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Phraseological Units with Axiological Features

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A B S T R A C T
This article examines the comparative analysis of English and Uzbek phraseological units (PUs) with animalistic components that describe human character traits, focusing on their axiological features. Phraseological units, being figurative and expressive, play a significant role in enriching language, reflecting cultural perceptions, and conveying emotional and evaluative connotations. However, there is a lack of comprehensive research comparing how different cultures use animal-related expressions to convey positive or negative evaluations of human behavior.

The study uses a contrastive approach to analyze English and Uzbek PUs that feature zoonym components, such as physical qualities, intelligence, personality traits, and habits. The research method involves identifying PUs in both languages and categorizing them according to their emotive and evaluative connotations. The findings reveal that both languages utilize animalistic imagery to describe human qualities, but negative evaluations dominate over positive ones. Examples include comparisons of strength, intelligence, and temperament, such as "as strong as a horse" and "as fierce as a tiger."

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Introduction

Phraseological units play crucial function in any language, because they make sentences more persuasive, colourful and expressive. Phraseological units represent a special layer of vocabulary of any language. They are figurative and capacious language units that most clearly capture the images created by man. The phraseological units give the language identity and uniqueness, they contain special symbols and associative links fixed in the consciousness of native speakers, because they are not created in the process of speech, and are used in it in a ready-made form [1]. Emotional sphere keeps dominant role in the formation of phraseological units as a figurative and marked nationally linguistic unit. The role of connotation in the meaning of phraseological units is great as it expresses a positive or negative assessment to human beings. We may identify two basic components of phraseological connotation, namely on the component of emotivity and on the component of expressivity. 1. The component of emotivity. Emotions are one of the forms of reflection of reality and its understanding. They are expressed by language means only when they are reflected in the consciousness. Emotions as a form of the man's attitude to reality are always accompanied by evaluation. As emotions are divided into two classes – positive and negative – their expression in the language may be negatively emotive and positively emotive. But unfortunately they do not have their necessary index in the dictionary. There are a lot of phraseological units that contain positive and negative emotive evaluation. 2. The component of expressivity. Expressivity is the graphic, portrayal quality of the word or the phraseological unit dependent on figurativeness, intensity or emotivity[2].

The purpose of this article is to present the comparative analysis of phraseological units with a zoonym component describing human character in English and Uzbek languages.

Methods ana analysis. There are many stable combinations that give the language of any nation a special flavor.The phraseological units visually demonstrate the way of life, geographical position, history, traditions of this or that community united by one culture [3]. The set of phraseological units reflects those subjects and phenomena which a person often faced in his life, namely those which caused special emotions and feelings. As the man throughout his history, one way or another, dealt with representatives of animal world, the set of phraseological units - zoo phraseological units are connected with them. Zoomorphisms reflect centuries-old human observations of the appearance and habits of animals, convey the attitude of people towards animals, and carry information about the typical traits of an animal.

Results. So, phraseological units with the names of animals reflect:[4]

- physical qualities and capabilities of a person : “as strong as a horse” – «otdek baquvvat»
- appearance: “as fat as pig” – «cho’chqaday semirmoq»;
- personality traits: “as fierce as a tiger” – «yulbarsdek jahldor»;
- intelligence:“a clever dog” – «itdek aqlli»
- Habits, abilities, skills:“to shed crocodile tears” – «timsohninig ko’z yoshlari».
- The analysis of phraseological units identifying the person’s character makes it possible to understand the culture and traditions of the nation internally. Any language is inherently anthropocentric, since, on the one side, it describes the reality through its perception by a person, on the other side, the language has an extensive tool set for the description of the person. Image of the animals create mostly negative association in human’s conscience.[5]

The comparative analysis of phraseological units (PUs) with animalistic components in both English and Uzbek languages reveals important insights into the ways in which animal metaphors are utilized to describe human character traits. The research indicates that both languages employ zoonymic imagery to convey physical qualities, intelligence, personality traits, and behavioral habits of individuals. However, a critical finding of this study is the dominant presence of negative connotations in these PUs, as compared to their positive or neutral counterparts.

