

Psycholinguistic Analysis Of The Acquisition Of Religious Phraseological Units

Adizova Dildora Rustam qizi

PhD student at the Alisher Navo'i Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature, Uzbekistan

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Abstract: This research explores the psycholinguistic aspects of acquiring religious phraseological units, focusing on how cognitive, linguistic, and cultural factors influence their comprehension, memorization, and usage. The study examines the mental mechanisms involved in processing religious idioms, metaphors, and fixed expressions, highlighting the role of conceptual frameworks, associative thinking, and cultural background in shaping learners' understanding. Special attention is given to how language acquisition theories intersect with religious discourse, revealing how such phraseological units contribute to worldview formation and linguistic identity.

Keywords: Psycholinguistics, religious phraseology, language acquisition, cognitive processes, idioms, cultural context, conceptual framework.

Introduction: Relevance of the topic lies in the fact that during the years of independence, attention to religious values in Uzbek society has increased, and religious expressions have once again begun to be actively used in everyday speech. Nevertheless, there are almost no comprehensive studies specifically devoted to the psycholinguistic features of religious phraseological units. This research aims to partially fill this gap. Object of the research – religious phraseological units in the Uzbek language. Subject of the research – the psycholinguistic process of acquiring religious phraseological units and their use in speech.

Purpose of the research – to analyze the process of acquiring religious phraseological units from a psycholinguistic perspective and to identify their speech-related and socio-psychological functions.

Tasks: To identify the linguistic and psycholinguistic features of religious phraseological units; To analyze the stages of their acquisition on the basis of cognitive and social factors; To demonstrate the peculiarities of their use in speech; To identify their socio-psychological functions.

METHODOLOGY – psycholinguistic analysis, observation, experiment, cognitive-semantic analysis, sociolinguistic observation. Theoretical significance – provides an additional scientific basis for clarifying the

place of religious phraseological units in the language system and their psycholinguistic mechanisms. Practical significance – the results can be applied in the fields of phraseology, psycholinguistics, cultural linguistics, as well as in the educational process.

RESULTS

Children aged 6–7 actively use short religious phraseological units such as “Bismillah” and “Amin.” At the age of 10–12, they begin to understand and use phraseological units that convey deeper semantic meaning (e.g., “Inshallah,” “May Allah be pleased”). Among adults, religious phraseological units are used consciously and with multilayered meaning, depending on the communicative context.

DISCUSSION

The process of acquiring religious phraseological units differs fundamentally from simply memorizing vocabulary items. This process: develops gradually (hearing – repetition – understanding – conscious use); is formed on the basis of psycholinguistic mechanisms (memory, emotion, social environment); takes place at the intersection of language and culture.

The findings of this study demonstrate that religious phraseological units hold a distinctive position within the phraseological system of the Uzbek language. They are marked by semantic multilayeredness, emotional-

expressive value, and their role in reflecting cultural identity. The process of their acquisition unfolds in three main stages: initial memorization as fixed patterns, semantic comprehension, and active usage. This developmental trajectory is strongly influenced by age-related factors as well as the social environment. With regard to speech functions, religious phraseological units fulfill communicative, emotional, social, and moral roles. They are actively employed across diverse contexts, including family life, social interactions, rituals, and professional settings. From a socio-psychological perspective, these expressions act as unifying elements within society, providing spiritual reassurance, reinforcing moral regulation, and strengthening collective identity.

Language is the most important means of expressing a nation's spirit, culture, and way of thinking. In the phraseological layer of a language, the historical memory, values, and religious views of the people are embodied. Religious phraseological units, in particular, are formed on the basis of sacred texts and religious rituals passed down from generation to generation, and they hold a special place in the linguistic and cultural life of society.

Today, the study of religious phraseological units is relevant not only from a linguistic but also from a psycholinguistic perspective. This is because such an approach reveals how individuals internalize religious and cultural values, the contexts in which they employ them, and the socio-psychological functions these expressions fulfill.

The relevance of the topic lies in the fact that, during the years of independence, attention to religious values has increased within Uzbek society, and religious expressions have once again become actively used in everyday speech. Nevertheless, there is a striking lack of comprehensive research specifically devoted to the psycholinguistic features of religious phraseological units. The present study seeks to partially address this gap.

