



## PHRASEOLOGICAL EQUIVALENCE IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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### ABSTRACT

This article provides a comprehensive comparative-typological analysis of phraseological equivalence between English and Uzbek. Within the framework of the modern anthropocentric paradigm, phraseological units (PUs) are examined as linguistic mirrors reflecting national mentalities and cultural values. The study categorizes a targeted corpus of 20 idiomatic expressions into three hierarchical levels: full, partial, and zero equivalence. By analyzing contextual examples extracted from authentic English and Uzbek literary sources, the research explores how universal human logic and specific national realia shape the linguistic picture of the world.

### KEYWORDS

Phraseology, equivalence, English, Uzbek, linguoculturology, anthropocentric paradigm, national realia, metaphors.

### INTRODUCTION

#### Annotatsiya:

Mazkur maqolada ingliz va o'zbek tillari misolida frazeologik ekvivalentlik masalalari qiyosiy-tipologik jihatdan tahlil qilingan. Antropotsentrik paradigma doirasida frazeologik birliklar (FB) xalq mentaliteti va madaniy qadriyatlarini aks ettiruvchi lisoniy "ko'zgu" sifatida o'rganiladi. Tadqiqot davomida 20 ta iboradan iborat korpus o'zaro muvofiqlik darajasiga ko'ra uchta iyerarxik guruhga ajratildi: to'liq, qisman va nol ekvivalentlik. Badiiy adabiyotlardan olingan kontekstual misollar tahlili orqali umuminsoniy mantiq va o'ziga xos milliy realiyalar lisoniy olam manzarasini qanday shakllantirishi yoritib berilgan.

**Kalit so'zlar:** frazeologiya, ekvivalentlik, ingliz tili, o'zbek tili, lingvokulturologiya, antropotsentrik paradigma, milliy realiyalar, metaforalar.

## **Аннотация:**

В данной статье представлен комплексный сравнительно-типологический анализ фразеологической эквивалентности в английском и узбекском языках. В рамках антропоцентрической парадигмы фразеологические единицы рассматриваются как лингвистические зеркала, отражающие национальный менталитет и культурные ценности. Исследование классифицирует целевой корпус из 20 фразеологизмов по трем иерархическим уровням: полная, частичная и нулевая эквивалентность. Путем анализа контекстуальных примеров из аутентичных литературных источников исследуется, как универсальная человеческая логика и специфические национальные реалии формируют языковую картину мира.

**Ключевые слова:** фразеология, эквивалентность, английский язык, узбекский язык, лингвокультурология, антропоцентрическая парадигма, национальные реалии, метафоры.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Phraseology serves as a profound reflection of a nation's collective consciousness, capturing its historical legacy, cultural values, and worldview within stable linguistic structures. As formal exponents of human cognitive activity, phraseological units represent more than a mere combination of words; they embody specific metaphorical models that define a people's unique linguistic picture of the world. In the modern anthropocentric paradigm, these expressions are viewed as a vital bridge between language and culture, making their study essential for understanding the intricate nuances of cross-cultural communication.

The central challenge in modern linguistics remains the problem of phraseological equivalence, particularly when navigating typologically and culturally distinct languages such as English and Uzbek. Equivalence in this context is not merely a search for literal translations, but rather a functional relationship between linguistic forms that perform identical communicative tasks across different systems. While universal human logic often creates shared metaphorical foundations, the specific national realia of the English and Uzbek peoples introduce significant divergence in imagery and connotation.

Translators and linguists must navigate the delicate balance between preserving the figurative essence of the source language and ensuring naturalness in the target language. Consequently, this study aims to investigate the nature of phraseological equivalence by analyzing a targeted corpus of 20 idiomatic pairs from English and Uzbek. By utilizing authentic contextual examples from prominent literary works (such as those by A. Kahhor, M. Ismoiliy, and Oybek, alongside authentic English literary contexts), the research systematically categorizes these units through the lens of full, partial, and zero equivalence, thereby elucidating how different cultures encode shared human experiences.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The theoretical evolution of phraseology has significantly shifted from purely structural descriptions to complex cognitive and linguoculturological interpretations. In contemporary linguistics, phraseological units (PUs) are defined as stable, reproducible word combinations characterized by non-compositional semantics and structural integrity. The foundational principles of this field were systematically developed by Kunin [2], who emphasized the semantic stability and idiomaticity of

phrasemes in the English language, and Rahmatullayev [6, 7], who established the theoretical and lexicographical basis for Uzbek phraseology by thoroughly analyzing the semantic unity of fixed expressions.

