

## ARTICLE

# Individual Happiness and Collective Justice: A Linguocultural Comparison of Western and Uzbek Fairy Tales

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## ABSTRACT

Fairy tales have historically reflected human morality and cultural heritage, conveying ethical teachings through evocative language and symbolic imagery. Among the most significant components of these narratives are moral lexemes, expressions that encapsulate values, such as benevolence, avarice, forbearance, and jealousy. This study examines the expression and interpretation of lexemes in the English tale *Cinderella* and the Uzbek tale *Zumrad and Kimmat* (Zumrad and Kimmat), both of which center on young female protagonists whose virtues are tested through adversity. The objective of the research is to examine the distribution, contextualization, and semantic significance of positive and negative moral lexemes in each narrative, as well as their reflection of the cultural values inherent in Western European and Uzbek traditions. The research uses a linguocultural and semiotic methodology alongside narrative analysis, emphasizing the significance of moral contrast in character development and plot progression. The results reveal both universal values, such as compassion and patience, as well as culturally specific elements such as the emphasis on forgiveness in *Cinderella* and the theme of retributive justice in *Zumrad and Kimmat*. The analysis is limited to the specific textual versions cited in the Methodology,

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which frames the scope and reproducibility of our findings. The study enhances comprehension of the relationship among language, culture, and morality in children's literature.

**Keywords:** Moral Lexemes; Linguocultural Analysis; Fairy Tales; Sustainable Development Goals; Intercultural Competence; Comparative Literature; Folklore

## 1. Introduction

Fairy tales have historically played a vital part in the moral and cultural education of societies, functioning as both sources of amusement and potent means for conveying ethical rules, social values, and cultural identity. Their storylines, typically simple in structure but deep in significance, represent archetypal conflicts between good and evil, humility and pride, as well as generosity and greed. Fairy tales present young audiences with exemplars of virtuous behavior while cautioning against destructive or immoral actions through these contrasts. Zipes (2013) posits that fairy tales should be regarded as cultural artefacts that include social practices, moral norms, and ideological frameworks of the groups that create and disseminate them<sup>[1]</sup>. They are not fixed narratives but dynamic cultural works that have been transformed over the ages to mirror evolving social structures and moral standards. Likewise, Warner (2015) underscores the historical and cultural roles of fairy tales, highlighting their capacity to safeguard collective memory and offer symbolic resolutions to universal human challenges<sup>[2]</sup>. She contends that fairy tales are infused with cultural concerns and aspirations, serving as instruments for comprehending the value systems of specific communities. Tatar (1999) shows that fairy tales serve as moral compendiums for youngsters, frequently imparting specific lessons on obedience, kindness, and perseverance. The ethical framework of these narratives is meticulously designed to emphasize cultural norms and to strengthen communal values<sup>[3]</sup>. Fairy tales convey morality through narrative rather than abstract instruction, embedding ethical contemplation in memorable characters and scenarios. Thus, fairy tales manifest as linguocultural texts in which language and morals are interwoven. Their moral lexicons, frequently reiterated and ritualized in the narratives, mould ethical conceptions and affect the worldview of their listeners. This dual function, acting as both entertainment and cultural education, elucidates their enduring presence throughout societies and their significance for

language and cultural studies.

The symbolic aspect of fairy tales is essential in forming their moral vocabulary and cultural significance. Objects in narratives frequently attain meanings that transcend their physical existence, serving as semiotic indicators that direct readers towards interpretations of moral ideals. In *Cinderella*, the glass slipper serves as perhaps the most emblematic symbol. Its delicate and translucent nature implies both susceptibility and innocence. The slipper symbolizes the distinctiveness of *Cinderella*'s virtue and the indelible connection between her moral identity and her ultimate fate. The fragility of glass emphasizes that virtue, however delicate, retains an inherent clarity that is inimitable. The slipper serves as a cultural symbol of personal recognition and societal advancement, embodying a Western focus on individual identity and ascent through virtue and grace. In *Zumrad and Kimmat*, the red and white chests establish a contrasting semiotic framework. The crimson chest, bestowed upon *Zumrad*, harbors riches and blessings, serving as a recompense for benevolence, obedience, and forbearance. The white chest, brought home by *Qimmat*, harbors devastation manifested as serpents and creatures, representing the repercussions of hubris, sloth, and avarice. Unlike the slipper, which focuses on recognition and union, the chests emphasize moral retribution and collective justice, expressing an Uzbek cultural orientation toward community harmony and the inevitability of divine justice. Through these symbolic objects, the tales highlight different moral lexemes while also revealing cultural priorities. The glass slipper encodes ideals of purity and personal destiny, whereas the contrasting chests embody a moral system rooted in reward and punishment. Together, these semiotic layers demonstrate how universal moral themes acquire culturally specific meanings in the language of fairy tales.

The comparative study of *Cinderella* and *Zumrad and Kimmat* holds particular importance because these tales belong to different traditions yet share broad moral patterns. *Cinderella* reflects the Western European worldview, where

moral values such as kindness, humility, and forgiveness are elevated through the motif of transformation and social mobility. In contrast, *Zumrad and Kimmat* encapsulates Uzbek cultural values in which patience, respect for elders, and moral retribution shape the plot. When examined collectively, the two narratives facilitate an exploration of both universal human ethics and culturally distinct moral teachings. Aripova (2023) asserts that translation and cross-cultural analysis of narratives yield insights into the manner in which linguistic structures convey cultural significances<sup>[4]</sup>. She observes that although the issues are universal, the selection of diction, metaphors, and cultural allusions influences the narrative's moral structure. This viewpoint is pertinent to a comparison of *Cinderella* and *Zumrad and Kimmat*, wherein moral lexemes like kindness, envy, avarice, and humility are manifested through culturally specific linguistic structures. Dosbaeva (2020) underscores the importance of linguocultural studies in connecting Uzbek and English literary traditions<sup>[5]</sup>. She contends that examining translation and contrastive literary elements reveals cultural goals embedded in language. In this sense, comparing *Cinderella* with *Zumrad and Kimmat* reveals not only how both tales use moral lexemes to guide ethical understanding but also how cultural contexts define the outcomes of virtue and vice. This study enhances the comprehension of universal and particular aspects of moral expression by juxtaposing these narratives, demonstrating that fairy tales remain significant texts for linguocultural research and intercultural education.

