"CONTEMPORARY INTERNET MEMES IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK: STICKER EMOJIS AND THEIR LINGUOCULTURAL ANALYSIS"

"INGLIZ VA OʻZBEK TILLARIDA ZAMONAVIY INTERNET-MEMLAR: STIKER EMODJILAR VA ULARNING LINGVOKULTUROLOGIK TAHLILI"

"СОВРЕМЕННЫЕ ИНТЕРНЕТ-МЕМЫ НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ И УЗБЕКСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ: СТИКЕР-ЭМОДЗИ И ИХ ЛИНГВОКУЛЬТУРОЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ"

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Annotation. This study investigates contemporary internet memes, focusing on sticker emojis and their linguocultural analysis in English and Uzbek languages. The research explores the structural formation, semantic roles, and cultural implications of sticker emojis as a modern digital phenomenon. Through a comparative linguocultural approach, it examines how these memes reflect sociocultural values, humor, and identity in both languages, while analyzing the adaptation of English-based internet memes into Uzbek contexts. The study underscores the interplay between language, culture, and digital communication in shaping the expressive potential of sticker emojis.

Аннотация.Данное исследование посвящено современным интернет-мемам, в частности стикер-эмодзи, и их лингвокультурологическому анализу на английском и узбекском языках. Исследование рассматривает структурное формирование, семантические роли и культурное значение стикер-эмодзи как современного цифрового феномена. С помощью сравнительного лингвокультурологического подхода анализируется, как эти мемы отражают

социокультурные ценности, юмор и идентичность в обоих языках, а также исследуется адаптация англоязычных интернет-мемов в узбекский контекст. Работа подчеркивает взаимодействие языка, культуры и цифровой коммуникации в формировании выразительного потенциала стикер-эмодзи.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu tadqiqot ingliz va oʻzbek tillaridagi zamonaviy internet-memlar, xususan, stiker emodjilar va ularning lingvokulturologik tahliliga bagʻishlanadi. Tadqiqot stiker emodjilarning tuzilishi, semantik rollari va madaniy ahamiyatini oʻrganadi, ularni zamonaviy raqamli hodisa sifatida koʻrib chiqadi. Qiyosiy lingvokulturologik yondashuv orqali ushbu memlarning har ikki tilda ijtimoiy-madaniy qadimiyatlar, hazil va oʻzlikni qanday aks ettirishi tahlil qilinadi, shuningdek, ingliz tilidagi internet-memlarning oʻzbek kontekstlariga moslashuvi koʻzda tutiladi. Tadqiqot til, madaniyat va raqamli muloqot oʻzaro ta'sirida stiker emodjilarning ifoda imkoniyatlarini shakllantirishini ta'kidlaydi.

Keywords: Internet memes, sticker emojis, linguocultural analysis, digital communication, semantic roles, cultural identity, humor, cross-linguistic, adaptation, sociocultural values.

Ключевые слова. Интернет-мемы, стикер-эмодзи, лингвокультурологический анализ, цифровая коммуникация, семантические роли, культурная идентичность, юмор, межъязыковой, адаптация, социокультурные ценности.

Kalit soʻzlar: Internet-memlar, stiker emodjilar, lingvokulturologik tahlil, raqamli muloqot, semantik rollar, madaniy oʻzlik, hazil, tillararo, moslashuv, ijtimoiy-madaniy qadimiyatlar.

INTRODUCTION. Internet memes have emerged as a powerful medium in contemporary digital culture, reflecting human emotions, societal trends, and cultural identities in an increasingly interconnected world. Among these, sticker emojis stand out as a unique form of expression, blending visual creativity with linguistic nuance. This study focuses on the exploration of sticker emojis within English and Uzbek internet memes, offering a lens into their role as carriers of humor, sentiment, and cultural values. The relevance of this research lies in its examination of how these digital artifacts transcend linguistic and cultural boundaries, fostering a shared global experience while retaining localized significance. Specifically, analyzing sticker emojis in English and Uzbek contexts reveals both universal patterns of digital communication and distinct national characteristics shaped by cultural heritage.

The primary objective of this study is to conduct a linguocultural analysis of contemporary internet memes, with a focus on sticker emojis, and to compare their semantic and expressive features across English and Uzbek languages. To accomplish this, the following tasks have been outlined:

● Reviewing theoretical perspectives on internet memes and digital communication;

● Investigating the themes, symbolism, and humor embedded in sticker emojis;

● Comparing the adaptation and transformation of English-based sticker emojis in Uzbek meme culture;

● Exploring the cultural and linguistic uniqueness of meme reception in English-speaking and Uzbek-speaking communities.

