

THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PHRASEO-SEMANTIC GROUPS OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS EXPRESSING HUMAN INTELLECTUAL ABILITIES

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Abstract. This article explores phraseological units (PUs) in English, Russian, and Uzbek, focusing on how they express cultural and linguistic dimensions of intelligence, such as wisdom, creativity, and cleverness. By analyzing and comparing phraseo-semantic groups, we reveal how different cultures articulate concepts of intelligence through unique expressions and metaphorical language. The findings highlight both shared themes and distinct cultural perspectives on intellectual qualities.

Keywords: Phraseology, phraseological units, intelligence, wisdom, creativity, cleverness, comparative analysis.

Introduction

Phraseology, the study of phraseological units (PUs) or fixed expressions, is essential in understanding the cultural and linguistic dimensions of language. PUs carry cultural connotations and often reveal underlying values and perceptions within a language. Intellectual abilities, such as wisdom, creativity, and cleverness, are commonly expressed through these PUs, offering insights into how societies perceive intelligence. This study aims to analyze and compare phraseo-semantic groups of PUs that express human intellectual abilities in English, Russian, and Uzbek. By examining these phrases, we can better understand how various cultures articulate concepts of intelligence and the underlying values they associate with intellectual qualities.

Phraseological units, as defined by Cowie [6, pp. 20-30], are fixed expressions that often carry idiomatic or metaphorical meanings, making them unique to each language. They can be idioms, collocations, or proverbs, each with varying degrees of semantic and syntactic fixedness [7, pp. 5-15; 10, pp. 90-110].

Phraseo-semantic grouping refers to organizing PUs based on thematic or conceptual categories. Vinogradov [4] introduced this grouping approach, which has since been used to analyze PUs in specific semantic fields. For intellectual abilities, phraseo-semantic groups may include “wisdom,” “creativity,” and “cleverness” [1, p. 45-50; 2, 23-25].

Research has examined PUs that reflect intellectual qualities across languages. For example, Wierzbicka [12] studied cultural scripts, noting that concepts like wisdom and intelligence are culturally specific and linguistically encoded. Studies have found that English frequently uses phrases related to sharpness and brightness, Russian favors wisdom-related metaphors involving animals, and Uzbek often employs practical or experiential metaphors [11, pp. 120-130; 8, pp. 78-82].

Comparative phraseology studies have highlighted differences and similarities across languages. Stepanov [5, pp. 22-28] and Arutyunova [3, pp. 15-20] investigated metaphor and cultural symbolism in phraseology, while Maslova [9] noted the impact of societal values on language use, making comparative analysis an insightful method for understanding PUs related to intellectual abilities.

Result and Discussion

Here’s we made an attempt for structural analysis and discussion based on the theories studied, using *grouping criteria*, *semantic categorization*, and *a comparative analysis* for English, Russian, and Uzbek phraseological units of intellectual qualities.

1. We used following grouping criteria for intellectual qualities

- *Wisdom*: Expressions that denote knowledge, insight, or deep understanding.
- *Creativity*: Phrases that suggest unconventional or innovative thinking.
- *Cleverness/Quick-Wittedness*: Phrases implying sharpness, quick problem-solving abilities, or perceptiveness.

2. And we classified the gathered phraseological units denoting human intellectual abilities according following semantic categorization

Intellectual Quality	English Examples	Russian Examples	Uzbek Examples
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Wisdom	“Wise beyond their years”	“Мудрая сова” (Wise owl)	“Oqil odam” (wise person)
Creativity	“Think outside the box”	“Находчивый ум” (Inventive mind)	“Aqli charxlangan” (mind is sharpened)
Cleverness/Quick-Wittedness	“Sharp as a tack”	“Семь пядей во лбу” (seven spans on forehead)	“Keskin fikrli” (sharp-thinking)
Gifted Intelligence	“Bright spark”	“Светлая голова” (bright head)	“Falonchining ko’zi ochiq” (eyes are open)

3. In comparative analysis the semantic nuances of each group were compared across languages, with attention to metaphors and cultural symbolism as:

- *Wisdom:*

English phrases like "Wise beyond their years" capture wisdom associated with maturity and life experience. This mirrors the Russian "Мудрая сова" (Wise owl), a metaphor for sagacious insight, particularly through age or experience. Uzbek's “Oqil odam” (wise person) is used similarly, often to convey deep cultural respect for someone with life experience and knowledge, highlighting how wisdom is valued across cultures. However, Uzbek also includes “Aql yog’i bor” (one has oil of wisdom), using a culinary metaphor implying seasoned knowledge, distinct from the animal symbolism in Russian.

- *Creativity:*

English’s “Think outside the box” highlights a valued concept in Western cultures: originality and non-conformity. Russian uses “Находчивый ум” (Inventive mind) with a similar connotation but emphasizes inventiveness rather than out-of-box thinking. Uzbek’s “Aqli charxlangan” (mind is sharpened) suggests mental honing, associating creativity with refinement, implying creativity achieved through intellectual effort and focus.

