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Cross-Cultural Semiotics of Oculesic Behavior: A Contrastive Linguocultural Mapping of Eye-Related Nonverbal Units in Uzbek and English Communicative Discourse

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ABSTRACT

In modern linguistics, the study of nonverbal communicative means in their linguocultural dimension is becoming an increasingly important direction of research. In particular, oculesic units – semiotic units realised through eye movements – manifest themselves in distinctive ways across different linguocultures. A linguocultural-comparative investigation of oculesic units in Uzbek and English communicative behaviour has not yet been carried out to a sufficient degree. This study aims to conduct a linguocultural comparative analysis of eye-related nonverbal units in Uzbek and English communicative discourse. The study employs comparative, contrastive, and semiotic methods of analysis. Uzbek and English literary texts, together with dictionary data, were used as the study material. The theoretical views of scholars such as R. Birdwhistell, E. Hall, A. Kendon, P. Ekman, M. Argyle, M. Knapp, G.E. Kreydlin, I.N. Kuznetsov, M. Qurbonov, and B. Ahmedov served as the scholarly foundation of the study. The analysis identified the semantic and national-cultural features, within Uzbek and English linguocultures, of such oculesic units as ko'zqismoq *(to wink),* ko'znilo'qqilmoq *(to glare),* ko'zniolaytirmoq *(bug-eyed),* g'azabbilanqaramoq *(to scowl),* ko'zsuzmoq *(to bat one's eyes),* o'qraymoq *(to goggle), and* mo'ltiramoq *(to make an eye). The findings of the study shed light on the linguocultural nature of Uzbek and English oculesic units and their place and significance in intercultural*

communication, thereby contributing to the field of linguoculturology.

Keywords: Oculesics, nonverbal communication, paralinguistic means, linguocultural analysis, visual contact, eye movements, semiotic units, intercultural comparison, communicative behaviour, discourse analysis.

INTRODUCTION

In modern linguistics, the view is increasingly gaining ground that studying language and communication within the bounds of verbal means alone is not sufficient. In the process of communication between people, an important part of information is conveyed through nonverbal means – gestures, facial expressions, bodily movements, and eye signals. In this connection, leading Western scholars such as R. Birdwhistell (1970), E. Hall (1966), A. Kendon (2004), and P. Ekman (1999) laid the foundations for the formation of nonverbal communication as an independent scholarly discipline. Among representatives of Russian linguistics, G. E. Kreydlin (2002) and I.N. Kuznetsov (2020) systematically investigated nonverbal semiotics and singled out eye movements as a distinct scholarly category. Within Uzbek linguistics, the studies of M. Qurbonov (2021), I. Aliyev (2021), and B. Ahmedov (2021) have made a worthy contribution to the development of this field.

Oculesics – the field that studies nonverbal semiotic units realised through eye movements – is a relatively new direction within linguistics. In the process of classifying nonverbal means into ten large groups, G. E. Kreydlin (2002) singled out gestures realised through the eyes as a separate category under the term "oculesics." M. Argyle (1994) investigated eye-related nonverbal means under the heading "direction of gaze" and provided scholarly grounding for the fact that human beings pay more attention to the eyes than to other parts of the body. M. Knapp (1992), for his part, analysed visual nonverbal means under the category "eye movement" and emphasised their role in revealing an interlocutor's mood and attitude. I. N. Kuznetsov (2020)

divided the degree of eye openness into five groups and systematised the purposes of visual contact into six categories. Within Uzbek linguistics, M. Qurbonov (2021) studied oculesics within a system of nonverbal communication divided into eighteen groups. B. Ahmedov (2021), meanwhile, introduced into scholarly circulation a broad inventory of eye-related nonverbal units in the Uzbek language. However, dedicated scholarly studies investigating oculesic units in Uzbek and English linguocultures in a comparative-contrastive aspect remain insufficient – and it is precisely this gap that defines the main scholarly problem addressed by the present study.

Although nonverbal means of communication have been studied from various angles within linguistics, the linguocultural features of oculesic units – in particular, the cultural similarities and differences found in Uzbek and English communicative behaviour– have not yet been sufficiently investigated. In existing scholarship, oculesics has mainly been considered within the general system of nonverbal communication, while the need to study it as an independent linguocultural category in a comparative aspect remains. In particular, the following questions remain scholarly open: a) the differentiation of the semantic features of oculesic units in Uzbek and English linguocultures; b) the universality of certain oculesic units as against the national-cultural character of others; c) the way in which the meanings expressed through eye movements are interpreted in the two cultures. Resolving these problems is of practical significance not only for theoretical linguistics but also for intercultural communication and linguoculturology.

The main purpose of the present study is to conduct a linguocultural comparative analysis of eye-related nonverbal units in Uzbek and English communicative discourse and to determine their place in intercultural communication.

