



COMPARISON BETWEEN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES IDIOMS.
(SAID AHMAD'S "UFQ" TRILOGY)

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Abstract: *This article explores the nature and role of phraseological units—particularly idioms—in English and Uzbek, focusing on their linguistic features, cultural significance, and the challenges they present in translation. The study emphasizes the importance of understanding idioms in second language acquisition, as they are widely used in everyday speech, literature, and media.*

Through a comparative analysis of selected idiomatic expressions in English and Uzbek, the paper categorizes idioms into direct equivalents, partial equivalents, and non-equivalents. It highlights the need for cultural competence and contextual awareness when interpreting or translating idioms across languages. The findings suggest that while some idioms have clear correspondences, others require descriptive or functional translation. The article concludes that mastering idioms not only improves linguistic proficiency but also facilitates cross-cultural communication and more accurate translation.

Keywords: *phraseology, idioms, figurative language, comparison, semantic meaning, expressions*

INTRODUCTION

Uzbek language has its own history. During the developing Uzbek language, it collected a great number of phraseological units, which people found successful, interesting and still have used them. Thus this linguistic phraseology plays an important role in Uzbek and English language learning. English idioms are affected with one thousand year history of England, compared to long history of Uzbek. Both culture and language distinguish, because history is various. Nowadays, the number of people who learn English is increasing, so English knowledge and speaking skills are needed in reality. Knowing English phraseology gives an opportunity to read and understand both idioms in publicistic and fiction extremely easier. Using idioms in your speech appears more expressive. "By idioms, as with the help of various shades of colors, the information aspect of language is supplemented by a sensual-intuitive description of our world, our life" ⁶V.A.Kabulianskiy suggested in his book "Concise dictionary of modern English idioms". By learning a foreign language as a person simultaneously interconnects two national cultures, native and foreign one. A good knowledge of the foreign language is impossible without knowledge of the idioms.

LITERATURE VIEW Phraseological units, particularly idioms, have been the focus of extensive research in both Western and Central Asian linguistic traditions. These multi-word expressions are characterized by their semantic unity, stability, and idiomatic meaning. Scholars have explored their structure, classification, cultural implications, and translation challenges across languages. In the English linguistic context, Cowie and Fernando contributed significantly to the understanding of idioms, highlighting their

⁶ Kabulianskiy, V.A. (1996) Concise dictionary of modern English idioms. Moscow



pragmatic and stylistic functions. Fernando, in particular, emphasized that “Idioms often reflect socio-cultural values and serve as a vehicle for emotional and metaphorical expression”.⁷ In the Uzbek linguistic tradition, A. Abduazizov and R. Karimov have conducted influential research on the nature and classification of Uzbek idioms. Abduazizov’s Phraseological Dictionary of the Uzbek Language serves as a crucial resource, while Karimov’s theoretical work explores the grammatical and semantic properties of Uzbek phraseologisms. Comparative studies, such as those by A. Jalilova and M. Umarova, have analyzed idiomatic alternation between English and Uzbek. These studies emphasize the difficulty of finding direct equivalents due to differences in cultural imagery and historical context. They also classify correspondences into full, partial, and zero equivalence, suggesting different translation strategies based on idiomatic structure and cultural load. Moreover A. Jalilova mentions as a conclusion in article that “By learning foreign language, a person simultaneously intercorrects two national culture; native and foreign one, good knowledge of the foreign language is impossible without knowledge of its idioms”.⁸

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Phraseological units, also known as set expressions or fixed combinations, are a significant part of any language’s lexicon. They are multi-word combinations that function as a single semantic unit and often have meanings that are not deducible from the meanings of their individual components. Unlike free word combinations, phraseological units are characterized by their stability, idiomaticity, and resistance to modification. Linguists generally classify phraseological units into several categories, including idioms, phrasal verbs, collocations, proverbs, and fused expressions. Each type varies in terms of its structure and degree of transparency, but all share the feature of being commonly used, culturally bound, and semantically rich. The study of phraseological units is essential because they enrich language and enhance expressive power, reflect cultural and historical contexts, pose challenges in translation due to their figurative nature, play a vital role in language fluency and natural communication. Both English and Uzbek languages have vast inventories of phraseological units, many of which are culturally specific. Understanding these expressions is critical for learners, translators, and linguists who aim to bridge linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Here are definitions and function of phraseological units were given with comparing both Uzbek and English languages.

