



MODERN PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION AND THEIR SCIENTIFIC
SOLUTIONS

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE STRUCTURE, SEMANTICS,
AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN ENGLISH
AND RUSSIAN

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Abstract: *This article provides a comparative analysis of phraseological units in English and Russian with a focus on their structural organization, semantic features, and cultural specificity. Phraseological units, as fixed or semi-fixed combinations of words, play a crucial role in shaping national linguistic worldviews and reflecting collective cultural experience. The study examines similarities and differences between English and Russian phraseological systems, identifying typological patterns, semantic shifts, and culturally marked components. Through descriptive, comparative, and contextual analysis, the research highlights how historical development, social values, and cultural traditions influence phraseological meaning and usage in both languages.*

Keywords: *phraseology, idioms, fixed expressions, english language, russian language, semantics, structure, cultural context, linguistic worldview.*

Introduction.

Phraseological units occupy a central position in the lexical systems of languages, serving as a vivid reflection of a nation's historical experience, cultural values, and cognitive patterns. As fixed or semi-fixed combinations of words whose meanings are often not deducible from their individual components, phraseological units represent a unique intersection of language, culture, and thought. In both English and Russian, phraseology functions not only as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a cultural code that preserves collective memory, social norms, and worldview. For this reason, the comparative study of phraseological units in different languages has become an important area of modern linguistics, particularly within the fields of contrastive linguistics, cognitive linguistics, and linguoculturology.

The growing interest in comparative phraseology is обусловлено the processes of globalization, intercultural communication, and the increasing need for accurate translation and interpretation across languages. English and Russian, belonging to different language families and shaped by distinct historical and cultural developments, offer a productive basis for comparative analysis. Despite structural and typological differences, both languages possess rich and diverse systems of phraseological units that





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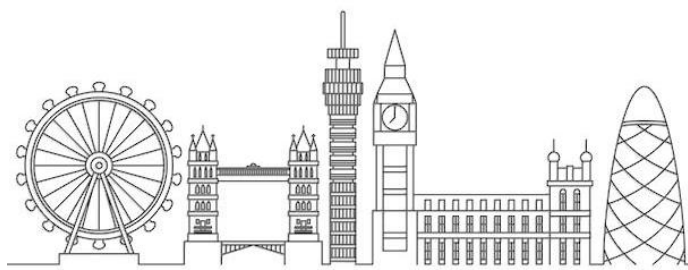
perform similar communicative functions while embodying culturally specific meanings. A comparative analysis of these units makes it possible to identify both universal tendencies in human cognition and nationally marked features conditioned by cultural, social, and historical factors.

From a structural perspective, phraseological units in English and Russian demonstrate varying degrees of stability, idiomaticity, and grammatical organization. English phraseology often relies on concise syntactic models and fixed word order, whereas Russian phraseological units tend to exhibit greater grammatical flexibility due to the inflectional nature of the language. These structural differences influence not only the form of phraseological units but also their usage, stylistic coloring, and functional potential in discourse. A systematic comparison of structural patterns allows for a deeper understanding of how phraseological meaning is constructed and maintained in each language.

Semantically, phraseological units present complex layers of meaning, frequently involving metaphor, metonymy, and symbolic associations. In both English and Russian, many phraseological units are built upon universal human experiences such as labor, emotions, physical sensations, and social relations. However, the semantic interpretation of these experiences often differs due to culturally specific associations. For example, identical conceptual domains may be verbalized through different images, while similar phraseological images may convey divergent evaluative or emotional meanings. The comparative semantic analysis of phraseological units thus reveals how languages encode reality in distinct yet sometimes overlapping ways.

The cultural dimension of phraseological units is particularly significant, as they serve as linguistic markers of national mentality and cultural identity. Phraseological expressions frequently contain references to historical events, folklore, religion, everyday life, and traditional values. In English phraseology, one can observe influences of maritime history, biblical sources, and British social institutions, whereas Russian phraseological units often reflect agrarian culture, Orthodox Christian traditions, and collective social experience. Investigating these cultural contexts allows scholars to uncover implicit cultural meanings that may remain hidden in direct translation and to explain difficulties arising in intercultural communication.

