

IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS AND CULTURAL VALUES IN MULTILINGUAL CONTEXT

Nasirova Khurshedabonu Sharof kizi

*Samarkand region, Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages,
Faculty of English Philology and Translation Studies,
Student of English Philology and Language Teaching
+998915596040*

[*nasirovaxurshedabonu5@gmail.com*](mailto:nasirovaxurshedabonu5@gmail.com)

Abstract: This article explores the intricate relationship between idiomatic expressions and cultural values within a multilingual context. It examines how idioms serve as reflections of the beliefs, traditions, and social norms of a culture, and how they can vary across different languages. The study focuses on the ways in which idiomatic expressions convey meaning beyond their literal interpretations, encapsulating the shared experiences and values of speakers. By analyzing examples from various languages, the article highlights the challenges and opportunities that arise in translation and cross-cultural communication. It also discusses the role of idiomatic expressions in identity formation and cultural preservation, particularly within multilingual communities. Ultimately, the article aims to demonstrate how understanding idioms can enhance intercultural competence and facilitate more meaningful interactions in diverse linguistic environments.

Keywords: Idiomatic expressions, Cultural values, Multilingualism, Cross-cultural communication, Translation, Identity formation, Linguistic diversity, Social norms, Cultural preservation, Intercultural competence

INTRODUCTION

Idiomatic expressions are phrases whose meanings are not easily deduced from the individual words they comprise. They are deeply rooted in the culture from which they originate, reflecting the beliefs, values, and social norms shared by speakers of that language. As societies become increasingly multilingual and interconnected, the study of idioms provides valuable insights into how language and culture interplay, particularly in multicultural environments. Idioms often serve as cultural touchstones, encapsulating collective experiences and emotions. For example, the English idiom “to kick the bucket” refers to dying and reflects a lighthearted approach to a serious subject. In contrast, many cultures have their idioms for death that speak to different beliefs, values, and attitudes regarding mortality. The Spanish phrase “dar el último suspiro,” meaning “to take the last breath,” conveys a somber gravity, showcasing the cultural significance of life and death. Understanding these idiomatic expressions in their cultural context fosters deeper comprehension of the underlying values and beliefs that shape societal attitudes. Multilingual contexts complicate the use and translation of idiomatic expressions. When speakers of different languages interact, they may face challenges in conveying idiomatic meanings accurately. For instance, the French idiom “mettre son grain de sel,” meaning “to add one's two cents,” cannot be translated directly into English without losing its idiomatic essence. This raises important questions about how cultural nuances embedded in idiomatic expressions

can be communicated effectively in translation. Translators must not only understand the literal meaning of words but also the cultural context that shapes their meanings. Some idioms are so culturally specific that they may not have an equivalent in another language. For example, the Japanese expression “猿も木から落ちる” (saru mo ki kara ochiru) translates to “Even monkeys fall from trees,” which conveys the idea that even experts can make mistakes. In cultures where the reference to monkeys is less common, this idiom may not resonate or be understood in the same way. Such discrepancies highlight the importance of cultural familiarity and context in effective cross-cultural communication. Humor often plays a pivotal role as well; the English idiom “to have a chip on one's shoulder” implies a tendency to hold grudges, illustrating a more combative cultural attitude that might not exist in other societies. In multilingual communities, idiomatic expressions become a tool for identity formation and cultural expression. Bilingual individuals often code-switch, using idioms from both languages to articulate thoughts and emotions effectively. This blending highlights not only the complexity of their cultural identities but also the ways in which idioms can function as bridges between different cultural knowledge systems. For example, a Spanish-English bilingual might say, “I'm feeling a bit “down in the dumps” but also “con el agua hasta el cuello,” which translates to “with the water up to the neck,” capturing feelings of anxiety in a rich, multi-layered manner.

