



CULTURAL VALUES REFLECTED IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS: A COMPARATIVE LINGUOCULTURAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract: *This article explores the manifestation of national-cultural values within the phraseological systems of the Uzbek and English languages. Phraseological units (PUs), including idioms, proverbs, and fixed expressions, serve as a "micro-world" of a nation's soul, preserving historical experience, social norms, and ethical values. Through a comparative analysis, this study identifies both universal human values and unique cultural markers—specifically the English emphasis on individualism, maritime history, and privacy, contrasted with the Uzbek focus on collectivism, hospitality, and agrarian tradition. The research utilizes the "linguo-cultural" approach to demonstrate how language serves as a repository for a nation's cognitive and cultural identity.*

Key words: *phraseology, linguoculturology, cultural values, Uzbek linguistics, English idioms, ethno-psychology, conceptual worldview*

INTRODUCTION

Language is far more than a mere instrument for exchanging information; it serves as the primary vessel for transmitting culture. Within any language, phraseological units (PUs)—including idioms, proverbs, and fixed expressions—represent the most culturally rich layer. Unlike standard vocabulary, PUs carry extralinguistic information that extends beyond literal meaning, reflecting a community's historical experience, religious beliefs, and geographic realities. These expressions often encode social norms, ethical values, and cognitive frameworks that shape the way a people perceive the world. By examining these units, linguists can gain insight into the deeper structures of thought and cultural identity that define a society.

Uzbek linguist A. Mamatov (2012) emphasizes that the study of phraseology is inseparable from the study of the national mindset. Phraseological analysis provides a lens through which the implicit values and



priorities of a culture become visible. When comparing Uzbek and English PUs, it becomes evident that each linguistic tradition conveys distinctive “cultural codes.” These codes reveal not only differences in everyday behaviors and social expectations but also broader paradigmatic distinctions: the Western individualistic mindset contrasts sharply with the Eastern collective-traditional worldview. Understanding these differences allows for a more nuanced appreciation of cross-cultural communication and cognition.

One of the most salient distinctions between Uzbek and English cultural values emerges in their conceptualization of human relationships and social hierarchy. In Uzbek culture, collectivist ideals dominate, and the family unit, along with the wider “Mahalla” or community, occupies a central place. Many Uzbek PUs stress respect for elders, the continuity of kinship, and obligations within social networks. For example, the expression “Bir kuni koʻrganingga qirq kun salom ber” (“Greet someone for forty days even if you saw them only once”) underscores the importance of maintaining enduring social ties and honoring hierarchical relationships. Such expressions encode a worldview in which social cohesion and interpersonal respect are paramount.

By contrast, English phraseology often reflects individualistic values, emphasizing personal autonomy, self-reliance, and private space. Idioms such as “My house is my castle” highlight the cultural significance of personal boundaries and the individual’s right to control one’s domain. This focus on independence and privacy illustrates a broader Western paradigm in which individual goals and personal freedom frequently take precedence over communal obligations. The contrast with Uzbek collectivist norms is particularly evident in how social hierarchy and relational obligations are perceived and linguistically represented.

Attitudes toward labor and the perception of time constitute another domain in which Uzbek and English PUs differ. English expressions frequently treat time as a valuable commodity, reflecting historical influences such as the Industrial Revolution and capitalist development. PUs like “Time is money,” “To buy time,” “Time is a great healer,” and “To kill two birds with one stone” convey a pragmatic, linear understanding of time, emphasizing efficiency, planning, and measurable productivity. These expressions encode a cultural orientation that values temporal discipline and instrumental action.

By contrast, Uzbek PUs link work and labor to moral character, spiritual fulfillment, and divine blessing (baraka). Proverbs such as “Mehnat, mehnatning tagi rohat” (“Labor, and the root of labor is pleasure/comfort”) reflect an agrarian worldview in which persistent effort is rewarded both materially and spiritually. The Uzbek perspective emphasizes patience, endurance, and ethical engagement with one’s duties, viewing labor as a



holistic process that nurtures the self and the community rather than merely generating economic outcomes. This illustrates a culturally embedded connection between ethics, spirituality, and daily life.

