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# СЎЗ САНЪАТИ ХАЛҚАРО ЖУРНАЛИ

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## A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FACE-RELATED IDIOMS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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### ABSTRACT

This article presents a comparative analysis of face-related idiomatic expressions in English and Uzbek, exploring both cognitive similarities and cultural differences. While Uzbek idioms emphasize collective honor and social responsibility, English idioms focus more on individual accountability. The study examines the historical and cultural influences that have shaped these idioms and analyzes their significance in communication. Additionally, it explores regional variations, demonstrating how local customs impact the use of face-related expressions in both languages. By employing cognitive semantic theory, this research aims to explain the conceptual motivations behind these idioms and their implications for cross-cultural communication.

**Keywords:** face idioms, cognitive semantics, cultural differences, honor, social behavior, regional variations, conceptual metaphors, phraseology, cross-cultural communication.

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## INGLIZ VA O'ZBEK TILLARIDAGI YUZ BILAN BOG'LIQ SOMATIZMLARNING QIYOSIY TAHLILI

### ANNOTATSIYA

Mazkur maqola ingliz va o'zbek tillaridagi yuz bilan bog'liq somatik ifodalarning kognitiv o'xshashliklari va madaniy farqlarini qiyosiy tahlil qiladi. O'zbek tilidagi idiomalar ko'proq obro' va ijtimoiy javobgarlikka urg'u bersa, ingliz tilidagi idiomalar individual mas'uliyatga ko'proq e'tibor qaratadi. Maqolada ushbu iboralarning shakllanishiga ta'sir etuvchi tarixiy va madaniy omillar o'rganilib, ularning muloqotdagi ahamiyati tahlil qilinadi. Shuningdek, tadqiqot mintaqaviy o'ziga xosliklarni ko'rib chiqib, mahalliy urf-odatlarining yuz bilan bog'liq ifodalarning qo'llanilishiga qanday ta'sir ko'rsatishini ko'rsatib beradi. Kognitiv semantika nazariyasi asosida bu idiomalar ortidagi tushunchaviy motivatsiya va ularning madaniyatlararo kommunikatsiyadagi ahamiyati ochib beriladi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** yuz iboralari, kognitiv semantika, madaniy farqlar, sharaf, ijtimoiy xulq-atvor, mintaqaviy o'ziga xosliklar, tushunchaviy metaforalar, frazeologiya, madaniyatlararo kommunikatsiya.

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## СРАВНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ ИДИОМ, СВЯЗАННЫХ С ЛИЦОМ, В АНГЛИЙСКОМ И УЗБЕКСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ

### АННОТАЦИЯ

Данная статья представляет собой сравнительный анализ идиоматических выражений, связанных с лицом, в английском и узбекском языках, выделяя как когнитивные сходства, так и культурные различия. Узбекские идиомы подчеркивают коллективную честь и социальную ответственность, тогда как английские идиомы больше сосредоточены на индивидуальной ответственности. В статье рассматриваются исторические и культурные факторы, повлиявшие на развитие этих идиом, а также их роль в коммуникации. Кроме того, исследуются региональные различия, демонстрируя, как местные обычаи формируют использование этих выражений. Основываясь на теории когнитивной семантики, автор анализирует концептуальные мотивы этих идиом и их значение в межкультурной коммуникации.

**Ключевые слова:** идиомы о лице, когнитивная семантика, культурные различия, честь, социальное поведение, региональные различия, концептуальные метафоры, фразеология, межкультурная коммуникация.

### Introduction

Language is more than just a means of communication; it is a mirror reflecting the culture, history, and worldview of its speakers. Among the many fascinating aspects of language, phraseological units—especially somatisms (idioms related to body parts)—stand out as rich sources of cultural and cognitive insights. These idioms, shaped by the historical and geographical contexts in which a language evolves, often carry layers of meaning that go beyond their literal interpretations. One particularly interesting category of somatisms includes idioms related to the **face**. The human face is universally associated with identity, emotions, and social interaction, making it a powerful conceptual tool for metaphorical expressions. In English and Uzbek, "face" and its equivalents ("yuz," "bet," "chehra," etc.) appear in numerous idiomatic expressions, each carrying unique cultural and cognitive nuances. However, despite the abundance of such expressions, comparative studies on their cognitive and semantic structures remain limited.

This study seeks to bridge that gap by exploring how English and Uzbek idioms related to "face" reflect cultural values, societal norms, and cognitive patterns. By analyzing these idioms, we aim to uncover both universal and culture-specific ways in which languages conceptualize personal and social identity.

