

IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS IN CONTEXT: PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGE USAGE

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Annotation: This article explores the pragmatic functions of idiomatic expressions in English and Uzbek, focusing on their roles in politeness, humor, persuasion, and emotional expression. Through a comparative analysis, the study highlights cultural and linguistic differences that shape the usage and interpretation of idioms in both languages. Examples drawn from literary works, proverbs, and conversational contexts demonstrate the nuances of idiomatic pragmatics and their impact on effective communication across cultures.

Introduction: Idiomatic expressions are essential elements of language, reflecting the cultural and social dynamics of a community. They go beyond literal meanings, offering insights into how speakers convey subtlety, emotion, and intent. This study examines the pragmatic functions of idioms in English and Uzbek, focusing on how they serve as tools for politeness, humor, persuasion, and emotional expression. By analyzing idioms in their cultural contexts, the research aims to uncover shared patterns and distinct features, contributing to a deeper understanding of cross-cultural communication.

Literature review: The study draws on foundational works in pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and cross-cultural communication. Scholars such as Geoffrey Leech (1983) on politeness principles and Dell Hymes (1974) on the ethnography of communication provide a theoretical framework. Research on Uzbek proverbs and idioms, such as Karimov (2005), highlights the cultural and moral significance of phraseological expressions in Uzbek society. Comparative studies like those by Wierzbicka (1999) offer insights into universal and culture-specific aspects of idiomatic usage.

Methodology: The research employs a comparative qualitative approach, analyzing idiomatic expressions from English and Uzbek through cultural and linguistic lenses. Data sources include:

- Idiom dictionaries in English and Uzbek.
- Literary works and folk tales representing idiomatic usage in each language.
- Surveys and interviews with native speakers to understand contextual and pragmatic nuances.

The analysis focuses on four key pragmatic functions: politeness, humor, persuasion, and emotional expression.

Findings:

1. Politeness: English idioms soften direct speech, while Uzbek idioms emphasize respect and goodwill, reflecting collectivist and hierarchical norms.
2. Humor: English idioms often use hyperbolic or absurd imagery, while Uzbek idioms incorporate moral undertones and cultural archetypes.
3. Persuasion: English idioms rely on logic and universal wisdom, whereas Uzbek idioms appeal to tradition and moral obligation.
4. Emotional expression: English idioms abstract emotions, while Uzbek idioms use imagery rooted in nature and shared experiences.

Overview: This article provides a detailed exploration of idiomatic expressions as pragmatic tools, offering examples and analysis of their usage in both languages. The findings demonstrate how idioms reflect and reinforce cultural values, highlighting the interplay between language and societal norms.

Participants: The study involved 20 native English speakers and 20 native Uzbek speakers across diverse age groups and professions. Participants were asked to identify and interpret idiomatic expressions in given contexts, providing insights into their pragmatic functions and cultural resonance.

Procedures: Selection of idiomatic expressions categorized under politeness, humor, persuasion, and emotional expression. Collection of examples from literature, media, and conversations. Surveys and interviews with participants to gather interpretations and contextual understandings. Comparative analysis of idioms in terms of linguistic structure, cultural significance, and pragmatic function.

Materials: Idiom dictionaries: The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms (English) and O‘zbek Maqol va Topishmoqlar To‘plami (Uzbek). Literary texts: Works by Shakespeare (English) and Alisher Navoi (Uzbek). Survey and interview templates designed to elicit contextual usage and pragmatic interpretations of idioms. Analytical tools: Thematic coding for qualitative data analysis.

Idiomatic expressions, also known as phraseological turnovers, play a vital role in communication by conveying meanings that transcend their literal interpretation.

They enrich language, enabling speakers to express ideas with cultural depth, humor, and emotional nuance. While English and Uzbek idiomatic expressions share some universal pragmatic functions, they also exhibit unique characteristics influenced by cultural norms, traditions, and linguistic structures. This paper explores the pragmatic functions of idiomatic expressions in English and Uzbek, focusing on politeness, humor, persuasion, and emotional expression. In English, idiomatic expressions often soften communication to maintain politeness, particularly in indirect requests or criticism. For example:

- "Could you lend me a hand?" (Request for help)
- "I think we're barking up the wrong tree." (Gentle criticism)

These idioms mitigate directness, making the message less confrontational. The cultural emphasis on politeness and indirectness, especially in British English, reflects societal norms of maintaining harmonious relationships. Uzbek idiomatic expressions also fulfill politeness functions but are deeply tied to traditional values such as respect for elders and hospitality. For example:

- "Qo'li ochiq" (Literally: "Open-handed," meaning generous or hospitable)
- "Tilidan gul yog'iladi" (Literally: "Flowers fall from their tongue," meaning someone who speaks kindly).