The comparison of Uzbek and English phraseological units highlights the ways in which language encodes cultural values, social norms, and cognitive orientations. By analyzing expressions related to human relationships, social hierarchy, labor, and time, one can identify the distinctive cognitive frameworks that underpin collectivist versus individualist paradigms. These insights demonstrate that PUs are not only linguistic constructs but also repositories of cultural knowledge, enabling successive generations to internalize and transmit the worldview of their community.

Cultural values are often vividly reflected in the “source domain” of metaphors employed in phraseology, particularly when it comes to food and hospitality. In Uzbek culture, bread (non) occupies a sacred status, symbolizing life, sustenance, and social bonds. Many Uzbek PUs leverage this symbolism to convey ethical and relational meanings. For instance, the expression “Nonini yarimta qilmoq” (“To cut someone’s bread in half”) metaphorically denotes reducing another person’s livelihood or resources, highlighting both material and moral dimensions. Bread, in this sense, becomes more than a staple food; it is a medium through which cultural priorities, such as generosity, fairness, and respect, are communicated.

Closely tied to the symbolism of bread is the concept of the *dasturxon*, the traditional Uzbek spread or tablecloth, which represents hospitality, family honor, and communal harmony. In Uzbek social practice, preparing and sharing a *dasturxon* is not merely a culinary act but a performance of cultural and ethical values. The linguistic reflection of this practice in PUs demonstrates how deeply embedded notions of respect, generosity, and social cohesion are within everyday communication. These expressions encode a worldview in which hospitality is both a moral duty and a measure of personal and family integrity.

English phraseology, by contrast, draws metaphors from its own culinary and domestic history, reflecting different cultural priorities and historical staples. Expressions such as “Not my cup of tea” indicate personal preference or disinterest, while “The meat of the matter” points to the essential core of an issue. These idioms, while related to food, emphasize individual taste and cognitive clarity rather than communal sharing or ethical obligations. The contrast illustrates how food metaphors in language encode broader cultural attitudes toward social interaction and individual versus collective focus.

Religious and mythological heritage is another domain in which PUs encode core values and cognitive frameworks. English idioms frequently reflect



Biblical origins or Christian ethical principles. Phrases like “To turn the other cheek” or “The forbidden fruit” encapsulate moral guidance and narrative motifs rooted in Christian scripture, thereby transmitting cultural norms through everyday language. These expressions reinforce the cultural lens through which morality, obedience, and temptation are understood within English-speaking contexts.

Uzbek phraseology, in contrast, is heavily influenced by Islamic teachings and Sufi philosophical thought. Expressions such as “Xudo xohlasa” (“God willing”) and those invoking sabr (patience) or shukr (gratitude) are not mere religious utterances; they permeate everyday speech and cognitive frameworks. They reflect the deeply held belief in taqdir (fate) and the integration of spiritual values into daily life. These PUs encode a worldview where divine guidance, ethical endurance, and gratitude are inseparable from social and personal conduct, shaping how individuals interpret events and make decisions.

Animal metaphors, or zoometaphors, further illustrate the cultural lenses through which traits are valorized or stigmatized. In English, the lion often symbolizes power and dominance, as seen in phrases like “The lion’s share”, reflecting admiration for strength, leadership, and authority. Uzbek phraseology, by contrast, assigns nuanced traits to animals rooted in historical and environmental experience. The wolf (bo’ri) embodies both predatory danger and endurance, reflecting the nomadic history of Central Asia. Similarly, the camel (tuya) symbolizes patience, resilience, and physical bulk, reflecting both the demands of desert life and Silk Road trade heritage—qualities rarely encoded in English idioms.

Together, these differences in metaphorical language underscore how deeply cultural, historical, and environmental contexts shape phraseology. Food, hospitality, religion, and animals are not neutral domains but serve as cognitive and ethical touchstones through which societies transmit their values. By examining these patterns, one can trace the ways in which Uzbek and English PUs encode collective versus individual priorities, ethical systems, and lived experience, offering a rich comparative perspective on the interplay between language, thought, and culture.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of Uzbek and English phraseological units reveals that while both languages aim to describe the human condition, they do so through different “lenses.” English PUs lean toward pragmatism, individualism, and maritime/industrial history. Uzbek PUs, conversely, are anchored in collectivism, hospitality, Islamic ethics, and an agrarian-nomadic past. For the translator and the linguist, understanding these underlying values is crucial; a phrase is never just a collection of words, but a “cultural



fragment" that requires deep empathy to be fully understood in another language.

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