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CULTURAL MODELS OF JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK DISCOURSE

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Abstract: Justice and fairness represent fundamental moral and sociocultural concepts through which communities evaluate human conduct, institutional decisions, social relationships, and the distribution of rights and responsibilities. Although these concepts are widely recognized across linguistic communities, their semantic organization and discourse representation may reflect culturally established expectations and communicative conventions. English justice and fairness and Uzbek adolat, haqqoniylik, and insof provide a productive basis for investigating similarities and differences in the linguistic conceptualization of moral legitimacy and fair treatment. This study aims to identify and compare cultural models of justice and fairness in English and Uzbek discourse, examine their cognitive-semantic structures, and determine how legal, moral, interpersonal, and social interpretations are expressed through language.

Key words: discourse patterns, existence of dictionary, treatment of individuals.

Introduction

Justice and fairness are among the most significant concepts through which human communities evaluate moral behavior, institutional legitimacy, social relationships, and the distribution of opportunities and resources. These concepts influence how individuals interpret acceptable conduct, recognize violations of rights, assess decisions, and negotiate competing interests. Although justice and fairness are frequently treated as universal values, their linguistic representation is neither uniform nor independent of cultural experience. The meanings associated with these concepts are shaped through social interaction, institutional practices, philosophical traditions, legal systems, and everyday communication. Language plays a central role in this process. Through lexical choices, metaphorical expressions, evaluative constructions, and recurring discourse patterns, speakers communicate not only what they consider fair or just but also which criteria they regard as relevant to moral evaluation. In English, the lexical units justice and fairness possess overlapping but distinguishable meanings. Justice may refer to moral correctness, legitimate treatment, and the administration of law, whereas fairness frequently emphasizes impartiality, appropriate treatment, and the absence of unjustified advantage. In Uzbek, the concept of justice is primarily represented by adolat, while related meanings are expressed through haqqoniylik (truthfulness or fairness), xolislik (impartiality), tenglik (equality), insof (conscientious fairness), and vijdon (conscience). These lexical units participate in interconnected semantic networks. However, the existence of dictionary equivalents does not necessarily imply identical conceptual organization. For example, English fairness may be used to evaluate the rules of a competition, a workplace decision, or the treatment of individuals. Uzbek adolat can perform similar functions, but the most natural equivalent in a particular context may instead be xolislik, haqqoniylik, or insof. Such variation indicates that a comparative study must examine the relationship between linguistic meaning and the cultural models activated through discourse. The concept of cultural models occupies an important position in

cognitive anthropology and cultural linguistics. Cultural models may be understood as socially transmitted interpretive frameworks that help individuals organize experience and evaluate situations. They are not necessarily explicit rules. Rather, they involve patterns of expectations, assumptions, values, and relationships that become recognizable through recurring communicative practices. Holland and Quinn (1987) describe cultural models as structures that influence how people interpret and organize experience. Their approach provides a foundation for examining how linguistic expressions reflect shared conceptual resources without assuming that every member of a community possesses identical beliefs. Sharifian (2017) further develops the relationship between language and cultural conceptualization, emphasizing that cultural meanings may be distributed across communities and expressed through cultural schemas, categories, and metaphors. From this perspective, justice is not a single, indivisible semantic unit. It is associated with several cultural models that become relevant in different situations. A legal dispute may activate a model of procedural justice involving rules, evidence, and impartial judgment. A discussion of wages may activate a distributive model involving equality, merit, and need. An interpersonal disagreement may activate expectations concerning honesty, respect, reciprocity, and consideration for others. These models can overlap or conflict. A decision may be procedurally correct but perceived as unfair in its outcome. Conversely, an outcome may be regarded as desirable even when the procedure used to obtain it is criticized. The linguistic analysis of justice must therefore account for the relationship between competing normative principles. Cognitive semantics provides a theoretical framework for investigating how abstract concepts are organized through experience, categorization, and conceptual relationships. Lakoff (1987) argues that human categories frequently exhibit complex internal structures rather than being defined exclusively by necessary and sufficient conditions. This perspective is relevant to justice because the concept encompasses multiple dimensions that cannot always be reduced to a single definition. Justice may concern equality, proportionality, deserved outcomes, respect for rights, impartial procedures, or the correction of wrongdoing. The relative importance of these dimensions varies according to the situation being evaluated. Frame semantics provides another useful perspective. Fillmore (1982) explains how lexical meanings activate structured scenes involving participants, relationships, and background knowledge. For example, the expression a fair decision may activate a frame containing a decision-maker, affected individuals, relevant criteria, available alternatives, and an evaluative standard. The Uzbek expression adolatli qaror activates a comparable frame, although its interpretation depends on the communicative context. Conceptual metaphor theory also contributes to the analysis. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) demonstrate that abstract domains can be conceptualized through more concrete patterns of experience. Expressions such as fight for justice, restore justice, and adolat uchun kurashmoq suggest that justice may be conceptualized as an objective to be pursued or a condition to be established. Together, these approaches allow justice and fairness to be examined as dynamic conceptual structures rather than isolated lexical meanings.

