

A Linguocultural Analysis of Folk-Based Phraseological Units in Isajon Sulton's Short Stories

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the folkloric sources of phraseological units and their authorial interpretation in the short stories of the prominent Uzbek writer Isajon Sulton. The study focuses on phraseological expressions that have emerged from everyday speech, traditional ways of life, social relations, cultural experience, and the national worldview of the Uzbek people. Particular attention is paid to the transformation of commonly used phraseological units within literary contexts and to the ways in which their semantic, expressive, psychological, and linguocultural potential is expanded by the author. The analysis demonstrates that expressions such as bo'yintovlamoq, qulog'iga gap kirmoq, yonigakirmoq, ko'zingao'tdayko'rinmoq, boshiko'kkayetmoq, changsolmoq, yukiniko'tarmoq, and ko'zqorachig'idekasramoq preserve their folkloric and culturally significant foundations while acquiring additional contextual meanings in Isajon Sulton's narratives. These phraseological units serve not only as expressive linguistic elements but also as important means of revealing characters' psychological states, emotional experiences, inner conflicts, social relationships, and moral values.

Keywords: Phraseological units, folk speech, folkloric sources, authorial interpretation, linguocultural features, literary discourse.

INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most complex and multifaceted social phenomena that plays a fundamental role in human life. It serves not only as a means of communication but also as a repository of a people's worldview, value system, social relations, cultural experience, historical memory, and spiritual heritage. Through language, the way of life, customs, religious beliefs, moral principles, and cultural traditions of a particular community are transmitted from one generation to another. Thus, language should be regarded not merely as a communicative instrument but also as an essential component of national culture and identity (Maslova 2004).

The nature, spirituality, and mentality of a people cannot be adequately understood independently of its language. As N. Mahmudov observes, "linguistic units, particularly figurative words and figurative phraseological expressions, reflect, in one way or another, the distinctive mentality of a people" (Mahmudov 2013). This observation is particularly relevant to phraseological units, which represent one of the most stable and culturally significant layers of a language.

Phraseological units are among the oldest and most stable elements of the linguistic and cultural heritage of a people. They arise from centuries of collective experience, everyday life, social relations, traditions, beliefs, and figurative perceptions. Consequently, phraseological units constitute an important linguistic manifestation of national thought and cultural memory. Their significance extends beyond their purely linguistic function, since they frequently encode culturally specific concepts and reflect the historical and social experience of their speakers.

Unlike ordinary nominative lexical units, phraseological units are characterized by structural stability and semantic integrity. Their overall meaning generally cannot be derived directly from the literal lexical meanings of their individual components. Instead, their semantic content is formed through metaphorical transfer, imagery, connotative associations, and emotional-expressive meanings. In many cases, phraseological

expressions preserve traces of historical events, religious beliefs, national customs, social practices, and cultural values.

From a linguocultural perspective, phraseological units are therefore particularly valuable because they function as repositories of collective knowledge and cultural codes. Their use in literary discourse enables authors not only to reproduce elements of folk speech but also to reinterpret traditional cultural meanings in accordance with an individual artistic worldview.

This aspect is especially significant in the literary works of the contemporary Uzbek writer IsajonSulton. His stories contain numerous phraseological expressions that originate from the folk linguistic tradition but acquire additional semantic, stylistic, and aesthetic meanings within the author's individual artistic context. The transformation and reinterpretation of traditional phraseological units in his works demonstrate the interaction between collective linguistic memory and individual authorial creativity.

The present study therefore focuses on the folk sources of phraseological units employed in IsajonSulton's stories and examines the ways in which these traditional expressions are interpreted and artistically transformed by the author. Particular attention is paid to the relationship between the folk-cultural foundations of phraseological units and their contextual realization in literary discourse.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The linguistic material of the study consists primarily of phraseological units identified in Isajon Sulton's stories. The analysis also draws upon Uzbek phraseological and explanatory dictionaries, scholarly works on phraseology and linguoculturology, and previous studies devoted to the language and literary style of Isajon Sulton.

The prominent Uzbek linguist A. Shomaqsudov identifies three major sources contributing to the enrichment of the phraseological fund of a language:

1. the living vernacular and spoken language;
2. expressions originating from literary and bookish styles;
3. phraseological expressions borrowed from other languages (Shomaqsudov 1970).

