



International Conference on Modern Science and Scientific Studies

Hosted online from Madrid, Spain

Website: econfseries.com

20th August 2025

THE SEMANTIC CLASSIFICATION OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

Kubaeva Nafisa Alisher qizi,

researcher of Samarkand State institute of foreign languages, Uzbekistan

nafisaxon77777@gmail.com

Abstract

This article explores the semantic classification of phraseological units in English and Uzbek languages, with special attention given to idioms containing animal names. The study reveals both universal and culturally specific aspects in the way phraseological meaning is constructed and interpreted across the two languages. It provides a structured overview of major semantic types of phraseological units, analyzes examples, and examines the cultural, cognitive, and linguistic factors that influence their classification. The research demonstrates how phraseological semantics reflects national mentality, worldview, and linguistic creativity.

Keywords: phraseological units, semantics, idioms, English-Uzbek comparison, animal symbolism, cultural linguistics, metaphor, figurative language, translation challenges, cognitive semantics

Introduction

Phraseological units, or idioms, are fixed word combinations that possess figurative meaning distinct from the literal meanings of their components. In both English and Uzbek, phraseological expressions play an essential role in enriching the language, conveying vivid imagery, and reflecting national culture. The semantic classification of these units is a critical aspect of phraseology because it helps determine how idioms function in communication, what meanings they encode, and how they are influenced by culture and cognition. This article aims to analyze the semantic typology of English and Uzbek phraseological units, focusing on those with animal components and drawing cross-linguistic comparisons.



International Conference on Modern Science and Scientific Studies

Hosted online from Madrid, Spain

Website: econfséries.com

20th August 2025

Semantic Classification of Phraseological Units

In linguistic studies, phraseological units are often classified semantically based on the nature of the meaning they express. According to linguistic traditions in both English and Uzbek, the main semantic groups include:

1. Phraseological Units Denoting Human Traits and Behavior

Many idioms describe human characteristics through metaphor, often using animals as symbols [1]. For example:

- English: as sly as a fox (clever and deceitful)
- Uzbek: ilonni boshi (a deceitful or dangerous person — literally, “the head of the snake”)

These expressions rely on associative imagery, connecting human traits to well-known animal behaviors [2].

2. Phraseological Units Expressing Emotions and Feelings

Emotive phraseological units reflect psychological states through metaphorical associations:

- English: cry wolf (raise a false alarm)
- Uzbek: qorqoq tovuq (a coward — “a cowardly chicken”)

While both languages use animals to symbolize emotions, the choice of animals may differ due to cultural perception.

3. Phraseological Units Describing Social Relations or Situations

Idioms in this category describe interpersonal dynamics or societal situations:

- English: top dog (a dominant person)
- Uzbek: itdan qochib mushukka yo‘liqdi (jumped from the frying pan into the fire — “escaped a dog only to meet a cat”)

These idioms illustrate status, conflict, and hierarchy [3].

4. Phraseological Units with Evaluative Meaning

These idioms provide positive or negative evaluations, often reflecting moral or ethical judgments:

- English: black sheep (a disgrace to the family)



International Conference on Modern Science and Scientific Studies

Hosted online from Madrid, Spain

Website: econfseries.com

20th August 2025

○ Uzbek: otni qamchilamasdan yurmaydi (won't move without the whip — refers to a lazy or slow person)

5. Phraseological Units Describing Natural Phenomena and States

Some idioms metaphorically refer to weather or natural events:

- English: it's raining cats and dogs
- Uzbek: yong'ir yog'ayotganidek yig'ladi (cried as if it was raining)

These idioms often reflect the local environment and metaphorical thinking [4].

Contrastive Analysis: Animal-Based Idioms

A special area of semantic classification involves idioms with animal names. The use of animals in idiomatic language reveals much about cultural symbolism and anthropocentric worldview [5]. While both languages share some metaphorical associations (e.g., fox = cleverness), there are differences:

- **Shared symbolism:**

- English to be a snake = deceptive
- Uzbek ilondek = like a snake, also negative

- **Cultural-specific symbolism:**

- English white elephant = useless luxury
- Uzbek has no exact equivalent; culturally such a concept might be described differently

- **Frequency and figurative density:**

Uzbek often uses domesticated animals like it (dog), mushuk (cat), eshak (donkey), while English frequently uses fox, dog, wolf, reflecting different cultural ecosystems [6].

Cognitive and Cultural Perspectives

Phraseological semantics is not merely linguistic—it reflects collective cognition and cultural models. The Uzbek language, shaped by its Turkic roots, agricultural lifestyle, and Islamic values, tends to use idioms rooted in rural life, ethics, and familial honor. English phraseology, shaped by Western literary traditions and individualism, often reflects psychological states and abstract reasoning [7].



International Conference on Modern Science and Scientific Studies

Hosted online from Madrid, Spain

Website: econfseries.com

20th August 2025

These cultural lenses impact the interpretation of idioms. For instance, in Uzbek, calling someone a donkey may reflect stubbornness or ignorance, while in English, it's less frequent and has milder connotations.

Moreover, phraseological imagery is a mirror of societal experience. While English idioms often draw from literary sources, media, and globalized metaphors, Uzbek idioms retain stronger oral-traditional and folklore origins [8].

Challenges in Semantic Equivalence and Translation

Translating phraseological units poses significant challenges due to semantic asymmetry. Idioms often lose their figurative meaning when translated word-for-word. Therefore, semantic classification helps translators determine whether:

- there is a direct equivalent (literal or figurative),
- an analogical expression is needed, or
- the idiom should be explained descriptively [9].

For example:

- English: let the cat out of the bag
- Uzbek equivalent: sirni ochib qo'yish (to reveal a secret — descriptive)

This cross-linguistic semantic gap calls for a culturally adaptive approach in translation and phraseological interpretation [10].

Conclusion

The semantic classification of English and Uzbek phraseological units reveals both universal conceptual frameworks and deep cultural uniqueness. While both languages share metaphorical mechanisms, the cultural content and choice of images differ significantly. Understanding these semantic groupings not only enhances comparative linguistic research but also supports more accurate translation, cross-cultural communication, and language teaching. Phraseological semantics remains a dynamic field that reflects not only language structures but also collective worldviews, values, and ways of thinking.



International Conference on Modern Science and Scientific Studies

Hosted online from Madrid, Spain

Website: econfséries.com

20th August 2025

References:

1. Goyipov U. (2024). Til nazariyasi va frazeologik birliklarning mazmuni. FLEDU.
2. ResearchGate. (2024). Semantic Features of Phraseological Units in English and Uzbek Languages.
3. Unknown Author. (n.d.). The Semantic Classifications of English and Uzbek Phraseological Units with the Names of Animals. [PDF document].
4. Cowie, A. P. (1998). *Phraseology: Theory, Analysis, and Applications*. Oxford University Press.
5. Koonin, A. V. (1996). *A Course in Phraseology*. Moscow: Higher School.
6. Mokienko, V. M. (2000). *Phraseology in Comparative Perspective*.
7. Vinogradov, V. V. (1947). *The Main Types of Phraseological Units in Russian*.
8. Amosova, N. N. (1963). *Essentials of English Phraseology*.
9. Mamatov, M. (2021). O‘zbek tilida hayvonot nomlari ishtirokidagi frazeologizmlar. Tashkent.
10. Larson, M. (1984). *Meaning-based Translation: A Guide to Cross-Language Equivalence*. University Press of America.