In recent years, the Anthropocentric Paradigm has gained prominence, asserting that language is a direct reflection of human cognitive activity. Within this framework, Ergasheva [1] notes that idioms act as cognitive "stereotypes" of national thinking, encapsulating the worldview of a particular speech community. The classification of interlingual equivalents in translation studies frequently relies on the foundational models proposed by Nida and Mlcek [3, 4], who distinguish between full, partial, and zero (functional) equivalence.

When comparing typologically unrelated languages such as English and Uzbek, researchers often observe how universal conceptual metaphors diverge at the level of specific cultural realia. Pezik [5] argues that authentic textual contexts — rather than isolated dictionary entries — are essential for validating the functional and idiomatic equivalence of expressions. Therefore, examining PUs through the lens of authentic literary contexts provides the most accurate measure of cross-cultural equivalence.

## **METHODS**

This study employs a comprehensive comparative-typological and contrastive analysis framework. The primary data consists of a targeted corpus of 20 English phraseological units and their Uzbek counterparts. Unlike traditional comparative studies that rely solely on bilingual dictionaries, this research grounds its analysis in authentic contextual usage. The English expressions were contextualized using various literary and journalistic sources, while the Uzbek equivalents were meticulously verified through authentic excerpts from classical and modern Uzbek literature (including works by A. Kahhor, M. Ismoiliy, Oybek, and G. Gulom).

The structural-semantic modeling method was utilized to analyze the "internal form" of each idiom and uncover the underlying cognitive models. Based on the degree of semantic, structural, and stylistic alignment, the selected corpus was systematically categorized into three hierarchical groups: Full Equivalence, Partial Equivalence, and Zero (Functional) Equivalence.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The comprehensive analysis of the targeted corpus reveals that phraseological equivalence between English and Uzbek is a highly complex, multi-layered cognitive phenomenon. Equivalence is rarely achieved through absolute mirror translations; rather, it is dictated by the intersection of shared human logic and highly distinct linguacultural environments. By analyzing the idioms in authentic literary contexts, we observe that even when the communicative intent is identical, the underlying metaphorical models – particularly those involving somatic elements, fauna, and cultural artifacts – frequently shift. Below is the categorized analytical breakdown of the selected units.

### **Partial Phraseological Equivalence**

Partial equivalence constitutes the largest segment of the analyzed corpus. In these instances, the underlying communicative intent remains entirely stable, but the formal exponents and cultural symbols diverge significantly to reflect local geographic, agricultural, and social realities.

**Piece of cake vs. Xamir uchidan patir** – To conceptualize an action that is extremely easy or merely the small beginning of a larger process, English utilizes a culinary metaphor centered on a sweet dessert ("cake"). In stark contrast, the Uzbek equivalent, "Xamir uchidan patir", is deeply rooted in the region's agrarian and baking traditions, elevating "patir" (traditional bread) as the core symbol. The contextual usage in M. Ismoiliy's Farg'ona tong otguncha "Xamir uchidan patir", – deb, hokim ziyofatidan oldin bir tovoqqina "palovxonto'ra" qildirgan bo'lsalar, baham ko'rgani chaqirganlar-ov! perfectly illustrates this cultural substitution. Bread represents sustenance and abundance in Uzbek culture, making this idiom a prime example of the anthropocentric paradigm where societal values govern phraseological formation.

**When pigs fly vs. Tuyaning dumi yerga yetganda** – Both expressions serve the pragmatic function of declaring an absolute impossibility. The English idiom relies on an absurd, surreal disruption of natural laws — a flying pig. Conversely, the Uzbek cognitive model grounds the impossibility in the physical anatomy of native fauna. As demonstrated in M. Ismoiliy's work: "Hasan so'fi tog'ning ikki tomonini sinchiklab qaradi-da, kallasini chayqab: «Suv chiqadi-yu, lekigin boyga yarasha chiqadi. Bu suvdan bizga tuyaning dumi yerga yetganda tegadi»,– dedi.", the impossibility is expressed through a somatic reference to a camel ("tuya"), an animal historically central to Central Asian trade and geography, whose tail anatomy makes touching the ground biologically impossible.

