

SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF BLESSING AND CURSE PHRASES IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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Abstract

This article provides a semantic and contrastive analysis of blessing and curse phrases in the English and Uzbek languages. Blessings and curses represent two opposite types of evaluative expressions that convey positive and negative wishes respectively. The study examines their semantic structure, functional features, connotative meanings, and linguocultural specificity. By comparing English and Uzbek data, the article identifies both universal semantic components and culture-specific characteristics that reflect national values, religious beliefs, and social norms.

Keywords: blessing phrases, curse phrases, semantics, evaluative language, English, Uzbek, linguocultural analysis.

Introduction

In world linguistics, there is an increasing number of studies devoted to the study of linguistic features of phraseological units and their factors of formation, structural-content conditioning, scope of application in the comparative and linguocultural aspect with other languages. A nation's language holds the same value as its motherland and country. Language is what unites people as a nation, binding individuals into a cohesive cultural identity. Every language carries the pearls of folk wisdom—proverbs and sayings that serve as sources of moral guidance, passed down through generations. These expressions are known in linguistics as paremiological units (paremias). They have long been a subject of academic interest because these wise sayings inspire individuals to cultivate qualities such as kindness, morality, diligence, honesty, justice, truthfulness, unity, patriotism, and love for one's country. The scientific study of paremias helps answer numerous important questions related to human life and society.

The study of paremias traces its roots back to the works of our ancestor Mahmud al-Kashgari.¹ Additionally, many great poets and scholars, including Yusuf Khass Hajib, Rabguzi, Yasawi, Atayi, Lutfi, Sakkaki, Alisher Navoi, Babur, Abulgazi Bahadur Khan, Turdi, Gulkhani, Munis, Sufi Allahyar, Nodira, and Muqimi, skillfully incorporated proverbs into their literary works. In England, research on paremiological units dates back to the Middle English period (14th–16th centuries), during which book printing became widespread in English society².

Linguistics recognizes nearly 30 different types of paremiological units, including riddles, proverbs, aphorisms, phraseological expressions, parables, legends, superstitions, dream interpretations, anecdotes, and tongue twisters. The field of paremiology is dedicated to studying these units. Scholars consider paremiology an interdisciplinary branch of both literary studies and linguistics, making it a subject of philological research. Paremiology is a subfield of

¹ Кошғарий М. Девону луғотит турк. 3 томлик. 3-том. - Тошкент: Фан, 1960. – Б.168-169.

² Mieder V. Twisted Wisdom, Modern Anti Proverbs. – Vermont, 1998. – 396 p.



philology that examines paremias and their classification. Additionally, a specialized field called paremiography³ focuses on collecting, preserving, and processing paremiological materials.

The classification and systematization of linguistic units and phenomena have been an established tradition since ancient times. Scholars have expressed various opinions on how to categorize and describe language structures, leading to different classification methods. However, as M.I. Rasulova pointed out, “At the current stage of linguistic development, there is a need to completely reconsider the foundations of linguistic elements classification, as it is impossible to develop a linguistic theory which aligns with the essence of research object without properly categorizing linguistic elements. Before describing and analyzing linguistic material, classification is essential.”⁴ The study of paremiology is no exception. It is worth noting that the classification of linguistic units began with the practice of compiling and publishing specialized collections. Since religious figures and politicians were among the first to engage in this practice, they often interpreted and classified paremias based on their own ideological and conceptual frameworks. For example, in the 19th century, the American missionary William Scarborough traveled to China and collected Chinese folk proverbs, which he attempted to classify from a Christian theological perspective.

The semantic-logical classification of proverbs was first applied by the Russian lexicographer V.Dal. In his work “Пословицы русского народа” (Proverbs of the Russian People), he categorized Russian folk proverbs based on thematic classifications. Recognizing the interrelation of categories, he connected the theme of “Warning and Punishment” with “Obedience and Submission”.⁵ Similarly, Uzbek paremiologists have classified Uzbek proverbs into thematic categories. R. Jumaniyozov divided Uzbek proverbs into 22 themes which is later expanded to 56 themes by A. Kholmukhammedov.⁶ T. Mirzaev and his co-authors compiled a collection of over 8,000 Uzbek folk proverbs, categorizing them into 70 themes⁷. M. Gadoeva classified proverbs based on somatisms into 27 thematic groups⁸, while Z. Narmuratov divided paremias into 34 thematic groups⁹.

