ANIMAL BASED IDIOMS IN ENGLISH, INDONESIAN AND UZBEK: A COMPORATIVE STRUCTURAL STUDY

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Abstract. Animal-based idioms represent an important component of phraseology because they reflect the linguistic, cultural, and cognitive associations that speakers establish between human behavior and the animal world. This study examines the structural characteristics of animal-based idioms in English, Indonesian, and Uzbek, focusing on their grammatical patterns, lexical composition, semantic organization, and cross-linguistic similarities and differences. The research employs a comparative descriptive approach supported by phraseological analysis and contrastive linguistic methods. Representative examples are classified according to their structural patterns, including noun phrases, verb phrases, adjective-based constructions, and comparative expressions. Particular attention is given to the relationship between grammatical structure and figurative meaning. The preliminary qualitative analysis suggests that animal-based idioms in the three languages employ both shared structural mechanisms and language-specific constructions. Although certain animal images may convey comparable meanings, their phraseological forms and cultural associations do not always correspond directly. The study highlights the importance of distinguishing formal equivalence from semantic and pragmatic equivalence in comparative phraseology and translation.

Keywords: animal-based idioms, English, Indonesian, Uzbek, comparative linguistics, phraseology, idiomatic expressions, structural patterns, metaphor, cross-cultural communication.

INGLIZ, INDONEZ VA O‘ZBEK TILLARIDA HAYVON NOMLARI ISHTIROKIDAGI IBORALAR: QIYOSIY-STRUKTURAVIY TAHLIL

Annotatsiya. Zoosemantik iboralar (hayvon nomlari ishtirokidagi iboralar) frazeologiyaning muhim tarkibiy qismlaridan biri bo‘lib, ular so‘zlovchilarning inson xulq-atvori va hayvonot olami o‘rtasida shakllantiradigan lingvistik, madaniy va kognitiv assotsiatsiyalarini aks ettiradi. Ushbu tadqiqot ingliz, indonez va o‘zbek tillaridagi hayvon nomlari ishtirokidagi iboralarning grammatik qoliplari, leksik tarkibi, semantik tuzilishi hamda tillararo o‘xshashlik va farqlariga e’tibor qaratgan holda ularning strukturaviy xususiyatlarini o‘rganadi. Tadqiqotda frazeologik tahlil va chog‘ishtirma tilshunoslik metodlari bilan uyg‘unlashtirilgan qiyosiy-tavsifiy yondashuvdan foydalaniladi. Tanlangan misollar otli so‘z birikmalari, fe’lli so‘z birikmalari, sifat asosidagi konstruksiyalar hamda qiyosiy ifodalarni o‘z ichiga olgan strukturaviy qoliplarga ko‘ra tasniflanadi. Grammatik struktura va ko‘chma ma’no o‘rtasidagi munosabatga alohida e’tibor qaratiladi. Dastlabki sifat tahlili shuni ko‘rsatadiki, uchala tildagi hayvon nomlari ishtirokidagi iboralarda umumiy strukturaviy mexanizmlar bilan bir qatorda har bir tilga xos konstruksiyalar ham qo‘llaniladi. Ayrim hayvon obrazlari o‘xshash ma’nolarni ifodalashi mumkin bo‘lsa-da, ularning frazeologik shakllari va madaniy assotsiatsiyalari har doim ham bir-biriga to‘liq mos kelmaydi. Tadqiqot qiyosiy frazeologiya va tarjimada formal muvofiqlikni semantik hamda pragmatik muvofiqlikdan farqlash muhimligini ta’kidlaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: hayvon nomlari ishtirokidagi iboralar, ingliz tili, indonez tili, o‘zbek tili, qiyosiy tilshunoslik, frazeologiya, idiomatik iboralar, strukturaviy qoliplar, metafora, madaniyatlararo muloqot.