### Methods

To conduct this comparative analysis, we adopted a mixed-methods approach that integrates linguistic comparison, cognitive analysis, and cultural interpretation. The study draws on data from dictionaries, linguistic corpora, and native speaker consultations to ensure a broad and accurate representation of face-related idioms in both English and Uzbek.

Our methodology involved two key stages:

1. **Semantic Classification** – We first identified idioms containing "face" in English and "yuz," "bet," "chehra," "aft," and "bashara" in Uzbek. These idioms were categorized based on their semantic functions, such as expressing emotions, social behavior, and physical appearance.
2. **Cognitive and Cultural Analysis** – After categorizing the idioms, we examined their underlying cognitive metaphors and cultural significance. This involved analyzing how concepts like honor, dignity, reputation, and emotional control are framed through face-related idioms in each language.

By applying a cognitive-semantic framework, we aimed to explore how speakers of English and Uzbek conceptualize identity and interpersonal relationships through idiomatic expressions.

Furthermore, we considered regional variations in both languages, investigating how historical and cultural contexts influence the usage of these idioms.

Through this comparative study, we aim to highlight the similarities and differences in face-related phraseology across these two languages, offering deeper insights into their cultural and cognitive landscapes.

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study is based on cognitive semantics and cultural linguistics, which provide a lens through which idiomatic expressions can be analyzed in relation to human thought and cultural background. According to Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (1980), idioms are not arbitrary but are grounded in embodied experiences and shaped by metaphorical thought processes. In this context, face-related idioms in English and Uzbek reflect deeper cultural and cognitive models of identity, reputation, and emotion.

Additionally, Sapir-Whorf's linguistic relativity hypothesis (1956) suggests that language shapes perception, meaning that the way face-related idioms are used in English and Uzbek may influence how individuals in these cultures perceive social interactions and emotional expressions. This study also builds upon Wierzbicka's (1999) cultural scripts approach, which argues that idiomatic expressions encapsulate culture-specific social norms and expectations.

By applying these theories, we aim to uncover how face-related idioms in both languages convey shared human experiences while also reflecting unique cultural perspectives. We hypothesize that while there are universal themes—such as using "face" to express dignity or emotional control—there are also notable differences shaped by historical, social, and cultural factors.

### Results

The comparative analysis of phraseological units involving "face" in English and "yuz" in Uzbek revealed both shared cognitive themes and distinct cultural differences. In English, there are 97 idiomatic expressions involving the word "face," while additional terms like "mug," "visage," and "countenance" account for 12, 15, and 7 idioms respectively. In contrast, Uzbek displays 78 idiomatic expressions with "yuz," 35 with "bet," 9 with "chehra," 5 with "aft," and 2 with "bashara." These figures, illustrated in the table and bar chart below, highlight the richness of face-related phraseology in both languages and underscore the role of cultural context in shaping these expressions.

Comparison of Face-Related Phraseological Units in English and Uzbek

| Terms           | English | Uzbek |
|-----------------|---------|-------|
| Face/Yuz        | 97      | 78    |
| Mug/Bet         | 12      | 35    |
| Visage/Chehra   | 15      | 9     |
| Countenance/Aft | 7       | 5     |
| Bashara         | 0       | 2     |

The bar chart further visualizes these differences, demonstrating that while both languages make extensive use of face-related idioms, Uzbek has a greater variety of expressions associated with different facial lexemes, particularly "bet" and "chehra."

Idioms involving the face play a significant role in both English and Uzbek, often reflecting emotional states, social behavior, and physical appearance. While there are common cognitive themes between the two languages, cultural nuances add depth and specificity to these expressions. The face, as a metaphorical representation of one's inner state, honor, or social standing, carries similar symbolic weight in both English and Uzbek but with some cultural variations.

Both English and Uzbek use face idioms to convey emotional reactions, particularly fear, anger, or shame. In Uzbek, the idiom "yuzidan qoni qochdi" (literally, "blood drained from their face") describes a person turning pale, usually from fear or anger. This idiom parallels the English "turned

white as a sheet," which also portrays someone becoming visibly pale due to an intense emotional shock or fright.

For example:

- Uzbek: "Sherbekning yuzidan qoni qochdi" (Sherbek's face turned pale) highlights the moment when someone feels deep shock or guilt, a visible marker of internal emotional disturbance.
- English: "His face turned white as a sheet when he saw the accident." Similarly, this idiom describes a sudden change in facial color due to fear or horror.

Both idioms reflect the universal cognitive link between emotional intensity and the physical appearance of the face, showing that fear and shock manifest similarly in different cultures.

