

COGNITIVE AND PRAGMATIC REPRESENTATION OF HORSE, DOG, AND CAT IMAGERY IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK PHRASEOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

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Abstract: This study investigates the cognitive and pragmatic characteristics of phraseological units containing horse, dog, and cat components in English and Uzbek. The research aims to identify how these animal images reflect cultural memory, moral values, and communicative behaviour. Descriptive, comparative, and cognitive-semantic methods were used to analyse idioms from dictionaries, literary texts, and oral discourse. The findings show that the horse represents honour and endurance, the dog embodies loyalty and suffering, and the cat reflects cleverness and psychological tension. Despite cultural differences, both languages demonstrate similar metaphorical mappings rooted in shared human experience. These idioms serve not only as linguistic ornaments but also as cognitive codes that preserve national worldview, transmit social ethics, and reveal communicative intentions within discourse.

Key words: zoonymic phraseology, cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, horse, dog, cat, English, Uzbek, cultural metaphor

INTRODUCTION. Zoonymic phraseological units form a unique layer of linguistic creativity that reflects collective consciousness and cultural symbolism [1]. Every language encodes the world through metaphors, and animal-based idioms provide a vivid insight into how human societies project moral and emotional meanings onto the natural world [2]. In both English and Uzbek, phraseological expressions containing the names of horse, dog, and cat constitute powerful metaphorical and pragmatic mechanisms that shape everyday communication and reflect national mentality [3].

Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory suggests that human cognition relies on mapping abstract experiences through concrete domains [4]. In this context, animal metaphors serve as cognitive frames where social relationships, virtues, and emotions are linguistically modeled. The horse symbolizes courage and endurance, the dog loyalty and subordination, and the cat independence and cunning. These metaphors not only form semantic associations but also reflect pragmatic attitudes toward behavior, status, and emotion [5].

The relevance of this study stems from the need to analyze how animal-based idioms function as cognitive and pragmatic constructs across languages. Building on the works of Karasik [6], Kubryakova [7], and Ergasheva [8], the research aims to demonstrate how these units contribute to the formation of national worldview and intercultural understanding.

Moreover, zoonymic imagery should be regarded as an integral part of the cultural and historical evolution of human thought. **The horse, dog, and cat** have been present in mythology, folklore, and everyday life, shaping the collective imagination of different nations. Their linguistic representations convey universal meanings such as strength, loyalty, and cleverness, which have become cognitive symbols of moral and emotional values [9]. In English idioms, these animal images often reflect individual experience, competition, and self-expression,

whereas in Uzbek idioms they are associated with social harmony, patience, and mutual respect [10].

Cognitive linguistics emphasizes that idioms cannot be separated from their cultural and pragmatic environment. Therefore, the study of zoonymic phraseology provides insight into how national mentality and communicative behavior are expressed in linguistic form. This article seeks to clarify how metaphorical thinking, emotional evaluation, and pragmatic intention converge in zoonymic idioms, revealing the interconnection between language, cognition, and culture [11].

METHODS. The study employs descriptive, comparative, and cognitive-pragmatic methods to examine the semantics and usage of horse, dog, and cat idioms in English and Uzbek [9]. The descriptive method provides linguistic classification, while the comparative method identifies structural and semantic parallels and divergences. The cognitive-pragmatic approach enables analysis of metaphorical motivation and communicative function in different social contexts.

A corpus of more than one hundred idioms was compiled from bilingual dictionaries, literary works, and contemporary media materials. Each idiom was examined in its natural discourse to ensure cultural and emotional accuracy. For instance, English idioms such as flog a willing horse and **to ride a dead horse** were analyzed in comparison with Uzbek equivalents like **otday xizmat qilmoq** and **otning yelkasida tog' bor** which emphasize endurance and responsibility. Dog-related idioms, including let sleeping dogs lie and work like a dog, were studied alongside Uzbek expressions **it hurar**, **karvon o'tar** and **itday yashamoq**, both reflecting the ideas of patience, fatigue, and persistence. The cat imagery was represented by idioms such as when the cat's away, the mice will play and a copycat, corresponding to Uzbek **mushukka o'yin bo'lib**, **sichqonga o'lim bo'ldi** and **mushuk o'ynab sichqon tutar**, which express irony and hidden malice.