We compare *Cinderella* and *Zumrad and Kimmat* because they are canonical, widely taught, and both center on a young female protagonist whose virtues are tested. This pairing allows a focused contrast between a classic Western narrative and a well-known Uzbek folk tale. Our aim is not to represent all Western or Uzbek traditions but to show how moral lexemes index cultural schemas through two emblematic cases. Future studies can extend this approach to a broader corpus. For folkloristic background and tale indexing, classic studies by Linda Dégh, Bengt Holbek, Elfriede Moser-Rath, and Satu Apo provide context; *Cinderella* corresponds to tale type ATU 510A.

Academic discourse on fairy tales frequently emphasizes their cultural importance and symbolic aspects; nonetheless, the detailed examination of moral lexemes is still insufficiently explored. Prior cultural-linguistic research illustrates

how language encapsulates social values and group identity. Bennett, Grossberg, and Morris (2005) contend that cultural vocabulary acts as a repository of collective norms and meanings, whereas Chen and Liu (2025) demonstrate through their cross-cultural analysis of sacred narratives that essential lexical items function as vessels of moral and spiritual concepts across various traditions<sup>[6,7]</sup>. These perspectives underscore the importance of examining language as a vehicle for transmitting ethical frameworks. At the same time, studies of particular lexical fields show how cultural values are embedded in language use. Mambetniyazova et al. (2024) reveal the cultural depth of politeness as a linguistic concept, and Muminova (2022) demonstrates how the semantic field of water reflects symbolic and moral associations in Central Asian contexts<sup>[8,9]</sup>. Serikkazykyzy et al. (2025) further show that lexical choices in medieval texts reveal processes of cultural interaction, while Sodiqova (2022) highlights the role of phraseologisms in encoding moral and social meaning in both English and Uzbek<sup>[10,11]</sup>. Despite these advances, there remains limited contrastive analysis of how moral lexemes function in fairy tales such as *Cinderella* and *Zumrad and Kimmat*. Although both narratives have been examined for folklore, narrative structure, and cultural symbolism, the lexical aspect of morality has not been adequately compared. This work fills the gap by examining moral lexemes as fundamental language units that express universal ethical conceptions and culturally specific values.

This study is guided by three interconnected research questions that examine the moral and linguistic aspects of the narratives. The initial inquiry examines the predominant moral lexemes in *Cinderella* and *Zumrad and Kimmat*, particularly the recurring themes of kindness, cruelty, patience, and arrogance. The second analysis examines how these lexemes are culturally shaped, exploring the degree to which they embody Western concepts of forgiveness and personal destiny, in contrast to Uzbek values of respect, social justice, and retributive punishment. The third one investigates the linguistic strategies utilized to emphasize moral contrasts, specifically how positive attributes like humility and patience are accentuated in opposition to negative traits such as envy and greed, and how these contrasts are articulated through figurative language, symbolic objects, and culturally specific narrative selections. Overall, these questions provide the framework for a linguocultural and semiotic study in-

tended to reveal both universal patterns and culturally rooted meanings within the moral language of the two narratives.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

To understand moral lexemes in fairy tales, analysis must go beyond surface reading of the text and employ a theoretical framework that situates language within cultural, symbolic, and ethical paradigms. This section outlines the linguocultural, semiotic, narrative, and ethical methods that together give us the ideas we need to figure out how moral principles are encoded, passed on, and understood in different cultures. The approach guarantees that the examination of *Cinderella* and *Zumrad and Kimmat* encompasses both their universal moral aspects and their culturally particular manifestations by synthesizing perspectives from linguistics, cultural theory, semiotics, and translation studies. While the frameworks employed are robust for linguistic interpretation, they do not yield definitive readings; they offer plausible accounts of how lexical choices organize moral meaning within particular cultural schemas.

The present analysis employs the linguocultural approach to explore the moral lexemes present within the context of fairy tales. This viewpoint regards language not merely as a means of communication but also as a repository of cultural information, values, and perspectives. Sharifian (2017) formulates the notion of Cultural Linguistics, elucidating the encoding of cultural schemas, metaphors, and categories within language<sup>[12]</sup>. From this perspective, moral lexemes in fairy tales function as more than mere isolated terms. They serve as cultural symbols that represent shared moral concepts, directing readers towards interpretations that align with community norms. Hofstede's (2001) model of cultural dimensions provides a comparative framework for analyzing cross-cultural values<sup>[13]</sup>. His research shows that values like individualism, collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance affect how societies understand moral ideas. Applied to fairy tales, this suggests that a single moral lexeme can carry distinct meanings across cultures, depending on its social and cultural context. For instance, in a Western context, kindness may stress personal humility and forgiveness, whereas in an Uzbek context, it may be closely associated with communal harmony and reverence for elders. Sharifian and Hofstede collectively offer a linguocultural

framework for analyzing the reflection of universal ethical principles and culturally particular values in *Cinderella* and *Zumrad and Kimmat*.

The semiotic and narrative frameworks offer supplementary theoretical instruments for comprehending the functioning of moral lexemes in fairy tales. Chandler (2002) defines semiotics as the study of signs and symbols as parts of communication<sup>[14]</sup>. In fairy tales, things, acts, and words can all be indicators that have more than one meaning. For example, a glass slipper or a magic box can be a sign that stands for cultural ideals like purity, fragility, justice, or retribution. Through semiotic analysis, these objects are not only narrative devices but key indicators of morality that steer the reader towards interpreting the story in culturally meaningful ways. Propp's (1968) morphological approach enhances this viewpoint by delineating recurring functions and roles within the framework of folktales. Propp asserts that fairy tales possess a uniform set of narrative functions, including the hero's trial, the emergence of a supernatural aide, and the villain's retribution<sup>[15]</sup>. These structural aspects create a space where moral lexemes can be embedded and reinforced. For instance, the heroine in both *Cinderella* and *Zumrad and Kimmat* goes through a lot of hardships, which shows how important moral attributes like patience and kindness are. These experiences also set the stage for the defeat of bad traits like greed and arrogance. The analysis shows how moral lexemes are woven into both the symbolic language and the structural fabric of fairy tales by integrating Chandler's semiotic insights with Propp's narrative functions. This dual lens facilitates a more profound examination of how morality is conveyed, not solely through language, but also integrated within the fundamental structure of the narratives.