Face idioms in both languages also represent social behavior, particularly in the context of respect and honor. In Uzbek, "yuziga oyoq qo'ymoq" (literally, "to step on someone's face") means to humiliate or disrespect someone to an extreme degree. This idiom has a strong cultural resonance in a collectivist society where the loss of face affects not only the individual but also their family or community. In English, the closest equivalent is "to trample on someone's dignity," which similarly conveys a profound level of disrespect.

For example:

- Uzbek: "Tog'angning yuziga oyoq qo'yding" (You stepped on your uncle's face) suggests a serious offense that brings shame and dishonor to a respected person.
- English: "He trampled on her dignity when he publicly humiliated her." This idiom reflects a similar concept of deeply disrespecting someone's social standing or pride.

In both languages, the face is metaphorically tied to personal and social honor, though the implications may be stronger in Uzbek due to the collective nature of honor in Central Asian cultures.

Idioms that relate to physical appearance often focus on facial expressions and color changes in both languages. In Uzbek, "yuzi qizarib ketdi" (literally, "his face turned red") describes someone blushing from embarrassment or shame. In English, "his face turned red" or "he blushed" serves a similar function, denoting the physiological response to feelings of discomfort or awkwardness.

For example:

- Uzbek: "Yuzlari qizardi" (his face turned red) frequently appears in contexts where a person feels ashamed or embarrassed, making their internal emotions visible.
- English: "He blushed deeply when his mistake was pointed out." This idiom reflects the same cognitive association between facial color change and emotional exposure.

Both cultures associate a change in facial color with vulnerability, emphasizing how emotions like embarrassment or shame are visibly expressed through the face.

While cognitive patterns are shared across both English and Uzbek idiomatic expressions, the cultural connotations of face-related idioms differ significantly due to the distinct values, traditions, and social frameworks of these languages. In Uzbek, face-related idioms (yuz, bet, aft) often relate to honor, reputation, and social responsibility, which extend beyond the individual and encompass family and community. On the other hand, English face idioms are often centered on personal reputation, consequences of one's actions, and emotional states.

In Uzbek, the idiom "yuzini yerga qaratmoq" (to make someone bow their face to the ground) signifies causing someone deep shame, to the point where they are unable to hold their head high. This reflects the strong emphasis on collective honor in Uzbek culture, where a person's actions are intertwined with the reputation of their family or community. Another similar expression, "yuzi qora bo'ldi" (his face turned black), describes a person who has permanently lost their social respect due to dishonorable actions, such as committing a serious offense against moral or societal norms.

In English, however, idioms like "with egg on your face" focus more on individual embarrassment or personal failure. When someone "has egg on their face," they are ridiculed or feel foolish after being proven wrong or making a mistake in public:

- "After making bold predictions about the project's success, he was left with egg on his face when it failed."

The difference here is that Uzbek idioms about losing face often carry lasting implications, affecting not only the individual but their wider social network, while English idioms are usually confined to temporary, personal embarrassment or failure.

#### Accountability and Consequences

In Uzbek, idioms like "yuz xotir qilmoq" (to respect someone's face) are used to indicate showing leniency or sparing someone out of respect for their reputation or social standing. This idiom reflects a deeper sense of social obligation, suggesting that one should avoid embarrassing or shaming another person out of respect for their social status. In contrast, the English idiom "to face the music" means to confront the consequences of one's actions, often indicating that the individual must take personal responsibility for a mistake or misdeed. For instance:

"After months of avoiding the issue, he finally had to face the music and admit his role in the scandal."

While both idioms involve dealing with the consequences of actions, the Uzbek version emphasizes sparing someone's honor, while the English idiom is focused on personal accountability, without any expectation of collective consequences.

Idioms that reflect physical appearance also differ between the two languages. In Uzbek, "yuzini ochiq tutmoq" (literally, "to keep one's face open") refers to someone who is open, honest, and socially transparent, indicating that they are respected and have nothing to hide from their community. This idiom underscores the cultural value placed on moral and social openness, which reflects on a person's standing in society.

In English, the idiom "the acceptable face of..." refers to someone or something that is deemed presentable or socially acceptable, often used in business or politics to describe a person who gives a favorable public image:

- "He was chosen as the acceptable face of the company's new strategy."

While the Uzbek idiom reflects moral integrity and social trustworthiness, the English idiom is more about creating a palatable image for public consumption, often in a more superficial or commercial sense.

In both languages, idioms related to facial expressions often reflect embarrassment or shame. In Uzbek, "yuzi qizarib ketdi" (his face turned red) denotes someone blushing from embarrassment, much like the English idiom "his face turned red". However, Uzbek culture places greater importance on communal honor, and expressions of embarrassment often imply a loss of social respect on a broader level.

