

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Semantic and Stylistic Features of Phraseological Units Denoting Behavior with Negative Verbs

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VOLUME: Vol.06 Issue06 2026

PAGE: 118-122

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Abstract

This article analyzes the semantic and stylistic features of phraseological units expressing negative character traits in the Uzbek language. The study examines the semantic layers of these phraseological units, their role in representing negative aspects of human character, and their function in enhancing expressiveness in speech. Furthermore, the stylistic coloring, evaluative (axiological) characteristics, and contextual usage of these units are illustrated with examples. Based on a linguocultural approach, the article also reveals the national and cultural features of phraseological units denoting negative character traits.

KEY WORDS

Negative character traits, phraseological unit, phraseologism, semantics, stylistic features, expressiveness, evaluative units, linguocultural studies, connotation, stylistics, figurativeness, speech culture.

INTRODUCTION

In modern linguistics, phraseological units are regarded as one of the most complex and multilayered components of the language system. In particular, their semantic and stylistic characteristics, pragmatic functions in discourse, and linguocultural significance constitute some of the most extensively researched areas in contemporary linguistic studies. Phraseological units not only expand the nominative potential of a language but also serve as important linguistic means reflecting national mentality, cultural stereotypes, and systems of social evaluation. The earliest theoretical approaches to phraseology in world linguistics V. Vinogradov, A. Kunin, N. Makkarti, D. Mun ... was developed by scholars such as Charles Bally, Viktor Vinogradov, and Alexander Kunin, who provided an in-depth analysis of the semantic integrity, degree of idiomaticity, and stylistic functions of phraseological units. In subsequent stages, within the frameworks of cognitive linguistics and discourse analysis, phraseological

units began to be studied in relation to human conceptual worldviews and systems of emotional evaluation. In particular, units possessing negative evaluative semantics have attracted considerable scholarly attention as powerful expressive means for representing human character and behavior.

In Uzbek linguistics, a significant scholarly tradition has also been established in the field of phraseology, and substantial research has been conducted in this area by a number of linguists and scholars Sh. Rahmatullayev, B. Yusupov, A. Hojiyev, N. Mahmudov, Sh. Safarov. The works of scholars such as ... have made a significant contribution to this field. These studies have extensively examined the semantic classification, grammatical characteristics, and stylistic potential of phraseological units in the Uzbek language. In recent years, within the framework of the linguocultural approach, the national-cultural content and conceptual foundations of phraseological units have also become the

focus of scholarly analysis.

Nevertheless, the semantic and stylistic features of phraseological units denoting negative character traits in Uzbek, as well as their evaluative (axiological) nature, have not yet been investigated comprehensively. In particular, the pragmatic functions of these units in discourse, their emotional impact, and their role as linguocultural codes require more in-depth analysis. The present article seeks to address this research gap by providing a comprehensive examination of the semantic layers, stylistic characteristics, and cultural-evaluative functions of phraseological units denoting negative behavior and character traits. The study adopts an integrated approach to reveal their linguistic and cultural significance within the Uzbek language system.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a comprehensive linguistic approach to investigate the semantic and stylistic features of phraseological units denoting negative behavior and character traits in the Uzbek language. The methodological framework of the research is based on structural-semantic analysis, descriptive-analytical methods, componential analysis, contextual analysis, and linguocultural interpretation.

First, the research material was selected from explanatory dictionaries of the Uzbek language, phraseological dictionaries, samples of literary texts, and contemporary public discourse. The selected phraseological units were classified according to their semantic characteristics, and their denotative and connotative meanings were identified and distinguished.

Through the method of componential analysis, the semantic elements constituting the internal semantic structure of the phraseological units were determined. Particular attention was paid to identifying the linguistic means through which negative evaluative semes are expressed. Contextual analysis was employed to examine the actual use of these phraseological units in discourse and to reveal their stylistic and functional load.

From a linguocultural perspective, the study explored the role of phraseological units as carriers of national and cultural codes. In this regard, the analysis focused on how phraseological units denoting negative behavior reflect the moral norms, social evaluation stereotypes, and cultural values of the Uzbek people.

In addition, elements of a comparative approach were applied to identify similarities and differences between certain phraseological units and their corresponding universal Turkic and cross-cultural semantic models. Throughout the study, qualitative analysis was adopted as the principal methodological approach, since the investigation of the semantic and stylistic characteristics of phraseological units primarily requires interpretative analysis.

