

Linguocultural Features of The Concept Of “Bribery” In the English And Uzbek Languages

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Abstract: The article examines the linguocultural features of the concept of bribery in the English and Uzbek languages. The study is based on the assumption that a concept is not limited to dictionary meaning, but includes evaluative, figurative, associative, and discourse-related components that reflect the experience and values of a speech community. The aim of the article is to identify the semantic core of the English concept bribery and the Uzbek concept *pora*, to determine their common and culture-specific features, and to explain how these concepts function in legal, social, and moral discourse. The research relies on comparative linguocultural analysis, componential semantic analysis, contextual interpretation, and conceptual analysis. The material includes English lexicographic sources, Uzbek explanatory dictionary data, legal documents, and common discourse patterns. The results show that both languages conceptualize bribery as an unlawful transfer of value intended to influence a person vested with authority. At the same time, the English linguistic picture tends to present bribery through institutional and legal categories, whereas the Uzbek linguistic picture gives stronger prominence to moral condemnation, everyday social experience, and expressive phraseological embodiment. The study also demonstrates that the Uzbek lexeme *ta'magirlik* belongs to the same semantic field but does not fully coincide with bribery, because it foregrounds illicit expectation, demand, or self-interested solicitation rather than the completed act of unlawful exchange. The findings may be used in comparative linguistics, translation studies, discourse analysis, and the teaching of intercultural communication.

Keywords: Concept, bribery, *pora*, *ta'magirlik*, linguoculturology, semantics, comparative linguistics, English language, Uzbek language, legal discourse.

Introduction: In contemporary linguistics, the study of concepts occupies an important place at the intersection of semantics, cognitive linguistics, discourse studies, and cultural analysis. A concept is usually understood not as an isolated lexical meaning but as a complex mental and cultural formation that accumulates collective experience, social evaluation, and symbolic representations [1; 2; 3]. From this perspective, language does not merely name social reality; it interprets, organizes, and transmits it. For that reason, socially sensitive notions such as justice, honor, freedom, corruption, and bribery are especially significant for linguocultural research, because they expose the interaction between vocabulary, public ethics, and institutional life.

The concept of bribery is particularly productive for

comparative analysis. It belongs simultaneously to the legal, moral, political, and everyday spheres of communication. In English, bribery is defined in contemporary lexicography as the crime of giving money, a gift, or another benefit to a person in authority in order to make that person do something illegal or dishonest, while in Uzbek the word *pora* denotes money or another thing given to an official so that a matter may be settled unlawfully. These definitions show a shared semantic core built around unlawful influence, authority, and personal gain. At the same time, anti-corruption discourse is also structured by international and national legal instruments: UNODC describes the United Nations Convention against Corruption as the only legally binding universal anti-corruption instrument, and Uzbekistan's anti-corruption legislation explicitly links legal education

with the formation of social intolerance toward corruption.

The relevance of the topic is обусловлена not only by the social significance of corruption as a public problem, but also by the fact that the linguistic expression of bribery is culturally uneven. Semantically close units in different languages rarely coincide completely. The English lexeme bribery is embedded in a lexical field that includes bribe, kickback, payoff, graft, and legal or administrative collocations such as bribery charges or anti-bribery compliance. In Uzbek, the nucleus of the field is formed by *pora*, *poraxo'r*, *poraxo'rlik*, and the adjacent concept *ta'magirlik*. Yet the semantic borders between these units are not identical to those in English. This asymmetry makes the topic especially important for translation, legal interpretation, media discourse, and intercultural communication.

The purpose of the present article is to describe the linguocultural features of the concept of bribery in the English and Uzbek languages through a comparative analysis of its semantic structure, value content, figurative embodiment, and discourse functioning. The article proceeds from the hypothesis that the English and Uzbek concepts share a stable notional core but differ in their axiological emphasis, phraseological realization, and the way the social act is framed within collective consciousness. The novelty of the study lies in combining semantic analysis with linguocultural interpretation and in paying special attention to the relationship between *pora* and *ta'magirlik* in Uzbek as compared with bribery in English.

The research is based on a qualitative comparative approach. The principal material for the analysis includes English lexicographic sources, Uzbek explanatory dictionary data, selected legal definitions, and commonly attested discourse patterns in public and everyday language. The study treats the concept as a multidimensional formation consisting of a notional component, an image-bearing or figurative component, and a value component, an approach developed in linguocultural scholarship [1; 2; 6]. Such a framework makes it possible to move from dictionary meaning to broader cultural interpretation.