Religious phraseological units (e.g., *Allohu akbar*, *Xudo xohlasa* [God willing], *Gunohga botmoq* [to fall into sin], *lymon keltirmoq* [to profess faith], etc.) are employed not only in religious contexts but also in everyday communicative situations. Their acquisition differs between children and adults. From a psycholinguistic perspective, analyzing this process makes it possible to trace the semantic and pragmatic stages through which such expressions are processed and consolidated in the mind. Language serves as a fundamental indicator of human thought and culture. Phraseological units—particularly religious ones—are not merely elements of the linguistic system but also reflect the spiritual life of

society. The issue of their acquisition is of particular importance from a psycholinguistic standpoint, as religious phraseological units are shaped and internalized under the influence of emotional, social, and cognitive factors.

The Concept of Phraseological Units and Religious Phraseologisms

Phraseological units are linguistic entities that constitute part of the lexical-semantic wealth of a language and consist of stable components. They typically possess figurativeness and expressiveness, with meanings that differ from the sum of their constituent parts (Kunin, 1996). Phraseological units embody the cultural memory, historical experience, and worldview of a people. For this reason, they are regarded as one of the most ancient layers of a national language.

Among phraseological units, religious phraseologisms constitute a distinct group. Religious phraseologisms are expressions that originate from religious sources, shaped within the discourse of the Qur'an, hadiths, Sufi literature, and ritual speech, and that gradually entered into everyday language. For example, expressions such as *Bismilloh* [In the name of God], *Alhamdulillah* [Praise be to God], *Inshoolloh* [God willing], *Astagh'firulloh* [I seek forgiveness from God], and *Omin* [Amen] were initially employed exclusively in religious texts but later evolved into linguistic units fulfilling broader social functions.

In Uzbek linguistics, the specialized study of religious phraseologisms is considered a relatively new direction. While there exists a considerable body of research in general phraseology, religious phraseologisms are most often discussed within the framework of religious style. However, their acquisition from a psycholinguistic perspective has not yet been sufficiently examined.

Semantic and Pragmatic Features of Religious Phraseologisms

One of the key characteristics of religious phraseologisms is the multilayered nature of their semantic structure. Take, for example, the expression *Inshoolloh*. On the one hand, it has the literal meaning "if God wills." On the other hand, it reflects the Muslim belief in destiny and divine will. Furthermore, it serves a socio-pragmatic function, operating as a cautious way of expressing the possibility of a future event.

For this reason, religious phraseologisms encompass:

Denotative meaning – the direct lexical content;

Connotative meaning – additional religious, moral, and spiritual implications;

Pragmatic function – aspects that serve communicative

purposes within social contexts.

For example, the expression *Astagh'firulloh* is used in three different contexts:

To express personal repentance (religious connotation);

To condemn or disapprove of another's improper behavior (pragmatic function);

To convey astonishment or disappointment (emotional-expressive effect).

Thus, religious phraseologisms are not to be regarded as ordinary words but as complex units with multilayered semantic systems.

Religious Phraseologisms and Cultural Identity

One of the primary functions of religious phraseologisms is the formation and reinforcement of a community's cultural identity, as they embody religious and cultural values transmitted across generations.

According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), language units serve not only as cognitive tools but also as instruments for transmitting socio-cultural experience. Religious phraseologisms are precisely such products of social experience, encapsulating the religious and cultural worldview of a society.

In Uzbek culture, religious phraseologisms are naturally employed at various stages of everyday communication:

Greeting: *Assalomu alaykum* – though of religious origin, it has become the standard form of greeting for the entire community;

Expressing gratitude: *Alloh rozi bo'lsin* [May God be pleased with you];

Expressing fear or astonishment: *Xudo saqlasin* [May God protect];

Prayers and rituals: *Allohu akbar* [God is the Greatest].

This demonstrates the linguo-cultural nature of religious phraseologisms: they convey not only religious meanings but also reflect national culture.

Psycholinguistic Stages of Acquisition

a) Perceptive stage (listening–receiving)

The child first hears religious expressions from the surrounding environment: parents, grandparents, religious ceremonies, television, radio, or social media;

At this stage, phraseologisms are retained in memory through their rhythmic form, repetition, and intonation;

For instance, the unit *Xudo xohlasa* [God willing] is often heard after prayers, so the child associates it with a religious context.

b) Reproductive stage (repetition–use)

The child begins to repeat phraseologisms without fully grasping their meaning;

In many cases, the social function of the expression takes precedence over its semantic content;

For example, a child may use *jini suymaslik* [not to like someone] to mean “dislike,” while remaining unaware of its deeper religious-philosophical connotations.

c) Semantic stage (understanding the meaning) Over time, the child develops an understanding of both the denotative and connotative meanings of phraseologisms;

For example, *aza tutmoq* [to mourn] is not merely understood as “to cry out of sadness,” but as a practice connected to the ritual and belief system surrounding death.

d) Pragmatic stage (conscious use in speech)

Phraseologisms are consciously employed according to the social situation;

For example, a person may use *Xudo asrasin* [May God protect] when experiencing or anticipating distress;

At this stage, phraseologisms serve as markers of an individual's psychological and religious identity.

