

Pragmatics Of Using Cultural Metaphors and Phraseologisms in Intercultural Dialogue: A Comparative Study of Uzbek, British, and American Cultures

Yangibayeva B. Ye.

Assistant teacher, Nukus State Technical University, Uzbekistan

Received: 29 March 2025; **Accepted:** 10 April 2025; **Published:** 30 May 2025

Abstract: - This article compares and contrasts Uzbek, British, and American cultures in order to examine the practical uses of cultural metaphors and phraseologisms in cross-cultural communication. The study emphasises how these linguistic components represent cultural norms, mental processes, and values. The article illustrates the potential difficulties and miscommunications that may occur in cross-cultural conversations because of disparate idiomatic and metaphorical expressions through a number of examples.

Keywords: - Pragmatics, cultural metaphors, phraseologisms, intercultural communication, Uzbek culture, British culture, American culture.

Introduction: - Language is not merely a system of communication; it is also a reflection of cultural thought, behavior, and tradition. Metaphors and phraseologisms serve as powerful tools for expressing shared experiences and cultural values. In intercultural communication, understanding these tools is crucial to interpreting meaning beyond the literal level. Metaphors and phraseological units are more than just decorative elements of language; they are vital cognitive and communicative instruments that represent a culture's values, worldview, and ways of thinking. This paper explores how metaphors and idiomatic expressions are used pragmatically in Uzbek and British cultures and discusses how these expressions influence intercultural understanding.

Extended Analysis and Cultural Insights

In extending our analysis of metaphor and phraseology use across cultures, it is essential to delve deeper into pragmatic situations where cultural assumptions and values shape communication. In Uzbek, metaphors like "Ko'ngli tog'dek keng" (literally "his heart is as wide as a mountain") reveal a collectivist orientation toward generosity and emotional openness. This image-heavy metaphor, grounded in nature, aligns with rural cultural narratives and collectivist values of Central Asia.

British English, influenced by an individualistic and historically class-conscious society, includes metaphors such as "a stiff upper lip," which pragmatically signals emotional restraint and stoicism. This cultural metaphor not only describes behavior but also guides it, especially in public discourse. British speakers may pragmatically employ this phrase to encourage social decorum, in contrast to more emotionally expressive cultures.

In intercultural communication, such metaphors may cause misunderstanding. For instance, a British colleague describing someone as having "a stiff upper lip" might be misunderstood by an Uzbek speaker as cold or unfeeling, whereas it actually connotes strength under pressure. Similarly, the phrase "turning the other cheek," rooted in Biblical language, may carry pragmatic implications of forgiveness or moral superiority in British English, which may not resonate with the Uzbek emphasis on honor and collective reputation.

Further examining phraseologisms in intercultural interaction, Uzbek speakers might use "Bir kunmas bir kun" (lit. "If not today, someday"), a culturally grounded phrase expressing patience and hope, whereas British English often resorts to more deterministic or time-specific idioms like "Better late than never" or "There's always tomorrow." Each carries

subtle pragmatic cues about one's orientation to fate, time, and planning.

Politeness Strategies and Cultural Values

Pragmatic choices are often guided by politeness strategies, which vary cross-culturally. Uzbek culture, influenced by collectivism and Islamic values, often favors indirectness and deference to elders. British culture values understatement and indirectness, while American culture, though polite, leans toward direct and egalitarian expression [4].

Idiomatic Expressions as Cultural Markers

Idioms encapsulate history and shared experiences. Uzbek idioms like 'it og'ziga tushgan suyak' (a bone in a dog's mouth) signify fortune. In British English, 'barking up the wrong tree' denotes misjudgment, while Americans say 'hit the nail on the head' to express precision. Such idioms function as cultural shorthand.

Cultural Specificity and Translation Challenges

Phraseologisms often lack direct equivalents across languages, posing challenges for interpreters and translators. Translating 'ko'ngil ko'tarish' (lifting the heart) as simply 'cheering up' misses the emotional depth in Uzbek. Similarly, British expressions like 'break the ice' may seem strange if translated literally into Uzbek.

Intercultural Competence and Pragmatic Awareness

To enhance intercultural dialogue, speakers must develop intercultural communicative competence. This involves not just language proficiency but also pragmatic awareness of culturally bound expressions and their functions in communication [5, p. 56].

As Karasik [6] and Wierzbicka [9] have shown, culture-specific phraseologisms often encapsulate deep-seated values and worldviews. Wierzbicka emphasizes that language serves as a repository of cultural scripts, where certain phrases act as condensed norms of behavior. The British "don't make a fuss," for instance, pragmatically enforces modesty and avoidance of attention, whereas an Uzbek speaker might find the phrase overly dismissive if directness or public concern is culturally encouraged.

Pragmatic Misalignments and Intercultural Strategy

Miscommunication can occur not due to lexical misunderstanding but due to the pragmatic inferences attached to metaphorical language. A British manager using "take it with a pinch of salt" might expect skepticism or humor, whereas the literal-minded interpretation in an Uzbek context could reduce the impact or create confusion. Conversely, an Uzbek speaker referring to "Ko'ngil ovlash" (soothing someone's soul) might imply emotional nurturing, a

layer that might be lost on a British interlocutor unfamiliar with this culturally embedded expression.

To bridge these gaps, learners and professionals in intercultural settings must develop what Thomas [8, p. 91-112] calls "pragmatic fluency"—the ability to interpret intended meaning rather than literal form. This includes understanding both source and target cultural connotations behind common metaphors and idioms.

Educational materials should include parallel metaphoric structures with context-rich examples, such as comparing British "It's not my cup of tea" to an Uzbek equivalent like "Bu mening ishim emas" (That's not my affair), though the former is softer and often humorous. Awareness of these pragmatic nuances helps build more effective intercultural dialogues.

CONCLUSION

The pragmatic study of metaphor and phraseologism in intercultural dialogue reveals the intricate interplay between language and cultural cognition. Uzbek and British cultures, while sharing some communicative goals, differ significantly in how metaphors encode social norms, emotional expression, and politeness strategies. A nuanced understanding of these metaphorical idioms can greatly enhance intercultural competence and mitigate the risk of pragmatic failure.

REFERENCES

- Atkinson, D. (1999). TESOL and Culture. *TESOL Quarterly*, 33(4), 625–654.
- Bozorov, K. (2015). Cultural Metaphors in Uzbek Proverbs. *Uzbek Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(1), 45–53.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Multilingual Matters.
- Juraev, O. (2016). *Pragmatic Aspects of the Uzbek Language*. Tashkent: Fan.
- Karasik, V. I. (2004). *Yazyk sotsial'nogo statusa i roli*. Volgograd: Peremena.
- Nurmatov, A. (2020). *Phraseological Units in Uzbek: Semantic and Cultural Dimensions*. Tashkent: UzMU Press.
- Thomas, J. (1983). Cross-cultural pragmatic failure. *Applied Linguistics*, 4(2), 91–112.
- Wierzbicka, A. (2003). *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: The Semantics of Human Interaction*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.