

A CROSS-LINGUISTIC STUDY OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK: SEMANTIC, STRUCTURAL, AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

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Annotatsiya: Frazeologiya – leksikologiya va morfologiya bilan bir qatorda tilshunoslikning ixtisoslashgan tarmoqlaridan biri bo'lib, jumlar, maqollar va idiomalar kabi tilning barqaror, idiomatik ifodalarini va ularning konseptualizatsiyasini o'rganadi. U diskursning tuzilishida muhim rol o'ynaydi. Ushbu maqolada ingliz va o'zbek frazeologiyalarining leksik, semantik va madaniy jihatlari bo'yicha o'xshashliklari va farqlari tavsifiy va taqqosiy usullar orqali tahlil qilinadi.

Kalit so'zlar: Frazalogiya, so'z birikmalari, ma'no xilma xilligi, ibora, idioma, o'zbek tili, xorijiy til, madaniyat, metodologiya yutuq va kamchilar,

Аннотация: Фразеология, специализированная отрасль лингвистики наряду с лексикологией и морфологией, изучает устойчивые, идиоматические выражения в языке, такие как фразы, пословицы и идиомы, а также их концептуализацию. Она играет важную роль в структуре дискурса. В статье рассматриваются сходства и различия между английской и узбекской фразеологией с лексической, семантической и культурной точек зрения с использованием описательных и сравнительных методов.

Ключевые слова: Фразеология, словосочетания, многообразие значений, фраза, идиома, Узбекский язык, иностранный язык, культура, методология, достижения и недостатки.

Abstract: Phraseology, a specialized branch of linguistics alongside lexicology and morphology, studies fixed, idiomatic expressions in a language, such as phrases, proverbs, and idioms, and their conceptualization. It plays an important role in the structure of discourse. This article examines the similarities and differences between English and Uzbek phraseologies from lexical, semantic, and cultural perspectives, employing descriptive and comparative methods.

Key words: Phraseology, word combinations, diversity of meanings, phrase, idiom, Uzbek language, foreign language, culture, methodology, achievements and shortcomings.

Introduction

Phraseology, with its diversity, appeal, and vivid expressions of meaning in each language, plays a significant role in revealing the richness of linguistic combinations. It is particularly noteworthy that phraseology manifests differently across various dialogues. Moreover, phraseology contributes to uncovering the intrinsic value of a language, as well as its historical and cultural dimensions.

Phraseology has long been recognized as an important branch of linguistics and has been studied by numerous scholars over many years, a process that continues to the present day. Significant contributions to the development of phraseological studies have been made by such scholars as V. Fleischer, V. V. Vinogradov, E. D. Polivanov, B. A. Larin, A. V. Kunin, N. M. Shansky, L. P. Smith, and Ch. Bally.

One of the most prominent researchers in this field, A. V. Kunin, developed his theories, views, and interpretations of phraseology primarily on the basis of Russian, English, and Modern English languages. He emphasized that phraseology consists of stable semantic and structural units, arguing that although phraseological units may appear to be ordinary word combinations, each of them possesses a specific and fixed meaning. These ideas are reflected in his *English–Russian Phraseological Dictionary* (1970–1980).

V. V. Vinogradov, in turn, defined phraseological units as “stable combinations of words with an integral meaning that are reproduced in speech and have a fixed structure.” Moreover, his linguistic theories have been widely applied to the study of phraseological systems of other languages, including Uzbek, and have contributed significantly to the comparative analysis of phraseology. Another researcher, N. A. Amosova, also presented a number of theoretical views on English phraseology in her works published in 1963.

Leterature review

In linguistics, the significance of phraseology lies not only in identifying various types of word combinations in a language or in analyzing sentences from grammatical, lexical, and semantic perspectives, but also in revealing how these combinations, within a particular dialect, reflect culture, spiritual worldview, ideas, and values through language. The present article therefore considers it necessary to review the studies conducted to date before examining the comparative analysis of phraseological units in two languages, namely Uzbek and English.

