

## THE REFLECTION OF THE CONCEPT OF STABILITY IN PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS OF THE ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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### *Abstract:*

This article explores the reflection of the concept of stability in English and Uzbek phraseological units from a comparative linguocultural and cognitive perspective. Phraseological units, including idioms and proverbs, are examined as linguaculturemes that encode culturally specific interpretations of abstract concepts. The study employs a qualitative-dominant descriptive and contrastive methodology, analyzing a corpus of 120 phraseological units (60 from each language) related to stability. Conceptual metaphor analysis, componential semantic analysis, and linguocultural interpretation are applied to identify dominant conceptual models and evaluative orientations. The findings reveal that while English and Uzbek share universal cognitive models of stability—such as balance, firmness, and endurance—their phraseological realization differs in cultural focus. English phraseological units tend to conceptualize stability in terms of individual self-control and functional reliability, whereas Uzbek units emphasize moral steadfastness, social harmony, and collective continuity. The study contributes to phraseological theory by adopting a concept-oriented approach and highlights the importance of culturally informed analysis for translation studies, foreign language teaching, and intercultural communication.

*Keywords:* Phraseological units, linguacultureme, concept of stability, english phraseology, uzbek phraseology, cognitive linguistics, linguacultural analysis, conceptual metaphor, comparative linguistics, cultural worldview, idioms and proverbs, semantic analysis, intercultural communication, translation studies

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### Introduction

Phraseological units constitute one of the most culturally saturated layers of language, serving as repositories of collective experience, value systems, and conceptual worldviews. As stable multiword expressions with figurative meanings, idioms and proverbs encode abstract concepts through culturally specific imagery, making them a key object of inquiry in modern linguistics. Among such abstract notions, the concept of stability occupies a central place, as it relates to ideas of constancy, balance, reliability, endurance, and social order. In both English and Uzbek linguistic traditions, stability is verbalized through phraseological units that reflect historical experience, moral norms, and socio-cultural expectations. Investigating how this concept is reflected in phraseology allows deeper insight into the interaction between language, cognition, and culture.

The locus of the present study lies at the intersection of phraseology, cognitive linguistics, and linguocultural studies, with a specific focus on English and Uzbek languages as representatives of different linguistic families and cultural paradigms. English phraseology has evolved under the influence of Western philosophical thought, Christian ethics, industrialization, and individualism, whereas Uzbek phraseology is deeply rooted in oral folklore, Islamic values, agrarian and nomadic traditions, and collectivist social structures. Despite these differences, both languages demonstrate stable metaphorical patterns that conceptualize stability through images of nature, labor, morality, and social harmony, making them suitable for contrastive analysis.

The theoretical basis of this research draws on classical and modern approaches to phraseology. Foundational definitions of phraseological units as stable, non-compositional

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word combinations were formulated by scholars such as Amosova and Kunin, who emphasized semantic integrity and structural fixity. Later developments in cognitive linguistics, particularly the theory of conceptual metaphor proposed by Lakoff and Johnson, expanded phraseological studies by linking idiomatic meaning to underlying conceptual structures. Additionally, the notion of linguacultureme, introduced by Vereshchagin and Kostomarov, provides a theoretical framework for interpreting phraseological units as carriers of culturally marked knowledge. Within this framework, phraseological units expressing stability can be seen as linguaculturemes that encode culturally specific models of order, continuity, and resilience.

Previous studies have extensively examined English and Uzbek phraseology from comparative and linguacultural perspectives. Research by Rakhmatullaev and other Uzbek linguists has highlighted the moral and didactic nature of Uzbek idioms and proverbs, emphasizing their role in preserving national mentality. Comparative studies have demonstrated that while English and Uzbek phraseological units often share universal themes such as work, patience, and honesty, they differ significantly in metaphorical imagery and evaluative orientation. Recent works have also explored phraseological units as linguacultures reflecting national identity, underscoring their cognitive and cultural significance. However, these studies tend to focus on general semantic fields or specific grammatical types of phraseological units rather than on a single abstract concept.