The central problem addressed in this study concerns the relationship between shared moral concepts and culturally mediated linguistic representations. English and Uzbek belong to different linguistic families and have developed through different historical and sociocultural processes. English is a Germanic language within the Indo-European family, whereas Uzbek belongs to the Turkic language family. Their lexical structures, grammatical resources, and histories of language contact differ. Nevertheless, both languages provide extensive resources for discussing justice, fairness, equality, rights, and moral responsibility. A comparative analysis can reveal how similar normative concerns are expressed through

partly different semantic and discourse structures. The study is significant for three reasons. First, it contributes to comparative cognitive linguistics by examining the relationship between conceptual universality and language-specific lexicalization. Second, it contributes to cultural linguistics by investigating how moral evaluations are communicated through culturally meaningful expressions. Third, it has practical relevance for translation, intercultural communication, legal terminology, and foreign-language education. The main aim of the study is to identify and compare cultural models of justice and fairness in English and Uzbek discourse.

The research addresses four questions:

1. What major cultural models of justice and fairness can be distinguished in English and Uzbek discourse?
2. How are these models represented through lexical and discourse structures?
3. What similarities and differences emerge in the semantic relationships among justice, fairness, adolat, haqqoniylik, and insof?
4. What implications do these relationships have for intercultural interpretation and translation?

Materials And Methods

The study employs a qualitative comparative design integrating cultural linguistics, cognitive semantics, lexical-semantic analysis, and discourse interpretation. The primary unit of analysis is the linguistic construction through which a particular understanding of justice or fairness is communicated. The research does not treat national cultures as internally uniform systems. Instead, it investigates culturally available linguistic resources that may be activated in specific communicative contexts.

Five analytical models are selected:

1. Procedural justice.
2. Distributive justice.
3. Interpersonal fairness.
4. Moral responsibility.
5. Restorative justice.

These models are used as comparative categories rather than as an exhaustive classification of all possible meanings of justice. The English analytical material includes the lexical units justice, fairness, equity, equality, impartiality, accountability, rights, responsibility, and injustice. The Uzbek material includes adolat, haqqoniylik, xolislik, tenglik, insof, vijdon, haq-huquq, javobgarlik, and adolatsizlik. Illustrative expressions are also examined.

English expression	Uzbek expression	Semantic domain
A fair decision	Adolatli qaror	Procedural evaluation
Equal opportunities	Teng imkoniyatlar	Distributive equality
Impartial judgment	Xolis baholash	Impartiality
Social justice	Ijtimoiy adolat	Social evaluation
A sense of fairness	Adolat hissi	Moral perception
To seek justice	Adolat izlash	Justice as an objective
To restore justice	Adolatni tiklash	Restoration
To act conscientiously	Vijdonan ish tutmoq	Moral responsibility

The examples are presented as illustrative constructions, not as quotations extracted from a verified bilingual corpus.

The analysis follows four stages.

Stage 1: Semantic identification. Central meanings of the selected lexical units are compared to distinguish shared semantic features and partial equivalences.

Stage 2: Cultural-model classification. Linguistic expressions are grouped according to the five analytical models.

Stage 3: Frame-based interpretation. Each model is examined in relation to its participants, evaluative criteria, expected actions, and outcomes.

Stage 4: Comparative interpretation. Similarities and differences are assessed without assuming that lexical contrasts necessarily represent differences in the beliefs of all speakers.

Four criteria are applied: semantic meaning, normative orientation, discourse function, and contextual interpretation.

Criterion	Description
Semantic meaning	The conceptual content expressed by a lexical unit
Normative orientation	The standard used to evaluate fairness or justice
Discourse function	The communicative purpose of the expression
Contextual interpretation	The meaning activated within a particular situation

These criteria make it possible to compare linguistic expressions without relying solely on literal translation.

