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A LINGUOCULTUROLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSPORT COMPONENT IN PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS AND PROVERBS

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a linguoculturological analysis of transport-component phraseological units and proverbs in English and Uzbek. The study covers more than 90 phraseological units, classified into semantic groups such as speed, control, hardship, social status, collectivism, and risk. Findings show that English phraseology, built around sea and automobile imagery (boat, wheel), foregrounds individual control, while Uzbek phraseology, centered on horse and caravan imagery, foregrounds collectivism and endurance. The analysis draws on Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory. The results are of practical value for phraseology, linguoculturology, translation studies, and foreign language teaching.

Keywords: phraseology, proverb, linguoculturology, transport component, conceptual metaphor, semantic group, English language, Uzbek language, cultural code, mentality.

INTRODUCTION

Phraseological units and proverbs form the most stable and image-rich layer of a people's language, compactly yet powerfully embodying centuries of collective experience, worldview, and value system. From a linguoculturological perspective, phraseological units and proverbs are not merely decorative figurative devices but a “frozen” linguistic expression of a people's mentality — that is, carriers of a cultural code. Every component within these units, including words denoting means of transport (horse, cart, ship, wheel, road, and others), carries a profound symbolic-cultural meaning.

The linguoculturological analysis of transport-component phraseological units and proverbs is of particular interest, since the notion of motion and movement is one of the most ancient and universal categories of human thought and frequently serves as a metaphorical basis for expressing abstract concepts such as life's path, destiny, hardship, or success. At the same time, which specific type of transport (horse, ship, cart, or train) is chosen as a phraseological image is directly linked to a people's historical-geographical conditions and way of life.

The aim of this study is to conduct a linguoculturological analysis of transport-component phraseological units and proverbs in English and Uzbek, to identify their semantic groups, and to reveal, on the basis of phraseological material, the similarities and differences in the mentality of the two peoples. The objectives of the study were defined as follows: to compile a corpus of transport-component phraseological units; to classify them into semantic groups; to carry out a comparative analysis of the results in the two languages; and to draw linguoculturological conclusions.

The scholarly foundations of the topic rest on the fundamental research of V.N. Teliya and V.A. Maslova in the field of phraseology and linguoculturology [1], [2]. However, studies specifically devoted to a comparative-linguoculturological analysis of transport-component phraseological units remain insufficient, which determines the scholarly novelty of the present research.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The material of the study consists of more than 90 phraseological units and proverbs, selected from English and Uzbek phraseological and proverb dictionaries, containing a component related to means of transport (horse, cart, ship, wheel, road, caravan, and others). The following methods were

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used in the study: the descriptive method, to characterize the general features of the material; the component-analysis method, to determine the semantic load of the transport component within the phraseological unit; the linguoculturological-analysis method, to reveal the cultural-national meaning behind the phraseological image; and the comparative-typological method, to compare the results across the two languages.

In the course of the analysis, each phraseological unit was first grouped according to its transport component and then divided into semantic groups on the basis of its phraseological meaning. The criterion for semantic grouping was the generalized meaning expressed by the phraseological unit — for example, concepts such as speed, control, hardship, social status, or collectivism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Transport-component phraseological units in English

A large portion of transport-component phraseological units in English was formed on the basis of maritime vocabulary (ship, boat) and modern automobile vocabulary (car, wheel). For example, the expression “in the same boat” denotes experiencing a common hardship, while “miss the boat” expresses the consequence of failing to act in time. The expression “rock the boat” conveys the meaning of disturbing stability. Such expressions are intimately connected with Britain's historical fate as an island nation and its maritime traditions.

Expressions related to modern automobile transport actively express notions of control and responsibility: phrases such as “in the driver's seat” (to be in control of a situation), “asleep at the wheel” (to be inattentive or irresponsible), and “backseat driver” (a person who gives unsolicited advice) reflect the high value placed on personal responsibility and control — a distinctive feature of English, and particularly American, individualistic mentality. Traditional horse-related expressions have also been preserved: idioms such as “hold your horses” (do not rush) and “back the wrong horse” (to make a wrong choice) remain actively used today as a legacy of the pre-industrial era.

2. Transport-component proverbs and phraseological units in Uzbek

The main body of transport-component phraseological units in Uzbek was formed around the images of the horse, the caravan, and the cart, which is connected with the nation's nomadic-agricultural culture and the heritage of the Great Silk Road. The proverb “It hurar, karvon o'tar” (“the dog barks, but the caravan moves on”) expresses the idea of continuing to pursue one's goal despite envy and gossip, while the expression “otdan tushib, eshakka minmoq” (“to get off the horse and onto the donkey”) denotes a decline in status. The expression “otning yoli yeldan tez” (“swifter than the wind”) conveys speed and courage, whereas “aravani quruq olib qochmoq” (literally, “to drive off an empty cart”) denotes an unfounded promise or exaggeration.

