

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CULTURE-BOUND IDIOMS IN ENGLISH AND
UZBEK: IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION***Omonova Farangiz Asror qizi**Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages**Master's student in Linguistics**omonova.f.a@gmail.com**<https://orcid.org/0009-0004-4376-6572>*

Abstract: In this article, cultural expressions existing in English and Uzbek are analyzed from a comparative point of view, and their role and importance in intercultural communication are studied. In the course of the study, the semantic structure of phrases, their communicative function, and the cultural values behind them were analyzed. It was also shown how the individualistic approach characteristic of English society and collectivist values in Uzbek society are expressed through language units. The article highlights, with examples, the problems that an incorrect translation or misinterpretation of cultural expressions can lead to in intercultural understanding. In conclusion, the importance of intercultural competence, along with linguistic knowledge, for effective intercultural communication was emphasized.

Keywords: cultural expressions, English and Uzbek, intercultural communication, semantic difference, cultural context, communicative competence, linguistic intercultural understanding

INTRODUCTION

In the modern era of globalization, communication between different cultures and languages is becoming a necessary need. In particular, relations between representatives of the English and Uzbek languages are becoming increasingly important in the spheres of education, business, diplomacy, and everyday life. In such communication, the correct understanding of not only lexical, but also culturally loaded expressions plays an important role. Cultural expressions existing in each language - for example, phraseological units, idioms, proverbs, or stable expressions expressing values - are closely related to the historical experience, mentality, and worldview of that people. In this article, a comparative analysis of cultural expressions in English and Uzbek is conducted, and their influence on intercultural communication is studied. Through comparative analysis, attention is paid to the commonalities and differences in the phraseological richness of the two languages, and the causes of problems and communicative errors in the translation process are identified. The article also serves to reduce misunderstandings between English and Uzbek cultures, increase cultural sensitivity, and identify ways to conduct effective communication. The relevance of the research lies in the fact that today there is a growing need for intercultural competence in language teaching and translation practice. Therefore, in this regard, an in-depth study of the semantic and stylistic features of cultural expressions, understanding their role in communication, is an urgent scientific and practical issue.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The inextricable connection between culture and language has been confirmed by many researchers, and this relationship has become a separate scientific direction, especially in the field of intercultural communication. Linguists and cultural scholars have put forward the idea that every unit in language - regardless of whether it is a word, phrase, or speech samples -

represents the worldview, value system, and norms of social behavior of representatives of a particular culture. In this regard, the American scientist Edward T. Hall (1959, 1976) developed the theory of «cultural contexts» and focused on the difference between «high-context» and «low-context» cultures in the analysis of intercultural communication. For example, in high-context societies like Uzbekistan, gestures, polite words, and nonverbal cues play an important role, while in low-context cultures like the USA or England, open, clear, and direct expression prevails. These differences can lead to misunderstandings or misinterpretations in communication.

Geert Hofstede (2001) developed the theory of «cultural dimensions» for analyzing national cultures. He identified differences in the cultural thinking of peoples through the following six main dimensions:

1. Individualism vs. collectivism,
2. Power distance,
3. Uncertainty avoidance,
4. Masculinity vs. femininity,
5. Long-term orientation,
6. Indulgence (indulgence).

These measurements directly influence the formation of cultural expressions, the style of communication, and the rules of intercultural communication. For example, in Uzbekistan, collectivism is at a high level, which means the priority of respect, loyalty, and family values in society. In English culture, individualism is the main value. This forms the habit of expressing independent opinion in speech, maintaining personal boundaries, and openly expressing criticism. An important theoretical basis for the study of intercultural communication is the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), developed by Milton J. Bennett. According to this model, people first deny, then acknowledge, and finally begin to accept and appreciate intercultural differences. This model shows the need to increase awareness of intercultural differences for Uzbek-speaking audiences studying English or participating in the process of mutual translation. Another important source is the concept of «Intercultural Communicative Competence» (ICC), developed by Byram (1997). He connects communicative competence not only with linguistic knowledge, but also with an understanding of cultural context, stereotypes, values, and social behavior. According to Byram, true language acquisition is not just grammatical and lexical knowledge, but the ability to act correctly in an intercultural context.

