

## THE ANALYSIS OF ORIGIN OF ENGLISH IDIOMS WITH ZOONYM COMPONENT

Nazarova Gulchehra Dilshod qizi

3<sup>rd</sup> year-student at TSPU

Email address: [nazarovagulchehra398@gmail.com](mailto:nazarovagulchehra398@gmail.com)

Scientific supervisor: D.Subanova

**Abstract:** *The image of animals often plays a significant role in the expression of speech in communication. It is obvious that we often use animal related idioms or expressions to explain our feelings or ideas. This article analyses several idioms about animals, distinctive features of their usage and their origin. Some example of animal related idioms and their translations into Uzbek are given in this article.*

**Keywords:** *idiom, zoonyms, origin, meaning, equivalence.*

**Introduction.** Nowadays in our country the government is paying great attention to the development of foreign languages. The process of learning and teaching foreign language is improving day by day according to the development of new methods on this field. It is important to know the culture of the learning language. Thus, the idioms are imaginative expressive means in which they can do our speech nominative, interesting and attractive. Idioms help to understand the culture and literature of the learning language. That is why in this article we try to analyze the idioms which are related to animals.

**Main body.** Before moving on to the analysis of idioms about zoonyms, we had better revise what the term “idiom” signifies. According to the most common definition, idioms are linguistic expressions whose overall meaning cannot be predicted from the meanings of the constituent parts.<sup>1</sup> In other words, idioms are expressions which are difficult to deduce because of their different meanings than the words on it. They help us by making our phrases more exciting and grasping emotions more effectively.

As for the term “zoonym”, it is a linguistic common name for a (species of) animal quotations.<sup>2</sup> So when saying “idioms with zoonym component” we mean “idioms about animals”.

The images of animals have such an important role in the society and, generally all over the world that they have already entered the language matters. In short, people in different nationalities use different idioms containing zoonyms. And there is no doubt

<sup>1</sup> <https://academic.oup.com/applij/article-abstract/17/3/326/159090>

<sup>2</sup> <https://en.m.wiktionary.org/wiki/zoonym>

that the origin of animal component idioms dates back to that animal which is used. It can also be seen in the meaning as well.

**Analysis.** In the following paragraphs we will observe the origins as well as the meaning of several English idioms with zoonym components and their translations into Uzbek is illustrated.

### 1. Dog days

For most people the phrase “dog days” evoke really hot summer days when even dogs can’t move around. But the phrase actually comes from a big and bright star called “Sirius” which means “big dog” in Latin. The dog days happen when Sirius appears to rise alongside the sun. Greeks and Romans thought that when the heat from the two stars combined it made these days the hottest of the year. Dog days last from the beginning of July to the middle of August. So this phrase does not have any connection with real dogs or lazy summer days. Nowadays this phrase can also be used and it has two meanings:

1. The hottest days of the year, which occur in July and August in the Northern hemisphere:

*We spent the dog days of summer in the mountains of Arizona.*

In Uzbek we can express like that: *Ko‘cha jazirama issiq, qaynayapti.*

2. a period in someone’s life or career when they are not having much success or are not making any progress:

*Those were the dog days of the Conservative government.*

### 2. Crying wolf

The phrase “crying wolf” refers to asking for help when it is not needed which results in being ignored when one really does need help. Say, for example, if you cry wolf too often, people will stop believing you.

This idiom is based on Aesop’s fable which is about a young shepherd who tricked people by pretending there was a wolf attacking his sheep and kept on calling the villagers. One day a real wolf came and no one believed him because he had lied before. So the moral of the story is that no one believes a liar even when he is telling the truth:

*The politicians would cry wolf at the slightest provocation so when the real threat appeared no one believed them. – Siyosatchilar eng kichik provokatsiyada dod solib yig‘laydilar, shuning uchun haqiqiy tahdid paydo bo‘lganda ularga hech kim ishonmasdi.*

### 3. No spring chicken



The idiom “no spring” means someone who is considered old. According to, Cambridge Dictionary it is used in negative contexts to refer to someone is no longer young. For example, *I think I look pretty good, considering I am no spring chicken.*

This idiom originated by farmers who needed to sell their chickens while they were still young in the spring. If they did not sell them, the chickens would get older and be significantly less profitable. When farmers tried to sell the old chickens as if they were young, people did not believe it and said they were “no spring chicken”.

*Qarigan tovuqqa o‘xshab fikrlayapsan, – u dedi xotiniga qarata.*

#### 4. Black sheep

The origin of the term “black sheep” refers to a family member who is not liked by others and always in trouble. To illustrate this, she had different interests, and we stupidly thought of her as a black sheep.

This idiom was first used in 1657, when farmers were raising sheep they wanted all their sheep to look the same. But sometimes a sheep would be born that was black instead of white. This sheep was different from the others and shepherds did not like black sheep because their wool could not be dyed. They also believed that black sheep were dangerous and bothered the other sheep:

*Every family has a black sheep.* In Uzbek we can give the following equivalence to this idiom: *Guruch kurmaksiz bo‘lmaydi. Besh qo‘l barobar emas.*

#### 5. Hold your horses

To understand origin of the idiom “hold your horses” we need to go back to the early 1800s when people rode horse-drawn carriages instead of cars. When people wanted the horses to stop or go slower, they would hold reins tightly and pull back. That is where the expression comes from. So “hold your horses” used to be something people said to horses, but now we use it to tell someone to slow down. For instance:

*Just hold your horses, Bill! Let’s think about this for a moment. – Biroz kutib turing, Bill! Keling, bu haqda bir zum o‘ylab ko‘raylik.*

#### 6. White elephant

The phrase “white elephant” comes from Thailand, which was known as Siam in the past. At that time, white or nearly white elephants were very special and valued, so they belonged to the Emperor. They were even on the national flag until 1917.

According to some legends, these special animals were given as “gifts” to anyone who annoyed the Emperors. After that, this animal became a problem because it cost a lot to take care of. However, people could not benefit from those elephants. The situation could also worsen by making owners face problems because of their expensive food and care. So now this term is used for anything useless and costs a lot. For example:

*There needs to be enough money for and endowment fund to maintain these venues because, without it, they become white elephants. – Bu joylarni saqlash uchun yetarli pul va jamgʻarma fondi boʻlishi kerak, chunki bularsiz ular otni kallasiday bir tiyinga qimmat matohga aylanadi.*

**Conclusion.** It can be concluded that animal related idiomatic expressions, namely idioms with zoonym components also vary according to their origin, language and culture as every language has its history.

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- 2.<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/spring-chicken>
- 3.<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/hold-your-horses>