In his work *Traité de stylistique française* (1909), **Charles Bally** examined phraseology under the term *locutions phraseologiques*. The scholar provided a clear explanation of the concepts of stylistics and phraseology, arguing that stylistics should not be analyzed solely on the basis of an individual writer’s subjective views, but rather through the linguistic resources inherent in a language, such as words, phrases, and stable expressions. From this perspective, Bally demonstrated that phraseological units are of particular interest as stable and effective means of expression within a language.

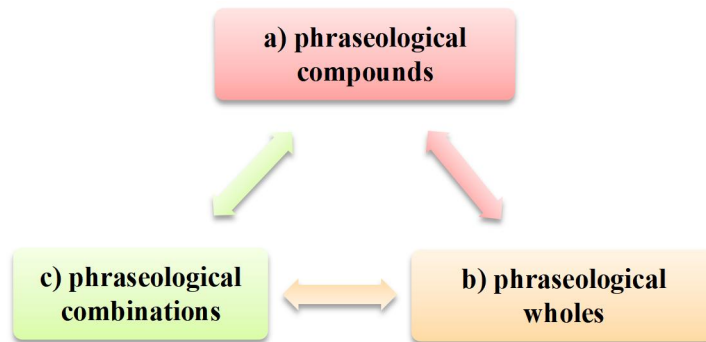
Bally also discussed phraseological and fixed expressions and divided their effects into two main types.

- ✓ **Natural effect**, which reflects the speaker’s emotional state and subjective expression.
- ✓ **Evocative effect**, which is closely connected with cultural background and contextual environment.

This approach proves the importance of studying phraseology from multiple dimensions. However, despite its theoretical value, Bally’s research lacks a sufficiently developed comparative perspective.

A representative of the Russian linguistic school, **V.V. Vinogradov**, classified phraseological units according to the degree of semantic unity of their components and clearly distinguished phraseological units from free word combinations and collocations. According to Vinogradov, “*Despite extensive research on phraseological units, challenges remain in their translation and interpretation across languages. Cultural differences often lead to variations in meaning, making it essential to analyze their cross-linguistic and contextual features.*”

Vinogradov divided phraseological units into three types based on semantic cohesion:



Although Vinogradov systematized the study of phraseology, his analysis was mainly conducted within the framework of a single language, and comparative issues remained limited.

A.P. Cowie, in his book *Phraseology: Theory, Analysis, and Applications*, presents a comprehensive overview of phraseology. After a wide-ranging introduction by the editor, the book introduces the main theoretical approaches, analyzes corpus data and phrase typology, and considers the application of phraseology to related disciplines, including lexicography, language learning, stylistics, and computational analysis. This work is regarded as the first comprehensive and up-to-date account of phraseology published in English.

Studies on English Phraseology

Numerous scholars, both native and non-native speakers of English, have produced books, textbooks, manuals, and articles on English linguistics, with many focusing specifically on phraseology. Their studies have addressed key aspects of English phraseology, including system, structure, semantics, word combinations, lexical meaning, and cultural connections. Particular attention has also been paid to the concept of the *idiom* and its defining characteristics.

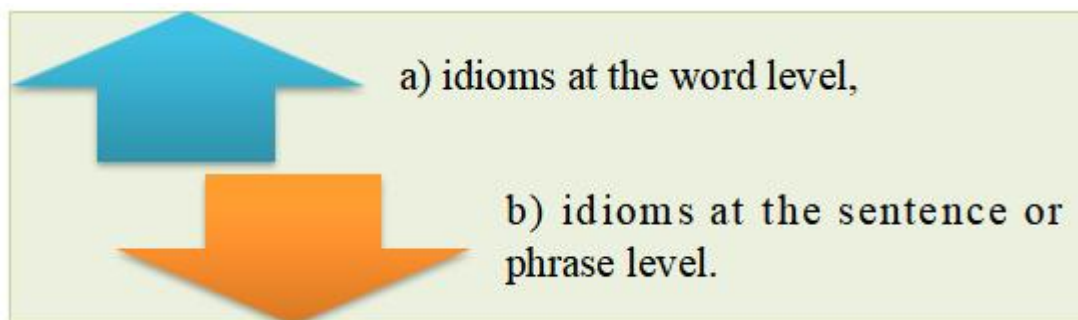
For instance, **Z. Kövecses** emphasized that idioms are not homogeneous units and that they differ significantly in form and meaning. **Arnold** (1968) noted that native speakers of English tend to perceive idioms as language-specific units and use them without clearly distinguishing between grammatical and lexical levels. **I. Makkai** argued that idioms, in a broad sense, may include individual words, word combinations, proverbs, and compound words. He divided idioms into two main categories:

In recent years, further contributions to phraseology have been made by scholars such as **Igor Mel'čuk**, whose work *General Phraseology: Theory and Practice* (2023) presents a universal theoretical framework, and **Hasan Alisoy** (2025), who proposed a structural and semantic classification of phraseological units in English, among other contemporary researchers.

