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THE MORPHOLOGICAL FEATURE FORMATION OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

Boymurodova Gulhayo Mamasharip qizi
Teacher at Termez State University of Engineering and Agricultural Technologies

Abstract Phraseological units (PUs), also known as idioms, fixed expressions, collocations, and proverbs, represent stable, figurative combinations of words that function as single lexical units with partially or fully reinterpreted meanings. This article examines the morphological features involved in their formation, stability, variability, and transformation in English (an analytic Indo-European language) and Uzbek (an agglutinative Turkic language). Drawing on structural-semantic classifications by V.V. Vinogradov and A.V. Kunin, as well as Uzbek scholarly traditions, the study highlights differences arising from typological contrasts: English PUs exhibit limited morphological flexibility due to analytic structure and reliance on word order, while Uzbek PUs demonstrate greater integration with agglutinative morphology yet maintain strict stability through fixed grammatical forms. The analysis reveals shared universal traits (stability, reproducibility, idiomaticity) alongside language-specific formation processes, such as morphological transformations (e.g., changes in tense, number, or affixes) and variants. Comparative examples illustrate how morphological integrity contributes to cultural expressiveness and challenges in translation. The findings underscore the role of morphology in PU formation for cross-linguistic studies, lexicography, and language pedagogy.

Keywords: phraseological units, morphological features, formation processes, stability, variability, English phraseology, Uzbek phraseology, comparative linguistics, morphological transformations, agglutination.

Introduction Phraseological units constitute a vital layer of any language's lexicon, embodying national culture, historical experience, and worldview. They are reproducible, stable word combinations whose meaning cannot be deduced solely from individual components. In both English and Uzbek, PUs arise through lexicalization of free phrases, where morphological processes play a key role in fixation and semantic shift. Morphology here refers to the internal grammatical structure of components, their inflectional/derivational potential, stability against variation, and occasional transformations.

English, being analytic, relies on fixed word order and auxiliary elements, limiting morphological inflection in PUs. Uzbek, agglutinative, incorporates suffixes and case markers, yet PUs resist free morphological alteration to preserve integrity. This comparative study explores how morphological features shape PU formation, drawing parallels and contrasts between these genetically unrelated languages.

Relevance of Work In an era of globalization and intensive language contact, understanding phraseological morphology is essential for translation, second-language acquisition, and computational linguistics. English and Uzbek differ typologically (analytic vs. agglutinative), yet both languages enrich their vocabularies through PUs that reflect cultural specificity. Comparative analysis reveals universal mechanisms of stability alongside language-specific morphological constraints, aiding bilingual lexicography and machine translation systems. Moreover, morphological variability and transformations in discourse (e.g., journalistic or literary contexts) highlight the dynamic nature of PUs, contributing to stylistics and pragmatics. This work addresses gaps in cross-Turkic and English phraseology studies, particularly morphological formation processes rarely examined contrastively.

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Purpose The primary purpose is to investigate and compare the morphological features in the formation, stability, and transformation of phraseological units in English and Uzbek. Specific objectives include: (1) classifying morphological aspects of PU structure; (2) analyzing formation mechanisms (lexicalization, affixation, compounding); (3) examining stability and variants (phonetic, morphological, lexical); and (4) identifying transformations and their semantic/pragmatic effects. The study aims to demonstrate how typological differences influence morphological integration while revealing shared principles of idiomatic fixation.

Materials and Methods of Research Materials comprise phraseological dictionaries, monographs, and corpora: A.V. Kunin's English-Russian Phraseological Dictionary and Course in Modern English Phraseology; Sh. Rakhmatullayev's explanatory works and dictionary of Uzbek phraseology; bilingual dictionaries (e.g., Azizova's English-Uzbek-Russian phraseology dictionary); and literary/journalistic texts for contextual examples. Approximately 200 PUs were analyzed (100 per language), focusing on somatic, zoomorphic, and biblical-origin units.

Methods include: comparative-typological analysis (English vs. Uzbek structures); structural-semantic classification (Vinogradov/Kunin); descriptive analysis of morphological components; and contextual discourse analysis for transformations. Data were drawn from scholarly sources published 1960–2025, ensuring empirical grounding.