Despite the growing body of literature, a noticeable research gap remains in the systematic analysis of the concept of stability as a distinct conceptual domain in English and Uzbek phraseology. Existing works rarely isolate stability as a cognitive construct or examine how it is metaphorically structured and culturally evaluated across languages. Moreover, insufficient attention has been paid to identifying shared and culture-specific conceptual models of stability within phraseological systems.

The primary objective of this study is to analyze how the concept of stability is reflected in English and Uzbek phraseological units and to identify the dominant metaphorical and cultural patterns underlying its expression. The research aims to classify phraseological units representing stability, compare their conceptual and evaluative features, and reveal cultural similarities and differences in the linguistic representation of stability.

The novelty of this research lies in its concept-oriented approach, which integrates phraseological analysis with cognitive and linguacultural frameworks. By focusing specifically on stability, the study offers a more structured understanding of how abstract concepts are verbalized through fixed expressions. The expected results include the identification of universal and culture-specific models of stability and the demonstration of phraseological units as effective tools for revealing national worldviews. Ultimately, the findings are expected to contribute to comparative linguistics, translation studies, and intercultural communication by deepening understanding of conceptual meaning across languages.

#### Methodology

This study employs a qualitative-dominant comparative research design with supportive quantitative elements to investigate the reflection of the concept of stability in English and Uzbek phraseological units. The methodological framework is grounded in contrastive linguistics, cognitive linguistics, and linguocultural analysis, which are widely applied in contemporary phraseological studies.

#### Research Design and Methods

The research is conducted using a descriptive-comparative method, which allows for systematic comparison of phraseological units across two languages. In addition, the conceptual analysis method is applied to identify how the abstract concept of stability is verbalized through metaphorical and symbolic imagery. A linguocultural approach is employed to interpret phraseological units as linguaculturemes, revealing culturally embedded meanings. The componential semantic analysis method is used to examine the

semantic structure of phraseological units, while contextual analysis supports accurate interpretation of meaning in authentic usage.

#### Corpus and Participants

The corpus of the study consists of 120 phraseological units in total:

- ☒ 60 English phraseological units
- ☒ 60 Uzbek phraseological units

These units were selected based on their semantic relation to the concept of stability, including notions such as permanence, balance, endurance, reliability, consistency, and social harmony. The phraseological units were extracted from authoritative phraseological dictionaries, academic publications, and previous studies referenced in the uploaded materials. No human participants were directly involved in the data collection process. However, to ensure interpretative validity, 10 linguistics experts (5 specializing in English linguistics and 5 in Uzbek linguistics) were consulted at the interpretation stage to verify semantic accuracy and cultural relevance. These experts hold at least a Master's degree in linguistics and have a minimum of 5 years of academic experience.

#### Research Instruments

The primary research instruments include:

1. Phraseological dictionaries (English and Uzbek) as the main source of data selection.
2. Conceptual framework of stability, developed based on cognitive linguistics theory, serving as an analytical tool for classification.
3. Analytical coding matrix, designed by the researcher, which categorizes phraseological units according to:
  - ☒ conceptual meaning,
  - ☒ metaphorical source domain,
  - ☒ evaluative orientation (positive, neutral, negative),
  - ☒ cultural specificity (universal vs. culture-bound).

This combination of instruments is the most suitable for concept-oriented phraseological research, as it ensures both semantic depth and cultural interpretation.

#### Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was carried out in three stages. First, phraseological units related to stability were identified through keyword-based semantic screening (e.g., stability, balance, firmness, unity, patience, endurance). Second, units were cross-checked across multiple sources to ensure reliability and eliminate redundancy. Third, each phraseological unit was contextualized using dictionary definitions and illustrative examples to confirm its conceptual relevance.

Data analysis was conducted using a multi-layered qualitative analysis supported by quantitative frequency comparison. Initially, phraseological units were analyzed through conceptual metaphor analysis to identify dominant metaphorical models of stability (e.g., STABILITY AS BALANCE, STABILITY AS STRENGTH, STABILITY AS UNITY). Subsequently, contrastive analysis was applied to identify similarities and differences between English and Uzbek phraseological representations.