“In English, idioms are a type of phraseological unit whose meaning is figurative and cannot be inferred from the literal definitions of the constituent words. They are deeply rooted in cultural context and often reflect unique linguistic traditions”.⁹ For example, the idiom “kick the bucket” means to die and does not relate directly to the literal act of kicking a bucket. Also, in Uzbek language the meaning of idioms (phraseologik birikmalar yoki

⁷ Cowie, A. P. (1998). *Phraseology: Theory, analysis and applications*. Oxford University Press. Fernando, C. (1996). *Idioms and idiomaticity*. Oxford University Press

⁸ Jalilova, A. (2019). *Language analysis of idioms: A comparison in Uzbek and English*. *Lingual analysis of idioms comparison in Uzbek and English languages*, Tashkent, pp. 49p.

⁹ Fernando, C. (1996). *Idioms and idiomaticity*. Oxford University Press



kochma ma'noli iboralar) can not be understood literally. For example, "Ko'zini ochmoq"-literally "to open one's eyes", but idiomatically, it can mean "to become aware" or "to realize the truth".

Set expressions are fixed, conventional phrases that are regularly used in speech and writing. While some may carry idiomatic meaning, others are used in standardized forms for social or functional purposes. Examples include greetings such as "Good morning" and formal openings like "Ladies and gentlemen".¹⁰ In Uzbek, set expressions (barqaror birikmalar) are common word combination used in specific situations. For example, "Rahmat aytmoq"-to say thank you or "Yaxshi kunlar tilayman"-I wish you good days.

Phrasal verbs consist of a base verb followed by one or more particles (prepositions or adverbs), which together form a new meaning distinct from the original verb. For instance, "give up" means to quit or stop trying, and its meaning differs significantly from the verb "give" used in isolation.¹¹ Although the term phrasal verb is specific to the English language, similar constructions also exist in Uzbek. While they may differ structurally from those in English, they are similar in meaning and function. In Uzbek, equivalents to phrasal verbs often appear in the form of figurative verbs, verb constructions with postpositions, and phraseological expressions. For instance, "qaytib kelmoq"-to return, "chiqib ketmoq"-to go out.

Word combinations refer to any grouping of words that are commonly used together in a language. These may be free (formed spontaneously, such as "open a window") or fixed (collocations or habitual pairings, such as "make a decision"). "The degree of stability and idiomaticity varies across different types of combinations."¹² Thus, the concept of word combinations also exists in the Uzbek language and refers to how words combine to form meaningful units. Although the grammatical structure may differ from that of English, their function and importance in language construction are quite similar. Word combinations in Uzbek, like in English, play a crucial role in expressing ideas clearly, enriching speech, and facilitating effective communication. These are "kitob o'qimoq-reading a book, dars tayyorlamoq-doing a homework, chiroyli qiz-beautiful girl".

Fusion expressions, also known as fused phraseological units, represent the highest degree of semantic fusion within phraseology. "In these expressions, the original meanings of the components are entirely lost, and the phrase functions as a single, indivisible semantic whole. For example, "spill the beans" means to reveal a secret, and this meaning cannot be derived from the individual words."¹³ Although the term fusion expression is primarily used in English linguistics, similar constructions undoubtedly exist in the Uzbek language. In Uzbek, such expressions are typically classified as stable phraseological units (barqaror frazeologik birliklar yoki kochma ma'noli iboralar) or figurative idioms (ko'chma ma'noli iboralar). These expressions cannot be translated word-for-word into other languages without losing their cultural and emotional nuance. For instance, "tilini yutib

¹⁰ Gläser, R. (1988). The grading of idiomaticity as a presupposition for a taxonomy of idioms. In W. Hüllen & R. Schulze (Eds.), *Understanding the lexicon: Meaning, sense and world knowledge in lexical semantics* (pp. 264–279). Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag.

¹¹ McCarthy, M., & O'Dell, F. (2004). *English idioms in use: Intermediate*. Cambridge University Press.

¹² Sinclair, J. (1991). *Corpus, concordance, collocation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹³ Vinogradov, V. V. (1977). *Lexicology and lexicography*. Moscow: Nauka.



yubormoq” would not make sense literally in English; its figurative equivalent would be “to be at a loss for words.”