Several methods were employed. Componential analysis was used to identify the semantic features that constitute the core meaning of the units bribery and *pora*. Comparative analysis was applied to reveal common and divergent elements in the two languages. Contextual interpretation was used to understand how the concept functions in legal discourse, media discourse, and everyday evaluative speech. Conceptual analysis helped to reconstruct the axiological and

associative content of the notion and to determine the place of neighboring lexemes within the same semantic field. In addition, elements of discourse analysis were used to interpret how the concept participates in broader narratives of legality, morality, and public trust.

Methodologically, the article follows the view that concepts are culturally marked formations rather than merely lexical units. Wierzbicka's idea of "key concepts" is especially relevant here, because it shows that words can reveal the core values and social sensitivities of a culture [3]. Likewise, the approaches associated with Karasik and Stepanov are important for understanding concepts as value-laden nodes of collective experience [1; 2]. Therefore, the study is not confined to equivalence at the word level; it is concerned with the cultural meanings that organize the use of these words in discourse.

The analysis demonstrates that the English concept bribery and the Uzbek concept *pora* share a stable semantic core. In both cases, the act presupposes a transfer of money, goods, services, or another benefit; the presence of a recipient invested with some degree of authority or influence; the intention to alter a decision, action, or omission; the unlawful or ethically unacceptable character of the exchange; and the expectation of private advantage. These components are central enough to make the two concepts broadly translatable into one another in legal and general discourse [7; 8; 9].

Despite this semantic overlap, the internal organization of the concepts is not identical. In English, the noun bribery is highly institutionalized. It functions easily in legal, administrative, and corporate registers and often appears in abstract, system-oriented collocations. It is commonly associated with such expressions as bribery offense, bribery allegations, anti-bribery framework, compliance policy, and public officials. This tendency gives the English concept a strong juridical and procedural profile. Even when it appears in the media or in everyday speech, it often retains the sense of a codified offense rather than a merely moral failing. English discourse thus tends to objectify bribery as a legally definable breach of public or professional integrity.

In Uzbek, the lexeme *pora* is equally unambiguous in moral evaluation, but its conceptual life is more vividly connected with everyday social experience. The explanatory definition foregrounds an illegal act involving an official, yet actual usage reveals a strongly personalized and socially concrete orientation. The phraseological patterns *pora bermoq*, *pora olmoq*, and especially *pora yemoq* are highly revealing. The last

expression, literally “to eat a bribe,” embodies corruption through the metaphor of consumption. This figurative embodiment is linguoculturally significant because it presents bribery not only as a violation of law but as an act of devouring what ought not to be consumed. In this sense, the Uzbek linguistic picture assigns a stronger bodily and moral concreteness to the act than the more institutionally abstract English noun bribery.

Another important result concerns the semantic status of the Uzbek word *ta'magirlik*. Although it belongs to the same value field as *pora*, it is not a perfect equivalent of English bribery. The concept *ta'magirlik* foregrounds expectation, self-seeking demand, or acquisitive solicitation. It may refer to the disposition or practice of seeking illicit advantage, often from a stronger or more active position. In many contexts it approaches such English notions as solicitation, extortionary demand, or venal expectation rather than the full event of bribery itself. Thus, while *pora* names the unlawful benefit or the exchange around it, *ta'magirlik* often highlights the predatory or demanding side of corrupt interaction. This asymmetry is important because a mechanical translation of *ta'magirlik* as bribery may erase the pragmatic nuance of initiative, pressure, or improper expectation.

The results also show that the value component of the concept is exceptionally strong in both languages, though it is verbalized differently. In English, negative evaluation is frequently encoded through legal labels and institutional vocabulary such as corruption, misconduct, abuse of office, or dishonest influence. In Uzbek, evaluation is more often woven into the emotional and ethical fabric of the utterance. The concept easily activates associations with *halollik* (honesty), *adolat* (justice), *vijdon* (conscience), and social shame. Therefore, the Uzbek linguistic realization of bribery tends to resonate more openly with communal ethics, while the English realization often foregrounds norm violation within an institutional framework.

The figurative layer of the concept is likewise unequal. English legal discourse generally avoids expressive metaphor when defining bribery. Its preferred mode is terminological precision. Figurative expression tends to be shifted to informal or journalistic language. Uzbek discourse, by contrast, tolerates stronger metaphorization even in everyday descriptions of corruption, and this contributes to a more embodied conceptual profile. The presence of such phraseology indicates that corruption is not perceived only as an abstract procedural breach but also as a morally degrading action attached to a recognizable human type.

The comparative analysis further reveals a difference in conceptual focus. The English concept often centers on the transaction and its legality. The Uzbek concept frequently centers on the participants and their moral state. In other words, English tends toward a norm-centered representation, whereas Uzbek tends toward a participant-centered and ethically saturated representation. This does not mean that English lacks moral judgment or that Uzbek lacks legal framing. Rather, it means that the dominant linguistic routes toward conceptualization are somewhat different.