Each idiom was analyzed in terms of metaphorical model, pragmatic purpose, and emotional evaluation. Componential and contextual analyses were applied to uncover how shared animal images generate different interpretations within each cultural frame. Frequency analysis revealed that horse-based idioms dominate Uzbek phraseology due to their historical connection with nomadic life, while in English the cat and dog images appear more frequently as reflections of domestic and urban experience.

RESULTS. The comparative analysis revealed that the horse image holds a noble and moral position in both languages. In English, idioms such as get off your high horse or straight from the horse's mouth emphasize confidence and reliability, whereas Uzbek equivalents like **otdek xizmat qilmoq** and **ot yurib, iz qolur** represent hard work and communal duty [10]. The horse thus operates as a metaphor of honor, stability, and productive strength.

The dog image demonstrates significant cultural divergence. In English, idioms like to go to the dogs, top dog, or to live a dog's life express both sympathy and irony, often implying misfortune with a humorous undertone. In Uzbek, **itday xor bo'lmoq** and **itdek toliqmoq** convey humility and hardship without irony, showing moral endurance and patience. The semantic field of "dog" imagery in Uzbek retains ethical overtones of submission and resilience, shaped by traditional moral philosophy [11].

The cat image carries different emotional associations. In English, cat nap and the cat's whiskers reflect comfort and admiration, while fight like cats and dogs denotes hostility. In Uzbek, *mushukni dumidan ushlamoq* and *mushukka o'yin bo'lib, sichqonga o'lim bo'ldi* embody hypocrisy and deceit, indicating how the same animal can symbolize opposite values.

Overall, the study found that zoonymic phraseological units reflect moral typology in human cognition. English idioms highlight individuality and psychological complexity, whereas Uzbek idioms foreground social balance and ethical evaluation.

DISCUSSION. The findings confirm that animal-based idioms function as mirrors of human consciousness and pragmatic expression [12]. The horse represents collective dignity and inner discipline in Uzbek, while in English it conveys self-assertion and independence. This difference arises from distinct historical worldviews: the Uzbek nomadic culture values communal harmony, whereas the English cultural model celebrates personal agency.

Dog-related idioms display the emotional dualism of compassion and contempt. As Wierzbicka notes, linguistic choices reflect cultural norms of empathy [13]. In English, **the dog's image** has gradually evolved from negativity toward affection, while in Uzbek, it preserves an ethical symbolism of endurance and humility. This demonstrates how language preserves social hierarchy and moral attitudes through stable metaphorical codes.

The cat image shows the interplay of intellect, secrecy, and domesticity. In English idioms, it is associated with curiosity and elegance; in Uzbek, it marks suspicion and moral caution. Such contrast proves that identical cognitive metaphors can evolve differently under varying social and gender contexts. Pragmatically, these idioms serve expressive functions: **Don't let the cat out of the bag warns against impulsive speech**, while *mushuk o'ynab sichqon tutar* criticizes deceitful behavior.

Through cross-linguistic comparison, it becomes clear that zoonymic idioms are not random linguistic artifacts but cultural metaphors structuring thought, emotion, and interaction. They act as pragmatic tools for irony, empathy, and moral reflection within communicative discourse [14].

CONCLUSION. The study concludes that phraseological units containing horse, dog, and cat components in English and Uzbek represent a multilayered intersection of cognition, culture, and pragmatics. The horse symbolizes strength and loyalty, the dog faithfulness and endurance, and the cat psychological subtlety and duplicity. Each animal functions as a cognitive key that unlocks collective emotional experience and moral evaluation.

English idioms tend to emphasize individuality, humor, and practical reasoning, whereas Uzbek idioms stress moral responsibility, endurance, and sincerity. Despite these differences, both languages reveal universal metaphorical principles rooted in human-animal relations. The horse remains a symbol of moral nobility and energy in Uzbek worldview, while in English it frequently marks ambition and personal drive. Dog imagery in both cultures reflects contrasting emotional dimensions: compassion and humor in English, humility and perseverance in Uzbek. The cat maintains dual symbolism, representing charm and wit in English, and caution and slyness in Uzbek.

These differences are not contradictions but cultural variations of the same human experience. Zoonymic idioms thus serve as linguistic and cultural bridges between nations. They embody collective values, express pragmatic emotions, and transmit ethical lessons from generation to generation. The present research contributes to the theoretical development of cognitive linguistics, cross-cultural semantics, and pragmatics by showing that behind every idiom lies a microcosm of thought, a reflection of how language transforms life into meaning and preserves the moral essence of humanity [15].

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