



## SEMANTIC, STYLISTIC, AND CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

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**Abstract.** Idiomatic expressions are fixed word combinations whose meanings cannot be deduced from the literal meanings of their individual components. They enrich language with figurative depth, stylistic expressiveness, and cultural specificity. This article explores the semantic (non-compositional and figurative meanings), stylistic (imagery, emotional coloring, discourse functions), and cultural (historical, social, and national psychological foundations) characteristics of idioms. Based on linguistic theories and comparative analysis, the study underscores their vital role in cross-cultural communication and language learning. The research integrates literature review, qualitative methodology, results with discussion, and conclusion.

**Keywords:** idiomatic expressions, semantics, stylistics, cultural characteristics, figurative meaning, phraseological units, cross-cultural linguistics.

## FRAZEOLOGIK BIRLIKLARNING SEMANTIK, STILISTIK VA MADANIY XUSUSIYATLARI

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**Annotatsiya:**Idiomatik iboralar bu mustahkam soʻz birikmalari boʻlib, ularning maʼnolarini alohida komponentlarining soʻzma-soʻz maʼnolaridan kelib chiqarib boʻlmaydi. Ular tilni obrazli chuqurlik, stilistik ifodalilik va madaniy oʻziga xoslik bilan boyitadi. Ushbu maqolada idiomalarning semantik (nokompozitsion va obrazli maʼnolar), stilistik (obrazlilik, emotsional rang-baranglik, diskursiv funksiyalar) va madaniy (tarixiy, ijtimoiy va milliy-psixologik asoslar) xususiyatlari oʻrganiladi. Lingvistik nazariyalar va qiyosiy tahlilga asoslanib, tadqiqot ularning madaniyatlararo muloqot va til oʻrganishdagi muhim rolini taʼkidlaydi. Ish adabiyotlar sharhi, sifatli metodologiya, natijalar va muhokama hamda xulosadan iborat.

**Kalit soʻz va iboralar:** idiomatik iboralar, semantika, stilistika, madaniy xususiyatlar, obrazli maʼno, frazeologik birliklar, madaniyatlararo lingvistika.



## СЕМАНТИЧЕСКИЕ, СТИЛИСТИЧЕСКИЕ И КУЛЬТУРНЫЕ ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКИ ФРАЗЕОЛОГИЧЕСКИХ ЕДИНИЦ

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Идиоматические выражения представляют собой устойчивые словосочетания, значение которых нельзя вывести из буквальных значений их отдельных компонентов. Они обогащают язык образной глубиной, стилистической выразительностью и культурной спецификой. В данной статье исследуются семантические (некомпозиционные и образные значения), стилистические (образность, эмоциональная окраска, дискурсивные функции) и культурные (исторические, социальные и национально-психологические основы) характеристики идиом. Опираясь на лингвистические теории и сравнительный анализ, исследование подчеркивает их важную роль в межкультурной коммуникации и изучении языков. Работа включает обзор литературы, качественную методологию, результаты с обсуждением и заключение.

**Ключевые слова:** идиоматические выражения, семантика, стилистика, культурные характеристики, образное значение, фразеологические единицы, межкультурная лингвистика.


### INTRODUCTION



Language serves as a carrier of culture, history, and collective cognition. Idiomatic expressions (also known as idioms or phraseological units) are among the most vivid manifestations of this. They are stable word combinations with holistic meanings that often differ significantly from the sum of their parts. For example, English “kick the bucket” means “to die,” having no direct connection to literal kicking or buckets [3]. Semantically, idioms are characterized by non-compositionality and semantic opacity. Stylistically, they add imagery, emotionality, and conciseness. Culturally, they embed national traditions, historical events, and psychological traits. This article examines these three interconnected dimensions and argues that idioms are indispensable for authentic communication and intercultural competence. In the age of globalization, understanding these features helps overcome barriers in translation and language acquisition. The author believes that neglecting the cultural layers of idioms results in superficial language mastery, while their systematic study fosters empathy and cognitive flexibility [1], [4].

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarly research on idioms covers semantics, stylistics, and cultural linguistics. Semantically, idioms are defined by their fixedness, semantic integrity, and figurative nature.



