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A STUDY OF COMPARATIVE PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN UZBEK AND FRENCH LINGUISTICS

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Abstract. This article examines the history and current state of research into comparative phraseological units (CPUs) in Uzbek and French linguistics from a comparative perspective. It reviews the principal theoretical approaches, lexicographic sources, and research traditions that have shaped the study of fixed comparisons in French and Uzbek. Particular attention is paid to the contribution of French phraseology to the formal-syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and corpus-based analysis of fixed comparisons, as well as to the study of Uzbek similes within stylistic, phraseological, and linguocultural frameworks. The analysis shows that, although fixed comparisons have been described in considerable detail in French linguistics, their functioning in journalistic discourse has not yet been sufficiently investigated as an independent research object through quantitative corpus methods. In Uzbek linguistics, similes have been studied extensively in semantic, stylistic, and linguocultural terms; however, their phraseological status, corpus-based description, and pragmatic functions in journalistic discourse remain underexplored.

Keywords: comparative phraseological units; fixed similes; Uzbek linguistics; French linguistics; phraseology; journalistic discourse; corpus-based analysis; semantic features; pragmatic functions; linguocultural specificity; phraseological stability.

O‘ZBEK VA FRANSUZ TILSHUNOSLIGIDA QIYOSIY FRAZEOLOGIK BIRLIKLARNING O‘RGANILISHI

Annotatsiya. Mazkur maqolada o‘zbek va fransuz tilshunosligida qiyosiy frazeologik birliklarning (QFB) o‘rganilish tarixi va hozirgi holati qiyosiy nuqtayi nazardan tadqiq etiladi. Unda fransuz va o‘zbek tillaridagi turg‘un qiyosiy birliklarni o‘rganishga asos bo‘lgan asosiy nazariy yondashuvlar, leksikografik manbalar hamda ilmiy tadqiqot an’analari ko‘rib chiqiladi. Fransuz frazeologiyasining turg‘un qiyosiy birliklarni formal-sintaktik, semantik, pragmatik va korpusga asoslangan tahlil qilishdagi hissasiga, shuningdek, o‘zbek tilidagi o‘xshatishlarning stilistik, frazeologik va lingvomadaniy yondashuvlar asosida o‘rganilishiga alohida e’tibor qaratiladi. Tahlil natijalari shuni ko‘rsatadiki, fransuz tilshunosligida turg‘un

qiyosiy birliklar ancha batafsil tavsiflangan bo‘lsa-da, ularning publitsistik diskursdagi qo‘llanilishi miqdoriy korpus metodlari asosida mustaqil tadqiqot obyekti sifatida hali yetarlicha o‘rganilmagan. O‘zbek tilshunosligida esa o‘xshatishlar semantik, stilistik va lingvomadaniy jihatdan keng tadqiq etilgan. Biroq ularning frazeologik maqomi, korpus asosidagi tavsifi hamda publitsistik diskursdagi pragmatik funksiyalari yetarlicha o‘rganilmagan.

Kalit so‘zlar: qiyosiy frazeologik birliklar; turg‘un o‘xshatishlar; o‘zbek tilshunosligi; fransuz tilshunosligi; frazeologiya; publitsistik diskurs; korpusga asoslangan tahlil; semantik xususiyatlar; pragmatik funksiyalar; lingvomadaniy o‘ziga xoslik; frazeologik barqarorlik.