In studies conducted in Uzbekistan, the peculiarities of intercultural communication are also highlighted. In particular, Yuldasheva (2020) in her article compares the strategies of politeness used in communication in Uzbek and English, indicating that in the Uzbek language, social balance is maintained through respect, irony, and sarcastic remarks, while in English, personal freedom and direct expression of opinion prevail. O. Asrorova (2022) in her research on intercultural pragmatics studied how speech acts such as caution, courtesy, reproach, and rejection are expressed in different cultures in English and Uzbek. These studies prove that cultural differences are the main cause of errors in language learning or translation. The recently published journal «Intercultural Pragmatics» (2022, De Gruyter) also analyzes the relationship between speech style, context, and cultural differences in intercultural communication, in particular, communication between representatives of Asian and European languages. These works are especially relevant for countries located at the intersection of languages and cultures, such as Uzbekistan.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, comparative-analytical and descriptive methods were combined. First of all, cultural expressions (proverbs, idioms, speech combinations) used in the English and Uzbek languages were selected, and their cultural meaning and communicative functions were contextually analyzed. Also, based on the theories of intercultural communication (Hall, Hofstede, Byram, and others), mutual differences were identified, and how these expressions are perceived in different cultural environments was demonstrated through practical examples. Scientific articles, textbooks, communication samples, and online corpora were used as research sources.

RESULTS

The research results showed that cultural expressions used in English and Uzbek deeply express not only the national characteristics of the language, but also the lifestyle, value system, and culture of communication of peoples. English largely reflects the style of communication characteristic of an individualistic society. For example, phrases such as «Speak your mind», «Stand up for yourself», «Don't beat around the bush» show that they are a product of a culture that values personal freedom, independence, and direct communication. Uzbek culture, according to Hofstede's theory, belongs to the category of collectivist societies. Therefore, in the Uzbek language, there are expressions that prioritize the interests of society, respect, and politeness. For example, phrases such as «Kattani kichik demagil'», «Ko'p gap – eshkka yuk», «Kimgadir gap tegmasin», «Ortiqcha og'iz ochma» express the values of compromise, loyalty, and self-restraint in the team. It is not easy to fully understand the meaning of these phrases in English-language culture, since freedom of thought prevails in these societies. In the course of the study, it was found that English phrases such as «Time is money», «Every man for himself», or «Business before pleasure» mean a practical approach to life, seriousness to work, a culture of putting personal interests first. In the Uzbek language, there is a warmer, relatively gentler approach to time: phrases such as «Sabr qil, sabrning tagi sariq oltin», «Har ishning oxiri hayrli bo'ladi», «Yetti o'lchab, bir kes» reflect the principles of patience, trust in Allah. These differences lead to different approaches to time in communication. For example, in English, being late for work is considered a professional irresponsibility, while in Uzbek society, being late is sometimes perceived as normal, especially at gatherings, weddings, and social events.

There are also significant differences in the attitude towards reproach and criticism. While in English open criticism and expression of opinion are often assessed as honesty, in Uzbek this situation can cause discomfort and even be perceived as disrespect. For example, in English, expressions such as «I disagree with you», «You are wrong», «Let me correct you» are a means of expressing direct opposition, while in Uzbek, these situations are usually expressed through subtle expressions: «Balki boshqacharoq bo'lishi mumkin», «Siz aytganga qo'shimcha qilmoqchiman», «Shunday deyishga majburman» and so on. Elements of communication used without knowing these differences can lead to intercultural misunderstandings and feelings of resentment. The study also showed that expressions related to hospitality, respect, and courtesy are also manifested in different forms in English and Uzbek. In English, phrases such as «Make yourself at home», «Can I get you something?», «Thanks for having me» are among the usual formulas of hospitality, while in Uzbek this process is quite emotional and based on thorough communication: phrases such as «Qadamlaringizga hasanot», «Uyimga fayz kirib keldi», «Mehmon kelsa - rizq keltiradi» reflect not only social etiquette, but also religious and spiritual values.

