
National-cultural specific features of idioms polysemy realization in English, Russian and Uzbek languages

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Annotation *This article examines the national and cultural specificity of the realization of polysemy in idioms of the English, Russian, and Uzbek languages. The study highlights the theoretical foundations of idiom analysis, the role of polysemy in idiomatic systems, and the presence of cultural components in their semantics. A comparative analysis reveals both universal tendencies and language-specific features in idiomatic polysemy, showing how historical, religious, and everyday realities shape idiomatic meaning. The article also discusses the challenges of translating polysemous idioms and the influence of cultural factors on the development of secondary meanings. The findings have practical implications for translation studies, intercultural communication, and language teaching.*

Keywords *Idioms, polysemy, national and cultural specificity, English, Russian, Uzbek, comparative analysis, intercultural communication*

Национально-культурная специфика реализации полисемии в идиомах английского, русского и узбекского языков

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Аннотация *В статье рассматривается национально-культурная специфика реализации полисемии в идиомах английского, русского и узбекского языков. Освещаются теоретические основы изучения идиом, роль полисемии в системе идиоматики, а также наличие культурных компонентов в их семантике. В результате сопоставительного анализа выявлены как универсальные тенденции, так и языковые особенности в реализации полисемии, отражающие влияние истории, религии и повседневных реалий на формирование идиоматического значения. Обсуждаются трудности перевода полисемичных идиом и влияние культурных факторов на развитие вторичных значений. Результаты исследования имеют практическую значимость для теории перевода, межкультурной коммуникации и преподавания языков.*

Ключевые слова *Идиомы, полисемия, национально-культурная специфика, английский язык, русский язык, узбекский язык, сопоставительный анализ, межкультурная коммуникация*

Ingliz, rus va o'zbek tillarida idiomalarda polisemiya namoyon bo'lishining milliy-madaniy o'ziga xosliklari

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- Annotatsiya** *Maqolada ingliz, rus va o'zbek tillaridagi idiomalarda polisemiya namoyon bo'lishining milliy-madaniy xususiyatlari tahlil qilinadi. Idiomalarni o'rganishning nazariy asoslari, idiomatik tizimda polisemiya roli hamda ularning semantikasi tarkibidagi madaniy komponentlar yoritilgan. Qiyosiy tahlil natijasida idiomalardagi polisemiya namoyon bo'lishining umumiy tendensiyalari va tilga xos xususiyatlari aniqlanadi, shuningdek, tarix, din va kundalik hayot realiyalari idiomatik ma'noga qanday ta'sir ko'rsatishi ko'rsatib beriladi. Polisemiya xususiyatiga ega idiomalarni tarjima qilishdagi qiyinchiliklar va ikkilamchi ma'nolarning shakllanishida madaniy omillarning ta'siri muhokama qilinadi. Tadqiqot natijalari tarjimashunoslik, madaniyatlararo muloqot va til o'qitish amaliyotida muhim ahamiyat kasb etadi.*
- Kalit so'zlar** *Idiomalar, polisemiya, milliy-madaniy xususiyatlar, ingliz tili, rus tili, o'zbek tili, qiyosiy tahlil, madaniyatlararo muloqot*

Idioms constitute a special layer of the lexicon that reflects national-cultural values and the worldview of a people. As V.N. Telia notes, idioms are a "mirror of culture" since their semantics preserve historical experience, ethnic memory, and social stereotypes (Телия, 1996). One of the essential features of idiomatic expressions is polysemy, which allows idioms to realize different meanings depending on the context and cultural associations. According to A.N. Baranov and D.O. Dobrovol'skij, the polysemy of idioms is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but also the result of cognitive and cultural processes (Баранов, Добровольский, 2008).

Uzbek linguists also emphasize the national-cultural specificity of idioms. Sh. Rakhmatullaev highlights that idioms in the Uzbek language reflect the mentality, worldview, and everyday life of the people, and their polysemy is shaped by cultural associations and traditions (Rakhmatullaev, 2010). Similarly, F. Shamsiyeva underlines that

idioms are closely connected with the ethnolinguistic experience of a nation and therefore require comparative analysis when studying their semantics (Shamsiyeva, 2015).