ИЗУЧЕНИЕ СРАВНИТЕЛЬНЫХ ФРАЗЕОЛОГИЧЕСКИХ ЕДИНИЦ В УЗБЕКСКОМ И ФРАНЦУЗСКОМ ЯЗЫКОЗНАНИИ

Аннотация. В статье с сопоставительной точки зрения рассматриваются история и современное состояние изучения сравнительных фразеологических единиц (СФЕ) в узбекском и французском языкознании. Анализируются основные теоретические подходы, лексикографические источники и исследовательские традиции, сформировавшие научные представления об устойчивых сравнительных конструкциях во французском и узбекском языках. Особое внимание уделяется вкладу французской фразеологии в формально-синтаксический, семантический, прагматический и корпусный анализ устойчивых сравнений, а также изучению узбекских сравнений в рамках стилистического, фразеологического и лингвокультурологического подходов. Результаты анализа показывают, что, несмотря на достаточно подробное описание устойчивых сравнительных единиц во французском языкознании, их функционирование в публицистическом дискурсе ещё не получило достаточного изучения в качестве самостоятельного объекта исследования с применением количественных корпусных методов. В узбекском языкознании сравнения широко исследованы в семантическом, стилистическом и лингвокультурологическом аспектах. Вместе с тем их фразеологический статус, корпусное описание и прагматические функции в публицистическом дискурсе остаются недостаточно изученными.

Ключевые слова: сравнительные фразеологические единицы; устойчивые сравнения; узбекское языкознание; французское языкознание; фразеология; публицистический дискурс; корпусный анализ; семантические особенности; прагматические функции; лингвокультурная специфика; фразеологическая устойчивость.

Introduction. A comparative analysis of the history of research into comparative phraseological units (CPUs) in Uzbek and French linguistics makes it possible not only to identify the common and distinctive features of the two research traditions but also to determine the scholarly gaps that the present study seeks to address. To this end, this section first reviews research in French linguistics, then examines studies in Uzbek linguistics by period and research area, and finally analyses studies comparing the two languages.

In French, the earliest observations concerning fixed comparisons were recorded in lexicographic sources, including Antoine Furetière’s dictionary (1690), the Dictionary of the French Academy (1694), and Émile Littré’s dictionary (1863–1872), where they appeared alongside proverbs and idiomatic expressions. Numerous comparisons formed with comme were included without special explanations and treated as characteristic turns of phrase of the language (gallicismes). The beginning of their scholarly analysis is associated, as noted above, with the work of Charles Bally. Bally examined comparisons among the means of expressing intensity and observed that, in some of them, the logical motivation of the standard component had been lost, turning it into a purely intensifying element. This observation later provided a basis for the development of the concept of “intensive comparisons” (comparaisons intensives) in French phraseology[1].

In the mid-twentieth century, Pierre Guiraud analysed the origins of fixed expressions, including comparisons, from etymological and cultural-historical perspectives in his work Les locutions françaises. He demonstrated that many comparisons are associated with rural life, crafts, religious ceremonies, historical figures, and literary sources. For example, pauvre comme Job (“as poor as Job”) derives from a biblical image; riche comme Crésus (“as rich as Croesus”) refers to ancient history; and fier comme Artaban (“as proud as Artaban”) goes back to seventeenth-century literature. The importance of Guiraud’s research for the present study lies in its distinction between the cultural layers of French comparisons – classical, biblical, folk and everyday, and literary– which can be compared with the cultural sources of Uzbek CPUs to reveal their national-cultural specificity.

Alain Rey and Sophie Chantreau’s Dictionnaire des expressions et locutions is one of the most authoritative works in French phraseography. It records fixed comparisons alongside other phraseological units and provides historical and etymological explanations, usage examples, and stylistic labels. In the dictionary, comparisons are generally arranged according to the standard component (noun), rather than the base component (adjective or verb). This approach recognises the standard as the semantic centre of the comparison. The dictionary is an important source for establishing the inventory of French CPUs and serves as a key lexicographic reference for identifying the units extracted from the corpus in the present study[2].

In Russian linguistics, the systematic study of French phraseology is associated with A. G. Nazaryan. In his textbook Phraseology of Modern French, French phraseological units are classified according to their structural-semantic and functional characteristics. Comparisons are identified as a separate group (сравнительные обороты), and their syntactic patterns, semantic properties, and stylistic functions are described. Nazaryan notes that a considerable proportion of French comparisons are characteristic of colloquial speech and often convey irony and hyperbole. V. G. Gak, in turn, compared the vocabulary of French and Russian and highlighted differences in the two languages’ figurative ways of representing the world through comparisons. His methodology of comparative lexicology is also significant for comparing languages that differ typologically.

