

The Linguo-cultural features of Phraseological units expressing human character in English and Uzbek

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Annotation: This study examines phraseological units - idioms, proverbs, and fixed expressions - that express human character traits in both English and Uzbek. We explore how these linguistic artifacts reflect cultural narratives and construct notions of human character. This research examines the structure, meaning, and cultural aspects of phraseological units across different languages. It compares idiomatic expressions to identify similarities and differences shaped by cultural and linguistic variations. By analyzing a corpus of real-world language data, the study uncovers patterns that help improve translation strategies and deepen our understanding of how language influences thought. This cross-linguistic approach highlights the role of idioms in shaping cultural perspectives and communication. The study has implications for cognitive linguistics, translation studies, and intercultural communication, ultimately suggesting that the deep interrelationship between language and culture must be recognized in any comprehensive analysis of human character portrayal.

Key words: Phraseological units, human character, linguo-cultural features, English, Uzbek, idioms, Cultural Semantics.

Ingliz va o'zbek tillarida inson xarakterini ifodalovchi frazeologik birliklarning lingvomadaniy xususiyatlari

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Annotatsiya: Ushbu tadqiqot ingliz va o'zbek tillarida inson xarakter xususiyatlarini ifodalovchi frazeologik birliklarni - idiomalar, maqollar va mustahkam iboralarni - o'rganadi. Biz ushbu lingvistik artefaktlar qanday qilib madaniy qirralarni aks ettirishini va inson xakteri tushunchalarini shakllantirishini tadqiq qilamiz. Tadqiqot frazeologik birliklarning tuzilishi, ma'nosi va madaniy jihatlarini tahlil qiladi, ularni turli tillar orasida solishtirib, madaniy va lingvistik farqlardan kelib chiqadigan o'xshashlik va tafovutlarni aniqlaydi. Real til ma'lumotlari korpusini tahlil qilish orqali ushbu tadqiqot tarjima strategiyalarini takomillashtirish va til tafakkurga qanday ta'sir qilishini chuqurroq tushunishga yordam beruvchi qonuniyatlarni aniqlaydi. Ushbu tildan-tillarga solishtiruv yondashuvi idiomalarning madaniy nuqtai nazarni shakllantirish va muloqotdagi rolini yoritadi. Tadqiqot kognitiv lingvistika, tarjima tadqiqotlari va madaniyatlararo kommunikatsiyaga ta'sir ko'rsatadi hamda til va madaniyat o'rtasidagi chuqur o'zaro bog'liqlikni har qanday inson xarakterini tahlil qilishda e'tiborga olish lozimligini ta'kidlaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: Frazeologik birliklar, inson xakteri, lingvo-madaniy xususiyatlar, ingliz tili, o'zbek tili, idiomalar, madaniy semantika.

Фразеологические единицы, выражающие черты характера человека в английском и узбекском языках: лингвокультурные особенности

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Аннотация: Данное исследование изучает фразеологические единицы – идиомы, пословицы и устойчивые выражения – выражающие характеристики личности на английском и узбекском языках. Мы исследуем, как эти лингвистические артефакты отражают культурные нарративы и формируют представления о человеческом характере. Исследование анализирует структуру, значение и культурные аспекты фразеологизмов, сравнивая их между языками, выявляя сходства и различия, возникающие из культурных и лингвистических различий. Анализируя корпус реальных языковых данных, исследование выявляет закономерности, которые помогают совершенствовать стратегии перевода и глубже понимать влияние языка на мышление. Сравнительный межъязыковой подход раскрывает роль идиом в формировании культурных взглядов и их функции в коммуникации. Исследование затрагивает когнитивную лингвистику, переводоведческие исследования и межкультурную коммуникацию, подчеркивая глубокую взаимосвязь языка и культуры, которую необходимо учитывать при анализе любых характеристик личности.