Studies on Uzbek Phraseology

With regard to Uzbek phraseology, many scholars have made significant contributions to its formation and development. Among them are **Sh. Rahmatullayev**, with his *Explanatory Phraseological Dictionary of the Uzbek Language* (1978); **M. Husainov**, who incorporated idioms into the classification of phraseological units; **E. Mamatov**, whose works include *Problems of Lexical and Phraseological Norms in Modern Uzbek Literary Language* (1991) and *Issues in the Formation of Uzbek Phraseological Units* (2000); and **B. Yoʻldoshev**, who authored *Functional and Stylistic Features of Phraseological Units in Modern Uzbek Literary Language* (1994). These scholars have made substantial contributions to Uzbek linguistics.

The analysis of the above-mentioned studies facilitates a clearer understanding of the role and significance of phraseology in both languages. Nevertheless, it becomes evident that a systematic comparative analysis of English and Uzbek phraseology has largely been overlooked. Therefore, this article aims to address this gap by focusing specifically on the comparative study of phraseological units in English and Uzbek.



Methods

This study aims to comparatively examine the phraseological features of the Uzbek and English languages and adopts a **qualitative research approach**. In addition, the research is designed as a **cross-sectional study**, in which phraseological phenomena are analyzed within a single time frame.

During the data collection process, the scholarly works of various linguists and researchers were reviewed, and the analysis was based on reliable academic sources. The data were primarily collected from **secondary sources**, including phraseological units identified in the works of **A.V. Kunin, V.V. Vinogradov, A.P. Cowie**, as well as Uzbek scholars such as **Sh. Rahmatullayev**.

Several analytical methods were employed in this study, including **comparative-descriptive, structural, semantic, pragmatic, and linguocultural analysis**. The comparative method was used to identify similarities and differences in the phraseological systems of the two languages. Structural and semantic analyses helped determine grammatical features and meaning structures of phraseological units. Pragmatic analysis revealed how phraseological expressions convey emotions, attitudes, and behavioral meanings depending on the communicative context. The linguocultural approach, in turn, facilitated the interpretation of national and cultural characteristics reflected in the phraseological units of both languages.

Results and discussions

Cross-linguistic Semantic Features. The semantic characteristics of phraseology in both languages are viewed as relatively stable combinations; however, differences exist between their structural organization and meaning. In phraseological units, the literal meanings of individual components are not taken into account; rather, it is essential to comprehend the implicit meaning embedded behind the words and the expression as a whole.

For example, in English, the phrase “*open hands*” when translated literally means “*ochiq qo‘llar*” (“open hands”), but its actual phraseological meaning conveys the notion of **generosity and hospitality**. In this case, the meanings of the components do not correspond directly to the figurative meaning, and according to A. V. Kunin, such units function as **integral semantic wholes**. Although this expression is semantically equivalent to the Uzbek phrase “*qo‘li ochiq*”, they differ structurally.

It should be noted that the original form of phraseological units plays a significant role in their semantic structure. The combination of words often contributes to the creation of a meaning that is not directly predictable from the individual components. For instance, the English idiom “*come to one’s mind*,” denotes the emergence of an idea or thought and still maintains a semantic link between the components and the overall meaning. In Uzbek, a semantically similar function is performed by the expression “*og‘zi bo‘sh*”, although noticeable differences exist in word forms and structure.

Structural and Grammatical Differences

English phraseology reflects several core grammatical patterns in the formation of phraseological units, such as:

Structure	Example
Verb + noun	<i>(make a decision)</i>
Verb + preposition + noun	<i>(fall in love)</i>
Verb + adverb	<i>(break down)</i>
Adjective + noun	<i>(huge deal)</i>

Idioms occupy a special place in English phraseology, as they are often formed on the basis of metaphorical, figurative, and culturally motivated concepts.