The scientific novelty of this research lies in its pioneering approach to analyzing sticker emojis as a bridge between English and Uzbek digital cultures, offering fresh insights into their linguocultural significance. The practical significance of the study is evident in its potential contributions to digital linguistics, cross-cultural communication studies, and the development of culturally sensitive digital content. This research also serves as a valuable resource for linguists, cultural researchers, and digital media professionals seeking to understand the evolving landscape of online expression.

Methods and materials. This study employs a comparative linguocultural analysis to explore sticker emojis within English and Uzbek internet memes, focusing on their semantic, structural, and cultural dimensions. The research draws on key scientific sources in digital linguistics, visual communication, and cultural studies to examine the expressive roles of sticker emojis in online discourse. A corpus of 500 sticker emojis—250 in English and 250 in Uzbek—was collected from popular platforms such as Telegram, Instagram, and WhatsApp, ensuring a representative sample of contemporary meme usage as of February 2025. The analysis encompasses both linguistic and visual components to uncover the essence of these digital artifacts as tools of communication and cultural reflection.

The lexical-semantic and pragmatic features of sticker emojis were scrutinized, with attention to how key terms (e.g., "LOL" in English and its Uzbek equivalents like "kulgu" or localized expressions) convey humor, emotion, or irony across languages. The extent to which meanings and emotional undertones are preserved or adapted in cross-linguistic contexts was evaluated. Structural aspects, such as text-image interplay and the use of repetition or variation in meme design, were analyzed to assess how visual and verbal elements collaborate to produce meaning. For instance, the study examined how English sticker emojis often rely on concise text paired with exaggerated imagery, while Uzbek versions may incorporate culturally resonant symbols or proverbs to enhance relatability.

Cultural adaptation techniques were investigated to determine how sticker emojis bridge or highlight differences in English and Uzbek sociocultural frameworks. Themes such as humor, social critique, and identity were explored, with specific attention to how universal digital trends (e.g., reaction memes) are localized for Uzbek audiences through linguistic and visual cues. The research compared strategies like

direct translation, where English phrases are rendered literally into Uzbek, versus adaptive methods, where cultural equivalents or visual substitutions are employed to maintain emotional resonance. The symbolic significance of recurring visuals—such as animals, everyday objects, or facial expressions—was analyzed to compare their implications in both languages.

The methodological foundation integrates modern theories of digital communication, semiotics, and linguocultural analysis, drawing on scholarly works such as those by Ерпова (2018), Васильева (2017), and Часовский (2022). Ерпова's dissertation, "Современный арт-контент как феномен культурной коммуникации," examines art memes as a form of visual network communication, emphasizing their role in cultural reinterpretation and social dialogue.[1] Васильева's "Репрезентация культурной идентичности в сети Интернет" explores identity representation online, focusing on visual and textual strategies in Russian-speaking contexts[2]. Часовский's "Визуализация общения в сети Интернет (на материале креолизованных мемов)" analyzes creolized memes as a genre of virtual interaction, highlighting their sociolinguistic and pragmatic functions in Russian and English.[3] These works provide a robust framework for understanding meme dynamics, which this study adapts to the bilingual English-Uzbek context. The analysis utilized qualitative methods, including content analysis to categorize themes and semiotic analysis to decode visual-verbal interactions, supplemented by quantitative measures to assess frequency and distribution of specific emoji types. This multi-faceted approach ensured a comprehensive examination of sticker emojis, illuminating their significance in digital communication and cross-cultural studies.

While Ерпова (2018) focuses on art memes as reinterpretations of traditional visual culture within Russian networks, this study targets sticker emojis as a broader, everyday digital phenomenon across English and Uzbek contexts, emphasizing linguistic adaptation over artistic heritage. Васильева (2017) investigates identity representation through memes in a monolingual Russian framework, whereas this research adopts a bilingual lens, contrasting English and Uzbek to highlight cross-cultural dynamics. Часовский (2022) examines creolized memes' sociolinguistic roles in Russian and English, prioritizing genre classification and pragmatic impact, while this study centers on sticker emojis' linguocultural specificity, integrating Uzbek as a less-explored linguistic dimension. Thus, this research extends beyond the scope of these works by bridging global and local meme cultures through a comparative English-Uzbek analysis.