ЗООНИМИЧЕСКИЕ ФРАЗЕОЛОГИЗМЫ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ, ИНДОНЕЗИЙСКОМ И УЗБЕКСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ: СОПОСТАВИТЕЛЬНОЕ СТРУКТУРНОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ

Аннотация. Фразеологические единицы с компонентом-зоонимом представляют собой важную составляющую фразеологии, поскольку отражают языковые, культурные и когнитивные ассоциации, которые носители языка устанавливают между человеческим поведением и животным миром. В данном исследовании рассматриваются структурные особенности фразеологических единиц с названиями животных в английском, индонезийском и узбекском языках с акцентом на их грамматические модели, лексический состав, семантическую организацию, а также межъязыковые сходства и различия. В исследовании применяется сравнительно-описательный подход, основанный на

фразеологическом анализе и методах сопоставительного языкознания. Репрезентативные примеры классифицируются в соответствии с их структурными моделями, включая именные словосочетания, глагольные словосочетания, конструкции на основе прилагательных и сравнительные выражения. Особое внимание уделяется взаимосвязи между грамматической структурой и переносным значением. Предварительный качественный анализ показывает, что фразеологические единицы с названиями животных в трёх языках используют как общие структурные механизмы, так и специфические для каждого языка конструкции. Несмотря на то что определённые образы животных могут передавать сходные значения, их фразеологические формы и культурные ассоциации не всегда полностью совпадают. В исследовании подчёркивается важность разграничения формального, семантического и прагматического соответствия в сопоставительной фразеологии и переводе.

Ключевые слова: фразеологические единицы с зоонимическим компонентом, английский язык, индонезийский язык, узбекский язык, сопоставительное языкознание, фразеология, идиоматические выражения, структурные модели, метафора, межкультурная коммуникация.

Introduction. Idiomatic expressions constitute an essential part of a language's phraseological system. They frequently express meanings that cannot be fully understood through the literal interpretation of their individual components. Among the different types of idioms, animal-based idioms occupy a particularly significant position because animals have long served as sources of metaphorical conceptualization in human communication. Speakers use animal names and characteristics to describe human behavior, personality, social relationships, physical appearance, and emotional states.

English, Indonesian, and Uzbek provide an interesting basis for comparative phraseological research because they differ in their linguistic structures, historical development, and cultural environments. English belongs to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family, Indonesian is an Austronesian language, and Uzbek belongs to the Turkic language family. Despite these differences, all three languages contain expressions in which animals function as vehicles for figurative meaning. In English, expressions such as a dark horse, to let the cat out of the bag, and to kill two birds with one stone illustrate how animal vocabulary becomes integrated into established idiomatic constructions. Indonesian uses expressions such as kambing hitam ('scapegoat', literally 'black goat') and buaya darat ('womanizer' or 'unfaithful man', literally 'land crocodile'). Uzbek also employs animal-based expressions, including tulki odam ('a cunning person', literally 'fox person') and qo‘y og‘zidan cho‘p olmagan ('extremely gentle or harmless', literally 'someone who would not take a twig from a sheep's mouth'). These examples illustrate different ways in which animal imagery can be used to characterize human qualities and behavior.

However, the existence of animal-related expressions across languages does not necessarily indicate that they share the same grammatical structures or figurative meanings. The same animal may symbolize different qualities in different cultural contexts, while similar meanings may be expressed through entirely different lexical and syntactic patterns. The relevance of this topic lies in the need to identify both universal and language-specific features of animal-based idioms. Such research can contribute to comparative linguistics, phraseology, translation studies, intercultural communication, and foreign-language teaching. The aim of this study is to identify and compare the principal structural patterns of animal-based idioms in English, Indonesian, and Uzbek and to examine how their grammatical organization relates to their figurative meanings.

The objectives are as follows: To identify representative animal-based idioms in the three languages. To classify the expressions according to their principal structural patterns. To compare their grammatical organization and lexical composition. To examine similarities and differences in their semantic and cultural associations. To establish the implications of structural variation for translation and intercultural communication.