The relevance of this study is further enhanced by its practical implications. A comparative analysis of English and Russian phraseological units contributes to improving translation quality, developing more effective methods of teaching foreign languages, and fostering intercultural competence. Learners of English and Russian often encounter significant challenges in mastering phraseological units due to their idiomatic nature and cultural specificity. Therefore, a systematic description of structural, semantic, and cultural correspondences and divergences between phraseological units in the two languages is of considerable pedagogical value.





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The aim of this article is to conduct a comprehensive comparative analysis of the structure, semantics, and cultural contexts of phraseological units in English and Russian. The study seeks to identify common and distinctive features of phraseological systems in the two languages, to classify types of equivalence and non-equivalence, and to reveal the cultural information encoded in phraseological meaning. By integrating structural, semantic, and cultural approaches, the research aspires to contribute to a deeper understanding of phraseology as a multidimensional linguistic phenomenon and to enrich the theoretical foundations of comparative linguistics.

Main part.

The structural organization of phraseological units in English and Russian reflects the grammatical nature of each language and determines the degree of their stability and variability in speech. Structurally, phraseological units are traditionally defined as stable combinations of two or more lexical components functioning as a single semantic whole. However, the internal structure of these units differs significantly between English and Russian due to typological distinctions between the two languages.

In English, phraseological units are characterized by a relatively fixed word order and limited grammatical variation. This rigidity is обусловлено the analytical structure of the English language, where grammatical relations are largely expressed through word order and auxiliary elements rather than inflection. Common structural models include verb-object combinations (to break the ice, to spill the beans), prepositional phrases (in the long run, under the weather), and adjectival constructions (cold feet, red tape). Any alteration in word order or substitution of components often leads to the destruction of the idiomatic meaning, which highlights the high degree of structural stability of English phraseological units.

By contrast, Russian phraseological units demonstrate greater grammatical flexibility as a result of the synthetic nature of the language. Russian allows for variations in word order, agreement, and case forms without necessarily losing the phraseological meaning. For example, the phraseological unit водить за нос may appear in different grammatical forms depending on the syntactic context. At the same time, despite this formal variability, the semantic integrity of the unit remains stable. This structural elasticity enables Russian phraseological units to integrate more freely into various syntactic constructions, enhancing their expressive potential.

A comparative analysis shows that while both languages rely on stability as a core feature of phraseological units, English emphasizes formal rigidity, whereas Russian prioritizes semantic cohesion over strict structural fixation. This difference has important implications for translation and language learning, as direct structural correspondence between phraseological units in English and Russian is often absent.

The semantics of phraseological units is marked by idiomaticity, imagery, and evaluative meaning. Unlike free word combinations, phraseological units possess a meaning that is either partially or completely non-compositional. In both English and





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Russian, the semantic structure of phraseological units is often based on metaphorical or metonymic reinterpretation of literal meanings.

English phraseological units frequently employ metaphorical imagery drawn from everyday activities, the human body, and social interactions. Expressions such as to hit the nail on the head or to keep an eye on something rely on transparent metaphors that are easily recognizable to native speakers. Russian phraseological units, on the other hand, often demonstrate a higher degree of imagery and emotional expressiveness, as seen in units like держать камень за пазухой or душа в пятки ушла. These expressions convey not only a denotative meaning but also a strong emotional and evaluative component.

From a comparative perspective, phraseological units in English and Russian can be classified according to their degree of semantic equivalence. Some units exhibit full equivalence, where both the meaning and imagery coincide, for example, to lose one's head and потерять голову. Partial equivalence is observed when the general meaning is similar but the imagery differs, as in to make a mountain out of a molehill and делать из мухи слона. Finally, cases of non-equivalence arise when a phraseological unit in one language has no idiomatic counterpart in the other and must be translated descriptively.

