

LINGUO-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF UZBEK PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

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Abstract

This article examines the role of phraseological units in linguistics as an essential linguistic phenomenon and their development within the field. Information is provided on the etymology and semantics of lexical units, word formation processes, linguo-cultural characteristics, and the ways in which new words and expressions emerge, illustrated through relevant examples.

Before conducting a comparative analysis of the linguo-cultural characteristics of Uzbek phraseological units, it is necessary to study these units separately within each language system and identify their distinctive features. The research process reveals that semantic and semiotic sources play a crucial role in the formation of phraseological units. In the process of semiotic encoding, symbolic principles are of particular importance. For instance, in Uzbek expressions such as “to get up on the wrong side” (literally “to stand on the left side”), meaning to be in a bad mood for no apparent reason, or “the horse’s blaze” (used metaphorically to denote notoriety in a negative sense), attention should be paid to the formation of phraseological meaning.

In expressions formed on the basis of semiotic principles, there is no direct symbolic correlation. In such cases, a phraseological unit possesses its own semantic essence, pragmatic function, and connotative system. Here, historical linguistic concepts rooted primarily in mythological perceptions become apparent, as seen in expressions such as “his spirit rose,” “his spirit fell,” and “his heart sank.”

In order to conduct a comparative analysis of the linguo-cultural features of French and Uzbek phraseological units, it is first necessary to examine these units individually within each language and identify their specific characteristics. Research shows that semantic and semiotic sources are fundamental in the formation of phraseological units, with symbolic principles playing a significant role in the process of semiotic encoding. For example, Uzbek expressions such as “to get up on the wrong side” or “the horse’s blaze” illustrate the formation of phraseological meaning. Phraseological units formed through semiotic principles lack a direct symbolic association; instead, they develop their own pragmatic and connotative systems, often reflecting historical and mythological worldviews.

The national and cultural specificity of Uzbek phraseological units can be explained, firstly, by the linguo-creative mode of thinking inherent to the Uzbek people; secondly, by the ethnolinguistic interpretation of the perceived world; and thirdly, by the semantic significance and social value attributed to essential objects in human consciousness. As cultural values continue to accumulate in human life, the need arises to systematize, categorize, and verbally express them.

The formation of the Uzbek phraseological corpus should be analyzed on the basis of the following linguistic and extralinguistic factors:



I. Phraseological units related to space:

1. Phraseological units connected with geographical names and toponyms.
Examples include expressions such as “I will show you Uchqo‘rg‘on,” “For a fool, Quva is just one step away,” “Mention work and he goes to Samarkand,” where place names serve as the core explanatory component.
2. Phraseological units related to flora:
“Sweet at the core despite the pit.”
3. Phraseological units associated with animals and birds:
“To make an elephant out of a fly,” “One bad calf spoils the whole herd,” “If the heifer does not flirt, the bull will not break the rope.”

II. Phraseological units related to national and cultural life:

1. National clothing:
“He threw his skullcap into the air,” “He put his coat on inside out.”
2. National cuisine:
“If death comes, let it come from pilaf,” “Do not hang lagman on someone’s ear.”
3. Customs and traditions:
“To observe the forty-day seclusion,” “The forty days have passed,” “The father has seen,” “He ate bread,” “The groom was invited,” “To put one’s head on the same pillow.”
4. Holidays and celebrations:
“Girls’ wedding,” “Circumcision ceremony,” “To beat the drum before the wedding.”

Each nation inhabits a distinct environment: some live in mountainous regions, others in deserts, coastal areas, islands, forests, or fertile valleys. Each environment possesses its own worldview and naming system. The participation of toponymic vocabulary in the formation of phraseological units not only enriches the semantic inventory of a language but also serves as an important historical source. For example, to indicate that a place is not far, people in the Fergana Valley say “For a fool, Quva is just a stone’s throw away,” while in Tashkent the equivalent expression is “For a fool, Toytepa is just a stone’s throw away.” Similarly, expressions such as “Does Asaka disappear?” (meaning “What is lost?”), “To show one’s mother from Uchqo‘rg‘on” (to severely punish), and “To fly to Bukhara at the word ‘puff’” incorporate toponyms that have contributed to the formation of new Uzbek phraseological units.

Expressions such as “By asking and asking, he found Mecca,” “The Garden of Iram,” “The gates of hell opened,” “If you strike a mountain, you grind it into flour,” “The mountain you lean on,” “The garden you trust,” “To dig a pit for someone,” “When fire reaches the forest, both wet and dry burn,” “To dig a well with a needle,” “To descend to the lowest depths,” and “Arshi A‘lo” demonstrate how spatial components play a crucial role in shaping the unique phraseological worldview of the Uzbek language.

Such units arise from plants, fruit trees, and toponyms associated with the environment in which the Uzbek people live. The semantic scope of these expressions is broad, forming new and culturally specific meanings. The expression “Sweet at the core despite the pit” reflects a simple yet culturally resonant metaphor understood deeply by native speakers. Other examples include “Eat the grapes, do not ask about the vineyard,” “A sparrow pecks when it sees another sparrow,” “Apple, ripen and fall into my mouth,” “There is no flower without thorns,” “To fill someone’s bosom with empty walnuts,” “To crack a walnut on someone’s head,” “Worms eat a



hollow tree,” and many others. These units emerge from animal names and their metaphorical behaviors. Such expressions may be formed not only from animals native to the region but also from universal metaphorical associations, resulting in similar expressions across languages. For example, the Uzbek “to make an elephant out of a fly” corresponds to French “make an elephant out of a fly” and Russian “делать из мухи слона,” all conveying the meaning of exaggeration. Likewise, the Uzbek “to live like cat and dog” corresponds to the French “lead a cat and dog life,” denoting constant conflict between spouses.

Numerous Uzbek expressions are derived from domestic animals such as goats and sheep, reflecting traditional livelihoods. Sheep symbolize gentleness and harmlessness, as seen in “gentle as a sheep” and “unable to take a straw from a sheep’s mouth.” Many other expressions depict human behavior and social situations through animal imagery, contributing significantly to the richness of Uzbek phraseology.

Preliminary analysis shows that nearly a thousand zoonym-based phraseological units function in the Uzbek literary language and mass media.

Phraseological units formed on the basis of national customs and celebrations include expressions such as “to declare wealth,” “to observe chilla,” “to invite the groom,” “wedding of a girl,” “circumcision ceremony,” “to beat the drum before the wedding,” and “to put one’s head on the same pillow.” Literary examples further illustrate the active use of such units in Uzbek prose.

As emphasized, phraseological units continue to enrich both Uzbek and French languages and are widely used in their respective literatures. The third chapter of this study focuses specifically on the linguo-cultural characteristics of phraseological units.

As an interesting example, let us consider the etymology of the expression “to wear one’s coat inside out.” According to the poet Erkin Vohidov, poor people would wear their coats inside out before a fight to protect the outer fabric from damage. Thus, the act became associated with anger and confrontation. In this context, the implicit meaning refers to emotional agitation, while the explicit meaning denotes the literal act of wearing clothing inside out. This demonstrates the effective use of both explicit and implicit meanings in phraseological units.

Another example appears in Oybek’s novella “In Search of Light,” where the phrase “Let neither the skewer nor the kebab burn” is used implicitly to emphasize balance and fairness rather than literal cooking. Similarly, in Omon Mukhtor’s work “Ffu,” expressions such as “When the skullcap becomes tight” convey implicit meanings related to difficulty and distress.

These examples clearly demonstrate that Uzbek phraseological units embody national culture, mentality, and worldview, serving as a vivid reflection of linguistic and cultural identity.