The aim of this article is to identify the national-cultural specificity of the realization of polysemy in idioms of the English, Russian, and Uzbek languages. To achieve this aim, the following tasks are set:

- to analyze theoretical approaches to the study of idioms and polysemy;
- to identify examples of polysemous idioms in the compared languages;
- to determine cultural factors influencing the development of their meanings;
- to compare the realization of polysemy across English, Russian, and Uzbek idioms.

The object of the study is idioms in English, Russian, and Uzbek, while the subject of the research is their polysemous nature and the national-cultural specificity of how this polysemy is manifested.

Idioms occupy a special place in linguistics as stable expressions whose meanings cannot be reduced to the sum of their individual components. In modern linguistics, there are several approaches to defining idioms: structural, semantic, and cognitive. As noted by V.N. Telia (1996), an idiom functions as a "cultural sign" that reflects the values and mental representations of a given community. Similar views are expressed by Uzbek scholars, such as Sh. Rakhmatullaev (2010), who regards idioms as carriers of ethnocultural information.

Polysemy, or multiple meaning, is a universal linguistic phenomenon that is also widely manifested in idiomatic expressions. According to A.N. Baranov and D.O. Dobrovolsky (2008), the polysemy of idioms arises not only from semantic mechanisms but also from cognitive processes of reinterpretation influenced by cultural factors. In English, Russian, and Uzbek, the polysemy of idioms is often rooted in metaphorical models, a fact supported by research in the field of cognitive linguistics (Lakoff, Johnson, 1980).

The national-cultural component of idiomatic meaning plays a decisive role in shaping both the semantics and polysemy of idioms. Idioms frequently encode culture-specific knowledge, values, and traditions, making their semantic expansion and reinterpretation highly dependent on national worldview. This explains why the same idiomatic structure can acquire different shades of meaning in English, Russian, and Uzbek, reflecting the cultural and historical background of each linguistic community.

The polysemy of idioms in English, Russian, and Uzbek reveals certain universal tendencies. In all three languages, idioms tend to develop multiple meanings through metaphorical extension, metonymy, and cultural reinterpretation. For example, idioms related to body parts (e.g., *to keep an eye on* in English, *держатъ ухо въampo* in Russian, *qulog'ini osmoq* in Uzbek) demonstrate cross-linguistic similarity in their semantic models,

yet they also diverge in connotations shaped by cultural values. Thus, polysemy reflects both universal cognitive mechanisms and culture-specific semantics.

English idioms frequently reflect historical and social realities of Britain and the Anglophone world. Many idioms derive from maritime tradition (*to know the ropes*, *to be three sheets to the wind*), legal institutions (*to plead the fifth* in American English), and everyday life. Polysemy in such idioms often emerges when historical expressions acquire metaphorical meanings in modern contexts. For instance, *to cross the Rubicon* originally refers to a historical event but now also denotes an irreversible decision in any sphere of life. The cultural background of the English-speaking world thus serves as a key factor in shaping idiomatic polysemy.

Russian idioms often carry traces of folklore, Orthodox Christian traditions, and rural life. Expressions such as *бумъ баклуши* (literally "to split wood chips," meaning "to idle") or *отдать Богу душу* (literally "to give one's soul to God," meaning "to die") reveal strong cultural links to traditional crafts and religion. The polysemy of such idioms is closely connected with the symbolic worldview of Russian culture, where metaphors often merge spiritual, moral, and everyday domains. The multiplicity of meanings in Russian idioms thus reflects the coexistence of religious, historical, and folk elements.

Uzbek idioms vividly represent the values of Eastern culture, traditional lifestyle, and collective mentality. Idioms such as *og'ziga qarab turmoq* (literally "to look at someone's mouth," meaning "to wait for instructions") or *ko'ngli tog'dek* ("his heart is like a mountain," meaning "generous") illustrate how polysemy is realized through symbolic images deeply rooted in national traditions. Folklore, proverbs, and classical Eastern literature significantly influence the idiomatic stock of Uzbek. The polysemic nature of many expressions reflects the multi-layered worldview of Uzbek society,

where idioms embody respect for elders, family values, and communal harmony.