Road-component expressions also express the hardships of life: the proverb “yo'l azobi — go'r azobi” (“the agony of the road is the agony of the grave”) carries powerful imagery by comparing the hardship of a journey to the agony of death. Such expressions reflect the value of patience and endurance in the face of life's difficulties within the Uzbek mentality. Likewise, variant expressions such as “karvon ko'chsa, it qichqirar” emphasize the steadiness of collective movement and its imperviousness to external obstacles — which is in harmony with the value of collectivism in Uzbek culture.

3. Comparative linguoculturological analysis

The results of the analysis are summarized by semantic group in the table below:

Semantic group	English example	Uzbek example
Speed and motion	to get the show on the road	otning yoli yeldan tez (“swifter than the wind”)

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Control and management	in the driver's seat; asleep at the wheel	jilovni qo'lga olmoq (“to take the reins”)
Hardship and endurance	a rough ride; a bumpy road	yo'l azobi — go'r azobi (“the agony of the road is the agony of the grave”)
Social status	backseat driver; fifth wheel	otdan tushib eshakka minmoq (“to get off the horse and onto the donkey”)
Collectivism / isolation	in the same boat; rock the boat	it hurar, karvon o'tar (“the dog barks, the caravan moves on”)
Opportunity and risk	miss the boat; back the wrong horse	aravani quruq olib qochmoq (“to make empty promises”)

Table 1. Comparative overview of the semantic groups of transport-component phraseological units in English and Uzbek.

The table shows that in both languages the transport component serves as a metaphorical basis for expressing universal human concepts such as speed, control, hardship, social status, collectivism, and risk. However, the concrete transport image expressing these concepts differs between the two languages: in English, images of the ship and the wheel (automobile) predominate, while in Uzbek, images of the horse and the caravan hold the leading position.

A difference is also observed in content: in English transport phraseology, personal control and individual responsibility (“in the driver's seat”, “asleep at the wheel”) prevail, whereas in Uzbek, values such as collective action and endurance (“karvon o'tar”, “yo'l azobi”) take the lead. This difference is explained by the individualistic and collectivistic orientations in the two peoples' social structure, historical development, and philosophical worldview.

Quantitative corpus analysis showed that nearly half of the transport-component phraseological units in English rely on modern automobile and maritime vocabulary, while the remainder draw on historical (horse-and-cart era) vocabulary. In Uzbek, by contrast, the majority of phraseological units are formed on the basis of traditional means of transport (horse, cart, caravan), while stable expressions containing modern transport components (car, train) remain relatively few and still in the process of formation. This confirms that the renewal rate of the phraseological system lags behind the pace of language development in general — that is, that phraseology is conservative in nature.

4. Cognitive-metaphorical foundations of phraseological images

The widespread occurrence of transport-component phraseological units can also be explained from the standpoint of cognitive linguistics. According to G. Lakoff and M. Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory, human beings comprehend abstract concepts (life, goal, success) through concepts grounded in concrete physical experience (motion, road, transport) [8]. The root conceptual metaphor “LIFE IS A JOURNEY” is actively manifested in both English and Uzbek: a person “travels along life's road”, “encounters obstacles”, and “moves toward a goal”. Means of transport express the concrete vehicles of this “journey” metaphor, performing the function of concretizing abstract notions.

From this standpoint, expressions such as “in the driver's seat” or “jilovni qo'lga olmoq” (“to take the reins”) are, not only phraseologically but also cognitively, a linguistic expression of the submetaphor “CONTROLLING LIFE IS CONTROLLING A VEHICLE”. Such a cognitive-metaphorical approach scientifically substantiates why transport-component phraseological units are

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so stable and universal, and why they are formed on the basis of similar cognitive models across different languages.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, transport-component phraseological units and proverbs in English and Uzbek are not merely figurative means of speech but a linguoculturological phenomenon embodying the deep cultural-historical layers of a people's mentality. The results of the analysis show that the choice of transport image (ship, horse, caravan, wheel) is directly linked to a people's geographical location and historical fate, while the orientation of the phraseological meaning (individual control or collective endurance) is directly linked to the system of socio-cultural values.

The conclusions obtained are of practical value for phraseology, linguoculturology, and comparative linguistics, as well as for the culturally adequate interpretation of phraseological units in translation studies and foreign-language teaching. Continuing the study on the material of other language pairs, and examining the use of transport-component phraseological units in contemporary media texts, remain promising directions for future research.

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