

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Symmetry and Asymmetry as Linguocultural Phenomena in English And Uzbek Literary Discourse

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Abstract

This article examines symmetry and asymmetry as linguocultural phenomena in English and Uzbek literary discourse. The study proceeds from the assumption that literary form is not merely an aesthetic shell of content, but a meaningful cultural mechanism through which authors organize value systems, temporal perception, emotional balance, and social hierarchy. Symmetry is interpreted as a principle of equivalence, recurrence, compositional balance, and semantic parallelism, while asymmetry is understood as a principle of deviation, disruption, incompleteness, and perspectival unevenness. The aim of the article is to identify how these two principles function in English and Uzbek literary texts and how they reflect national models of world perception. The research is based on a comparative linguoculturological and stylistic analysis of selected English and Uzbek prose texts, including works by Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf, Abdulla Qodiriy, and O'tkir Hoshimov. The analysis shows that in both traditions symmetry is associated with ethical order, ritualized communication, and textual cohesion, whereas asymmetry often marks psychological tension, historical rupture, social conflict, and the individualization of voice. At the same time, the English literary tradition tends to realize symmetry through irony, conversational equilibrium, and compositional framing, while Uzbek literary discourse more frequently links symmetry to relational ethics, communal value, and narrative circularity. Asymmetry in English prose is often internalized as fragmentation of consciousness, whereas in Uzbek prose it is frequently connected with historical upheaval, moral imbalance, or a break in communal continuity. The article argues that symmetry and asymmetry should be treated as culturally loaded discourse strategies rather than purely formal stylistic devices.

KEY WORDS

Symmetry, asymmetry, linguoculturology, literary discourse, English literature, Uzbek literature, stylistics, comparative analysis, textual organization, cultural meaning.

INTRODUCTION

In modern philology, literary discourse is increasingly viewed as a space where language, culture, cognition, and aesthetics intersect. Within this perspective, textual organization cannot be reduced to grammar or composition alone, because the arrangement of forms in a literary text also encodes culturally significant meanings. Symmetry and asymmetry are among

the most productive categories for describing this interaction. In poetics and stylistics, symmetry usually refers to recurrence, balance, structural equivalence, and patterned correspondences, while asymmetry points to displacement, rupture, irregularity, and violated expectation. Roman Jakobson's classic discussion of poetic parallelism established

that equivalence is central to verbal art, and later stylistic and semiotic traditions developed this insight by showing that repeated structures do not simply decorate discourse but shape interpretation itself. Halliday and Hasan's work on cohesion further demonstrated that patterned recurrence is fundamental to text construction, while Lotman and Leech showed that artistic form becomes meaningful precisely when regularity and deviation interact. Cross-cultural linguistics, especially in the work of Anna Wierzbicka, has also made clear that textual meaning is inseparable from culturally specific value systems and key concepts.

Despite the richness of these theoretical traditions, the category pair "symmetry/asymmetry" remains underexplored in comparative studies of English and Uzbek literary discourse. This gap is important because the two literary traditions share certain universal narrative mechanisms but differ substantially in their cultural models of personhood, temporality, social relation, and emotional expression. English prose, especially from the realist and modernist periods, frequently develops meaning through dialogic balance, irony, perspectival shifts, and interiorized tension. Uzbek prose, while also highly diverse, often retains stronger links to communal memory, moral relationality, and cyclic conceptions of life experience. These differences suggest that symmetry and asymmetry should be analyzed not only as formal principles, but also as linguocultural signs. The purpose of this article is therefore to investigate how symmetry and asymmetry function in English and Uzbek literary discourse and to determine what cultural meanings they activate in the two traditions.

The study employs a comparative linguoculturological method combined with stylistic, discourse-analytic, and interpretive textual analysis. The theoretical framework draws on poetics, semiotics of culture, discourse linguistics, and cross-cultural semantics. Symmetry is operationalized as the recurrence of lexical, syntactic, compositional, and thematic equivalence. Asymmetry is operationalized as formal or semantic imbalance manifested in broken parallelism, narrative disproportions, shifts in voice, disrupted temporality, incomplete communicative exchange, or ethically unstable relations. These categories are treated not as mutually exclusive absolutes but as dynamic poles within one discourse system.

