

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF IDIOMS RELATED TO EMOTIONS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH

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Abstract: Idiomatic expressions represent one of the most culturally loaded elements of language, particularly in the verbalization of emotions. This study conducts a cross-linguistic investigation of idioms associated with emotional states in Uzbek and English. By examining their semantic structure and metaphorical foundations, the research demonstrates how emotional experience are linguistically encoded in two culturally and topologically distinct languages. The findings reveal both universal cognitive mechanisms and language-specific patterns, thereby contributing to phraseological research, contrastive linguistics, and intercultural studies.

Keywords: idioms, emotions, contrastive linguistics, Uzbek, English, metaphorical meaning

Introduction. Emotions constitute an inseparable part of human cognition, and language serves as the primary medium through which these emotions are articulated. Among various linguistic devices, idioms play a particularly significant role due to their figurative nature and cultural specificity. Emotional idioms allow speakers to express complex psychological states in a condensed and culturally recognizable form.

The comparative examination of emotion-related idioms in Uzbek and English is especially relevant because these languages originated from different linguistic families and cultural traditions. Such contrast provides an opportunity to observe how shared human emotions are shaped by divergent cultural perspectives. The primary objective of this research is to analyze how emotions are metaphorically conceptualized through idioms and to identify similarities and differences in emotional representation across the two languages.

1. Idioms and Emotional Expression.

Idioms are conventionally understood as stable expressions whose meaning cannot be fully derived from their lexical components. Their semantic integrity and figurative meaning distinguish them from free word combinations. In emotional discourse, idioms function not merely as stylistic devices but as cognitive tools that structure emotional experience.

In both Uzbek and English, emotional idioms frequently draw on bodily experience, physical movement, and sensory perception. This suggests that emotional meaning is grounded in embodied cognition rather than abstract linguistic convention alone.

2. Cognitive Perspective on Emotions.

From a cognitive-linguistic standpoint, emotions are not random psychological reactions but structured conceptual categories. Emotional states are often interpreted through metaphors derived from physical experience, such as pressure, containment, temperature, and motion. These metaphors allow abstract feelings to be communicated through concrete imagery.

The present study adopts this cognitive framework to explore how emotional idioms in Uzbek and English reflect shared conceptual patterns while simultaneously revealing culturally specific interpretations.

3. Research Design and Methodology.

The study employs a qualitative contrastive methodology. Data were collected from reputable English and Uzbek phraseological dictionaries and analyzed comparatively. Emotional idioms were grouped into four primary categories: happiness, sadness, anger, and fear. The analysis focused on figurative meaning, metaphorical motivation, and cultural implications rather than surface-level lexical similarity.

Comparative Analysis

1.1 Idioms Denoting Happiness. In English, happiness is commonly associated with spatial elevation and lightness. Idiomatic expressions such as “on cloud nine” conceptualize joy as an upward movement, implying emotional release from gravity or burden.

Uzbek idioms, on the other hand, frequently portray happiness as an internal state of fullness or dynamic motion. Expressions like “ko‘ngli to‘lmoq” emphasize emotional completeness, while “xursandchilikdan uchmoq” depicts joy as a force capable of lifting the individual. Despite linguistic differences, both languages associated happiness with expansion and freedom.

1.2 Idioms Expressing Sadness. Sadness-related idioms in English often employ metaphors of damage or descent. The idiom “to break one’s heart” represents emotional suffering through the image of physical harm.

Similarly, Uzbek idioms conceptualize sadness as internal pressure or constriction. The phrase “ko‘ngli siqilmoq” illustrates emotional discomfort through the sensation of compression. These parallel metaphors indicate that emotional pain is commonly understood through bodily distress across cultures.

1.3 Idioms Conveying Anger. English anger idioms typically frame anger as a form of heat or explosion, portraying it as a powerful and potentially uncontrollable force. Expressions like “see red” suggest heightened emotional intensity.

In contrast, Uzbek anger idioms emphasize visible physiological changes. The expression “jahldan ko‘k yuz bo‘lmoq” reflects anger through physical appearance, highlighting the outward manifestation of internal emotion. This distinction illustrates cultural variation in emotional externalization.

1.4 Idioms Related to Fear. Fear-related idioms in English frequently focus on bodily reactions and nervous sensations. The idiom “scared stiff” presents fear as paralysis, while “butterflies in one’s stomach” conveys internal agitation.

Uzbek idioms similarly portray fear as physical immobility, as seen in “teri qotmoq”. Although the imagery differs, both languages conceptualize fear as a disruption of normal bodily functioning.

Discussion. The comparative analysis reveals that Uzbek and English share core metaphorical principles in expressing emotions, particularly through body-oriented imagery. However, cultural context significantly influences metaphor selection and emotional framing. English idioms tend to employ abstract or symbolic imagery, whereas Uzbek idioms prioritize physical sensation and internal bodily experience.

Implications for Translation and Linguistic Research. The results highlight the limitations of literal translation when dealing with emotional idioms. Effective translation requires an understanding of conceptual equivalence rather than word-for-word correspondence. This research thus provides valuable insights for translators, language teachers, and scholars engaged in intercultural communication.

Conclusion. This study demonstrates that while emotional experiences are universal, their idiomatic expression is shaped by cultural and linguistic frameworks. Uzbek and English emotional idioms reveal both shared cognitive foundations and distinct cultural perspectives. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how language encodes emotion and support further research in comparative phraseology.

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