To achieve this purpose, five tasks have been set: 1) to generalise and systematise existing theoretical views in the field of oculesics; 2) to identify and classify eye-related nonverbal units in Uzbek and English literary texts and dictionary materials; 3) to conduct a comparative analysis of the semantic and cultural features of oculesic units in Uzbek and English linguocultures; 4)

to distinguish and scientifically substantiate oculesic units that bear a universal character from those that bear a national-cultural character; 5) to interpret the results of the study from the standpoint of intercultural communication and linguoculturology.

The present study carries out, for the first time, a comparative analysis of oculesic nonverbal units in Uzbek and English linguocultures as an independent line of scholarly inquiry. The results of the study make it possible to distinguish the universal and national-cultural features of oculesic units and shed light, in a linguocultural aspect, on the cultural distinctiveness of Uzbek and English communicative behaviour. The findings obtained may serve as a theoretical basis in the fields of intercultural communication, linguoculturology, and nonverbal semiotics. The research materials may also be applied in such fields as applied linguistics, translation studies, and the culture of communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of nonverbal communication as an independent scholarly discipline developed rapidly in the second half of the twentieth century. The earliest systematic studies in this field are associated with the name of R. Birdwhistell (1970), who provided scholarly grounding for kinesics – communication realised through bodily movements – and demonstrated the close connection between nonverbal means and verbal communication. E. Hall (1966), for his part, investigated proxemics – communication through space and distance – and scientifically proved the distinctive character of nonverbal behaviour across different cultures. His conception of intercultural communication served as an important theoretical foundation for subsequent research. A. Kendon (2004) conducted an in-depth study of the role of gestures and eye contact in communication and systematised the communicative functions of nonverbal units. P. Ekman (1999), meanwhile, proved the universal character of facial expressions and emotions, shedding new light on the intercultural aspects of nonverbal communication. The studies of these scholars laid the groundwork for the study of nonverbal communication as an

independent communicative category and gave methodological direction to subsequent generations of researchers.

Scholarly research in the field of oculesics constitutes one of the most important branches of nonverbal communication studies. G. E. Kreydlin (2002), in his fundamental study in the field of nonverbal semiotics, singled out eye movements as a separate scholarly category – "oculesics" – and revealed the aspects of these units that shape human behaviour. This classification by the scholar served as an important theoretical basis for subsequent research in the field. M. Argyle (1994) investigated eye-related nonverbal means under the heading "direction of gaze" and scientifically substantiated the fact that more attention is paid to a person's eyes than to other parts of the body. His research demonstrated the leading role of eye contact in communication. M. Knapp (1992) analysed visual nonverbal means as the category "eye movement" and emphasised their communicative role in revealing an interlocutor's mood, attitude, and intention. I. N. Kuznetsov (2020), for his part, divided the degree of eye openness into five groups and systematised the purposes of visual contact into six categories, enriching the scholarly description of the functions performed by the eyes as a nonverbal means in communication.

Although the study of nonverbal means of communication within Uzbek linguistics began to take shape relatively recently, research in this field is developing rapidly. I. Aliyev, presenting four large classifications of nonverbal means in Uzbek communication, provided scholarly grounding for eye contact as part of the "visual means of communication". His research laid the initial scholarly groundwork for the systematic study of Uzbek nonverbal communication. M. Qurbonov (2021), dividing nonverbal communication into eighteen groups, classified oculesic units under the term "oculesics" and shed light on the distinctive features of eye movements in Uzbek communicative behaviour. This classification by the scholar gave impetus to the study of oculesics as an independent scholarly category within Uzbek linguistics. B. Ahmedov (2021) introduced into scholarly circulation a broad inventory of eye-related nonverbal units in the Uzbek language and investigated their genderological and

pragmatic features. In his work, the semantic and communicative functions of such oculesic units as *ko'zqismoq*, *ko'znilo'qqilmoq*, *ko'zniolaytirmoq*, *ko'zsuzmoq*, and *mo'ltiramoq* in Uzbek communication were scientifically described. Nevertheless, dedicated scholarly studies investigating oculesic units in Uzbek and English linguocultures in a comparative-contrastive aspect have still not been sufficiently developed.

The analysis of the studies cited above shows that nonverbal means of communication, and oculesic units in particular, have been studied from various angles within linguistics. Western scholars such as Birdwhistell (1970), Hall (1966), Kendon (2004), and Ekman (1999) created the general theoretical foundations of nonverbal communication, while Kreydlin (2002), Argyle (1994), Knapp (1992), and Kuznetsov (2020) strengthened the scholarly foundations of oculesics. Within Uzbek linguistics, Aliyev, Qurbonov (2021), and Ahmedov (2021) have made a worthy contribution to this field.