This classification demonstrates that the formation and development of phraseological units are closely associated with both linguistic and extralinguistic factors. In particular, phraseological expressions are shaped by the socio-political life of a community, its worldview, customs, historical experience, traditions, and cultural values.

The formation of phraseological units cannot therefore be explained exclusively through internal linguistic processes. Their emergence and semantic development are closely interconnected with the cultural environment in which the language functions. Folk traditions, collective memory, everyday practices, social relationships, religious beliefs, and historical experience may all serve as sources for the creation and preservation of phraseological expressions.

The structural and semantic complexity of phraseological units presents an additional challenge for linguistic analysis. Their semantic integrity may differ considerably from the formal structure of their constituent components. Furthermore, a discrepancy may occur between the actual meaning of a phraseological unit in contemporary speech and its original or etymological meaning. These characteristics make phraseological units particularly significant objects of linguistic and linguocultural investigation.

The correct interpretation and use of phraseological expressions consequently require a thorough understanding of their semantic structure, contextual function, stylistic properties, and cultural background. In literary discourse, this issue becomes even more important because an author may intentionally modify an established phraseological expression, expand or narrow its meaning, alter its structural components, or place it in an unexpected contextual environment.

A number of linguistic studies have addressed the literary language and artistic style of Isajon Sulton. In addition, D.

Nasriyeva has examined his works at the dissertation level, focusing particularly on linguocultural units occurring in his texts. Her research demonstrates the role of such units in text formation and provides a contextual-discursive analysis of their functioning.

The study of linguocultural units in literary texts is important because such units perform functions that extend beyond aesthetic expression. They may simultaneously represent the author's national worldview, cultural perceptions, historical memory, and figurative mode of thinking. In Isajon Sulton's works, linguistic and phraseological units similarly contribute to the representation of national identity, traditional values, cultural memory, and spiritual heritage.

Within the framework of the present study, phraseological units are analyzed using a combination of descriptive, semantic, contextual, structural, linguocultural, and linguopoetic methods. The descriptive method is used to identify and classify phraseological units occurring in the selected literary texts. Semantic analysis is applied to determine their literal, figurative, connotative, and contextual meanings. Contextual analysis makes it possible to identify semantic and stylistic changes occurring in the process of literary realization. Structural analysis is used to examine modifications in the lexical and grammatical composition of established phraseological expressions. The linguocultural approach is employed to identify the national-cultural codes and collective experiences encoded in the expressions, while the linguopoetic approach helps reveal their artistic and aesthetic functions within the literary text.

Particular attention is given to the distinction between the folk source of a phraseological unit and its authorial interpretation. A phraseological expression may originate in the collective linguistic experience of the people, while its contextual meaning in a literary work may be substantially enriched by the author. In such cases, the writer does not merely reproduce a traditional expression but incorporates it into an individual artistic system, thereby generating additional semantic, emotional, and aesthetic nuances.

Accordingly, the phraseological units found in Isajon Sulton's stories can be considered at two interconnected levels: first, as manifestations of the collective linguistic and cultural heritage of the Uzbek people; and second, as elements of the writer's individual artistic language. The interaction of these two levels constitutes one of the central objects of the present research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Phraseological units in the language of a people provide valuable insights into its distinctive culture, historical development, way of life, and even national character. They preserve elements of collective experience and cultural memory and, when incorporated into literary discourse, may acquire additional semantic and stylistic meanings. For example:

Do you remember those who worked in the snow that fell heavily, in the spring rains, and during the scorching summer heat? Those kinds of work seemed very difficult to both you and me. Since our father ordered us to do them, we completed them reluctantly, resisting all the while. (I. Sulton, 'The Friend')

The phraseological unit *bo'yintovlamog* (to resist; to be reluctant to carry out something; to refuse to perform a required task) is widespread in Uzbek folk speech and is one of the expressions that developed from everyday life experience. Primarily, the expression denotes "refusing to perform an action or task that one is expected to carry out." In spoken language, *bo'yintovlamog* is frequently used in situations related to social relations, family life, or labour, concisely expressing the conflict between obligation and personal desire.

