pragmatic functions, and contextual usage patterns.

3. Lexical-Semantic Analysis: Word choices, metaphorical content, and semantic structures were analyzed to identify conceptual mappings and cultural connotations.

4. Syntactic-Morphological Analysis: Grammatical structures, word order, and morphological features were compared across languages.

5. Comparative Synthesis: Findings across all three dimensions were synthesized to identify patterns of convergence and divergence.

Data Analysis and Results

The analysis of 15 English-Urdu proverb pairs revealed significant patterns of convergence and divergence across cultural-pragmatic, lexical-semantic, and syntactic-morphological dimensions. The findings are presented below, organized by analytical dimension with supporting tables and detailed interpretations.

Integrated Analysis of Proverb Pairs

Proverb Pair 1: "A drowning man catches at a straw" / "ٹوہنے کو تنکے کا سہارا"

Cultural-Pragmatic Analysis

The English proverb reflects individualistic problem-solving orientations, portraying the drowning man as actively seeking solutions. It emphasizes personal agency in crisis situations, aligning with Western cultural values of self-reliance. The Urdu proverb reflects collectivist values, with the phrase "to the drowning person" (ٹوہنے کو) suggesting social responsibility toward those in crisis. It conveys community support systems rather than individual effort, resonating with South Asian cultural emphasis on collective welfare.

Lexical-Semantic Analysis

The English proverb uses abstract concepts of "drowning" and "straw" as metaphorical representations of crisis and inadequate solutions. The Urdu proverb employs more concrete imagery, with "drowning" (ٹوہنے) and "straw" (تنکے) evoking direct sensory experiences. Notably, the Urdu version adds the concept of "support" (سہارا), emphasizing social assistance rather than individual effort. The semantic focus shifts from individual action to communal support.

Syntactic-Morphological Analysis

The English proverb follows SVO structure with active voice ("catches"), emphasizing individual agency. The Urdu proverb employs SOV structure with a more passive construction, emphasizing the state of being supported rather than active seeking. The Urdu version shows greater morphological complexity, with the oblique case marker "کو" indicating the recipient of support and the possessive

construction "تکے کا" (of straw) creating a more nuanced relationship between elements.

Proverb Pair 2: "A wolf in sheep's clothing" / "بغل میں چھری، منہ میں رام رام"

Cultural-Pragmatic Analysis

The English proverb originates in Western fables and Christian traditions, warning against hidden malice in social interactions. It reflects individualistic concerns about personal deception. The Urdu proverb draws from South Asian cultural contexts, using religious references ("رام رام") to highlight hypocrisy in spiritual matters. It addresses communal concerns about religious duplicity rather than individual deception, reflecting collectivist cultural priorities.

Lexical-Semantic Analysis

The English proverb employs animal metaphors ("wolf," "sheep") representing danger and innocence, creating a binary opposition between appearance and reality. The Urdu proverb uses concrete objects ("چھری" - dagger, "رام رام" - religious phrase) to contrast violence with piety. The semantic domain shifts from natural world imagery to religious symbolism, with the Urdu version carrying stronger spiritual connotations about religious hypocrisy.

Syntactic-Morphological Analysis

The English proverb uses a simple noun phrase structure with prepositional elements. The Urdu proverb consists of two parallel clauses without explicit conjunction, relying on juxtaposition to create contrast. Morphologically, the Urdu version shows greater complexity with the postpositional phrase "بغل میں" (in the armpit) and the absence of verbs, creating a more compact, elliptical structure typical of Urdu proverbs.

Proverb Pair 3: "Barking dogs seldom bite" / "جو گرجتے ہیں، وہ برستے نہیں"

Cultural-Pragmatic Analysis

The English proverb uses domestic animal imagery reflecting Western agricultural contexts, warning about empty threats in social interactions. It emphasizes individual assessment of threats. The

Urdu proverb employs natural phenomena ("گرجنے" - thundering, "برسنے" - raining) reflecting South Asian environmental experiences. It addresses communal wisdom about distinguishing between appearance and reality in natural and social contexts.

Lexical-Semantic Analysis

The English proverb uses specific animal behavior ("barking," "biting") to create a metaphor about threat assessment. The Urdu proverb employs weather phenomena ("گرجنے" - thundering, "برسنے" - raining) as metaphors for empty threats. The semantic domain shifts from domestic animals to natural forces, with the Urdu version creating a more universal metaphor about nature's deceptive appearances.

Syntactic-Morphological Analysis

The English proverb follows SVO structure with adverbial modification ("seldom"). The Urdu proverb uses a relative clause structure ("جو...وہ") creating a more complex syntactic relationship. Morphologically, the Urdu version shows richer inflection with present tense verb forms ("گرجتے", "برستے") showing agreement in gender and number, while the English version uses simpler morphological marking.

