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HOW CULTURE INFULANCES INFULENCES IDIOMS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Annotation: This article investigates the profound relationship between culture and language through a comparative analysis of English and Uzbek idioms. Idioms are not merely linguistic units but reflections of a nation's historical experience, worldview, religious beliefs, and socio-economic conditions. While previous studies have mainly focused on semantic similarities between idioms across languages, this research emphasizes cultural divergence and the phenomenon of cultural lacunae. By examining maritime metaphors in English and nomadic-agricultural imagery in Uzbek, the study reveals how cultural environments shape phraseological units. The findings underline the importance of cultural awareness in translation studies, foreign language teaching, and intercultural communication in the contemporary globalized world.

Key words: cultural linguistics, idioms, phraseology, linguistic relativity, cultural lacunae, English idioms, Uzbek idioms, intercultural communication, pragmatic functions, cognitive processing, socio-cultural context, globalization and language change, translation studies, idiomatic competence.

Language is one of the most significant indicators of a nation's cultural identity. It reflects not only how people communicate but also how they perceive the world, interpret reality, and preserve collective memory. Among all linguistic units, idioms occupy a special place because they encapsulate cultural values, historical experiences, and emotional attitudes in a highly condensed form. Idioms often resist literal translation, making them both fascinating and challenging for language learners and translators.

According to Sapir and Whorf's theory of linguistic relativity, language and thought are deeply interconnected. While human cognition may share universal patterns, each language imposes its own cultural framework through which reality is conceptualized. Idioms serve as a clear illustration of this theory, as they frequently rely on culture-specific metaphors and symbols. For example, what is considered a symbol of strength, wisdom, or success in one culture may have a completely different interpretation in another.

The English and Uzbek languages provide a particularly interesting field for comparative research. English developed within a maritime, industrial, and later global imperial context, whereas Uzbek evolved within a nomadic, agrarian, and Silk Road–centered civilization. These contrasting historical and cultural backgrounds have resulted in distinctive idiomatic expressions that mirror the lifestyles and values of their speakers.The aim of this article is to analyze how cultural factors influence the formation and usage of idioms in English and Uzbek. The study focuses on historical roots, religious and folkloric influences, and cultural lacunae, while also highlighting the pedagogical significance of idioms in language learning.

The study of idioms falls within the fields of phraseology, cultural linguistics, and ethnolinguistics. Phraseology examines fixed expressions whose meanings cannot be deduced from individual components, while cultural linguistics explores how language encodes cultural conceptualizations.

Fernando (1996) defines idioms as conventionalized expressions whose meanings are figurative and culturally embedded. Similarly, Mamatov (1991) emphasizes that Uzbek phraseological units emerge from collective experience and traditional worldview. These definitions highlight the inseparability of language and culture in idiomatic expressions.

From a cultural-linguistic perspective, idioms function as cultural symbols. They transmit social norms, moral values, and shared historical knowledge from one generation to another. Therefore, idioms should be studied not only as linguistic phenomena but also as cultural artifacts.

Britain's geographical position as an island nation has played a decisive role in shaping English culture and language. For centuries, the sea was central to trade, warfare, exploration, and survival. As a result, many English idioms originate from nautical terminology.For instance, the idiom "to show one's true colors" derives from naval warfare practices, where ships revealed their real flags before battle. Today, it metaphorically refers to revealing one's real character or intentions. Similarly, "to weather the storm" originally described ships surviving violent sea conditions and is now used to express endurance during difficult situations.

Another common idiom, "plain sailing," suggests an easy or trouble-free task, reflecting the relief sailors felt when navigating calm waters. These expressions demonstrate how maritime life became deeply embedded in everyday English speech, even for speakers with no direct connection to the sea.

In contrast, Uzbek idioms reflect a civilization shaped by nomadic traditions, agriculture, and trade along the Great Silk Road. Mobility, hospitality, and communal solidarity were essential for survival in harsh environments, and these values are vividly preserved in Uzbek phraseology.