Ключевые слова: фразеологические единицы, человеческий характер, лингво-культурные особенности, английский язык, узбекский язык, идиомы, культурная семантика.

Introduction. Language is more than a medium for communication - it serves as a powerful reflection of a society's values, traditions, and worldview. Within language, phraseological units, commonly referred to as idioms or set expressions, express cultural wisdom, societal norms, and shared human experiences. These units are particularly significant in shaping perceptions of human character, as they convey attitudes toward virtues, flaws, and personality traits in a way that is often metaphorical and deeply rooted in cultural heritage.

Understanding the phraseological units that describe human character in different languages provides insight into the mentality and social structures of various communities. English and Uzbek, which belong to distinct linguistic families - Germanic and Turkic, respectively - offer unique perspectives on human traits through idiomatic expressions. While English phraseological units often emphasize individualism, pragmatism, and self-reliance, Uzbek idioms highlight society or group values, morality, and respect for tradition. These linguistic tendencies are shaped by historical, cultural, and social influences, reinforcing the idea that phraseological units are not merely linguistic constructs but cultural artifacts.

Cowie (1998) states that Veronika Teliya and her colleagues develop a conceptual framework for describing cultural data as represented in the meanings of multiword units. They argue that phraseology is a particularly fruitful point of focus for 'linguo-cultural' analysis. This is especially true of restricted lexical collocations, to which the analyst cannot do full justice unless cultural meanings are taken into account. According to him, idiomatic expressions related to a certain culture are carried forward through the way people speak and act, shaped by traditions in language and usage. Words and expressions, particularly the unique phrases that define a group, play a vital role in building and preserving that group's sense of identity and belonging over time. Language isn't just a tool - it's a bridge that connects generations and keeps the spirit of a culture alive. (Cowie, 1998).

This study examines the linguo-cultural features of phraseological units expressing human character in English and Uzbek, identifying both commonalities and differences. By analyzing their semantic and cultural significance, this research outlines how different societies conceptualize human traits, behavioral tendencies, and social interactions. The findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of cross-cultural communication, aiding translators, language learners, and researchers in grasping the nuanced meanings embedded in phraseology.

Phraseological Units as Cultural Markers. Phraseological units, or fixed expressions, go beyond just decorating speech – they carry a community’s cultural values, traditions, and shared experiences. They often reveal how people think, what they value, and how they see the world around them. As Dobrovol’skij and Piirainen (2006) explain, these expressions are packed with cultural meaning that’s often taken for granted by native speakers.

Take the English idiom “to have a heart of gold,” for example. It describes someone who is kind and generous, and enjoys helping other people (Collins Dictionary). In Uzbek, the phrase “ko’ngli ochiq odam” (an open-hearted person) carries a similar meaning but focuses more on emotional openness and generosity traits that are highly respected in Uzbek culture, especially in the context of hospitality and social harmony.

These expressions often reflect common images or ideas tied to a specific culture. In English, zoonyms or animal names play a significant role in both linguistics and culture (Tuygunova, 2023). They are frequently used to describe people’s traits: “a white elephant,” “brave as a lion,” “quiet as a mouse.” Each animal symbolizes a personality type familiar to Western culture. In Uzbek, their ideas or meanings look like each other but are grounded in different experiences. For example, “ayiqdek polvon” (brave as a lion) metaphorically conveys the image of someone who is extraordinarily powerful and robust, comparing their strength to the might of a bear which unlike Uzbek, lion is the symbol of powerfulness in English mentality.

Metaphors also play a big role in shaping how idioms are formed. English often uses temperature-related metaphors for emotions, like “cold-hearted” or “warm personality.” In Uzbek, expressions are more likely to revolve around the word “ko’ngil” (the heart or inner self), such as “ko’ngli xira” (a sad-hearted person), “ko’ngli qora” (a spiteful person) or “ko’ngli yayragan” (a joyful-hearted person) which reflect deeper emotional states (Rakhmatullaev, 1978).