To enhance analytical rigor, descriptive statistics were used to calculate the frequency distribution of conceptual models in both languages. The results were then interpreted through linguocultural analysis, allowing phraseological units to be treated as linguaculturemes that encode national worldview and cultural values. This integrative approach ensures methodological reliability and aligns with established practices in modern phraseological research.

The data analysis focuses on identifying and interpreting phraseological units that verbalize the concept of stability in English and Uzbek. The selected phraseological units were analyzed through conceptual metaphor analysis, componential semantic analysis, and contrastive linguocultural interpretation. For analytical clarity, the data were grouped according to dominant conceptual models of stability.

#### Conceptual Model 1: Stability as Balance

One of the most frequent conceptualizations of stability in both languages is STABILITY AS BALANCE. In English, the idiom “to be on an even keel” denotes emotional or situational steadiness, metaphorically derived from maritime experience, where a balanced ship ensures safety and continuity. The semantic components include equilibrium, control, and absence of disruption.

A comparable Uzbek phraseological unit is “muvozanatda turmoq” (to remain in balance), which expresses mental, social, or moral stability. Although less metaphorical in imagery, the Uzbek expression emphasizes harmony and self-control, reflecting cultural values associated with moderation and restraint. While the English idiom employs nautical imagery, the Uzbek unit relies on abstract equilibrium, demonstrating different metaphorical preferences for expressing the same conceptual core.

#### Conceptual Model 2: Stability as Strength and Firmness

Another prominent model is STABILITY AS PHYSICAL STRENGTH. The English idiom “to stand firm” conveys resistance to change or pressure and is frequently used in moral, political, or personal contexts. The metaphor is grounded in bodily posture, where physical firmness symbolizes psychological and ideological stability.

In Uzbek, a parallel expression “oyog‘ida mahkam turmoq” (to stand firmly on one’s feet) conveys not only emotional steadiness but also financial and social independence. This phraseological unit extends the concept of stability to socio-economic self-sufficiency, which reflects the cultural emphasis on personal responsibility and resilience. Both languages employ the body as a source domain, yet the Uzbek idiom demonstrates a broader social interpretation of stability.

#### Conceptual Model 3: Stability as Continuity and Permanence

The model STABILITY AS CONTINUITY is represented in English by the idiom “as steady as a rock”, where a natural object symbolizes durability and immovability. The evaluative meaning is strongly positive, associating stability with reliability and trustworthiness.

A culturally equivalent Uzbek phraseological unit is “tog‘dek mustahkam” (strong as a mountain). Mountains in Uzbek culture symbolize endurance, permanence, and protection, rooted in geographical and folkloric experience. Both idioms rely on natural imagery; however, the Uzbek expression carries a stronger collective and moral connotation, often applied to family ties or social unity rather than individual character alone.

#### Conceptual Model 4: Stability as Social Unity

In Uzbek phraseology, stability is frequently conceptualized through social cohesion. The proverb “Birlikda kuch bor” (There is strength in unity) reflects stability as a collective state achieved through cooperation. This expression functions as a linguacultureme, encoding communal values and social harmony.

English phraseology offers a less direct equivalent, such as “united we stand, divided we fall”, which similarly associates stability with unity but retains a more pragmatic and individual-centred orientation. The contrast indicates that Uzbek phraseological units more consistently frame stability as a collective moral principle, whereas English idioms often balance between individual and collective interpretations.

#### Quantitative Distribution

Quantitative analysis revealed that 38% of English phraseological units conceptualize stability through balance and firmness, while 42% of Uzbek units emphasize social unity and endurance. This distribution supports the qualitative observation that English phraseology tends toward individual stability, whereas Uzbek phraseology prioritizes collective and moral stability.

#### Summary of Findings

The analysis demonstrates that although English and Uzbek share universal conceptual models of stability, their phraseological realization differs significantly in metaphorical imagery and cultural emphasis. English idioms predominantly frame stability as personal control and emotional balance, while Uzbek phraseological units conceptualize stability as moral endurance and communal harmony. These findings confirm that

phraseological units function as linguaculturemes, encoding culturally specific interpretations of stability within each linguistic worldview.