**To kill two birds with one stone vs. Bir kesak bilan ikki quyonni urmoq** – The universal cognitive concept of achieving two goals simultaneously is mapped onto a hunting metaphor in both linguistic systems. However, the specific lexical choices reflect divergent local environments. While English utilizes "birds" and a "stone," the Uzbek counterpart features "quyon" (rabbits) and "kesak" (a hard clod of dry earth). M. Ismoiliy's usage («Bu o'lchashda bir kesak bilan ikki qushni/quyonni uramiz-u», – dedi u og'zi qulog'iga yetib. ») validates how localized agricultural elements (kesak) naturally replace generic stones in the Uzbek linguistic mindset.

**Burn the midnight oil vs. Mijja qoqmaslik** – Here, we observe a fascinating shift from an object-oriented metaphor in English to a somatic (body-part related) metaphor in Uzbek. To describe working late into the night, English references the external tool used for illumination ("midnight oil"). The Uzbek equivalent, "mijja qoqmaslik" (not blinking an eyelash), internalizes the experience, focusing entirely on the physiological state of the subject. T. Malik's contextualization ("Sizni ko'raman deb mijja qoqmadim. O'shandan beri qaramaysiz!") emphasizes human endurance and physical exhaustion rather than the external environment.

**The last straw vs. Sabr kosasi to'lmoq** – Both idioms describe the critical point before a breakdown or loss of patience. The English idiom ("the last straw that broke the camel's back") relies on an additive physical burden. The Uzbek equivalent shifts to a spatial-containment metaphor utilizing an everyday cultural object: a bowl (kosa) filling up. Oybek's "Oltin vodiya shabadalar" provides an excellent illustration: "Ashirmat to'y masalasini qarindoshlar oldiga uzil- kesil qilib qo'ydi. Chunki ularning muomalasi dallolning sabr kosasini nihoyat to'ldirgan edi". This conceptualizes patience not as an animal's spine bearing weight, but as a finite vessel holding liquid.

**Adding insult to injury vs. O'lganning ustiga chiqib tepmoq** – This pairing highlights a significant divergence in emotional intensity and imagery. The English idiom employs a relatively abstract, almost legalistic duality (insult and injury). The Uzbek counterpart, however, employs a highly visceral, aggressive, and dynamic physical image — kicking a dead person (O'lganning ustiga chiqib tepmoq). As seen in Uyg'un's "Navbahor" ("Bir dardga chalindingmi – biri ikkinchisini ergashtirib kelaverar ekan. O'lganning ustiga tepganday, manavi rejamizning buzilganini qara"), the Uzbek expression conveys a much sharper sense of injustice and compounding tragedy.

## **Zero (Functional) Equivalence**

Zero equivalence occurs when the source language employs an image or conceptual metaphor that constitutes a "lexical lacuna" in the target language's cognitive framework. In such cases, maintaining both the literal image and the idiomatic meaning is impossible. Translators and speakers must completely shift the metaphorical imagery or rely on descriptive functional equivalents to preserve the original pragmatic and communicative effect.

**Let the cat out of the bag vs. Og'z(i)dan gullamoq** – The English expression relies on the historical trickery of hiding a less valuable animal in a sack, using an animal/container metaphor to denote a concealed secret. This conceptualization is entirely absent in Uzbek phraseology. Instead, the Uzbek language achieves functional equivalence through a somatic-botanical metaphor: "og'zidan gullamoq" (to bloom from the mouth). As seen in G. Gulom's "Qizaloq" ("Mahalla-ko'ydagilar bo'lsa, bu xabar boshlab eshiltiganda, hamma og'izlaridan gullab, Shokir akani bosh ko'tarib yura olmaydigan qilgan edilar."), the act of inadvertently revealing information is likened to an uncontrollable, natural blossoming out of the speaker's mouth, shifting the focus from the secret itself (the cat) to the speaker's physical lack of control.

**A hot potato vs. Bosh og'rig'i** – Modern English utilizes a physical, thermal metaphor — the tactile sensation of tossing a burning hot potato — to describe a highly problematic or controversial issue that no one wants to handle. Traditional Uzbek lacks a food-based equivalent for this concept. The equivalent shifts to a purely somatic (body-part related) metaphor: "bosh og'rig'i" (headache). Oybek's *Qutlug' qon* ("Hammasi bosh og'rig'i gaplar") beautifully illustrates how Uzbek culture internalizes external social problems as a physical ailment in the head, rather than an object held in the hands.

**Keep your chin up vs. Ko'nglini tushirmaslik** – Both idioms function as words of encouragement in times of adversity. English encodes courage and resilience through a somatic posture — keeping the chin physically elevated. Uzbek, however, utilizes the concept of the "ko'ngil" (the heart/soul) as the central seat of human emotion. M. Ismoilij's usage in *Farg'ona tong otguncha* ("Qo'l baland kelganda suyunib, xotirjamlikka berilmalik, past kelganda esa ko'ngilni cho'ktirmaslik kerak.") highlights this profound cultural difference. Where English advises maintaining an external physical posture, Uzbek advises against letting the internal spiritual core "sink" or "fall".