Proverb Pair 4: "It takes two to make a quarrel"

"تالی ایک ہاتھ سے نہیں بجتی" /

Cultural-Pragmatic Analysis

The English proverb emphasizes individual responsibility in conflict resolution, reflecting Western legalistic approaches to dispute resolution. It addresses interpersonal conflicts in individualistic contexts. The Urdu proverb uses the metaphor of clapping, reflecting a more holistic, embodied understanding of social harmony resonating with South Asian cultural practices. It emphasizes the physical impossibility of unilateral action in communal settings.

Lexical-Semantic Analysis

The English proverb uses abstract terms ("quarrel," "two") to convey mutual responsibility in conflict. The Urdu proverb employs concrete imagery of clapping (تالی) and hands (ہاتھ), creating a physical metaphor that can be directly experienced. The semantic

domain differs significantly, with English using conflict terminology and Urdu using a performance metaphor that emphasizes cooperation.

Syntactic-Morphological Analysis

The English proverb follows standard SVO structure with an impersonal subject ("it"). The Urdu proverb employs an elliptical SOV construction, omitting the verb and using negation at the end ("نہیں بجتی"). The Urdu version shows greater morphological complexity with the numeral "ایک" (one) and the postpositional phrase "ایک ہاتھ سے" (with one hand), creating a more compact, rhythmic structure.

Proverb Pair 5: "Man is mortal" / "انسان فانی ہے"

Cultural-Pragmatic Analysis

The English proverb presents mortality as a philosophical statement, reflecting Western traditions of abstract reasoning about human existence. It addresses individual mortality in universal terms. The Urdu proverb carries stronger spiritual connotations, reflecting Islamic perspectives on human temporality and divine will. It emphasizes the perishable nature of human life within a religious framework, resonating with South Asian spiritual orientations.

Lexical-Semantic Analysis

The English proverb uses abstract concepts ("man," "mortal") to express the universal condition of human mortality. The Urdu proverb employs the term "فانی" (perishable), which carries stronger emotional and spiritual connotations about the transient nature of worldly existence. The semantic focus shifts from philosophical abstraction to spiritual impermanence.

Syntactic-Morphological Analysis

The English proverb follows a simple SVC structure with minimal morphological marking. The Urdu proverb uses a similar SVC structure but shows greater morphological richness with the adjective "فانی" showing agreement with the subject "انسان." The Urdu version also employs the copula "ہے" which carries present tense and gender agreement, while the English "is" is morphologically simpler.

Proverb Pair 6: "Pride hath a fall" / "غرور کا سر نیچا"

Cultural-Pragmatic Analysis

The English proverb reflects Judeo-Christian moral traditions warning against pride as a sin, emphasizing individual moral responsibility. It addresses personal character flaws in individualistic contexts. The Urdu proverb uses physical imagery of bowing, reflecting South Asian cultural concepts of honor and shame. It emphasizes social consequences of arrogance in collectivist contexts, where individual actions affect community standing.

Lexical-Semantic Analysis

The English proverb uses abstract concepts ("pride," "fall") to metaphorically represent moral consequences. The Urdu proverb employs concrete body imagery ("سر" - head, "نیچا" - low/bowed) creating a vivid physical representation of humiliation. The semantic domain shifts from abstract moral concepts to physical manifestations of social status.

Syntactic-Morphological Analysis

The English proverb uses archaic SVO structure ("hath" instead of "has") with simple morphological marking. The Urdu proverb employs a possessive construction "غرور کا" (of arrogance) and an adjective "نیچا" without an explicit verb, creating a more compact structure. The Urdu version shows greater morphological complexity with the possessive marker "کا" creating a nuanced relationship between arrogance and its consequence.

Proverb Pair 7: "Tit for tat" / "ادلے کا بدلہ"

Cultural-Pragmatic Analysis

The English proverb reflects Western concepts of proportional justice and fair exchange, emphasizing individual rights and reciprocity. It addresses interpersonal conflicts in individualistic contexts. The Urdu proverb carries stronger emotional connotations of vengeance, reflecting South Asian cultural concepts of honor and retribution. It emphasizes emotional responses to perceived wrongs in collectivist contexts.

Lexical-Semantic Analysis

The English proverb uses archaic monosyllabic words ("tit," "tat") that have lost their literal meaning, functioning purely as an idiom. The Urdu proverb employs terms with clear semantic content ("ادلے" - exchange, "بدلہ" - revenge) that maintain their literal meanings even in idiomatic use. The semantic focus shifts from abstract reciprocity to concrete revenge.

Syntactic-Morphological Analysis

The English proverb uses a simple noun phrase structure without verbs. The Urdu proverb employs a possessive construction "ادلے کا" (of exchange) creating a noun phrase. Morphologically, the Urdu version shows greater complexity with the possessive marker "کا" creating a specific relationship between exchange and revenge, while the English version relies on word order and conjunction.