Among paremiological units, blessing or curse words, phrases have existed since ancient times but remain a less-studied field. Blessing and curse phrases occupy a significant place in human communication as they express speakers’ attitudes, emotions, and value judgments. While **blessing phrases** convey goodwill, protection, and prosperity, **curse phrases** express condemnation, misfortune, and negative wishes. These expressions function as powerful linguistic tools, often associated with belief systems, traditions, and cultural norms.

In both English and Uzbek languages, blessing and curse phrases are deeply rooted in historical, religious, and social contexts. A semantic analysis of these phrases helps to reveal how languages

³ Уралова О.П. Инглиз ва ўзбек тилларида “оила” бош лексемали мақоллар семантикаси ва структураси. Филол. фанлари фалсафа д-ри... дисс. Самарқанд, 2021. – 144 б.

⁴ Расуллова М.И. Проблемы категоризации на уровне текста: понятие и интерпретация//Актуальные проблемы современной лингвистики. – Тошкент, 2021. – С.158.

⁵ Даль В. Пословицы русского народа. – Москва: Наука, 1982. – 1140 с.

⁶ Жуманиёзов Р. Сўз қўрки – мақол. – Тошкент, 1964. – 102 б.; Холмухаммедов А. Жемчужины мысли народной. –Тошкент, 1972. – 187 б.

⁷ Мирзаев Т., Мусакулов А., Саримсоқов Б. Ўзбек халқ мақоллари. – Тошкент, Шарқ, 2005. – 512 б.

⁸ Гадоева М.И. Инглиз ва ўзбек тилларида соматизмларнинг семантик-прагматик тадқиқи. Филол. фан. докт. (DSc) диссертацияси. – Бухоро, 2022. – 234 б.

⁹ Narmuratov Zayniddin Radjabovich. “Ta’lim” va “ilm” mazmunli frazemalarning semantik-struktur, lingvomadaniy xususiyatlari (ingliz va o‘zbek tillari misolida). Filol fanlari doktori(DSc) dissertatsiyasi. Buxoro, 2024. – 246 b.



encode positive and negative evaluations and how cultural worldviews influence meaning formation. The aim of this article is to conduct a comparative semantic analysis of blessing and curse phrases in English and Uzbek.

1. Blessings Expressing Health and Longevity

English examples:

- *Bless you*
- *May you live long*
- *Wishing you good health*

Uzbek examples:

- *Sog‘-salomat bo‘ling*
- *Uzoq umr ko‘ring*
- *Yashasin*

2. Blessings Denoting Success and Prosperity

These phrases focus on achievement and material abundance.

English examples:

- *Good luck*
- *May you succeed*
- *May fortune favor you*

Uzbek examples:

- *Omadingizni bersin*
- *Ishingiz yurishsin*
- *Baraka toping*

3. Religious Blessing Phrases

English examples:

- *God bless you*
- *May God be with you*

Uzbek examples:

- *Alloh rozi bo‘lsin*
- *Xudo panohida bo‘ling*
- *Omin*

1. Curses Expressing Misfortune and Suffering

English examples:

- *Damn you*
- *May you rot in hell*

Uzbek examples:

- *Joning chiqsin*
- *Boshiga balo yetsin*

2. Curses Targeting Social and Moral Degradation

English examples:

- *Shame on you*
- *You’ll regret this*



Uzbek examples:

- *Yuzing yerga qarasin*
- *Nomusdan ketgin*

3. Religious and Supernatural Curses

English examples:

- *God damn you*
- *May God punish you*

Uzbek examples:

- *Xudo urib qo 'ysin*
- *Alloh jazolasin*

In English discourse, curses are often softened or avoided, whereas in Uzbek discourse, curses may be used more openly as emotional release or moral judgment.

The semantic analysis of blessing and curse phrases in English and Uzbek languages reveals both universal and culture-specific features. While the basic semantic opposition between positive and negative wishes is shared, Uzbek blessing and curse phrases are more expressive, religiously marked, and socially oriented. English phrases tend to be more neutral and pragmatically restrained.

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