The findings confirm that the concept of bribery is a productive object of linguocultural analysis because it combines a universal notional core with culturally specific patterns of lexical realization. From a conceptual point of view, both English and Uzbek represent bribery as a distortion of legitimate authority through illicit benefit. This makes the concept translatable at the level of legal substance. Yet the two languages differ in what they foreground when the concept enters discourse. This confirms a central insight of linguoculturology: equivalence at the level of denotation does not guarantee equivalence at the level of conceptual structure [1; 2; 3].

The English data suggest that the concept is tightly connected with the discourse of institutions. This is historically and socially understandable, because English-language public discourse often frames corruption in terms of governance, compliance, transparency, and accountability. As a result, bribery easily appears in the language of statutes, courts, journalism, and corporate policy. Its semantic profile is relatively stable, formalized, and norm-oriented. Such stability is reinforced by legal lexicography, where bribery is defined with attention to offense structure and abuse of entrusted position [7; 8].

The Uzbek data point to a different balance between the legal and the moral. The concept *pora* unquestionably belongs to the language of law, but in ordinary usage it also appears as a vivid moral sign. The bodily metaphor embedded in *pora yemoq* is especially telling. It shows that the language conceptualizes corrupt gain not merely as receiving an unlawful benefit but as a form of improper ingestion. In cultural terms, this metaphor signals moral contamination, excessive appetite, and the destruction of social trust. The concept therefore contains a sharper image-bearing component, which strengthens its emotive force in public speech.

This difference helps explain why the neighboring concept *ta'magirlik* becomes important in Uzbek. Where English often differentiates between bribery, solicitation, extortion, and corruption through

institutional vocabulary, Uzbek may mobilize adjacent moral concepts that mark the character and intention of the participant. Ta'magirlik does not simply duplicate pora; it expands the semantic field toward acquisitiveness, improper demand, and self-interested expectation. In translation practice, ignoring this distinction can flatten the conceptual landscape. A legal text may require the neutral precision of bribery, while a literary or journalistic context may require a more nuanced rendering depending on whether the focus is on the unlawful payment, the greedy demand, or the corrupt disposition.

Another important implication concerns anti-corruption discourse. The international and national legal framework does more than regulate behavior; it also shapes language. The United Nations Convention against Corruption organizes anti-corruption discourse around prevention, criminalization, law enforcement, cooperation, and recovery, while Uzbek legislation explicitly connects anti-corruption policy with legal consciousness, public education, and the formation of an uncompromising attitude toward corruption. This means that the linguistic representation of bribery is not formed by dictionary semantics alone; it is also institutionalized through educational, media, and legal discourse.

From the standpoint of cultural semantics, the concept reveals what a speech community treats as socially intolerable and how it verbalizes that intolerance. Wierzbicka's approach to key words is relevant here because corruption-related vocabulary often condenses deep social values such as fairness, honesty, duty, and trust [3]. In English, these values are frequently filtered through procedural and institutional categories. In Uzbek, they are more readily articulated through moral-emotional vocabulary and expressive phraseology. Both patterns are culturally meaningful. One does not indicate greater or lesser ethical sensitivity; rather, each language activates its own preferred channels for encoding public wrongdoing.

The study also has methodological implications. Comparative linguocultural analysis should not be limited to the search for lexical equivalents. It must examine how concepts are distributed across registers, what metaphors support them, how near-synonyms divide the semantic field, and what value judgments are embedded in habitual usage. In the present case, the comparison of bribery and pora shows that conceptual similarity and discourse behavior are related but not identical. That difference is precisely where linguocultural interpretation becomes necessary.

The conducted analysis allows us to conclude that the

concept of bribery in English and the concept of pora in Uzbek possess a common notional core based on unlawful influence, abuse of authority, and private gain. At this level, the two concepts are close equivalents. However, their linguocultural realization reveals substantial differences. English tends to conceptualize bribery through legal and institutional categories, giving the concept a formalized and norm-centered profile. Uzbek, while fully preserving the legal meaning, enriches the concept with stronger moral-emotional and figurative components, especially through phraseological usage that presents corrupt gain as a socially and ethically degrading act.

The research has also shown that the Uzbek lexeme ta'magirlik should be treated as a neighboring but not identical concept. It broadens the semantic field toward acquisitive demand, improper expectation, and predatory solicitation. This distinction is important for lexicography, translation, and discourse analysis. Overall, the comparison confirms that socially significant concepts are shaped not only by legal definitions but also by culturally specific value systems and patterns of verbal embodiment. The concept of bribery, therefore, is best understood as a semantic and cultural formation in which language records both universal social prohibition and national modes of moral interpretation.

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