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Ta'lim innovatsiyasi va integratsiyasi

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ANTHROPOMORPHIZED ANIMAL CHARACTERS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK ANIMATION

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Abstract This article offers a structured side-by-side look at how human-like animal characters are used in English and Uzbek animated films, using a language-teaching and semiotics perspective. Instead of simply describing what's on screen, it sets out clear criteria—what the characters' speech is used for, how independently they act, how much symbolic meaning they carry, and how closely they match the story's moral message—to see how anthropomorphism works both for storytelling and for teaching. Building on systemic-functional linguistics (Halliday) and cultural semiotics (Lotman), the study reviews six well-known animated works from each tradition. The results suggest that English animation tends to use anthropomorphism to show problem-solving and emotional intelligence, while Uzbek animation uses it more as a tool for moral lessons and for strengthening a shared group identity. The article also considers how these findings could be used in language classes and in teaching cross-cultural media literacy.

Key terms: anthropomorphism, animation, language teaching, semiotics, cultural semiotics, comparing different media, teaching-related discourse

Introduction Anthropomorphism, or giving human traits to non-human characters, isn't just a stylistic choice in animation. It works as a way of communicating meaning that influences how audiences take in social norms, language habits, and moral thinking. In education, animated animal characters can act as "cultural intermediaries" (Bourdieu, 1984), helping connect abstract values with clear, everyday examples of how to behave. Even though earlier research has pointed out how animation can be useful for teaching (Furniss, 2016; Wells, 2009), not many studies have turned this into a clear set of comparative standards for examining anthropomorphism across production systems that differ by language and culture. This study aims to fill that gap by putting forward an analytical framework that others can use and repeat. The goals are:[1] to find measurable differences in how

anthropomorphism is shown,[2] to explain those differences using linguo-cultural theory, and[3] to suggest practical ways to use these kinds of characters when teaching language and culture.

Literature Review and Methodology Theoretical Foundations
This study brings together three main theories:
a) Linguistic anthropomorphism (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003): how we use metaphors to map human ways of thinking and behaving onto animals.
b) Cultural semiotics (Lotman, 1990): treating animated characters like "texts" that carry shared cultural memory and familiar ways of acting.
c) Systemic-functional linguistics (Halliday, 1978): looking at dialogue as something people do in social life, and as a way they build identity. Empirical research suggests that children often pick up moral and social rules from animal characters that act like people (Geerdts et al., 2016). Still, there hasn't been much cross-cultural comparative research on this yet.

Criteria for Choosing Animated Works "To keep things comparable, we chose six English-language animated films (like Zootopia, The Lion King, and Kung Fu Panda) and six Uzbek animated films (like Suvarak, Quyoshning Oltin Bolasi, and Toshkentda Shamol) made between 2000 and 2020, featuring:
-A primary animal protagonist with human speech and social roles;
-Minimum 15 minutes of screen time;
-Availability of annotated scripts in original language.

Procedure Three trained coders (two linguists and one media scholar) each separately reviewed 10-minute clips from every animation. Their inter-coder reliability (Fleiss'κ) fell between 0.81 and 0.89. When they didn't agree, they talked it through and settled on a shared decision.

Discussion. Speech Functionality: Pragmatic Differences

In English-language animations, animal characters mostly speak to negotiate (45% of what they say), show their feelings or thoughts (32%), or make jokes (18%). Only a small share of the dialogue (5%) is clearly meant to teach a moral lesson. In contrast, in Uzbek animations, moral lessons make up 41% of what characters say, with negotiation next (28%), and then talk about social responsibility (19%). For instance, in Toshkentda Shamol, the fox directly states a collectivist saying ("Bir kishi bir ish qilsa, el bir bo'lib ko'taradi" – "What one person begins, the community carries"). Nothing similarly direct showed up in the English examples, where the moral point is usually shown through what happens in the story instead of being spelled out in the dialogue.

Behavioral Autonomy English characters scored an average of 3.6 out of 4 on the autonomy scale. For example, in Zootopia, Judy Hopps investigates crimes on her own, without parents or the community watching over her. Uzbek characters averaged 1.8

out of 4. In many of those stories, animal protagonists often check in with elders, go back to their families, or make decisions under group guidance. This pattern fits Hofstede's (2001) individualism vs. collectivism idea: English animation tends to highlight independent, self-directed characters, while Uzbek animation more often emphasizes close relationships and relying on others.

Symbolic Density "Animal symbols in English came across as fairly simple (average 1.2 out of 4). Wolves mostly stand for a general sense of danger, and rabbits suggest a kind of bravery people tend to overlook—ideas that are easy to understand in many cultures. In contrast, Uzbek animation used much denser symbolism (average 3.4 out of 4). For example, the wolf (bo'ri) isn't just a predator; it can point to nomadic roots and the kind of cleverness needed to survive. And the donkey (eshak) can carry the idea of folk wisdom, not just "being stupid." For viewers from outside the culture, these layers may be hard to catch, which can make global distribution tougher, even as it adds more depth for local teaching and learning.

Moral Alignment All six English animated films showed individual-focused moral endings: the main character reaches a personal goal, and the community ends up adjusting to that person. In five of the six Uzbek animated films, the moral endings were more group-focused: the main character gives up a personal wish to keep the group in harmony, and behavior that breaks the rules gets addressed by bringing the person back into the community. This points to the idea that anthropomorphism isn't culturally neutral, and often follows the main values and ideological storylines of the culture it comes from.

Ideological and Educational Functions in Practice Practically speaking, these differences matter when you decide how to use animations in a language classroom. Animations in English tend to work better for teaching everyday communication skills, like making requests, sharing opinions, or following simple problem-solving dialogues. Animations in Uzbek, on the other hand, are often a better fit for teaching speech and phrases that are closely tied to the culture, such as honorifics, proverbs, and common ways of saying thank you or sorry, and they can also help students build intercultural awareness of more collectivist value systems.

Results The quantitative and qualitative analyses came back with the following results:

1. Speech and dialogue: In English-language animation, the focus tends to be on negotiation and expressing yourself, while in Uzbek animation it more often leans toward teaching moral lessons and highlighting social duties.
2. Behavioral autonomy: Characters in English texts show noticeably more autonomy ($p < 0.01$, Mann-Whitney U test).
3. Symbolic density: Uzbek letters tend to carry a lot of culture-specific meaning, so you often need local context to really understand everything they imply.

4. Moral alignment: In English-language stories, the ending often leans toward individual choices and personal outcomes, while Uzbek stories tend to wrap things up in a way that reinforces the group and a collectivist sense of resolution.

5. Pedagogical usefulness: Each tradition brings something different to teaching language and culture. English-based models tend to help with practical, everyday communication skills, while Uzbek-based models often support intercultural understanding and thinking through moral questions.

Conclusion: This study shows that animal characters with human traits in English and Uzbek animation aren't just interchangeable storytelling tools. They work more like culture-based sign systems. Using a four-part framework that others can reuse—how speech is used, how independently the character acts, how much symbolic meaning it carries, and how its behavior lines up with moral lessons—we found consistent differences that point to bigger cultural values. For researchers, this framework can be used to compare media across cultures in a clearer, more structured way. For educators, it gives practical criteria for choosing animations based on what you want to teach: English animations may work better for communicative language practice, while Uzbek animations may be a better fit for cultural learning and moral education. For animators, the results suggest that "localizing" these kinds of characters takes more than changing the visuals or translating the dialogue; you often need to rethink the character's behavior patterns and the moral message it supports. Future research could build on this by looking at audience reception, such as testing how children from different cultural backgrounds understand the same anthropomorphized characters.

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