Literature review and methods. During the 1970s and 1980s, the lexical-grammar approach established by Maurice Gross made a substantial contribution to the formal-syntactic description of fixed comparisons. Within this approach, fixed comparisons formed with comme in French were collected in special tables, where their syntactic properties were systematically recorded. These included the possibility of replacing an adjective or verb, the determination of the standard (type of article), use in negative constructions, and possibilities for expansion. As a result, several hundred fixed comparisons in French received a lexical-grammatical description. Gaston Gross developed a general theory of fixed expressions, included comparisons among the classes of fixed adjectives and adverbs, and emphasised their intensive semantics[3].

Salah Mejri’s monograph Le figement lexical developed a general theory of phraseological fixation using data from French and Arabic. Mejri interprets fixation as a mechanism through which lexical units emerge and regards it as a process occurring at semantic (the consolidation of meaning), syntactic (the rigidity of structure), and pragmatic (the specification of conditions of use) levels. Mejri’s comparative French–Arabic approach provides a methodological model for the present study because it demonstrates how to identify both general principles of fixation and national-specific features in languages that differ genetically and typologically. Within the Mejri school, the translation of fixed comparisons between French and other languages, their semantic opacity (opacité), and their cultural load have also been discussed.

In his study Les stéréotypes en français, Catherine Schapira analyses fixed comparisons (comparaisons stéréotypées) alongside proverbs, aphorisms, clichés, and other stereotyped formulas. She identifies their principal feature as their status as ready-made images stored in collective memory. Schapira distinguishes two types of comparisons: those whose motivation remains transparent (rusé comme un renard) and those whose motivation has been lost or appears illogical (bête comme ses pieds, soûl comme un Polonais). In the latter type, she argues, the semantic weakening of the standard means that the comparison expresses intensity alone. Schapira also notes that some comparisons reflect ethnic and social stereotypes and that their use in contemporary journalism is constrained by the norms of political correctness (politiquement correct). This observation demonstrates the need to take sociocultural factors into account when analysing the use of CPUs in journalistic discourse[4].

In “La phraséologie du français” Isabelle González-Rey presents the general theory and classification of French phraseological units and identifies comparisons as a distinct and particularly productive type. She also pays special attention to phraseodidactics—the teaching of phraseology – and substantiates the need for a culturally comparative approach when teaching comparisons in a foreign language. M. Svensson, meanwhile, developed a methodology for empirically testing criteria of fixedness and analysed fixed expressions in contemporary French using corpus data and questionnaire responses. This research demonstrates that the degree of fixedness can be measured on the basis of native speakers’ intuitions and corpus frequency. The methodology is relevant to the assessment of the fixedness of CPUs in the present study.

In recent decades, the corpus-based study of phraseology has developed rapidly in French linguistics. F. Grossmann and A. Tutin have worked on corpus-based analysis and the automatic processing of collocations. D. Legallois and A. Tutin have proposed broadening the scope of phraseology to include “motifs”, that is, recurrent lexical-syntactic patterns in texts. This approach makes it possible to study CPUs not only as ready-made units recorded in dictionaries but also as recurrent comparative patterns in corpora, such as grimper comme…, flamber comme…, and s’effondrer comme…. The availability of Frantext and other French corpora provides a solid empirical basis for the diachronic and synchronic corpus-based study of French CPUs.

Discussion and results. Research on phraseological units in French journalistic writing has mainly focused on the phenomenon of défigement in press headlines. These studies analyse how phraseological units are modified in headlines through lexical substitution, addition, reduction, grammatical transformation, and contamination, and how such changes produce wordplay, irony, and attention-grabbing effects. However, fixed comparisons are rarely treated as an independent object of analysis and are usually considered as part of the broader set of phraseological units. Moreover, most studies are qualitative, and quantitative data on the frequency and distribution of CPUs in journalistic corpora are almost entirely absent[5].