Cultural values show up clearly in how different societies express behavior. English speakers might say “mind your own business” or “speak your mind,” emphasizing individuality and assertiveness. In contrast, Uzbek idioms encourage modesty and thoughtfulness, like “tilingni tiygin” (watch your tongue) or “o’zini bilgan odam” (a person who knows their place), which underline the importance of humility in social interactions.

Semantic analysis of character traits. Phraseologisms are divide into positive, negative and neutral connotations in terms of semantic analysis. Phraseological units expressing human character are also categorizing into three main groups: positive, negative and neutral evaluative meanings. For example:

1. Positive evaluation: High blood (sher yurak), a big heart (bag’ri keng), merry as a cricket (bir qop yong’oq)
2. Negative evaluation: to have sticky fingers (qo’li egri), hard heart (tosh yurak), tight fist (ochko’z)
3. Neutral evaluation: as mild as dove (qo’yday yuvosh), a queer bird (oydan tushgan) (Omonturdieva, 2025)

Cross-cultural similarities and and differences. A comparative analysis of English and Uzbek PUs reveals both universal and culturally specific patterns in how societies perceive and describe human nature.

Similarities between English and uzbek phraseologisms

1. Anthropocentric Nature. Both English and Uzbek phraseological units center heavily on human behavior and psychology. This indicates that English and Uzbek phraseologies reflect a deep anthropocentric nature. In both languages, human beings are placed at the center of figurative expressions, and their character traits are conceptualized through culturally shared metaphors.

These languages reflect internal state of people with metaphorical expressions, such as sadness, courage, happiness, fear and others.

Emotion	English Ph units	Uzbek Ph units	meaning
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Sadness	To lose heart	Ko'ngli cho'kmoq	To become hopeless
Joy	On cloud nine	Osmonga uchmoq	Extremely happy
Fear	Heart in one's mouth	Yuragi og'ziga chiqmoq	Extremely afraid

In these phraseological units, human body (heart, ko'ngil, og'iz) is used as the center of emotions which refer to a key anthropocentric feature.

2. Use of Metaphor and Symbolism. In both languages, metaphors play a crucial role. For instance, animals, moral and social traits are commonly used to symbolize character traits:

Example: English: *as sly as a fox, as stubborn as a mule*

Uzbek: *tulkidek ayyor, eshakdek o'jar*

These examples illustrate the universal conceptual metaphor "human is animal" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Example: English: *a man of his word*

Uzbek: *gapida turadigan odam*

These phraseological units reflect shared human values such as honesty and reliability.

Differences between English and Uzbek phraseologisms

Although phraseological units which encapsulate human traits exist in both English and Uzbek there are significant differences in terms of cultural, linguistic and semantic point of view:

1. It is true that phraseological units express the tradition and historical experience of each language. English culture relies mostly on individualism, universal or religious sources. When it comes to Uzbek culture, loyalty to family or Islamic and national images.

Example: *a self-made man - o'z mehnati bilan odam bo'lgan*. In English, a person who successes in her/his own.

Black sheep (of the family) - oila yuzini yerga urgan bola. Both of Phraseological units are negative, but differ from their connotations.

2. Structural and grammatical differences of phraseological units differentiate significantly. In English, expressions are simpler and doer of the action is showed clearly. Unlike English, Uzbek is rich in poetic nature and expressiveness, and subject is not showed directly.

Example: *All bark and no bite – ko'p gapirib hech narsa qilmaydigan odam*

Moreover, English PUs often follow the structure: "(as) + adjective + as + Noun Phrase (NP)". For example, *cold as ice* which means a person who is lack of feeling (Novoselec & Parizoska, 2012). Uzbek idioms are more likely to take the form of metaphorical clauses or proverbs (Komilova, 2020). For example, *It hurar, karvon o'tar* ("The dog barks, but the caravan goes on") conveys the idea of ignoring unimportant criticism and continuing one's path.