Although phraseology emerged as an independent branch of linguistics in the mid-twentieth century, its origins can be traced back to early lexicographic and stylistic traditions. Initially, phraseological units were recorded within the framework of lexicography as "fixed expressions" or "stable word combinations," while their systematic investigation was subsequently developed in European and Russian linguistic scholarship. The scientific foundation of phraseology in Russian linguistics is closely associated with the works of Viktor Vinogradov, whose studies played a pivotal role in establishing the theoretical principles of phraseological research. His seminal work, *Osnovnye Ponyatiya Russkoy Frazeologii* ("Fundamental Concepts of Russian Phraseology," 1946), provided a classification of phraseological units according to the degree of their semantic integrity. He distinguished three principal types of phraseological units: phraseological combinations, phraseological collocations, and phraseological unities. Vinogradov's approach subsequently served as the theoretical foundation for a wide range of phraseological studies and significantly influenced the development of phraseological theory.

Another prominent scholar in the field is Alexander Kunin, who conducted a systematic study of English phraseology. His research made a substantial contribution to the development of phraseological theory by expanding the understanding of the structural, semantic, and functional properties of phraseological units.

His major work "English Phraseology" (1970) and later, "A Course in English Phraseology" (1986) He analyzes phraseological units from communicative, stylistic, and pragmatic perspectives. Kunin regards phraseological units as stable linguistic formations and particularly emphasizes their expressive function in speech. In English linguistics, the works of Michael McCarthy and Ronald Carter are also of significant importance. Their work *Vocabulary and Language Teaching* (1990s) contributed to the understanding of vocabulary and phraseology in language teaching and discourse analysis,

highlighting the functional and communicative aspects of lexical and phraseological units and their corpus-based studies reveal the frequency of phraseological units in actual language use as well as their contextual functions in real discourse. They interpret phraseological units not only as lexical items but also as discourse phenomena. In cognitive linguistics, the work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, particularly their book *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), laid the foundation for understanding metaphor as a fundamental mechanism of human conceptualization plays a particularly important role. These scholars view language as a system of conceptual metaphors and interpret phraseological units as products of human cognition. This approach makes it possible to relate phraseological units expressing negative character traits to a broader system of conceptual evaluation and axiological interpretation.

In addition, the work of Anna Wierzbicka, *Semantics: Primes and Universals* (1996), contributes to phraseological semantic analysis by identifying universal semantic primitives. She examines phraseological units as culturally and semantically structured formations.

In the field of linguocultural studies, the work of Viktor Telia, *Russian Phraseology: Semantic, Pragmatic and Linguocultural Aspects* (1996), occupies a significant place this work is highly significant. It interprets phraseological units as "carriers of cultural codes," demonstrating how they reflect national mentality and cultural worldview.

In Uzbek linguistics, the formation of a scientific school in phraseology is associated with the works of Shavkat Rahmatullayev. This development is directly associated with the name of Shavkat Rahmatullayev. His fundamental work *O'zbek frazeologiyasining ba'zi masalalari* (1966), along with his subsequent studies, laid the foundation for the systematization of Uzbek phraseological units. He provided a semantic classification of phraseological units and scientifically substantiated their status as lexical units.

The lexicographical works of Alisher Hojiyev, particularly *O'zbek tili izohli lug'ati*, played an important role in shaping the dictionary-based interpretation of phraseological units. He also developed criteria for the inclusion of phraseological units in dictionaries.

In the research of Baxtiyor Yusupov, especially in studies such as "Stylistic Features of Phraseological Units in the Uzbek Language," phraseological units are analyzed in terms of their

expressive and emotional functions.

The linguocultural studies of Nazar Mahmudov and Shahlo Safarov, including works such as "Language and Culture" and "Foundations of Cognitive Linguistics," examine phraseological units in relation to national concepts. They interpret phraseological units as models of national thinking.

Recent studies in Uzbek linguistics have increasingly focused on the discourse-pragmatic and cognitive aspects of phraseological units. In particular, phraseological units expressing negative evaluative meanings are considered a pressing scientific issue due to their connection with social stereotypes, moral norms, and cultural values.

In the course of this research, phraseological units expressing negative behavior in Uzbek were semantically classified into several main groups. The internal structure and stylistic functions of each group were identified, and the following results were obtained:

1. Phraseological units expressing behavioral attitudes toward others:

Aravani quruq olib qochmoq (a liar), qovog'idan qor yog'adigan odam (bad-tempered person), og'zining tanobi qochmoq (boastful person), birga o'nni qo'shib gapirmoq (liar), ilonning yog'ini yalagan (cunning person), qishda qor so'rasa bermaydigan (stingy person), berdisini aytguncha urib o'ldiradigan (impulsive person), shaytonga dars bermoq (cunning person), iblis bilan til biriktirmoq (deceitful person), terisi qalin (shameless/rude person), betiga eshak terisini qoplamoq (shameless person).