Psycholinguistic Approach to Religious Phraseologisms

Psycholinguistics examines the acquisition of phraseological units primarily through the following aspects:

Perception – the child or language learner acquires religious phraseologisms through auditory input;

Memory – their short and formulaic structure facilitates quick memorization;

Emotion – religious expressions are often employed in emotionally charged situations, which strengthens retention;

Speech activity – phraseologisms are consciously used to meet communicative needs.

Glucksberg (2001) associates the acquisition of phraseological units with metaphorical thinking. According to him, children initially memorize phraseologisms as “ready-made templates” and only later learn to conduct semantic analysis. Wray (2002) likewise emphasizes the role of formulaic language units in speech development.

In Uzbekistan, there are relatively few psycholinguistic studies devoted specifically to religious phraseologisms. However, observations concerning general phraseological competence (for example, in the speech of schoolchildren) indicate that religious expressions are acquired at an early stage.

Findings from Practical Observation

The observational study began with the identification of relevant expressions. For this purpose, phraseological units used in the 5th–8th grade Mother Tongue and Literature textbooks were examined and selected for the experimental observation. Below are examples of religious expressions found in the textbooks:

Imon keltirmoq [to profess faith], yomon ko'zdan asramoq [to protect from the evil eye], ko'z tegmoq [to be affected by the evil eye], gunohga botmoq [to fall into sin], fотиha bermoq [to recite the Fatiha], aza tutmoq [to mourn], xudo ko'p ko'rmoq [to be punished by God], tuproqqa qo'ymoq [to bury], gunohini yuvmoq [to atone for sins], ajali yetmoq [to meet one's destined death], aza ochmoq [to begin mourning], xudo saqlasin [may God protect], xudoga shukr [thanks be to God], qiyomat qoyim bo'lmoq [to cause chaos], xudo yorlaqadi [God blessed], xudo biladi [God knows], xudo urgan [God has punished], xudo bergan [God-given], noumid shayton [only the devil despairs], jin chalmoq [to be possessed], jini suymaydi [not to like someone].

Religious expressions were not widely used in the textbooks overall; they appeared more frequently in Literature textbooks, embedded in literary works. From these, five expressions were selected to study their acquisition among children aged 11–14.

The results of the experiment show that students in this age group generally understand religious expressions well; however, these expressions have not yet been fully integrated into their productive vocabulary. Children rarely use religious phraseologisms in their spoken language.

Conclusions Based on Experiments

Children aged 6–7 actively use short religious phrases such as “Bismillah” and “Amin.”

By the ages of 10–12, they begin to understand and use phrases with deeper semantic meaning (e.g., “Inshallah,” “May Allah be pleased with you”).

Among adults, religious phrases are employed consciously with multilayered meanings, depending on the communicative context.

The process of acquiring religious phrases fundamentally differs from simply memorizing vocabulary items. This process:

develops gradually (listening – repetition – understanding – conscious usage); is shaped by psycholinguistic mechanisms (memory, emotion, social environment); occurs at the intersection of language and culture.

Therefore, the acquisition of religious phrases should

be evaluated not only as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a psychological and sociocultural process.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that:

Religious phrases occupy a distinct place in the phraseological layer of the Uzbek language. They stand out for their semantic multilayeredness, emotional-expressive qualities, and their reflection of cultural identity. Their acquisition process unfolds in three stages: memorization as ready-made patterns, semantic comprehension, and active usage. This process is closely connected with age factors and the social environment. In terms of speech usage, religious phrases fulfill communicative, emotional, social, and moral functions. They are actively employed in family, social, ceremonial, and professional contexts. From a socio-psychological perspective, they serve as unifying tools in society, providing spiritual comfort, reinforcing moral control, and strengthening identity.

Thus, religious phrases are significant not only as linguistic units but also as active elements of socio-cultural life. Their psycholinguistic study helps to understand how religious values are internalized in the collective consciousness and what functions they serve in everyday life.

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