CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK: LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

Shomurodova Nilufar Alisher qizi
Teacher, Denov Specialized School No. 2,
Email: shomurodovanilufar@7991.com
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17278608

Abstract

Phraseological units, including idioms, proverbs, and fixed expressions, are significant cultural and linguistic markers within any language. This paper explores the similarities and differences between English and Uzbek phraseological units through a comparative lens, focusing on their semantic structure, cultural imagery, and syntactic behavior. Using selected examples, we highlight how phraseological meaning is shaped by the worldview of each linguistic community. The study reveals both universal cognitive patterns and language-specific cultural references that affect phraseological equivalence and translatability.

Keywords: phraseological units, idioms, Uzbek, English, linguistic comparison, cultural semantics, translation, worldview.

1. Introduction

Phraseological units (PUs) are stable combinations of words that carry idiomatic meanings beyond the sum of their components. As linguistic and cultural artifacts, they reflect a nation's worldview, values, and everyday experiences. In both English and Uzbek, phraseology plays a vital role in spoken and written communication, making it a rich area for cross-cultural linguistic research.

This article investigates the similarities and differences between English and Uzbek PUs, aiming to identify patterns of convergence and divergence from a structural, semantic, and cultural perspective. It also discusses challenges faced in translating idioms and how phraseological knowledge contributes to language proficiency and intercultural communication.

2. Theoretical Background

The term "phraseological unit" was introduced in Russian and European linguistic traditions and has since been used to encompass idioms, collocations, proverbs, and sayings. Vinogradov, Kunin, and Amosova in Russian linguistics, and Cowie and Fernando in English linguistics, have extensively studied idiomatic language. In Uzbek linguistics, researchers like Qayumov and G'aniev have explored the role of idioms in cultural expression.

PUs can be classified by their structural type (verbal, nominal, adjectival), semantic transparency (transparent, semi-transparent, opaque), and degree of metaphorization. Understanding the types of PUs and their functions allows for deeper comparative insights.

3. Methodology

The study employs qualitative analysis based on bilingual corpora, dictionaries of idioms, and authentic materials (literary texts, media, folklore). 50 idioms from each language were selected and analyzed under the following criteria:

- Semantic equivalence
- Cultural-specific imagery
- Structural composition
- Translatability and usage context

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Semantic Equivalence and Cultural Variation

Some English and Uzbek idioms show direct equivalents:

- *"To spill the beans"* – **"Tilidan chiqib ketmoq"** (To slip out of the tongue)
- *"Like two peas in a pod"* – **"Bir qo'shiqning ikki kuychisi"** (Two singers of one song)

However, many idioms are culture-bound and do not have direct equivalents. For instance:

- English: *"Kick the bucket"* (to die)
- Uzbek: **"Qarg'aning qarg'ishi o'chdi"** (The crow's curse fulfilled)

These idioms reflect different cultural imagery and historical backgrounds.

4.2 Animal Imagery in Idioms

Animals are commonly used metaphorically in both languages but with differing connotations: But some animals used differ:

- English: *"White elephant"* (useless gift)
- Uzbek: **"Tuyaning orzusi osmondan"** (The camel dreams of the sky) – metaphor for unreachable goals

4.3 Structural and Grammatical Aspects

Structurally, Uzbek PUs tend to be more descriptive and narrative, often retaining subject-verb-object order. English idioms, by contrast, are often nominal or verbal phrases without full sentence structures.

Example:

- English: *"Under the weather"* (sick)
- Uzbek: **"Ko'ngli chopmayapti"** (One's heart is not in it)

4.4 Pragmatic Functions

In both languages, PUs are used for humor, criticism, praise, exaggeration, and euphemism. However, their frequency and acceptability in formal or academic contexts vary. Uzbek idioms are often found in oral and folkloric settings, while English idioms are more integrated into all registers, including journalism and politics.

5. Implications for Translation and Language Learning

Understanding phraseological units is crucial for translation, as literal rendering often fails to capture meaning. Translators must identify functional equivalents or offer cultural explanations. In education, teaching idioms aids language learners in grasping the cultural nuance and fluency.

Example:

- *"Break a leg"* (good luck) → No equivalent in Uzbek, needs explanation.

Phraseological competence bridges linguistic knowledge with intercultural understanding.

6. Conclusion

The comparative analysis of English and Uzbek phraseological units reveals deep insights into the cognitive and cultural fabric of both societies. While some idioms share universal human experiences, others are deeply rooted in specific cultural-historical contexts. Studying such expressions not only enhances linguistic competence but also fosters cultural sensitivity and effective communication in a globalized world.

Adabiyotlar, References, Литературы:

1. Cowie, A. P., Mackin, R., & McCaig, I. R. (1993). *Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms*. Oxford University Press.
2. Fernando, C. (1996). *Idioms and Idiomaticity*. Oxford University Press.
3. Kunin, A. V. (1996). *English-Russian Phraseological Dictionary*. Russian Language Publishers.
4. Qayumov, M. (1992). *O‘zbek tilida iboralar va ularning mazmuni*. Tashkent: O‘qituvchi.
5. Vinogradov, V. V. (1947). *On the main types of phraseological units in the Russian language*. Moscow: Nauka.
6. Gläser, R. (1984). The Stylistic Potential of Phraseological Units in the Light of Genre Analysis. *Phraseology and Culture*, 8(1), 32–47.
7. Zykova, I. V. (2008). *An Introduction to Phraseology*. VSU Publishing.