However, an analysis of existing studies reveals a number of important scholarly gaps. First, the linguocultural features of oculesic units – that is, how they are interpreted in different cultures and what function they perform in communication – have not been sufficiently studied. Second, dedicated scholarly studies investigating oculesic units in Uzbek and English linguocultures in a comparative-contrastive aspect are insufficient. Third, it has not been scientifically established which oculesic units are universal and which bear a national-cultural character. These scholarly gaps define the main direction of the present study and substantiate the necessity of conducting a linguocultural and semiotic comparative analysis of eye-related nonverbal units in Uzbek and English communicative discourse.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on a qualitative research approach and aims to conduct a linguocultural and semiotic comparative analysis of eye-related nonverbal units in Uzbek and English communicative discourse. A variety of methods were employed in the study. The comparative-contrastive method of analysis

served to identify similar and differing aspects of oculesic units in Uzbek and English linguocultures (Kendon 2004; Kreydlin 2002). The semiotic method of analysis made it possible to study the sign–meaning relationships of nonverbal units realised through eye movements (Birdwhistell 1970). The contextual method of analysis, in turn, was directed at determining how oculesic units are applied in specific communicative situations. In addition, the descriptive-analytical method was used to explain the semantic and cultural features of oculesic units.

Samples of Uzbek and English literary works served as the material of the study. The Uzbek literary texts include the works of O'. Hoshimov, U. Hamdam, A. Qodiriy, S. Ahmad, O. Yoqubov, and E. Raimov. As English literary texts, R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, G. Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, and A. Becket's *National Review* were used. In addition, dictionary and corpus sources such as the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, the *Cambridge English Corpus*, and the *U. S. Dictionary* were drawn upon as supplementary material.

In the course of the analysis, ten principal oculesic units were identified: *ko'zqismoq*, *ko'znilo'qqilmoq*, *ko'zniolaytirmoq*, *g'azabbilanqaramoq*, *ko'zlariola-kulabo'lmoq*, *o'qraymoq*, *ko'zsuzmoq*, *mo'ltiramoq*, *ko'znipirpiratmoq*, and *ko'zgatikboqmoq* (Kuznetsov 2020; Ahmedov 2021). Each unit was analysed first in Uzbek communicative behaviour and then in English communicative behaviour, and their semantic, cultural, and communicative features were studied comparatively. As a result of the analysis, oculesic units were divided into those bearing a universal character and those bearing a national-cultural character (Ekman 1999; Qurbonov 2021).

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Within the scope of the study, the oculesic units identified from Uzbek and English communicative discourse are classified into three groups according to their semantic and cultural features. The first group comprises negative emotional oculesic units. This group includes eye movements expressing anger, hatred, threat, and disrespect. Units such as *ko'znilo'qqilmoq*, *ko'zniolaytirmoq*,

g'azabbilanqaramoq, *o'qraymoq*, and *ko'zlarnichaqchaytirmoq* mainly express a negative emotional state in both Uzbek and English communication. However, the cultural acceptability of these units differs considerably between the two linguocultures (Ekman 1999). The second group comprises positive emotional oculesic units. This group includes eye movements expressing attention-seeking, sincerity, sympathy, and interest. Units such as *ko'zqismoq*, *ko'zsuzmoq*, and *ko'zgatikboqmoq* bring about a positive attitude in the communicative process. Certain units, such as ko'zsuzmoq, possess a gender-specific character typical mainly of women's communication (Ahmedov 2021). The third group comprises neutral-universal oculesic units. This group includes eye movements expressing astonishment, fear, hope, and absent-mindedness. Units such as *mo'ltiramoq*, *ko'zlariola-kulabo'lmoq*, and *ko'znipirpiratmoq* are used with similar meanings in Uzbek and English linguocultures and bear a universal character (Ekman 1999; Kreydlin 2002).

Ko'zqismoq (to wink)

The oculesic unit *ko'zqismoq* (to wink) is one of the widely used nonverbal units in Uzbek and English communicative behaviour. This action is performed by closing and opening a single eye and expresses various meanings depending on the speech situation (Kuznetsov 2020). In Uzbek communication, this oculesic unit hints at the existence of a mutual, secretive atmosphere between interlocutors. In English communication, meanwhile, this nonverbal unit conveys the meanings of joking, signalling someone to stop talking, reaching an agreement, and inviting disregard (Argyle 1994).

Excerpt from Uzbek communicative context:

> *Mullajonamakiqix-qixlabkulib, keyinmengaqarab, ko'zlariniqisdilar.* (Raimov 2005)

Excerpt from English communicative context:

> She winked mischievously at him, hinting at a secret they shared, and they both burst into laughter, knowing they were in on something special. (Becket 2022)

In the examples cited, the oculesic unit ko'zqismoq expressed a secretive atmosphere and mutual understanding between interlocutors in both linguocultures. The typological character of this unit indicates that it belongs among the universal oculesic units (Ekman 1999). However, while in Uzbek communication this gesture is more characteristic of older men, no such gender restriction is observed in English communication (Ahmedov 2021).