The corpus consists of representative prose texts from English and Uzbek literary traditions. For English literature, the analysis refers primarily to Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*. Austen's novel offers rich

material for studying dialogic symmetry, balanced sentence patterns, and culturally coded social equivalence, whereas Woolf's text demonstrates the modernist intensification of asymmetry through temporal layering and fragmented consciousness. For Uzbek literature, the article considers Abdulla Qodiriy's *O'tkan kunlar* and O'tkir Hoshimov's *Dunyoning ishlari*. Qodiriy's prose provides a valuable example of how narrative balance is linked to ethical order and historical memory, while Hoshimov's prose foregrounds emotionally resonant asymmetries between everyday simplicity and existential depth. Bibliographic details for these editions are traceable in library and publisher records.

The analysis focuses on four levels of textual realization. The first is syntactic organization, including parallel constructions, balanced clauses, and broken sequences. The second is compositional design, including framing, circularity, and narrative disproportion. The third is semantic and symbolic patterning, especially oppositions such as order and disorder, center and periphery, memory and rupture. The fourth is cultural pragmatics, that is, how verbal symmetry and asymmetry reflect culturally specific norms of politeness, hierarchy, selfhood, kinship, and moral evaluation. This multi-level approach makes it possible to move from local linguistic structures to broader cultural interpretation.

The analysis demonstrates that symmetry in both English and Uzbek literary discourse functions as a marker of meaningful order. At the linguistic level it is frequently realized through parallel syntax, repeated evaluative lexicon, mirrored descriptive sequences, and compositional framing. Yet the cultural semantics of this order differ. In English prose, especially in Austen, symmetry often emerges in the discourse of social regulation. Balanced exchanges, antithetical phrasing, and carefully proportioned dialogue do not merely create elegance; they index a culture in which self-control, measured wit, and socially legible conduct are central values. Symmetry here serves as a verbal analogue of civility. It organizes relationships by making speakers mutually visible and comparable. In such discourse, even irony often depends on symmetrical structure because the form presents equivalence while the context introduces evaluative slippage. The result is not static harmony but controlled tension within a recognizable social frame.

In Uzbek prose, symmetry more often acquires an explicitly ethical and communal dimension. In *O'tkan kunlar*, for instance, correspondences between characters, situations,

and evaluative motifs contribute to a sense that life is structured by moral reciprocity, even when history disrupts it. Symmetry in this tradition is frequently tied to notions of adab, family continuity, interpersonal duty, and the meaningful repetition of life patterns. Lexical recurrence and formulaic relational expressions are not simply ornamental; they reproduce the cultural grammar of respect, kinship, and social embeddedness. In this sense, symmetry becomes a linguocultural sign of coherence between person and community. When a narrative returns to a motif, a relational formula, or a moral contrast, it often reinforces the cultural expectation that human action should remain answerable to collective norms.

At the same time, the corpus shows that asymmetry is equally central to literary meaning. In English literary discourse, asymmetry is especially productive in texts where consciousness is no longer transparent to itself. Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* exemplifies this tendency through discontinuous perception, shifting focalization, and the coexistence of private memory with public urban time. Here asymmetry appears not only in plot structure but in discourse rhythm. Sentences move associatively rather than linearly, and voices overlap without stable borders. Such textual unevenness reflects a cultural turn toward interiority, psychological singularity, and the instability of postwar subjectivity. The broken balance of narration is thus not merely a stylistic innovation; it encodes a historically specific experience of modernity.

In Uzbek literary discourse, asymmetry often takes a different form. Rather than being primarily a matter of fractured consciousness, it is frequently linked to imbalance between person and social world, between past integrity and present disruption, or between ethical expectation and lived reality. In Qodiriy, historical processes disturb relational symmetry, so personal destinies become asymmetrical to the moral order they presuppose. In Hoshimov, the everyday world is often narrated through small disproportions, emotionally charged absences, and understated breaks in ordinary continuity. This produces a distinct discourse effect: asymmetry becomes a sign of human vulnerability within a culture that still values wholeness. The broken pattern is meaningful precisely because the norm of balance remains active in the background.

Another important result is that symmetry and asymmetry in both traditions are rarely isolated. More often, literary discourse derives its force from their interaction. Symmetry

creates expectation, recognizability, and cultural stability; asymmetry interrupts these patterns and thereby generates depth, irony, trauma, or revelation. In Austen, a symmetrical conversation may culminate in an asymmetrical implication that exposes class prejudice or affective misunderstanding. In Woolf, dispersed impressions gain force because readers continue to search for latent pattern. In Uzbek prose, repeated communal formulas intensify the significance of their eventual disruption. Thus, the relationship between the two categories is dialectical. Symmetry without asymmetry risks becoming inert convention, while asymmetry without symmetry loses interpretive salience because deviation requires a background norm.