The formation of this expression is closely associated with the traditional way of life of the Uzbek people. The component *bo'yin* ("neck") is culturally associated with obedience, submission, and responsibility. While lexical units generally name events, facts, processes, and situations, phraseological units are capable of expressing sorrow, emotion, feelings, psychological states, and personal qualities (Royenzon & Avaliani).

In the cited passage, the expression is also associated with childhood memories. Although the characters perform the work assigned to them by their father, they do so not willingly but out of obligation. The characters do not openly resist their father; nevertheless, they experience an internal sense of dissatisfaction. The simplicity of the expression and its accessibility to members of the speech community give it a distinctly folk character, allowing it to function naturally in a wide range of everyday situations.

In the authorial interpretation, however, *bo'yintovlamog* functions not merely as an ordinary colloquial expression but as an artistic device conveying memory and emotional experience. It reveals the characters' attitude toward compulsory labour during childhood and portrays the subtle psychological tension between obedience and inner resistance. In this way, the phraseological unit is adapted to the literary context, enhancing the naturalness and credibility of the narrative.

Furthermore, the repeated use of the verb contributes an additional emotional colouring and intensifies the atmosphere of dissatisfaction. Consequently, characteristics typical of oral speech are transferred into the literary text. The expression thus places emphasis not simply on the fact that the action was performed but on the manner and emotional circumstances in which it was performed. This demonstrates that Isajon Sulton incorporates elements characteristic of folk speech into his literary texts in a natural and purposeful manner.

As U. Nosirova points out, the linguistic representation of the world in poetic texts is characterized by the author's perceptions and worldview underlying the lines, his ability to transform lexical resources into poetic expressions, to provide linguistic means with poetic colouring, and to depict diverse linguopoetic features expressing different attitudes toward the events of a particular period (Nosirova). Phraseological units, similes, and figurative expressions are particularly significant among such devices. Through them, literary texts reflect not only an individual authorial style but also the cultural perceptions of a particular historical period and nation.

The linguist D. Khudoyberganova notes that many scholars concerned with speech production recognize the existence of an intermediate stage in the formation of speech, during which not only the content of an utterance but also its pragmatic characteristics are represented (Khudoyberganova 2013). When creating a literary work, a writer reflects reality through his or her individual self and expresses a personal attitude toward it, selecting particular linguistic means capable of conveying the essence of these perceptions.

The ability to employ cognitive knowledge and linguistic resources varies from one individual to another. In this respect, the literary texts of Isajon Sulton are so deeply intertwined with philosophical, national, religious, and social factors that these dimensions cannot easily be separated from one another.

For example:

You asked me three or four times, 'Let us go, I am very cold... I will become seriously ill in this condition,' but I stubbornly held on to my decision. Could I have listened to anyone at that time? I was living as though the world existed through love, and I was at a time when I did not even understand the difference between love and affection. (I. Sulton, 'The Friend')

The phraseological unit "qulog'iga gap kirmoq" (*to listen to reason; to heed what someone says*) generally denotes a state in which a person fails to understand or heed what is being said to them because of distraction, intense excitement, or preoccupation. In everyday speech, the expression is often used with a tone of reproach, dissatisfaction, or irony, particularly in relation to a person's stubbornness or obstinacy.

In the story, however, the function of the phraseological unit is considerably expanded. Its use in the rhetorical form *U mahalquloqqa gap kirarmidi?* ("Could I have listened to anyone at that time?") does not simply express reproach. Rather, it represents the narrator's retrospective reinterpretation of his former psychological state from the perspective of the present.

At the same time, the phraseological unit is employed within a cause-and-effect relationship: the character is unable to heed

what is being said because he is stubborn and obstinate. Yet the passage identifies the deeper reason for his inability to listen as his emotional preoccupation with love. The expression therefore does not indicate indifference; instead, it represents a temporary impairment of perception caused by an overwhelming emotional state.

The rhetorical-question form further intensifies the emotional and connotative force of the expression. Through the question *U mahalquloqqa gap kirarmidi?*, the character adopts a critical attitude toward his own past behaviour. Moreover, the expression is closely connected with the philosophical reflections on love that follow in the passage. When the character regarded love as the sole meaning of life, the needs and condition of the person close to him were relegated to a secondary position. This contextual relationship considerably broadens the semantic range of the phraseological unit.