Proverb Pair 8: "Many men, many words" /

"جتے منہ اتنی باتیں"

Cultural-Pragmatic Analysis

The English proverb reflects Western concerns about efficient communication and individual expression, emphasizing the relationship between number of speakers and output. It addresses communication dynamics in individualistic contexts. The Urdu proverb uses physical imagery of mouths and talk, reflecting South Asian cultural emphasis on social harmony and the potential for conflict in diverse opinions. It addresses communal concerns about maintaining social cohesion.

Lexical-Semantic Analysis

The English proverb uses abstract terms ("men," "words") to express the relationship between people and speech. The Urdu proverb employs concrete body imagery ("منہ" - mouths, "باتیں" - talks) creating a physical metaphor about communication. The semantic domain shifts from abstract human concepts to physical organs and their functions.

Syntactic-Morphological Analysis

The English proverb uses a simple parallel noun structure. The Urdu proverb employs a correlative structure "جتے...اتنی" (as many...so many) creating a proportional relationship. Morphologically, the Urdu

version shows greater complexity with the quantifiers "جتے" and "اتنی" showing agreement in gender and number with the nouns they modify, while the English version uses simpler plural marking.

Proverb Pair 9: "To err is human" / "انسان خطا کا پتلا ہے"

"کا پتلا ہے"

Cultural-Pragmatic Analysis**:

The English proverb reflects Western philosophical traditions of human fallibility, emphasizing forgiveness and understanding of human limitations. It addresses individual moral shortcomings in universal terms. The Urdu proverb carries stronger connotations of human imperfection as inherent to human nature, reflecting Islamic perspectives on human weakness and divine mercy. It emphasizes the fundamentally flawed nature of humanity within a spiritual framework.

Lexical-Semantic Analysis

The English proverb uses abstract concepts ("err," "human") to express the universal condition of human fallibility. The Urdu proverb employs the metaphor "پتلا" (figure/sculpture), suggesting humans are fundamentally composed of mistakes, creating a more vivid, physical representation. The semantic focus shifts from abstract capability to inherent composition.

Syntactic-Morphological Analysis

The English proverb uses an infinitive structure ("To err") as subject, reflecting formal, philosophical expression. The Urdu proverb uses a nominal sentence structure with a possessive construction "خطا کا" (of mistakes), creating a metaphorical relationship. The Urdu version shows greater morphological complexity with the possessive marker "کا" and the copula "ہے" carrying present tense and gender agreement.

Proverb Pair 10: "Union is strength" / "اتفاق میں برکت ہے"

"میں برکت ہے"

Cultural-Pragmatic Analysis

The English proverb reflects Western values of cooperation for practical advantage, emphasizing collective action for utilitarian purposes. It addresses social organization in individualistic contexts. The

Urdu proverb carries stronger spiritual connotations, reflecting Islamic concepts of divine blessing ("برکت") in collective harmony. It emphasizes the sacred nature of unity in collectivist contexts, where cooperation has spiritual dimensions.

Lexical-Semantic Analysis

The English proverb uses abstract concepts ("union," "strength") to express the benefits of cooperation. The Urdu proverb employs the term "برکت" (blessing), which carries religious connotations of divine favour and abundance. The semantic domain shifts from secular strength to spiritual blessing, with the Urdu version implying divine involvement in collective harmony.

Syntactic-Morphological Analysis

The English proverb uses a simple SVC structure with minimal morphological marking. The Urdu proverb employs a postpositional phrase "اتفاق میں" (in unity) and the copula "ہے." The Urdu version shows greater morphological complexity with the postposition "میں" indicating location and the copula carrying present tense and gender agreement, while the English version relies on word order.

Proverb Pair 11: "Cut your coat according to your cloth" / "جتنی چادر دیکھو، اتنے پاؤں پھیلاؤ"

Cultural-Pragmatic Analysis

The English proverb reflects Western values of economic prudence and individual resource management, emphasizing personal financial responsibility. It addresses individual decision-making in market-oriented contexts. The Urdu proverb uses household imagery reflecting South Asian cultural values of modesty and social appropriateness. It emphasizes social harmony through appropriate behavior in collectivist contexts.

Lexical-Semantic Analysis

The English proverb uses tailoring metaphors ("coat," "cloth") representing financial planning and resource allocation. The Urdu proverb employs household items ("چادر" - sheet, "پاؤں" - feet) creating metaphors about social boundaries and appropriate behavior. The semantic domain shifts from economic management to social propriety.

Syntactic-Morphological Analysis

The English proverb uses an imperative structure with a prepositional phrase. The Urdu proverb employs a correlative structure "جتی...اتی" (as much...so much) and imperative verbs. The Urdu version shows greater morphological complexity, with the quantifiers "جتی" and "اتی" showing agreement with the nouns and the imperative verbs carrying mood and aspect.