Ko'znilo'qqilmoq (to glare)

The oculesic unit *ko'znilo'qqilmoq* (to glare) is one of the widely used units in Uzbek nonverbal communication bearing a distinctive cultural character. This action is performed by opening the eyes wide and looking directly and fixedly into the interlocutor's eyes (Kuznetsov 2020). In Uzbek communication, this oculesic unit mainly expresses anger, threat, and rudeness, giving rise to a negative emotional state in the communicative process. In English communication, however, this nonverbal unit is rarely used, since it is evaluated as a sign of extreme disrespect and aggressiveness toward the interlocutor (Argyle 1994).

Excerpt from Uzbek communicative context:

> *Rashid birsiltabuni yon tomondagiso'rigao'tqazdi-da, ko'zigako' zinilo'qqilibdedi: – Erkin aka, Xudoxohlasa, ertagayoqto'layman. Qarzimniyam, singanstolniyam.* (Hamdam 2015)

Excerpt from English communicative context:

> He glared at me for a few seconds and nodded, the fierce expression still on his face. It made me so sad. (*Cambridge English Corpus*)

In the examples cited, the oculesic unit ko'znilo'qqilmoq expressed a negative emotional state in both linguocultures. However, the linguocultural analysis shows that in Uzbek communication, particularly among men, this unit is accepted as a relatively widely used, ordinary expression. In English communication, by contrast, this gesture is evaluated as an extremely rude and socially unacceptable act, considered

contrary to communicative culture (Hall 1966; Ekman 1999). In this respect, the oculesic unit *ko'znilo'qqilmoq* belongs among the units bearing a national-cultural character.

Ko'zniolaytirmoq (bug-eyed)

The oculesic unit *ko'zniolaytirmoq* (bug-eyed) is one of the nonverbal units found in both Uzbek and English communicative behaviour, performed by opening both eyes wide and fixing them on a single point (Kuznetsov 2020). This action is more characteristic of people who are seeking information, angered, astonished, or frightened, and expresses similar emotional states in Uzbek and English communication (Kreydlin 2002).

Excerpt from Uzbek communicative context:

> *– Gapir! – deditahdidbilan. – To'yqayerdabo'lyapti? – Barzangik o'ziniolaytiribso'kindi. – Shunaqami? – Rustam qo'linitag'inbo'g 'zigataqashibilanbarzangiyuvoshtortibqoldi.* (Hoshimov 2010)

Excerpt from English communicative context:

> And each of them looked bug-eyed from drugs or some form of shock. (Stirling, "The future war")

In the examples cited, the oculesic unit *ko'zniolaytirmoq* was used to express anger and threat in Uzbek communication, while in English communication it served to express astonishment and fear. The linguocultural analysis shows that, although this oculesic unit is semantically partly similar in Uzbek and English linguocultures, its scope of use and cultural interpretation differ from one another. At the same time, since the oculesic unit *ko'zniolaytirmoq* bears an international character and may be used by any person when angered, frightened, or astonished, this allows it to be included among the universal oculesic units (Ekman 1999; Hall 1966).

G'azabbilanqaramoq (to scowl)

The oculesic unit *g'azabbilanqaramoq* (to scowl) is one of the widely used nonverbal units in Uzbek and English

communicative behaviour. This action is performed by narrowing the eyes slightly and looking directly at the object, and it conveys a negative-emotional meaning in various languages (Kuznetsov 2020). This oculesic unit is widely used in Uzbek communication to express anger, hatred, and a negative attitude. In English communication, the unit to scowl likewise gives rise to the same kind of negative emotional state (Argyle 1994).

Excerpt from Uzbek communicative context:

> *Bu gap Azizagashunchalikta'sirqilishinibilmaganekan. To'satdan Azizaningrangibo'zaribketdi. Titroqqo'llaribilansumkasiniyuliboldida, siltanibeshikoldigabordi. G'azabbilanburilibqaradi. Erkakemish! Bu kuningdano'lganingyaxshi! U eshiknishuqadarqar sillatibyopdiki, derazalarzirillabketdi.* (Hoshimov 2013)

Excerpt from English communicative context:

> He scowled so angrily at Gloin that the dwarf huddled back in his chair; and when Bilbo tried to open his mouth to ask a question, he turned and frowned at him and stuck out his bushy eyebrows, till Bilbo shut his mouth tight with a snap. (Tolkien 1937)

In the examples cited, the oculesic unit *g'azabbilanqaramoq* was used in both linguocultures as a means of expressing a negative emotional state – anger and resentment. In the Uzbek text, Aziza made use of this oculesic unit to display her hatred and anger toward her interlocutor, while in the English text it performed exactly the same function. The linguocultural analysis shows that the oculesic unit *g'azabbilanqaramoq* expresses similar meanings in both linguocultures at the semantic level and bears a universal character (Ekman 1999). However, in Uzbek communication, the fact that this unit is used compositionally together with accompanying nonverbal actions – snatching up one's bag, storming off, slamming the door – defines its distinctive character within Uzbek linguoculture (Kreydlin 2002; Ahmedov 2021).

