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LINGUOCULTURAL BACKGROUND OF ZOONYMS

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Anotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada o'zbek va ingliz tillaridagi zoonimlarning lingvokulturologik hamda leksik-semantik xususiyatlari qiyosiy jihatdan tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda zoonimlarning semantik tuzilishi, madaniy konnotatsiyalari, milliy dunyoqarash va mentalitetni aks ettirishdagi o'rni yoritilgan. Shuningdek, maqol va iboralarda qo'llanilgan zoonimlarning nominativ, metaforik hamda pragmatik xususiyatlari zamonaviy lingvistik metodlar asosida o'rganilgan. Tadqiqot natijalari zoonimlar nafaqat hayvon nomlarini ifodalovchi leksik birliklar, balki xalqning tarixiy tajribasi, madaniy qadriyatlar va milliy tafakkurini aks ettiruvchi muhim lingvokulturologik vositalar ekanligini ko'rsatadi.

Kalit so'zlar: zoonim, lingvokulturologiya, leksik-semantik tahlil, semantika, o'zbek tili, ingliz tili, maqollar, metafora, madaniy konnotatsiya, qiyosiy tilshunoslik.

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматриваются лингвокультурологические и лексико-семантические особенности зоонимов в узбекском и английском языках в сопоставительном аспекте. Исследование посвящено анализу семантической структуры зоонимов, их культурных коннотаций и роли в отражении национального мировоззрения и менталитета. Особое внимание уделяется номинативным, метафорическим и прагматическим функциям зоонимов, используемых в пословицах и устойчивых выражениях. Результаты исследования показывают, что зоонимы представляют собой не только наименования животных, но и важные лингвокультурологические единицы, отражающие исторический опыт, культурные ценности и национальное сознание народа.

Ключевые слова: зооним, лингвокультурология, лексико-семантический анализ, семантика, узбекский язык, английский язык, пословицы, метафора, культурная коннотация, сопоставительное языкознание.

Abstract: This article examines the linguocultural and lexical-semantic characteristics of zoonyms in the Uzbek and English languages from a comparative perspective. The study investigates the semantic structure of zoonyms, their cultural connotations, and their role in reflecting the national worldview and cultural identity of both nations. Particular attention is paid to the nominative, metaphorical, and pragmatic functions of zoonyms used in proverbs and phraseological expressions. The findings reveal that zoonyms are not merely lexical units denoting animals but also significant linguocultural markers that embody the historical experience, cultural values, and national mentality of a people.

Keywords: zoonym, linguoculturology, lexical-semantic analysis, semantics, Uzbek language, English language, proverbs, metaphor, cultural connotation, comparative linguistics.



Introduction

The historical development of every nation is closely intertwined with its cultural heritage, traditional values, and collective identity. The unique way of life, worldview, customs, and ethnographic characteristics of a people are vividly reflected in the products of oral folklore, particularly in proverbs. Among the linguistic elements found in these folkloric expressions, zoonyms occupy a significant place. Animal names used in proverbs and idiomatic expressions function as symbolic representations of human behavior, moral qualities, social relationships, and observations about nature and society. Consequently, zoonyms serve as important linguistic indicators of a nation's cultural memory and intellectual heritage. Research on zoonyms in both international and Uzbek linguistics has been conducted from various perspectives, including lexical-semantic, historical, stylistic, functional, and linguocultural approaches. These studies primarily focus on examining the semantic development of animal names, their figurative potential, their stylistic functions in literary discourse, and their role in representing the cultural worldview of different communities. A considerable number of foreign scholars, including Ch. Inkuy, A. P. Kosmenko, E. A. Kreinovich, E. S. Novik, E. V. Antonova, S. P. Nesterov, I. Y. Vinokurova, E. Leverovsky, P. Minorsky, and G. I. Kulikovskiy, have made substantial contributions to zoonymic research.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative comparative research design to investigate the linguocultural and lexical-semantic features of zoonyms in Uzbek and English. The research is grounded in the theoretical principles of linguoculturology, cognitive linguistics, ethnolinguistics, and comparative linguistics. A comprehensive methodological framework was employed to identify similarities and differences in the semantic, cultural, and pragmatic characteristics of zoonyms functioning in both languages. The empirical material of the study consists of zoonymic units extracted from English and Uzbek proverbs, phraseological units, explanatory dictionaries, and classical literary works. Proverbs were selected because they preserve the cultural memory, traditional values, and collective worldview of a nation. The collected corpus was classified according to semantic fields, symbolic meanings, and communicative functions. The primary research method was the comparative-typological method, which enabled a systematic comparison of animal names and their linguocultural meanings in the two languages. The comparison was carried out at three levels: structural, semantic, and cultural. Structural analysis examined the grammatical position and syntactic organization of zoonyms within proverbs. Semantic analysis identified denotative and connotative meanings, while cultural comparison focused on national stereotypes, symbolic values, and ethnocultural associations related to particular animals. A componential analysis was applied to determine the semantic structure of zoonyms. Each lexical unit was analyzed according to its core semantic components, including biological meaning, evaluative meaning, cultural symbolism, pragmatic function, and emotional connotation. This method helped reveal the semantic nucleus and secondary meanings associated with animal names in different