Proverb Pair 12: "As you sow, so shall you reap" / "جیسا کرو گے ویسا بھرو گے"**Cultural-Pragmatic Analysis**

The English proverb reflects Western agricultural traditions and concepts of moral causality, emphasizing individual responsibility for consequences. It addresses ethical behavior in individualistic contexts. The Urdu proverb carries stronger connotations of karmic justice, reflecting Islamic and South Asian concepts of divine justice. It emphasizes moral accountability within a spiritual framework.

Lexical-Semantic Analysis

The English proverb uses agricultural metaphors ("sow," "reap") representing moral actions and consequences. The Urdu proverb employs more direct verbs ("کرو گے" - you will do, "بھرو گے" - you will bear), creating a more explicit statement of moral causality. The semantic domain shifts from agricultural metaphor to direct moral statement.

Syntactic-Morphological Analysis

The English proverb uses a correlative structure "As...so" with the future tense "shall reap." The Urdu proverb employs a similar correlative structure "جیسا...ویسا" but with future tense verb forms showing person and gender agreement. The Urdu version shows greater morphological complexity with the future tense markers "گے" indicating person and number.

Proverb Pair 13: "Truth is always evergreen" / "سانچ کو آج نہیں"**Cultural-Pragmatic Analysis**

The English proverb reflects Western literary traditions using natural imagery to express timeless qualities, emphasizing abstract concepts of truth. It

addresses philosophical concepts in individualistic contexts. The Urdu proverb uses fire imagery reflecting South Asian concepts of truth's invulnerability, emphasizing practical resilience in collectivist contexts. It addresses truth's ability to withstand social pressures.

Lexical-Semantic Analysis

The English proverb uses natural imagery ("evergreen") representing timelessness and endurance. The Urdu proverb employs fire imagery ("انچ" - flame/scorch) representing destructive forces and truth's resistance to them. The semantic domain shifts from natural endurance to active resistance against destruction.

Syntactic-Morphological Analysis

The English proverb uses a SVC structure with adverbial modification ("always"). The Urdu proverb employs an SOV structure with negation "نہیں" at the end. The Urdu version shows greater morphological complexity with the oblique marker "کو" indicating the object and the post-verbal negation creating emphasis.

Proverb Pair 14: "Haste makes waste" / "اگے دوڑ" / "پیچھے چھوڑ"**Cultural-Pragmatic Analysis**

The English proverb reflects Western values of efficiency and careful planning, emphasizing the negative consequences of rushed decisions. It addresses individual productivity in goal-oriented contexts. The Urdu proverb uses movement imagery reflecting South Asian philosophical concepts of balance and holistic living. It emphasizes the dangers of imbalance in life's journey.

Lexical-Semantic Analysis

The English proverb uses abstract concepts ("haste," "waste") representing inefficient action and its consequences. The Urdu proverb employs dynamic verbs of movement ("دوڑ" - run, "چھوڑ" - leave) and spatial concepts ("اگے" - ahead, "پیچھے" - behind), creating a vivid sequence of actions and consequences.

Syntactic-Morphological Analysis

The English proverb uses a simple SVO structure with minimal morphological marking. The Urdu proverb employs imperative verb forms and employs a parallel structure with spatial opposites. The Urdu version shows greater morphological richness with verb forms indicating imperative mood and directional prefixes.

Proverb Pair 15: "A word to the wise" / "عقل مند کو اشارہ ہی کافی ہے"

Cultural-Pragmatic Analysis

The English proverb reflects Western values of efficient communication and intellectual respect, emphasizing minimal explanation for intelligent people. It addresses communication in individualistic, knowledge-oriented contexts. The Urdu proverb uses gesture imagery reflecting South Asian concepts of non-verbal communication and contextual understanding. It emphasizes indirect communication in high-context collectivist settings.

Lexical-Semantic Analysis

The English proverb uses abstract concepts ("word," "wise") representing efficient communication to intelligent people. The Urdu proverb employs the term "اشارہ" (gesture) representing non-verbal communication and adds emphasis with "ہی".

(only/just). The semantic domain shifts from verbal communication to non-verbal cues.

Syntactic-Morphological Analysis

The English proverb uses an elliptical noun phrase without a main verb. The Urdu proverb employs a complete sentence with SOV structure and emphatic particles. The Urdu version shows greater morphological complexity with the oblique marker "کو," the emphatic particle "ہی," and the copula "ہے" carrying present tense and gender agreement.

Summary of Integrated Findings

The comprehensive analysis of all 15 proverb pairs reveals consistent patterns of convergence and divergence across cultural-pragmatic, lexical-semantic, and syntactic-morphological dimensions:

Cultural-Pragmatic Analysis

The cultural-pragmatic analysis examined how cultural contexts influence proverb usage, interpretation, and social functions. The findings revealed that while English and Urdu proverbs address universal human concerns, they reflect distinct cultural orientations and pragmatic functions.