Ko'zlariola-kulabo'lmoq (to roll one's eyes)

The oculesic unit *ko'zlariola-kulabo'lmoq* (to roll one's eyes) is one of the nonverbal units possessing a distinctive semantic character in Uzbek and English communicative behaviour. This action is performed through the rolling of the eyes in different directions or their assuming an odd expression (Kuznetsov 2020). This oculesic unit arises when a person is lying, is astonished at something, or feels self-doubt or fear. In Uzbek communication this unit mainly expresses astonishment and dread, whereas in English communication it may also express disdain, disbelief, and irony (Argyle 1994; Hall 1966).

Excerpt from Uzbek communicative context:

> *Qanchaso'rayapsizo'zi? – dallolonamninggapinibo'ldi. – Beshyuz. – Nima? – dalloldahshatli gap eshitgandekko'ziniola-kulaqildi. – Beshyuzso'mgagovmishsigirberadi-ku! Hozirbozorarzon. Qishkelyapti, yanga! Qishkelyapti! Yemtashvishibor, pichantashvishi bor.* (Hoshimov 2012)

Excerpt from English communicative context:

> Mok, the former second-in-command of the Yellow Neck daofei, goggled his eyes in surprise. (Ch. Holub, "EW")

In the examples cited, the oculesic unit *ko'zlariola-kulabo'lmoq* was used in both linguocultures as a means of expressing astonishment and dread. In the Uzbek text, this oculesic unit depicted the broker's state of astonishment at the high price, while in the English text it likewise served to show a communicative participant's astonishment. The linguocultural analysis shows that this oculesic unit is used in Uzbek linguoculture mainly with the meanings of astonishment and dread. In English communication, the unit to roll one's eyes additionally encompasses such supplementary semantic components as irony, disdain, and disbelief (Ekman 1999; Kreydlin 2002). In this respect, the oculesic unit *ko'zlariola-kulabo'lmoq* is characterised as a unit bearing a partly universal,

partly national-cultural character in Uzbek and English linguocultures.

O'qraymoq (to goggle)

The oculesic unit *o'qraymoq* (to goggle) is one of the widely used nonverbal units in Uzbek communicative behaviour, considered synonymous with such verbal units as *jahlbilanqaramoq*, *chaqchaymoq*, and *xo'mraymoq* (Kuznetsov 2020). This action is performed by opening the eyes wide and staring fixedly at the interlocutor, to the point where the eyes seem almost to leave their sockets, and in Uzbek communication it mainly expresses anger, irritation, and displeasure. In English communication, the unit to goggle is used more to express astonishment and a reaction to an unexpected situation (Argyle 1994).

Excerpt from Uzbek communicative context:

> *Nizomjonsherdekbo'kirib, o'rnidanturibketdi. U qalt-qalttitrar, ko'zlariqinidanchiqay deb, opasigao'qrayibqararedi.* (Ahmad 1994)

Excerpt from English communicative context:

> He goggled at his colleague after they made an insensitive comment. (*Merriam Webster Dictionary*)

In the examples cited, the oculesic unit *o'qraymoq* expressed semantically differing meanings in the two linguocultures. In the Uzbek text, Nizomjon made use of this oculesic unit to display his anger and irritation toward his sister. In the English text, the unit to goggle expressed a combined state of astonishment and displeasure at the interlocutor's inappropriate remark. The linguocultural analysis shows that the oculesic unit *o'qraymoq* is used in Uzbek linguoculture mainly with the meanings of anger and irritation, while in English linguoculture it serves to express astonishment and reaction to an unexpected situation (Hall 1966; Ekman 1999). This difference shows that this oculesic unit has a differing semantic orientation in the two cultures, allowing it to be included among the units bearing a national-cultural character (Kreydlin 2002; Ahmedov 2021).

Ko'zsuzmoq (to bat eyes)

The oculesic unit *ko'zsuzmoq* (to bat one's eyes) is one of the nonverbal units in Uzbek and English communicative behaviour that mainly arises in women's behaviour. This action is performed by half-closing the eyes and looking coquettishly, with the aim of attracting someone's attention (Kuznetsov 2020). In Uzbek communication, this oculesic unit expresses the meanings of looking coquettishly with half-closed eyes and drawing others' attention to oneself. In English and Russian communication, too, this gesture is used to attract others' attention, though it occurs quite rarely in the communicative process (Argyle 1994).

