



**EXPRESSING CULTURE THROUGH PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS:  
THE ANALYSIS OF THE COMPETENCE “TONGUE” IN ENGLISH AND  
UZBEK LANGUAGES**

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*Annotation:* the article presents a linguocultural analysis of phraseological units containing the component "tongue" in English and Uzbek. It examines how cultural values, social norms, and national identity are expressed through somatic expressions in various cultural contexts.

*Keywords:* phraseological units, language, culture, linguo-culturology, somatic expressions, Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, phraseological analysis, national culture.

Somatic phraseological units, that is, idioms related to body parts, have linguocultural significance. Through these expressions, the daily experiences and cultural values of a people are conveyed. Body parts, as an important part of language, reflect a person's physical and emotional states. In addition, they also indicate a person's relationship with their environment. Idioms that include the component "tongue" have different semantic aspects across various cultures. These expressions reflect the uniqueness of national culture. The culture, values, and life experiences of each nation are reflected in such phraseological expressions. In particular, somatic idioms play a significant role in a person's daily life and speech.



These kinds of expressions are vivid examples of how national culture is expressed through linguistic units.

The main goal of this research is to reveal cultural codes in phraseological units and to make a comparative analysis of “tongue” component idioms in English and Uzbek. The study will highlight how important the role of language is in expressing national culture through somatic phraseological units. These expressions reflect the cultural values, lifestyle, and speech etiquette of a people in various cultural contexts.

The theoretical basis of this research is the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. This hypothesis plays an important role in analyzing the influence of language on human thinking and worldview. Through phraseological units, the worldview and culture of a people are studied. Linguoculturology views language and culture as interconnected and mutually influential phenomena. This approach provides a theoretical foundation for analyzing somatic phraseologisms. Furthermore, it allows for studying how culture is reflected in language.

“Tongue” component idioms in English and Uzbek are significant in expressing culture. For example, the English idiom “hold your tongue” and the Uzbek equivalent “tilini tiyib turmoq” are similar in meaning but used in different contexts in each culture. The English idiom “hold your tongue” usually has a negative connotation, used to stop someone from speaking inappropriately. It is often used in serious situations, formal or confrontational conversations. This idiom tends to urge someone to think before speaking or to stop saying unnecessary things. In English culture, such idioms often carry a warning tone, reflecting the speaker’s direct and intense emotions. The Uzbek idiom “tilini tiyib turmoq” is more based on



respect and norms of politeness. In Uzbek culture, speaking etiquette and showing respect to elders is highly valued. Therefore, this idiom expresses mutual respect, gentleness, and courtesy. Moreover, it is often used in heavier conversations to emphasize respect towards elders. In Uzbek culture, people pay great attention to politeness in speech, and “tilini tiyib turmoq” is often associated with following social norms and behaving properly in society.

Both idioms call for silence, but they reflect different cultural norms and values. The English idiom has more of a warning tone, while the Uzbek one expresses respect and etiquette. However, in some cases, in Uzbek culture, this idiom can also be used to sharply reprimand or warn someone. These expressions reflect cultural values such as self-restraint, silence, and patience in society, but their underlying cultural context is unique. Therefore, the analysis of “tongue” component idioms allows us to gain insight into behavior, social norms, and values in English and Uzbek cultures.

Phraseological units are associated with cultural codes that reflect a language-specific worldview, national character, and life philosophy. Every language has its own unique expressions. It reflects the cultural values and social relationships of a people. For example, the English idiom “silver tongue” and the Uzbek idioms “tili shirin” or “shirinso‘z” are semantically similar. Both describe a speaker who is pleasant and persuasive. However, these idioms carry different cultural connotations. In English, “silver tongue” often implies that a person influences others through their words to achieve their own goals. This expression can also carry a negative meaning, such as manipulation or being overly talkative. For



instance, the phrase “He’s got a silver tongue” can sometimes refer to someone who lies or plays with words.

In contrast, the Uzbek idioms “tili shirin” or “shirinso‘z” usually have positive connotations, emphasizing a person's sincerity, good communication skills, and politeness. These expressions reflect how such a person gains respect and affection in society, and they do not imply any negative meaning. In both cultural contexts, these idioms related to the tongue express important social and communicative values. However, while eloquence and manipulation may be interconnected in English culture, in Uzbek culture, politeness in speech and sincerity hold primary importance.

“Silver tongue” in English typically highlights a person’s persuasiveness and eloquence, though it may also carry the negative sense of manipulation or using words to influence others for personal gain. In a given situation, it suggests that someone skillfully uses words to achieve their objectives. On the other hand, “tili shirin” or “shirinso‘z” in Uzbek primarily convey sincerity, politeness, and good communication skills. These idioms reflect how a person earns respect and affection through pleasant and polite speech, without any negative connotation.

