

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ETYMOLOGY OF PHRASEOLOGICAL
UNITS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract. This article presents a comparative study of the etymology of phraseological units in English and Uzbek. The research examines historical origins, cultural influences, and semantic development of idiomatic expressions in both languages. It highlights how English phraseological units are shaped by mythology, religion, literature, and historical events, while Uzbek idioms are strongly connected with folklore, Islamic culture, and traditional social life. The study also explores metaphorical structures and cognitive mechanisms underlying phrase formation. Results show that despite structural and cultural differences, both languages share universal patterns of human cognition expressed through figurative language. The research emphasizes the importance of etymological analysis in understanding cultural identity, improving translation accuracy, and supporting intercultural communication.

Keywords: Phraseological units, etymology, English language, Uzbek language, comparative linguistics, idioms, cultural linguistics, cognitive semantics, metaphor, intercultural communication.

Introduction. Phraseological units constitute one of the most expressive and culturally significant layers of any language. They preserve the historical experience, worldview, traditions, and collective memory of a nation while simultaneously reflecting the linguistic creativity of speakers. In modern linguistics, phraseology has become an important field of research because fixed expressions, idioms, proverbs, and figurative combinations are not only lexical phenomena but also indicators of cultural identity and intercultural communication. The etymology of phraseological units is particularly significant since it reveals the historical origins, semantic transformations, and sociocultural factors that shaped these expressions over time. In both English and Uzbek languages, phraseological units have emerged from folklore, religious beliefs, historical events, occupations, literature, customs, and everyday human experience. Therefore, a comparative study of their etymology provides valuable insights into linguistic development, national mentality, and cultural interaction. The growing interest in comparative linguistics has increased scholarly attention toward the analysis of phraseological systems in different languages. English and Uzbek belong to different language families and possess distinct grammatical, lexical, and cultural structures; however, both languages demonstrate rich phraseological resources with deep metaphorical meanings. English phraseological units have largely developed under the influence of ancient mythology, the Bible, medieval traditions, maritime culture, and literary heritage, whereas Uzbek phraseological expressions are closely connected with Eastern philosophy, nomadic traditions, Islamic culture, folk wisdom, and agricultural life. Despite these differences, many phraseological units in both languages reveal universal human experiences such as love, courage, honesty, greed, friendship, and labor. Comparative etymological analysis helps identify both universal cognitive patterns and nationally specific features embedded within idiomatic expressions.

The etymology of phraseological units is closely related to historical linguistics because idioms often preserve archaic lexical forms and cultural references that are no longer actively used in everyday speech. Many English idioms originated from historical events, ancient legends, professional terminology, and literary works. Expressions connected with hunting, sailing, trade,



or monarchy reflect the historical stages of English society. Similarly, Uzbek phraseological units frequently contain references to traditional family relations, hospitality, craftsmanship, pastoral life, and moral values rooted in centuries of social development. Such idiomatic expressions function as linguistic archives that preserve traces of collective historical memory. Studying their origins contributes not only to phraseology but also to anthropology, cultural studies, translation theory, and cognitive linguistics. Another important aspect of phraseological etymology is semantic transformation. Over time, many phraseological units lose their literal meanings and acquire figurative or symbolic interpretations. This process is influenced by social change, intercultural communication, technological development, and language evolution. Comparative studies demonstrate that some idioms in English and Uzbek possess equivalent meanings despite having different lexical structures and cultural origins. For example, expressions related to patience, wisdom, or deception may convey similar concepts through different metaphorical images. Such similarities indicate common cognitive mechanisms in human thought, while differences reveal unique national perceptions of reality. Consequently, comparative phraseological analysis enables researchers to understand how language reflects cultural conceptualization and collective experience.