[1] Ерпова, Д. Е., 2018, Современный арт-контент как феномен культурной коммуникации. page 3

[2] Васильева, М. А., 2017, Репрезентация культурной идентичности в сети Интернет. page 3

[3] Часовский, Н. В., 2022, Визуализация общения в сети Интернет (на материале креолизованных мемов). page 3

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION. The primary objective of this study was to analyze the sticker emojis in English and Uzbek internet memes, focusing on their semantic roles, structural composition, and cultural significance. The following significant findings were obtained, each of which has been extensively discussed: During the study, it was found that sticker emojis such as 😅, 😒, 😍, 😂, □, □, 😟, 🙂, □, and 🐱 played a crucial role in enhancing the emotional, humorous, and cultural content of digital communication. The analysis revealed that these emojis function as standalone units or combine with text to form creolized structures, amplifying intent through visual-verbal interplay. For instance, 😅 in English conveys laughter, often paired with "LOL," while in Uzbek, it might accompany "kulgu" or "xaxaxa," reflecting universal humor with local flair.[4]Sticker emojis in English memes were adapted into Uzbek contexts using two main methods: first, as direct equivalents retaining universal meanings (e.g., 😅 → 😅, 😍 → 😍); second, as culturally nuanced reinterpretations (e.g., 🙂 with "yana shu" in Uzbek, meaning "this again," versus "eye roll" in English). In cross-cultural digital communication, merely replicating visual symbols is insufficient; conveying their contextual and cultural meaning accurately is essential. [5]Equivalence here does not always imply direct correspondence. Users often adopt flexible approaches to preserve the emotional and pragmatic effect of the meme.[6] For example, 😄 in English memes on platforms like Instagram signaled amusement (e.g., "can't stop laughing"), while in Uzbek, it paired with "kulib o'ldim" (died laughing) or "juda kulgili" (very funny), amplifying the effect. The emoji 😠 expressed anger in English with "so mad," but in Uzbek, it appeared with "jahl chiqdi" (I got furious), aligning with local intensity. Similarly, □ in English celebrated with "party time," while Uzbek users added "bayram muborak" (happy holiday), embedding cultural festivity. The emoji □ (hug) in English stood alone or with "hugs," but in Uzbek, it was often "quchoqlayman" (I'll hug you), reflecting warmth. The animal emoji 🐱 in English meant "cute" or "cat lover," while in Uzbek, it paired with "mushukcha" (kitten) or playful phrases like "mushukdek yaramas" (naughty like a cat). This adaptation aligns with the expressive norms of Uzbek, ensuring flexibility in digital communication.[7]The primary function of sticker emojis in English memes was to intensify emotional and semantic impact through concise visuals. In Uzbek, this intent was often conveyed through contextual elaboration. For instance, 😭 in English implied sadness or exaggeration (e.g., "crying"), while in Uzbek, it paired with "yig'lab

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[4] [Часовский, Н. В., 2022, Визуализация общения в сети Интернет (на материале креолизованных мемов). page 3]

[5] [Ерпова, Д. Е., 2018, Современный арт-контент как феномен культурной коммуникации. page 3]

[6] [Baker, M., 2018, In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation. page 12]

[7] [Васильева, М. А., 2017, Репрезентация культурной идентичности в сети Интернет. page 3]

yubordim" (I burst into tears) or "achinarli" (pitiful), adding depth. Although core meanings were preserved, their integration revealed systematic variations, highlighting differences in digital styles between English and Uzbek users. In any adaptation process, changes occur due to linguistic and cultural disparities.[8] The following table categorizes the semantic roles, structural types, and cultural adaptations of a wider range of sticker emojis identified in the study:

№	Emoji	Semantic Role (English)	Structural Type (English)	Semantic Role (Uzbek)	Structural Type (Uzbek)
1	😄	Laughter/Humor	Standalone/Captioned	Laughter/Exaggeration	Captioned/Proverbial
2	😒	Sarcasm/Annoyance	Standalone/Captioned	Disdain/Disapproval	Captioned/Explanatory
3	😍	Admiration/Love	Standalone/Captioned	Affection/Enthusiasm	Captioned/Exaggerated
4	😭	Sadness/Exaggeration	Standalone/Captioned	Grief/Overreaction	Captioned/Dramatic
5	□	Thoughtfulness/Doubt	Standalone/Captioned	Curiosity/Skepticism	Captioned/Questioning
6	□	Celebration/Joy	Standalone/Captioned	Festivity/Happiness	Captioned/Cultural
7	😡	Anger/Frustration	Standalone/Captioned	Fury/Irritation	Captioned/Intense
8	🙄	Disbelief/Exasperation	Standalone/Captioned	Mockery/Boredom	Captioned/Contextual
9	□	Warmth/Support	Standalone/Captioned	Affection/Comfort	Captioned/Expressive
10	🐱	Cuteness/Playfulness	Standalone/Captioned	Endearment/Mischief	Captioned/Descriptive

This table is designed for analyzing the semantic and structural features of sticker emojis in English and Uzbek internet memes.