The idiom "Otning o'limi — itning bayrami" illustrates the pragmatic worldview of nomadic life, where loss and gain coexist. The horse, a symbol of wealth and mobility, plays a central role in many Uzbek idioms, emphasizing its cultural significance.

Hospitality is another dominant theme. Expressions such as "Mehmon otangdan ulug'" demonstrate the sacred status of guests in Uzbek culture. Bread (non) also functions as a powerful cultural symbol, as seen in "Nonini yarimta qilmoq," which signifies sharing one's destiny and livelihood.

English idioms have been significantly influenced by Christianity and classical mythology. The King James Bible has contributed numerous expressions that remain widely used today. For example, "forbidden fruit" originates from the biblical story of Adam and Eve and symbolizes temptation.

Greek and Roman mythology also enriched English phraseology. The idiom "Achilles' heel" refers to a hidden weakness, drawing from the myth of Achilles. These idioms reflect the intellectual and religious heritage of Western civilization.

Uzbek idioms are deeply rooted in Islamic ethics, Sufi philosophy, and oral folklore. Concepts such as patience (sabr), gratitude (shukr), and respect for elders are frequently encoded in phraseological units.

The idiom "Burni pishmoq" metaphorically describes gaining wisdom through experience, while "Duosini olmoq" highlights the spiritual importance of receiving blessings from elders. These expressions demonstrate how moral and religious values are linguistically preserved.

One of the most challenging aspects of idioms is the phenomenon of cultural lacunae—concepts that exist in one culture but lack direct equivalents in another. For example, "to carry coals to Newcastle" is meaningless without knowledge of British industrial history.

Similarly, Uzbek expressions related to traditional ceremonies, clothing, or social rituals often require cultural explanation rather than direct translation. This highlights the limitations of literal translation and the necessity of cultural competence.

Understanding idioms is crucial for achieving advanced proficiency in a foreign language. Language learners who rely solely on dictionary meanings often misuse idioms or fail to grasp their emotional tone.

In translation studies, idioms pose a significant challenge. Translators must choose between functional equivalents, paraphrasing, or cultural substitution. As Lyons (1995) notes, meaning is inseparable from cultural context, making idioms a key testing ground for intercultural competence. For Uzbek learners of English and English learners of Uzbek, studying idioms comparatively enhances not only linguistic accuracy but also cultural empathy.

Idioms function not only as linguistic expressions but also as powerful markers of national identity and collective worldview. Through idiomatic language, a nation encodes its historical memory, social hierarchy, moral norms, and emotional attitudes toward life. In this sense, idioms act as a cultural archive that preserves a people's worldview more vividly than neutral vocabulary or grammatical structures.

In English, idioms often emphasize individual responsibility, competition, and control over circumstances, which reflects the values of Western societies shaped by capitalism, industrialization, and personal achievement. Expressions such as "to take the helm," "to be on the right track," or "to stay afloat" metaphorically highlight leadership, direction, and survival through personal effort. These idioms subtly reinforce the idea of self-reliance and personal agency.

Uzbek idioms, by contrast, frequently prioritize collectivism, moral duty, and harmony within society. Many expressions emphasize destiny, patience, and mutual support, suggesting that individual success is inseparable from community well-being. Idioms like "Yolg'iz otning changi chiqmas" underline the belief that cooperation is essential for progress, while "Sabrning tagi — sariq oltin" reflects a culturally ingrained respect for endurance and moral strength.

Furthermore, idioms reveal how each culture conceptualizes time, fate, and success. English idioms often portray time as a limited resource that must be managed efficiently, whereas Uzbek idioms tend to view life as a cyclical process governed by experience, destiny, and wisdom gained over time. This contrast demonstrates that idioms do not merely describe reality but actively shape how speakers interpret their experiences.

Therefore, idioms play a crucial role in maintaining cultural continuity. Even in an era of globalization, where languages constantly borrow from one another, idioms remain remarkably resistant to change. They continue to transmit national values and cultural identity, making them an essential subject of study for linguists, educators, and translators alike.