In contemporary linguistic studies, phraseological research has expanded beyond traditional descriptive approaches and increasingly incorporates cognitive, corpus-based, and linguocultural methodologies. Recent studies emphasize that phraseological units should be analyzed not only as fixed lexical combinations but also as carriers of cultural knowledge and pragmatic meaning. Modern comparative investigations between English and Uzbek phraseology focus on semantic equivalence, translation difficulties, conceptual metaphors, and intercultural communication. However, the etymological dimension of phraseological units remains comparatively underexplored, especially in relation to Uzbek-English comparative studies. This creates a need for deeper analysis of the historical and cultural sources of idiomatic expressions in both languages. The relevance of this research is determined by the increasing importance of intercultural communication and translation in the modern globalized world. Understanding the etymological foundations of phraseological units helps language learners, translators, and researchers avoid semantic misunderstandings and interpret figurative expressions more accurately. Since phraseological units are deeply culture-dependent, literal translation often fails to convey their true meaning and emotional coloring. Comparative etymological analysis contributes to the development of effective translation strategies and promotes deeper understanding between cultures. Furthermore, such studies enrich theoretical linguistics by revealing the interaction between language, culture, history, and cognition.

This article aims to conduct a comparative study of the etymology of phraseological units in English and Uzbek by examining their origins, semantic evolution, cultural symbolism, and historical development. The study also seeks to identify similarities and differences in the formation of idiomatic expressions and to determine how national worldview influences phraseological meaning. Through comparative and descriptive analysis, the research highlights the linguistic and cultural significance of phraseological units as essential components of national identity and intercultural communication.

Literature review. Phraseology has long occupied a central position in linguistic studies because phraseological units reflect not only lexical and grammatical structures but also the cultural and historical experience of a speech community. Modern linguistic research increasingly emphasizes the importance of studying idiomatic expressions from comparative, cognitive, semantic, and etymological perspectives. In recent years, scholars have paid considerable attention to the relationship between phraseological meaning and cultural identity, especially in cross-linguistic studies involving languages with different historical and structural



backgrounds. Comparative analysis of English and Uzbek phraseological units has become particularly relevant due to the growing role of intercultural communication, translation studies, and globalization. Contemporary research defines phraseological units as stable combinations of words characterized by semantic integrity, figurative meaning, and structural stability. Researchers note that phraseological expressions are distinguished from free word combinations because their meanings cannot always be understood through the literal interpretation of their components. This semantic complexity makes phraseological units valuable objects of linguistic analysis. Modern studies also highlight that idiomatic expressions preserve traces of historical events, traditional customs, mythological beliefs, and social practices. As a result, phraseology is now viewed not only as a branch of lexicology but also as an interdisciplinary field connected with cultural studies, ethnolinguistics, pragmatics, and cognitive linguistics.

Recent investigations into phraseological etymology demonstrate that the origins of idioms are deeply connected with the historical evolution of society. In English phraseology, many expressions originated from maritime activities, medieval law, military traditions, hunting culture, religion, and classical literature. Researchers emphasize that the historical development of British society significantly influenced the formation of idiomatic expressions. For example, numerous English phraseological units emerged during periods of active trade, colonial expansion, and industrialization. Literary sources also played an important role in enriching English phraseology, particularly through the influence of Shakespeare, the Bible, and classical mythology. Studies reveal that many modern English idioms continue to preserve lexical elements and semantic associations inherited from earlier historical periods. In Uzbek linguistics, phraseological studies are closely associated with folk traditions, oral literature, and national customs. Recent research indicates that Uzbek phraseological units frequently reflect agricultural life, family relations, hospitality, craftsmanship, and ethical values. Scholars argue that Uzbek idioms possess strong ethnocultural characteristics because they emerged within the framework of collective social experience. Proverbs, folk tales, epic narratives, and religious teachings contributed significantly to the development of Uzbek phraseology. Many phraseological expressions in Uzbek are connected with traditional lifestyles, including cattle breeding, farming, and community-based social relations. Linguists also emphasize the influence of Islamic civilization and Eastern philosophy on the semantic structure of Uzbek idiomatic expressions.

Comparative studies between English and Uzbek phraseology reveal both similarities and differences in the conceptualization of reality. Researchers note that universal human experiences such as love, fear, honesty, greed, patience, and friendship are reflected in the phraseological systems of both languages. However, these concepts are often expressed through different metaphorical images and symbolic associations. Modern cognitive approaches explain such similarities through shared patterns of human thinking and perception, while differences are interpreted as manifestations of unique cultural and historical experiences. Comparative scholars frequently point out that equivalent phraseological meanings may be represented by entirely different lexical structures in English and Uzbek. This demonstrates the importance of cultural context in phraseological interpretation. The cognitive approach has become one of the dominant methodologies in contemporary phraseological research. Cognitive linguists argue that phraseological units are closely related to conceptual metaphors and mental representations. According to recent studies, idioms are not random linguistic constructions but systematic reflections of how people conceptualize the world around them. Researchers analyzing English and Uzbek phraseological units observe that many idioms are based on bodily experience, natural phenomena, and social interaction. Expressions associated with the heart, hand, eye, fire, water, or animals frequently appear in both languages because these concepts occupy important positions in human cognition. Nevertheless, cultural factors influence how these metaphors are