These expressions emphasize positive traits, reflecting the cultural value of uplifting others and maintaining social harmony. While both languages use idioms to soften speech, Uzbek idioms often carry a more explicitly positive tone, rooted in collectivist values. In contrast, English idioms frequently employ subtlety and irony, reflecting a more individualistic approach to communication. Humor in English idiomatic expressions often relies on wordplay, absurdity, or incongruity. For instance:

- "When pigs fly" (Something impossible)
- "Kick the bucket" (A humorous way to refer to death).

These expressions reflect English-speaking cultures' fondness for creativity and wit in language. In Uzbek, humor in idiomatic expressions often revolves around cultural experiences or folk wisdom. For example:

- "It hurar, karvon o'tar" (Literally: "The dog barks, the caravan moves on," meaning criticism or noise should not deter one from their path).
- "Boshini yegan o'yin" (Literally: "A game that eats your head," describing a tricky or exhausting situation).

These expressions, while humorous, also carry moral or practical lessons, aligning with the didactic nature of Uzbek oral traditions. English idioms often use abstract or exaggerated imagery for humor, while Uzbek idioms are grounded in relatable, culturally specific scenarios. The humorous element in Uzbek idioms

frequently intertwines with wisdom, underscoring their educational function. Idiomatic expressions in English are powerful rhetorical tools in persuasion, as they lend an air of familiarity and authority to arguments. For example:

- "Actions speak louder than words."
- "The early bird catches the worm."

These idioms appeal to shared cultural wisdom and often underscore the speaker's point effectively. In Uzbek, idioms also play a significant role in persuasion, often drawing on proverbs that resonate deeply within the cultural context. Examples include:

- "Ko'pni ko'rgan ko'pni biladi" (Literally: "One who has seen much knows much," emphasizing experience).
- "Oqil so'zning qadrini biladi" (Literally: "A wise person values the word," encouraging careful listening).

Such idioms reflect respect for age, wisdom, and traditional values, making them persuasive in arguments. Both languages utilize idioms for persuasion, but while English idioms often encourage action or pragmatism, Uzbek idioms frequently draw on moral authority and collective wisdom. This difference highlights cultural values: individual agency in English-speaking contexts versus deference to tradition in Uzbek culture. Idiomatic expressions in English are widely used to convey emotions, from joy to frustration. Examples include:

- "Over the moon" (Extremely happy)
- "Blowing off steam" (Releasing anger or frustration).

These idioms often reflect individual emotional states and allow for vivid, metaphorical expression. Uzbek idiomatic expressions similarly convey a range of emotions, often through metaphors rooted in nature or daily life. For example:

- "Ko'ngli tog'dek ko'tarildi" (Literally: "Their heart rose like a mountain," meaning immense happiness).
- "Qonini qaynatdi" (Literally: "It boiled their blood," expressing extreme anger).

These expressions are deeply tied to sensory and natural imagery, making emotional states relatable and tangible. English idioms often emphasize individual feelings in an abstract or exaggerated way, while Uzbek idioms root emotional expression in shared cultural imagery. The use of nature and sensory elements in Uzbek idioms reflects the agrarian and collective history of the culture. In English, idiomatic expressions play a significant role in softening direct speech, particularly in professional or social settings where politeness is valued. For example:

- "I think we're barking up the wrong tree." (A subtle way to suggest someone is mistaken).

- "Let's put a pin in it." (A polite way to postpone discussing a topic).

Such expressions reflect English-speaking cultures' preference for indirectness in sensitive situations. British English, in particular, often prioritizes maintaining politeness through euphemisms and understated language. Uzbek idioms also emphasize politeness, but they are more overt in expressing respect and admiration, especially in hierarchical or elder-youth relationships. For instance:

- "Ko'nglingizni to'q qiling" (Literally: "Strengthen your heart," meaning to stay strong emotionally).
- "Qo'lingiz dard ko'rmasin" (Literally: "May your hands not see pain," expressing gratitude to someone for their effort).