In Uzbek, the earliest scholarly observations on similes can be found in the traditions of classical poetics and the science of rhetoric. In works on figures of speech by Alisher Navoi, Atoulloh Husayniy, and other classical authors, tashbih (simile) is described as one of the most important rhetorical devices. Its components are distinguished as mushabbih (the entity being compared), mushabbihun bih (the entity used for comparison), vajhi shabah (the basis of comparison), and adoti tashbih (the marker of comparison). Notably, this four-component structure in classical poetics fully corresponds to the model proposed in modern linguistics by Ogoltsev and Mukarramov. This correspondence indicates the universal nature of conceptualisations concerning the structural organisation of similes.

In contemporary Uzbek linguistics, similes have been studied in two main areas: stylistic-poetic research and linguistic research (including phraseological and linguocultural approaches). In the first area, similes have mainly been investigated as means of artistic representation within studies of the styles of individual writers and poets. M. Mukarramov can be regarded as a founder of the second area. In his monograph O‘zbek tilida o‘xshatish, simile was systematically described for the first time as a linguistic phenomenon, including its structural components, means of expression, and semantic types. The author provides a detailed account of the diversity of simile markers in Uzbek: the affixes -day/-dek, -simon, -namo, -omuz, -vor, -cha, and -larcha; function words and independent words such as kabi, singari, misoli, xuddi, go‘yo, go‘yoki, monand, o‘xshab, and o‘xshash; and analytical constructions such as -ga o‘xshab and -dan farqi yo‘q. R. Koungurov and other scholars have also studied similes from semantic and stylistic perspectives as part of the figurative resources of Uzbek[6].

In his phraseological studies, Sh. Rahmatullayev considers similes as one type of phraseological unit, and some of them are included in the Explanatory Phraseological

Dictionary of the Uzbek Language. However, the dictionary does not cover all fixed similes; they are more often presented as part of other phraseological units or as their components. Since the scholar identifies figurative meaning as a principal feature in the definition of a phraseological unit, the phraseological status of comparisons with weak figurative meaning that directly intensify a quality (for example, qordek oq, “white as snow”) remains debatable. A. E. Mamatov analyses the sources from which phraseological units develop and demonstrates the process of phraseologisation of similes: the transition from a free comparison to a fixed simile and, subsequently, to a metaphorical phraseological unit in which the comparison marker has disappeared.

An important milestone in the lexicography of Uzbek similes was the publication of the Explanatory Dictionary of Similes in the Uzbek Language compiled by N. Mahmudov and D. Xudoyberganova. The dictionary arranges fixed similes according to their standard component and explains their meanings, usage examples, and stylistic features. It serves as a principal source for establishing the inventory of Uzbek CPUs and as a key reference for identifying Uzbek units extracted from the corpus in the present study. N. Mahmudov analyses simile standards from a linguocultural perspective, reveals their relationship with national thought and culture, and substantiates the need for Uzbek linguistics to adopt an anthropocentric paradigm. D. Xudoyberganova, within the framework of the anthropocentric study of text, investigates the cognitive foundations of similes and the way in which they reflect the human factor[7].

Since Uzbekistan gained independence, the comparative study of similes in Uzbek and other languages has become more active. The linguocultural features of simile standards in English and Uzbek, comparative constructions in Persian and Uzbek, comparative phraseological constructions in Russian and Uzbek, and phraseological units containing somatic and zoomorphic components have all been investigated comparatively. These studies focus primarily on the national-cultural specificity of standards, types of equivalence, and translation issues. However, most rely on dictionaries and literary works, while journalistic texts have hardly been considered as a research object.

The comparative study of French and Uzbek phraseology is a relatively young field in Uzbek linguistics. Scholars at Uzbekistan State University of World Languages, Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages, and Bukhara State University have made significant contributions to its development. As P. Nishonov and M. Primova note, the comparative study of phraseology across languages began in the 1960s, and early research focused mainly on the translation of phraseological units from one language into another. The authors examined phraseological units denoting human character in French and Uzbek from a comparative perspective and classified them according to lexical and grammatical categories[8].