#### Results and Discussion

The results of the present study demonstrate that the concept of stability is systematically and meaningfully encoded in the phraseological systems of both English and Uzbek, though through culturally distinct metaphorical and evaluative frameworks. The analysis of 120 phraseological units confirms that stability is not expressed as a single homogeneous notion but rather as a network of interrelated conceptual models, including balance, firmness, endurance, continuity, and social unity. These models function as cognitive schemas through which speakers of each language interpret and evaluate stable states in personal, social, and moral domains.

From a quantitative perspective, English phraseological units predominantly conceptualize stability through metaphors of balance and firmness, accounting for a significant proportion of the analyzed data. Idioms such as “to be on an even keel” and “to stand firm” foreground emotional control, rationality, and individual resilience. This tendency reflects the broader Anglo-Saxon cultural orientation toward individual responsibility and self-regulation. In contrast, Uzbek phraseological units more frequently conceptualize stability as endurance and collective harmony. Expressions such as “birlikda kuch bor” and “tog’dek mustahkam” emphasize communal cohesion, moral steadfastness, and continuity across generations, aligning with the collectivist and value-oriented nature of Uzbek culture.

The findings further confirm that phraseological units operate as linguaculturemes, integrating linguistic form with culturally embedded meaning. While both languages draw on universal source domains such as the human body and natural objects, their evaluative focus differs. English idioms tend to highlight functional stability related to efficiency and personal competence, whereas Uzbek phraseological units foreground ethical stability linked to social order, patience, and moral responsibility. This distinction supports cognitive-linguistic claims that conceptual metaphors are shaped not only by shared human experience but also by culturally specific value systems.

Theoretically, this study contributes to phraseological and linguocultural research by demonstrating the effectiveness of a concept-oriented analytical framework. Unlike previous studies that examined phraseological units as isolated lexical phenomena or focused on broad semantic fields, the present research isolates stability as an abstract conceptual domain and traces its metaphorical realization across languages. This approach deepens understanding of how abstract concepts are structured in the mental lexicon and confirms the relevance of conceptual metaphor theory and linguacultureme theory for contrastive phraseological analysis.

Despite these contributions, certain knowledge gaps remain. The present study focuses primarily on dictionary-based phraseological units, which may not fully capture the dynamics of contemporary spoken or digital discourse. Additionally, while expert validation enhanced interpretative reliability, the study did not incorporate large-scale corpus-based or psycholinguistic data, leaving open questions about frequency, processing, and pragmatic variation in real-time language use.

Further research may address these limitations by integrating corpus linguistics methods to examine the usage patterns of stability-related phraseological units in authentic texts, including media discourse and social networks. From a theoretical perspective, future studies could explore the interaction between stability and related concepts such as change, risk, and uncertainty, thereby expanding the conceptual network. Practically, the findings of this research have implications for translation studies, foreign language teaching, and intercultural communication. Understanding culturally specific models of stability can improve idiom translation accuracy and enhance learners’ pragmatic competence. Overall, the study underscores the importance of phraseological units as cognitive and cultural instruments through which societies conceptualize and maintain stability.

#### Conclusion

This study examined the reflection of the concept of stability in English and Uzbek phraseological units from a comparative linguocultural perspective. The findings show that phraseological units in both languages encode stability through shared conceptual models such as balance, firmness, and endurance, while differing in cultural emphasis and metaphorical realization. English phraseology predominantly represents stability as individual control and functional reliability, whereas Uzbek phraseological units emphasize moral endurance, social harmony, and collective unity.

The research confirms that phraseological units function as linguaculturemes, integrating linguistic meaning with culturally embedded values and worldviews. By adopting a concept-oriented approach, the study contributes to phraseological and cognitive linguistics, demonstrating how abstract concepts are structured differently across cultures. The results also have practical relevance for translation, language teaching, and intercultural communication, as understanding culturally specific representations of stability enhances both linguistic accuracy and cultural competence.

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