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[8] [Newmark, P., 1988, A Textbook of Translation. page 6]

Distribution of Semantic Roles of Sticker Emojis in English and Uzbek Memes
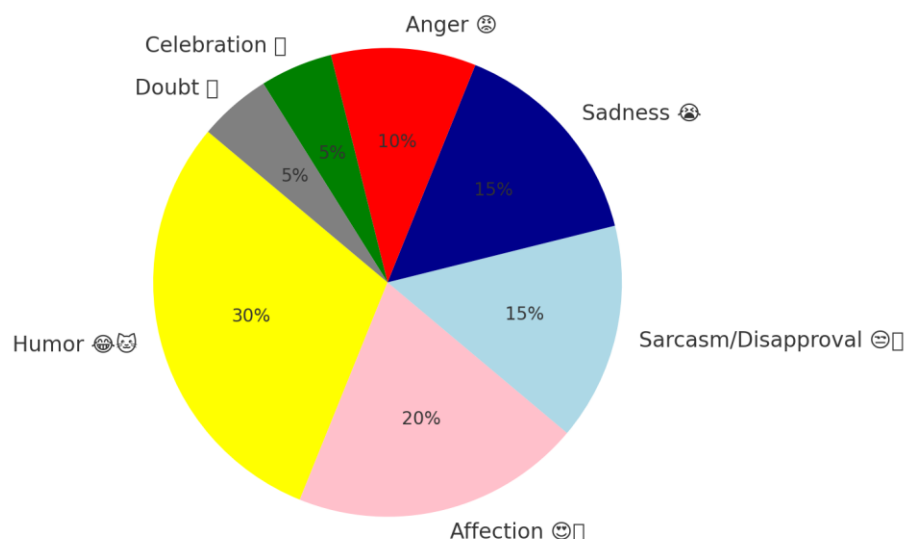
The pie chart below illustrates the distribution of semantic roles of sticker emojis across English and Uzbek memes (based on a sample of 500 stickers).

Humor (30%) - Dominated by 😄 and 😼, reflecting comedy's prevalence in both languages.

Affection (20%) - Driven by 😍 and ▢, showing emotional warmth, slightly higher in Uzbek due to elaboration.

Sarcasm/Disapproval (15%) - Led by 😒 and 🙂, prominent in both but nuanced in Uzbek with context.

Sadness (15%) - Represented by 😭, consistent across languages for dramatic effect.

Anger (10%) - Marked by 😠, expressing frustration, often intensified in Uzbek.

Celebration (5%) - Via ▢, tied to joy, culturally enriched in Uzbek.

Doubt (5%) - Via ▢, less frequent but reflective. Humor's dominance highlights sticker emojis' playful role, while affection and sarcasm reveal cultural tendencies in emotional expression.