Results and Discussion Morphological formation of PUs begins with free word combinations undergoing lexicalization—semantic reinterpretation accompanied by structural fixation. In English, analytic morphology favors fixed syntactic patterns (verb + object, adjective + noun) with minimal inflection. Kunin identifies five types of stability: usage, structural-semantic, semantic, lexical, and syntactic. Morphological stability manifests as resistance to inflectional change; components rarely alter tense, number, or articles without losing idiomaticity. For instance, "to kick the bucket" (to die) resists pluralization or tense shifts in core form, though occasional transformations occur in discourse: "He kicked the proverbial bucket last week" (morphological addition of article/adjective for stylistic effect). Such transformations alter grammatical aspects (tense, number, comparison) while preserving core meaning, contributing to expressiveness in journalism.

Vinogradov's classification further illuminates morphology: phraseological fusions (completely non-motivated, e.g., "red tape" – bureaucracy; components lose independent morphology), unities (one literal component, e.g., "to show the white feather" – cowardice), and combinations (motivated, e.g., "a fish out of water"). English PUs often derive from biblical sources ("forbidden fruit," "manna from heaven") or Shakespeare, where morphological fixation reflects historical lexicalization without heavy affixation.

In Uzbek, agglutinative morphology integrates suffixes (case, possession, tense) into PUs, yet stability demands fixed forms. Sh. Rakhmatullayev defines PUs as "stable compounds" equivalent to words, with grammatical formation mirroring proverbs/sayings. Examples: "og'zi ochildi" (mouth opened – surprised; verb form fixed, no free affix variation); "boshi osmonga yetdi" (head reached the sky – overjoyed; possessive and directional morphology fixed). Morphological variants exist but are limited: phonetic/morphological shifts preserve meaning (e.g., variants of "og'zi qulog'iga yetdi" – mouth reached ear). Rakhmatullayev's 1966 monograph analyzes over 30,000 cards, noting one-word equivalents like "kimok" (idiomatic words from phrases). Uzbek PUs form through folk wisdom, with agglutinative affixes enhancing emotional nuance but resisting decomposition. Proverbs like "To'g'ri o'tgan, egri kamaygan" (straight passes, curves decrease) exhibit sentence-like morphology fixed as units.

Comparative results reveal key differences:

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- **Formation processes**: English relies on compounding/blending with syntactic fixation (e.g., binomial "bread and butter"); Uzbek uses agglutination for valence (verb phrases dominate). Both share folk/Biblical origins, but Uzbek incorporates Turkic cultural imagery (somatic components more affix-heavy).
- **Stability**: English morphological stability is syntactic (word order); Uzbek combines syntactic and agglutinative (suffix integrity). Kunin's morphological variants apply cross-linguistically, but Uzbek allows more grammatical harmony due to Turkic typology.
- **Transformations**: Morphological changes (tense/number in English; limited affix shifts in Uzbek) serve stylistic purposes. In English press: "thick skin" → "her own skin not thick enough" (possessive morphology). Uzbek equivalents resist more due to fixed molds.
- **Cultural implications**: Morphology encodes worldview—English analytic precision vs. Uzbek vivid agglutinative expressiveness. Challenges arise in translation: English PUs lose nuance without equivalent morphology; Uzbek units require descriptive adaptation.

Examples illustrate: English "kick the bucket" vs. Uzbek "jon berdi" (soul gave – died); both fixed morphologically but differ in component complexity. Variability (e.g., English "to leave in the lurch" variants) contrasts Uzbek stricter fixation.

Conclusion Morphological features fundamentally shape phraseological unit formation in English and Uzbek, ensuring stability while permitting controlled variability and transformation. English analytic morphology emphasizes syntactic fixation and occasional grammatical shifts for expressiveness, whereas Uzbek agglutinative structure integrates affixes into immutable molds, reflecting typological heritage. Shared principles—lexicalization, semantic reinterpretation, and cultural embedding—emerge despite differences, confirming phraseology as a universal microsystem. These insights advance comparative linguistics, enhance phraseological dictionaries, and improve translation/pedagogy practices. Future research could incorporate corpus data for quantitative morphological analysis.

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