The study is qualitative and exploratory. It does not report statistical frequencies, experimental responses, or representative national discourse patterns. Consequently, the findings concern semantic possibilities and theoretically motivated cultural models rather than measured differences between English-speaking and Uzbek-speaking populations. Further empirical investigation is necessary to determine how frequently particular models occur in different genres and how speakers interpret them.

Results

The comparative analysis identifies five major analytical models through which justice and fairness can be represented in English and Uzbek.

Cultural model	Central principle	English representation	Uzbek representation
Procedural justice	Fair decision-making	Fair trial, impartial judgment	Adolatli sud, xolis qaror
Distributive justice	Justified allocation	Fair distribution, equal opportunity	Adolatli taqsimot, teng imkoniyat
Interpersonal fairness	Appropriate treatment	Fair treatment, mutual respect	Adolatli munosabat, o‘zaro hurmat
Moral responsibility	Ethical accountability	Conscience, responsibility	Vijdon, insof, mas’uliyat
Restorative justice	Correction of wrongdoing	Restore justice, make amends	Adolatni tiklash, zararni qoplash

The models share a general concern with legitimate treatment but emphasize different dimensions of moral evaluation. Procedural justice concerns the fairness of decision-making processes. Its central elements include impartiality, consistency, transparency, the opportunity to present relevant information, and the application of legitimate criteria. In English discourse, expressions such as fair trial, due process, impartial hearing, and procedural fairness represent this model.

In Uzbek, comparable meanings can be expressed through adolatli sud, xolis ko‘rib chiqish, qonuniy tartib, and adolatli qaror.

Consider the illustrative statements:

Every person deserves a fair hearing.

Har bir inson o‘z masalasi xolis ko‘rib chiqilishiga haqli.

Both statements emphasize a normative expectation concerning the process by which a decision is reached. However, the English adjective fair may combine several dimensions of procedural legitimacy, while Uzbek may use xolis, adolatli, or a more specific procedural expression depending on the intended meaning. The procedural model demonstrates that justice is not evaluated exclusively through outcomes. The legitimacy of the decision-making process can itself become a subject of moral judgment. Distributive justice concerns the allocation of benefits, resources, opportunities, responsibilities, and burdens. Three normative principles are especially relevant: equality, merit, and need. Equality emphasizes equivalent treatment or distribution according to a specified criterion. Merit concerns differences in contribution, achievement, or responsibility. Need concerns differences in circumstances and requirements. These principles may produce different outcomes. For example, distributing identical financial support to all individuals may satisfy one interpretation of equality. Providing greater assistance to individuals facing greater disadvantage may satisfy a needs-based interpretation of fairness. In English, distributive justice is represented through expressions such as fair allocation, equal opportunity, equitable distribution, and social justice. In Uzbek, relevant expressions include adolatli taqsimot, teng imkoniyatlar, ijtimoiy adolat, and resurslarni adolatli taqsimlash. The lexical comparison reveals that equality and equity are not interchangeable in every context. Similarly, Uzbek tenglik and adolat should not be treated as exact synonyms. The distinction is important because justice may require consideration of relevant differences rather than identical treatment in all circumstances. Interpersonal fairness concerns how individuals treat one another in everyday relationships. This model includes respect, honesty, reciprocity, consideration, and the avoidance of unjustified favoritism. In English, expressions such as treat someone fairly, show respect, be reasonable, and give someone a fair chance can activate this model. In Uzbek, comparable meanings may be expressed through adolatli munosabatda bo‘lmoq, hurmat ko‘rsatmoq, insof bilan ish tutmoq, and birovning haqqiga xiyonat qilmaslik. The Uzbek word insof is particularly relevant to this model. Depending on context, insof may express conscientious fairness, moral restraint, reasonable conduct, or consideration for another person's circumstances.

For example: Insof bilan ish tutish kerak.

A context-sensitive English translation might be:

One should act fairly and conscientiously. The translation illustrates a partial semantic correspondence. No single English lexical item necessarily reproduces every meaning associated with insof. However, this does not imply that the underlying moral expectations are absent from English discourse. Comparable evaluations may be communicated through several lexical expressions. The principal difference lies in lexical organization and contextual interpretation. The moral-responsibility model concerns the relationship between justice, conscience, obligation, and accountability. It becomes relevant when individuals evaluate their own actions or the conduct of others according to moral standards. In English, the model can be represented through conscience, moral responsibility, integrity, accountability, and doing the right thing. In Uzbek, relevant lexical units include vijdon, mas’uliyat, halollik, insof, and adolat. The expression vijdonan ish tutmoq emphasizes acting according to conscience. Similarly, English act according to one's conscience presents moral

judgment as an internal source of behavioral regulation. The two expressions share a substantial semantic foundation. Nevertheless, conscience and justice remain distinct concepts. A person may sincerely believe that an action is morally justified while others consider it unfair or harmful.

