

PAPER

PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS ACROSS CULTURES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK IDIOMATIC SYSTEMS

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Abstract

This article examines phraseological units in English and Uzbek as essential components of linguistic expression. These stable combinations with figurative meanings enrich communication by conveying cultural, emotional, and historical nuances. The study outlines three main types—phraseological fusions, unities, and combinations—and provides illustrative examples with Uzbek equivalents. Drawing on the works of V. V. Vinogradov and Uzbek scholars such as Sh. Rahmatullaev, the article traces the development of phraseology from early European studies to its establishment in Uzbek linguistics in the mid-20th century. It highlights how idiomatic expressions reflect national identity and stylistic distinctiveness. The findings underscore the role of phraseological systems in shaping cross-cultural semantics and linguistic structure.

Key words:

Combination, phraseological unit, content, stable expression, language styles.

INTRODUCTION

Language allows us to manage the word system as well as express various expressions and

phraseological units. Phraseological units contribute to the diversity of expression and are distinguished by their ease of conveying other expressions in addition to meaning. Phraseological

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units are stable combinations of words whose overall meaning is not derived from the individual meanings of the words. Such expressions frequently exhibit cultural traits and are deeply ingrained in the language's historical and cultural traditions. As a result, they are used as one unit.

Phraseological units reflect the values and national coloring of each nation, as they emerged over the years and centuries based on people's way of life. Phraseological units are often tied to a specific location or region. When translating such units from one language to another, it is often impossible to fully convey their meaning, even though many of them may have equivalent forms. The linguo-cultural and cognitive interpretation of phraseological units has become one of the most important aspects of modern linguistics. As long as language exists, it will continue to evolve and give rise to new interpretations. Therefore, this field of linguistics has always provided opportunities for the study of phraseology as an object of research.

In linguistics, these units take the form of phraseological units or phrasemes. In short, they are composed of two or more words and have the same meaning as a single sentence or a whole statement. Phraseological units encompass idioms, combinations, proverbs, phrasemes, and other stable expressions. Phraseological units are stable units in which the words cannot be changed or replaced. According to Alaudinova, D (2023), they are employed as ready-made material with meaning and a specific lexical-grammatical content, which means that no part of the phraseological units can be omitted or removed (p.57). For example, in Uzbek, we can list stable combinations such as *arpasini xom o'rmoq*, *chuchvarani xom sanamoq*, *xamirdan qil sug'urmoq*, while in English, we can list some combinations such as "to kick the bucket" and "to let the cat out of the bag" and "break the ice".

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The study of phraseological units in the English language has a long history. Initially, in the 18th century, Samuel Johnson was one of the first among scholars to use idiomatic expressions in his dictionaries, but did not name them with a specific systematic term. By the 20th century,

phraseological units began to emerge and be studied as an object of research. Swiss linguist Charles Balli emphasized the importance of emotional language and the depiction of stable expressions. One of the linguists, V.V. Vinogradov, studied phraseological units in Russian and English and divided them into three groups.

- Phraseological fusions – the overall meaning of the unit does not belong to the single word in the phraseological unit, such as *to beat about the bush* – it means discussing, but its Uzbek example is *gapni aylantirmoq* or *to'nini teskari kiymoq*.

- Phraseological unities – the fixed phrases are partially related to the literal meaning of the words in the unit, such as *to burn one's bridges*. It means destroying the past relationship in English. Its Uzbek equivalent is *tagiga suv quymoq*.

- Phraseological combinations – the stable word combination in which one word has its literal meaning while another one has a figurative and special meaning in one unit. For example: *to meet requirements*, here the requirement has its technical meaning and sense, but, whole phrase gives us a fixed collocation indicating answering the requirements or closing the requirements. Its Uzbek standard equivalent is *talablarga to'g'ri kelmoq* or *talablarga javob bermoq*. In addition, English linguists such as A. P. Cowie, J. R. Firth, P. Hanks, M. Halliday, and R. Moon have revealed the role and significance of phraseological units within corpus linguistics. Renowned Russian linguists A. V. Kunin, V. V. Vinogradov, and A. I. Smirnitsky have also interpreted phraseological units extensively from a broad linguistic perspective.

