



## Cultural Semantics of Evaluation: A Linguocultural Study of *Good/Bad* and *Yaxshi/Yomon* in English and Uzbek

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**Abstract:** While culture is considered the most essential indicator and distinctive feature of both the individual and society, then language, as the primary tool of communication in human life and social interaction, occupies a crucial and irreplaceable place. In other words, language and culture are inseparable; they represent two interdependent parts reflecting one another. But what is culture, essentially? "Culture is an intangible force that organizes the world and incorporates it into a system of human values."<sup>1</sup> Since culture organizes the world, it inevitably structures language as well—playing a role in its formation and manifesting itself through it.

The lifestyle and consciousness of any society, as well as the language it employs, are intimately connected to its culture. Indeed, the culture of a people is directly reflected in their language and vocabulary. For example, the Uzbek word “маҳалла” does not have an exact equivalent in English. Although it is often translated as “neighbourhood,” the English term fails to fully convey the socio-cultural meaning embedded in “маҳалла” within Uzbek culture. This is primarily due to the absence of the маҳалла institution and the related social concept in English society.

**Key words:** paremiology, phraseological units, semantics, culture, linguoculturology.

Numerous other examples of such culture-bound lexical items can be cited from Uzbek, including: эл-юрт, маҳалла, қариндош-уруф, шарм, ҳаё, ибo, юз-хотир,

<sup>1</sup> Mamatov, A. E. Zamonaviy lingvistika. — Toshkent: Fan va texnologiya, 2020. —B. 4.



кўшничилик, беточар, юзкўрди, келинсалом, кўрмана, суюнчи, кулча, чопон, калтача, мурсак, тиллақош, салла, кўрпача, палов, куртоба, мошхўрда, атала, чиллик. These words reflect the unique cultural and mental characteristics of the Uzbek people and, as such, lack direct equivalents in other languages—especially in European tongues—because the underlying concepts or material realities they denote do not exist in those cultures. As a result, such terms are untranslatable in a single lexical unit.

Conversely, consider certain English words and expressions such as posh, gobsmacked, twee, cheeky, miffed, broolly, guttled, kerfuffle and chuffed. These lexical items are deeply intertwined with British culture and express nuances of lifestyle and social attitudes that are difficult to render precisely in other languages—particularly Uzbek—through a single equivalent word.

In such cases, the most appropriate approach in translation is to render the term using the most contextually suitable alternative word or, where necessary, employ a descriptive translation that explains the cultural meaning behind the term.<sup>2</sup>

Below, we present a comparative analysis of several idioms containing the components good, bad, and their Uzbek equivalents yaxshi and yomon. In the Uzbek phraseological unit яхши жой (“a good family”), the primary implication is not material prosperity, but rather a peaceful, well-mannered household where human values are respected and children are raised with proper moral education. Only secondarily does this idiom refer to the family’s financial stability or affluence. That is, the Uzbek worldview—emphasizing patience, the sanctity of family, and the aspiration to live in harmony—prioritizes these qualities within the phrase яхши жой, relegating economic status to a secondary role.

In addition to being used freely in everyday speech, this idiom also appears in the form of a blessing or well-wishing expression such as яхши жойлардан ато этсин (“May they come from a good family”). In contrast, within Western culture—particularly in English-speaking societies—the concept of a good match for marriage tends to place

<sup>2</sup> Oxford University Press. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. –<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/>



significant emphasis on the financial standing of the prospective partner. The idea of a marriageable individual's wealth plays a crucial role, often surpassing personal or moral qualities.

In the following context, we observe the usage of the idiom **bad blood**, first recorded in a work by William Shakespeare and widely used in modern English. The excerpt reads: “...with such alterations as suited her; bade them take good heed of the child, for she came of bad blood; and told them she was illegitimate, and sure to go wrong at one time or other.”<sup>3</sup>

Although bad blood originally appears in Shakespeare's work to describe the long-standing conflict between the Montagues and the Capulets, in modern English dictionaries it is defined as “resentment, animosity, or inherited hostility between individuals, families, or groups.”

However, in the context quoted above, the idiom carries a markedly different meaning: “...She didn't quite rely, however, on their discontent and poverty for the child's unhappiness, but told the history of the sister's shame, with such alterations as suited her; bade them take good heed of the child, for she came of bad blood.”<sup>3</sup>

Given this context, the idiom bad blood could be rendered into Uzbek using several culturally appropriate phraseological equivalents, such as қони бузук, қони суюк, палаги тоза эмас, палаги нотоза, or, in milder form, номуносиб оиладан чиққан (“from a disreputable family”). This example illustrates that phraseological units may acquire context-dependent semantic shifts beyond their conventional dictionary definitions.

From a linguocultural perspective, both bad blood in English and зоти бузук in Uzbek reflect deeply rooted cultural beliefs about lineage and moral upbringing. In both traditions, a person's family background—especially their perceived moral integrity—is regarded as significant not only for the individual but also for their descendants. It is understood that those who come from a morally compromised or socially disapproved lineage may face societal rejection or prejudice, regardless of their personal innocence or

<sup>3</sup> Dickens, Ch. Oliver Twist. — New York: James G. Gregory, 46 Walker Street, 1861. — P. 293.



achievements. This reflects a collective perception that both individual and inherited traits determine one's social evaluation.

Moreover, the lexical items blood and qon serve as cultural metaphors in both languages, highlighting the shared cultural emphasis on lineage, ancestry, and genetic inheritance as meaningful social categories.

Another example of phraseological comparison is the English idiom **bad business**, which is often translated into Uzbek as ёмон иш. Both idioms share the core component bad / yomon, indicating a parallel evaluative structure across both languages. This reveals that morally or socially disapproved actions are universally identified through negative lexemes.

For instance: A bad business this, madame, of Gaspard's execution. Ah! the poor Gaspard! Translation: Хоним, Гаспарднинг қатл этилиши ёмон иш бўлибди! Еҳ, bechora Gaspard! Or in another example: “Ёмон иш бўлди,” деди секин. “Энди судга беради.”<sup>4</sup>

Both idioms convey a negative evaluative tone, expressing condemnation or regret over a particular event or action. The semantic core of both expressions lies in the lexemes bad / ёмон, indicating a shared conceptualization of negativity or immorality in both cultures. The phrases bad business and ёмон иш are semantically equivalent in expressing disapproval, ethical wrongdoing, or emotional reaction to a regrettable event.

Nevertheless, despite these semantic parallels, there is also a notable linguocultural difference between the two: In English, bad business is typically used with a rational, metonymic tone and may appear in formal or analytical discourse. In contrast, in Uzbek, ёмон иш tends to be more emotionally charged and is commonly used in colloquial and expressive speech, reflecting the emotional and culturally embedded nature of Uzbek evaluative expressions.

<sup>4</sup> Hoshimov, O'. *Dunyoning ishlari: qissa*. – Toshkent: Yoshlar nashriyot uyi, 2018. – B. 85.



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