In both languages, English and Uzbek, idiomatic expressions involving the component "tongue" reflect cultural norms, social behavior, and moral values in communication. These expressions convey the importance of speech and the rules of interaction in society. For example, the English expression "sharp tongue" describes someone who speaks harshly and critically. This phrase carries a negative connotation and usually refers to harmful or sarcastic remarks. In English culture, it is used to criticize someone’s biting words. For instance, the phrase "He has a sharp



"tongue" implies that the person's words are sharp and potentially hurtful. In Uzbek, the phrase "tili o'tkir" also describes someone who speaks critically, but in this context, it often emphasizes logic and conciseness. In Uzbek culture, being "tili o'tkir" can sometimes be seen positively, as it indicates the person's critical thoughts are well-founded. However, when someone speaks excessively harshly, the phrase "tili zahar" is used, which conveys the negative aspect of verbal criticism. This expression is usually applied to women, and their sharp words are often frowned upon by society. The formation of phraseological units in both English and Uzbek is the result of the intrinsic connection between language and culture. In the development of phraseology in both languages, linguistic principles and metaphorical imagery play a significant role. This demonstrates the uniqueness of each language and reflects cultural characteristics through linguistic means. For example, the English phrase "sharp tongue" and the Uzbek phrase "tili o'tkir" both describe someone who speaks critically, harshly, and sometimes mercilessly. Both expressions highlight the strength of critical thinking and its impact on the listener.

In English culture, "sharp tongue" usually carries a negative tone, indicating that someone speaks bitterly, sarcastically, or harmfully. For instance:

"You are a cruel, hardened, selfish wretch!" Heathcliff exclaimed, his sharp tongue cutting through the silence. "I shall never forgive you for what you've done. You deserve no sympathy."

— E. Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*

In Uzbek culture, although the phrase "tili o'tkir" expresses criticism, it also emphasizes the logic and conciseness of speech:



"Speak thoughtfully, be more cautious in your interactions. Sensitive at heart, sharp-tongued – with a single word, they may abruptly destroy your hopes."

The difference between these expressions lies in their connotation: in English, "sharp tongue" is generally used with a negative evaluation, while in Uzbek, a critical speaker may be perceived positively if their opinion is seen as accurate and well-founded. In this context, the expression "tili zahar" may be a closer equivalent to "sharp tongue." This phrase is commonly used in spoken language and literature to describe women who speak harshly and critically. It is used to portray people—mainly women—who emotionally hurt others with their words or who have a strong verbal impact.

In Uzbek culture, especially in traditional family and social life, gentleness and soft speech are highly valued. Therefore, the phrase "tili zahar" carries a negative connotation, as women's sharp speech is culturally frowned upon. Through the analysis of such phraseological expressions that reflect the national mentality, it is possible to identify the distinctive features of language and culture. The linguistic imagery of each nation expresses their worldview and social relationships.

In both languages, there are phraseological expressions related to the word "tongue" that have no direct equivalents. For example, the English phrase "speak in tongues" refers to the act of speaking in unknown or incomprehensible languages within the context of Christian religious practice. This phenomenon is known as glossolalia (the act of speaking in unknown languages through the Holy Spirit, as described in the Bible). It is interpreted as a spiritual gift and is recorded in the Bible (e.g., in the Book of Acts). In English culture, this expression is used in a religious context and is widespread in charismatic and Pentecostal churches.



In Uzbek, there is no directly corresponding phraseological unit, as Uzbek culture primarily follows Islamic traditions, where prayers are recited in Arabic, and practices such as zikr (remembrance of God) or duo (supplication) are used. There is no practice of speaking in unknown languages in these religious rituals. Therefore, while the English expression "speak in tongues" refers to a spiritual ability, such a phenomenon does not exist in Uzbek religious or cultural traditions. Such situations do not occur. This difference highlights the unique religious practices and values between language and culture. For instance, the Uzbek expression "tilingga kuydirgi chiqqur" is a widely used curse, typically directed at someone who has spoken inappropriate or harmful words. In Uzbek mentality, this phrase carries the meaning of a severe curse, implying that the speaker believes the person deserves punishment for their harmful words. It is most commonly used in the speech of women.

In English, there is no direct equivalent to this expression, as such curses are not prevalent or culturally significant in Western contexts. Phrases like "bite your tongue" or "watch your mouth" in English serve more as warnings or advice, lacking the strong negative and punitive connotation found in the Uzbek curse. The phrase "tilingga kuydirgi chiqqur" reflects the moral and cultural values of the Uzbek people, expressing societal disapproval of harsh words or behavior.

One of the conclusions that can be drawn from this research is that language and culture are closely interconnected, and the speech culture of each nation is reflected in its linguistic features. While idioms containing the word "tongue" in both English and Uzbek may be semantically similar, their meanings, usage, and cultural connotations differ significantly. English idioms often carry a sharper, more



sarcastic, or manipulative tone, whereas Uzbek idioms are grounded in politeness, respect, and social norms, expressing the traditional values of the people.

Furthermore, the study reveals that phraseological units can serve as a means to express a nation's cultural identity and worldview through linguistic tools. In both cultures, phraseological units are used in various contexts and reflect the moral standards and cultural values of society. In conclusion, it should be emphasized that language is not merely a means of communication but also a unique expression of a people's culture, traditions, and way of thinking. Such studies are of great theoretical and practical importance in linguistic research and cultural comparison.

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