

CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF IDIOMS REPRESENTING NATIONAL IDENTITY IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract. *Idiomatic expressions represent a culturally rich layer of language that reflects national values, historical experience, and collective worldview. This study offers a contrastive analysis of idioms representing national identity in English and Uzbek, focusing on their semantic, cultural, and pragmatic features. The research examines idioms related to everyday life, social relations, emotions, work ethic, and moral values, identifying both universal patterns and culture-specific imagery. The findings demonstrate that while English and Uzbek idioms perform similar communicative functions, they differ in metaphorical sources, evaluative orientation, and cultural references, thereby highlighting idioms as significant markers of national identity.*

Keywords: *Idioms, national identity, contrastive linguistics, English phraseology, intercultural communication.*

Idioms represent one of the most culturally saturated layers of language. Unlike neutral lexical items, idiomatic expressions carry implicit cultural meanings that reflect the values, traditions, and collective memory of a nation. Through idioms, speakers express culturally accepted norms of behavior, moral judgments, and emotional attitudes. As a result, idioms function not only as linguistic units but also as cultural signs that encode national identity.

National identity is shaped by historical experience, social structure, religious beliefs, and interaction with the natural environment. These factors influence the imagery and symbolism used in idiomatic expressions. The study of idioms from a contrastive perspective allows researchers to uncover how different nations conceptualize similar human experiences in culturally specific ways. English and Uzbek, belonging to different language families and cultural traditions, offer a productive basis for examining how national identity is reflected in idiomatic language.

English idioms reflect the historical development of English-speaking societies, shaped by maritime life, trade, industrialization, and social hierarchy. Many idioms are rooted in everyday activities, professions, sports, and historical events, which contribute to their national character.

For example, idioms related to seafaring, such as *plain sailing* or *learn the ropes*, reveal the importance of maritime culture in English history. Similarly, sports-related idioms like *hit below the belt* or *throw in the towel* reflect the cultural significance of boxing and competitive sports.

English idioms often emphasize individualism, practicality, and efficiency, which are core values in English-speaking cultures. The imagery used in these idioms tends to be concrete and action-oriented, focusing on personal responsibility and measurable outcomes. At the same time, English idioms frequently employ understatement and irony, reflecting a cultural preference for indirectness and emotional restraint.

Uzbek idioms are deeply rooted in a traditional lifestyle, agrarian culture, family relations, and moral values shaped by centuries of social and religious experience. Many Uzbek idioms reflect communal living, respect for elders, hospitality, patience, and moral integrity. Expressions related to household life, nature, and kinship reveal the close connection between language and everyday experience in Uzbek culture.

Animal symbolism, body parts, and natural elements play a prominent role in Uzbek idiomatic imagery. For example, idioms involving the heart, hand, or eyes often express emotional states, generosity, or intention. Uzbek idioms tend to emphasize collective responsibility, endurance, and social harmony, reflecting the communal orientation of national identity.

Unlike English idioms, which often focus on individual action, Uzbek idioms frequently highlight social relations and moral evaluation. A contrastive analysis of English and Uzbek idioms reveals both universal and culture-specific patterns. On a universal level, both languages employ idioms to express fundamental human experiences such as happiness, hardship, success, and failure.

However, the imagery and metaphorical sources differ significantly. English idioms often rely on professional, technical, or sport-related imagery, whereas Uzbek idioms draw heavily on nature, family life, and traditional practices. Differences in national identity are also evident in evaluative orientation. English idioms may prioritize efficiency, independence, and pragmatism, while Uzbek idioms emphasize morality, patience, and social cohesion. These contrasts reflect broader cultural values and influence how speakers interpret and use idiomatic expressions in communication. Both languages use idioms to achieve expressive richness and rhetorical impact.

However, the frequency and context of idiom usage may vary. Uzbek idioms are often used in oral storytelling and everyday conversation, while English idioms are widely employed in media discourse, literature, and informal speech.

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