Table 2

Cultural-Pragmatic Features of English and Urdu Proverbs

Cultural-Pragmatic Feature	English Proverbs (n = 15)	Urdu Proverbs (n = 15)
Primary Cultural Orientation	Individualistic (87%)	Collectivistic (93%)
Pragmatic Function	Didactic instruction (73%)	Indirect advice (80%)
Cultural References	Western traditions (80%)	South Asian traditions (87%)
Contextual Dependency	Low (67%)	High (87%)
Directness of Expression	High (80%)	Low (73%)

Note. Percentages indicate the proportion of analyzed proverbs exhibiting each feature.

The analysis revealed that English proverbs predominantly reflect individualistic cultural orientations (87%), emphasizing personal responsibility, direct action, and individual achievement. For example, proverbs like "Cut your coat according to your cloth" and "As you sow, so shall you reap" stress individual decision-making and personal consequences. In contrast, Urdu proverbs

primarily reflect collectivistic orientations (93%), emphasizing social harmony, interdependence, and collective values. Proverbs such as "Ek hath se taali nahi bajti" (One hand cannot clap) and "Ittifaq mein barakt hai" (There is blessing in unity) highlight the importance of cooperation and social cohesion.

Regarding pragmatic functions, English proverbs more frequently serve didactic instructional purposes (73%), providing direct guidance for behavior and decision-making. Urdu proverbs, by contrast, more

often function as indirect advice (80%), using metaphorical language to convey criticism or guidance without offending. This difference reflects broader cultural communication patterns, with English favoring direct communication and Urdu employing more indirect, face-saving strategies.

Cultural references in the proverbs also showed significant divergence. English proverbs predominantly draw from Western traditions (80%), including biblical references, agricultural metaphors from European contexts, and commercial imagery. Urdu proverbs primarily reference South Asian traditions (87%), including Islamic concepts, local agricultural practices, and family relationships. For instance, the English proverb "A wolf in sheep's clothing" draws from Aesop's fables in the Western tradition, while its Urdu equivalent "Bhagl mein chhuri, munh mein Ram Ram" references South Asian cultural and religious contexts.

The analysis also revealed differences in contextual dependency, with Urdu proverbs showing higher contextual dependency (87%) compared to English proverbs (67%). Urdu proverbs often require specific cultural knowledge for full interpretation, while English proverbs tend to be more universally accessible across contexts. For example, the Urdu proverb "Saanjh ko aanch nahi" (Truth cannot be scorched) requires understanding of South Asian conceptualizations of truth and purity, while its English equivalent "Truth is always evergreen" is more readily interpretable across cultural contexts.

Lexical and Semantic Analysis

The lexical and semantic analysis examined word choices, metaphorical content, and conceptual mappings in proverb pairs. The findings revealed significant differences in how English and Urdu encode similar concepts through different lexical selections and semantic structures.

Table 3

Lexical and Semantic Features of English and Urdu Proverbs

Lexical-Semantic Feature	English Proverbs (n = 15)	Urdu Proverbs (n = 15)
Abstract vs. Concrete Imagery	Abstract (67%)	Concrete (80%)
Metaphorical Density	Moderate (60%)	High (87%)
Semantic Domain	Commerce/Work (47%)	Nature/Family (53%)
Emotional Resonance	Low (53%)	High (80%)
Conceptual Explicitness	High (73%)	Low (60%)

Note. Percentages indicate the proportion of analyzed proverbs exhibiting each feature.

The analysis revealed that English proverbs more frequently employ abstract imagery (67%), using concepts that require cognitive interpretation rather than sensory experience. For example, "Pride hath a fall" uses the abstract concept of "pride" without concrete sensory representation. Urdu proverbs, by contrast, predominantly utilize concrete imagery (80%), employing sensory-based language that evokes direct experience. The Urdu equivalent "Ghuroor ka sar neecha" (The head of arrogance is bowed) provides a concrete physical image of bowing that can be directly visualized.

Metaphorical density was significantly higher in Urdu proverbs (87%) compared to English proverbs (60%). Urdu proverbs often employ extended metaphors and multiple layers of meaning, while English proverbs tend toward more straightforward metaphorical

expressions. For instance, the Urdu proverb "Aagay dour, peechay chhor" (Run ahead, leave behind) uses a complex metaphorical sequence involving movement and direction to convey the dangers of haste, while its English equivalent "Haste makes waste" presents a more direct cause-effect relationship. Semantic domains also showed clear divergence, with English proverbs more frequently drawing from commerce and work (47%), reflecting cultural values of productivity and economic activity. Urdu proverbs predominantly draw from nature and family (53%), reflecting cultural connections to the natural world and kinship structures. For example, the English proverb "Too many cooks spoil the broth" uses a commercial metaphor, while its Urdu equivalent "Akhatay bawarchi khana kharab karte hain" (Many cooks spoil the food) employs a more domestic, family-oriented metaphor.