Intuitive ethics is a concept that can assist in comprehending the philosophical and ideological aspects of fairy tales. Haidt and Joseph (2004) posit that humans possess inherent moral principles, yet these manifest and are prioritized differently across cultures. It is asserted that characteristics such as compassion, justice, loyalty, respect, and sacredness are universally present, although the emphasis and narrative surrounding them are influenced by cultural traditions<sup>[16]</sup>. This theory elucidates the persistent presence of specific moral lexemes across various fairy tales, while also adopting culturally distinct interpretations. For instance, in *Cinderella*,

the words that are related to love and forgiveness show Western ideas of compassion and reconciliation. In *Zumrad and Kimmat*, on the other hand, the words that have to do with patience and respect show Uzbek cultural values that are connected to moral justice and community harmony. Both stories depend on the idea that good behavior should be rewarded and bad behavior should be punished, but they use different moral paths and symbols to get to this point. Using Haidt and Joseph's approach, the moral lexemes in these stories are linguistic reflections of intuitive ethics. These elements function as both universal ethical benchmarks and culturally specific indicators of conduct<sup>[17]</sup>.

The study of moral lexemes in fairy tales is enhanced by the research undertaken on translation and cross-cultural lexicon, as the meanings of moral concepts are profoundly rooted in cultural contexts. Aripova (2023) emphasizes that translating narratives between English and Uzbek necessitates more than a mere literal translation of words, as moral and cultural implications are frequently embedded in figurative language and symbolic expressions<sup>[4]</sup>. Her work demonstrates that the translation of fairy tales entails the transference of ethical ideals with linguistic forms, underscoring the pivotal significance of lexemes in the preservation of cultural identity. Dosbaeva (2020) argues that literary translation from Uzbek to English constitutes not merely a language endeavor but also a cultural negotiation<sup>[5]</sup>. She asserts that translators must consider the moral lexicon of the source culture, guaranteeing that values conveyed through particular words and idioms are preserved in the target text. This is especially relevant when comparing *Cinderella* and *Zumrad and Kimmat*, as lexemes like kindness, patience, envy and avarice may have meanings that vary in cultural significance. Khusenova (2023) corroborates this perspective by highlighting the comparative typology between English and Uzbek<sup>[18]</sup>. Her findings indicate that although the two languages have structural similarities, moral and cultural concepts frequently differ in their lexical expression. For example, an Uzbek word that means "respect for the community" may not have an identical English equivalent; thus, it needs to be adapted to the circumstances. These discoveries in combination illustrate that the cross-cultural examination of moral lexemes is crucial for comprehending the transmission of ethical ideals across languages and customs. They also show the importance of considering both linguistic form and cultural content when

comparing fairy tales.

In brief, the theoretical framework integrates multiple viewpoints to elucidate the intricate functioning of moral lexemes in fairy tales. The linguocultural perspective underscores the cultural foundations of moral terminology, whereas semiotic and narrative frameworks accentuate their symbolic and structural functions within storytelling. The ethical principles in question are emphasized as being of universal importance, yet it is also noted that these principles are influenced by culture. The field of translation studies has been selected as an illustrative example of the difficulties of transmitting such principles across linguistic barriers. These viewpoints collectively establish a solid framework for analyzing how *Cinderella* and *Zumrad and Kimmat* embody and convey both universal human ethics and culturally distinct moral ideas.

### 3. Methodology

This study employs a comparative textual analysis of two well-known fairy tales, *Cinderella* in its English version available at readthetale.com (accessed July 2024) and *Zumrad and Kimmat* in its Uzbek version available at ziyouz.uz (accessed December 2015). The choice of these tales is based on their cultural significance and their shared function as moral narratives that transmit ethical lessons across generations. The two narratives focus on female protagonists whose moral qualities are tested, rendering them suitable for examining how moral lexemes are embedded in different linguistic and cultural frameworks. Limiting the dataset to these specific online texts improves reproducibility but also constrains generalization beyond these versions. The clear documentation of online textual sources ensures research transparency and supports the principles of context-aware philological data collection, as highlighted in recent location-based philological studies<sup>[19]</sup>. Other Western tales with stronger social themes were considered; *Cinderella* was chosen for its exceptional diffusion, stable tale-type classification, and clear moral lexeme structure. *Zumrad and Kimmat* was selected because it is one of the most widely known Uzbek folk narratives, officially included in national school and cultural heritage collections, and retains strong ties to oral storytelling traditions. Its rich use of moral lexemes and well-preserved plot make it a representative text for studying how Uzbek

culture encodes virtues such as patience, respect for elders, and divine justice.

The analysis focuses specifically on moral lexemes, which are understood as words, expressions, and idioms that encode moral values. Lexemes such as good, evil, patience, kindness, envy, and greed serve as primary units of investigation. By identifying and categorizing these lexical items, the study highlights how moral values are articulated, reinforced, and contrasted within the narrative structures of the two tales. The frequency, context, and connotative meaning of these words are also considered, as their moral force often depends on cultural and symbolic associations.

To achieve this aim, the study applies three main analytical tools. The first is lexical semantic field analysis, which maps out groups of related moral lexemes and shows how they form coherent value systems within each text. The second is linguocultural interpretation, which connects the lexical choices of the tales to broader cultural schemas and social norms. The third is semiotic reading, which considers how symbolic objects and narrative patterns function as signs that reinforce or contrast moral values.

In addition, the analysis cross-references the identified lexemes with figurative and symbolic language. The insights of Kuczok (2019) on figurative expression and the studies by Khodjamkulov et al. (2024), Makhmudov et al. (2025) on culturally embedded lexemes provide a foundation for interpreting how metaphor, symbolism, and cultural connotation enrich the moral lexicon of the tales<sup>[20–22]</sup>. This combined methodology allows for a nuanced understanding of both the universal and the culturally specific aspects of moral language in *Cinderella* and *Zumrad and Kimmat*.

