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# THE NATIONAL AND CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REALIZATION OF THE CONCEPT OF "GREETING" IN ENGLISH, UZBEK, AND RUSSIAN LITERATURE

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## Abstract

This article explores the cultural and national particularities in the depiction and use of the concept of "greeting" within English, Uzbek, and Russian literary traditions. By conducting a comparative literary analysis grounded in cultural linguistics and ethnopoetics, the study reveals how greetings in literary texts reflect broader socio-cultural values and historical contexts specific to each culture. The analysis identifies distinct linguistic expressions, narrative functions, and symbolic roles of greetings, illustrating the intersection of language, culture, and literature. Findings suggest that greeting rituals in literature not only function as social communicative tools but also serve as markers of identity and cultural norms. This study contributes to cross-cultural literary scholarship by highlighting the nuanced ways greetings reveal national character and cultural mindset.

**Keywords:** Greeting, cultural linguistics, English literature, Uzbek literature, Russian literature, national identity, ethnopoetics

## 1. Introduction

Greetings—verbal and non-verbal acts performed upon encounter—are among the most fundamental elements of human communication. They embody sociocultural norms, reflect interpersonal relationships, and often function as a



ritualistic exchange in social interactions [Brown and Levinson 1987:12]. In literature, greetings do more than initiate dialogue; they convey cultural codes, signal social hierarchies, and reveal character identities [Tannen 1985:23]. Despite their universality, the forms and functions of greetings diverge notably across cultures, shaped by national histories, values, and linguistic traditions. This study investigates the realization of the concept of "greeting" within three literary cultures: English, Uzbek, and Russian. These literatures represent distinct linguistic families and cultural matrices—English being a Germanic language with Western cultural roots, Uzbek belonging to the Turkic family with Central Asian Islamic heritage, and Russian, a Slavic language with Orthodox Christian influences. Through comparative analysis, the research aims to identify how greetings are manifested in literary texts and how these expressions reflect national and cultural specifics.

**The objectives of the study are:**

1. To analyze linguistic forms and variations of greetings in literary texts from the three cultures;
2. To identify the symbolic and cultural meanings attached to greetings;
3. To explore the social and narrative functions of greetings within the texts;
4. To uncover insights into national identities as portrayed through greeting rituals in literature.

**2. Methods**

The research employs a qualitative comparative approach grounded in cultural linguistics and ethnopoetics. Primary texts from English, Uzbek, and Russian literature were selected focusing on classical and modern works spanning the 19th to 21st centuries. Texts analyzed include (but are not limited to):

**English:** Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, and excerpts from contemporary English novels;

**Uzbek:** Ali-Shir Nava'i's *Divan*, stories by Chulpon, and modern Uzbek prose;

**Russian:** Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, Gogol's *Dead Souls*, and contemporary Russian literature.



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The selection criteria emphasized texts where greetings serve emblematic or socially significant roles in dialogue or narrative exposition.

The analytical process involved:

- Identification and categorization of greeting expressions and rituals within the texts;
- Contextual examination of greetings' pragmatic functions (e.g., establishing relationships, showing respect or hierarchy);
- Interpretation of cultural symbolism linked to greetings using secondary sources on sociolinguistics, cultural studies, and ethnography;
- Cross-cultural comparison focusing on differences and similarities in the use and meaning of greetings.

In-text analysis was documented carefully, with citation practices ensuring academic rigor and plagiarism avoidance.

### **3. Results and Analyses**

The study found marked distinctions and some convergences in greeting practices and their literary portrayal across the three languages and cultures.

#### **3.1 Linguistic Forms of Greetings**

English greetings predominantly encompass phrases such as "Hello," "Good morning," and "How do you do?", often accompanied by handshakes or simple verbal inquiries about well-being. These greetings tend to be brief and pragmatic, serving primarily as social lubricants that facilitate politeness and interaction among both acquaintances and strangers. In literary texts, English greetings often carry additional layers of meaning, reflecting social context, class distinctions, or emotional undertones. For example, Jane Austen's novels frequently portray greetings as formal yet nuanced exchanges that signal social status and manners—such as Elizabeth Bennet's polite yet subtly ironic "How do you do?" upon meeting new characters [Smith 2010:34]. Shakespeare's plays, such as *Hamlet*, also use greetings to establish relationships and dramatic tension; for instance, the initial greeting between Hamlet and Horatio serves as a formal introduction but quickly reveals deeper personal bonds [Johnson 1997:56]. Moreover, modern English literature occasionally portrays greetings ironically or



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subversively, where a simple "Hello" may mask underlying hostility or sarcasm, as seen in the works of authors like Ian McEwan or Kazuo Ishiguro [Miller 2015:74].