This distinction shows that moral responsibility is a related cultural model rather than a synonym of justice. The restorative model concerns responses to wrongdoing and the possibility of repairing harm. Its central elements include acknowledgment of harm, responsibility, compensation, reconciliation, and the re-establishment of legitimate relationships. English expressions such as restore justice, make amends, repair harm, and take responsibility can activate aspects of this model. Uzbek expressions include adolatni tiklash, zararni qoplash, aybni tan olish, and yarashuvga erishish. Justice requires recognition of the harm caused.

Adolat yetkazilgan zararni tan olishni talab qiladi.

Both statements emphasize that justice may involve more than punishment.

However, restoration and reconciliation should not be assumed to be necessary or appropriate in every case. Their relevance depends on the nature of the harm, the rights of affected individuals, and the institutional context. The restorative model therefore represents one possible approach to justice rather than its universal definition.

The relationship among central lexical units can be summarized as follows.

Semantic feature	**Justice**	**Fairness**	**Adolat**	**Haqqoniylik**	**Insof**
Moral legitimacy	Strong	Strong	Strong	Contextual	Contextual
Impartial treatment	Strong	Strong	Strong	Contextual	Contextual
Legal institutions	Strong	Contextual	Strong	Limited	Limited
Truthfulness	Contextual	Contextual	Contextual	Strong	Contextual
Personal moral restraint	Contextual	Contextual	Contextual	Limited	Strong
Social distribution	Strong	Strong	Strong	Contextual	Contextual

Note: “Strong,” “contextual,” and “limited” are qualitative analytical labels, not numerical measurements. The table illustrates that semantic overlap is accompanied by differences in conventional lexical emphasis. English justice and Uzbek adolat exhibit particularly broad normative meanings. English fairness and Uzbek haqqoniylik overlap in some contexts but are not fully equivalent. Uzbek insof occupies an important position in the interpersonal and moral-responsibility domains, although its meanings can be communicated in English through contextually selected expressions. Several candidate conceptual metaphors emerge from the illustrative expressions.

JUSTICE IS A GOAL

English: They fought for justice.

Uzbek: Ular adolat uchun kurashdilar.

The expressions conceptualize justice as an objective requiring purposeful action.

JUSTICE IS A RESTORABLE CONDITION

English: Justice must be restored.

Uzbek: Adolat tiklanishi kerak.

The expressions suggest that justice can be disrupted and re-established.

JUSTICE IS A MORAL STANDARD

English: The decision did not meet the standards of justice.

Uzbek: Qaror adolat mezonlariga mos kelmadi.

The expressions conceptualize justice as a criterion against which decisions are evaluated. These candidate metaphors demonstrate how justice can be represented through action, restoration, and measurement. However, their relative conventionality and frequency in English and Uzbek remain to be established through corpus-based research.

The relevance of individual cultural models changes according to discourse context.

Discourse context	**Potentially prominent model**	**Illustrative expressions**
Legal discourse	Procedural justice	Fair trial; adolatli sud
Economic discourse	Distributive justice	Fair wages; adolatli ish haqi
Educational discourse	Procedural and interpersonal fairness	Fair assessment; xolis baholash
Family discourse	Interpersonal fairness	Fair treatment; adolatli munosabat
Ethical discourse	Moral responsibility	Conscience; vijdon
Conflict-resolution discourse	Restorative justice	Repair harm; zararni qoplash

This classification demonstrates that the concept of justice is context-sensitive. It also explains why a single lexical equivalent cannot always represent every communicative function of the concept.

Discussion

The findings indicate that English and Uzbek provide comparable conceptual resources for evaluating fairness, legitimacy, rights, and moral responsibility. The five cultural models identified in the study are not exclusive to either language. Procedural fairness, distributive justice, interpersonal respect, moral responsibility, and restoration can all be discussed through English and Uzbek lexical constructions. This observation is important because comparative cultural analysis sometimes risks presenting differences in lexical expression as evidence of fundamentally different moral systems. The present analysis supports a more cautious interpretation. The differences identified concern semantic organization, lexical selection, and contextual emphasis. They do not establish that speakers of one language possess moral values absent from speakers of the other. One of the most important aspects of the comparison is the relationship between Uzbek insof and English expressions of fairness. Insof can be used in situations involving reasonable behavior, moral consideration, restraint, and the avoidance of unfair advantage. Its semantic range makes it relevant to both interpersonal fairness and moral responsibility. However, insof should not be treated as a uniquely Uzbek moral category without historical and cross-linguistic evidence. Comparable concepts may be expressed in English through fairness, decency, conscience, reasonableness, and consideration. The main linguistic observation is that a single Uzbek lexical item may require several English equivalents depending on context. This has direct implications for translation. For example, translating insofli odam as a just person may be possible in certain contexts, but a fair-minded person or a decent person may better express the intended meaning in others. The choice must be determined by discourse context rather than a fixed