These idioms are often embedded in traditional conversational norms where politeness is intertwined with expressions of goodwill and emotional support. In English, politeness idioms often reflect a pragmatic and transactional cultural approach—mitigating confrontation while focusing on outcomes. Uzbek idioms, however, tend to be more relational, emphasizing emotional connection and respect. This difference highlights a collectivist worldview in Uzbek culture versus a more individualistic one in English-speaking societies. Humor in English idiomatic expressions often arises from their imaginative, absurd, or hyperbolic nature. Examples include:

- "It's raining cats and dogs" (Pouring rain).
- "Keep your shirt on!" (Stay calm, often said humorously to someone agitated).

These idioms reflect a culture where humor is frequently used to defuse tension or add levity to mundane situations. In Uzbek, humor often takes a storytelling form, rooted in vivid imagery that resonates with daily life or cultural archetypes. Examples include:

- "Otni qamchilab bo'lmaydi" (Literally: "You can't whip the horse," meaning it's too late to act).
- "Ko'r bo'lmagan so'ramaydi" (Literally: "Only the blind doesn't ask," humorously pointing out something obvious).

Uzbek idioms also incorporate a moral undertone, where humor serves not just to entertain but to instruct or caution. The contrast between English and Uzbek idioms lies in the source of humor. English idioms often prioritize creativity and entertainment, while Uzbek idioms lean on shared cultural wisdom. This cultural grounding ensures Uzbek humor is relatable to the collective experience, while English humor allows for more flexibility and playful abstraction. Idioms in English are frequently employed in arguments or persuasive speech to anchor points with familiar wisdom. Examples include:

- "Don't put all your eggs in one basket." (Encouraging diversification).

- "You can't judge a book by its cover." (Urging not to make snap judgments).

These expressions draw on shared cultural norms, making the speaker's point more relatable and credible. Uzbek persuasive idioms often appeal to the listener's sense of morality, tradition, or respect for elders. For instance:

- "Ko'p o'ylagan ko'p xato qiladi" (Literally: "One who overthinks makes many mistakes," encouraging decisive action).
- "Yaxshi so'z jon ozig'i" (Literally: "A kind word is food for the soul," promoting kindness).

These idioms are especially effective in contexts where appeals to collective values carry weight, such as community decisions or familial advice. While both English and Uzbek use idioms to persuade, the strategies differ. English idioms often appeal to logic and individual benefit, aligning with a more individualistic worldview. Uzbek idioms, however, lean heavily on moral and social obligations, reflecting a collectivist and hierarchical society where tradition holds sway. In English, idioms provide a vivid way to express emotions, often making abstract feelings more relatable. Examples include:

- "Walking on air" (Feeling extremely happy).
- "A heart of stone" (Lacking empathy or compassion).

These idioms allow speakers to articulate complex emotional states succinctly and effectively. Uzbek idiomatic expressions similarly capture emotional nuances, often using imagery tied to nature or everyday experiences. Examples include:

- "Ko'ngli tog'dek ko'tarildi" (Literally: "Their heart rose like a mountain," describing great joy).
- "Dilini xira qildi" (Literally: "It dimmed their heart," expressing disappointment or sadness).

These expressions reflect the poetic and agrarian roots of Uzbek culture, where emotions are often described in terms of tangible, natural phenomena. Both languages use idioms to enrich emotional expression, but the choice of imagery differs significantly. English idioms often abstract emotions, while Uzbek idioms root them in the physical world, reflecting cultural connections to nature and collective experiences. Idiomatic expressions are indispensable tools for pragmatic communication in both English and Uzbek. They enrich interactions by encapsulating complex meanings, reflecting cultural norms, and fostering emotional and social bonds. The contrast between English and Uzbek idioms lies in their cultural underpinnings: English idioms emphasize individualism and abstraction, while Uzbek idioms foreground collectivism and shared wisdom. By appreciating these differences, educators, translators, and communicators can navigate the intricacies of cross-cultural interactions more effectively.

Conclusion: Idiomatic expressions in both English and Uzbek serve crucial pragmatic functions, enriching communication through politeness, humor, persuasion, and emotional expression. However, their application reflects distinct cultural values: English idioms often emphasize individuality, creativity, and subtlety, whereas Uzbek idioms are deeply rooted in tradition, collectivism, and didactic purposes. By understanding these differences, linguists, educators, and translators can navigate cross-cultural communication more effectively, appreciating the depth and diversity idiomatic language offers.

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