Literature review. The study of idioms has developed through several major approaches, including traditional phraseology, cognitive linguistics, contrastive linguistics, and corpus-based language research. These approaches provide complementary perspectives on the structure, meaning, and use of animal-based idiomatic expressions.

Phraseological approaches to idioms. Traditional phraseological research examines relatively stable multiword expressions whose meanings are conventionalized within a language community. Such expressions are often characterized by varying degrees of semantic non-compositionality, lexical stability, and restricted substitutability. Fernando (1996) distinguishes idioms from other types of fixed expressions and emphasizes their role in everyday communication. Her approach is useful for identifying expressions that function as established linguistic units rather than as freely constructed combinations of words. For the present study, this distinction is important because not every phrase containing an animal name should automatically be classified as an idiom. For example, a black horse may be a literal noun phrase in one context, whereas a dark horse can refer idiomatically to an unexpectedly successful or little-known candidate. Similarly, Indonesian kambing hitam can denote a scapegoat in figurative use, while its literal interpretation remains possible in an appropriate context. Moon (1998) investigates fixed expressions and idioms in English, highlighting their conventionalized forms and their role in discourse. Her work demonstrates that idiomaticity involves more than figurative meaning: lexical restrictions, conventional usage, and contextual interpretation are also important. These insights suggest that a comparative study must examine both the grammatical form and the conventional meaning of each expression.

Cognitive and conceptual approaches. Cognitive linguistics provides another important perspective on animal-based idioms. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphor is not merely a stylistic device but a fundamental mechanism through which people conceptualize abstract experiences in terms of more concrete domains. Within this

framework, animal-based idioms can be analyzed as linguistic manifestations of conceptual mappings between animal characteristics and human attributes. For instance, the fox is conventionally associated with cunning in several European and Central Asian linguistic traditions. This association may motivate expressions that describe a person as clever, deceptive, or strategically resourceful. Nevertheless, conceptual associations are not universally identical. The meaning assigned to a particular animal depends on cultural experience, historical traditions, local ecology, literary conventions, and repeated patterns of linguistic usage. Consequently, a comparative analysis should not assume that an animal symbol has the same meaning in English, Indonesian, and Uzbek merely because the same species appears in each language. Kövecses (2010) further demonstrates that metaphorical conceptualization involves both widely shared patterns and culturally specific variations. This perspective is particularly relevant to the present study because it allows researchers to distinguish similarities in conceptual motivation from differences in conventional phraseological form.

Contrastive phraseology and cross-linguistic comparison. Contrastive linguistics examines similarities and differences between languages at phonological, grammatical, lexical, semantic, and pragmatic levels. In phraseology, contrastive analysis is particularly useful because idioms often resist direct word-for-word translation. An expression may have a close equivalent in another language, a partial equivalent with a different grammatical form, or no established equivalent at all. Structural similarity does not necessarily guarantee semantic equivalence, and semantic similarity does not require identical lexical composition. For example, the English expression to let the cat out of the bag and the Uzbek expression sirni oshkor qilmoq ('to reveal a secret') can convey comparable meanings, but their lexical structures differ considerably. The Uzbek expression is a more transparent verb construction and does not contain an animal component. This example illustrates why semantic equivalence and structural equivalence should be examined separately. Similarly, Indonesian kambing hitam and English scapegoat share a comparable conventional meaning, but their internal lexical forms differ. The English word is a single compound, whereas the Indonesian expression is a two-word noun construction consisting of an animal noun and a color adjective.

Existing research on idioms, metaphor, and phraseology provides a strong theoretical foundation for examining animal-based expressions. However, a three-language comparison that systematically focuses on the structural organization of English, Indonesian, and Uzbek animal-based idioms requires careful selection and verification of examples from reliable dictionaries and authentic language use. The present study addresses this comparative perspective by proposing a structural classification of representative expressions and examining the interaction between form, figurative meaning, and cultural convention. Its findings are qualitative and exploratory; a comprehensive account of frequency, productivity, and distribution would require a larger, systematically compiled corpus.