For instance, PUs such as “as strong as a horse” (in Uzbek, otdek baquvvat) reflect physical strength and resilience, a positive trait. On the other hand, phrases like “as fat as a pig” (cho’chqaday semirmoq) and “as fierce as a tiger” (yulbarsdek jahldor) carry more negative connotations, with the former expressing physical excess and the latter reflecting aggression or unrestrained temperament. Similarly, "a clever dog" (itdek aqlli) highlights intelligence, but the connotation may be context-dependent, as it could imply cunning or craftiness rather than wisdom in certain situations. In addition, idiomatic expressions such as “to shed crocodile tears” (timsohninig ko’z yoshlari) evoke insincerity, a negative aspect of human character.

This widespread use of negative associations with animal imagery in both languages suggests that animals, particularly in their more untamed or undesirable forms, serve as metaphors for human failings, flaws, or behaviors that are socially and culturally discouraged. These findings are consistent with existing theories in linguistic anthropology, where animals often represent the ‘other’ or the wild, acting as symbols for traits considered outside of human civility, particularly in patriarchal or highly structured societies. Therefore, animalistic imagery in these PUs is indicative of how societies view and regulate certain behaviors and characteristics.

The study also underscores the emotional and evaluative weight that zoonymic expressions carry in both languages. Emotional evaluations, whether positive or negative, serve as a reflection of a society’s collective perceptions of traits such as strength, intelligence, and integrity. The connotation of expressivity, as defined in the study, plays a crucial role in shaping the impact of these PUs on the listener or reader. As noted earlier, expressivity in these PUs is often marked by the intensity or figurativeness of the animal comparisons, which either intensify or soften the perception of a human trait.

Discussion.

Emotional sphere keeps dominant role in the formation of phraseological units as a figurative and marked nationally linguistic unit. The role of connotation in the meaning of phraseological units is great as it expresses a positive or negative assessment to human beings. They are expressed by language means only when they are reflected in the consciousness.

Scientists argue that zoomorphisms in phraseology have a number of distinctive features:

- stable expressions containing the direct name of the animal;
- always have a figurative meaning "person";
- carry an assessment of a person's actions or behavior

Knowledge Gap and Further Research

While this study provides significant insights into the role of animal-related phraseological units in both English and Uzbek languages, a gap in the literature exists regarding the deeper cultural context in which these PUs function. The study has primarily focused on the comparative aspect of animal symbolism, but further research could explore the historical, social, and cultural reasons behind the prevalence of negative connotations in these expressions. Why do certain traits, such as aggression or cunning, consistently evoke negative animal metaphors across different linguistic and cultural settings? What historical, economic, or ecological factors may have influenced these metaphorical associations? Additionally, the study does not account for the dynamic nature of language and how these PUs may evolve over time. As societies change and cultural norms shift, some animal metaphors might take on more positive or neutral meanings, while others could continue to reinforce negative stereotypes. A longitudinal study examining the evolution of these expressions could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how language mirrors cultural change.

Further theoretical research should also investigate the role of animal symbolism in the formation of social identity and its implications for language acquisition, especially among children. Understanding how young speakers learn and internalize these idiomatic expressions can shed light on the broader impact of such metaphors in shaping societal values.

Practical Implications

The practical implications of this study extend to cross-cultural communication, language teaching, and intercultural competence. For language learners, understanding the figurative meanings of animal-related PUs is vital for effective communication and cultural integration. Misinterpretation of these expressions can lead to communication breakdowns, particularly in intercultural settings where metaphors and idiomatic expressions may not translate directly. As such, further research into the pedagogical use of zoonymic PUs in language teaching is essential.

Moreover, this study contributes to the field of cross-cultural linguistics by highlighting the importance of animal metaphors in shaping the worldview of different cultures. By comparing English and Uzbek expressions, the study provides valuable insights into how language and culture intertwine in the construction of human identity and behavior. Future studies could expand this analysis to include more languages and explore how these expressions reflect broader universal themes or region-specific values.

Conclusion.

The research allows to draw a conclusion about phraseological units with zoonym component also determine the traits of human character. The research has also shown PU expressing negative trairs of human character dominate the positive or neutral evaluation.

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