The well-known linguist A. V. Kunin developed a detailed classification system of English phraseological units. He proposed that phraseology should be studied not merely within lexicology but as an independent branch of linguistics, based on the functions these units perform in actual speech (A. V. Kunin, 1986).

Prominent professor A. I. Smirnitsky considered phraseological units as a unique group of words and regarded them as single semantic stable combinations (A. I. Smirnitsky, 1956). At this point, the views of Kunin and Smirnitsky diverged. A. V. Kunin emphasized that the components of these units can possess individual meanings.

Famous linguist Charles Bally, a student of the French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, was one of the first scholars to study stylistics and idiomatic expressions in the French language.

In Uzbek linguistics, the study of phraseology or phraseological units was among the first to be investigated in the 1950s and 1970s. Proverbs, sayings, and epics are all examples of oral literature. Scientists like Y. Yuldoshev, M. Mirtojiev, and Sh. Rahmatullaev played an important role in this field. By the 1980s, phraseological dictionaries were being constructed, and significant progress was made in this area.

The precise interpretation and formation of phrases and stable units prompted their extensive research. Professor Sh. Rahmatullaev, a Doctor of Philology who has done numerous studies in this field, is widely regarded as the founder of phraseology. Bakieva M.J. (2022) noted that he was one of the first to expose the similarities and differences of linguistic occurrences and investigate their grammatical nature, and he constructed an explanatory dictionary of Uzbek phraseology for the first time, as well as explaining the meaning of phrases in it (p.651).

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The formation of phraseological units that exist in both English and Uzbek is closely connected to each nation's way of life, culture, customs, traditions, living environment, and attitude toward nature. These expressions are used by people during communication across various styles and for different purposes, reflecting the cultural and social contexts in which they developed. Phraseological units can express the speaker's ideas in a colorful and effective ways. Rather than using simple language styles and phrases, idioms and stable combination enable you to convey emotional content deeply and straightforwardly. For example, the Uzbek phrase "kimdir uni arpasini xom o'rdi" sounds more colorful and meaningful than the sentence "uni kimdir hafa qildi". The English phrase "spill the beans" dates back to ancient English customs and it refers "to unintentionally revealing a secret".

During communication, these units serve to enhance expressive impact. Through them, the

speaker can fully convey their emotional attitudes, as phraseological units are often vivid, expressive, compact, and convenient to use in speech. They can also be effectively used to reveal pragmatic contexts—such as politeness, humor, or subtle implications—that might be difficult to express through literal language alone.

According to Yuldoshev, B (1992), "the origins and creators of these expressions are largely unknown, as many of them have a long historical background. In both Uzbek and other languages, most phraseological units were created by the people, with no identifiable authors or clearly documented sources" (p.37-42). Linguist A. V. Kunin emphasized this point in his research. Despite this, the origin of some fixed expressions can be traced, as they have existed in the language for centuries and were passed down through oral and written traditions, reflecting the cultural values of a particular nation. For example, the Uzbek expression "O'zingni uydagidek his qil" corresponds to the English "Make yourself at home" and the English idiom "break the ice" carries the meaning "to say something to start a conversation".

CONCLUSION

Phraseology has always been considered an important field in linguistics and has been the subject of numerous research. The creation of phraseological units, independent of ethnic background, can be attributed to a long history and people's way of life. In English and Uzbek, phraseology is an important subject of linguistics that investigates the origin, system, structural aspects, and location of these. Scientists in this discipline conducted multiple stages of scientific investigation before recognizing it as a separate science. Despite the fact that this topic has now evolved into a discipline with a formal structure, there are still many linguistic complications that need to be addressed and researched. Because they occur in various settings and language styles depending on the speaker's goal.

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