Materials and methods. The study adopts a qualitative comparative-descriptive design. It combines structural classification, phraseological analysis, and cross-linguistic comparison to investigate animal-based idioms in English, Indonesian, and Uzbek.

The analysis is organized around three principal dimensions:

Structural dimension: the grammatical pattern and lexical organization of each expression.

Semantic dimension: the conventional figurative meaning and the relationship between literal and idiomatic interpretation.

Comparative dimension: the degree of structural and semantic correspondence among expressions in the three languages.

The purpose is not to establish statistically representative frequencies but to identify recurrent structural possibilities and illustrate their comparative significance.

Selection of examples. Representative expressions were selected to illustrate different grammatical structures and semantic functions. The English examples include a dark horse, to let the cat out of the bag, and to kill two birds with one stone. Indonesian examples include kambing hitam and buaya darat. Uzbek examples include tulki odam and qo‘y og‘zidan cho‘p olmagan. The examples serve as a preliminary analytical sample rather than a complete inventory of idioms in the three languages. Their idiomatic status, contextual meaning, spelling, and frequency should be verified against established monolingual and bilingual dictionaries and authentic language corpora before the study is presented as a completed empirical investigation.

Results and discussion. The preliminary comparison reveals several structural patterns among the selected examples. These patterns illustrate how animal names can function as nominal heads, modifiers, and components of verbal constructions.

Table 1.

Structural classification of selected animal-based idioms

Language	Idiom	Literal interpretation	Conventional or intended meaning	Structural pattern
English	A dark horse	A horse of a dark color	An unexpected or little-known candidate with a chance of success	Noun phrase
English	Let the cat out of the bag	Release a cat from a bag	Reveal a secret	Verb phrase
English	Kill two birds with one stone	Kill two birds using one stone	Achieve two objectives through one action	Verb phrase

Language	Idiom	Literal interpretation	Conventional or intended meaning	Structural pattern
Indonesian	Kambing hitam	Black goat	Scapegoat; a person blamed for others' actions	Noun phrase
Indonesian	Buaya darat	Land crocodile	A womanizer or unfaithful man in conventional use	Noun phrase
Uzbek	Tulki odam	Fox person	A cunning or crafty person	Noun phrase
Uzbek	Qo‘y og‘zidan cho‘p olmagan	Someone who would not take a twig from a sheep's mouth	An extremely gentle or harmless person	Extended descriptive construction

The table illustrates that noun phrases and verb phrases are prominent structural possibilities. Noun phrases commonly label people or characterize their social identities, while verb phrases frequently represent actions, outcomes, or communicative events. The English examples demonstrate that animal-based idioms may be integrated into relatively complex verbal constructions. In to let the cat out of the bag, the animal noun occurs within a larger construction whose figurative meaning is not predictable from the literal meanings of its individual words. In to kill two birds with one stone, the animal component participates in an idiom that expresses efficiency through the accomplishment of two objectives by a single action. Indonesian kambing hitam illustrates a different structural arrangement. The noun kambing ('goat') is modified by hitam ('black'), forming a noun phrase that has acquired a conventional figurative meaning. Similarly, buaya darat consists of buaya ('crocodile') and darat ('land'), but the expression's conventional interpretation cannot be derived simply from the literal relationship between the two words. The Uzbek examples illustrate both compact nominal descriptions and longer, clause-like constructions. Tulki odam combines an animal noun with a human-denoting noun, while qo‘y og‘zidan cho‘p olmagan uses a more elaborate descriptive pattern to convey extreme gentleness or harmlessness. These examples demonstrate the importance of examining the full construction rather than isolating the animal noun.