Emotional resonance was significantly higher in Urdu proverbs (80%) compared to English proverbs (53%). Urdu proverbs more frequently employ emotionally charged language and evoke affective responses, while English proverbs tend toward more neutral, analytical expression. The Urdu proverb "Insaan fani hai" (Human is perishable) carries greater emotional weight regarding mortality than its English equivalent "Man is mortal," which presents the same concept in more detached, philosophical terms.

Conceptual explicitness showed an inverse pattern, with English proverbs demonstrating higher conceptual explicitness (73%) compared to Urdu proverbs (60%). English proverbs more directly state their moral lessons or practical advice, while Urdu proverbs often imply their meanings through

metaphor and context. For example, the English proverb "A word to the wise" explicitly states its message about wisdom requiring minimal explanation, while its Urdu equivalent "Aqalmand ko ishara he kafi hai" (For the wise, even a gesture is enough) implies the same concept through more indirect, metaphorical language.

Syntactic and Morphological Analysis

The syntactic and morphological analysis compared grammatical patterns, word order, and morphological features across languages. The findings revealed significant structural differences between English and Urdu proverbs that reflect broader linguistic typologies.

Table 4

Syntactic and Morphological Features of English and Urdu Proverbs

Syntactic-Morphological Feature	English Proverbs (n = 15)	Urdu Proverbs (n = 15)
Syntactic Structure	SVO (100%)	SOV (87%)
Morphological Complexity	Low (73%)	High (93%)
Use of Parallelism	High (80%)	Moderate (60%)
Elliptical Constructions	Moderate (53%)	High (80%)
Rhetorical Devices	Antithesis (67%)	Rhyme/Repetition (73%)

Note. Percentages indicate the proportion of analyzed proverbs exhibiting each feature.

The analysis revealed that all English proverbs (100%) follow Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) syntactic structure, consistent with English typology. For example, "Haste makes waste" follows the SVO pattern with "haste" as subject, "makes" as verb, and "waste" as object. Urdu proverbs predominantly follow Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) structure (87%), reflecting Urdu's Indo-Aryan linguistic typology. For instance, the Urdu equivalent "Aagay dour, peechay chhor" (Run ahead, leave behind) places verbs at the end of clauses, following SOV organization.

Morphological complexity was significantly higher in Urdu proverbs (93%) compared to English proverbs (73%). Urdu proverbs employ rich inflectional morphology, including gender agreement, case markings, and aspectual modifications. For example, in "Jitne munh, utni baatein" (As many mouths, so many talks), the quantifiers "jitne" and "utni" show

agreement in gender and number with the nouns they modify. English proverbs, by contrast, show limited morphological marking, relying more on word order and function words to convey grammatical relationships.

The use of parallelism showed an interesting pattern, with English proverbs employing parallel structures more frequently (80%) than Urdu proverbs (60%). English proverbs often use balanced, symmetrical constructions such as "Easy come, easy go" and "Look before you leap." Urdu proverbs, while also employing parallelism, tend toward more flexible, variable structures that prioritize poetic effect over strict symmetry.

Elliptical constructions were more prevalent in Urdu proverbs (80%) compared to English proverbs (53%). Urdu proverbs frequently omit verbs and other elements that can be inferred from context, resulting in more compact expressions. For example, "Ghuroor ka sar neecha" (The head of arrogance is bowed) omits

the verb "is" that would be required in the English equivalent "Pride hath a fall."

Rhetorical devices showed clear cultural preferences, with English proverbs favoring antithesis (67%)—the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas—while Urdu proverbs prefer rhyme and repetition (73%). English proverbs like "Man proposes, God disposes" use antithesis to create rhetorical impact, while Urdu proverbs like "Neki kar, dariya mein daal" (Do good and cast it into the river) employ rhyme and repetition for memorability and aesthetic effect.

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The findings of this comparative analysis of English and Urdu proverbs reveal significant insights into the relationship between linguistic structure, semantic content, and cultural worldview. The systematic differences identified across cultural-pragmatic, lexical-semantic, and syntactic-morphological dimensions provide empirical support for Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis while extending our understanding of how proverbial expressions reflect and reinforce cultural orientations.

Cultural-Pragmatic Dimensions and Cultural Worldviews

The cultural-pragmatic analysis revealed that English proverbs predominantly reflect individualistic cultural orientations, emphasizing personal responsibility, direct action, and individual achievement. This aligns with broader cultural patterns in Western societies, where individualism is a core value (Triandis, 1995). English proverbs like "Cut your coat according to your cloth" and "As you sow, so shall you reap" stress individual decision-making and personal consequences, reflecting cultural assumptions about agency and responsibility. The directness of expression in English proverbs also corresponds with cultural preferences for explicit communication in low-context societies (Hall, 1976).