- *Cleverness/Quick-Wittedness:*

English's "Sharp as a tack" and Uzbek's "Keskin fikrli" (sharp-thinking) both use sharpness as a metaphor for mental acuity. Russian's "Семь пядей во лбу" (seven spans on the forehead) captures cleverness in an idiomatic manner unique to Russian culture. This phrase implies an extraordinary intelligence, denoting the esteemed value placed on cleverness in Russian-speaking societies.

- *Gifted Intelligence:*

English uses "Bright spark," symbolizing light as a metaphor for intellectual brightness. Russian's "Светлая голова" (bright head) shares this metaphor of light, denoting intelligence as a beacon of mental capacity. Uzbek's "Falonchining ko'zi ochiq" (eyes are open) suggests a culturally unique approach by associating intelligence with perception or awareness, which, while less direct, emphasizes quick understanding and alertness.

In contextual usage the situational and cultural contexts in which the above mentioned phraseological units are used and were analyzed. English expressions tend to be direct and associated with modern Western values like creativity and quick-wittedness, often used in both professional and casual contexts. Russian expressions are more elaborate and culturally rooted in tradition, often used to show admiration for intelligence in academic, social, or professional settings. Uzbek expressions reflect cultural ties to wisdom and perception, often used in familial or social settings to convey respect for insight and practical intelligence.

4. In examining the semantic patterns of phraseological units across English, Russian, and Uzbek, we observe both common themes and unique cultural expressions that illuminate how each language conceptualizes intelligence.

Common Themes:

Light, sharpness, and animal symbols, such as the "wise owl," emerge as universal metaphors for intelligence in all three languages. This prevalence suggests a shared conceptual framework for representing intellectual qualities, indicating that these themes resonate across cultures as fundamental associations with intelligence.

Unique Cultural Expressions:

Delving into the unique cultural expressions reveals significant distinctions among the languages. Russian phrases often favor symbolic and traditional imagery, exemplified by the expression “seven spans on the forehead,” which conveys cleverness through culturally rich metaphorical language. In contrast, the Uzbek phrase “Aql yog'i bor,” meaning "oil of wisdom," uniquely connects mental insight to valued resources, highlighting the cultural importance placed on experiential and practical knowledge. This metaphor illustrates how specific linguistic expressions can reflect a society's values regarding intelligence and wisdom.

The influence of cultural context on the expression of intellectual qualities is profound and multifaceted. Each language embodies distinct cultural values and attitudes toward intelligence.

English culture emphasizes creativity and quick thinking, traits that are frequently celebrated and associated with individual independence. This focus is directly expressed in English idioms that prioritize inventive thought. In contrast, Russian idioms reveal a deep reverence for wisdom and ingenuity, often articulated through symbolic language that reflects the culture's appreciation for tradition and intellectual depth. Meanwhile, Uzbek expressions highlight perceptive wisdom and practical intelligence, which are esteemed qualities in both social and familial contexts. This emphasis on experience and situational awareness underscores the importance of wisdom as it relates to everyday life in Uzbek culture.

This comparison highlights how languages use metaphor, symbol, and culturally rooted phrases to encapsulate complex intellectual qualities. These variations not only enhance linguistic diversity but also reflect the rich tapestry of cultural values surrounding intelligence and wisdom.

The analysis reveals both universal and culture-specific elements in the expression of intellectual qualities across English, Russian, and Uzbek. Common themes, such as light, sharpness, and animal imagery, are used across all three languages to denote wisdom, creativity, and cleverness. For instance, both English and Russian use brightness metaphors ("bright spark" and "Светлая голова") to symbolize intelligence. Uzbek expressions uniquely incorporate elements like "oil of

wisdom," linking intelligence to practicality and cultural values of insight and experience.

Distinct cultural expressions emerge in phrases like the Russian "Семь пядей во лбу" (seven spans on the forehead), which doesn't have a direct equivalent in English or Uzbek but vividly represents cleverness in Russian. Similarly, Uzbek's "Falonchining ko'zi ochiq" (eyes are open) reflects a culturally embedded perspective on intelligence tied to perception and alertness, highlighting societal values that prize insight.

Conclusion

This comparative analysis illustrates how language reflects and reinforces cultural perceptions of intellectual abilities. Understanding these expressions can enrich studies in intercultural communication, providing insights into how concepts of wisdom, creativity, and intelligence are culturally framed. For translation studies, the findings underscore the need for contextually sensitive translations that account for cultural nuances. In language learning, these expressions can foster deeper cultural understanding, helping learners navigate social expectations and values embedded in different linguistic frameworks.

This study finds that languages often use shared metaphors to represent intellectual qualities, such as light and sharpness, while also relying on unique cultural symbols that reflect societal values. The comparison between English, Russian, and Uzbek reveals both universal metaphors for intelligence and distinct, culturally specific idioms that express a nuanced view of wisdom, creativity, and cleverness. The study contributes to understanding phraseology and cultural representations of intellectual qualities by illustrating how metaphorical expressions vary and align across languages. It offers a valuable framework for examining how different languages and cultures articulate concepts of intelligence, enhancing both linguistic and cultural comprehension.

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