



ENGLISH IDIOMS AND THEIR UZBEK EQUIVALENTS

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*“Idioms bridge cultures — they show how different nations think
with the same heart.”*

(George Couros)

Abstract. This article presents commonly used expressions and idioms found in everyday Uzbek conversations and provides their English equivalents. It illustrates these with clear examples, emphasizing their meanings and usage. In addition, the article compares several well-known English and Uzbek idioms, giving thorough explanations for each.

Key words: idioms, equivalent, meaning, change, comparison, context, culture.

Idioms are fixed expressions whose meanings are not literal and cannot be explained by the meanings of the component words. And idioms are an integral part of any language. They make a speech more emotional and expressive. English idioms, along with proverbs and phrasal verbs, can often be difficult to understand. They are commonly used in daily conversations across English-speaking countries, and many of them appear mainly in informal speech. Additionally, not only people use them in their communication but also writers and poets also use them in their works.

Each country has its own idioms that reflect its unique culture. While some idioms have similar meanings in different places, this shows the shared human nature across cultures. The English Learning idioms of a particular culture helps understand that nation's mentality, lifestyle, and values. For instance, in Uzbek, idioms often originate from folk wisdom, religion, and social experience, while English idioms may come from nature, literature, or history. Every language has many idiomatic

expressions. These phrases can be confusing since their meanings aren't always obvious. This can be especially challenging for people who are learning English as a second language since these expressions often have a symbolic meaning. Due to this characteristic, English learners find idioms unusual and difficult to understand. For instance, the Uzbek equivalent is “*Bir o‘q bilan ikkita quyonni ovlash,*” in English “Kill two birds with one stone.” It is the best method for translators to find equivalent idioms in the target language. According to Fernando , idioms are “conventionalized multiword expressions whose meaning cannot be derived from the meanings of their individual components” [3]. In Uzbek linguistics, idioms are defined as stable word combinations expressing figurative meanings that reflect national culture. Idioms differ from proverbs and phrasal verbs because they express an idea figuratively rather than offering moral advice or syntactic function. In this article, I want to share some similar idioms in English and Uzbek. I hope this will help you understand and compare the idioms in both languages.

Examples of English Idioms:

“Burn the midnight oil” – this idiom’s Uzbek equivalent conveys the same meaning working or studying hard through the night[4].

Example: They have a paper due tomorrow, so they will be burning the midnight oil tonight.

“Cost an arm and a leg” – means something very expensive or costly [2].

Example: Ginger’s fancy new car must have cost her an arm and a leg.

In Uzbek people often say “Joni evaziga tushdi” or “Qimmatga tushdi”, expressing the same concepts of high cost.

Some Similar Idioms in Uzbek and English:

“Sulaymon o‘ldi, devlar qutildi” – means to be happy when a person leaves [3].

(As Suleiman’s death means happiness to the genies — this expression is based on a historical and religious story.) Example:

A: Bugun sizlar bayram qilyapsizlar, tinchlikmi o‘zi?

B: Bugun xo‘jayin yo‘qlar, uzoq safarga ketdilar.

A: Sulaymon o‘ldi, devlar qutildi deng?

B: Ha, shunaqa!

English equivalent: Be glad to see the back of someone — be happy when a person leaves or when an unpleasant situation ends [5].

Example: He came for two days and stayed a month. I was glad to see the back of him when he finally left.

“Beshtala barmog‘ini og‘ziga tiqish” – means to take on a task that is too big or to try to do more than one is able to do [1][3]. It is used to advise people not to be greedy.

Example:

A: U yaxshi maosh, mashina va kvartira so‘radi.

B: O‘zi aybdor, beshtala barmog‘ini og‘ziga tiqmasligi kerak edi.

English equivalent: Bite off more than you can chew [4].

Meaning:

Try to do more than one is able to do

Undertake a promise one cannot accomplish

Attempt to do something hardly achievable Example

Sentences:

- By accepting two part-time jobs, he is clearly biting off more than he can chew.
 - I bit off more than I could chew when I promised to complete this worksheet in one day.
 - Don’t bite off more than you can chew by accepting the job in Alaska during winter.
- “Break the ice”- “Muzni eritmoq”- it’s meaning to make people feel more comfortable in a new situation.

Example : The teacher told a joke to break the ice at the beginning of the lesson.

The Uzbek equivalent “Muzni eritmoq” expresses the same figurative meaning to start communication in a friendly way.

“Cry over spilt milk”- “O’tgan ishga salovat”- it’s meaning to regret something that can not be changed.

Example: There’s no use crying over spilt milk.

Uzbek people say “O’tgan ishga salovat” to express acceptance and not to regret what has already happened.

This comparison shows that many Uzbek and English idioms have similar meaning but different imagery.

English idioms often rely on objects or actions (birds, milk, ice).

Uzbek idioms frequently use moral or religious text (Suleyman, five fingers).

Both languages use idioms to express universal emotions such as: regret, effort and joy.

The evidence indicates that while cultural practices differ, the experiences of human beings are similar across societies.

In conclusion, idioms reflect the linguistic creativity and cultural wisdom of a society.

The comparative analysis of English and Uzbek idioms demonstrates the deep connections between language, thought, and culture. Idioms serve as both linguistic

and cultural markers, conveying figurative meanings, emotions, and societal values in vivid and memorable ways. Studying idioms not only enhances language proficiency but also fosters intercultural understanding, highlighting the shared human experiences despite cultural differences.

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