In this regard, B. Yo'ldoshev emphasizes that, when using a phraseological unit, it is necessary to take into account not only its stylistic characteristics but also its expressive and evaluative colouring (Yo'ldoshev 1998).

Another example can be found in the story 'Bo'ri' ('The Wolf'):

Days and months passed, and the children grew up. Life is difficult; without striving and working hard, one simply cannot manage. Is it easy to feed and raise children? Father had passed away, mother was ill, and the children were growing up. I struggled on alone. There was no one to stand by me or share my burden. I had so many worries that sometimes I wanted to leave everything behind and disappear somewhere. (I. Sulton, 'The Wolf')

The phraseological unit *yonigakirmoq* is widely used in Uzbek colloquial speech and primarily conveys the meaning of "to support someone and provide assistance." In everyday communication, it is used to express the idea of not abandoning someone in a difficult situation and sharing their difficulties.

Thus, the expression does not denote physical proximity but rather responsibility, solidarity, and emotional support. In Uzbek

cultural cognition, the concept of *yon* (“side”) is associated with being a source of support, protection, and companionship, whereas the verb *kirmoq* (“to enter”) here indicates an action involving the assumption of responsibility rather than mere physical movement.

Consequently, *yonigakirmoq* in folk speech expresses an unwillingness to remain indifferent to another person’s situation and a readiness to provide practical assistance.

In the cited passage, the expression is used in precisely this sense but against a particularly strong psychological background. When the character states, *yonimgakiradigan, hamdardbo ‘ladiganbironkimsayo ‘q* (“there is no one to stand by me and share my sorrow”), he does not merely refer to the absence of someone with whom to communicate or share feelings. Rather, he refers to the absence of a person who could help alleviate the burdens of everyday life and share responsibility.

The phrase therefore expresses not simply loneliness but the character’s profound need for a confidant, companion, and source of support. The death of the father, the illness of the mother, and the children’s growing up leave the character socially and psychologically isolated. Thus, the phraseological unit becomes an artistic device that reveals the increasing burden of responsibility in the character’s life and the urgent need for support. This example clearly demonstrates how a folk phraseological expression may acquire greater semantic depth when transferred from everyday speech into literary discourse.

A further example is found in the story “Ozor”:

Yes, all of you ganged up on my father and tormented him terribly, didn’t you? He endured everything and never said a word. Now I understand that the poor man endured it all for the sake of his children. And you – with your cheeks bright red – have come before us claiming that our father is lying there in need of good deeds, trying to make yourself appear righteous?”
(I. Sulton, ‘Ozor’)

The phraseological unit *tishinitishigaqo ‘ymoq* expresses the meaning of “to endure emotional distress through strength of will

and self-control.” Clenching one’s teeth when angry or experiencing pain is a natural physical reaction. In the literary context, however, the expression denotes more than a physical state: it conveys the character’s inner condition, endurance, and ability to withstand suffering.

In some cases, the repeated use of a phraseological unit within a character’s speech serves to intensify the figurative effect generated by that expression and to extend its “radiation” of imagery throughout the text.

For example:

Whenever I moved, I feared that one of those venomous creatures might pass over me and harm my children, so I endured their bites with my teeth clenched. Those scorpions drank my blood.” (I. Sulton, ‘Ozor’)

In the first example, *tishinitishigaqo ‘ymoq* is used in the sense of enduring psychological suffering, whereas in the latter context it acquires a more concrete meaning, referring to enduring physical pain. Thus, the same phraseological unit demonstrates contextual semantic variation depending on the nature of the suffering experienced by the character.

Another illustrative example occurs in ‘Ona yurt’ (“Motherland”):

Your friends have grown into fully grown men now... Whenever I see them in the street, I run up and ask about you by taking them by the shoulder. When you are not here, even they look as dear to me as fire. (I. Sulton, ‘Motherland’)

The phraseological expression *ko ‘zimgao ‘tdayko ‘rinadi* is widespread in spoken Uzbek and has developed from everyday experience. It is generally used to express the idea that someone or something is attractive, dear, or pleasing to the speaker. In ordinary communication, the expression conveys the importance and emotional value of a person through a vivid image.

