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CULTURAL CONCEPTUALIZATION IN ENGLISH, UZBEK, AND KAZAKH PHRASEOLOGY

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Abstract: This article presents a comparative linguistic and linguocultural analysis of cultural concepts reflected in phraseological units of English, Uzbek, and Kazakh languages. The main objective of the study is to identify how historical experience, worldview, mentality, and national values are represented through phraseological expressions in these languages. Phraseological units related to family, labor, friendship, animals, wealth, and human character are comparatively examined to reveal their semantic, cognitive, and cultural features. The findings demonstrate that phraseological units serve not only as figurative linguistic expressions but also as carriers of cultural memory, national identity, and value systems. While English phraseology tends to emphasize individualism and pragmatism, Uzbek and Kazakh phraseological systems predominantly reflect collectivism, kinship relations, and traditional cultural values.

Keywords: phraseology, phraseological unit, cultural concept, linguoculturology, cognitive linguistics, comparative linguistics, English language, Uzbek language, Kazakh language, national mentality.

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, the study of the relationship between language and culture has become one of the most significant areas of linguistic research. Modern linguistics no longer regards language merely as a means of communication; rather, it is viewed as a complex socio-cultural phenomenon that reflects the historical memory, cultural experience, and worldview of a particular nation. From this perspective, phraseological units represent one of the most culturally marked layers of language, encapsulating a nation's way of life, traditions, values, and mentality. As fixed linguistic expressions, phraseological units often serve as verbal manifestations of collective experiences and perceptions accumulated over centuries.

Recent developments in cognitive linguistics and linguocultural studies have provided new methodological approaches to the investigation of phraseological units. While traditional phraseological research primarily focused on the structural and semantic characteristics of idiomatic expressions, contemporary studies increasingly emphasize the conceptual structures, cultural codes, and cognitive models underlying phraseological meaning. Consequently, the examination of phraseological units through the lens of cultural concepts has gained considerable importance not only in linguistics but also in cultural studies, ethnolinguistics, and cognitive

science. A comparative analysis of English, Uzbek, and Kazakh phraseology is of particular scholarly interest. English, as a member of the Germanic language family, reflects the cultural experience and worldview of Western civilization. In contrast, Uzbek and Kazakh belong to the Turkic language family and embody the historical, cultural, and philosophical perspectives of Eastern societies. A comparative study of phraseological units in these languages makes it possible to identify conceptual models formed in different cultural environments and to distinguish between universal and culture-specific features of linguistic representation.

Phraseological units function as repositories of cultural codes that preserve and transmit collective knowledge. For example, the English conceptual metaphor “Time is money” reflects a pragmatic perception of time as an economic resource. In Uzbek, the expression “Vaqt g‘animat” (“Time is precious”) emphasizes the moral and existential value of time in human life. Similarly, the Kazakh phrase “Уақыт – алтыннан қымбат” (“Time is more valuable than gold”) highlights time as a supreme cultural value. Such examples demonstrate that phraseological expressions are deeply rooted in specific cultural concepts and conceptualizations.

The relevance of the present study is determined by the growing need to investigate different cultural systems in the context of globalization, promote intercultural communication, and gain a deeper understanding of the linguocultural nature of phraseological units. The findings of this research may contribute not only to comparative linguistics but also to translation studies, intercultural communication, cognitive linguistics, and foreign language education. Furthermore, the comparative examination of phraseological units in English, Uzbek, and Kazakh offers valuable insights into the ways language reflects cultural identity, national mentality, and collective patterns of thought. Phraseology is one of the most complex and relatively independent branches of linguistics that investigates the system of fixed expressions as well as their semantic, structural, and functional characteristics. With the advancement of modern linguistic theory, the scope of phraseological studies has expanded considerably. While early research primarily focused on the grammatical structure and lexical meanings of phraseological units, contemporary linguistic scholarship increasingly explores their cognitive, pragmatic, and linguocultural dimensions. This shift reflects the growing recognition that language is inseparably connected with human cognition, culture, and worldview.