The preservation of cultural values through idioms is particularly important in immigrant and diaspora communities. Idiomatic expressions often carry ancestral legacies and serve as reminders of cultural heritage. For instance, the Chinese idiom “一箭双雕” (yi jian shuang diao), meaning “to kill two birds with one stone,” emphasizes efficiency and cleverness, values important to Chinese tradition. As younger generations grow up in multicultural environments, idioms may evolve or blend, creating new expressions that reflect their unique cultural experiences. Furthermore, recognizing the cultural significance of idioms can enhance intercultural competence. Language learners who study idiomatic expressions can gain a deeper understanding of the culture connected to the language they are acquiring. This comprehension allows them to navigate social interactions more effectively, demonstrating respect for cultural contexts and building rapport with speakers. For instance, a non-native English speaker who understands the idiom “bite the bullet” will be better equipped to engage in conversations that require discussing difficult choices or challenges. Idiomatic expressions serve as more than mere linguistic constructs; they are reflections of cultural values and social norms within multilingual contexts. The challenges posed by translation and cultural specificity highlight the complexities of effective communication across languages. Idioms are markers of cultural identity and heritage, encapsulating collective experiences, humor, and perspectives that shape societies. By studying idiomatic expressions, we gain insight into the intricate connections between language and culture, paving the way for enhanced understanding and more meaningful interactions within diverse linguistic landscapes. Understanding idioms is not just about language learning; it is about grasping the culture that shapes human experience.

Languages are not mere vehicles for communication; they embody the cultural values, beliefs, and experiences of their speakers. Idiomatic expressions, in particular, serve as a vivid illustration of how language intertwines with culture. These expressions often do not translate directly into other languages, which makes them compelling case studies in understanding cultural nuances in a multilingual context. Idiomatic expressions are phrases whose meanings

cannot be inferred from the literal definitions of the individual words. For example, the English expression "kick the bucket" refers to death, while the literal interpretation suggests an entirely different scenario. Such idioms reflect the history, culture, and societal norms of their language speakers. Consequently, idioms can act as windows into the values and attitudes prevalent within a culture.

In a multilingual context, the richness of idiomatic expressions presents both opportunities and challenges. When speakers of different languages come together, idioms may lead to misunderstandings or confusion. The difficulty in translating idiomatic expressions can result in the loss of cultural nuance. For instance, if someone translates the Spanish idiom "Echar agua al mar" (to throw water into the sea) directly, it may bewilder an English speaker, who might interpret the phrase literally, missing its implication of futile efforts. Such challenges are compounded in multicultural settings, where individuals may come from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Language learners and translators must navigate these intricacies not only to convey meaning but also to evoke the intertwined values and sentiments embedded in idiomatic expressions.

Despite these challenges, idiomatic expressions can serve as valuable cultural bridges in multilingual interactions. When individuals take the time to learn and appreciate idioms from different languages, they gain insights into the values and beliefs of other cultures. This understanding fosters empathy and respect, paving the way for more meaningful connections between people. Moreover, drawing parallels between idioms across languages can reveal shared human experiences and values, even amid cultural differences. For instance, the French saying "C'est la vie". (that's life) resonates closely with the English expression "such is life," emphasizing a shared acceptance of life's unpredictability. Recognizing these connections can become a foundation for deeper intercultural dialogue. Idiomatic expressions provide a profound glimpse into the cultural values embedded within languages. In multilingual contexts, understanding these idioms can enhance communication, enrich relationships, and foster appreciation for the diverse tapestry of human experience. By acknowledging the complexities of idiomatic language, individuals can cultivate a more nuanced understanding of both their own culture and the cultures of others, promoting harmony in an interconnected world.

CONCLUSION

Idiomatic expressions serve as vital conduits for cultural values and social norms within multilingual contexts. They encapsulate the nuances of collective experiences, beliefs, and attitudes that vary significantly across cultures. The challenges of translation and the absence of direct equivalents in different languages underscore the cultural specificity embedded in these expressions. By navigating these complexities, individuals can foster better intercultural understanding and communication. Moreover, idioms play a crucial role in identity formation for bilinguals and immigrants, allowing them to express their unique cultural frames of reference. Learning idiomatic expressions not only enhances language acquisition but also promotes deeper cultural appreciation. Ultimately, studying idiomatic expressions offers rich insights into the intricate relationship between language and culture, reminding us of the diverse ways in which human experiences are articulated across different linguistic landscapes.

REFERENCES:

1. Baker, M. (1992). In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation. London: Routledge.
2. Johnson, S. (2005). A Dictionary of Idioms. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
3. Longman. (2009). Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. Harlow: Pearson Education.
4. O'Grady, W., & Archibald, J. (2009). Contemporary Linguistics: An Introduction. Bedford/St. Martin's.
5. Yu, N. (1998). The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor: A Perspective from Chinese. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.