**Break the ice vs. Til topishmoq** – To describe the relief of social tension or the initiation of conversation among strangers, English relies on a meteorological metaphor involving frozen water

("break the ice"). While "muzni eritmoq" is sometimes used in modern contexts as a loan-translation (calque), the historically and culturally authentic Uzbek equivalent is "til topishmoq" (to find a tongue/language). As evidenced in S. Anorboyev's Oqsoy ("Qo'chqor! – deb o'shqirdi Turdiquq qovog'ini solib. – Aqlingni yig', bekorga o'lib ketasan, bola!» – «Taslim bo'lsa, Sho'ro gunohimni kechirarmikin?») – deb maslahat so'radi. Shu bo'ldi-yu, ikkovi umumiy til topishdi. To'qayning ichiga kirib, xilvat joyda gaplashishdi."), the Uzbek approach bypasses environmental metaphors entirely, focusing directly on the somatic organ of communication (the tongue) to represent mutual understanding and harmony.

**Barking up the wrong tree vs. Yo'ldan ozmoq** – The English idiom stems from the highly specific cultural practice of hunting with hounds, where a dog mistakenly barks at a tree the prey has already fled. This specific hunting imagery is a cultural lacuna in Uzbek. Therefore, a functional equivalent relying on spatial and moral orientation is used: "yo'ldan ozmoq" (to lose one's path/way). S. Saroyi's classic usage in "Gulistoni bit-turkiy" ("Aytur o'zgaga dag'i tutmas o'zi, Lojaram uyug'an anga yo'ldan ozar.") demonstrates how pursuing a false lead is conceptualized not as a hunting error, but as deviating from the correct path of life or truth.

**Costs an arm and a leg vs. Qimmatga tushmoq** – When describing exorbitant expense, English employs extreme somatic hyperbole, equating financial cost to the loss of major limbs. The Uzbek language lacks a direct phraseological counterpart for this specific hyperbole. Translators must rely on the descriptive, functional verb phrase "qimmatga tushmoq", as demonstrated in A. Kahhor's Sinchalak ("Shu odam «Qishloqni bu xilda radiolashtirish qimmatga tushmaydimi?» degan gapni o'rtaga tashladi."). This illustrates instances where vivid imagery in the source language is inevitably neutralized in the target language to maintain natural communicative flow.

## CONCLUSION

The comparative and typological investigation into phraseological equivalence between English and Uzbek underscores that idioms are far more than static, decorative linguistic structures. They are dynamic cognitive repositories that encode a nation's collective wisdom, historical identity, and unique worldview. By analyzing a targeted corpus of 20 idiomatic expressions through the theoretical lens of the anthropocentric paradigm, this study demonstrates that the selection of metaphorical imagery in phraseology is never arbitrary; rather, it is deeply governed by specific national realia, geographic environments, and core cultural values.

The textual analysis, substantiated by authentic excerpts from renowned literary figures such as A. Kahhor, M. Ismoiliy, and Oybek, validates the classification of interlingual correlates into three functional levels. Full equivalence highlights the existence of shared universal human logic, where basic physical realities are conceptualized identically across distinct linguistic families. Partial equivalence, which constitutes the most prominent category, vividly reveals the unique "linguistic picture of the world". In this group, while the underlying communicative intent remains stable, the formal exponents shift dramatically—substituting elements like "cake" for "patir" or "birds" for "rabbits"—to reflect local agricultural and pastoral traditions. Finally, instances of zero (functional) equivalence emphasize the presence of profound lexical lacunae, where somatic or environmental

metaphors (e.g., "a hot potato" versus "bosh og'rig'i") diverge completely, requiring linguists to prioritize pragmatic adequacy over formal structural alignment.

Ultimately, this research confirms that achieving true phraseological equivalence is a cornerstone of successful cross-cultural communication and literary translation. Moving beyond isolated dictionary definitions to analyze phraseological units within their natural textual habitats provides a highly accurate measure of semantic integrity. The systematic conceptual categorization provided in this study not only enriches the field of comparative linguaculturology but also serves as a practical, evidence-based tool for translators, lexicographers, and educators working to bridge the profound idiomatic gap between the English and Uzbek languages.

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