



THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF UZBEK AND ENGLISH PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS: A CASE STUDY OF GAFUR GULOM'S "SHUM BOLA" AND KENNETH GRAHAME'S "THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS"

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Abstract

Phraseological units constitute an essential component of every language, reflecting the interaction between linguistic structure, cultural traditions, and cognitive perception. Among them, phraseological units containing flora and fauna components are particularly significant because they preserve cultural knowledge and metaphorical conceptualizations accumulated throughout generations. This study investigates the structural, semantic, and cultural characteristics of flora- and fauna-based phraseological units in English and Uzbek through a comparative analysis of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* (1908) and Gafur Gulom's *Shum bola* (1936). The research applies an integrated semantic–structural–cultural analytical framework grounded in phraseology, cognitive linguistics, and comparative linguistics. The findings demonstrate that both languages share universal cognitive metaphors such as HUMAN BEHAVIOR IS ANIMAL BEHAVIOR and LIFE IS A GROWTH PROCESS. However, significant differences emerge in cultural symbolism, phraseological realization, and evaluative functions. The study reveals three degrees of equivalence—full, partial, and zero equivalence—between English and Uzbek phraseological units. The results contribute to the understanding of phraseology as a multidimensional phenomenon connecting language, cognition, and culture.



Keywords: Phraseological units, flora, fauna, comparative linguistics, cognitive linguistics, English, Uzbek, metaphor, cultural linguistics, equivalence.

INTRODUCTION

Phraseology occupies a central position in modern linguistic studies because phraseological units reflect not only linguistic structures but also cultural values, cognitive models, and collective experiences of speech communities. Unlike ordinary lexical items, phraseological units carry figurative meanings that often cannot be interpreted literally. As a result, they provide valuable material for investigating the relationship between language, thought, and culture.

One of the most productive categories of phraseological units consists of expressions containing names of animals and plants. Such phraseological units are deeply rooted in human observation of nature and frequently serve as sources of metaphorical conceptualization. Animals are often used to describe human behavior, personality traits, and social relationships, whereas plants are commonly associated with growth, beauty, development, and life processes.

The comparative study of phraseological units in different languages allows researchers to identify universal cognitive patterns as well as culture-specific conceptualizations. English and Uzbek, despite belonging to different language families and cultural traditions, demonstrate numerous similarities and differences in the use of flora- and fauna-based phraseological expressions.

This research focuses on two literary works representing English and Uzbek literary traditions: *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame and *Shum bola* by Gafur Gulom. Both texts contain rich examples of animal and plant imagery that reflect national worldviews and cultural symbolism.

Kenneth Grahame (1859–1932) is one of the most influential authors of English children's literature. His novel *The Wind in the Willows* presents an imaginative world inhabited by anthropomorphic animals whose actions and interactions symbolize human social behavior. The work is renowned for its pastoral atmosphere, vivid natural descriptions, and extensive use of fauna-related imagery.

Gafur Gulom (1903–1966) occupies a prominent place in Uzbek literature as a poet, writer, and public intellectual. His autobiographical novel *Shum bola*



depicts social life in early twentieth-century Uzbekistan through humor, satire, and realistic narrative techniques. The text contains numerous phraseological units reflecting traditional Uzbek culture, folk wisdom, and everyday experience. The purpose of this study is to compare flora- and fauna-based phraseological units found in these literary works and to determine their structural, semantic, and cultural characteristics.

The research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What structural models characterize flora- and fauna-based phraseological units in English and Uzbek?
2. What semantic functions do these phraseological units perform?
3. How do cultural factors influence their formation and interpretation?
4. To what extent do equivalent phraseological units exist across the two languages?

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The study employs a qualitative comparative research design based on phraseological analysis. The corpus of the research consists of flora- and fauna-related phraseological units identified in *The Wind in the Willows* and *Shum bola*. The analytical framework combines four complementary approaches:

Semantic Analysis

The semantic analysis investigates denotative and connotative meanings, evaluative polarity, and semantic classification of phraseological units. This approach follows the tradition of classical phraseology developed by Viktor Vinogradov and later expanded through semantic studies by Stephen Ullmann.

Structural Analysis

The structural analysis examines grammatical patterns and phraseological models used in the formation of phraseological units. Particular attention is paid to similes, nominal constructions, verbal constructions, and fixed phraseological patterns. The concept of phraseological stability proposed by A. V. Kunin serves as the theoretical foundation for this stage.

Cultural and Cognitive Analysis

The cultural dimension explores symbolic meanings associated with animals and plants in English and Uzbek cultures. The analysis is informed by Conceptual



Metaphor Theory developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson and further elaborated by Zoltán Kövecses.

Comparative Analysis

The comparative stage investigates cross-linguistic equivalence between English and Uzbek phraseological units. Following Mona Baker's framework, phraseological equivalence is categorized into three types:

- Full equivalence
- Partial equivalence
- Zero equivalence

The integrated semantic–structural–cultural model enables a comprehensive understanding of phraseological units as linguistic and cultural phenomena.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Flora and Fauna Imagery in “The Wind in the Willows”

The analysis of Kenneth Grahame's work demonstrates a predominance of descriptive and metaphorical phraseology rather than traditional idiomatic expressions. Animal and plant imagery functions as a narrative mechanism that constructs a dynamic natural environment.

Expressions such as a bird's-eye view, flowers budding, leaves thrusting, and the carol of happy birds illustrate the author's tendency to personify nature and create a living ecological system.

