

A COMPARATIVE LINGUOCULTURAL ANALYSIS OF “JOY” IN ABDULLA QADIRI’S “O’TGAN KUNLAR” AND VIRGINIA WOOLF’S “MRS DALLOWAY”

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Abstract

This study employs a comparative linguocultural methodology to analyze the verbalization of joy and happiness in two seminal literary works: Abdulla Qadiri’s Uzbek novel *O’tgan kunlar* (Bygone Days) and Virginia Woolf’s English modernist novel *Mrs Dalloway*. Through semantic and psycholinguistic analysis, this research examines how lexical choices, metaphorical mappings, and narrative strategies reflect deeper cultural constructs. In *O’tgan kunlar*, joy is expressed through collective, somatic, and nature-based phraseology tied to concepts of fate ("Baxt") and spiritual harmony. In *Mrs Dalloway*, joy emerges as ephemeral “moments of being” experienced individually and articulated through abstract metaphors of elevation and light. The findings reveal a fundamental cultural contrast: English modernist discourse prioritizes subjective, internal emotional states, whereas Uzbek classical discourse embeds emotion within social ethics, familial bonds, and a predetermined cosmic order. This article contributes to the broader field of cultural linguistics by demonstrating how universal emotions are filtered through distinct linguocultural frames, shaping both literary expression and reader interpretation.

1 Introduction

The linguistic expression of emotion serves as a profound interface between individual psychology and collective cultural values. While emotions like joy are universally experienced, their conceptualization and verbalization vary significantly across linguistic and cultural boundaries. This article investigates these variations through a comparative analysis of two canonical novels from distinct literary traditions: Abdulla Qadiri’s *O’tgan kunlar* (Bygone Days), a cornerstone of early 20th-century Uzbek literature, and Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*, a landmark of English literary modernism.

The theoretical foundation of this research rests on the premise that language does not merely label emotions but actively constructs them within specific cultural and cognitive frameworks. Metaphorical mappings, such as associating happiness with “light” or “elevation,” are not arbitrary but are shaped by cultural models that guide how inner experiences are understood and communicated. Similarly, phraseological units—fixed expressions like idioms—encode worldview-specific logic and values, acting as vessels of cultural memory. Literature provides a rich repository of such linguistic data, as authors consciously and unconsciously deploy the emotive resources of their language to craft character psychology and thematic depth¹.

The selection of these two works is deliberate. *O'tgan kunlar*, written in the 1920s, portrays Uzbek society at a historical crossroads, weaving personal destinies into a tapestry of traditional values, ethics, and collective identity. Its language is rooted in Turkic and Persian literary traditions. Conversely, *Mrs Dalloway*, published in 1925, epitomizes the modernist turn inward, using stream-of-consciousness to explore the fragmented, subjective experience of post-World War I Londoners. By examining the linguistic representation of joy in these texts, this study aims to illuminate how different cultural priorities—collective harmony versus individual consciousness, fate versus subjective creation—are embedded in the very fabric of literary language. The central research question guiding this inquiry is: How do the linguistic mechanisms for expressing joy in these novels reflect their underlying, culture-specific models of self, society, and happiness?

2 Methods

This study adopts a comparative linguocultural approach, integrating methods from semantics, phraseology, and psycholinguistics. The primary objective is to identify and analyze the functional role of linguistic units—both lexical and phraseological—that encode the concept of joy, and to examine the mental processes these units trigger for readers within their respective cultural contexts.

The analysis was conducted in several structured phases. First, a close reading of both texts (in translation for *O'tgan kunlar*, with constant reference to original lexical choices) was performed to identify all relevant passages where joy, happiness, or related affective states are described or evoked. Second, these passages were subjected to semantic analysis. This involved cataloging key emotion terms (e.g., “Baxt,” “Saodat” in Uzbek; “joy,” “happiness,” “ecstasy” in English), their frequency, and their collocations. Special attention was paid to metaphorical

¹ Hamidov, Khayrulla & Ismatullayeva, Nargiza & Kayumova, Mehriniso & Mubarakova, Dilshoda & Jumaboyev, Oybek. (2023). Exploring Phraseologisms Formed with Somatisms in the Turkish Language. 178-189. 10.5220/0012695000003882.

patterns, guided by the theory of conceptual metaphor, which posits that abstract concepts like emotions are systematically understood in terms of more concrete domains like spatial orientation. Third, a phraseological analysis was conducted, particularly for *O'tgan kunlar*, to examine culturally specific somatic idioms (expressions involving body parts). This aligns with research highlighting how phraseologisms encapsulate national-cultural characteristics and worldviews.