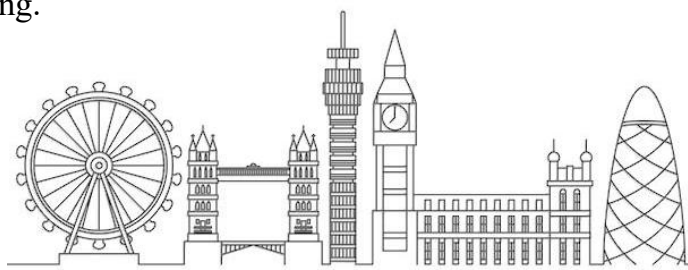
The semantic analysis also reveals that phraseological units often carry implicit cultural and evaluative meanings. They may express irony, approval, disapproval, or emotional intensity, which are not always explicitly stated. This semantic complexity makes phraseological units a powerful expressive resource but also a challenging aspect of language acquisition and translation.

The cultural aspect of phraseological units is inseparable from their structure and semantics, as many idioms originate from culturally significant experiences and historical realities. Phraseological units serve as linguistic embodiments of cultural knowledge, reflecting traditions, beliefs, and social practices specific to a given speech community.

In English, a considerable number of phraseological units are rooted in biblical texts, maritime life, and historical events. Expressions such as the writing on the wall or to be at the helm reveal the influence of religion and seafaring culture on the English linguistic worldview. These units preserve cultural references that may not be immediately transparent to speakers of other languages, particularly in intercultural communication.

Russian phraseological units often originate from folk traditions, agricultural life, and Orthodox Christian culture. Idioms like работать спустя рукава or нести свой крест reflect moral values, attitudes toward labor, and religious symbolism deeply embedded in Russian culture. Such phraseological units function as carriers of national mentality, conveying collective attitudes toward perseverance, suffering, and social relations.

A comparative cultural analysis demonstrates that even when English and Russian phraseological units share similar meanings, their cultural foundations may differ significantly. This divergence underscores the importance of cultural competence in translation and interpretation. Literal translation without consideration of cultural context may lead to misunderstanding or loss of meaning.





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Beyond their structural and semantic features, phraseological units perform important functional and pragmatic roles in discourse. In both English and Russian, they enhance expressiveness, contribute to stylistic variation, and serve as tools for persuasion and evaluation. Phraseological units are frequently used in spoken language, journalism, literary texts, and political discourse to achieve emotional impact and rhetorical effectiveness.

In English discourse, idioms are often employed to create informality and conversational tone, especially in spoken and media language. In Russian, phraseological units tend to be more emotionally charged and may serve as markers of social attitudes and interpersonal relationships. The pragmatic use of phraseological units thus reflects not only linguistic conventions but also cultural norms of communication.

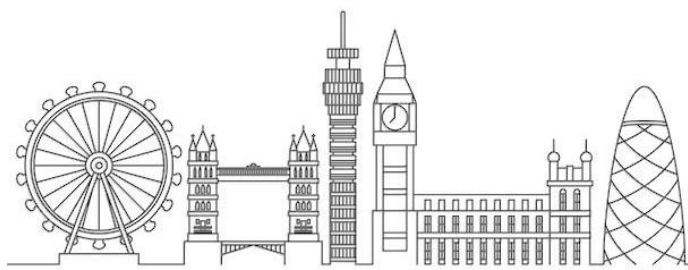
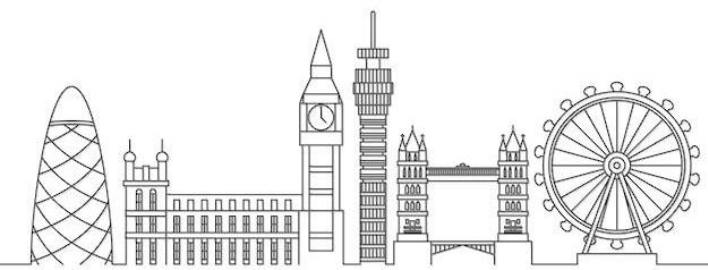
Overall, the functional comparison of English and Russian phraseological units reveals both universal communicative purposes and language-specific pragmatic strategies. This reinforces the idea that phraseological units are a multidimensional phenomenon that must be analyzed at the intersection of structure, semantics, and culture.

Conclusion.