The analysis of English, Russian, and Uzbek idioms demonstrates both shared tendencies and distinctive features in the development of semantic nuances. For instance, idioms connected with emotions (e.g., *to have butterflies in one's stomach* in English, *душа не лежит* in Russian, *ko'ngli to'lmayapti* in Uzbek) all convey inner psychological states, yet the imagery differs. English tends to employ concrete metaphors from nature and daily life, Russian idioms often reflect deep emotional and spiritual connotations, while Uzbek idioms highlight communal values and symbolic references. Thus, similarities can be traced in the cognitive basis of idioms, but differences emerge in the semantic shades shaped by culture.

The polysemous character of idioms creates significant challenges for translators. A single idiom may carry several interrelated meanings that are not always reproducible in another language. For example, the English idiom *to break the ice* may mean both "to start a conversation" and "to overcome social tension." Its direct translation into Russian (*сломать лёд*) or Uzbek (*muzni eritmoq*) does not fully convey the pragmatic nuances. Translators often resort to functional equivalents or descriptive translation, yet in doing so they risk losing cultural connotations. Therefore, polysemy complicates equivalence and requires careful contextual interpretation.

Cultural background plays a decisive role in shaping the secondary meanings of idioms. In English, industrial and historical experiences gave rise to idioms like *to throw in the towel* (boxing origin, meaning "to give up"), which later developed broader figurative meanings. In Russian, religious and moral values influenced idioms such as *нести свой крест* ("to carry one's cross"), now used to describe personal hardships of various kinds. In Uzbek, idioms like *yuziga tupurmoq* ("to spit in one's face") evolved into metaphorical expressions of dishonor, reflecting social norms

of respect. These examples demonstrate that secondary meanings are inseparable from cultural heritage, historical realities, and collective mentality of each linguistic community.

The study of polysemy in idioms has direct implications for translation theory. Since idioms often carry multiple meanings embedded in cultural contexts, translators must go beyond literal equivalence and employ strategies that preserve both semantic nuance and cultural resonance. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of idiomatic polysemy, providing practical guidelines for achieving functional equivalence in English–Russian–Uzbek translation.

Idioms are powerful carriers of cultural identity, and their polysemous nature reflects the diversity of worldviews. A comparative study enhances intercultural awareness, as it enables speakers of different languages to recognize cultural-specific imagery and avoid misinterpretations. By highlighting similarities and differences in idiomatic expressions, this research promotes effective communication across English, Russian, and Uzbek cultural contexts.

In the field of pedagogy, the findings may be applied to teaching English, Russian, and Uzbek as foreign or second languages. Introducing idioms not only enriches learners' vocabulary but also develops cultural competence. Explaining the mechanisms of polysemy in idioms helps students understand figurative language, grasp cultural nuances, and use idiomatic expressions more appropriately in various contexts. Thus, the research supports communicative and culturally oriented approaches to language teaching.

The present study has demonstrated that the polysemy of idioms in English, Russian, and Uzbek is closely intertwined with cultural, historical, and social factors. Idioms, as linguistic and cultural phenomena, reveal national worldviews and value systems, and their multiple meanings reflect both universal

human experience and unique cultural specifics. The comparative analysis has shown that while certain semantic tendencies are common across the three languages, each culture develops distinct figurative layers shaped by its traditions, beliefs, and everyday practices.

The findings highlight the importance of considering cultural context in translation, intercultural communication, and language pedagogy. By exploring the polysemous nature of idioms, researchers and practitioners can gain deeper insights into how languages encode cultural meanings and how these

meanings can be effectively conveyed across linguistic boundaries.

Future research could expand the scope of analysis by including idioms from other languages, which would enrich the comparative perspective and allow for broader generalizations. Another promising direction lies in a more detailed investigation of specific semantic groups of idioms, such as those related to food, religion, or social interaction. Such studies would provide a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between polysemy and culture in idiomatic expressions.

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