Comparative Analysis of Structural Adaptations of Sticker Emojis
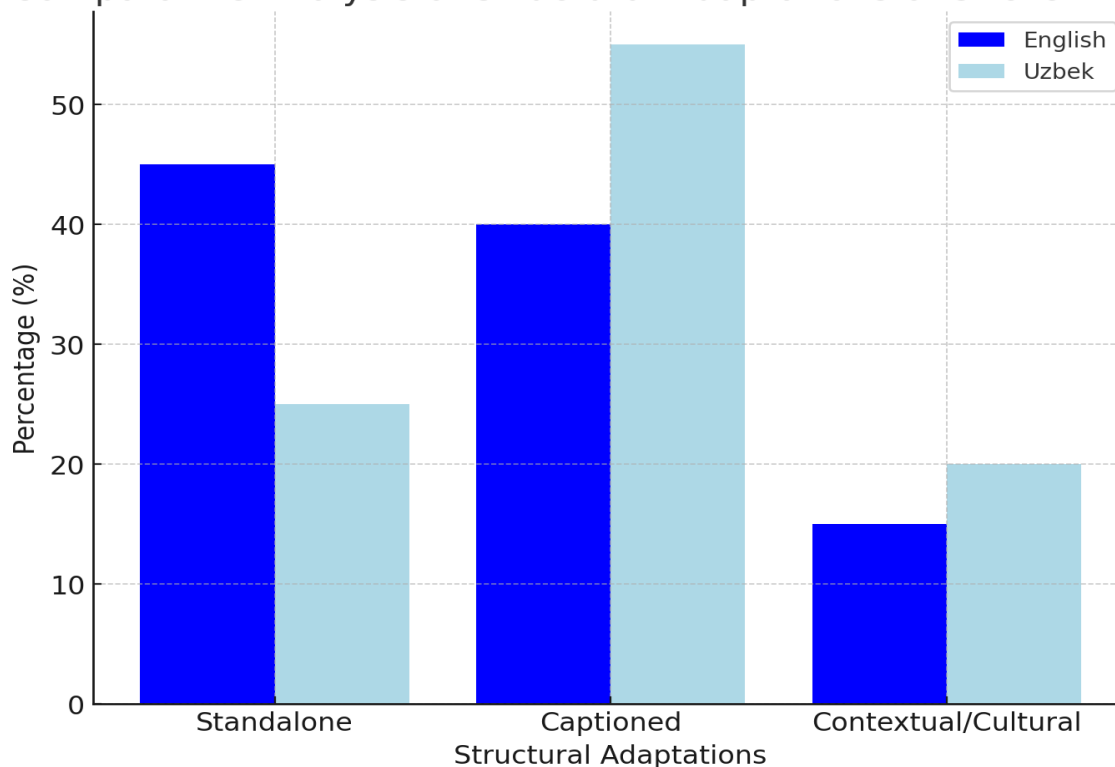
The bar chart below presents a comparative analysis of structural adaptations of sticker emojis from English to Uzbek.

Standalone (45% English, 25% Uzbek) - Example: 😊 (English: standalone; Uzbek: "kulgu"). English favors brevity, Uzbek adds text.

Captioned (40% English, 55% Uzbek) - Example: 😠 (English: "so mad"; Uzbek: "jahl chiqdi"). Uzbek captions often elaborate.

Contextual/Cultural (15% English, 20% Uzbek) - Example: ☐ (English: "party"; Uzbek: "bayram muborak"). Uzbek embeds cultural phrases. Standalone emojis (45%) are common in English for simplicity, while captioned forms (55%) dominate in Uzbek for clarity. Contextual adaptations (20%) in Uzbek emphasize cultural specificity, contrasting with English's minimalism.

Sticker emojis in English memes enhanced emotional and humorous impact through concise visuals. For example, 🙂 conveyed disbelief succinctly, but in Uzbek, "bunaqa emas" (not like that) added explanation. Adaptations maintained cultural resonance, aligning with Uzbek norms. In digital communication, literal replication is often ineffective; expressive or contextual methods preserve intent.[9]

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study examined the semantic, structural, and cultural characteristics of sticker emojis in English and Uzbek internet memes, focusing on

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[9] [Vinay, J. P., & Darbelnet, J., 1995, Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation]

examples such as 😂, 😒, 😍, 😭, ▢, ▢, 😟, ☺, ▢, and 🐱. These sticker emojis played a crucial role in shaping the expressive and humorous tone of digital communication, enhancing the emotional depth and cultural resonance of online interactions. They actively contributed to engaging users by amplifying intent and reflecting both universal and localized identities within the virtual landscape.

When sticker emojis from English memes were incorporated into Uzbek contexts, some retained their standalone universality (e.g., 😊 as laughter), while others underwent adaptations through captioned or culturally enriched phrases (e.g., ▢ with "bayram muborak"). These adaptations ensured that the emotional and pragmatic impact of the memes remained intact, aligning with the communicative norms of Uzbek users. The process involved modifications in structure and context to accommodate the linguistic and cultural systems of Uzbek, revealing notable differences in how English and Uzbek digital communities utilize visual-verbal interplay. These findings underscore the flexibility required in cross-cultural digital communication, where direct replication often gives way to expressive reinterpretation to preserve meaning.

The insights gained from this analysis hold significant value for digital linguistics, cross-cultural communication studies, and the practice of meme creation. They pave the way for future research by highlighting the need to investigate the evolving role of sticker emojis in multilingual online environments. Exploring the interaction between visual semiotics and linguistic transformation could introduce new approaches to understanding digital identity and humor. Further studies might also examine the influence of platform-specific conventions or the creative strategies of meme authors in maintaining cultural authenticity across diverse linguistic landscapes. This study thus serves as a foundational step toward a deeper appreciation of how sticker emojis bridge global and local dimensions of internet culture.

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