

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK: SEMANTIC AND CULTURAL ASPECTS

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Annotation. *This article explores the semantic and cultural features of idiomatic expressions in English and Uzbek, emphasizing their role in conveying national mentality and worldview. The study focuses on similarities and differences in idiom structures, meanings, and cultural connotations, as well as challenges in cross-cultural translation. By comparing idioms in both languages, the paper identifies how linguistic imagery reflects each nation's unique cultural identity and offers insights for improving translation accuracy and intercultural understanding.*

Key words: *idiomatic expressions, semantics, culture, translation, English, Uzbek, metaphor, equivalence, connotation, cultural identity, linguistics, communication, worldview.*

INTRODUCTION

The study of idiomatic expressions has long attracted the attention of linguists and translators due to their complexity and cultural richness. In English and Uzbek, idioms serve not only as stylistic devices but also as reflections of national mentality and worldview. The relevance of comparing idioms in both languages lies in understanding how metaphorical meaning and cultural imagery shape linguistic thought. The main goal of this study is to analyze selected English idioms and their Uzbek equivalents, focusing on semantic correspondence and cultural adaptation. The tasks include identifying translation strategies, examining cultural connotations, and determining levels of equivalence. The comparative approach highlights how similar concepts may be expressed differently depending on each nation's history, lifestyle, and worldview. This analysis contributes to more effective cross-cultural translation and deepens understanding of how language mirrors cultural identity.

MAIN PART

Idiomatic expressions are one of the most colorful and complex aspects of any language. They reflect not only linguistic creativity but also the deep cultural experience of a nation. In both English and Uzbek, idioms serve as a linguistic bridge that connects words with cultural meanings. However, translating them across languages remains a significant challenge, since idioms often contain metaphorical, cultural, and historical

references that cannot be easily rendered into another language. The study of idioms, therefore, is essential for understanding the interaction between language, culture, and thought.

The semantic analysis of idiomatic expressions reveals that their meanings are not directly derived from the literal meanings of their components. For example, the English idiom “to kick the bucket” means “to die,” while in Uzbek a similar idea might be expressed as “dunyodan o‘tmoq.” Though both refer to death, their semantic imagery differs. The English expression uses a metaphor from physical action, whereas the Uzbek equivalent relies on a euphemistic cultural norm that softens the concept of death. This difference highlights how language encodes social attitudes through idioms.

Culturally, idioms serve as mirrors of national mentality. English idioms often reflect industrial, maritime, and Christian cultural backgrounds - such as “to save for a rainy day” or “cross the bridge when you come to it.” Uzbek idioms, in contrast, tend to reflect agrarian, nomadic, and Islamic traditions, such as “don ekkan hosil olar” (he who sows reaps) or “sabr qilgan daryo kechar” (patience crosses the river). These examples demonstrate that idioms function as repositories of collective wisdom and cultural experience.

From a comparative perspective, English idioms frequently employ metaphorical and phrasal structures that are abstract and universal in tone. Uzbek idioms, on the other hand, are more concrete and tied to everyday life, nature, and moral values. This difference is also evident in idiom formation. English idioms often contain verbs of motion, such as “go,” “run,” or “take,” indicating dynamic and action-oriented communication. Uzbek idioms frequently rely on figurative nouns and local images such as “ko‘ngil” (heart), “ko‘z” (eye), and “yo‘l” (path), emphasizing emotional and moral dimensions of communication.

In translation, idiomatic equivalence is rarely absolute. Translators face three main strategies: finding a full equivalent, using a partial equivalent, or applying paraphrase. A full equivalent exists when both languages share the same imagery and meaning, for example, “blood is thicker than water” and its Uzbek equivalent “qarindoshlik qon bilan.” Partial equivalents retain the same meaning but use different imagery, while paraphrasing explains the sense without preserving form. For instance, “once in a blue moon” may be rendered as “juda kam hollarda.” Each strategy reflects a compromise between linguistic fidelity and cultural adaptation.

Semantically, idioms carry connotative layers that make translation even more complex. An idiom’s emotional tone, humor, or irony may not have a direct counterpart in another language. For example, the English idiom “spill the beans” implies revealing

a secret, but in Uzbek, the closest translation would be “sirni ochmoq,” which lacks the same playful metaphor. Such differences show that literal translation fails to capture the cultural resonance of idioms. Translators must therefore rely on pragmatic and cultural competence rather than lexical equivalence alone.

Cultural factors further complicate translation. Idioms often originate from specific historical or religious contexts. English idioms like “the writing on the wall” derive from biblical sources, while Uzbek idioms such as “suvga tushgan toshdek yo‘qolmoq” come from folk imagery. Understanding these origins allows translators to preserve cultural depth while ensuring communicative clarity.

Comparative linguistic research shows that idioms embody collective experiences. The study of English and Uzbek idioms reveals both universal human values and culturally specific worldviews. Universally, both languages use idioms to express emotions, social relations, and moral lessons. Culturally, each reflects its unique environment and traditions: the English worldview shaped by pragmatism and individualism, and the Uzbek worldview emphasizing collectivism, patience, and harmony with nature.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the comparative analysis of English and Uzbek idiomatic expressions demonstrates that idioms serve as cultural and semantic bridges linking language and thought. They encapsulate each nation’s history, traditions, and worldview in figurative form. Effective translation of idioms requires more than linguistic skill; it demands sensitivity to cultural context and metaphorical meaning. Future studies should expand this comparative approach using corpus-based and cognitive methods to deepen understanding of idiomatic universality and diversity in world languages.

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