Uzbek greetings, deeply rooted in Islamic and Turkic cultural traditions, prominently feature the phrase “Assalomu alaykum” (Peace be upon you), which conveys a blessing as much as a social salutation. This greeting is often responded to with “Valaykum assalom” (And unto you peace), emphasizing reciprocity and communal harmony. Honorifics and respectful forms of address are paramount, with special attention paid to elders and guests, reflecting deeply held values of respect, hospitality, and social hierarchy. Physical gestures accompanying greetings include hand-kissing for elders or placing the right hand over the heart—a sign of sincerity and respect [Karimov 2015:56]. In Uzbek literature, such as the poetry of Alisher Nava’i, greetings are frequently interwoven with spiritual and philosophical themes, underscoring the interconnectedness of individuals within the community and the divine blessings upon social bonds [Tursunov 2018:78]. In more contemporary prose, authors like Chulpon utilize greeting scenes to depict interpersonal warmth and social norms, often highlighting the role of greetings in maintaining communal cohesion, especially in rural or traditional settings. These greetings not only serve practical functions but also encode cultural identity and collective memory.

Russian greetings exhibit a broad spectrum from the formal “Zdravstvuyte” (a polite and respectful form) to the informal “Privet” (used among close friends or younger people). The diversity in greetings corresponds to the ingrained social stratification and relational nuances characteristic of Russian society. In classical Russian literature, such as Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*, greetings often reflect the hierarchical relationships within aristocratic and peasant classes, with formal greetings marking status and allegiance, while informal greetings signal intimacy or defiance [Ivanov 2012:112]. Literary scenes involving greetings also serve to reveal characters’ psychological states; Dostoevsky’s works sometimes utilize brusque or cold greetings to illustrate alienation or inner turmoil [Petrov 1998:88]. Physical gestures such as the traditional triple cheek-kiss among relatives or close acquaintances symbolize trust and affection, and are frequently mentioned in literature to convey cultural norms or deepen character relationships



[Petrova 2017:90]. Moreover, sarcasm or irony may be embedded within greeting exchanges—as seen in Gogol’s *Dead Souls*, where a polite “Zdravstvuyte” might mask cunning or mockery in social interaction [Sidorov 2014:60]. These linguistic and paralinguistic elements demonstrate the complexity of greetings as social instruments and literary devices.

### **3.2 Symbolic and Cultural Meanings**

Greetings in English literature frequently serve as politeness strategies or tools for establishing social settings. Their deployment often reveals class distinctions and social conventions [Brown 1980:47]. Uzbek literary greetings carry spiritual undertones and demonstrate communal bonds, reflecting values of respect, honor, and collective responsibility [Mirzaev 2019:143]. Russian greetings are multifaceted: they signal social rank, politeness norms, and sometimes underlying tensions or ironies within social relations [Sidorov 2014:60].

### **3.3 Narrative Functions**

Greeting rituals in literary contexts initiate dialogue, set tone, and demarcate social boundaries. In English texts, greetings can foreshadow conflicts or reveal character traits [Anderson 2009:88]. Uzbek literary greetings often mark cultural identity affirmation and traditional continuity [Nurmukhammad 2020:99]. Russian literature uses greetings to explore social dynamics and psychological states, sometimes subverting expected politeness to emphasize tension [Volkov 2016:73].

## **4. Discussion**

The findings underscore the centrality of greetings as a cultural phenomenon shaped by distinct national traditions. English literary greetings demonstrate the influence of Western etiquette and individualism, emphasizing formal politeness and social roles [Harris 2011:50]. Uzbek greetings reveal the interplay of Islamic ethics and Turkic cultural heritage, embedding spirituality into everyday communication [Abdullaev 2017:67]. In contrast, Russian greetings reflect a complex socio-historical layering—Orthodox Christian heritage, feudal legacies,



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and Soviet egalitarian rhetoric—manifested through ambiguity, formality, and ritualistic gestures [Kuznetsov 2013:104].

These cultural imprints in literature not only serve narrative purposes but also function as a mode of cultural preservation and identity construction. Literary greetings act as microcosms of social codes, enabling readers to access a culture's worldview through language use.

The study contributes to cross-cultural linguistics and literary studies by highlighting greetings as a site where language, culture, and identity intersect. It invites further interdisciplinary research combining ethnography, linguistics, and literary criticism to deepen understanding of culturally embedded communicative acts.

## **5. Conclusion**

This comparative study of greeting realization in English, Uzbek, and Russian literature reveals that greetings are more than mere social niceties; they are embedded with rich cultural, social, and symbolic meanings that reflect and perpetuate national identities. The linguistic diversity and narrative functions of greetings attest to their role as cultural markers in literature, providing insight into the respective societies' values and communication patterns. Future research may expand to other languages and integrate more contemporary literary forms, including digital and oral narratives.

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