The comparative analysis of the structure, semantics, and cultural contexts of phraseological units in English and Russian demonstrates that phraseology constitutes a complex and multifaceted linguistic phenomenon reflecting both universal cognitive mechanisms and language-specific cultural experiences. Despite belonging to different language families and typological systems, English and Russian reveal a shared reliance on phraseological units as an essential means of expressing figurative meaning, emotional evaluation, and cultural knowledge. This confirms the significant role of phraseology in shaping linguistic worldviews and facilitating effective communication.

The structural analysis has shown that phraseological units in English are generally characterized by a high degree of formal stability and fixed word order, which is обусловлено the analytical nature of the language. In contrast, Russian phraseological units display greater grammatical flexibility while maintaining semantic integrity, reflecting the synthetic structure of the Russian language. These structural differences influence not only the form of phraseological units but also their syntactic behavior and stylistic potential in discourse. As a result, direct structural equivalence between English and Russian phraseological units is relatively rare, which poses challenges for translation and language learning.

The semantic investigation revealed that idiomaticity, imagery, and evaluative meaning are core features of phraseological units in both languages. Many phraseological expressions are based on metaphorical and metonymic models that reflect common human experiences, such as emotions, physical actions, and social relations. However, the comparative analysis has shown that similar conceptual domains are often verbalized through different images in English and Russian. The existence of full, partial, and non-





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equivalent phraseological units highlights the asymmetry of semantic systems and underscores the necessity of context-sensitive interpretation in cross-linguistic studies.

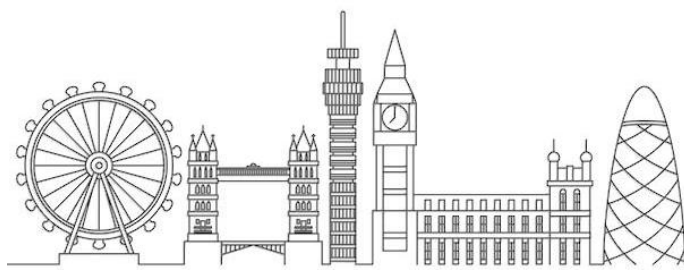
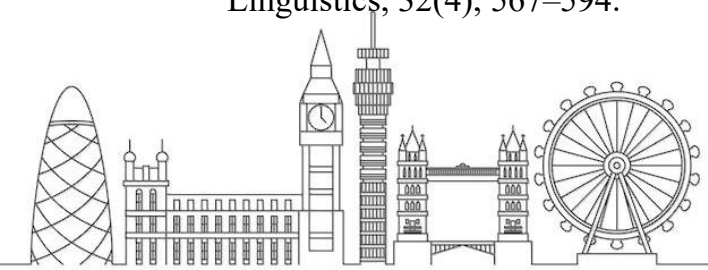
The cultural analysis confirmed that phraseological units function as carriers of national and cultural identity. English phraseology preserves cultural references related to biblical tradition, maritime history, and social institutions, while Russian phraseological units are deeply rooted in folk culture, agrarian life, and Orthodox Christian values. Even when phraseological units in the two languages convey comparable meanings, their cultural foundations may differ significantly. This cultural specificity explains frequent difficulties in intercultural communication and emphasizes the importance of linguocultural competence for translators, language learners, and researchers.

From a functional and pragmatic perspective, phraseological units in both English and Russian serve as powerful expressive tools that enhance the emotional, stylistic, and persuasive impact of discourse. Their use is closely connected with communicative intentions, genre conventions, and sociocultural norms. The comparative approach adopted in this study demonstrates that while the communicative functions of phraseological units are largely universal, their pragmatic realization is shaped by language-specific and culture-bound factors.

In conclusion, the findings of this study confirm that a comprehensive understanding of phraseological units is possible only through an integrated analysis of their structural, semantic, and cultural dimensions. The comparative examination of English and Russian phraseological systems contributes to the development of contrastive linguistics, phraseology, and linguoculturology by revealing both common patterns and national peculiarities. The results of the research may be effectively applied in translation studies, foreign language teaching, and intercultural communication, as well as serve as a foundation for further research into cognitive and cultural aspects of phraseology in other languages.

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