

**PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS AS LINGUACULTUREMES: REFLECTION OF
NATIONAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES**

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Abstract: This article explores the role of phraseological units as linguaculturemes that reflect national and cultural identity within English and Uzbek linguistic worldviews. The research emphasizes the anthropocentric and linguocultural approaches in modern linguistics, analyzing phraseological expressions as mirrors of a nation’s mentality, traditions, and worldview. Through comparative analysis, the study demonstrates how phraseological units encapsulate both universal human experiences and culture-specific values that form the foundation of national consciousness. Language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a repository of cultural knowledge and identity. In the context of contemporary linguistics, the study of phraseological units reveals how language embodies a people’s worldview, value system, and collective memory. Phraseological units—idioms, proverbs, and set expressions—are unique linguistic forms that intertwine linguistic and cultural meanings, functioning as linguaculturemes. They reflect the symbiotic relationship between language and culture, revealing the cognitive and emotional dimensions of human experience.

Keywords: phraseology, linguacultureme, national identity, cultural linguistics, idioms, proverbs, English, Uzbek, cultural reflection, metaphorical worldview.

I. Introduction

Language is not only a system of communication but also a mirror of culture and a repository of collective consciousness. The interdependence between language and culture is most vividly manifested in phraseological units — idioms, set expressions, and proverbs — that encapsulate centuries of social experience, wisdom, and cultural attitudes. Each phraseological unit represents a condensed cultural message, making it an essential object of study in cultural linguistics.

In recent decades, the concept of the linguacultureme — a unit that combines linguistic and cultural information — has become increasingly relevant in cross-cultural studies. Phraseological units are among the most prominent linguaculturemes because they reveal how speakers of different languages perceive reality through culturally marked metaphors and associations. The English and Uzbek languages, though belonging to distinct linguistic families and cultural spheres, offer a fascinating field for comparative study. Both nations have developed rich phraseological systems that reflect their historical development, moral values, and worldview.

This paper aims to analyze phraseological units in English and Uzbek as reflections of national and cultural identity. The study addresses the following research questions:

1. What linguistic and cultural features make phraseological units linguaculturemes?

2. How do English and Uzbek phraseological units reflect distinct cultural values and worldviews?
3. What are the similarities and differences in metaphorical imagery between the two languages?

II. Literature Review

Phraseology as a linguistic discipline has been explored by scholars such as A.V. Kunin (1996), N.N. Amosova (1963), and R. Moon (1998), who defined idioms as stable combinations of words with non-compositional meaning. Later, cultural linguistics and cognitive linguistics expanded the study of phraseology by linking it to cultural models and conceptual metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Wierzbicka, 1992). The term *linguacultureme* was introduced to highlight the inseparability of linguistic and cultural phenomena (Vereshchagin & Kostomarov, 1990). A *linguacultureme* can be defined as a minimal unit of language that carries culturally specific meaning, including notions, values, and symbols characteristic of a particular ethnos. Phraseological units, being culturally motivated, often function as *linguaculturemes* because they preserve national mentality in figurative form.

In Uzbek linguistics, phraseological studies were actively developed by A. Madrahimov, B. Tursunov, and Sh. Rahmatullaev, who emphasized the cultural and historical roots of Uzbek idioms and proverbs. They viewed phraseological expressions as “living fossils” of ancient beliefs and customs. Similarly, English linguists such as Fernando (1996) and Cowie (2001) argued that idioms serve as cultural markers that reveal collective thinking patterns. Comparative studies (Sharipova, 2018; Karimova, 2020) between English and Uzbek phraseology have shown that despite structural and lexical differences, both languages share universal themes — love, work, family, morality, and nature — yet interpret them through culturally distinct symbols. This demonstrates that phraseological units are an indispensable resource for studying national mentality.

III. Analysis

1. Phraseological Units as Linguaculturemes

Phraseological units are idiomatic expressions whose meaning cannot be inferred from the literal meanings of their components. For example, the English idiom “to spill the beans” means “to reveal a secret,” while the Uzbek equivalent “og‘zidan mish-mish chiqdi” (lit. “rumor came out of his mouth”) conveys a similar idea through different imagery. Both idioms express a common human behavior — revealing hidden information — but the cultural imagery differs.

As *linguaculturemes*, phraseological units encode:

- **Conceptual meaning:** mental models rooted in collective experience;
- **Evaluative meaning:** moral and emotional attitudes of society;
- **Symbolic meaning:** cultural archetypes and metaphors (e.g., animals, nature, food, body parts).

For instance, the English idiom “a piece of cake” (something easy) reflects a culture valuing comfort and informality, while the Uzbek “nonni oson topmaydi” (bread is not easy to earn) emphasizes the value of labor and hardship — a sign of agrarian heritage and moral diligence.