Excerpt from Uzbek communicative context:

> *Albatta, – ZahrosuzikkoʻzlariniYusufgaqarab, sekin, biroqdona-donaqilibdedi: – Birpaytlarkoʻpboʻlmasa-da, harholdaoydabir-ikkikelibturardingiz.* (Hamdam 2015)

Excerpt from English communicative context:

> She looked up at him and batted her eyes, clearly trying to get his attention. (*U.S. Dictionary*)

In the examples cited, the oculesic unit *ko'zsuzmoq* was used in both linguocultures with the meaning of drawing the interlocutor's attention to oneself. In the Uzbek text, Zahro's batting of her eyes expressed her wish to draw Yusuf's attention to herself, and the English text envisaged exactly the same communicative purpose. The linguocultural analysis shows that the oculesic unit *ko'zsuzmoq* expresses semantically similar meanings in the two linguocultures and possesses a gender-specific character mainly typical of women's communication (Ahmedov 2021). However, while this unit is used relatively widely in Uzbek communication, it occurs quite rarely in English communication and often bears a joking or artificial character (Hall 1966; Ekman 1999). In this respect, the oculesic unit *ko'zsuzmoq* is characterised as a unit bearing a partly universal, partly national-cultural character.

Mo'ltiramoq (to make an eye)

The oculesic unit mo'ltiramoq (to make an eye) is one of the nonverbal units possessing a distinctive semantic character in Uzbek communicative behaviour. This action is performed through a moist, mournful, pained gaze and is considered synonymous with such verbal units as *ko'znijavdiratmoq* and *ma'yusboqmoq* (Kuznetsov 2020). This oculesic unit has two distinct semantic orientations in Uzbek communication: first, it expresses the meaning of looking with hope and longing; second, it expresses the meaning of looking with inattentiveness and absent-mindedness (Ahmedov 2021). In English communication, the unit to make an eye does not possess as broad a semantic range as in Uzbek and is used mainly with the meaning of looking beseechingly, in supplication.

Excerpt from Uzbek communicative context:

> *Oltinoyqayrilibqaradi, quralayko'zlariumidbilan, bolalarchailinj bilanmo'ltiradi.* (Yoqubov 1994)

Excerpt from English communicative context:

> She made eyes at him across the room, her gaze soft and pleading, hoping he would understand what she could not say in words. (U.S. Dictionary)

In the examples cited, the oculesic unit *mo'ltiramoq* performed differing semantic functions in the two linguocultures. In the Uzbek text, Oltinoy's look of hope and longing was expressed through this oculesic unit, whereas in the English text the unit to make an eye was used with the meaning of looking beseechingly, in supplication. The linguocultural analysis shows that the oculesic unit *mo'ltiramoq* is a semantically rich, polysemous unit within Uzbek linguoculture (Kreydlin 2002). In English communication, meanwhile, no full semantic equivalent of this unit exists – a fact that shows this oculesic unit possesses a national-specific character peculiar to Uzbek linguoculture (Hall 1966; Kendon 2004). In this respect, *mo'ltiramoq* belongs among the oculesic units bearing a national-cultural character.

Ko'znipirpiratmoq (to blink)

The oculesic unit *ko'znipirpiratmoq* (to blink) is one of the widely used nonverbal units in Uzbek and English communicative behaviour. This action is performed by rapidly closing and opening the eyes, expresses an emotional state, and manifests itself more when a person is nervous or in a state of fear (Kuznetsov 2020). In Uzbek communication, this oculesic unit is used mainly to express fear, nervousness, and agitation. In English communication, women also make use of this action to draw those around them to attend to themselves (Argyle 1994).

Excerpt from Uzbek communicative context:

> *ZuhraOqsoqolningvajohatidanqo'rqibto'xtovsizko'zinipirpiratibocharedi.* (Hoshimov 2011)

Excerpt from English communicative context:

> He was delicate, thin, with a curiosity that unnerved the adults, but unlike the inquisitive and sometimes clairvoyant look that the colonel had at his age, his look was blinking and somewhat distracted. (Marquez 1967)

In the examples cited, the oculesic unit *ko'znipirpiratmoq* was used in both linguocultures as a means of expressing an emotional state. In the Uzbek text, Zuhra's blinking out of fear at the Elder's menacing appearance expressed the communicative participant's state of fear and agitation, while in the English text this unit likewise served to express the communicative participant's nervous state and fear of something. The linguocultural analysis shows that the oculesic unit *ko'znipirpiratmoq* is used in Uzbek linguoculture mainly to express fear and nervousness, while in English linguoculture, particularly in women's communication, it also performs the function of attracting attention (Hall 1966; Ekman 1999). Furthermore, in English communication, blinking is also interpreted as a nonverbal sign of a person who is lying (Knapp, 1992). In this respect, this oculesic unit is characterised, in Uzbek and English linguocultures, as a unit bearing a partly universal,

partly national-cultural character (Kreydlin 2002; Ahmedov 2021).

