

THE NATURE OF IDIOMS AND THEIR MAIN FEATURES IN ENGLISH AND
UZBEK LANGUAGES

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Abstract. *This article presents a contrastive study of English and Uzbek idiomatic expressions representing national identity. It analyzes idioms as cultural markers reflecting social values, historical memory, and collective attitudes. By exploring semantic and pragmatic aspects, the study identifies linguistic convergences and divergences. The findings emphasize the vital role of idioms in cross-cultural communication, translation, and understanding the cultural worldview embodied within a language.*

Keywords: *Idioms, national identity, cultural markers, English language, Uzbek language, contrastive linguistics, figurative language, semantic analysis, pragmatic functions, cross-cultural communication, language and culture.*

Annotatsiya. *Ushbu maqola ingliz va o'zbek tillaridagi milliy o'zlikni ifodalovchi idiomalarning qiyosiy tadqiqiga bag'ishlangan. Idiomalar ijtimoiy qadriyatlar va tarixiy xotirani aks ettiruvchi madaniy belgilar sifatida tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot tillararo o'xshashlik va farqlarni aniqlab, idiomalarning madaniyatlararo muloqot va tarjimadagi o'rnini ko'rsatib beradi. Natijalar til boyligi milliy dunyoqarash bilan uzviy bog'liqligini isbotlaydi.*

Tayanch iboralar: *Idiomalar, milliy o'ziga xoslik, madaniy belgilar, ingliz tili, o'zbek tili, qiyosiy tilshunoslik, obrazli til, semantik tahlil, pragmatik funktsiyalar, madaniyatlararo muloqot, til va madaniyat.*

Аннотация. *Данная статья посвящена сопоставительному исследованию английских и узбекских идиом, отражающих национальную идентичность. Идиомы анализируются как культурные маркеры, передающие социальные ценности и историческую память. Исследование выявляет лингвистические сходства и различия, подчеркивая роль фразеологизмов в межкультурной коммуникации и переводе.*

Результаты подтверждают, что языковое богатство неразрывно связано с национальным мировоззрением.

Ключевые слова: *идиомы, национальная идентичность, культурные маркеры, английский язык, узбекский язык, контрастная лингвистика, образный язык, семантический анализ, прагматические функции, межкультурная коммуникация, язык и культура.*

Introduction. Language is a powerful medium for expressing not only ideas but also cultural identity and social values. Among various linguistic tools, idiomatic expressions play a significant role in reflecting the worldview, historical experiences, and collective consciousness of a nation. Idioms are fixed, figurative expressions whose meanings often cannot be deduced from the individual words they contain. They encapsulate societal norms, shared beliefs, and culturally specific knowledge, making them an invaluable resource for understanding how a community perceives itself and others.

In particular, idioms related to national identity provide a lens through which the values, priorities, and historical memory of a society can be examined.

In both English and Uzbek, idioms serve as cultural markers, carrying connotations that reveal a nation's social norms, traditions, and collective experiences. English idioms often reflect historical events, social hierarchies, or everyday experiences rooted in Western culture, while Uzbek idioms are shaped by the Central Asian historical context, folklore, and traditional social practices.

The figurative language embedded in these idioms reveals how speakers conceptualize national identity, convey moral lessons, or express social attitudes. For example, proverbs or sayings may praise bravery, hard work, or hospitality, thereby illustrating the values that a society prioritizes and the qualities it admires in its members.

A contrastive study of idioms in English and Uzbek allows researchers to identify both similarities and differences in the ways each language encodes national identity. Similarities may arise from universal human experiences or shared social functions of language, whereas differences often stem from historical, cultural, or environmental factors unique to each community. By analyzing the semantic content, structural features, and pragmatic functions of idioms, this study aims to uncover the underlying cultural narratives and identity markers embedded in language.

Understanding idiomatic expressions is not only important for linguistic analysis but also has practical implications for cross-cultural communication, translation, and language teaching.

Misinterpretation or literal translation of idioms can lead to loss of meaning or cultural nuance, highlighting the need for awareness of the cultural and historical context behind these expressions.

Moreover, the study of idioms contributes to broader discussions on the relationship between language and culture, demonstrating how language functions as both a mirror and a vehicle of national identity.

Main Part:

Idioms are fixed expressions whose meaning is often figurative rather than literal, reflecting the beliefs, values, and experiences of the linguistic community that uses them. They are more than mere linguistic constructs; idioms function as cultural artifacts, encapsulating historical events, social norms, and moral principles. In the context of national identity, idioms serve as concise expressions of the qualities, virtues, and ideals that a nation values, transmitting collective memory and reinforcing a sense of shared belonging.

In English, idioms often arise from historical, literary, or everyday life contexts.