In English, the phrase "with egg on your face" can be used to describe someone appearing foolish or ridiculous after making a mistake. While both languages use idioms about facial color changes to represent shame or discomfort, the English focus is more individualistic, whereas Uzbek idioms often carry a heavier social weight.

In informal contexts, English idioms can also take on a more humorous or exaggerated tone. For example, the expression "off your face" refers to someone being extremely drunk or under the influence of drugs, as in:

- "He was completely off his face after the party last night."

This idiom, which deals with extreme physical or mental states, contrasts with the more socially grounded Uzbek idioms that rarely touch on such personal indulgence but are more centered on honor and public reputation.

In short, Uzbek face idioms often focus on preserving or losing social honor, extending beyond the individual to the family and community. Respect, reputation, and social standing are deeply embedded in the language, reflecting a collectivist cultural outlook. In contrast, English face idioms tend to focus more on personal embarrassment, consequences, and individual accountability. While both languages use the face as a metaphor for social and emotional experiences, the underlying cultural values significantly shape the idiomatic expressions, highlighting the difference between collectivist and individualistic worldviews.

In both English and Uzbek, face-related idioms vary regionally, reflecting the diversity of dialects, traditions, and social norms within each language. While certain idioms retain similar meanings

across different regions, the frequency and contextual use of these expressions can differ significantly depending on geographical location and cultural practices.

In Uzbekistan, the use of face-related idioms such as "bet" (face) varies across regions, influenced by the rural-urban divide and localized cultural nuances. The meanings of these expressions often hinge on ideas of social honor, personal integrity, and moral conduct.

- In rural areas, idioms like "betga chopar bo'lmoq" (to speak bluntly, without concern for others' feelings) are commonly used to describe individuals who are direct and unafraid of offending others. This idiom reflects the straightforward nature of interpersonal communication in smaller communities, where relationships are often closer and more personal:
  - "Betga choparlik qilma, og'ayni!" (Don't be so blunt, my friend!) is an admonishment often heard in rural settings, where community ties are important, but people may still speak frankly.
- In urban regions, on the other hand, the idiom "chehrasini ochmoq" (to brighten one's face) is frequently used to describe someone who appears happier or more attractive, often reflecting the importance of appearance and social presentation in the city. For instance:
  - "Musaffo havo tobora uning chehrasini ochmoqda" (The fresh air is brightening her face) reflects the figurative use of chehra (face) to suggest a return to a positive emotional state.
- Additionally, expressions like "bet(ing) qursin" (literally, "may your face be cursed") are often used more in informal or emotional contexts, especially in rural dialects, to express frustration or anger. This idiom is more commonly used in spoken language, especially by women, as a way to curse or criticize someone who has caused them grief or embarrassment:
  - "Qiz bo'lmay beting qursin!" (Curse you, girl!) is an example of this idiom being used in emotional outbursts in rural settings, where oral traditions are strong.
- Another notable idiom, "betimda bet qolmadi" (I have no face left), indicates a loss of shame after repeatedly making requests or facing rejection. This idiom is commonly heard in situations of desperation or when someone feels they've lost their dignity through repeated failure:
  - "Shirmon xolangdan so'rayverib, betimda bet qolmadi" (I've asked Aunt Shirmon so many times, I have no face left) illustrates the loss of self-respect after continuously seeking help.

In English, face-related idioms also exhibit regional differences, particularly in the way idioms are used in casual or formal settings. These variations often reflect the social and cultural priorities of different English-speaking regions.

- In British English, idioms like "face the music" (to confront the consequences of one's actions) are commonly used across the country, though their formality can vary by context. In formal or professional settings, this idiom might be used to describe someone taking responsibility for a serious mistake, while in more casual conversations, it can be applied to minor issues:
  - "He knew he had to face the music after missing the deadline."
- In American English, informal idioms such as "off your face" (extremely drunk or under the influence) are more prevalent in casual conversation, especially among younger speakers. This idiom often reflects a more laid-back, colloquial style of speech in comparison to British English, where the expression might be less commonly used:
  - "After the party, he was completely off his face."
- Australian English also features informal face-related idioms, such as "to lose face" (to lose respect or reputation), though this is used less frequently in casual settings. In some regional dialects, this phrase may be replaced by more colloquial expressions to describe embarrassment or shame:

"He was worried he might lose face after the argument with his boss."

