

FUNCTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SYMBOLS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LITERARY TEXTS

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Abstract. This article examines the functional characteristics of symbols in English and Uzbek literary texts. It analyzes their semantic, cultural, and stylistic roles, highlighting similarities and differences shaped by linguistic and cultural contexts, and their contribution to deeper textual interpretation.

Keywords: Symbolism, literary analysis, English literature, Uzbek literature, cultural meaning.

Symbolism is one of the most significant stylistic devices in literary texts, allowing authors to convey deeper meanings beyond literal expression. A symbol is generally defined as a sign, object, or image that represents a broader concept or idea. In both English and Uzbek literary traditions, symbols play a crucial role in enriching narrative depth, expressing emotions, and reflecting cultural values. The study of symbols belongs to the broader field of stylistics and semiotics. According to Crystal, language functions not only as a communication tool but also as a system of signs that carry cultural and contextual meanings [2]. In literature, symbols serve as bridges between the explicit and implicit layers of meaning. This article aims to explore the functional characteristics of symbols in English and Uzbek literary texts, focusing on their semantic, cultural, emotional, and stylistic roles. By comparing these two literary traditions, the research highlights both universal and culture-specific aspects of symbolism. Symbolism originates from the Greek word *symbolon*, meaning a sign or token. In literary studies, a symbol is an element that represents something beyond its literal meaning. As noted by Abrams, symbols often carry multiple layers of interpretation and depend on context for their full understanding [1]. Symbols can be classified into several types:

- Universal symbols – understood across cultures
- Cultural symbols – specific to a particular society
- Personal symbols – unique to an author's style

In both English and Uzbek literature, these types coexist, but their usage varies depending on cultural and historical contexts. One of the primary functions of symbols is semantic enrichment. Symbols expand the meaning of a text by adding layers of interpretation. According to Leech, literary language often relies on figurative devices, including symbolism, to achieve semantic complexity [5]. In English literature, for example, the symbol of “darkness” often represents evil, ignorance, or death. In contrast,

in Uzbek literature, darkness may also symbolize hardship or social injustice, reflecting historical experiences. Similarly, “water” in English texts frequently symbolizes life, purity, or renewal. In Uzbek literary works, water (especially rivers) can symbolize continuity, destiny, or the passage of time. Thus, while some symbolic meanings overlap, others are shaped by cultural perception.

Symbols are deeply rooted in culture, making them essential tools for expressing national identity and worldview. As emphasized by Lotman, culture itself can be viewed as a system of symbols [4]. In Uzbek literature, many symbols are closely connected to traditions, nature, and everyday life. For instance:

- Bread (non) symbolizes hospitality and sacredness
- Cotton (paxta) represents labor and national pride
- Garden (bog‘) symbolizes peace and harmony

In English literature, cultural symbols often derive from religion, mythology, and historical traditions:

- The cross symbolizes faith and sacrifice
- The rose represents love or beauty
- The crown signifies power and authority

These differences demonstrate how symbolism reflects cultural values and societal norms. From a stylistic perspective, symbols contribute to the uniqueness of an author’s language. As noted by Galperin, stylistic devices like symbolism enhance the expressiveness and originality of literary texts [3]. In English literature, symbolism is often subtle and implicit. Writers like Shakespeare and modernist authors use symbols that require interpretation. For example, in Shakespeare’s works, objects like storms or animals often symbolize internal conflict or moral struggle. In Uzbek literature, symbolism can be both implicit and explicit. Classical poets such as Alisher Navoi used symbolic imagery extensively, often drawing from nature and spiritual concepts. The stylistic use of symbols in both literatures demonstrates creativity, but their presentation differs in terms of directness and complexity.

Symbols serve as powerful tools in both English and Uzbek literary texts, performing multiple functions including semantic enrichment, cultural representation, emotional expression, and stylistic enhancement. While there are universal aspects of symbolism, many differences arise from cultural, historical, and linguistic factors. English literary symbolism tends to be more subtle and individualistic, whereas Uzbek symbolism is often more explicit and deeply rooted in cultural traditions. Despite these differences, both traditions demonstrate the importance of symbols in creating meaningful and impactful literature. Understanding the functional characteristics of symbols not only enhances literary analysis but also promotes cross-cultural awareness and appreciation. Future research may explore symbolic interpretation in modern digital literature or comparative studies across more languages.

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