## 4. Results

The comparative study shows that both *Cinderella* and *Zumrad and Kimmat* use moral lexemes as central narrative tools for distinguishing virtue from vice. Positive words like kindness, patience, humility, and respect are used to describe the virtuous heroines, whereas negative words like envy, brutality, greed, and arrogance are used to describe the villains. Although the two tales share the universal moral structure of rewarding goodness and punishing wrongdoing, they differ in the cultural shaping of these values. In *Cinderella*, positive moral lexemes are closely tied to themes of

forgiveness, purity, and personal destiny, while in *Zumrad and Kimmat*, they emphasize patience, respect for elders, and the inevitability of retributive justice. These findings suggest that while the moral lexicon of fairy tales reflects shared ethical principles, its cultural interpretation is expressed through distinct linguistic and symbolic strategies.

### 4.1. Moral Lexemes in *Cinderella*

#### 4.1.1. Positive Moral Lexemes

The persistent use of positive moral lexemes is at the heart of *Cinderella*. The story uses words like kindness, forgiveness, obedience, love, and humility over and over again to build the heroine's identity. These lexemes are both explicit, as they are used in descriptive passages, and implicit, as they come from *Cinderella*'s actions and reactions to problems. Kindness is probably the most important moral word that goes with *Cinderella*. Even if her stepmother and stepsisters treat her badly, she doesn't get angry or mean back. She still treats others with kindness, even when they don't return it. The story emphasizes her capacity to care for animals and talk with birds and mice, implying that her generosity transcends human interactions and signifies a harmonious relationship with nature. This relationship strengthens the lexeme as an important virtue, showing that true goodness is recognized by everyone, not just people but also by nature. Forgiveness is also a big part of who *Cinderella* is. Even though her stepsisters make fun of her and use her, the end of the story shows that she can forgive them once the prince sees her. Instead of getting back at someone, she shows kindness, which makes her moral superiority even stronger. The word "forgiveness" shows that she is not just a passive victim, but an engaged moral agent whose moral power goes beyond her own problems. Another good word that goes along with her society's standards is "obedience." *Cinderella* does what her stepmother tells her to do, even if it's unjust, and she does her responsibilities around the home without complaining. Even while obedience may seem onerous here, it actually shows how important it is to keep going and how morally right it is to keep your promises. It is not shown that her compliance is a sign of weakness; instead, it is shown that it is a sign of patience that will be rewarded. Love manifests in both familial and romantic settings. *Cinderella*'s remembrance

of her dead mother is shaped by her loving heart, and her relationship with the prince is defined as a love that grows from mutual respect and admiration. Love serves as a moral lexeme that enhances her humanity and stands in opposition to the selfishness of her stepsisters. *Cinderella* does everything out of humility. She doesn't brag about how she looks or ask for praise for what she does. She stays humble and reserved even when she becomes a beautiful figure at the ball. In this meaning, humility means having inner strength instead of giving in. It also shows a Western idea of modest virtue being rewarded by divine or magical justice.

#### 4.1.2. Negative Moral Lexemes

The moral lexicon of *Cinderella* also includes a range of negative lexemes that define the antagonists and create the necessary contrasts within the story. The stepmother and stepsisters are sometimes called nasty, jealous, arrogant, and selfish. The word "cruelty" is most closely associated with the stepmother. Her harshness is both physical, like making *Cinderella* work, and mental, like not giving her stepdaughter respect, acknowledgment, or love. This cruelty is enacted through harsh words, repetitive orders, and forcing people to wear rags as clothing. The lexical realm of cruelty positions the stepmother as the personification of unethical authority. The stepsisters are generally shown as being jealous. They are jealous of *Cinderella*'s innate beauty and kind nature, which they can't copy. Jealousy makes them make fun of her, put her down, and try to keep her from going to the ball. The word "jealousy" is a harmful force that causes fights and shows how pointless envy is when faced with real virtue. Another word that describes the stepsisters is "arrogance." They think they're better than everyone else because they care so much about how they look, what they wear, and their social status. They think they are good enough for the prince, but they don't think *Cinderella* is good enough for noble company. Their attempts to fit into the glass slipper fail, which is ironic because it shows how pride may lead to moral decline. The stepmother and her daughters are both selfish. Everything they do, from looking well to going for the prince, is for their own benefit. They use *Cinderella*'s work to help themselves without caring about how it affects her. The selfish lexicon is the opposite of *Cinderella*'s love and humility, which makes a moral difference that readers may easily see.

#### 4.1.3. Roles of the Fairy Godmother and the Prince as Moral Agents

The story gives moral weight to more than just the heroine and her enemies. It also gives moral weight to the fairy godmother and the prince. These characters act as moral agents who see and support the good qualities that *Cinderella* has. The fairy godmother is a kind of authority figure who helps *Cinderella* reach her destiny, something her stepmother tries to stop her from doing. Words that correspond with the word "fairy godmother" are kindness, charity, and protection. She turns *Cinderella*'s rags into a dress, gives her a magical carriage, and makes sure she can get to the ball. The fairy godmother represents the outside force that verifies the moral lessons of the story by rewarding patience and compassion. Her part shows that even though people don't always see kindness in their daily lives, higher moral or even supernatural powers do. The prince, on the other hand, functions as the recognizer. His words are linked to respect, justice, and adoration. He sees *Cinderella* for who she really is, unlike her stepmother and stepsisters. The moment when the glass slipper fits her perfectly shows the lexeme of recognition: she is the only one who has the moral and personal attributes that meet the symbol of purity and uniqueness. The prince's choice shows that society values virtue and that being kind and humble may make a person happy and give them honor. The fairy godmother and the prince work together to make the moral of the story stronger. They show that the words kindness, forgiveness, and humility are not only good things to have inside, but also good things to have outside that change fate.

