

## A CROSS-LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF ZOONYMIC PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

**Sobirova Odinaxon Komiljon qizi**

1<sup>st</sup>-year master's student at UTAS

E-mail: [odinaxonsobirova543@gmail.com](mailto:odinaxonsobirova543@gmail.com)

**Annotation:** This article presents a cross-linguistic analysis of zoonymic phraseological units in English and Uzbek languages. It compares how these expressions are used and what they mean in both languages. The research shows similarities and differences and explains how culture influences language. Examples from both languages are used to make the analysis clear.

**Key words:** zoonym, phraseological unit, animal expressions, cross-linguistic analysis, English language, Uzbek language, animal symbolism.

Different scientists understand the term “zoonym” in different ways. Some scholars use it only for pet nicknames such as Bobik or Murka, which resemble human personal names and are mainly used in direct communication with animals. Other researchers interpret the term more broadly, including general names of animals or groups of animals, such as dogs, cats, and horses [4].

In its widest sense, zoonyms are understood as common nouns that denote animals, for example cat, cow, or dog [6]. A third group of linguists extends the definition even further, considering zoonyms not only as direct animal names but also as any lexical units connected with the animal world.

In the context of a cross-linguistic analysis of zoonymic phraseological units in English and Uzbek languages, this terminological diversity becomes particularly important. Zoonymic phraseological units are stable expressions in which animal names function as key components and carry figurative or metaphorical meaning. Although cultures differ across nations, languages show a common tendency to interpret animals in human-like terms - people often compare animals to humans and humans to animals. This makes it possible to describe human characteristics vividly through animal-based imagery.

Phraseological units that include animal names express a wide range of human traits, such as:  
Physical qualities: strong as a horse, sharp-eyed as a lynx, smell like a dog, agile as a monkey;  
Appearance: fat as a boar, having a goat's beard;  
Psychological traits: as angry as a dog, as stubborn as a bull;  
Intellectual abilities: as foolish as a sheep, staring blankly like a cow at a new gate;  
Behavioral features: repeat like a parrot, cunning as a fox [3].

These zoomorphic expressions have become an integral part of everyday language, adding vividness and emotional coloring to speech. Researchers emphasize that even when the same animal is mentioned, its symbolic meaning can differ greatly between languages - sometimes even representing opposite traits depending on cultural context.

Therefore, when comparing English and Uzbek phraseology, it is necessary to consider not only the direct lexical meaning of zoonyms but also their figurative and cultural functions within idiomatic expressions.

To further illustrate the cross-linguistic nature of zoonymic phraseological units, it is useful to analyze concrete examples from both English and Uzbek languages and examine how animal imagery is used to represent human qualities.

One of the most frequently used animals in both languages is the *dog*, although its symbolic meaning is not always identical.

In English, expressions such as “*to work like a dog*” or “*a dog’s life*” are commonly used. The first phrase refers to someone who works extremely hard and persistently, often under difficult conditions, while the second describes a life filled with hardship and suffering. In Uzbek, similar expressions include “*itdek ishlamoq*” (to work like a dog) and “*it hayoti*” (a dog’s life), which also convey the idea of exhaustion, hardship, and difficult living conditions. In both languages, the dog is associated with endurance and suffering rather than loyalty in these contexts. However, Uzbek usage tends to carry a slightly stronger negative emotional coloring, emphasizing deprivation more explicitly.

Another widely used zoonym is the *fox*, which generally symbolizes cleverness and cunning.

In English, phrases such as “*as sly as a fox*” or “*old fox*” describe a person who is intelligent, strategic, and sometimes deceitfully clever. In Uzbek, the equivalent expression “*tulkidek ayyor*” (as cunning as a fox) is used with a very similar meaning. In both languages, the fox consistently represents intelligence combined with trickery, showing a strong cross-cultural similarity in symbolic interpretation.

The zoonym *lion* also represents one of the most positively evaluated zoonyms that symbolizes courage, strength, and leadership. In English, expressions such as “*as brave as a lion*” and “*lion’s share*” are widely used to describe bravery and the largest portion of something. Similarly, in Uzbek, “*sherdek jasur*” (as brave as a lion) and “*sher yurakli*” (lion-hearted) are common expressions emphasizing courage and fearlessness. In both languages, the lion consistently represents power, bravery, and dominance, showing a strong universal symbolic meaning.

In English, the *bee* is a highly productive zoonym in idiomatic and metaphorical expressions. For example, “*as busy as a bee*” is a standard fixed simile that emphasizes continuous activity and industrious behavior. In addition, English expands the semantic potential of the bee through social metaphorization, as in “*queen bee*”, which refers to a dominant, influential, or controlling woman within a social group or workplace hierarchy.

In contrast, Uzbek phraseology uses the zoonym *bee* much more narrowly in figurative meaning. While expressions like “*aridek mehnatkash*” (as hardworking as a bee) exist, the bee is less frequently extended into social or hierarchical metaphors. Instead, Uzbek language more commonly uses the *ant* (“*chumoli*”) as the dominant symbol of hard work, as seen in “*chumolidek mehnatkash*”. This indicates a different zoonymic preference in conceptualization of labor: English favors the bee, while Uzbek tends to favor the ant for expressing industriousness.

The *snake* also shows significant cross-linguistic differences. In English, expressions such as “*a snake in the grass*” describe a hidden enemy or a deceitful person. Similarly, in Uzbek, “*ilondek makkor*” (as cunning as a snake) conveys deception and danger. However, English also allows more narrative-based metaphorical uses in literature and political discourse, while Uzbek expressions tend to be more direct moral evaluations of behavior. Thus, English uses the snake in both figurative storytelling and idiomatic warning, while Uzbek primarily uses it for character judgment and moral labeling.

The comparative analysis of zoonymic phraseological units in English and Uzbek languages confirms that animal-based idioms are a universal linguistic phenomenon rooted in human cognitive experience and cultural interpretation of the natural world. It is clear that zoonyms serve as an

important mechanism for expressing abstract human qualities through concrete animal imagery that make our speech more vivid, expressive, and culturally meaningful.

**In conclusion**, zoonymic phraseological units in English and Uzbek languages not only reflect linguistic creativity but also provide valuable insight into how different cultures conceptualize human behavior through the animal world.

#### **References:**

1. Kunin, A. V. (1996). Kurs frazeologii sovremennogo angliyskogo yazyka [Course of modern English phraseology]. Moscow: Vysshaya Shkola.
2. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). Metaphors we live by. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
3. Rsaliyev, A. (2025). Zoonyms in modern linguistics: terminological, cultural, and semantic aspects. International Multidisciplinary Research in Academic Science (IMRAS), 8(10).
4. Uralova, O. (2024). The term “zoonym” and its content in English. Web of Scientist: International Scientific Research Journal, 5(5).
5. Yo‘ldoshev B. O‘zbek frazeologiyasi va frazeografiyasining shakllanishi hamda taraqqiyoti (monografiya), Samarqand: SamDU nashri, 2007.
6. Литвин Ф. А. Многозначность слова в языке и речи. -Новосибирск: Наука, 1983.
7. Маслова В. А. Лингвокультурология: учебное пособие для студентов высших учебных заведений, Москва: Издательский центр «Академия», 2001.