bilingual equivalence. Cultural models should not be understood as rigid structures uniformly shared by all members of a linguistic community. Their activation depends on social roles, communicative goals, institutional settings, and individual experiences. For instance, a legal professional discussing justice may foreground procedural legitimacy and the protection of rights. An employee discussing fairness may focus on wages, workload, or workplace opportunities. A family member evaluating interpersonal conduct may emphasize respect, reciprocity, and consideration. These differences can occur within the same linguistic community. Therefore, comparisons between English and Uzbek should account for variation within each language as well as differences between them. A future empirical study should compare equivalent discourse genres rather than assuming that all occurrences of justice and adolat are directly comparable. The findings support the view that abstract moral concepts are organized through networks of related semantic features and contextual frames. Justice is not represented through a single necessary lexical feature in every situation. Instead, different contexts activate different components of the broader conceptual structure. In procedural discourse, impartiality and consistency may become prominent. In distributive discourse, equality, need, and merit may become central. In interpersonal discourse, respect and reasonable treatment may be emphasized. This variability is compatible with cognitive-semantic approaches that recognize graded category structures and context-sensitive meaning. The five-model framework offers a practical means of organizing this variation. The comparison highlights the importance of context-sensitive translation. English fairness may correspond to Uzbek adolat, xolislik, haqqoniylik, or another expression depending on the situation. Similarly, Uzbek adolat may be translated as justice or fairness according to its communicative function. The phrase adolatli baholash, for example, may be translated as fair assessment in educational discourse. The phrase adolatli sudlov is more naturally associated with fair administration of justice or fair judicial proceedings, depending on context. Translators must therefore identify the cultural and institutional frame activated by the source expression. This approach may reduce semantic distortion in legal, educational, administrative, and interpersonal communication.

Conclusion

This study has examined cultural models of justice and fairness in English and Uzbek discourse through a comparative cognitive-semantic and linguocultural framework. The analysis identifies five major interpretive models: procedural justice, distributive justice, interpersonal fairness, moral responsibility, and restorative justice. These models demonstrate that justice and fairness are multidimensional concepts whose meanings depend on the relationship between normative principles and communicative contexts. The findings suggest that English and Uzbek share substantial conceptual resources for expressing fairness, legitimate treatment, rights, responsibility, and the correction of wrongdoing. At the same time, the languages differ in their lexical organization and the semantic relationships among corresponding expressions. English justice, fairness, equity, and equality represent partially overlapping but distinguishable concepts. Uzbek adolat, haqqoniylik, xolislik, tenglik, and insof likewise form an interconnected semantic network with context-dependent relationships. The analysis of insof is particularly important because it demonstrates how a culturally meaningful moral expression may require multiple translation equivalents. The study also shows that justice can be conceptualized through candidate metaphorical patterns involving goals, restoration, and normative standards. The theoretical contribution of the research lies in combining cultural-model analysis with cognitive semantics and discourse interpretation. Its practical contribution concerns translation, language teaching, intercultural communication, and the interpretation of moral terminology. The findings should be

understood as a qualitative conceptual model rather than a statistically established description of national discourse patterns. Future research should employ authentic bilingual corpora, systematic discourse annotation, and psycholinguistic experiments to test the proposed models. Overall, the analysis demonstrates that justice and fairness are simultaneously shared human concerns and linguistically mediated categories whose interpretation depends on context, lexical structure, and cultural knowledge.

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1. Publication note: This manuscript provides a complete qualitative IMRAD structure with comparative tables and a theoretical bibliography. For submission to an empirical Scopus- or Web of Science-indexed journal, the Results section should be strengthened with authentic, referenced English and Uzbek discourse examples, transparent sampling procedures, and a replicable coding methodology. The reference list should also be checked against the target journal's style.
2. I can prepare an expanded 5,000–6,000-word Word version with more detailed Results and Discussion sections, 5–7 comparative tables, a conceptual-model diagram, and APA 7 references.

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