In the English language, many phraseological units are also constructed like "V+NP" structure and adverbs or adjectives to modify the noun. For example: *to have a short fuse (salga qizishadigan)* means a person has a quick temper or anger easily. In Uzbek, there are some phraseologisms which are equal to sentences with their structure. However, the whole sentence is equal to one word such as, the idiom *boshi osmonga yetdi* define a person who is extremely happy.

3. Religious and Traditional Influences are clearly seen in both languages. Uzbek phraseology often incorporates Islamic and traditional values: *musulmon kishiga o'xshagan* – describing a modest, honest person. English idioms are more secular or rooted in Christian tradition: *a Good Samaritan* who helps someone in need or people in trouble without expecting anything in return.

Translation and Cultural Transfer. Translating PUs is challenging due to cultural specificity. Full equivalence is rare; most idioms require cultural adaptation or explanatory translation. Translating phraseological units (PUs) is not easy because it involves more than just finding words

with similar meanings in another language. Translation of these expressions often presents challenges due to their idiomatic and cultural nature (Baker, 2011). Therefore, they are difficult to translate directly. Since idioms are tied to specific cultures and ways of thinking, it is rare to find another idiom in the target language that matches both in words and in meaning.

In some cases, some phraseological units are translated word for word and they have their full equivalence. Full equivalence in phraseological translation occurs when an idiom in the source language has an exact or near-identical counterpart in the target language, both in semantic content and figurative meaning. This type of equivalence is rare but highly valuable for translators because it preserves both the cultural imagery and the emotional impact of the original phrase. For example, *as sly as a fox* - *tulkidek ayyor*. Both use the fox as a metaphor for cunning behaviour.

Full equivalence makes translation more efficient and natural. It reflects shared conceptual metaphors between cultures and facilitates easier cross-cultural communication.

Usually, translators use partial equivalents or replace the original idiom with a culturally similar expression. For example, the English idiom *"to wear one's heart on one's sleeve"* can be translated into Uzbek as *"ko'nglini yashirmaslik"* (not hiding one's emotions). While this version does not use the same metaphor, it still expresses the idea clearly.

Sometimes, there is no idiom in the target language that fits the original. In such cases, translators may use a descriptive translation or try to find a phrase that serves the same function. For instance, the English idiom *"a cold fish,"* which describes someone who is emotionally distant, has no direct match in Uzbek. A phrase like *"hissiz odam"* (an emotionless person) can be used, but it lacks the colorful image of the original.

There are also situations where a literal translation might confuse the reader or even be inappropriate. That's why translators must pay close attention to both the meaning and the cultural context of the idiom. A good translation doesn't just transfer words - it transfers meaning, emotion, and cultural feeling. So, translating idioms well requires not only strong language skills, but also a deep understanding of both cultures and the ability to adapt creatively.

Conclusion. Phraseological units are not only used to make language more expressive - they also show the values, beliefs, and ways of thinking of a culture. This research has shown that although some human qualities, like kindness, bravery, dishonesty, or hypocrisy, are common in all cultures, the way these ideas are expressed in idioms is different in English and Uzbek. These differences come from each culture's history, traditions, and way of life.

In English, many idioms focus on the individual, strong emotions, and personal independence. This reflects Western values such as self-confidence and personal freedom. In contrast, Uzbek idioms often show respect for the group, modesty, and peaceful relationships. These are important values in Uzbek culture, where family and community play a central role.

These cultural meanings are important in translation. When translators understand the deeper cultural ideas behind idioms, they can give more accurate and meaningful translations. This is also helpful for teachers and students who want to understand both the language and the culture. Because idioms are not just decorative parts of language – they carry the memory and identity of a culture. Studying them helps us better understand how language and culture are connected. Future research can compare idioms in other Turkic or Indo-European languages to learn more about how people express shared human experiences in different ways.

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