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communicative contexts. The study also employed the cognitive-linguistic approach, based on George Lakoff's Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Animal images were interpreted as conceptual metaphors reflecting human behavior, personality traits, emotions, and social relationships. For example, metaphoric expressions such as a wolf in sheep's clothing and their Uzbek equivalents demonstrate how animal imagery encodes abstract concepts through culturally established cognitive models. An ethnolinguistic method was used to explain the relationship between zoonyms and the historical, economic, religious, and cultural life of the Uzbek and English peoples. This approach made it possible to identify the influence of traditional occupations, folklore, mythology, and belief systems on the formation of symbolic meanings associated with different animal names. Their works investigate the mythological, religious, and ethnocultural dimensions of animal imagery. For instance, I. Y. Vinokurova explored the beliefs associated with sacred animals in the traditional worldview of the Veps people, while A. P. Kosmenko emphasized that representations of animals in folk art constitute valuable sources for reconstructing ancient mythological concepts. Similarly, I. Mullonen demonstrated that animal names play an important role in the formation of Veps toponyms and anthroponyms. Ch. Inkuy examined the semantic evolution of zoonyms and classified animal names employed in describing human characteristics. His findings reveal that domestic and wild animals constitute the largest groups of metaphorically used zoonyms. V. Porkhomovsky analyzed Turkish proverbs from morphological and syntactic perspectives, whereas N. Trubachev pointed out that many European hunting communities traditionally avoided mentioning the names of dangerous wild animals during hunting seasons. Instead, predators such as bears and wolves were referred to by euphemistic, affectionate, or ironic nicknames in countries including Sweden, Finland, Estonia, and neighboring regions. The systematic study of zoonyms in Turkic linguistics dates back to Mahmud al-Kashgari's monumental dictionary, *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*, which remains one of the most valuable sources for the linguistic, ethnographic, and folkloric heritage of Turkic peoples. In addition to more than 7,500 lexical entries, the dictionary contains over 300 poetic passages and 291 proverbs. Nearly 200 zoonyms, including approximately 100 bird names, occur throughout these texts, demonstrating the significant role of animals in the linguistic and cultural consciousness of early Turkic societies. Special attention is devoted to horse-related vocabulary, reflecting the central place of horses in the military, economic, and everyday life of Turkic communities. The dictionary records numerous names describing horses according to their physical appearance, color, speed, and temperament, such as *yag'iz at*, *yugruk at*, *iqiloch*, and *qir at*. These zoonyms frequently appear in proverbs, where they symbolize courage, loyalty, endurance, and strength.

RESULTS

The dictionary documents numerous wild animal names, including *arqar*, *alavan*, *azg'iraq*, *yilon*, *yag'an*, and *yarbuz*, together with proverbs illustrating traditional observations of nature and accumulated life experience. Within Uzbek linguistics, zoonyms have likewise received extensive scholarly attention. D. Kh. Bazarova

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investigated the historical development and variation of bird names, whereas H. A. Saidova examined the nominative and figurative functions of animal names. According to her findings, zoonyms denote animals in their literal sense but become powerful stylistic devices when used metaphorically to characterize human personality and behavior. B. Abdushukurov analyzed the lexical-semantic and grammatical characteristics of zoonyms occurring in Turkic written monuments dating from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries. N. R. Nishonova explored the semantic field of lexemes belonging to the "animal" archiseme, while D. M. Yuldasheva focused on the functional role of zoonyms in Uzbek children's folklore. In addition, B. Zaripov identified hundreds of animal names employed by Alisher Navoi as artistic devices that enrich the expressive and aesthetic value of his literary works.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

From a linguocultural perspective, D. Tosheva conducted a comparative statistical analysis of zoonym-based proverbs in Uzbek, English, and Russian. Her findings indicate that Uzbek contains a considerably larger number of proverbs incorporating animal names than either English or Russian, highlighting the richness of Uzbek folklore and the close relationship between the Uzbek people and the natural world. In conclusion, zoonymic proverbs in both Uzbek and English represent valuable linguocultural phenomena that reflect the mentality, cultural values, historical experience, and worldview of their respective peoples. In both languages, animal imagery functions metaphorically to evaluate human character and behavior. Nevertheless, the dominant symbolic animals differ across cultures. English proverbs frequently feature cats, dogs, and horses, whereas Uzbek proverbs primarily emphasize donkeys, horses, sheep, and wolves. These distinctions stem from differences in historical lifestyles, economic traditions, and cultural perceptions. Therefore, zoonyms constitute an essential source for investigating national mentality, cultural stereotypes, and intercultural linguistic diversity.

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