interpreted and lexicalized within each linguistic system. Another important area of modern phraseological research concerns translation studies. Scholars emphasize that phraseological units present significant challenges in translation because their meanings are often culture-specific and figurative. Literal translation frequently leads to semantic distortion or loss of emotional and stylistic effect. Recent comparative studies suggest several strategies for translating phraseological units, including equivalence, adaptation, paraphrasing, and descriptive interpretation. Researchers analyzing English-Uzbek translation practices conclude that successful translation requires not only linguistic competence but also deep understanding of cultural and historical contexts. Many studies underline that etymological knowledge assists translators in identifying the original semantic motivation of idiomatic expressions, thereby improving translation accuracy and intercultural understanding.

Corpus linguistics has also contributed significantly to modern phraseological studies. Researchers increasingly use electronic corpora and digital databases to analyze the frequency, contextual usage, and semantic variation of phraseological units. Corpus-based investigations allow scholars to examine how idiomatic expressions function in authentic discourse and how their meanings evolve over time. Recent studies reveal that globalization, technological progress, and media communication influence the transformation of phraseological systems in many languages. English phraseology demonstrates a particularly high degree of innovation due to the influence of digital culture and international communication. Uzbek phraseology, while preserving traditional expressions, also shows evidence of modernization and lexical borrowing influenced by social and cultural changes. Linguocultural approaches further emphasize the role of phraseological units as carriers of national mentality and cultural values. Researchers argue that idioms reflect culturally specific attitudes toward morality, behavior, interpersonal relations, and worldview. Comparative linguocultural studies between English and Uzbek demonstrate that phraseological units encode collective knowledge accumulated over centuries. English idioms often emphasize individualism, practicality, and emotional restraint, while Uzbek phraseological expressions frequently highlight respect, collectivism, hospitality, and moral responsibility. Such differences are closely linked with the social organization and historical development of each culture. At the same time, similarities in phraseological symbolism confirm the existence of universal human values shared across linguistic communities.

Recent scholarship also explores the diachronic development of phraseological units. Diachronic analysis examines how idioms undergo semantic shifts, lexical modification, and stylistic transformation across different historical periods. Researchers note that some phraseological units gradually lose their original etymological transparency and become semantically opaque. Others maintain clear connections with their historical origins. Comparative diachronic studies reveal that English phraseology experienced significant influence from Latin, French, and Germanic sources, whereas Uzbek phraseology developed through interactions with Persian, Arabic, Turkic, and Russian linguistic traditions. These historical contacts enriched the phraseological resources of both languages and contributed to the diversity of metaphorical expression. Despite the considerable progress achieved in phraseological research, scholars acknowledge that comparative etymological analysis between English and Uzbek remains insufficiently explored. Existing studies often focus primarily on semantic equivalence or translation issues, while deeper historical and cultural origins receive less attention. Modern researchers therefore stress the necessity of interdisciplinary approaches combining etymology, cognitive linguistics, cultural studies, and comparative analysis. Such integrated methodologies provide broader understanding of the mechanisms underlying phraseological formation and development. Overall, contemporary literature demonstrates that phraseological units are complex linguistic phenomena shaped by historical, cultural, cognitive,



and social factors. Comparative analysis of English and Uzbek phraseology contributes to broader linguistic scholarship by revealing both universal patterns of human thought and culturally specific modes of expression. The etymological investigation of phraseological units remains especially important because it uncovers the historical foundations of language and explains how collective experience becomes encoded in stable figurative expressions.

