

PAPER

PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS BASED ON ANIMAL NAMES IN FRENCH AND UZBEK: POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS

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Abstract

This study analyzes phraseological units constructed from animal names in French and Uzbek, focusing on their positive and negative connotations. The linguistic and cultural comparison reveals that these phraseological units reflect worldviews, sociocultural values, and collective imaginaries specific to each linguistic community. Phraseological units containing animal names represent a rich lexical and cultural field, capable of revealing the worldview of a linguistic community. This article analyzes the positive and negative connotations associated with these expressions in French, highlighting their cultural, metaphorical, and cognitive dimensions. The study shows that animals are perceived not only as biological realities but also as symbols carrying behavioral, moral, or affective values, and highlights parallels, divergences, and cultural specificities in the symbolic evaluation of animals.

Key words: connotation, denotation, phraseological units, animal names, contrastive analysis, expressive value, culture, pragmatics.

Introduction

Phraseological units constitute an essential element of the lexicon and reflect the collective experience of speakers. Among them, idiomatic expressions formed from animal names are particularly rich in connotations. They play an important role in

describing human behavior, moral categorization, and the expression of emotions. Phraseological units—idiomatic expressions, verbal phrases, proverbs, and fixed similes—constitute a complex linguistic phenomenon where language reflects culture and perception of the world. In human languages, animals play a special role, serving

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as metaphorical referents to characterize human beings, their behaviors, and their emotions. The aim of this article is to study the positive and negative connotations in phraseological units based on animal names, focusing primarily on French. The analysis is based on common examples, classified according to their semantic, symbolic, and cultural values. In French and Uzbek, animals have long served as metaphors to denote human characteristics, often related to animistic beliefs, folkloric representations, and cultural values. The aim of this article is to analyze the positive and negative connotations of these phraseological units in order to highlight the similarities and differences between the two languages.

Phraseology is defined as the set of fixed lexical combinations whose meaning cannot be entirely deduced from their constituent words (Mel'čuk, 1995). Phraseological units are fixed expressions whose overall meaning does not simply correspond to the sum of their constituent words. Phraseological units associated with animals fall primarily under this category. These include:

- verbal phrases (avoir un chat dans la gorge) ;
- fixed similes (têtu comme un âne, être rusé comme un renard) ;
- proverbs (Quand le chat n'est pas là, les souris dansent) ;
- idiomatic expressions (donner sa langue au chat) ;
- metaphorical phrases (une langue de vipère).

In contrastive linguistics, these units are linguocultural markers, as they reflect how a community interprets and evaluates certain animals.

Methodology. The study is based on the lexicographical analysis of bilingual, idiomatic, and etymological dictionaries, the selection of phraseological units frequently used in contemporary usage, classification according to semantic polarity (positive vs. negative connotations), and linguistic-cultural comparison.

Contrastive analysis of connotations. Phraseological units based on animal names are fixed expressions that use animal names to create images or metaphors. These expressions are found in various categories such as games (tag), insults (old pig), proverbs and sayings, or to designate things by analogy, reflecting the richness

of language and human ingenuity in characterizing reality. The notion of connotation occupies an essential place in the study of linguistic meaning, as it goes beyond the denotational meaning of lexical units to encompass subjective, cultural, and emotional values. In linguistics, the analysis of meaning is not limited to the lexical definition of words. Beyond denotation, which corresponds to objective and referential meaning, connotation refers to the subjective, affective, and cultural values associated with linguistic units. These connotations can be positive or negative and play a major role in discourse interpretation. Contrastive analysis of connotations allows us to compare how different languages and cultures evaluate the same reality. It is particularly relevant in the fields of translation, contrastive linguistics, and intercultural communication.

Connotation is the affective, cultural, or emotional value attached to a word or expression. Positive connotations express favorable values such as admiration, sympathy, strength, intelligence, or nobility. These perceptions are not universal: they depend on history, beliefs, and the cultural environment. Although animals often carry negative stereotypes, several expressions associate them with positive values.

Negative connotations in phraseological units are more numerous and often reflect moral or behavioral judgments.

These connotations are strongly influenced by cultural and social stereotypes, making them particularly sensitive in intercultural communication.

Positive connotations are more closely linked to animals valued in Uzbek culture. Domestic animals or totems of Turkic peoples are often associated with noble qualities (lion, horse, ram).

Common points: The two languages share several similarities:

- a. The same animals often symbolize the same traits (donkey = stupidity; snake = treachery);
- b. Animal metaphors are used to characterize human behavior;
- c. Negative phraseological units are more numerous than positive ones.

Differences:

- a. In French, symbolism is strongly influenced by Christianity and rural life.

No	Judgments	Expressions	Comments	In Uzbek
1.	Animals associated with work, courage, and performance	<i>Travailler comme une abeille</i> <i>Fort comme un bœuf</i> <i>Avoir du chien</i>	Connotes diligence, productivity, and positive energy. A symbol of physical vigor and robustness. Means being elegant, attractive, and dynamic.	Chumolidek mehnatkash Ho'kizdek kuchli Tovusdek tovlanadi
2.	Animals associated with luck or protection	<i>Un chaud lapin</i> <i>Un ange gardien</i>	This isn't necessarily positive, but rabbits can have a cute or sweet image in certain contexts. Derived animal symbolism.	
3.	Animals symbolizing intelligence and prudence	<i>Être rusé comme un renard</i> <i>Sage comme une image / comme un hibou</i>	Ambiguous, sometimes positive depending on the strategic context. The owl represents reflection and wisdom.	Tulkidek ayyor Ukkidek dono

N ^o	Judgments	Expressions	Comments	In Uzbek
1.	Stupidity, naivety, or lack of intelligence	<i>Être bête comme une oie / comme un âne</i> <i>Faire l'oiseau</i>	Attributes a lack of intelligence. To be distracted, frivolous.	Eshakday qaysar
2.	Filth, disorder, misconduct	<i>Vivre comme un cochon</i> <i>Manger comme un cochon</i>	Disorder, lack of hygiene. Lack of manners.	Cho'chqadek besaranjom Moldek (cho'chqadek) badnafs
3.	Cruciousness, ferocity, or aggression	<i>Avoir un caractère de cochon</i> <i>C'est un loup pour l'homme</i>	Bad temper. Reference to natural violence.	Itfe'l Bo'ridek tajovuzkor
4.	Cunning, hypocrisy, and deceit	<i>Être un renard / fin renard</i> <i>Tuer la poule aux œufs d'or</i>	Deceit, calculation. Clumsiness, greed.	Tulkidek ayyor
5.	Weakness or cowardice	<i>Avoir la chair de poule</i> <i>Être une poule mouillée</i>	Fear. Cowardice.	Quyonyurak Suvga tushgan mushukdek

b. In Uzbek, the view of animals is linked to nomadic traditions, pastoralism, and Turkic beliefs.

c. Some animals perceived negatively in French have a more positive image in Uzbek (e.g., the fox, sometimes admired for its intelligence).

d. Noble animals in Uzbek culture (horse, lion, ram) occupy a valued position, absent in standard French phraseology.

Conclusion

Phraseological units based on animal names constitute a privileged space for linguistic and cultural imagination. Contrastive analysis shows that, despite numerous semantic correspondences, the connotations attributed to animals reflect values deeply rooted in each culture. In French, animal representations are situated within a rural and moral framework, while in Uzbek they extend a nomadic and heroic heritage. Understanding these differences enriches the teaching of French and facilitates intercultural interpretation, particularly in translation contexts.

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