#### 4.1.4. Christian-Western Values

The moral lexemes in *Cinderella* are based on Christian and Western cultural ideals, especially those that stress humility, generosity, and the reward of virtue. These principles provide the story's moral authority and cultural endurance by giving it a structure. *Cinderella*'s persistent readiness to help people without getting angry shows her charity. Her acts of caring for animals, being patient with her family, and forgiving her sisters at the end all fit with the Christian idea of unselfish love. Charity as a moral lexeme situates *Cinderella* as an exemplar of ethical conduct within a Christian framework. As was said before, humility is not seen as a

weakness but as a virtue that fits with the Christian idea of being humble before God and society. Her modesty during the event, even though she was beautiful, shows how important this virtue is. The word “humility” connects her suffering on Earth with her reward in the end. The story’s ending is all about the reward of virtue. Christian doctrine says that people who go through pain with faith and patience will be rewarded in the afterlife. *Cinderella* tells this story in a way that fits with this idea. However, the story doesn’t give celestial rewards; instead, it gives earthly distinction and happiness through marriage to the prince. This cultural adaptation of religious ideas shows how fairy tales can teach moral lessons while yet being secular. *Cinderella* is part of a cultural heritage that emphasizes forgiveness, modesty, and the power of virtue to change people. This is because she has Christian-Western ideals. The moral lexemes of the tale function as both descriptive categories and vessels of cultural theology and ethical philosophy.

## 4.2. Moral Lexemes in *Zumrad and Kimmat*

### 4.2.1. Positive Moral Lexemes

The tale consistently elevates lexemes that express patience, respect, kindness, honesty, and modesty. These words and expressions are not merely descriptive but serve as ethical standards that structure the fate of the protagonist *Zumrad*. Patience is the most dominant positive lexeme in the story. *Zumrad* endures her stepmother’s mistreatment without complaint and accepts heavy labor without protest. Her patience is not mere submission; it is a moral quality that makes her deserving of divine and magical help. Patience is a virtue that is rewarded by both people, like when she sees her father again, and by supernatural means, like when she finds the magical chest full of jewels. Another important key lexeme is “respect.” *Zumrad* speaks to the old woman she meets in the woods with respect and honor. *Zumrad* shows how important respect is in Uzbek culture by treating the old woman like a mother and following her orders. Respect here is using courteous language and following the advice of an older person. *Zumrad*’s kindness is reflected in her interactions with nature. Flowers bend towards her in greeting, and birds sing for her, symbolically affirming her moral harmony with the natural world. This indicates that her kindness is acknowledged not only by humans, but also by the natural

world. Her kindness toward others ensures that she is never isolated, even when she is physically abandoned in the forest. The lexeme of kindness in this tale carries a collective dimension: it binds the heroine to both human society and the wider natural world. Honesty appears in *Zumrad*’s directness and sincerity. When she meets the old woman, she tells her about her pain honestly, without embellishment or lying. Her stepsister’s attitude and avarice show that she foregrounds dishonesty, heightening the contrast with *Zumrad*’s sincerity. So, honesty becomes a lexeme that connects *Zumrad* with moral truth and spiritual integrity. Her actions throughout the story show how modest she is. *Zumrad* doesn’t brag or show off her wealth even after getting the trove of treasures. Instead, she maintains a humble disposition and refrains from overtly assertive behavior. This lexeme fits with the Uzbek culture’s belief that being modest is a sign of true dignity. Together these lexemes form the moral portrait of *Zumrad* as a heroine whose virtues not only guide her survival but also secure her eventual reward.

### 4.2.2. Negative Moral Lexemes

The tale’s antagonists, represented by *Qimmat* and her mother, are consistently described and judged through negative moral lexemes such as arrogance, laziness, greed, disobedience, and envy. These words create the moral differences that the story needs to teach. “Arrogance” defines *Qimmat*’s character. She refuses to treat others with politeness, mocks natural beauty, and considers herself superior. Her pride makes her ignorant of the value of respect, which is why she fails every moral exam she takes. In Uzbek culture, being arrogant is viewed as a harmful way to break up societal harmony, and in the story, it is what causes her downfall. Another negative lexeme that comes up often is “laziness.” *Qimmat* refuses to carry out household tasks or obey the old woman’s requests. Instead of cleaning and maintaining the home, she idles away her time. Laziness is not simply an individual weakness but a moral flaw that disrupts communal well-being. Within the tale, laziness symbolizes an unwillingness to participate in the shared responsibilities that define family and community life. Both *Qimmat* and her mother are characterized by greed. They are driven by their desire for money rather than their moral integrity, thinking that they may get rich without being good. Their avarice is most clear in how badly they want a chest of treasures like

*Zumrad*'s. But instead of bringing them wealth, their greed leads to destruction when snakes and dragons come out of the chest. The lexeme of greed serves as a cautionary tale regarding the futility of materialism devoid of morality. "Disobedience" is another defining lexeme. When instructed by the old woman to complete simple tasks, *Qimmat* refuses or responds rudely. Not being able to follow directions shows that she doesn't respect them and hurts her moral standing. In Uzbek tradition, disobedience to elders is not only a personal fault but a cultural violation with serious consequences, and the tale illustrates this clearly. Finally, "envy" is what drives *Qimmat* to do what she does. She envies *Zumrad*'s beauty, virtues, and eventual prosperity. Instead of developing her own moral qualities, she attempts to imitate the external conditions of *Zumrad*'s journey, hoping for the same outcome. Her envy blinds her to the moral foundations of *Zumrad*'s reward, leading to her tragic fate. These negative lexemes collectively construct *Qimmat* and her mother as embodiments of immorality. They also provide a sharp contrast with *Zumrad*'s positive traits, reinforcing the didactic clarity of the narrative.

#### 4.2.3. Nature's Response to Moral Behavior

A distinctive feature of *Zumrad and Kimmat* is the way nature itself responds to the moral lexemes embodied by the characters. *Zumrad* gets along well with flowers, birds, and other natural indications, whereas *Qimmat* doesn't like them or is scared of them. This semiotic aspect embodies the Uzbek folklore conviction that the natural realm is integral to the moral fabric of society. For *Zumrad*, flowers bow their heads in greeting, which shows that they respect and appreciate her benevolence. Birds sing happily when she is around, giving her company and admiration. Flowers give off light to show her the way, even in the dark jungle. These answers illustrate that her virtues go beyond the human realm. They reveal that the whole natural order recognizes patience, respect, and kindness. When *Qimmat* walks by, on the other hand, flowers close their petals and do not greet her. Owls hoot in a scary way, warning of danger and darkness. Instead of help, she gets turned down and scared. This clear distinction shows that being arrogant, greedy, and lazy may cause problems in both human civilization and the natural world. The symbolic interplay between characters and nature strengthens moral lexemes. It shows that moral behavior is not only a private thing; it affects the wider world. This is

because Uzbek tradition sees humans and nature as having a moral link.