Finally, a narrative-strategy analysis examined how each author integrates these linguistic units into broader textual patterns. For Woolf, this involved analyzing the stream-of-consciousness technique and its role in creating “moments of being” – sudden flashes of heightened awareness where emotion and perception fuse. For Qadiri, the analysis focused on dialogic integration and the role of moderation (“andisha”) in emotional expression. This multi-method approach ensures that the analysis moves beyond simple lexical comparison to a deeper understanding of how language, culture, and cognition intertwine in the literary construction of emotion.

3 Results

3.1 The Expression of Joy in *O'tgan kunlar*: Fate, Nature, and the Collective Self

In Abdulla Qadiri's *O'tgan kunlar*, joy and happiness are predominantly articulated through a lexicon deeply embedded in a worldview that intertwines personal feeling with collective well-being, ethical living, and cosmic order. The central concepts are “**Baxt**” and “**Saodat**.” “Baxt,” signifying happiness, fortune, or fate, is etymologically linked to Persian and Turkic roots meaning “portion” or “lot,” implying that happiness is a divinely apportioned share of one's destiny. “Saodat” denotes a higher, more complete state of prosperity and bliss, often spiritual or familial in nature. This linguistic framing immediately distinguishes Uzbek conceptualization from Western individualism; joy is not a purely internal state to be pursued but an outward condition of alignment with one's rightful, ethical path and social harmony.

The verbalization of this joy relies heavily on **vivid, somatic phraseologisms and nature-based imagery**. Characters do not simply “feel happy”; their emotions are externalized through physical metaphors. Expressions such as “**terisiga sig'maslik**” (not to fit into one's own skin), “**og'zi qulog'ida**” (one's mouth reaching one's ears from smiling), and “**ko'ngli o'smoq**” (one's heart growing) directly map intense joy onto the body. This aligns with broader Turkic linguistic traditions where phraseologisms with somatisms (body-part terms) are a crucial expressive device, encoding cultural attitudes toward emotion as a physically

manifest phenomenon². Furthermore, joy is ritualized and aestheticized through similes drawn from nature and beauty. A joyous bride and groom are described as “blossoming like a flower” (gulday ochilib) and “glittering like a peacock” (tovusday tovlanib), linking human happiness to ideals of natural perfection and splendor. Here, joy is not a private mental event but a visible, communal celebration of life, fertility, and spiritual purity (“halol”).

3.2 The Expression of Joy in *Mrs Dalloway*: Subjective Moments and Metaphors of Elevation

In stark contrast, Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway* constructs joy as a profoundly subjective, ephemeral, and internally apprehended phenomenon. The novel’s modernist technique of **stream-of-consciousness narration** is fundamental to this representation. Joy emerges not through stable attributes or social rituals, but as fleeting “**moments of being**” – a term Woolf used to describe instants when an individual is fully conscious of an experience, perceiving a hidden pattern behind the “cotton wool” of daily routine. For Clarissa Dalloway, these moments are triggered by mundane sensory details: the “fresh like frilled linen” look of roses in a flower shop, the sight of “the slow-swimming happy ducks” in the park, or simply the “absorbing” spectacle of London life. The language in these passages becomes breathless and accumulative, mimicking the rush of consciousness itself.

The English linguistic discourse in the novel heavily employs **orientational metaphors** that map positive emotion onto the domain of HEIGHT and LIGHT. This is a conventional pattern in English, where feeling “up,” “high,” or “lifted” signifies happiness, while “down,” “low,” or “sunken” signifies sadness³. Woolf utilizes this framework but infuses it with modernist abstraction. Characters are described as feeling they could walk on air or are on top of the world. More subtly, Clarissa’s joyful perceptions are often bathed in light – the morning sunlight in which she plunges at the novel’s start, the “luminous halo” of awareness she seeks. Flowers, a recurring motif, are not symbols of social ritual as they might be in *O’tgan kunlar*, but triggers for private, sensory-based joy and Proustian memories of youth and lost love. Joy is thus linguistically constructed as a vertical, illuminating, yet intensely personal breakthrough in perception, often poised against an ever-present awareness of death and time, marked by the relentless tolling of Big Ben.

4 Discussion

² Hamidov, Khayrulla & Ismatullayeva, Nargiza & Kayumova, Mehriniso & Mubarakova, Dilshoda & Jumaboyev, Oybek. (2023). Exploring Phraseologisms Formed with Somatisms in the Turkish Language. 178-189. 10.5220/0012695000003882.