In order to summarise, in comparative form, the semantic and cultural features of the oculesic units analysed above in Uzbek and English linguocultures, a table was compiled (Table 1).

Table 1. *Linguocultural comparative analysis of oculesic units in Uzbek and English communicative discourse*

Oculesicunit	**English equivalent**	**Meaning in Uzbek communication**	**Meaning in English communication**	**Cultural feature**
Ko'zqismoq	To wink	Keeping a secret, agreement, joking	Joking, agreement, showing disregard	Universal
Ko'znilo'qqilmoq	To glare	Anger, threat	Disrespect, aggressiveness	National-cultural
Ko'zniolaytirmoq	Bug-eyed	Anger, astonishment, fear	Astonishment, fear	Universal
G'azabbilanqaramoq	To scowl	Anger, hatred	Anger, resentment	Universal
Ko'zlariola-kulabo'lmoq	To roll one's eyes	Astonishment, dread	Astonishment, irony, disdain	Partly universal
O'qraymoq	To goggle	Anger, irritation	Astonishment, displeasure	National-cultural
Ko'zgatikboqmoq	To stare	Courage, honesty	Discomfort, aggressiveness	National-cultural
Ko'zsuzmoq	To bat eyes	Attracting attention, coquetry	Attracting attention	Partly universal
Mo'ltiramoq	To make an eye	Hope, longing, absent-mindedness	Looking beseechingly	National-cultural
Ko'znipirpiratmoq	To blink	Fear, nervousness	Fear, attracting attention	Partly universal

The table reflects the English equivalent, the meanings in the two linguocultures, and the cultural feature of each oculesic unit (Kreydlin 2002; Ekman 1999).

The distribution, by semantic group, of the analysed oculesic units in Uzbek and English communication is reflected in the

figure (Figure 1). This diagram shows the difference between the two linguocultures in terms of the emotional orientation of oculesic units.

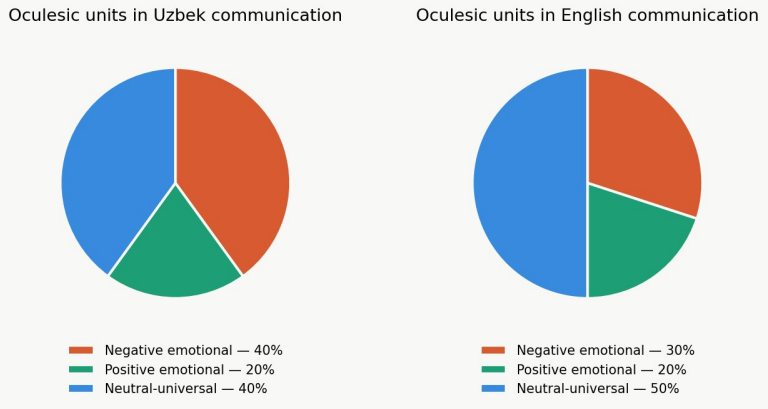

Figure 1. *Distribution of oculesic units by semantic group in Uzbek and English communication*

As Figure 1 shows, negative emotional oculesic units constitute 40% of Uzbek communication, a higher figure than in English communication (30%). This confirms the relatively wide use, in Uzbek communicative behaviour, of eye movements expressing anger, threat, and displeasure (Ahmedov 2021; Ekman 1999). In English communication, meanwhile, neutral-universal oculesic units constitute 50%, exceeding the corresponding figure for Uzbek communication (40%). This shows that, in English linguoculture, eye movements are used in a manner that is more situation-dependent and culturally neutral (Hall, 1966; Argyle, 1994). Positive emotional oculesic units, meanwhile, are equal in both linguocultures – 20% – confirming that units of this category bear a partly universal character (Ekman 1999).

DISCUSSION

A comparative analysis of the results of the study with existing scholarly literature makes it possible to draw a number of important conclusions. The conception of the universal character

of emotions put forward by P. Ekman (1999) was partly confirmed within the scope of the present study. In particular, the oculesic units *g'azabbilanqaramoq* and *ko'zniolaytirmoq* expressed similar emotional meanings in both linguocultures, thereby lending support to Ekman's theory. E. Hall's (1966) theory of intercultural communication likewise found confirmation in the results of the study. In particular, the fact that the oculesic unit *ko'zgatikboqmoq* is accepted in Uzbek communication as a positive sign – of courage and honesty – whereas in English communication it is interpreted as a negative sign – of discomfort and aggressiveness – clearly manifests the fundamental difference, emphasised by Hall, in the communicative behaviour of Eastern and Western cultures. The classification of oculesics proposed by G. E. Kreydlin (2002) was likewise reflected in the results of the study: studying eye movements as an independent semiotic category made it possible to identify the distinctive features of oculesic units in Uzbek and English linguocultures. M. Argyle's (1994) conclusions concerning the leading role of eye contact in communication also coincided with the results of our study: in both linguocultures it was confirmed that eye movements constitute an inseparable and meaningful part of communication (Knapp 1992; Ahmedov 2021).