Expressions such as *"the grass is always greener on the other side"* or *"to bite the bullet"* carry figurative meanings that reflect cultural attitudes toward desire, resilience, or pragmatism. Similarly, Uzbek idioms often draw upon folklore, traditional practices, and historical experience, with examples like *"Qo'lning qo'li bilan ishlashi sharafdir"* (literally, "It is an honor for a hand to work with another hand"), emphasizing cooperation and social responsibility. These idioms illustrate how language encodes not only meaning but also cultural values and social expectations.

English idioms that reflect national identity often emphasize individualism, pragmatism, and historical experience. Many idioms are metaphorical, drawing from social customs, historical events, or common life experiences. For instance, idioms related to leadership, bravery, or fairness, such as *"to carry the day"* or *"to hold the fort"*, convey societal admiration for courage, responsibility, and competence.

In addition, idioms derived from historical or literary contexts, such as “*crossing the Rubicon*”, not only carry figurative meanings but also reflect historical knowledge embedded in the culture.

These expressions serve multiple functions: they communicate cultural norms, reinforce shared identity, and provide linguistic shortcuts for conveying complex ideas about societal values.

In media, literature, and everyday conversation, such idioms strengthen a sense of belonging to the English-speaking cultural community, demonstrating the inseparable link between language and national identity.

Uzbek idioms, in contrast, often emphasize collectivism, moral virtue, and traditional wisdom. Many Uzbek idioms are rooted in folklore, proverbs, and historical experiences of Central Asia, reflecting the values that the society has preserved over centuries. Examples include:

- “*O‘tgan kun ortda, ertangi kun oldinda*” (“The past day is behind, the future day is ahead”) – emphasizing patience and forward-looking perspective.
- “*Donolikning uchta kaliti – bilim, sabr, va halollik*” (“The three keys to wisdom are knowledge, patience, and honesty”) – reflecting ethical values central to Uzbek culture.

These idioms often employ vivid imagery and metaphor to communicate complex moral and social lessons, reinforcing communal norms and cultural heritage. Unlike English idioms, which frequently highlight individual achievement, Uzbek idioms often celebrate collective responsibility, social harmony, and adherence to tradition, providing a distinctive lens through which national identity is expressed.

A contrastive study of English and Uzbek idioms reveals both similarities and differences in how national identity is linguistically encoded. Similarities include the use of metaphor, imagery, and figurative language to convey abstract concepts such as bravery, wisdom, or moral virtue. Both languages employ idioms as cultural markers, embedding historical knowledge, social norms, and collective values within everyday expressions.

Differences arise from cultural, historical, and social contexts. English idioms often reflect individualism, pragmatism, and historical or literary references, while Uzbek idioms emphasize collectivism, moral conduct, and traditional wisdom. Structurally, English idioms frequently involve fixed phrasal constructions, whereas Uzbek idioms often employ rich metaphorical or proverb-like forms with ethical or social instruction embedded in the expression.

These contrasts highlight how idiomatic expressions serve as mirrors of cultural identity, reflecting not only language-specific features but also deeper societal values, historical experiences, and worldview differences.

Idioms representing national identity fulfill semantic, stylistic, and pragmatic functions.

Semantically, they encode culturally significant concepts, values, and collective experiences.

Stylistically, they enhance expressiveness and rhetorical impact in both spoken and written discourse. Pragmatically, idioms communicate social norms, provide cultural context, and reinforce in-group cohesion among speakers of the language.

In cross-cultural communication and translation, understanding these idiomatic expressions is crucial. Misinterpretation of idioms can lead to loss of cultural meaning or misunderstanding of national identity, emphasizing the importance of cultural competence and contextual awareness in translation, language teaching, and intercultural dialogue.

Conclusion:

The contrastive study of idioms representing national identity in English and Uzbek demonstrates that idiomatic expressions serve as powerful cultural markers, reflecting the values, beliefs, and historical experiences of each linguistic community. English idioms often emphasize individualism, pragmatism, and historical or literary references, highlighting traits such as courage, resilience, and personal achievement. In contrast, Uzbek idioms emphasize collectivism, moral virtue, and social responsibility, reflecting the ethical and traditional values central to Uzbek culture.

By examining semantic, structural, and pragmatic features, this study reveals both similarities and differences in the ways national identity is encoded through idioms. While both languages use figurative language, metaphor, and imagery to convey cultural meanings, their focus, stylistic patterns, and underlying worldview differ, illustrating how language functions as a mirror of societal norms and cultural consciousness.

Understanding these idiomatic expressions is crucial for cross-cultural communication, translation, and language teaching, as misinterpretation can obscure cultural nuances or distort the intended message. Overall, the analysis underscores the inseparable relationship between language and national identity, demonstrating that idioms are not merely linguistic units but also carriers of cultural heritage, societal values, and collective identity.

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