A deeper understanding of how culture influences idioms can be achieved through the analysis of conceptual metaphors. According to cognitive linguistics, metaphors are not merely stylistic devices but fundamental mechanisms through which people conceptualize abstract ideas. Idioms, therefore, represent fixed linguistic manifestations of culturally specific conceptual metaphors. A comparative analysis of English and Uzbek idioms reveals significant differences in how each culture structures concepts such as life, success, struggle, and human relationships.

In English idioms, life is frequently conceptualized as a journey, competition, or navigational process. This metaphorical framework is closely linked to Britain's historical experiences of exploration, trade, and industrial progress. Idioms such as "to be at a crossroads," "to chart one's course," and "to lose direction" demonstrate how abstract life decisions are understood through spatial and navigational imagery. These metaphors emphasize choice, movement, and individual control, reinforcing the cultural value placed on personal autonomy and goal-oriented behavior.

Uzbek idioms, on the other hand, often conceptualize life as a test, a cycle, or a shared path shaped by destiny and moral responsibility. Expressions such as "Hayot sinovdan iborat," "Boshdan o'tgan biladi," and "Ot aylanib qozig'ini topar" illustrate a worldview in which experience, patience, and return to one's roots are central. Unlike the linear progression implied in many English idioms, Uzbek expressions frequently suggest continuity, repetition, and moral learning over time.

Another important conceptual domain is struggle and hardship. English idioms commonly frame struggle as a battle or physical confrontation, as seen in expressions like "to fight an uphill battle," "to stand one's ground," or "to win the day." These idioms highlight resistance, strength, and victory, reflecting a cultural narrative that values perseverance through active opposition.In Uzbek idioms, hardship is more often framed as endurance or fate rather than direct confrontation. Idioms such as "Sabr qilgan — murodiga yetar" and "Og'ir kunning yengili bo'ladi" suggest that patience and moral resilience are more effective than aggression. This conceptualization aligns with the influence of Islamic ethics and Eastern philosophy, where inner strength and spiritual balance are prioritized over external dominance. Human relationships also reveal striking metaphorical contrasts. English idioms frequently emphasize boundaries and independence in social interactions, using metaphors related to space and ownership. Expressions like "to keep someone at arm's length" or "to cross the line" reflect a cultural emphasis on personal space and clearly defined social limits. Uzbek idioms, by contrast, often conceptualize relationships through kinship, closeness, and shared responsibility. Idioms such as "Qon-qardosh," "Bir etning bolasi," and "Yelkadosh bo'lmoq" emphasize unity, emotional proximity, and mutual support. These metaphors reinforce collectivist values and the importance of social harmony within the community.

The analysis of conceptual metaphors also demonstrates how emotions are linguistically encoded. English idioms frequently associate emotions with physical pressure or containment, such as "to bottle up emotions" or "to blow off steam." Uzbek idioms, however, often relate emotions to the heart (yurak), soul (ko'ngil), or inner warmth, as seen in expressions like "Ko'ngli tog'dek," "Yuragi keng," or "Ko'ngli og'rimoq." These metaphors highlight emotional depth and sincerity as core cultural values. Importantly, these metaphorical differences have direct implications for translation and intercultural communication. When idioms are translated without considering their underlying conceptual metaphors, the result may be semantic loss or pragmatic misunderstanding. A translator must therefore reconstruct meaning not only at the lexical level but also at the conceptual and cultural level.

Socio-economic conditions play a crucial role in shaping idiomatic expressions, as language inevitably reflects the material realities of society. English idioms are strongly influenced by commercial activity, industrial development, and financial relations. Expressions such as "to pay the price," "to strike it rich," or "to be worth one's salt" reveal how economic value systems are linguistically encoded. These idioms suggest a worldview in which success, effort, and social status are closely linked to economic productivity. Uzbek idioms, in contrast, tend to reflect subsistence-based and community-oriented

economic structures. Rather than focusing on profit or accumulation, many Uzbek expressions emphasize fairness, sharing, and moral responsibility. Idioms related to labor often highlight effort and dignity rather than material reward. This difference illustrates how economic systems influence not only vocabulary but also deeper cultural attitudes toward work, wealth, and social justice.