While face-related idioms generally share common meanings across regions in both languages, the degree of formality, frequency of use, and specific cultural contexts in which they are employed can differ. For instance, in Uzbek, the idiom "betga choparlik" (speaking bluntly without regard for others) may be used more in rural regions, where directness is often a characteristic of interpersonal communication, while urban areas may place a greater emphasis on politeness and indirect speech. Similarly, in English, idioms like "with egg on your face" may be used more frequently in casual or humorous situations in the United States, while in formal contexts, more neutral expressions might be chosen to describe embarrassment.

Regional variations in face-related idioms in both English and Uzbek illustrate the cultural and geographical diversity within these languages.

### Discussion

The comparative analysis of face-related idioms in English and Uzbek highlights both shared cognitive themes and distinct cultural differences shaped by the respective social, historical, and linguistic contexts of each language. While the face serves as a universal metaphor for emotions, social standing, and personal honor in both languages, the specific cultural connotations and implications of these idioms reveal important insights into how English-speaking and Uzbek-speaking societies conceptualize social behavior, accountability, and reputation.

Across both English and Uzbek, the face is a central metaphor for expressing internal states and social behaviors. Idioms related to the face are commonly used to convey emotions such as embarrassment, fear, and shame. As discussed in the Results section, idioms like "yuzidan qoni qochdi" and "turned white as a sheet" reflect a shared cognitive link between facial expressions and emotional shock in both languages. This cognitive link between facial expressions and emotions underscores a shared human experience, where the face is universally recognized as a visible manifestation of one's inner state.

Moreover, both languages use the face to symbolize social behavior and moral standing. Idioms like "to save face" in English and "yuzini saqlamoq" in Uzbek reflect a common concern for maintaining dignity and avoiding shame. These idioms demonstrate how the face is metaphorically tied to an individual's or community's sense of honor and reputation, highlighting a cognitive universal where human interactions and social judgment are closely linked to facial expressions.

While cognitive patterns are shared, the cultural significance of these idioms differs notably between English and Uzbek due to contrasting social values. Uzbek face-related idioms often emphasize collective honor and social responsibility, where an individual's actions can affect the reputation of their family and community. For instance, the idiom "yuzini yerga qaratmoq" (to bow someone's face to the ground) represents bringing shame not only to oneself but also to one's relatives and social group. In contrast, English idioms like "with egg on your face" or "to face the music" focus more on individual embarrassment or personal accountability, emphasizing an individualist worldview where the consequences of actions are primarily borne by the individual.

In Uzbek culture, the face is deeply tied to social honor and communal values, as seen in idioms like "betga chopar bo'lmoq" (to speak bluntly without concern for others' feelings). This idiom reflects a cultural norm where interpersonal communication is evaluated based on how it affects the collective, and failing to consider others' feelings can be seen as a moral failing. In contrast, in English, similar directness might not carry the same moral weight, as individual expression is often more accepted in Western societies. This demonstrates how face idioms in Uzbek are embedded within a collectivist culture that values respect, honor, and social harmony, while English idioms tend to reflect an individualist orientation.

Both languages exhibit idioms that highlight the importance of public reputation, but the contexts in which these idioms are used reflect different cultural emphases. In English, idioms like "to face the music" signify personal responsibility, often in professional or formal settings where individuals are held accountable for their actions. This idiom suggests a clear, individualistic approach to dealing with mistakes or failures, where the burden falls on the person who made the error.

In contrast, Uzbek idioms like "betimda bet qolmadi" (I have no face left) demonstrate the deep connection between personal actions and social perceptions. The repeated act of asking for help or

favors until one's dignity is lost shows how much importance is placed on social reputation, especially in close-knit communities where every action is scrutinized. This idiom captures the cultural expectation that one must carefully maintain their social standing to avoid losing face in the eyes of others.

Regional variations in both English and Uzbek also reflect how localized dialects and cultural influences shape the use of face-related idioms. In Uzbek, idioms such as "betga choparlik qilmoq" (to be blunt without regard for others) are more commonly used in rural areas, where directness and honesty are valued in interpersonal communication. Conversely, in urban settings, expressions like "chehrasini ochmoq" (to brighten one's face) are more prevalent, indicating a greater focus on personal appearance and emotional expression in the city. These regional differences highlight the adaptability of idiomatic expressions based on local customs and social dynamics.

These findings support the notion that while metaphorical expressions in both languages share **universal cognitive foundations**, their specific meanings and usage are deeply intertwined with **historical and socio-cultural influences**. By examining these idioms through a comparative lens, this study emphasizes how face-related expressions contribute to shaping cultural identity, cognitive awareness, and interpersonal relationships in different linguistic communities.

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