

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HUMAN CONCEPTUALIZATION IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK ANIMAL IMAGERY PHRASEOLOGICAL EXPRESSIONS

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Abstract: This article presents a comparative linguistic and cognitive analysis of animal imagery within the phraseological systems of the English and Uzbek languages. By examining how animals are conceptualized in idiomatic expressions, the study explores the intersection of language, culture and human perception.

Keywords: imagery, personify, moral and practical advice, unique qualities, associate, cultural priority, contextual nuances, individualistic mindset, personal integrity, symbolically portrait, highly valued trait

Introduction. Phraseological units are complex, ready-made structures in language composed of at least two independent lexemes and conveying a single figurative meaning. Their combination of idiomaticity, stability, and imagery differentiates them from free word combinations. In a free phrase, each word retains its individual meaning and syntactic role. In contrast, components of a phraseological unit form a semantic whole and function as a single element in speech. Phraseological expressions are not created spontaneously; rather, they are time-tested expressions shaped by generations of speakers. The origin and semantic development of idioms often stem from mechanisms of meaning transfer such as metaphor and metonymy. Both English and Uzbek phraseology use body parts, animals, and natural elements to conceptualize human characteristics, reflecting universal human experiences while differing significantly in cultural focus. English tends toward individualism, efficiency, and action-oriented idioms, whereas Uzbek phraseology highlights collectivism, respect for elders, emotional depth, and social reputation.

Main part. Animal symbolism has long been a key part of folk culture, and animal-related imagery appears across languages in proverbs, idioms, and expressions. Such phrases use animals to represent certain human traits, behaviors, and societal values, often reflecting both linguistic and cultural nuances. English and Uzbek languages both feature a range of animal images in their idioms and proverbs, serving as a bridge

between folk wisdom and everyday language. Comparing these expressions provides insight into cultural similarities and differences and shows how each society interprets the natural world. Animals have historically played crucial roles in human daily life, serving as companions, symbols, and sources of sustenance. As such, they are often used in language to personify human virtues, flaws, and behaviors. In English-speaking cultures, animals like the fox, lion, and bee are frequently referenced to symbolize cunning, bravery, and industriousness, respectively. Similarly, in Uzbek culture, animals such as the wolf, camel, and tulki (fox) are common in proverbs, reflecting local experiences and the agrarian lifestyle. The use of animal imagery in proverbs and idioms primarily serves to express complex human behaviors, emotions, and situations in a concise and relatable way. Animals, each with unique qualities, are used to symbolize various traits. For instance, lion represents courage, while fox embodies cleverness or cunning. Such proverbs often provide moral or practical advice, helping individuals interpret and navigate social interactions. These phrases, passed down through generations, offer a window into the beliefs, humor, and values of each culture.

In English, animal related expressions often carry universal meanings, reflecting commonly observed through animal behaviors:

1. Courage and Strength: The lion is frequently seen as a symbol of bravery, as in the expression *"brave as a lion"* (*"sherdek qo'rqmas"*). This conveys courage, resilience, and strength, making it ideal for describing a fearless person.

2. Cunning and Intelligence: Foxes, often viewed as sly creatures, appear in expressions like *"sly as a fox"* (*"tulkidek ayyor"*) to characterize individuals who are clever but potentially deceptive. The fox's association with cleverness in English reflects its role in British folktales as a trickster.

3. Hard Work and Persistence: Bee and ant symbolizes diligence and industriousness in expressions such as *"busy as a bee"* (*"asalaridek ishchan"*). This phrase highlights the hardworking nature of bees and ants, a metaphor that carries over to people who are active and productive.

4. Docility and Obedience: Sheep, known for their herd mentality, appear in the expression *"like a lamb to the slaughter"* implying passive acceptance or blind obedience, even when it leads to harm. This reflects a critical view of people who lack assertiveness.

5. Stubbornness: Donkeys are often associated with stubbornness, as seen in the phrase *"stubborn as a mule"*. This expression underscores the animal's perceived obstinacy, commonly used to describe a person who refuses to change their mind.

6. Greed: wolves are often describes so greedy and dull as it can be seen in this example: *"greedy as a wolf"*. This is used to describe someone who wants more than they need, especially food or possessions.

7. Rudeness, lack of restraint, irascibility: “*gruff as a bear*” a metaphorical meaning very rough, harsh or unfriendly in voice or manner, used to describe someone who speaks or behaves in a stern, growling way.

Uzbek proverbs also feature animals as symbols of human characteristics, often with nuanced differences from English proverbs:

1. Courage and Strength: Like in English, the lion or tiger is a symbol of courage in Uzbek culture, expressed in phrases such as “*sherdek botir*” (“*brave as a lion/tiger*”). The lion represents both physical and moral strength in Uzbek, emphasizing heroism and valor.

2. Cleverness and Trickery: The fox appears in Uzbek proverbs as a symbol of cunning and sometimes clever, as in “*tulki kabi ayyor*” (“*as cunning as a fox*”). Much like in English, this expression highlights the fox’s trickster image, used to describe someone who is calculating and shrewd.

3. Industriousness and Diligence: The ant, rather than the bee, is a common symbol of diligence in Uzbek culture, as in the proverb “*Chumoli mehnati bilan dunyoni ko‘taradi*” (The ant lifts the world with its labor). This phrase underscores the value of hard work, endurance, and community effort, virtues highly regarded in Uzbek culture.

4. Meekness and Innocence: Sheep in Uzbek expressions symbolize innocence and vulnerability, similar to English usage, as in “*Qo‘y kabi yuvosh*” (as meek as a sheep). This expression describes someone who is very gentle, quiet, submissive or easily controlled, showing no aggression or resistance..

5. Loyalty and Patience: Dogs in Uzbek proverbs are symbols of loyalty and patience, as in “*It - vafo, xotin- jaf*” (A dog is loyal, a wife brings trouble). This reflects the dog’s role as a faithful animal and signifies loyalty to loved ones, a highly valued trait in Uzbek culture.

A contrastive analysis of English and Uzbek proverbs shows both overlap and divergence in how animals are symbolically portrayed:

- **Shared Symbolism:** Lions in both cultures represent courage and strength, while foxes embody cleverness and slyness, indicating a shared perception of certain animal traits across cultures.

- **Different Animals, Similar Values:** Although both languages emphasize industriousness, English associates it with the bee, while Uzbek culture uses the ant. These variations reveal unique cultural priorities; bees are associated with productivity in a Western context, while the ant’s endurance resonates more with Uzbek values.

- **Contextual Nuances:** Animals such as dogs reflect contextual differences. In Uzbek, dogs symbolize loyalty and patience, emphasizing traditional respect for loyalty within close relationships. In English, dogs are seen in varied contexts, sometimes positive (loyalty) and sometimes negative (as in “work like a dog”).

Conclusion. The analysis of phraseological units in this chapter demonstrates that the linguistic construction of “the person” relies on a dual-system of metaphorical mapping. By analyzing the zoonymic codes, we can summarize the following conclusions regarding how language encodes human identity. While many animal-based idioms convey similar meanings across languages, unique cultural influences shape the choice of animals and their symbolic roles. These proverbs serve as a cultural bridge, offering insight into values, humor, and societal expectations in both English and Uzbek-speaking communities. By examining these linguistic elements, we gain a deeper understanding of each culture’s worldview and the role of folk wisdom in shaping how people communicate complex ideas about human behavior. The representation of animals in English and Uzbek proverbs and expressions reveals both shared human experiences and culturally unique perspectives. By studying these linguistic elements, we gain deeper insights into the values and traditions of each society.

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