#### 4.2.4. Centrality of Uzbek Cultural Values

The moral lexemes of *Zumrad and Kimmat* gain their full meaning when considered within the context of Uzbek cultural values. The tale reflects key principles such as obedience to elders, moral retribution, and divine justice, which together provide a distinctly Uzbek interpretation of universal moral themes. Obedience to elders is consistently emphasized through the interactions between *Zumrad* and the old woman. Her respectful address and willingness to follow instructions highlight the cultural importance of honoring elders as carriers of wisdom and moral authority. This lexeme aligns with broader Central Asian traditions where obedience to parents and elders is viewed as a sacred duty. Moral retribution forms another central value. The tale illustrates that virtue is always rewarded while vice is inevitably punished. *Zumrad*'s patience and kindness secure her a chest of treasures, while *Qimmat*'s arrogance and greed bring about her destruction. This cultural belief in moral balance is expressed through the lexicon of justice, showing that society and the divine order do not allow immorality to triumph. Divine justice underpins the entire moral framework of the tale. The supernatural events, including the magical chests and the intervention of symbolic creatures, reflect a worldview where divine forces ensure that morality is upheld. The lexemes associated with justice, fate, and punishment demonstrate that human behavior is judged not only by society but also by higher spiritual laws. Taken together, these values reveal how *Zumrad and Kimmat* encodes the Uzbek worldview into its moral lexicon. The story is not merely about individual virtue and vice but about maintaining harmony within family, community, and the divine order.

### 4.3. Comparative Linguocultural Perspective

#### 4.3.1. Similarities and Contrasts in Moral Lexemes

A comparative reading of *Cinderella* and *Zumrad and Kimmat* highlights both shared moral structures and culturally specific interpretations of virtue and vice. Both tales rely on the dichotomy of kindness and cruelty, center their moral conflicts around young female protagonists, and employ symbolic objects to embody moral rewards. However,

the way these elements are expressed lexically and culturally reflects significant differences between Western and Uzbek traditions. **Table 1** summarizes the central moral similarities and differences in the two tales.

**Table 1.** Similarities and Contrasts in Moral Lexemes.

| Aspect                 | <i>Cinderella</i>                                               | <i>Zumrad and Kimmat</i>                                                | Shared Moral Function                              |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Core moral dichotomy   | Kindness vs. cruelty                                            | Kindness vs. cruelty                                                    | Virtue rewarded, vice punished                     |
| Female-centered trials | <i>Cinderella</i> tested through domestic labor and obedience   | <i>Zumrad</i> tested through patience, respect, and endurance in forest | Young women embody moral testing grounds           |
| Symbolic rewards       | Glass slipper as symbol of purity and recognition               | Magic chest as symbol of wealth, blessing, or destruction               | Moral status embodied in symbolic objects          |
| Positive lexemes       | Kindness, forgiveness, humility, love, obedience                | Patience, respect, modesty, honesty, kindness                           | Shared emphasis on humility and selflessness       |
| Negative lexemes       | Cruelty, jealousy, arrogance, selfishness                       | Arrogance, laziness, greed, disobedience, envy                          | Antagonists defined by immorality                  |
| Outcome                | Social mobility, marriage to prince, forgiveness of stepsisters | Divine justice, retribution of <i>Qimmat</i> , community balance        | Justice achieved through different cultural lenses |

**Figure 1** illustrates how each tale encodes morality in symbolic objects. The glass slipper in *Cinderella* is fragile and pure, symbolizing individual virtue recognized by society and rewarded with love and status. The chest in *Zumrad and Kimmat* has a dual nature: it can grant wealth and prosperity if given to the virtuous, but it brings destruction when possessed by the immoral. The slipper reflects Western ideals of personal destiny, while the chest encodes Uzbek ideals of moral retribution and communal justice.



**Figure 1.** Symbolism of Rewards.

The comparative analysis reveals that both narratives employ the moral framework of kindness and cruelty; however, they differ in cultural focus. *Cinderella* emphasizes forgiveness, humility, and personal acknowledgment within a Christian-Western context, wherein virtue facilitates social advancement and healing. In contrast, *Zumrad and Kimmat* promotes patience, respect, and obedience within the context of Uzbek cultural values, where moral justice is unequivocal and divine retribution guarantees the penalty of vice.

The mutual dependence on female-centric moral evaluations indicates that both narratives employ women as vessels of cultural ethics, educating youngsters through the experiences of female protagonists. The contrasting symbolism of the glass slipper and the chest exemplifies divergent cultural perspectives on morality: Western traditions associate inner virtue with individual happiness, whereas Uzbek traditions emphasize collective morality through tangible repercussions of good and evil.

#### 4.3.2. Differences in Moral Perspectives

Although *Cinderella* and *Zumrad and Kimmat* exhibit structural similarities, their underlying moral views differ markedly. The Western narrative highlights forgiveness, reconciliation, and individual acknowledgment, while the Uzbek narrative emphasizes punishment, moral retribution, and the preservation of communal harmony. These distinctions are manifested in the cultural language and symbolic selections of each narrative (**Table 2**). The resolution of *Cinderella* is rooted in forgiveness and social ascension, culminating in personal fulfilment through marriage. In *Zumrad and Kimmat*, the resolution is retributive, wherein immorality is penalised and morality is rewarded, so safeguarding collective justice.

The disparities among the narratives elucidate the cultural aspects of moral lexemes. In the Western environment, forgiveness is emphasized as the paramount virtue, along with Christian principles of kindness and compassion. The heroine's recompense is depicted as personal fulfilment and social advancement through marriage to the prince. In contrast, the Uzbek narrative underscores a cultural prioritization

of justice, wherein moral transgressions cannot be exonerated solely via forgiveness but must confront retribution. The

community, rather than the individual, is the focal point of the moral framework.