Its folk character is reinforced by its formation from simple and universally familiar lexical components such as *ko ‘z* (“eye”) and *o ‘t* (“fire”). Within everyday cultural perception, the image

of fire is associated with warmth and brightness and consequently conveys a positive evaluation.

In the authorial interpretation, however, the expression conveys more than the notion of attraction or affection. It also evokes associations with love, joy, childhood, and longing. Phraseological units in literary texts therefore function not only as devices for describing events but also as important means of revealing the inner psychological states of characters.

Although the national and cultural characteristics of communicative speech have been examined from various perspectives within linguistics, psycholinguistics, and general psychology, the internal psychological mechanisms of this phenomenon and its modes of representation in literary texts have not yet been sufficiently systematized (Sorokin 1974). In particular, the potential of folk speech units formed in communication to represent a character's psychological state within literary contexts requires further attention.

Folk phraseological units used in literary works, although originating in everyday speech, may acquire the function of psychological devices that figuratively reveal a character's inner experiences, emotional preoccupation, psychological resistance, or regret. In our view, the significance of such expressions in literary discourse lies in their ability to represent a character's psychological state through culturally established and cognitively familiar images. As a result, the reader can more readily perceive and interpret the character's internal condition, while an abstract emotional process becomes concretely visualized through a familiar figurative structure. For example:

My home and table are always open. Whenever someone comes in, I gladly put before them whatever I have found and prepared; sometimes there is plenty, sometimes very little. Whenever someone comes to visit me, I am overjoyed. (I. Sulton, 'The Wolf')

The phraseological unit *boshiko 'kkayetmoq* literally evokes the image of one's "head reaching the sky" and figuratively means "to be extremely happy; to experience great joy." It expresses an intense state of happiness and inner satisfaction.

In everyday speech, the expression is commonly used in situations involving unexpected success, attention, kindness, or other circumstances producing a particularly high degree of happiness. It therefore enables speakers to represent an emotional state metaphorically rather than naming it directly.

Within the literary context, *boshiko'kkayetmoq* becomes an important psychological device for revealing the character's inner state. Although the character's happiness in the cited passage is associated with the arrival of a visitor, this happiness is not based on material abundance. Instead, it is connected with the feeling of being remembered, valued, and respected. For the character, someone's coming to visit represents one of the greatest sources of happiness in life, and the phraseological unit places precisely this emotional state at the centre of the narrative.

The expression is thus based on the metaphorical modelling of a psychological state, transforming an abstract feeling of happiness into a culturally familiar spatial image.

A further example is found in the following passage from "Bo'ri" ("The Wolf"):

With this pain, I have struggled through various kinds of work. There were times when some people tried to seize what belonged to me, and there were times when I managed to tear myself away from their grasp. Life itself has wounded me, and sometimes I, like a wounded creature, lick and tend those wounds. Yet my children, sleeping peacefully, know nothing of this; sometimes they smile, sometimes they sleep with innocent dreams of childhood. (I. Sulton, "The Wolf")

The expression *changsolmoq* used in this passage conveys the meanings "to attack persistently" and "to attempt to appropriate something unlawfully." In folk speech, it may describe unjustified external interference in a person's life or attempts to obstruct another person's honest labour.

In everyday communication, *changsolmoq* may be used in relation to deliberately damaging someone's work, livelihood, interests, or reputation. In this respect, the expression does not necessarily denote direct physical violence; rather, it represents indirect harm through a vivid figurative image.

Within the literary text, however, the expression functions as a psychological marker revealing the character's conflictual relationship with the external environment. Through the construction *rizqimgachangsolib* ("interfering with my livelihood"), the author does not enumerate the injustices experienced by the character individually. Instead, they are incorporated into a single semantic chain. As a result, the reader perceives the character's suffering not as a series of isolated events but as a generalized emotional experience.

Importantly, the phraseological unit does not explicitly describe the character's psychological pain. Rather, the image expressed by *changsolmoq* represents a condition experienced through suffering and endurance. Although the character succeeds in escaping from these adversities – *changalidanyulibolgan* ("tearing oneself from its grasp") – their traces remain in his psychological state and develop into the image of *yaralarniyalab-yulqash* ("licking and tending one's wounds"), which is associated with inner regret and emotional suffering.