³ Walter, L. (2014, September 17). *A bit up and down – describing emotion with metaphors of height*. Cambridge Dictionary Blog. <https://dictionaryblog.cambridge.org/2014/09/17/a-bit-up-and-down-describing-emotion-with-metaphors-of-height/>

The analysis reveals a foundational cultural dichotomy structuring the linguistic representation of joy. In *Mrs Dalloway*, the emotional lexicon and metaphorical system reflect a **culture of individualism**. Joy is a private achievement of consciousness, a temporary victory of the self over the fragmentation and despair of modern life. Clarissa's party, her central act, is an attempt to "kindle and illuminate" this feeling in others, but it originates in and is primarily meaningful to her own subjective experience⁴. Even shared joy is an aggregate of individual moments. Conversely, in *O'tgan kunlar*, joy is inextricable from a **culture of collectivism**. The very terms for happiness (*Baxt, Saodat*) imply a condition that encompasses the individual, the family, and the community, often as a result of moral righteousness and social concord. Joy is not something one "has" so much as something one "participates in" as part of a rightly ordered social and cosmic system. This contrast underscores how linguistic patterns are not merely stylistic choices but are deeply reflective of a culture's fundamental ontology – its understanding of the self in relation to others.

A further point of divergence lies in the **concreteness of emotional expression**. Uzbek discourse, as seen in Qadiri's work, favors **direct, vivid, and somatic imagery**. The body is the primary canvas for emotion: joy causes the heart to grow and the smile to widen impossibly. This concrete expression aligns with the phraseological traditions of Turkic languages, where the body serves as a primary source domain for conceptualizing inner experience. English discourse, as utilized by Woolf, leans toward **greater abstraction and indirectness**. While idioms like "heart leaping" exist, Woolf's more characteristic expressions involve abstract spatial concepts ("elevation") or synesthetic sensory blends (like the "lead circles" of Big Ben's chime dissolving in the air). This is not to say English lacks bodily metaphors, but that its modernist literary incarnation sought to transcend the purely physical to capture the elusive quality of conscious experience itself. Notably, both traditions share some universal metaphorical ground, such as the concept of a beloved being the "apple of one's eye" (*ko'zimning oq-u qorasi*), indicating a common cognitive basis that is then culturally inflected.

The authors' narrative strategies further shape the reader's encounter with joy. Woolf employs a **polyphonic narrative structure**, using free indirect discourse to weave between characters' inner worlds. This allows for a stark, poignant **juxtaposition** – Clarissa's joyful receptivity to life is continuously shadowed by Septimus Warren Smith's traumatic despair. Their connection, culminating when Clarissa intuits the meaning of his suicide, suggests joy and

⁴ Cosby, Matt. "Mrs Dalloway Section 1." LitCharts LLC, August 11, 2014. Retrieved February 9, 2026. <https://www.litcharts.com/lit/mrs-dalloway/section-1>.

sorrow are part of a hidden, universal pattern⁵. This narrative “gymel” (vocal doubling) presents joy as fragile and interdependent with pain. Qadiri, meanwhile, uses **dialogic integration** and the cultural concept of “**andisha**” (reserve or thoughtful moderation). Expressions of joy by characters are often tempered, contextualized within social dialogue, and balanced against consideration for others and for one’s fate. This narrative strategy embeds joy within a framework of social propriety and philosophical acceptance, preventing it from being represented as mere unchecked personal euphoria. Thus, narrative form itself acts as a cultural regulator of emotion, demonstrating how joy is managed and understood within each world.

5 Conclusion

This comparative linguocultural analysis demonstrates that while joy is a universal human emotion, its literary expression in Abdulla Qadiri’s *O’tgan kunlar* and Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway* is profoundly shaped by distinct national-cultural worldviews. The Uzbek classical tradition, as exemplified by Qadiri, verbalizes joy through a lexicon of fate and collective bliss, employing somatic phraseologisms and nature-based metaphors that externalize emotion and tie it to social and ethical harmony. In contrast, the English modernist tradition, pioneered by Woolf, conceptualizes joy as an intensely private “moment of being,” articulated through abstract metaphors of elevation and light, and accessed through the introspective stream-of-consciousness technique.

These differences highlight a fundamental contrast between a collectivist, fate-oriented model of the self and an individualist, consciousness-centered model. Both approaches, however, showcase the supreme power of literature to serve as a shared cognitive space. Authors use the specific linguistic triggers of their culture to construct affective worlds, which readers then decode through their own cultural and cognitive filters. Future research could productively extend this methodology to other emotion concepts (such as grief or shame) across a wider array of literary traditions, or employ digital humanities tools for large-scale semantic analysis of emotive lexicons. Ultimately, this study affirms that exploring how we say we are happy reveals deep truths about who we believe we are, both alone and in community.

⁵ Urquhart, N. L. (n.d.). Moments of being in Virginia Woolf’s fiction. Colorado State University Department of English. Retrieved February 9, 2026, from <https://writing.colostate.edu/gallery/matrix/urquhart.htm>

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