**Table 2.** Key Differences in Moral Orientation.

| Dimension           | <i>Cinderella</i>                                             | <i>Zumrad and Kimmat</i>                                             |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Central moral focus | Forgiveness, reconciliation, humility                         | Punishment, retribution, obedience                                   |
| Outcome of virtue   | Social mobility and marriage to the prince                    | Reward through wealth, blessings, and family reunion                 |
| Outcome of vice     | Stepsisters are forgiven despite cruelty                      | Stepmother and <i>Qimmat</i> are destroyed by serpents and dragons   |
| Happiness model     | Personal happiness and individual destiny                     | Collective harmony and moral justice                                 |
| Symbolic object     | Glass slipper symbolizing purity and recognition              | Magic chests symbolizing reward or destruction                       |
| Cultural emphasis   | Individual success and grace in a Christian-Western framework | Communal morality, divine justice, and respect in an Uzbek framework |

*Cinderella* presents a moral viewpoint centered on reconciliation and individual destiny, whereas *Zumrad and Kimmat* articulates a perspective grounded in punishment and communal equilibrium. The emblematic artefacts of each narrative, the glass slipper and the enchanted chests, underscore these divergent cultural logics, with one signifying delicate purity acknowledged by society and the other encapsulating the twin aspects of reward and retribution within a divine framework.

## 5. Discussion

The findings from the comparative analysis of *Cinderella* and *Zumrad and Kimmat* demonstrate that moral lexemes are not only linguistic items but also cultural signs that reveal the ethical frameworks of different societies. While both tales transmit universal values such as kindness, patience, and the triumph of virtue over vice, they differ in the cultural emphases placed on forgiveness, retribution, individual destiny, and collective justice. In this section, the interpretations are elaborated through linguocultural theory, semiotic symbolism, gender expectations, societal values, and the didactic function of moral lexemes.

### 5.1. Linguocultural Interpretations

Sharifian's framework of Cultural Linguistics provides a robust perspective for analyzing the moral lexemes inside these narratives. Sharifian posits that cultural schemas, metaphors, and categories inherent in language mirror communal cognitive frameworks and perceptions of reality<sup>[12]</sup>. When analyzed within this paradigm, the lexemes in both narratives function as conduits of cultural memory and collective moral understanding. The recurrence of kindness,

forgiveness, and humility in *Cinderella* exemplifies Western paradigms that prioritize inner virtue and personal metamorphosis. In *Zumrad and Kimmat*, the repetition of patience, respect, and modesty corresponds with Uzbek paradigms that prioritize societal harmony, social duty, and deference to elders. These lexemes possess cultural significances that extend beyond their dictionary definitions, reflecting the lived experiences and anticipations within each group.

Hofstede's cultural aspects theory further elucidates these findings<sup>[13]</sup>. His theory delineates distinctions between individualist and collectivist cultures, along with divergent views towards power, authority, and uncertainty. The moral lexemes of *Cinderella* exhibit a distinctly individualistic orientation, wherein personal destiny and acknowledgment by the prince epitomize the realization of the individual's virtue. The term 'forgiveness' facilitates this perspective by addressing conflict through individual reconciliation. In contrast, *Zumrad and Kimmat* embodies a collectivist ethos, wherein obedience, respect, and retributive justice uphold the cohesion of family and community. The punishment of *Qimmat* and her mother guarantees not only *Zumrad's* contentment but also the reestablishment of societal equilibrium. Consequently, the disparity in moral lexemes corresponds with the extensive cultural patterns delineated by Hofstede.

### 5.2. Semiotic Symbolism

The semiotic aspect of the two narratives is important to their ethical purpose. According to Chandler's perspective on semiotics as the examination of signs, the symbolic elements within the narratives serve as cultural indicators that convey values surpassing the literal storyline<sup>[14]</sup>. In *Cinderella*, the glass slipper is delicate and translucent, representing purity, individuality, and the frail yet indomitable

nature of genuine virtue. The slipper serves as a cultural symbol of acknowledgment, indicating that personal virtue cannot be concealed and will ultimately be unveiled. The slipper is gendered, linked to femininity, delicacy, and beauty, which correspond with Western conceptions of womanhood.

In contrast, *Zumrad and Kimmat* uses the red and white chests as semiotic representations. The crimson chest brimming with treasures symbolizes blessing, recompense, and prosperity for the upright, but the white chest teeming with serpents and monsters signifies destruction, punishment, and divine retribution. In contrast to the slipper, which emphasizes individual identity, the chests serve as social symbols of justice, demonstrating that virtue and vice yield tangible repercussions for both family and community. This symbolism underscores that morality is both a personal and societal issue, supporting Uzbek cultural principles of justice and equilibrium.

The semiotic distinction between the slipper and the chests signifies two divergent moral perspectives. The slipper symbolizes Western ideals of delicate purity that are rewarded with social advancement, whilst the chests represent Uzbek concepts of retributive justice and collective ethics. Both illustrate how tangible things in fairy tales function as stores of moral significance, converting narrative components into lasting cultural icons.

### 5.3. Feminine Roles and Cultural Expectations

Fairy tales frequently position female protagonists at the core of moral evaluation, with both *Cinderella* and *Zumrad and Kimmat* serving as prime examples of this trend. The feminine roles in these narratives embody societal expectations of women while concurrently offering exemplars of ethical conduct for viewers.

Bálint (2021) showed in his comparative examination of Romani fairy tales that female characters frequently represent the moral and social goals of the communities that narrate these tales<sup>[23]</sup>. In *Cinderella*, the protagonist embodies Western ideals of beauty, humility, and forgiveness, attributes associated with women within a patriarchal framework. The benefit of marrying the prince positions her happiness within the context of social advancement and elevation through association with a male authority figure. The moral lexemes in *Cinderella* represent cultural expectations that women must exemplify patience and virtue to attain recognition and stability.

In *Zumrad and Kimmat*, the characters *Zumrad* and *Qimmat* illustrate a distinct cultural configuration. *Zumrad* epitomizes the quintessential Uzbek daughter, characterized by her respectfulness, modesty, obedience, and patience. Her recompense is not chiefly marriage, but the reinstatement of familial harmony and the attainment of blessings that enhance her household. *Qimmat*, however, represents the negative antithesis, encapsulating disobedience, conceit, and lethargy. Her punishment exemplifies the societal assumption that women who disturb social order and defy authority will incur significant repercussions.

