



LEXICAL AND LINGUOCULTUROLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN MODERN UZBEK SHORT STORIES

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Abstract

This article investigates the lexical and linguoculturological features of phraseological units in modern Uzbek short stories. With the rising interest in cognitive linguistics and anthropocentric paradigms in contemporary linguistics, phraseological expressions are no longer seen as mere stylistic devices, but as cultural markers and mental representations of national worldviews. Through linguistic-cultural methodology, conceptual and ideographic analysis, and semantic field theory, this study aims to identify how phraseological expressions embody national mentality, values, and culturally bound interpretations within Uzbek literature. The research draws on a comparative and analytical approach, incorporating theoretical insights from both global and Uzbek linguistic schools.

Keywords: phraseological units, Uzbek short stories, linguoculturology, national mentality, cultural code, conceptual metaphor, cognitive linguistics, phraseosemantic field, lexical analysis, Uzbek worldview.

The relationship between language and culture is one of the most intricate and deeply interwoven domains in linguistic science. As noted by E. Sapir and B. Whorf, language not only serves as a communication tool but shapes the very way individuals perceive reality. In this light, the role of phraseological units (PUs) in reflecting and transmitting cultural codes has become increasingly significant in modern linguistics. In Uzbek short stories, especially those emerging in the post-independence period, PUs serve as semiotic signs saturated with cultural memory, emotional evaluation, and cognitive schemas. This study aims to explore how these units function as carriers of cultural meaning and how they reflect Uzbek national consciousness through literary texts.



Linguoculturological Framework and Methodology

The theoretical framework of this article is grounded in cognitive linguistics and linguistic cultural studies (linguoculturology), which emphasize the connection between language, cognition, and culture. Influential scholars such as V. Teliya, A. Wierzbicka, and Uzbek researchers like N. Mahmudov and M. Xoliqova have highlighted the value of PUs as linguistic expressions of national mentality and cultural memory [1].

The methodology includes:

- **Component analysis** – identifying and interpreting cultural elements in phraseological structure;
- **Conceptual and ideographic modeling** – mapping cognitive concepts within phraseological content;
- **Frazeo-semantic field analysis** – studying lexical clusters that share thematic or cultural meaning;
- **Metaphoric modeling** – uncovering conceptual metaphors that underlie phraseological expressions;
- **Linguocultural profiling** – analyzing the cultural portrait embedded in PU usage [2].

These methods allow a multidimensional investigation of how phraseological expressions are used in narrative contexts to reflect socio-cultural values.

Lexical Features of Phraseological Units in Uzbek Short Stories

Lexically, phraseological units in Uzbek literature are marked by national imagery, folklore references, and culturally-specific idioms. For instance, expressions such as “ko‘z tegmasin” (may the evil eye not strike), “yuziga tupurgan bilan orlanmaydi” (a person who has lost honor won’t feel shame), or “suvga tushgan itdek bo‘ldi” (was humiliated like a dog fallen into water) reveal lexical peculiarities grounded in cultural connotation [3].

Such units are not arbitrary; they emerge from centuries-old traditions, oral lore, and common mental schemas. The lexical structure of these PUs often includes:



- **Kinship terms** (ota, ona, aka, singil) reflecting the family-centered culture;
- **Nature and environment references** (suv, qum, yomg'ir) symbolizing Uzbek landscape and spiritual connection to land;
- **Animals and objects** (it, xar, xamir) used as metaphors in moral or behavioral expressions.

These phraseological combinations not only carry idiomatic meaning but resonate with deep national ethos [4].

Linguoculturological Functions of Phraseological Units

Phraseological units in Uzbek literature are cultural markers that reflect historical experience, traditional values, and communal norms. Their linguoculturological role includes the following dimensions:

1. **Cultural coding** – PUs encapsulate social norms, prohibitions, beliefs, and stereotypes. For example, “erkak kishi g'am yemaydi” (a man does not show sorrow) reflects gender role expectations in patriarchal culture.
2. **Mental worldview expression** – PUs embody the way Uzbek people perceive and interpret reality. The expression “bolaning tili achchiq bo'ladi” (a child's tongue is bitter) conveys collective wisdom about unintended truth-telling in children.
3. **Narrative aesthetics** – Authors use PUs to add cultural flavor, realism, and rhythm to narration, helping readers to connect with characters on a culturally intimate level.
4. **Value transmission** – Idiomatic phrases like “qari bilan maslahat – farzand bilan ishtaha” (consult with the old, enjoy with the young) serve as verbalized moral lessons, preserving traditional wisdom.
5. **Emotive and evaluative functions** – Many PUs carry implicit emotional evaluation, used to judge or characterize situations and behaviors (e.g., “ochdan o'lgandek yedi” – ate like starving to death).

These functions show that PUs are embedded within collective consciousness and cultural heritage, operating as compressed texts with rich associative networks [5].



Examples from Modern Uzbek Short Stories

In recent works by Uzbek authors such as Xurshid Davron, Tohir Malik, and Erkin A'zam, phraseological expressions are strategically embedded in character dialogue, internal monologue, and narrative commentary. For instance:

- In Tohir Malik's short story "So'nggi Kun", the protagonist's moral struggle is punctuated by the expression "ichimdagi o'tni hech kim bilmaydi" (no one knows the fire burning inside me), which metaphorically conveys internal suffering, drawing on cultural understanding of emotional suppression [6].
- Erkin A'zam's "Uloq" uses the PU "otasi bilan tish-tirnog'i bilan tirishgan odam" (a person who fought tooth and nail with his father) to illustrate deep-rooted familial conflict and traditional authority resistance.
- In Xurshid Davron's "Samarqandga boraman", the phrase "ko'ngil ko'zgudek bo'lsa, unda dog' qolmaydi" (if the heart is like a mirror, it leaves no stain) serves as a cultural metaphor of forgiveness and emotional clarity [7].

These examples underscore that PUs are not ornamental—they are narrative strategies that render character experience culturally resonant and linguistically nuanced [8].

Despite the rich phraseological heritage in Uzbek language and literature, the study of phraseological units within modern fiction remains underexplored. Most scholarly attention has focused on etymology or structural classification, while their cognitive, cultural, and communicative dimensions are only recently gaining traction.

The cognitive linguistic approach confirms that PUs are not isolated expressions but windows into the conceptual world of a speech community. As such, each PU reflects mental templates shaped by history, geography, and collective psychology. As Whorf emphasized, linguistic structures determine habitual thought, and in this regard, Uzbek PUs form a vital part of cultural self-understanding and transmission [9].

This research affirms the necessity of integrating linguistic and cultural studies for a more holistic interpretation of literary language. Moreover, it supports the view that studying phraseological language in fiction can enhance both language teaching and intercultural communication [10].



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Phraseological units in modern Uzbek short stories are powerful carriers of cultural meaning, mental worldview, and linguistic identity. Their lexical richness and conceptual depth provide insights into how the Uzbek people perceive, experience, and narrate the world around them. Through linguistic and cultural analysis, these units reveal themselves as dynamic tools that connect tradition with contemporary expression, individuality with collectivity, and language with culture.

As Uzbek literature continues to evolve, the study of phraseological expressions offers fertile ground for interdisciplinary research at the crossroads of linguistics, cultural studies, and literary analysis. Deepening this line of inquiry will not only enrich our understanding of Uzbek cultural semiotics but also contribute to global discussions on the intersection of language, thought, and identity.

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