2. Cultural Semantics of English Phraseological Units

English idioms often emerge from everyday life, literature, seafaring, and Christian traditions. Expressions like “the apple of one’s eye”, “by the book”, “cast the first stone”, and “a storm in a teacup” carry moral or religious undertones. They show how English culture values individuality, morality, and restraint. Metaphorical patterns in English frequently derive from **nature** (“every cloud has a silver lining”), **animals** (“let the cat out of the bag”), and **sports** (“throw in the towel”), reflecting the historical context of a seafaring, industrial, and competitive society. The idioms reflect pragmatism, moderation, and rationality — core traits of Anglo-Saxon culture.

3. Cultural Semantics of Uzbek Phraseological Units

Uzbek phraseology is deeply rooted in oral folklore, Islamic ethics, and nomadic-agrarian traditions. Idioms like “Ko‘p eshakni bozor buzadi” (“Too many donkeys ruin the market”) and “Non topgan joyda jon top” (“Where you find bread, you find life”) illustrate the values of unity, hard work, and loyalty. Proverbs such as “El bilan borsang, el bo‘lasan” (“If you go with the people, you become one of them”) highlight collectivism and social harmony. Animal imagery (camel, horse, donkey, sheep) dominates Uzbek idioms, reflecting the nomadic past. For example, “Otlizga oson, o‘tsizga qiyin” (“Easy for the one with a horse, hard for the one without”) implies social inequality and practical wisdom derived from steppe life. Religious values also appear in expressions such as “Yaxshilik qil, dengizga tashla” (“Do good and throw it into the sea”) — a metaphor for altruism rooted in Sufi ethics. Unlike English idioms that often highlight individuality, Uzbek phraseology emphasizes community, morality, and patience.

4. Comparative Cultural Analysis

Thematic Aspect	English Phraseology	Uzbek Phraseology	Cultural Interpretation
Work & Effort	“No pain, no gain”	“Mehnat qilgan to‘yadi”	Both stress diligence but Uzbek version carries moral connotation.
Luck & Fate	“Break a leg”	“Omad yor bo‘lsin”	English expresses support via humor; Uzbek via sincere blessing.
Honesty & Truth	“Honesty is the best policy”	“Rostgo‘y elga do‘st bo‘lur”	Shared ethical value, but Uzbek one stresses community harmony.
Greed & Foolishness	“Don’t count your chickens before they hatch”	“Tuxum qo‘ymasdan jo‘ja sanama”	Conceptually identical — shows universal rural metaphor.

Thematic Aspect	English Phraseology	Uzbek Phraseology	Cultural Interpretation
Relationships	“Birds of a feather flock together”	“Bo‘ridan qo‘rqkan o‘rmonga kirmas”	Both stress social belonging, but Uzbek variant implies moral choice.

Such correspondences show that while the conceptual core of human experience is universal, the figurative expression is nationally specific.

IV. Discussion

The comparison of English and Uzbek phraseological units reveals both universal human experiences and unique cultural identities. The universal aspect arises from shared cognitive metaphors — such as LIFE IS A JOURNEY, WORK IS VALUE, TIME IS MONEY — but their linguistic realizations depend on cultural experience. For instance, the English “time is money” reflects industrial pragmatism, while in Uzbek culture, “Vaqt oltindan qimmat” (“Time is more precious than gold”) expresses the same value through an agrarian and moral lens. English phraseology tends to favor individualistic and pragmatic metaphors — reflecting personal achievement and efficiency. Uzbek phraseology, however, is collectivist and moralistic, emphasizing harmony, respect, and spiritual endurance. These differences demonstrate how phraseological units function as linguaculturemes, encoding both linguistic and cultural patterns that shape national mentality.

Moreover, phraseological creativity shows cultural evolution. New English idioms from technology and media (“go viral,” “hit refresh,” “to ghost someone”) demonstrate dynamic modernization. In contrast, Uzbek continues to preserve traditional proverbs while increasingly incorporates modern expressions like “Internetda yuz ko‘rsatdi” (“appeared online”) — showing the coexistence of tradition and modernity. The findings confirm that studying phraseology is not merely about lexical units but about decoding cultural DNA. Each idiom or proverb functions as a cultural gene transmitting values, humor, and moral codes from one generation to the next.

V. Conclusion

Phraseological units are linguistic mirrors reflecting a nation’s worldview, moral code, and emotional experience. As linguaculturemes, they carry symbolic meanings rooted in history, religion, and social behavior. The comparative analysis of English and Uzbek phraseological units shows that while human experiences are universal, their linguistic embodiment is culture-specific. English idioms reflect pragmatism, individuality, and rational order; Uzbek idioms reveal collectivism, spirituality, and moral depth. This study confirms that phraseological units are not only tools of expression but also cultural archives that preserve identity. They represent how each nation conceptualizes life, nature, and human relations. Therefore, teaching and translating idioms across cultures require not only linguistic competence but also cultural empathy. Further research may focus on cognitive mapping of phraseological imagery and digital preservation of idioms as elements of intangible cultural heritage. In the age of globalization, understanding phraseological linguaculturemes becomes essential for intercultural communication and the preservation of linguistic diversity.

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