The findings support the view that literary discourse is culturally organized at a deep structural level. Jakobson's principle of equivalence helps explain why symmetry is such a powerful poetic mechanism, but the comparative evidence suggests that equivalence itself is culturally inflected. What counts as balance, what kinds of repetition are aesthetically valued, and how deviation is interpreted all depend on broader cultural models. In English literary discourse, symmetry frequently aligns with rhetorical moderation, individual self-presentation, and dialogic negotiation. This reflects a literary culture shaped by conversational realism, irony, and the problem of personal agency within social form. In Uzbek discourse, symmetry is more often linked to relational ethics, narrative circularity, and emotionally resonant repetition grounded in communal life. Even when individual experience is central, it tends to remain legible through shared moral frameworks.

From a linguoculturological point of view, this means that symmetry is not only a structural property but also a repository of cultural memory. Repeated forms preserve socially valued orientations. They stabilize concepts such as respect, propriety, fidelity, maternal care, or social rank by embedding them in recognizable discourse patterns. Halliday and Hasan's concept of cohesion is useful here, yet literary cohesion exceeds purely textual connectedness because it can also function as cultural connectedness. A repeated address form, a mirrored scene, or a cyclical return to a domestic image may organize the text while simultaneously activating shared cultural knowledge.

Asymmetry, conversely, should not be understood as mere disorder. In both corpora it emerges as a privileged site of meaning production. Lotman's semiotic view of culture is

especially relevant here because cultural systems generate information through tension between regularity and unpredictability. Literary asymmetry often signals a point where normative language can no longer fully contain experience. In English modernist prose this may occur through fractured temporal sequence or unstable interior monologue. In Uzbek narrative prose it may take the form of ethical disproportionality, silence, loss, or broken continuity between generations. In both cases, asymmetry reveals what a culture experiences as crisis.

The comparative dimension also allows a refinement of the notion of literary discourse itself. Discourse is not simply the sum of linguistic choices within a text; it is the culturally framed mode in which a text positions speaker, listener, memory, value, and event. Therefore, symmetry and asymmetry operate simultaneously on formal and anthropological levels. A symmetrical composition can present a worldview in which relations are still thinkable as reciprocal and the world remains interpretable through return and comparison. An asymmetrical discourse can register alienation, trauma, or social transition. This is particularly important for comparing English and Uzbek literatures because the two traditions encode different historical experiences. English prose often moves from social balance to psychological fracture. Uzbek prose often moves from ethical wholeness toward historical or existential break, while preserving the memory of communal order as an interpretive horizon.

The study has implications for comparative poetics and translation studies as well. When symmetry and asymmetry are transferred from one language to another, what is at stake is not only syntax or rhythm but also cultural value. A translator who smooths asymmetry may erase a text's psychological or historical tension; a translator who fails to preserve symmetry may weaken its ethical or symbolic design. This is particularly relevant in English-Uzbek literary mediation, where equivalent semantic content may be distributed differently across discourse patterns. Linguoculturological analysis can therefore improve translation sensitivity by showing where formal balance carries cultural weight.

The article has shown that symmetry and asymmetry in English and Uzbek literary discourse are not merely stylistic oppositions but linguocultural phenomena that shape textual meaning at multiple levels. Symmetry functions as a principle

of recurrence, cohesion, and value stabilization, while asymmetry functions as a principle of deviation, crisis, and intensified interpretation. In English prose, symmetry is often associated with conversational balance, irony, and social form, whereas asymmetry tends to foreground interior fragmentation and historical modernity. In Uzbek prose, symmetry is more strongly connected with communal ethics, relational continuity, and moral coherence, while asymmetry often registers historical rupture, emotional absence, or the disturbance of shared norms.

The most important conclusion is that literary discourse gains semantic depth through the dynamic interplay of these principles. Symmetry establishes the norm that enables recognition, and asymmetry reveals the limits of that norm. Their interaction constitutes a culturally meaningful strategy through which literature encodes human experience. A comparative linguoculturological approach therefore makes it possible to move beyond purely formal descriptions and to interpret textual organization as a reflection of distinct cultural ways of perceiving order, imbalance, selfhood, and community. Future research may extend this model to poetry, drama, and translated texts, as well as to corpus-based studies of recurring symmetrical and asymmetrical patterns in larger bodies of English and Uzbek literature.

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