

NATIONAL-CULTURALLY SPECIFIC MODELS OF METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS IN ENGLISH (ON THE EXAMPLE OF IDIOMS, EUPHEMISMS, PERIPHRASES)

A`zamova Dिल्фуза Shofiyevna

Senior Lecturer. Interfaculty Department of Foreign Languages.

Termez State University.

Abstract: This article explores the national-culturally specific models of metaphorical expressions in the English language, focusing on idioms, euphemisms, and periphrases. These figurative devices not only enrich language but also reflect the worldview, historical experiences, and value systems of a linguistic community. Using examples from English, the paper analyzes how metaphorical expressions convey culturally embedded meanings and how they differ from equivalent expressions in other languages. The research reveals that metaphorical language is a cognitive-linguistic mechanism deeply intertwined with culture and social norms.

Keywords: metaphorical expression, national-cultural specificity, idiom, euphemism, periphrasis, conceptual metaphor, English language.

НАЦИОНАЛЬНО-КУЛЬТУРНО-СПЕЦИФИЧЕСКИЕ МОДЕЛИ МЕТАФОРИЧЕСКИХ ВЫРАЖЕНИЙ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ (НА ПРИМЕРЕ ИДИОМ, ЭВФЕМИЗМОВ, ПЕРИФРАЗ)

Азамова Дильфуза Шофиевна

Старший преподаватель. Межфакультетская кафедра иностранных
языков.

Термезский государственный университет.

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматриваются национально-культурно-специфические модели метафорических выражений в английском языке, уделяя особое внимание идиомам, эвфемизмам и перифразам. Эти образные приемы не только обогащают язык, но и отражают мировоззрение, исторический опыт и систему ценностей языкового сообщества. Используя примеры из английского языка, в статье анализируется, как метафорические выражения передают культурно обусловленные значения и чем они отличаются от эквивалентных выражений в других языках. Исследование показывает, что метафорический язык является когнитивно-лингвистическим механизмом, глубоко переплетенным с культурой и социальными нормами.

Ключевые слова: метафорическое выражение, национально-культурная специфика, идиома, эвфемизм, перифраз, концептуальная метафора, английский язык.

Introduction. Language is not only a means of communication but also a mirror of culture, mentality, and collective experience. Among its most culturally loaded elements are metaphorical expressions—idioms, euphemisms, and periphrases—that carry meanings beyond the literal. These expressions serve as keys to understanding the national character, value orientations, and socio-cultural norms of a language community.

The English language, as a global means of communication, is rich in such metaphorical constructs. However, despite globalization and language contact, many metaphorical expressions retain distinct national-cultural features. This article aims to analyze how idioms, euphemisms, and periphrases function in English as culturally specific metaphors and what models underlie their formation.

Theoretical Background. The concept of metaphor as a cognitive and cultural phenomenon was significantly developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), who introduced the theory of *conceptual metaphor*. They argued that metaphors are not merely linguistic devices but rather mental mappings that reflect how humans perceive the world.

Metaphorical expressions, particularly idioms, euphemisms, and periphrases, are fixed or semi-fixed phrases whose meanings cannot be derived directly from the meanings of their individual components. Their cultural specificity lies in their ability to encode values, taboos, traditions, and social attitudes.

Methodology. The study applies a comparative linguistic and cultural analysis of English idioms, euphemisms, and periphrases. Selected expressions are categorized based on their thematic domains (e.g., life and death, bodily functions, social status, emotions, etc.) and analyzed for metaphorical patterns, cultural symbolism, and conceptual metaphors. The analysis also contrasts English expressions with their approximate counterparts in other languages (e.g., Uzbek, Russian, French) to highlight national-cultural specificity.

Analysis and Discussion. Idioms as National-Cultural Metaphors

Idioms often reflect the historical, religious, and mythological heritage of a nation. For example:

“To spill the beans” (to reveal a secret) likely originates from ancient Greek voting practices using beans—cultural context is key.

“Kick the bucket” (to die) reflects an old execution method or slaughterhouse practice in English folklore, with no direct equivalent in many other cultures.

“A white elephant” (a burdensome possession) refers to a Southeast Asian tradition where kings gifted rare but costly elephants—a metaphor retained in English due to colonial-era contact.

These idioms demonstrate how metaphorical imagery is shaped by culturally specific experiences and associations.

Euphemisms and Cultural Taboos. Euphemisms serve to soften direct reference to socially sensitive or taboo topics such as death, bodily functions, or sexuality.

Death: “*Pass away*”, “*go to a better place*”, “*meet one's maker*” reflect Christian religious metaphors and a cultural tendency to avoid direct mention of death.

Bodily functions: “*Use the restroom*”, “*answer nature's call*” replace direct terms like “urinate” with culturally accepted euphemisms.

Sexuality: Terms like “*sleep together*”, “*make love*” are metaphorical periphrases that show politeness strategies in English-speaking cultures.

These euphemisms vary significantly across cultures. For instance, in Uzbek, euphemisms related to death often include expressions such as “*olamdan o'tmoq*” (to pass from the world), also reflecting religious and spiritual beliefs.

Periphrasis and National Cultural Representation. Periphrasis involves describing a concept indirectly, often to elevate or obscure meaning. For example:

- “**The Land of the Free**” for the United States emphasizes national values.
- “**The fairer sex**” for women reflects traditional gender roles.
- “**The big screen**” for cinema emphasizes the grandeur and cultural significance of film.

Periphrastic expressions reflect how English speakers conceptualize certain phenomena within a framework of politeness, respect, or ideological emphasis.

Conceptual Metaphor and Cultural Models. Conceptual metaphors such as “**LIFE IS A JOURNEY**”, “**ARGUMENT IS WAR**”, and “**TIME IS MONEY**” are prevalent in English metaphorical expressions:

- “*He's at a crossroads in life*”
- “*She attacked his point of view*”
- “*Don't waste my time*”

These metaphors reflect individualistic, goal-oriented, and capitalist cultural values in English-speaking societies. By contrast, other cultures might conceptualize life through metaphors of nature, spirituality, or community.

Conclusion. Metaphorical expressions in English are not arbitrary; they are culturally grounded and shaped by history, religion, social norms, and worldview.

Idioms, euphemisms, and periphrases provide insight into English-speaking cultures' values, beliefs, and cognitive patterns.

Understanding these expressions requires not only linguistic but also cultural competence. For foreign language learners and translators, recognizing the national-cultural specificity of metaphorical language is crucial for accurate interpretation and effective cross-cultural communication.

Future research may explore how metaphorical models evolve with cultural change and how global English adapts to multicultural contexts while retaining native metaphorical frames.

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