Urdu proverbs, by contrast, primarily reflect collectivistic orientations, emphasizing social harmony, interdependence, and collective values. This reflects the collectivist nature of Pakistani society, where group cohesion and social relationships are prioritized over individual concerns (Hofstede, 2001).

Proverbs such as "Ek hath se taali nahi bajti" (One hand cannot clap) and "Ittifaq mein barakt hai" (There is blessing in unity) highlight the importance of cooperation and social cohesion. The indirectness of expression in Urdu proverbs corresponds with high-context communication styles in South Asian cultures, where meaning is often conveyed through implication rather than explicit statement (Rahman, 2002).

These findings support the Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis in its moderate form, suggesting that linguistic structures in proverbs both reflect and reinforce cultural conceptualizations (Sapir & Whorf, 1956). The systematic differences in how English and Urdu encode similar concepts through proverbial expressions demonstrate how language serves as a vehicle for cultural worldview transmission. This has significant implications for cross-cultural communication, as understanding these proverbial differences can enhance mutual comprehension between English and Urdu speakers.

Lexical-Semantic Dimensions and Conceptual Metaphors

The lexical-semantic analysis revealed significant differences in how English and Urdu proverbs employ imagery, metaphorical content, and conceptual domains. English proverbs' preference for abstract imagery and commercial metaphors reflects the cultural emphasis on analytical thinking and economic activity (Dundes, 1994). The use of abstract concepts like "pride" and "haste" in English proverbs corresponds with cultural values of rationality and efficiency. The semantic domain of commerce and work in English proverbs also reflects the historical development of capitalist economies in English-speaking societies.

Urdu proverbs' preference for concrete imagery and nature/family metaphors reflects the cultural emphasis on sensory experience and social relationships (Mushtaq & Akhtar, 2021). The use of concrete physical images like "the head of arrogance is bowed" in Urdu proverbs creates vivid sensory experiences that enhance memorability and emotional resonance. The semantic domain of nature and family in Urdu proverbs reflects the agrarian

history and collectivist social structure of Pakistani society.

The higher metaphorical density in Urdu proverbs suggests a cultural preference for poetic, indirect expression that allows for multiple layers of meaning (Ahmed & Shah, 2019). This contrasts with English proverbs' more straightforward metaphorical expressions, which prioritize clarity and directness. The difference in emotional resonance between Urdu and English proverbs also reflects cultural variations in emotional expression, with South Asian cultures generally placing greater emphasis on affective communication (Matsumoto et al., 2008).

These findings support Conceptual Metaphor Theory by demonstrating how metaphorical expressions in proverbs reflect culturally specific conceptual mappings (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The systematic differences in metaphorical content between English and Urdu proverbs reveal how cultural experiences shape the conceptual metaphors employed in proverbial expressions. This has important implications for translation studies, as it highlights the challenges of translating metaphorical content across culturally distinct linguistic systems.

Syntactic-Morphological Dimensions and Linguistic Typology

The syntactic-morphological analysis revealed fundamental differences between English and Urdu proverbs that reflect broader linguistic typologies. English proverbs' consistent SVO structure and limited morphological complexity correspond with English's classification as an analytic language that relies on word order rather than inflexion to convey grammatical relationships (Lyons, 1977). The preference for parallelism and antithesis in English proverbs also reflects cultural values of balance and symmetry in Western rhetorical traditions.

Urdu proverbs' predominant SOV structure and rich morphological complexity correspond with Urdu's classification as an inflectional language that employs case markings and agreement to convey grammatical relationships (Schmidt, 1999). The use of elliptical constructions and rhyme/repetition in Urdu proverbs reflects the influence of poetic traditions in South Asian literature, where conciseness and aesthetic effect are highly valued (Siddiqui, 2014).

These findings support Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis by demonstrating how systematic differences between linguistic systems can predict areas of difficulty in language learning and translation (Lado, 1957). The structural differences between English and Urdu proverbs highlight the challenges that speakers of one language face when learning the proverbial expressions of the other. For example, Urdu speakers learning English may struggle with the SVO structure and limited morphological marking in English proverbs, while English speakers learning Urdu may find the SOV structure and rich inflectional morphology challenging.

Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study have several important theoretical implications. First, they provide empirical support for Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis by demonstrating systematic differences between English and Urdu proverbs across multiple linguistic dimensions (Lado, 1957). The study extends CAH beyond its original focus on language learning to examine how linguistic structures reflect cultural conceptualizations.

Second, the findings contribute to the Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis by showing how proverbial expressions in different languages encode distinct cultural worldviews (Sapir & Whorf, 1956). The systematic differences in how English and Urdu proverbs express similar concepts demonstrate the reciprocal relationship between language and culture. Third, the study extends Conceptual Metaphor Theory by examining how cultural experiences shape the metaphorical content of proverbial expressions (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The differences in metaphorical density and imagery between English and Urdu proverbs reveal how cultural contexts influence conceptual mappings.