Noun phrases and the characterization of people. Noun-phrase idioms frequently function as labels for human personality, social roles, and behavioral tendencies. Animal names provide a compact means of characterizing individuals through culturally familiar associations. English a dark horse refers to a person or candidate whose abilities or prospects are not widely recognized but who may achieve unexpected success. The animal noun functions as the central nominal element, while the adjective dark forms part of the conventional idiomatic expression. Its meaning cannot be reduced to the physical appearance of a horse. Indonesian kambing hitam also functions as a noun phrase, but its figurative meaning concerns the social allocation of blame. The expression is used for an individual or group unfairly held responsible for a problem. Although both expressions have similar grammatical organization, their semantic functions are different. Uzbek tulki odam associates a human being with the fox, conventionally linked to cunning or craftiness. In this expression, the animal component serves as a metaphorical descriptor of human character. However, its interpretation may vary according to context, and the phrase should not automatically be treated as a fully lexicalized idiom in every occurrence. These examples show that similar structural categories can accommodate different semantic functions. A noun phrase may describe a person's prospects, assign social blame, or characterize personality. Therefore, structural classification should be combined with semantic analysis.

Verb phrases and event-oriented meanings. Verb-phrase idioms often express actions, changes of state, or consequences. Their meanings are typically associated with an entire construction rather than with the animal noun alone. The English expression to let the cat out of the bag describes the disclosure of information that was intended to remain secret. Its structure contains a verb, an object, and a prepositional phrase. The idiomatic meaning emerges from the conventional interpretation of the whole expression. The expression to kill two birds with one stone similarly has a multi-component verbal structure. It describes a situation in which one action produces two beneficial outcomes. Its figurative interpretation depends on a metaphorical mapping between a concrete action and an abstract problem-solving situation. These examples suggest that English animal-based idioms can exhibit relatively elaborate internal structures. However, the present sample is too limited to conclude that English systematically favors verb-phrase idioms more than Indonesian or Uzbek. Such a claim would require comparable corpora and explicit frequency measurements for all three languages.

Limitations and directions for further research. The present study provides a qualitative comparison of selected expressions. Its principal limitation is the absence of a systematically compiled, balanced corpus covering English, Indonesian, and Uzbek idioms. The examples are illustrative rather than statistically representative, and no quantitative claims are made about the relative frequency of structural patterns. Further research should compile phraseological data from authoritative dictionaries, literary texts, newspapers, online communication, and other authentic sources. Each candidate expression should be checked for conventional usage, syntactic behavior, figurative meaning, and regional or register variation. A larger dataset would make it possible to calculate the proportion of noun phrases, verb phrases, and extended constructions in each language. It would also allow researchers to examine whether particular animal categories are associated with specific semantic fields, such as intelligence, aggression, deception, weakness, or social status. Such work would strengthen the empirical basis of comparative phraseology and provide a more comprehensive understanding of how grammatical organization and cultural meaning interact in animal-based idioms.

Conclusion. This study has examined selected animal-based idioms in English, Indonesian, and Uzbek from a comparative structural perspective. The analysis demonstrates that animal imagery can be incorporated into different

grammatical constructions, including noun phrases, verb phrases, and extended descriptive expressions. These constructions perform a variety of communicative functions, such as characterizing human personality, describing social roles, expressing actions, and evaluating behavior. The comparison also shows that structural similarity does not necessarily imply semantic equivalence. Expressions may share a nominal pattern while conveying different meanings, whereas semantically comparable expressions may differ considerably in their lexical composition and grammatical organization. Consequently, a reliable comparative analysis must consider structure, conventional meaning, and cultural context together. The findings further emphasize the importance of distinguishing idiomatic expressions from freely constructed phrases that merely contain animal names. The conventional status and interpretation of each expression should be supported by reliable phraseological sources and authentic language data. In conclusion, the comparison of English, Indonesian, and Uzbek animal-based idioms offers a productive framework for exploring the relationship between grammatical structure and cultural conceptualization. Future corpus-based research involving larger and systematically verified datasets would make it possible to test the preliminary observations presented here and establish a more precise account of cross-linguistic structural patterns.

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