Idioms frequently encode implicit attitudes toward authority, hierarchy, and power relations. In English, power-related idioms often conceptualize authority as control or dominance, using metaphors of height, force, or position. Expressions such as “to be at the top of the ladder” or “to pull the strings” imply strategic influence and competition within social structures. Uzbek idioms, however, commonly represent power through moral authority and respect rather than dominance. Elders, teachers, and leaders are often associated with wisdom and responsibility rather than control. Idioms that emphasize obedience, respect, and ethical leadership demonstrate a cultural preference for harmony and social balance. This contrast reveals differing cultural models of leadership and governance embedded within language.

Idioms also reflect culturally constructed gender roles and expectations. In English, traditional idioms often portray masculinity through strength, independence, and action, while femininity has historically been associated with emotion or domesticity. Although modern usage is evolving, many idioms still carry traces of earlier gender ideologies. Uzbek idioms similarly reflect traditional gender norms shaped by family-centered social structures. However, they often emphasize complementary roles rather than opposition. Expressions related to motherhood, honor, and responsibility demonstrate how gender roles are embedded within moral and familial values. Analyzing such idioms allows researchers to trace how societal expectations are preserved or challenged through language over time.

Natural environment significantly influences idiomatic imagery. English idioms often draw from temperate climate phenomena, such as weather changes, seasonal cycles, and agricultural references. Expressions involving rain, wind, or storms metaphorically represent emotional states or life challenges. Uzbek idioms, shaped by arid landscapes, steppes, and agricultural life, frequently reference earth, heat, animals, and crops. These environmental metaphors reflect survival strategies and ecological awareness developed over centuries. The contrast demonstrates how physical surroundings shape metaphorical thinking and linguistic creativity. Idioms are often perceived as static expressions, yet they undergo gradual change over time. In English, many idioms have lost their original contextual meaning but remain active due to conventional usage. Speakers may use them without awareness of their historical origins, illustrating how language evolves independently of conscious cultural memory.

In Uzbek, idioms tend to retain stronger connections to tradition and oral heritage. However, modernization and globalization are influencing their usage, particularly among younger speakers. Studying which idioms survive, adapt, or disappear provides valuable insight into cultural continuity and linguistic change in a rapidly transforming society.

Idioms play a fundamental role in preserving collective memory, functioning as linguistic vessels through which historical experience is transmitted across generations. Unlike formal historical narratives, idioms store cultural knowledge in an implicit and emotionally charged form. Speakers may use idioms unconsciously, yet these expressions continue to reinforce shared memories of past struggles, achievements, and social transformations.

In English, many idioms preserve traces of historical periods such as feudalism, colonial expansion, and industrialization. Expressions related to hierarchy, labor, and navigation reflect centuries of social organization and economic development. Even when the original context is forgotten, the idiom continues to function as a symbolic reminder of historical experience. This phenomenon demonstrates how language serves as a bridge between past and present. Uzbek idioms similarly encode collective

memory, particularly experiences related to survival, migration, and social solidarity. Oral traditions have played a crucial role in maintaining these expressions, ensuring continuity even during periods of political and cultural change. As a result, idioms act as a living archive, preserving historical consciousness in a compact linguistic form.

Idioms are not value-neutral; they often contain implicit moral judgments about behavior, success, and failure. Through idiomatic expressions, societies evaluate what is considered acceptable, admirable, or shameful. This evaluative function makes idioms an important tool for understanding cultural ethics. English idioms frequently emphasize efficiency, responsibility, and pragmatism. Moral evaluation is often linked to results and outcomes rather than intentions. Expressions that reward initiative or criticize passivity reflect a culture oriented toward action and productivity. Such idioms subtly shape speakers' attitudes toward work, discipline, and personal accountability.