The author's association of this painful experience with childhood, innocence, and purity creates a strong contrast within the text. The depiction of evil against a background of childlike innocence evokes a powerful emotional and imaginative response in the reader.

Thus, a folk phraseological expression becomes an important artistic device for creating psychological contrast within the literary text.

DISCUSSION

The analyzed examples demonstrate that phraseological units of folk origin perform a dual function in Isajon Sulton's stories. At the first level, they preserve the collective linguistic and cultural experience of the Uzbek people. At the second level, their contextual realization allows the author to reinterpret and enrich their conventional meanings in accordance with the psychological and aesthetic requirements of the narrative.

The analysis particularly demonstrates that authorial interpretation may result in the expansion, contextual specification, emotional intensification, or psychological reinterpretation of a phraseological unit. Consequently, the phraseological expression retains its recognizable folk basis while simultaneously becoming an integral component of the author's individual artistic language.

The expressions *bo'yintovlamoq*, *qulog'iga gap kirmoq*, *yonigakirmoq*, *tishinitishigaqo'ymoq*, *ko'zimgao'tdayko'rinmoq*, *boshiko'kkayetmoq* and *changsolmoq* illustrate different mechanisms of contextual reinterpretation. Their meanings are activated and modified by the surrounding narrative context, the psychological state of the characters, the narrator's perspective, and the author's broader philosophical and cultural worldview.

Therefore, phraseological units in Isajon Sulton's stories should not be considered merely fixed expressions reproduced from everyday speech. They constitute dynamic literary elements capable of transmitting cultural memory while simultaneously producing new contextual meanings. Their artistic potential is particularly evident in the representation of psychological states, interpersonal relations, social difficulties, memories, suffering, joy, regret, and longing.

The interaction between folk linguistic tradition and individual authorial creativity consequently represents one of the central features of Isajon Sulton's phraseological style. Through this interaction, conventional expressions acquire new aesthetic functions while retaining their national and cultural identity.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the phraseological units employed in Isajon Sulton's stories are stable linguistic expressions that have developed within the folk speech of the Uzbek people. When incorporated into literary discourse, however, these expressions acquire new semantic and aesthetic dimensions through the author's individual interpretation. By integrating expressions characteristic of folk speech into his literary texts, the writer enhances the naturalness and authenticity of the depicted events

while enriching the speech of his characters with a distinct national and cultural spirit.

Phraseological units such as *bo'yintovlamoq* (to resist or be reluctant to perform a required task), *qulog'iga gap kirmoq* (to fail to heed what is being said), *yonigakirmoq* (to support and assist someone), *ko'zingao'tdayko'rinmoq* (to appear extremely dear or attractive), *boshiko'kkayetmoq* (to be extremely happy), *changsolmoq* (to interfere with or attempt to appropriate something belonging to another), *yukiniko'tarmoq* (to bear or assume a burden), *ko'zqorachig'idekasramoq* (to protect or cherish something with utmost care), and *ko'z-ko'zqilmoq* (to show or display something deliberately) are figurative expressions directly connected with folk life, social relations, and national cultural values.

These expressions embody ethical principles, collective perceptions, and life experiences developed within the national worldview. In literary discourse, they function as important means of representing the characters' psychological experiences, internal conflicts, emotional states, and attitudes toward other people and the surrounding world.

Furthermore, Isajon Sulton does not employ phraseological units merely as ready-made linguistic formulas. He adapts them to the requirements of the literary context, expands or specifies their semantic potential, and strengthens their expressive capacity through grammatical and stylistic devices. Through such contextual modification, conventional phraseological expressions become organically integrated into the narrative structure and contribute to a more comprehensive representation of the depicted reality.

As a result, folk phraseological units acquire additional psychological and aesthetic meanings within the literary text and contribute to a deeper representation of the characters' inner worlds. Their contextual reinterpretation demonstrates the creative interaction between collective linguistic heritage and individual authorial expression.

Therefore, the phraseological units in Isajon Sulton's stories should be regarded not only as stable linguistic units but also as significant repositories of national thought, cultural experience,

collective memory, and artistic expression. Their use demonstrates how the resources of folk language can be creatively transformed within literary discourse while preserving their cultural identity and simultaneously generating new semantic and aesthetic meanings.

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