G. S. Qurbonova investigated the national-linguistic features of phraseological units containing onomastic components in French and Uzbek and revealed the universal and national-cultural meanings of phraseological units that include proper names. This research also provides important information for identifying Uzbek equivalents of French CPUs with onomastic standards, such as pauvre comme Job, riche comme Crésus, and fier comme

Artaban. In addition, a number of articles have been published on phraseological units containing colour terms, art terminology, somatisms, and zoonyms in French and Uzbek, on colloquial phraseological units, and on the translation of phraseological units in literary works.

Having summarised these studies, their main characteristics can be formulated as follows. First, a thematic approach predominates in French–Uzbek comparative phraseology: researchers select and compare units according to a particular component (a somatic term, zoonym, colour term, or proper name) or semantic field (character or emotion). Second, the research material is drawn mainly from bilingual and explanatory phraseological dictionaries and, to a lesser extent, from literary works and their translations. Third, the analysis is primarily structural-semantic and linguocultural in nature, while pragmatic and discourse-related aspects remain secondary. Fourth, quantitative corpus data are rarely used. Fifth, CPUs have not been studied as an independent research object, particularly within journalistic discourse[9].

Table 1.

A Comparative Overview of Research on CPUs in Uzbek and French Linguistics

Parameter	French linguistics	Uzbek linguistics	Research gap
Theoretical status	Fixed comparisons are recognised as phraseological units within the theory of fixation (figement).	A phenomenon at the boundary between phraseology and stylistics; its status remains debatable.	To substantiate the phraseological status of CPUs on a comparative basis.
Main approach	Formal-syntactic (lexique-grammaire), semantic-pragmatic, and stereotype-based approaches.	Semantic-stylistic, linguocultural, and anthropocentric approaches.	To integrate formal, semantic, and pragmatic approaches.
Lexicography	The Rey–Chantreau dictionary and lexical-grammar tables.	The Explanatory Dictionary of Similes in the Uzbek Language (N. Mahmudov and D. Xudoyberganova).	No bilingual dictionary of CPUs is available.
Corpus resources	Frantext, large web corpora, and press archives.	National corpus projects are at the development stage.	No comparative journalistic corpus is available.
Journalistic discourse	Défigement in headlines has been widely studied.	Has hardly been studied.	The functions of CPUs in journalistic discourse.
Comparative studies	French–Arabic, French–Spanish, and French–Italian language pairs.	Uzbek–English, Uzbek–Russian, and Uzbek–Persian pairs; thematic French–Uzbek studies.	A corpus-based comparison of French and Uzbek CPUs.

As the table demonstrates, in French linguistics CPUs have been described in detail from formal-syntactic and lexicographic perspectives; corpus resources are well developed, and the modification of phraseological units in journalistic texts has been extensively studied. Nevertheless, CPUs have not been systematically investigated as an independent object in journalistic discourse using quantitative methods. In Uzbek linguistics, similes have been studied extensively from semantic, stylistic, and linguocultural perspectives, but their phraseological status, corpus-based description, and pragmatic functions in journalistic discourse remain insufficiently explored. Studies comparing the two languages rely mainly on thematic approaches and dictionary data.

Conclusion. This situation determines the scholarly novelty and methodological orientation of the present study: Uzbek and French CPUs are to be investigated comparatively within journalistic discourse on the basis of corpus material, combining formal, semantic, and pragmatic approaches. On the one hand, such research will make it possible to clarify the phraseological status of CPUs in Uzbek linguistics on the basis of corpus evidence; on the other, it will test the theoretical and methodological experience accumulated in French phraseology using data from a typologically different language. At the same time, it will enable a comparison of the systems of standards in the cultures of the two peoples on the basis of authentic contemporary texts of public communication, thereby revealing a “living” linguocultural picture.

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