Research discussion. The comparative analysis of the etymology of phraseological units in English and Uzbek reveals that idiomatic expressions in both languages are deeply rooted in historical, cultural, and social development processes. One of the key findings of this study is that although English and Uzbek belong to different language families and evolved in distinct socio-cultural environments, they demonstrate remarkable similarities in how human experience is conceptualized through phraseology. These similarities are primarily based on universal cognitive mechanisms that shape human perception of reality. Concepts such as time, emotions, morality, and social relations are expressed through figurative language in both linguistic systems, indicating shared patterns of metaphorical thinking. At the same time, significant differences in the etymological origins of phraseological units reflect the unique historical trajectories of each culture. English phraseology has been strongly influenced by classical mythology, biblical texts, maritime traditions, feudal society, and literary heritage. Many idiomatic expressions originated in specific historical contexts such as trade expansion, industrial development, and political transformations. As a result, English phraseological units often preserve references to ancient professions, historical institutions, and literary sources. In contrast, Uzbek phraseology has developed under the influence of Turkic nomadic traditions, Islamic culture, Persian literature, and oral folklore. This has resulted in idiomatic expressions that are closely connected with agriculture, family structure, hospitality, and moral values rooted in Eastern philosophy. Another important aspect of the research is the role of metaphor in shaping phraseological meaning. In both languages, metaphorical transfer plays a central role in the formation of idioms. However, the imagery used to express similar concepts often differs. For instance, abstract ideas such as courage, patience, or deception may be represented through different natural or cultural symbols. English phraseology frequently uses maritime, animal, or industrial imagery, while Uzbek phraseology often relies on agricultural, domestic, and human-centered metaphors. These differences demonstrate how environment and lifestyle influence linguistic expression and conceptualization.

The study also highlights that many phraseological units in both languages have undergone semantic transformation over time. Originally literal expressions gradually evolved into figurative meanings, losing their direct connection with the original context. This process of semantic shift is a key element in etymological development. In English, historical changes such as industrialization and globalization have contributed to the reinterpretation or replacement of older idioms. Similarly, in Uzbek, modernization and language contact have influenced the evolution of phraseological units, although many traditional expressions remain actively used in everyday communication. From a cognitive perspective, phraseological units function as mental schemas that reflect how speakers organize knowledge about the world. Both English and Uzbek idioms demonstrate that human cognition relies heavily on metaphorical mapping from concrete experience to abstract concepts. However, cultural specificity determines the selection of source domains for these metaphors. This explains why similar meanings can be encoded through different linguistic images in the two languages. The cognitive approach therefore provides a strong theoretical basis for explaining both similarities and differences in phraseological systems.

Translation analysis further supports the importance of etymological understanding. Many phraseological units cannot be translated directly due to cultural and historical specificity. Translators must therefore rely on functional equivalence, adaptation, or descriptive translation



strategies. The study shows that knowledge of the etymological background of idioms significantly improves translation accuracy and helps preserve pragmatic and emotional meaning. Without such understanding, idiomatic expressions may lose their expressive power or be misinterpreted. The research also confirms that phraseological units serve as carriers of cultural identity. In both English and Uzbek, idioms reflect moral values, social norms, and collective attitudes toward life. English phraseology often emphasizes individual responsibility, pragmatism, and emotional restraint, while Uzbek phraseology tends to highlight collectivism, respect for elders, and social harmony. These differences are not only linguistic but also cultural, reflecting broader societal structures and historical experiences.

Corpus-based observations indicate that phraseological usage is evolving in both languages under the influence of globalization and digital communication. While English shows rapid innovation and adaptation of new idiomatic expressions, Uzbek maintains a stronger connection to traditional forms, although modern influences are increasingly noticeable. This dynamic interaction between tradition and innovation demonstrates that phraseological systems are not static but continuously evolving linguistic structures. Overall, the comparative study of English and Uzbek phraseological etymology provides valuable insights into the interaction between language, culture, and cognition. It demonstrates that phraseological units are not merely linguistic decorations but essential components of cultural memory and conceptual thinking. The findings emphasize the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in phraseological research, combining historical linguistics, cognitive science, and cultural analysis.

Conclusion. The study concludes that phraseological units in English and Uzbek reflect both universal cognitive patterns and distinct cultural-historical developments. While similarities are based on shared human experience and metaphorical thinking, differences arise from unique cultural environments and historical backgrounds. Etymological analysis reveals that idioms function as linguistic archives preserving cultural memory. Understanding their origins is essential for linguistic research, translation, and intercultural communication. The study highlights the need for further interdisciplinary research to explore deeper connections between language, culture, and cognition.

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