In addition, interjectional, communicative, and comparative units also occupy an important place in phraseology. Similar constructions are found in Uzbek; however, they differ structurally from their English counterparts.

According to the views of Uzbek linguist **Sh. Rahmatullayev**, the majority of Uzbek phraseological units are **verbal constructions**, in which the verb often co-occurs with a noun. For example, “*bosh egdi*” conveys the meaning “to surrender,” while “*ko‘z tegdi*” is a fixed expression rooted in cultural context, meaning that an unpleasant event has occurred due to external influence.

The nominal component within such constructions may combine with adjectives or adverbs, resulting in different grammatical realizations. For instance, “*ko‘ngli bo‘sh*” describes a kind-hearted and compassionate person and differs from English constructions by its noun–adjective structure. When combined with adverbial meaning, expressions such as “*oyog‘ini qo‘liga olib yugurdi*” convey the sense of acting hastily or with great speed.

Linguocultural Differences in Phraseology

The phraseology of both languages demonstrates certain differences in terms of structure, semantics, and the degree of idiomatization. These differences have emerged as a result of historically formed lifestyles, national identity, religion, cultural worldview, and social needs. In both linguistic communities, speakers have aimed to convey their intentions and communicative goals effectively through language.

The formation of English phraseology has been significantly influenced by English literature, media, and the Christian religion. English phraseological metaphors frequently draw on elements of nature, animals, and social vocabulary. For example, expressions such as **“as busy as a bee”** (very hardworking), **“the apple of one’s eye”** (someone who is deeply loved and valued), **“a storm in a teacup”** (making a fuss over something insignificant), **“once in a blue moon”** (very rarely), and **“raining cats and dogs”** (heavy rain) carry culturally specific meanings deeply rooted in English linguistic and cultural traditions.

The significance of culture in Uzbek phraseology, like that of English, can be identified through several criteria. The Uzbek language has incorporated literary and artistic stylistic features shaped by national customs and traditions, Islamic culture, folklore, literature, art, Sharia-based values, as well as traditional crafts and livestock breeding. In Uzbek phraseological dictionaries, dominant themes include social harmony, the dignity of the individual, and the importance of moral upbringing. Interestingly, similar to English, Uzbek phraseology also makes extensive use of references to natural phenomena, household objects, and numerical expressions. For instance, expressions such as **“Qush uyasida ko‘rganini qiladi”** (a child imitates what he or she sees at home, emphasizing upbringing), **“Qolgan ishga qor yog‘ar”** (delayed work brings trouble, highlighting the value of time), and **“Sabr kosasi to‘ldi”** (one’s patience has run out) illustrate culturally embedded meanings and pragmatic intentions.

There are also expressions in English that are used humorously or light-heartedly, whereas similar expressions in Uzbek convey a different communicative purpose. For example, the English phrase **“break a leg”** is used to encourage someone in a humorous or informal manner, while the Uzbek expression **“omad yor bo‘lsin”** functions as a blessing, expressing goodwill and sincere emotional support. This demonstrates that although phraseological units in both languages may be similar in meaning, they differ in terms of communicative purpose and cultural perspective.

Conclusion

This research was aimed at comparatively analyzing the phraseological units of the English and Uzbek languages from semantic, structural-grammatical, pragmatic, and linguocultural perspectives. As a result of the study, it was revealed that phraseological units in both languages are regarded as semantically fixed and relatively stable units, and that their meanings are not equal to the original lexical meanings of the components participating in the units.

Pragmatic and linguocultural analyses proved that while social norms, personal opinion, freedom, and efficiency occupy a central position in English phraseology, Uzbek phraseology gives priority to national cultural thinking, collectivism, and moral upbringing. This shows that phraseological units serve not only to express meaningfulness in speech, but also function as a means of representing intercultural and historical values.

The results obtained from this research may contribute to the development of the field of comparative phraseology in the future and may serve as a scientific basis for further study of the structural and pragmatic use of phraseological units in intercultural communication and translation processes.

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