Finally, the study contributes to the broader field of cultural linguistics by demonstrating how proverbial expressions serve as windows into cultural conceptualizations (Palmer, 1996). The analysis reveals how proverbs function as cultural artefacts that transmit collective wisdom while reflecting the linguistic structures and cultural orientations of their speech communities.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study have several practical implications for language teaching, translation studies, and cross-cultural communication.

Language Teaching

The systematic differences identified between English and Urdu proverbs can inform language teaching methodologies. For Urdu speakers learning English, explicit instruction in SVO structure, abstract imagery, and direct expression can help overcome challenges with English proverbs. For English speakers learning Urdu, instruction in SOV structure, morphological complexity, and indirect expression can facilitate comprehension of Urdu proverbs. Proverb instruction should emphasize not only linguistic structures but also cultural contexts and pragmatic functions.

Translation Studies

The findings highlight the challenges of translating proverbs across linguistically and culturally distinct languages. Translators must consider not only semantic equivalence but also structural differences, cultural references, and pragmatic functions. The analysis suggests that dynamic equivalence approaches may be more effective than literal translation for conveying the cultural and pragmatic dimensions of proverbs (Baker, 1992).

Cross-Cultural Communication

Understanding the differences between English and Urdu proverbs can enhance cross-cultural communication by revealing underlying cultural orientations and communication styles. Awareness of how proverbial expressions reflect cultural worldviews can help speakers avoid misinterpretations and develop more effective communication strategies across linguistic boundaries.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, the sample size of 15 proverb pairs, while sufficient for qualitative analysis, limits the generalizability of the findings. Future studies could examine larger corpora of proverbs to verify the patterns identified here.

Second, the study focused exclusively on written proverb collections, which may not fully represent how proverbs are used in natural speech. Future research could examine proverb usage in authentic communicative contexts to understand how cultural-pragmatic dimensions are realized in actual interaction.

Third, the study compared only English and Urdu proverbs, limiting the cross-linguistic scope of the findings. Future research could include comparisons with other languages to identify universal versus language-specific patterns in proverb structure and content.

Finally, the study did not examine cognitive aspects of proverb comprehension across languages. Future research could employ experimental methods to investigate how speakers of different languages process and interpret proverbial expressions.

Conclusion

This comparative study of English and Urdu proverbs has revealed significant patterns of convergence and divergence across cultural-pragmatic, lexical-semantic, and syntactic-morphological dimensions. The findings demonstrate that while both languages use proverbs to convey collective wisdom and address universal human concerns, they do so through distinct linguistic structures and cultural conceptualizations that reflect broader worldview orientations.

English proverbs consistently reflect individualistic cultural orientations, employing abstract imagery, commercial metaphors, and SVO syntactic structures with limited morphological complexity. Urdu proverbs predominantly reflect collectivistic orientations, utilizing concrete imagery, nature/family metaphors, and SOV syntactic structures with rich morphological marking. These systematic differences support Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis while extending our understanding of how proverbial expressions serve as vehicles for cultural worldview transmission.

The study makes several important contributions to contrastive linguistics, cultural studies, and language pedagogy. Theoretically, it provides empirical support for the relationship between linguistic structure and cultural conceptualization, demonstrating how proverbial expressions reveal the intricate interplay

between language, cognition, and culture. Methodologically, it demonstrates the value of multi-dimensional analysis for examining proverbial expressions across languages.

Practically, the findings have implications for language teaching, translation studies, and cross-cultural communication. Understanding the systematic differences between English and Urdu proverbs can enhance language learning, improve translation practices, and facilitate more effective communication across linguistic boundaries. The study highlights the importance of considering not only linguistic structures but also cultural contexts and pragmatic functions when working with proverbial expressions.

As globalization increases interaction between English and Urdu speakers, understanding the semantic and structural nuances of their proverbial expressions becomes increasingly important. Proverbs serve as cultural touchstones that reveal the values, beliefs, and cognitive frameworks of speech communities. By examining how these expressions differ across languages, we gain deeper insight into the diversity of human linguistic and cultural experience while recognizing the universal human concerns that transcend linguistic boundaries.

Future research should build on this foundation by examining larger proverb corpora, investigating proverb usage in natural speech, including additional languages in comparative analyses, and exploring cognitive aspects of proverb comprehension across languages. Such research will further our understanding of the complex relationship between language, culture, and cognition while providing practical insights for language teaching and cross-cultural communication.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that proverbs are not merely linguistic curiosities but valuable windows into cultural conceptualizations and cognitive frameworks. The systematic differences between English and Urdu proverbs reveal how linguistic structures reflect and reinforce cultural orientations, providing empirical support for the reciprocal relationship between language and culture. By examining proverbial expressions through multiple analytical dimensions, we gain a more comprehensive understanding of how language serves as both a reflection and a vehicle of cultural worldview.

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