[3], [5]. Lakoff and Johnson's seminal work *Metaphors We Live By* demonstrates how conceptual metaphors underlie many idioms, connecting abstract concepts to concrete bodily experiences [6]. Stylistically, idioms enhance expressiveness by adding color, irony, or euphemism. They play important pragmatic roles in discourse, such as creating vividness, humor, or politeness [7], [8]. In literary texts and everyday speech, they serve as powerful rhetorical devices.

Culturally, idioms act as mirrors of national psychology and history. Wang Ping's study on English and Chinese idioms reveals both universal and culture-specific features. For instance, expressions related to "flattery" draw from unique historical and social contexts [1]. Similar patterns appear in Uzbek and Turkic languages, where phraseological units often reflect local customs, nature, and social relations [9], [10]. Existing literature emphasizes that idioms are not merely linguistic units but cultural artifacts that require deep contextual knowledge [2], [11]. Although significant progress has been made, integrated analyses combining semantic, stylistic, and cultural aspects—especially for non-Indo-European languages—remain limited. This study aims to contribute to filling that gap.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The research adopts a qualitative, descriptive-comparative approach. Data were drawn from major idiom dictionaries (Oxford, Longman), academic corpora, and contrastive examples from English and Uzbek/Turkic languages. Approximately 60 representative idioms were selected across semantic categories (figurative, metaphoric, symbolic, ironic).


Analytical methods included:

- Semantic analysis: evaluation of compositionality and opacity;
- Stylistic-functional analysis: examination of rhetorical effects and discourse roles;
- Cultural-historical tracing: linking origins to traditions and worldview;
- Comparative-contrastive method: juxtaposing English idioms with equivalents in other languages.

The study relies on secondary sources and illustrative examples. This approach ensures depth and allows for interpretive insights while acknowledging limitations such as potential source bias toward European languages [4], [12].

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Semantic Characteristics** Idioms exhibit non-compositionality—the overall meaning cannot be predicted from individual words. Categories include purely figurative ("cut corners" – to do something poorly to save time), metaphoric ("in hot water" – in trouble), symbolic ("cross the Rubicon" – commit to an irreversible decision), and ironic ("as clear as mud" – unclear) [3], [5]. This semantic opacity poses challenges for language learners but provides rich expressive possibilities. The author notes that semantic stability combined with gradual variability (new idioms emerging, old ones evolving) demonstrates language's dynamic adaptation to social changes.



**Stylistic Characteristics** Idioms bring vivid imagery, emotional coloring, and conciseness to speech. They elevate informal registers and literary style while performing evaluative or intensifying functions. Strategic use signals native-like proficiency, though overuse may render speech clichéd [7], [8]. In Uzbek discourse, analogous phraseological units (e.g., “qo‘lini ko‘tarib gapirmoq” – to speak boldly) similarly enhance poetic and conversational expressiveness.


**Cultural Characteristics** Idioms encapsulate a nation’s values, history, and worldview. English “bury the hatchet” traces back to Native American peace rituals, while many Chinese idioms reflect Confucian social hierarchies or agricultural traditions [1]. In Uzbek, expressions like “tuya dumini yerga tekkizmaslik” reflect nomadic heritage. Universal themes (e.g., coldness symbolizing discouragement) coexist with unique cultural specifics [9], [10]. In translation, literal approaches often fail; functional or cultural-adaptive strategies better preserve pragmatic effect. In my opinion, in multicultural settings, idioms strengthen cultural identity but can cause misunderstandings. Therefore, language education should integrate cultural immersion alongside linguistic forms [2], [11]. Comparative analysis shows English idioms frequently draw from seafaring, sports, and biblical sources, whereas Uzbek and Turkic idioms often relate to nomadic life, nature, family relations, and traditional cuisine. This interplay confirms idioms’ role in cognitive linguistics as embodied cultural knowledge.

### CONCLUSION

Idiomatic expressions combine profound semantic opacity, stylistic vividness, and deep cultural embeddedness. Their study reveals language as both a cultural mirror and a cognitive tool. The findings highlight the necessity of integrated teaching methods that emphasize context and cross-cultural comparison. Future research could benefit from more extensive empirical cross-linguistic experiments. Ultimately, mastering idioms improves not only communication skills but also intercultural empathy. The author advocates treating idioms as bridges between cultures and recommends their thoughtful incorporation into language policies and curricula [1], [4].

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