Phraseological units emerge as products of centuries of collective experience. Every idiomatic expression is shaped within a particular historical period, social environment, cultural tradition, and system of beliefs. Therefore, phraseological units should not be viewed merely as linguistic phenomena; rather, they function as cultural repositories that preserve and transmit social knowledge across generations. Compared to other layers of vocabulary, phraseological expressions more vividly reflect the mentality, values, and cultural identity of a speech community. Through phraseology, it becomes possible to observe how societies conceptualize labor, family, morality, nature, social relationships, and human behavior. The development of phraseological theory has been significantly influenced by the Russian linguistic tradition. In particular, V.V. Vinogradov made a substantial contribution to the field by classifying phraseological units according to their semantic cohesion. His distinction between phraseological fusions, phraseological unities, and phraseological combinations became a foundational framework for subsequent phraseological research in many languages. Likewise, A.V. Kunin's extensive studies on English phraseology established essential criteria for identifying phraseological units, including semantic integrity, stability, reproducibility, and idiomaticity.

In Uzbek linguistics, phraseological studies have also developed into a substantial scholarly tradition. The works of scholars such as Sh. Rahmatullayev, A. Mamatov, and B. Yo‘ldoshev have

contributed significantly to both the theoretical and practical investigation of Uzbek phraseology. Rahmatullayev, in particular, emphasized that phraseological units represent manifestations of national culture and collective thinking. According to his interpretation, phraseological expressions reflect the conceptualization of reality and the evaluative attitudes of language users. Consequently, the study of phraseology requires not only linguistic analysis but also consideration of historical, ethnographic, and cultural factors. Since the second half of the twentieth century, linguoculturology has emerged as an influential interdisciplinary field dedicated to examining the interaction between language and culture. Linguocultural research seeks to uncover cultural information encoded within linguistic units. From this perspective, phraseological units function as carriers of cultural knowledge and collective memory. V.N. Telia described phraseological expressions as "microtexts of culture," arguing that they encapsulate historical experience, cultural values, and national worldviews. As a result, phraseological units with similar meanings may be represented through entirely different images and symbolic structures across languages. The concept of cultural concepts occupies a central position within contemporary cognitive linguistics and linguoculturology. A concept may be defined as a complex mental structure that organizes knowledge and experience within human consciousness and finds expression through language. Cognitive linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson argue that human thought is fundamentally structured through conceptual systems that shape the way reality is perceived and interpreted. Within this framework, phraseological units represent one of the most vivid linguistic manifestations of conceptual structures because they encode culturally significant knowledge in a condensed and metaphorical form.

Cultural concepts are formed through the historical experience and collective consciousness of a particular community. Concepts such as family, homeland, labor, wealth, friendship, honesty, and courage are present in virtually every culture; however, their meanings, symbolic associations, and linguistic representations often differ significantly. Phraseological units provide a valuable source for identifying these differences. For instance, the English proverb "Every man is the architect of his own fortune" promotes the ideas of individual achievement and personal responsibility. In contrast, the Uzbek proverb "Yolg'iz otning changi chiqmas, changi chiqsa ham dong'i chiqmas" emphasizes cooperation, social solidarity, and collective effort. Such examples illustrate how cultural concepts are shaped by distinct social and ideological frameworks. From a cognitive linguistic perspective, phraseological units are closely connected with conceptual metaphors. Conceptual metaphor theory explains how abstract concepts are understood through more concrete domains of experience. The English metaphor "Time is money" conceptualizes time as an economic resource and reflects the pragmatic and economically oriented worldview characteristic of many Western societies. In contrast, Uzbek and Kazakh phraseological expressions such as "Vaqt g'animat" and "Уақыт – алтыннан қымбат" conceptualize time as a moral and existential value rather than merely an economic asset. These differences demonstrate that identical concepts may be structured through distinct metaphorical models across cultures. Furthermore, phraseological units function as carriers of cultural codes. Cultural codes represent culturally specific ways of perceiving and interpreting reality. English phraseology frequently contains expressions associated with maritime life, trade, and industrial development, reflecting the historical experience of British society. In contrast, Uzbek and Kazakh phraseological systems contain a considerable number of expressions related to pastoralism, agriculture, kinship relations, and traditional communal life. These differences are closely connected with the historical, economic, and social development of the respective cultures. Through phraseological units, such cultural codes are preserved and transmitted as elements of collective memory.

In summary, phraseological units should be regarded not merely as fixed semantic structures but as complex cognitive and linguocultural phenomena. They serve as important sources for understanding the historical experience, cultural values, national mentality, and conceptual worldview of language communities. Therefore, the comparative study of phraseological units in English, Uzbek, and Kazakh provides a valuable framework for identifying both universal and culture-specific aspects of cultural conceptualization. The subsequent sections of this study examine how major cultural concepts, including family, labor, animals, and national values, are represented within the phraseological systems of these languages.

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