According to the results of the study, of the ten oculesic units analysed, three were found to bear a universal character, three a partly universal character, and four a national-cultural character. This ratio shows that oculesic units in Uzbek and English linguocultures differ considerably in cultural terms. The units bearing a universal character – *ko'zniolaytirmoq*, *g'azabbilanqaramoq*, and *ko'zqismoq* – were found to have a similar semantic orientation in both linguocultures. This fact shows that these oculesic units possess a biological and evolutionary basis, thereby lending support to P. Ekman's (1999) conception of the universality of emotions. However, the fact that even universal units differ partly, between the two linguocultures, in their scope of use and cultural interpretation was one of the unexpected findings of the study.

The units bearing a national-cultural character – *ko'znilo'qqilmoq*, *o'qraymoq*, *ko'zgatikboqmoq*, and *mo'ltiramoq* – revealed the sharpest divergences between the two linguocultures. In particular, the oculesic unit *mo'ltiramoq* stood out as a unit specific to Uzbek linguoculture– the absence, in English communication, of a full semantic equivalent for it shows the distinctiveness of the Uzbek oculesic system (Ahmedov 2021; Kreydlin 2002). The unit *ko'zgatikboqmoq*, meanwhile, proved to be one of the most important findings of the study. The fact that this unit carries diametrically opposed cultural interpretations in Uzbek and English linguocultures shows that it may give rise to misunderstandings in intercultural communication (Hall 1966; Kendon 2004).

The present study has contributed a number of important scholarly innovations to the theory of oculesics. First, the study, for the first time, examined oculesic units within Uzbek linguistics as an independent linguocultural category in a comparative aspect, thereby filling a scholarly gap in this field. Whereas in existing studies (Kreydlin 2002; Argyle, 1994; Knapp 1992) oculesics has mainly been considered within the general system of nonverbal communication, the present study has scientifically substantiated the necessity of analyzing oculesic units separately as a linguocultural category. The study has likewise proposed a new classificatory model dividing oculesic units into universal, partly universal, and national-cultural types. This classificatory model may in future serve as a methodological basis for studying the oculesic systems of other languages and cultures as well (Ekman 1999; Birdwhistell 1970). In addition, the study has introduced into scholarly circulation the distinctive features of the Uzbek oculesic system – in particular, the existence of national-specific units such as mo'ltiramoq. This fact shows that the nonverbal communication system of Uzbek linguoculture possesses distinctive semiotic categories that differ fundamentally from those of Western linguocultures (Ahmedov 2021; Qurbonov 2021).

CONCLUSION

The present study, having conducted a linguocultural and semiotic comparative analysis of eye-related nonverbal units in Uzbek and English communicative discourse, has made it possible to draw a number of important scholarly conclusions.

First, the oculesic units analysed were divided, according to their semantic and cultural features, into three groups – units bearing a universal, a partly universal, and a national-cultural character. *Ko'zniolaytirmoq*, *g'azabbilanqaramoq*, and *ko'zqismoq* were found to bear a universal character, possessing a similar semantic orientation in both linguocultures (Ekman 1999).

Second, oculesic units such as *ko'znilo'qqilmoq*, *o'qraymoq*, *ko'zgatikboqmoq*, and *mo'ltiramoq* bear a national-cultural character and revealed the sharpest divergences between the two linguocultures. In particular, the fact that the unit *ko'zgatikboqmoq* is accepted in Uzbek communication as a positive sign – of courage and honesty – while being interpreted in English communication as a negative sign – of discomfort and aggressiveness – showed that this may give rise to misunderstandings in intercultural communication (Hall 1966; Kendon 2004).

Third, the oculesic unit *mo'ltiramoq* stood out as a unit specific to Uzbek linguoculture – the absence, in English communication, of a full semantic equivalent for it shows the distinctiveness of the Uzbek oculesic system (Ahmedov 2021; Qurbonov 2021).

Fourth, the results of the study showed that negative emotional oculesic units in Uzbek communication (40%) exhibit a higher figure than in English communication (30%), while in English communication neutral-universal units (50%) predominate. This clearly expresses the distinctive cultural features of communicative behaviour in the two linguocultures (Argyle 1994; Kreydlin 2002).

The results of the study may serve as a theoretical basis in the fields of intercultural communication, linguoculturology, and nonverbal semiotics, and may also be applied in such fields as

applied linguistics, translation studies, and the culture of communication. A comparative study of oculesic units with other Turkic and Indo-European languages, as well as the conduct of experimental research based on live communication and video materials, is identified as a promising direction for future research (Birdwhistell 1970; Knapp 1992).

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