Liu and Li (2024) observe that renditions of *Cinderella* in China frequently support cultural gender norms while also mirroring contemporary changes<sup>[24]</sup>. Their findings align with the situation of *Zumrad and Kimmat*, where the cultural narrative for femininity promotes obedience and moral obligation within the family unit. The disparity between the heroines of the two narratives illustrates that, although both act as moral paragons, the values they represent vary based on cultural context.

### 5.4. Moral Lexemes and Societal Values

The broader societal values reflected in the moral lexemes of the two tales reveal an important distinction between Western individualism and Uzbek communal ethics. In *Cinderella*, the lexemes of kindness, forgiveness, and humility are linked to individual recognition and personal happiness. The outcome of the story highlights the triumph of the individual who remains true to her virtues despite adversity. This aligns with Western cultural values that prioritize personal freedom, self-expression, and individual success.

Conversely, *Zumrad and Kimmat* illustrates how moral lexemes bolster collective responsibility and societal cohesion. The concepts of patience, respect, and humility are not solely individual traits but societal norms that promote the welfare of both family and community. The punishment of *Qimmat* and her mother signifies more than individual vengeance; it reinstates equilibrium within the community and reasserts the notion that immorality disturbs social cohesion. The Uzbek cultural paradigm underscores that morality is intrinsically linked to collective justice, as seen by the moral lexemes embedded in the narrative. **Table 3** illustrates how moral lexemes reflect not only narrative functions but also broader cultural values that shape social identity.

**Table 3.** Societal Orientations.

| Moral Focus            | <i>Cinderella</i>                   | <i>Zumrad and Kimmat</i>          |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Primary values         | Kindness, forgiveness, humility     | Patience, respect, modesty        |
| Social orientation     | Individual recognition and mobility | Collective harmony and justice    |
| Resolution of conflict | Forgiveness and marriage            | Punishment and divine retribution |
| Cultural model         | Western individualism               | Uzbek communal ethics             |

## 5.5. Didactic Functions of Moral Lexemes

The pedagogical and didactic role of moral lexemes in fairy tales is significant. *Cinderella* and *Zumrad and Kimmat* function as moral instruction for youngsters, facilitating their ethical growth through memorable narratives and characters. Islamova (2019) underscores the significance of narratives in cultivating linguistic and ethical values in higher education, whereas Farida et al. (2023) illustrate the efficacy of hybrid multimedia in advancing cross-cultural moral education<sup>[25,26]</sup>. These viewpoints emphasize the potential of narratives like *Cinderella* and *Zumrad and Kimmat* to be utilized in educational settings as instruments for imparting language and ethical principles.

In *Cinderella*, the themes of kindness, forgiveness, and humility illustrate that personal character may prevail against cruelty and adversity. The narrative subtly teaches youngsters to develop patience and moral fortitude, telling them that these virtues will be acknowledged and rewarded. The educational purpose here is based on the assurance that personal satisfaction is the ultimate result of virtuous conduct.

In *Zumrad and Kimmat*, the moral lexemes underscore respect, obedience, and patience, illustrating the Uzbek traditional emphasis on societal harmony. The fate of *Qimmat* and her mother serves as a poignant reminder that immorality incurs repercussions. The educational objective is to both commend virtuous conduct and dissuade immoral actions by illustrating their detrimental effects. The simultaneous role of encouragement and deterrence renders the narrative a thorough moral compass for youngsters within their cultural context.

The incorporation of moral lexemes into narrative frameworks illustrates the efficacy of storytelling as an educational instrument. Fairy tales incorporate ethical lessons through captivating narratives and symbolic elements, facilitating the retention of moral education in memorable and emotionally impactful manners.

The present analysis is based on two textual realizations

of highly diffused tales. Earlier or variant versions may differ in lexical choices and symbolic emphasis, and oral renditions can shift pragmatic meanings in performance. Our claims therefore apply to the cited versions and are intended as a focused demonstration rather than a comprehensive account of either tradition.

## 6. Conclusions

The comparative analysis of *Cinderella* and *Zumrad and Kimmat* suggests that, despite their different cultural origins, both narratives adhere to the same broad moral paradigm wherein virtue is rewarded and vice is penalized. Both storylines depend on moral lexemes like compassion, patience, humility, and respect, indicating that these virtues are universally considered as fundamental principles of human conduct. In both narratives, the protagonists exemplify these values, and their ultimate triumph reinforces the cultural significance of upholding moral integrity during adversity.

Nevertheless, despite these shared features, the narratives differ in their construction and interpretation of moral precepts. *Cinderella* underscores themes of forgiveness and social ascension. The heroine's benevolence and modesty are recompensed with matrimony to a prince, signifying personal acknowledgment and individual contentment. Forgiveness is essential for conflict resolution, highlighting the significance of reconciliation in a Western cultural context. In contrast, *Zumrad and Kimmat* emphasizes ethical fairness and reverence for tradition. Virtue is rewarded not by marriage but via benefits that enhance family and community, whereas wickedness is met with destruction. The narrative emphasizes adherence to elders and divine justice as fundamental cultural norms, safeguarding morality within the social and spiritual framework.

These findings indicate that fairy tales retain moral lexemes that serve as cultural DNA, conveying ethical rules and cultural memory through generations. Although the

universal ideals of compassion, patience, and humility are prevalent in both traditions, the culturally particular elements of forgiveness in *Cinderella* and retributive justice in *Zumrad and Kimmat* demonstrate how communities tailor moral precepts to their distinct worldviews. In this regard, fairy tales transcend mere storytelling; they serve as cultural texts that encapsulate and safeguard the ethical principles of societies.

Subsequent research ought to broaden this comparative methodology by examining a more extensive corpus of fairy tales across other languages and traditions. Such research would enhance our comprehension of the universal functioning of moral lexemes and elucidate the varied cultural techniques employed by nations to convey values. A broader comparative perspective would enhance understanding of language's role in shaping morality and underscore the persistent function of fairy tales as both entertainment and moral education.

## Author Contributions

Conceptualization, Z.J. and K.M.; methodology, A.N. and R.T.; formal analysis, F.O. and Z.S.; investigation, S.S. and D.A.; resources, N.K.; data curation, A.N. and F.O.; writing—original draft preparation, K.M. and Z.J.; writing—review and editing, N.K. and A.S.; visualization, Z.S.; supervision, K.M.; project administration, Z.J.; funding acquisition, A.S. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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