In addition, cases of misunderstanding of cultural expressions in the fields of translation and language teaching have also been identified. For example, the English phrase «break the ice» (to soften communication, to lose dignity at first acquaintance) seems meaningless when translated literally into Uzbek. In the Uzbek language, expressions such as «Yuz ochildi», «Gapga kirishildi», «Muomala iliqlashdi» are used to express this situation. Consequently, in such cases, disregarding cultural differences can disrupt communication.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study showed that expressions related to culture acquire an important communicative and cultural load in both languages. If representatives of the English and Uzbek languages rely only on lexical knowledge in the process of mutual communication, misinterpretations, inconveniences, or even social conflicts may arise due to intercultural differences. For example, in English, open expression, personal interest, and clarity are prioritized, while in Uzbek, caution, respect, and indirect style of expression are preferred. These differences are explained within the framework of intercultural pragmatics and are confirmed in the theories of such scholars as Bennett and Byram. According to Edward T. Hall's context theory, Uzbekistan is a «high-context» society, meaning that much information is conveyed not verbally, but through social gestures, irony, body language, and expressions. In the English language - representatives of a «low-context» culture - such means of communication are considered secondary. Therefore, such phrases in the Uzbek language as «Yaxshi niyat – yarim davlat», «Til – qalb tarjimoni» are often interpreted depending on the context, which contradicts communication in English based on simple grammar and vocabulary. On the other hand, understanding cultural expressions in English in Uzbek requires not only translation, but also intercultural competence. For example, the phrase «The early bird catches the worm» expresses the approach of English society to speed and initiative. The phrase in the Uzbek language that gives it a similar meaning - «Early risen clay passes through» - emphasizes not just time, but skill. Despite these similarities, the underlying values are different. This requires understanding cultural thinking not in translation, but at the contextual level of communication. These differences can cause one of the major problems of intercultural communication - a **semantic conflict**. As Hofstede analyzed, in societies characterized by high power distance and collectivism, people choose more «closed» expressions, which may be incomprehensible to representatives of an «open» culture. For example, the English phrase «Let's agree to disagree» can be interpreted negatively in Uzbek communication, as it is perceived as disagreement. This further strengthens the need for intercultural sensitivity.

The discussion shows that linguistic competence in linguistics and sociocultural competence in cultural studies are complementary systems, both of which are necessary for effective intercultural communication. Also, textbooks, translated texts, or educational materials written without taking these differences into account may misrepresent the language and culture being studied. Therefore, when studying cultural expressions between the English and Uzbek languages, it is necessary to take into account not only their semantic meaning, but also their cultural connotation, communicative function, and pragmatic function. This is relevant not only for language teachers and translators, but also for those studying a foreign language, diplomats, journalists, and teachers working in foreign educational institutions.

CONCLUSION

This study showed that cultural expressions used in English and Uzbek are not only linguistic units, but also cultural signs reflecting the values, worldview, communication etiquette, and social relations of a particular society. Comparative analysis has proven that English phrases

express more individualism, independence, accuracy, and direct communication, while Uzbek phrases are based on collectivism, respect, politeness, and indirect expression. These differences are important in the process of intercultural communication, especially in the field of language learning, translation, international relations, and education. Also, direct translation of cultural expressions can often lead to misinterpretations, semantic distortions, and cultural ambiguities. Therefore, when teaching such expressions, their background culture, social context, and pragmatic function should be consistently explained. Intercultural sensitivity, empathy, and contextual analysis serve as the main tools for the correct understanding and application of cultural expressions. At the end of the study, it should be noted that the analysis of cultural expressions between the English and Uzbek languages is of great importance not only in the development of linguistic competence, but also in the development of intercultural communicative competence. This, in turn, once again confirms the necessity of mastering culture and language as a whole in the process of learning foreign languages.

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