Quyidagi qismni ilmiy-adekvat inglizcha tarjima qilib berdim:

2. Phraseological units expressing laziness and indifference:

The expressions "qo'l qovushtirib o'tirish" (to sit idle with folded hands), "barmog'ini qimirlatmaslik" (not to lift a finger), "ishdan qochmoq" (to avoid work), "qo'lini sovuq suvga urmaslik" (not to do any work at all), and "issiq o'rnini sovutmaslik" (to remain inactive and unwilling to leave one's comfort zone) denote passive behavioral attitudes.

3. Phraseological units expressing betrayal and disloyalty:

Expressions such as "so'zida turmaslik" (to break one's promise), "do'stni sotmoq" (to betray a friend), and "orqasidan urmoq" (to stab someone in the back) represent one of the most axiologically loaded groups among negative behavioral phraseological units. These expressions reflect the violation of

interpersonal trust, the breakdown of moral norms, and the erosion of social relations.

4. Phraseological units expressing attitudes toward objects and events:

Expressions such as “dunyoni suv bossa to’pigi’iga chiqmaydigan” (indifferent even in extreme situations), “yeb turib maraydigan” (greedy/gluttonous), “alifni ko’rsa kaltak deydigan” (illiterate/ignorant), “cholni ko’rsa buvam deydigan” (naïve/simple-minded), “ammamning buzog’i” (foolish/simpleton), “o’pqqonday yutadigan” (extremely greedy) express evaluative attitudes toward objects, events, and cognitive perception.

5. Phraseological units expressing self-directed behavior and self-attitude:

Expressions such as “dimog’idan qurt yog’iladigan” (selfish), “burni ko’tarilgan” (arrogant), “ko’zini yog’ bosgan” (conceited), “oyog’i yerdan uzilgan” (overconfident/arrogant), “oyog’ini uchida ko’rsatmoq” (to act arrogantly), “o’zini yo’qotib qo’ymoq” (to become conceited), and “o’zidan ketmoq” (to become overly proud) denote various forms of self-centered and arrogant behavior.

RESULTS

Research results show that phraseological units expressing negative behavior in Uzbek occupy an important place not only in the semantic system of the language but also in national thinking and social consciousness. These units linguistically encode socially accepted moral norms, evaluative criteria, and stereotypes.

Analysis further indicates that such phraseological units are predominantly based on metaphorical imagery, allowing complex character traits to be conveyed in a concise and expressive form. For instance, expressions such as “tili bir quloq” and “og’zing qani desa, qulog’ini ko’rsatadigan” intensify emotional expression and enhance the expressiveness of speech.

From a linguocultural perspective, these phraseological units are directly linked to the ethical values of Uzbek culture. In particular, expressions such as “ilonning yog’ini yalagan” and “pixini yorgan” are evaluated as highly negative traits within society, reflecting the high value placed on loyalty, honesty, and trust in Uzbek cultural tradition.

Moreover, in literary texts, phraseological units serve as

important tools for character construction. Through their use, authors vividly and effectively express the inner world, psychological state, and social position of literary characters.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the present study, the following conclusions can be drawn: Phraseological units expressing negative behavior and character traits constitute an important semantic and stylistic layer of the Uzbek language. These phraseological units can be semantically classified into several groups, each of which reflects a specific negative aspect of human character. In discourse, they perform expressive, evaluative, and image-creating functions, thereby enhancing the overall expressiveness of speech.

From a linguocultural perspective, these units reflect national mentality, moral values, and social stereotypes. Phraseological units expressing negative behavior are also significant stylistic devices in literary texts, where they contribute to the intensification of dramatic effect and conflict development.

In general, a comprehensive study of negatively evaluative phraseological units contributes to the further development of phraseology, stylistics, and linguoculturology within Uzbek linguistics. In literary discourse, such phraseological units are frequently used as means of intensifying conflict and sharply revealing character traits. Units expressing negative behavior are evaluated as some of the most serious moral shortcomings within the national ethical code, and they are often expressed not directly but in contextual and metaphorical forms. In literary texts, these expressions enhance dramatic tension, conflict, and psychological depth.

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