The expression a bird's-eye view represents a conceptual metaphor linking perception with understanding. Semantically, it denotes a general overview. Structurally, it is a lexicalized noun phrase. Culturally, birds symbolize freedom and broad perspective within English culture.

Similarly, flowers budding symbolizes growth and renewal. The phrase follows a noun-plus-participle structure and reflects traditional associations between flowers and rebirth in English cultural symbolism.

Faunal expressions such as like a rabbit at the gap and terrified weasels employ animal behavior as a source domain for describing emotional states. The rabbit symbolizes vulnerability and fear, while the weasel represents cunning and disorder.



The repeated enumeration of species such as kingfishers, moorhens, dabchicks, and otters contributes to the ecological richness of the narrative and reflects the English pastoral literary tradition.

Flora and Fauna Phraseology in “Shum bola”

Unlike Grahame's text, Shum bola contains a greater number of conventional phraseological units directly derived from folk speech.

The phrase Bo‘ridan qo‘rqqaqan tulkidek illustrates a comparative phraseological model describing excessive fear and caution. The wolf symbolizes danger, while the fox represents cunningness combined with anxiety.

The expression Itday yugurmoq denotes tireless movement or continuous effort. The dog serves as a metaphorical representation of endurance and physical activity.

Similarly, Eshakday ishlamoq emphasizes hard labor and endurance. The donkey functions as a cultural symbol of burden-bearing and patience in Uzbek society. Among flora-related expressions, Gulday ochilmoq and Mevasini bermoq occupy a special position. These phraseological units conceptualize personal development and success through botanical imagery.

Gulday ochilmoq associates human happiness and beauty with the blooming of a flower, whereas Mevasini bermoq connects achievement and reward with fruit-bearing processes.

The expression Xazon bo‘lmoq metaphorically represents decline, disappointment, and emotional loss through the imagery of autumn leaves.

Comparative Analysis

The comparative examination reveals both similarities and differences between English and Uzbek phraseological systems.

Structural Similarities

Both languages demonstrate extensive use of simile constructions. Examples include:

- As sly as a fox
- Bo‘ridan qo‘rqqaqan tulkidek
- Itday yugurmoq
- Like a rabbit at the gap



These structures indicate the universality of analogical thinking in human cognition.

Semantic Similarities

Fauna-based phraseological units in both languages primarily characterize human behavior and personality traits. Animals serve as metaphorical models for evaluating human actions.

Examples include:

- Fox = cunning
- Rabbit = fearfulness
- Dog = hard work
- Donkey = endurance

Flora-based phraseological units in both languages are associated with development, growth, beauty, and life cycles.

Cultural Differences

Despite these similarities, significant cultural differences are evident.

English phraseology tends to emphasize descriptive observation and individual behavior. Many expressions are rooted in pastoral traditions and literary symbolism.

Uzbek phraseology, by contrast, often incorporates moral evaluation and collective social values. Animal and plant imagery is more directly connected with folk wisdom, agricultural life, and ethical judgments.

For example, the flower image in Uzbek culture frequently symbolizes spiritual beauty and emotional fulfillment, whereas in English it often functions as a general symbol of natural growth and renewal.

Cognitive Interpretation

The analysis confirms the operation of two universal conceptual metaphors:

HUMAN BEHAVIOR IS ANIMAL BEHAVIOR

This metaphor explains why characteristics such as cunningness, fear, endurance, and aggression are represented through animal imagery.

LIFE IS A GROWTH PROCESS

This metaphor underlies flora-based expressions related to development, success, decline, and transformation.



These conceptual metaphors appear in both languages despite cultural and linguistic differences, supporting the cognitive linguistic hypothesis that metaphor constitutes a fundamental mechanism of human thought.

Phraseological Equivalence

Three levels of equivalence were identified.

Full Equivalence

Examples: As sly as a fox → Tulkidek ayyor

Both expressions employ the same animal image and convey identical meanings.

Partial Equivalence

Some phraseological units share semantic content but differ in imagery or structural realization.

Zero Equivalence

Certain expressions possess no direct counterpart because they rely on culturally specific symbolism unique to one linguistic community.

The predominance of partial equivalence demonstrates that phraseological meaning is shaped simultaneously by universal cognition and local culture.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of flora- and fauna-based phraseological units in *The Wind in the Willows* and *Shum bola* demonstrates that phraseology serves as a bridge between language, cognition, and culture.

The study reveals that both English and Uzbek employ similar cognitive mechanisms in the formation of phraseological units. Comparative constructions, metaphorical mappings, and symbolic representations of animals and plants occur in both languages, reflecting universal aspects of human conceptualization.

However, the research also highlights significant cultural differences. English phraseology tends to emphasize descriptive realism and individual behavior, whereas Uzbek phraseology reflects stronger moral, social, and collective orientations. Flora and fauna images acquire distinct cultural meanings depending on historical traditions, environmental conditions, and social values.

The findings confirm that phraseological units are multidimensional phenomena that cannot be fully understood through semantic analysis alone. Their



interpretation requires consideration of structural organization, cultural symbolism, and cognitive motivation.

The integrated semantic–structural–cultural model applied in this study proved effective for uncovering these complex relationships and may serve as a useful framework for future comparative phraseological research.

Ultimately, the study demonstrates that flora- and fauna-based phraseological units preserve valuable linguistic and cultural knowledge while simultaneously reflecting universal patterns of human cognition. Their investigation contributes not only to phraseology and cognitive linguistics but also to translation studies and intercultural communication.

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