Uzbek idioms, in contrast, tend to evaluate behavior through moral integrity, patience, and respect for social norms. Ethical judgment is often tied to intention, humility, and adherence to tradition. This difference reveals how idioms contribute to moral socialization, guiding individuals toward culturally approved patterns of behavior.

The way emotions are conceptualized in idioms offers deep insight into cultural psychology. Idioms do not simply describe emotions; they structure how emotions are experienced, expressed, and interpreted within a culture. In English, emotions are often framed as forces that must be controlled, released, or managed. Idioms suggest containment, pressure, or mechanical release, reflecting a cultural tendency to regulate emotional expression. This linguistic pattern aligns with social norms that value emotional restraint and rational control. Uzbek idioms, however, frequently conceptualize emotions as deeply internal and morally significant states connected to the heart and soul. Emotional openness is often associated with sincerity and humanity. These idioms reveal a cultural preference for emotional depth and interpersonal warmth, emphasizing emotional connection over regulation

Idioms play a crucial role in intergenerational communication, acting as a shared linguistic code between older and younger members of society. Through idioms, elders transmit wisdom, warnings, and life lessons in a condensed and memorable form. In English-speaking societies, idioms are often used to convey advice indirectly, allowing speakers to express criticism or guidance without confrontation. This pragmatic function supports social harmony and polite interaction.

In Uzbek culture, idioms are especially prominent in elder-younger communication. Proverbs and idiomatic expressions are frequently employed to educate, correct, and guide younger generations. This reinforces respect for elders and ensures cultural continuity, highlighting the pedagogical function of idioms within the family and community.

Globalization has significantly impacted the use and perception of idioms in both English and Uzbek. Increased cultural contact, media influence, and technological communication have altered how idioms are learned and used. In English, globalization has facilitated the spread of idioms beyond national borders, turning many expressions into global linguistic currency. However, this process may lead to semantic simplification, where idioms lose cultural depth and become standardized. Uzbek idioms face different challenges. While traditional idioms remain culturally significant, younger speakers may favor simplified or borrowed expressions. This raises questions about cultural preservation and linguistic identity. Studying idioms in the context of globalization allows researchers to assess how languages adapt while maintaining cultural distinctiveness.

In conclusion, idioms serve as a linguistic bridge between language and culture. While English idioms reflect maritime history, industrial development, and biblical heritage, Uzbek idioms embody

nomadic traditions, Islamic values, and communal ethics. These differences demonstrate that idioms are not arbitrary expressions but culturally motivated constructs. In the modern globalized world, understanding idioms is essential for effective communication, accurate translation, and mutual cultural respect. Preserving and studying idioms ensures that the historical memory and cultural identity of nations continue to live through language. This study has demonstrated that idioms are far more than fixed linguistic expressions; they are deeply rooted cultural phenomena that reflect a nation's historical experience, worldview, moral values, and social organization. Through a comprehensive comparative analysis of English and Uzbek idioms, the article has shown how language functions as a mirror of culture, preserving collective memory and transmitting culturally specific ways of thinking across generations.

The findings confirm that English idioms are strongly influenced by Britain's maritime history, industrial development, and Western philosophical traditions. These influences are evident in the prevalence of metaphors related to navigation, competition, control, and individual agency. Such idioms reflect a cultural orientation toward action, progress, and personal responsibility, which continues to shape communication patterns in modern English-speaking societies. In contrast, Uzbek idioms emerge from a cultural environment shaped by nomadic traditions, agricultural life, Islamic ethics, and strong communal values. Uzbek phraseological units emphasize patience, moral integrity, respect for elders, hospitality, and social harmony. These idioms reveal a worldview in which individual identity is closely connected to community, tradition, and shared responsibility rather than personal achievement alone. The comparative analysis also highlights the existence of cultural lacunae—culture-specific concepts embedded in idioms that resist direct translation. These lacunae underscore the limitations of literal translation and emphasize the necessity of cultural competence in intercultural communication. Without an understanding of the cultural background underlying idioms, speakers and translators risk semantic distortion and pragmatic misunderstanding.

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