Having clarified the various types of phraseological units in both languages, it is now appropriate to turn our attention to stable expressions, specifically idioms, which constitute a significant part of phraseological units. This section aims to highlight key research findings related to idioms, discuss their importance in language acquisition, and examine the alternation of idiomatic expressions between Uzbek and English.

Phraseology is a vital and rich part of any language. Our daily life and worldview are expressed with more depth and color through idioms, which enhance both spoken and written communication. Idioms often reflect historical, social, and cultural experiences, revealing how language and culture evolve together. Understanding idioms is essential for achieving fluency in a language, as they possess figurative meanings that are often difficult to interpret, even when one knows the individual words. Writers frequently use idioms to describe the inner states and behaviors of characters in a vivid and culturally resonant way. For instance, in the Ufq trilogy by renowned Uzbek writer Said Ahmad, the character Azamjon’s emotional state is expressed through the idiom “qo’lini yuvib, qo’ltiqqa urmoq,”¹⁴ which is functionally equivalent to the English expression “to give up.” This comparison demonstrates the cultural and expressive value of idiomatic language and the need for idiom-aware translation. To accurately translate idioms between languages, it is important to understand their historical origins, cultural context, and figurative function. As U. Hoshimov and I. Yakubov state in *Methods of Teaching English*, “The difficulty in learning idioms stems from their structural uniqueness and deep-rooted cultural associations. These differences make literal translation ineffective, often requiring equivalent or descriptive substitution”.¹⁵ Many idioms can be grouped into semantic fields, such as work, emotion, or social behavior. In this study, we analyzed several Uzbek and English idioms related to the semantic field of work, chosen from phraseological dictionaries:

Get/go to work – ishga kirishmoq

A bad workman quarrels with his tools – yomon kosib bigiz tanlar

Many hands make light work – ko’pdan quyon qochib qutulmas

No bees, no honey; no work, no money – mashaqqatsiz baxt kelmas, mehnatsiz taxt kelmas

Care killed the cat – ish qartitmaydi, balki baxt qaritadi.

These examples show that while some idioms in Uzbek and English may share functional or semantic equivalents, others differ significantly due to cultural nuances. For example, the Uzbek idiom “Ko’nglini ko’tarmoq” may be loosely translated as “to cheer up” in English, but the emotional depth and metaphorical image differ. Similarly, the idiom “Xamir uchidan patir” is equivalent to “a piece of cake” in English, both expressing the idea of something being very easy. This comparison supports the importance of identifying phraseological equivalents—that is, expressions in the target language that convey the same idea, even if the literal words differ. Some idioms have direct equivalents, others only partial, and some require explanation or rephrasing. Such insights are valuable not only for

¹⁴ Said Ahmad ,(1988). Ufq (3 qism, p. 201). Tashkent: G’afur G’ulom nomidagi Adabiyot va san’at nashriyoti.

¹⁵ Hoshimov, U., & Yakubov, I. (2020). *Methods of teaching English*. Tashkent: Fan va texnologiya nashriyoti.



translation but also for language teaching, where idioms can enhance learners' communicative competence and cultural awareness.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, phraseological units can be considered both challenging and fascinating in the process of language learning. While some of these units differ in terms of structure and function between English and Uzbek, others share similar functions despite differences in form. For instance, certain idioms convey the same meaning in both languages, even if their imagery is different. Idioms, in particular, are extremely important for anyone who aims to become a language specialist. They add vividness to speech and make the speaker appear more linguistically and culturally competent. Most importantly, mastering idioms helps avoid confusion during real-time conversation and improves understanding of literary texts in the target language.

This article examined to what extent idioms in Uzbek and English correspond to one another. The findings show that idiomatic expressions can be categorized into three main types when compared cross-linguistically: Direct equivalents, Partial equivalents, Non-equivalents. These categories demonstrate the importance of understanding both linguistic and cultural aspects of idioms for accurate translation and effective communication between languages. Moreover, in both language, phraseological units are known to be grouped according to their semantic meanings.

Ultimately, the alternation of idioms between English and Uzbek reveals the uniqueness of each language while also pointing to shared human experiences expressed through metaphor. Effective teaching and translation of idioms demand both linguistic knowledge and cultural insight—skills that are essential in our increasingly interconnected world.

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