

PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS WITH ZOONYMIC COMPONENTS IN  
LINGUISTICS AND TRANSLATION STUDIES

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**Annotation:** This article is devoted to the study of phraseological units with zoonym components in Uzbek and English languages. The article analyzes the concept of phraseology, the main features of phraseological units, the linguistic nature of zonyms, and their role within phraseological units. Furthermore, the specific characteristics of zoonym-based phraseological units - such as imagery, national-cultural specificity, emotional-expressive nature, and metaphorical quality - are revealed. Through a comparative-typological analysis of zoonym phraseological units in Uzbek and English, their semantic groups, similarities, and differences have been identified. The article highlights the linguoculturological significance of zoonym phraseological units and the possibilities of expressing the national mentality, traditions, and worldview of a people through them.

**Keywords:** zoonym, phraseological unit, phraseology, zoomorphism, linguoculturology, semantic classification, comparative typology, national mentality.

Every language is not merely a collection of words and rules, but a mirror reflecting the centuries-old life experience of a people, as well as their relationship with nature, the world, and themselves. One of the most vibrant and evocative parts of a language is its phraseology—those stable expressions and idioms that are constantly on the lips of the people. They adorn our speech, making our thoughts more precise, beautiful, and emotionally charged.

Expressions involving animal names are particularly interesting. Just imagine—when you call someone 'lion-hearted,' the image of a brave and courageous person immediately springs to mind. Or, if you say someone is 'as cunning as a fox,' you visualize a sly and crafty individual. When the phrase 'as loyal as a dog' is used, it brings to mind the closest and most reliable of friends. This magic condition—the transfer of animal traits to human beings—is called zoomorphism, and it exists in all languages

Zonyms are simply the names of animals. However, for linguists, they represent far more than just labels. Each animal name carries a hidden cultural layer, reflecting a people's relationship with that animal, their observations, and their conclusions. For the Uzbek people, the “sheep” (qo'y) is a symbol of gentleness and harmlessness (as in the phrase “qo'y og'zidan cho'p olmagan”—referring to someone so mild they wouldn't even take a straw from a sheep's mouth). The “horse” (ot), on the other hand, symbolizes friendship and loyalty (as in “otning qashqasidek”).

For the English people, the “dog” is not only a symbol of loyalty but also of exhaustion (“dog-tired”—extremely tired), while the “cat” embodies independence and the dangers of the unknown (as in “curiosity killed the cat”). Interestingly, some animals are perceived the same way worldwide. For instance, the fox is a universal symbol of cunning, and the lion represents bravery and power. However, some animals carry one meaning in one culture and a completely different one in another. For example, while the owl is a symbol of wisdom in Europe (“as wise as an owl”), in our culture, it is a symbol of loneliness and misfortune (“boyqushday yakka”—as solitary as an owl).



For animals to evolve into phraseological units, people had to observe them for hundreds of years. For the Uzbeks—traditionally a pastoral and farming people—there are a vast number of idioms related to domestic animals such as sheep, goats, cows, donkeys, and horses. This is because these animals were a daily presence in their lives, and every habit and trait they possessed was thoroughly studied.

The English, on the other hand, being a nation of sailors and hunters, created more expressions related to fish, dogs, cats, and wild animals. For example, “a big fish in a small pond” refers to an influential person who operates within a very limited circle. Another example is “to hunt with the hounds and run with the hare,” which describes someone who tries to support two opposing sides at the same time.

Scholars of phraseology categorize these expressions into three types. First are phraseological fusions (frazelogik qo‘shilmalar)—where the meaning of the idiom is entirely different from the individual meanings of its constituent words. For example, “bo‘yniga olmoq” (literally “to take onto one’s neck”)—in reality, no one is placing anything on their neck; it means “to take responsibility” or “to confess.”

Second are phraseological unities (frazelogik birliklar)—where the meaning of the idiom is related to the literal meanings of the words but is used in a figurative sense. An example is “o‘t bilan o‘ynashmoq” (to play with fire), which means to engage in a dangerous activity.

Third are phraseological combinations (frazelogik birikmalar)—where one word is used freely, while the other only carries that specific meaning within that particular expression. For example, “qattiq uyqu” (deep sleep)—the word “qattiq” (hard/solid) only conveys this specific meaning when combined with the word “uyqu” (sleep).

During our research, comparing zoonymic phraseological units in the Uzbek and English languages yielded interesting results. Similarities: In both languages, the fox symbolizes cunning, the lion represents bravery, and the rabbit stands for cowardice. In both systems, idioms are created based on the most prominent characteristics of animals, and both languages possess expressions with positive and negative connotations. Differences: While Uzbek features a vast number of idioms related to domestic livestock (sheep, goats, donkeys, and horses), English contains more expressions related to wild animals, as well as dogs and cats among domestic ones. Furthermore, in Uzbek, the “donkey” (eshak) is often a symbol of hard work and industriousness, whereas in English, it is primarily a symbol of stupidity. Similarly, while the “owl” (boyqush) represents loneliness in Uzbek culture, in English, it is a hallmark of wisdom.

Understanding zoonymic phraseological units (idioms involving animals) is not just about mastering a language; it is about grasping a nation’s psyche, its values, and its relationship with nature. For instance, if someone calls you “bo‘ri bolasi” (son of a wolf) in Uzbek, it is a respectful term used to describe a brave and courageous young man. However, if you were to translate this literally into another language, the person might not understand it or could even misinterpret it. This is why knowing phraseological units is especially crucial for translators and language learners. To translate accurately, one must look beyond the literal meaning and understand the idiom’s true essence and the specific context in which it is used.

In conclusion, phraseological units with zoonymic components represent one of the most ancient and vibrant layers of a language. They preserve the centuries-old observations, experiences, and wisdom of a nation. By projecting animal characteristics onto humans, people have expressed their own virtues and vices, joys and sorrows, hopes and fears. The study of zoonymic idioms in the Uzbek and English languages reveals that there are many commonalities in the thought processes of different peoples. At the same time, the unique identity and worldview of each nation are reflected in these expressions. It is precisely these similarities and differences that make language learning such an interesting and exciting process.



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