

NATIONAL AND CULTURAL FEATURES OF ZOONYMIC PHRASEOLOGICAL
UNITS IN THE RUSSIAN AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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Abstract: The present study explores the national and cultural features of zoonymic phraseological units in the Russian and Uzbek languages. The relevance of the research is determined by the growing interest in comparative phraseology, linguistic worldview, and the cultural specificity of phraseological systems. The paper analyzes phraseological units containing animal names and examines their role in representing intellectual, emotional, moral, and behavioral characteristics of individuals. Special attention is paid to identifying universal and culture-specific patterns in the figurative interpretation of animal images. The comparative analysis demonstrates that, despite the existence of common semantic models based on shared human experience, each language reflects its own cultural values, traditions, and worldview through phraseological imagery. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of linguistic and cultural interrelations and may be applied in intercultural communication, translation studies, and foreign language teaching.

Keywords: phraseology, zoonymic phraseological units, Russian language, Uzbek language, linguistic worldview, national and cultural specificity, comparative analysis, semantics, figurative meaning, intercultural communication.

In contemporary linguistics, phraseological units are regarded as an important source of information about the culture, worldview, and national consciousness of a speech community. Fixed expressions preserve collective experience accumulated over centuries and reflect cultural values, stereotypes, and social attitudes. Through phraseology, language conveys not only information about reality but also the ways in which a particular nation interprets and evaluates the surrounding world.

Among the various groups of phraseological units, those containing animal names occupy a special place. Since ancient times, animals have served as objects of observation and comparison, becoming symbols of particular human qualities and behavioral characteristics. As a result, zoonymic phraseological units constitute an essential part of the figurative and evaluative system of many languages.[1]

Russian and Uzbek possess a rich inventory of phraseological units with zoonymic components. These expressions are actively used in everyday communication as well as in literary discourse, enabling speakers to describe personal qualities, emotions, moral values, and patterns of behavior in a vivid and expressive manner. Comparative analysis of such units makes it possible to identify both universal features of human cognition and nationally specific characteristics shaped by cultural traditions.

Zoonymic Phraseological Units as a Means of Characterizing Human Qualities

One of the most productive groups of zoonymic phraseological units is associated with the description of intellectual abilities. In Russian, mental characteristics are frequently expressed through animal images traditionally linked to wisdom, cunning, or stupidity. Expressions such as , “хитрый как лиса”(“*cunning as a fox*”), “туп как баран”(“*stupid as a ram*”) ,



“мудрый как сова” (“*wise as an owl*”) illustrate the metaphorical transfer of animal traits to human beings. [2]

Similar phraseological units are found in Uzbek, including “*tulkiday ayyor*” (“as cunning as a fox”), “*eshakday qaysar*” (“as stubborn as a donkey”), and “*bo‘riday och*” (“as hungry as a wolf”). In both languages, animal images function as symbolic representations of specific human qualities. Nevertheless, the associative meanings attached to particular animals may vary according to cultural traditions and collective perceptions.

Another significant group comprises phraseological units related to diligence and activity. Russian phraseology includes expressions such as “*works like a horse*” and “*runs like a squirrel in a wheel*,” emphasizing hard work, endurance, and constant activity.

Comparable meanings are conveyed in Uzbek through expressions such as “*otday ishlamoq*” (“to work like a horse”) and “*asalariday mehnatkash*” (“as hardworking as a bee”). These examples demonstrate that both linguistic communities associate certain animals with industriousness and perseverance, reflecting observations derived from everyday life and traditional economic activities. [3]

Representation of Emotional and Moral Characteristics

Zoonymic phraseological units also play an important role in expressing emotional states and behavioral patterns. Russian phraseology contains numerous expressions such as “*to live like cat and dog*,” “*angry as a dog*,” and “*to tremble like a hare*.” These units convey conflict, aggression, fear, and emotional instability through vivid animal imagery.

In Uzbek, similar meanings are expressed by phraseological units such as “*it-mushukdek yashamoq*” (“to live like cat and dog”), “*quyonday qo‘rqoq*” (“as cowardly as a hare”), and “*itday vafodor*” (“as loyal as a dog”). Such examples indicate that animal symbolism serves as an effective means of expressing emotional and ethical evaluations in both languages.

Particular attention should be paid to phraseological units describing moral qualities. In Russian, negative moral characteristics are often associated with the images of a wolf, pig, or snake. Expressions such as “*a wolf in sheep’s clothing*,” “*to play a dirty trick*,” and “*a snake in the grass*” symbolize hypocrisy, deceitfulness, and betrayal.

In Uzbek, comparable evaluative meanings can be found in expressions such as “*ilonday zahar*” (“venomous as a snake”) and “*tulkiday mug‘ombir*” (“as sly as a fox”). These phraseological units demonstrate the evaluative nature of language and reflect culturally established perceptions of desirable and undesirable personal qualities. [4]

Universal and Culture-Specific Features

The comparative analysis reveals a number of universal correspondences between Russian and Uzbek zoonymic phraseology:

- fox (*лиса / tulki*) — cunning;
- wolf (*волк / bo‘ri*) — strength, aggression, or cruelty;
- hare (*заяц / quyon*) — cowardice;
- dog (*собака / it*) — loyalty or aggressiveness;
- horse (*лошадь / ot*) — diligence and endurance.

Such similarities can be explained by common human experience and shared observations of animal behavior. However, national and cultural specificity becomes evident in the frequency of particular images, their emotional connotations, and the range of associations connected with them.

Certain phraseological units have no direct equivalents in the other language because they reflect unique cultural traditions, historical experiences, and social realities. Consequently, the



study of zoonymic phraseology is particularly important for translation practice and intercultural communication, where cultural nuances often determine the adequacy of interpretation.

The analysis demonstrates that zoonymic phraseological units constitute an important component of the phraseological systems of both Russian and Uzbek. Through animal imagery, these expressions convey intellectual, emotional, moral, and behavioral characteristics of individuals while simultaneously reflecting national values and cultural traditions.

The comparative study reveals the coexistence of universal cognitive mechanisms and culture-specific patterns of figurative thinking. Universal features arise from shared human interaction with the natural world, whereas national peculiarities are shaped by historical development, cultural experience, and social values.

Therefore, zoonymic phraseological units represent not only a linguistic phenomenon but also a valuable source of cultural information. Their study contributes to a deeper understanding of linguistic worldviews, promotes intercultural dialogue, and enhances the effectiveness of translation and language teaching.

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