

Linguocultural Features of "Good" and "Bad" Concepts in English Idioms

Sevinj Shukurlu ¹

¹ *Azerbaijan National Academy of Science, Institute of Linguistics named after Nasimi*
115 H. Cavid Avenu, Baku, Azerbaijan

DOI: 10.22178/pos.103-28

LCC Subject Category: PE1001-1693

Received 21.03.2024

Accepted 25.04.2024

Published online 30.04.2024

Corresponding Author:

sevinc_shukurlu@yahoo.com

© 2024 The Author. This article
is licensed under a [Creative Commons
Attribution 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) 

Abstract. Language facilitates communication and helps one to comprehend the culture of the people who speak it. Language and culture interactions are studied with the help of linguoculturology. As a branch of humanitarian science, linguoculturology examines the role of language in the formation of culture and the role of culture in the formation of language.

At the heart of linguoculturology are concepts, the fundamental building blocks connecting national thought with a universal conceptual system. These concepts, reflections of the language's worldview, are instrumental in studying people's outlook. Each country's unique ideas, embedded in its language, offer a glimpse into its distinct cultural characteristics. As linguistic phenomena, concepts manifest in stable word combinations and phraseology, shaping our understanding of language and culture.

Language units such as fixed word combinations, idioms, and proverbs are understood based on concepts. Idioms are formed due to the concerted activity of different tribes and generations and become an integral part of the national culture. To understand the content of the value concepts "good" and "bad" verbalized in idioms in English, it is essential to study the culture of those speakers. The study of idioms with the concepts of "good" and "bad" in English expresses the moral values of English culture. Idioms in English confirm the national authenticity of the mentality of the people at the linguistic level.

Keywords: language; culture; linguoculturology; concept; idioms.

INTRODUCTION

Linguoculturology is one of the most developed fields of linguistics in recent years. Born at the intersection of linguistics and cultural studies, linguoculturology is a field of science that studies the expression of cultural information in linguistic units. Linguoculturology analyzes the relationship between language and people, language and culture. The study of language and culture and their relations, as well as the study of how and in what form culture and thought are reflected in language, are the main research objects of linguoculturology.

The most widespread ideas about the interaction of language and culture belong to V. Humboldt. He emphasized that language is essential in forming the people's national spirit; a society's language is its soul, and its soul is its language [2,

165]. Every culture is national; its national character is expressed in language through a unique worldview. Language has its internal form for each nation and expresses its culture. The connection between a person and the world around him occurs with the help of language. While studying the problem of the relationship between language and culture in the context of ethnocultural specifications, it is necessary to proceed from the analysis of the language picture of the world expressed in fundamental concepts.

"Language does not only serve the field of culture. It is directly related to the field of production" [3,105]. Language influences the culture of the people who use it. Culture is created, developed, preserved, and transmitted from generation to generation through language. Languages, like cultures, are rarely sufficient unto themselves. The necessities of intercourse bring the

speakers of one language into direct or indirect contact with those of neighbouring or culturally dominant languages [5, 11]. As a field of science that investigates the interaction between linguistics and culture, the main research objects of linguoculturalology are the language picture of the world, cultural background, mentality, cultural concepts, and so on. The concept is one of the leading research objects of linguoculturology. Emotional, expressive, and evaluative concepts are complex concepts. For the first time in Russian linguistics, the term "concept" was coined by S.A. Askoldov-Alekseev in 1928. He defined the concept as an essential component of cognitive language and noted it as a mental formation in the thinking process [1, 156]. The concept is an integral part of the collective consciousness, existing in verbal form in the memory of the language speakers. A concept is a mental symbol defined as a unit of knowledge.

In modern linguistics, great importance is attached to the study of the essence of the concept, and at the same time, there are different points of view. Concepts analyzed as linguistic-cultural phenomena, cultural concepts, and the world's language picture are investigated using concepts. V. Karasik, G. Slyshkin, and Y. Stepanov, who investigated the concept from the linguistic and cultural aspects, especially emphasized the value and image aspects of the concept from the point of view of culture. By studying these components, the carriers of any language culture can understand the concepts existing in that language. According to Y.S. Stepanov, the concept is a micro-model of ethnic culture. He notes that "culture creates a concept, and a concept develops through culture. The concept has a complex structure. On the one hand, everything is attributed to it - structural concepts, and on the other hand, cultural and historical etymological factors are attributed to it [7, 48].

The language picture of the world is reflected in the concepts that connect national thinking with the universal conceptual system. Concepts are considered units that allow national mentality and moral peculiarities to be revealed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Concepts in language are realized through phraseological units, idioms, proverbs, and paremies. These language units play a unique role in transmitting national and moral values from

generation to generation. Idioms, phraseology, and proverbs reflect the main features of concepts. Idioms manifest the culture and history of different languages. The internal form of idioms, one of the primary units of linguistic culture, often includes national-cultural elements.

When learning any language, you must learn its grammar and idioms. Since the words in idioms lose meaning when translated individually, their translation and understanding are difficult for English as a foreign language learner. But after learning idioms, we perfectly understand the language's carriers and begin to express our thoughts more fluently because idioms are stable expressions that enrich speech and make it colourful. Since idioms were created in connection with the way of life and living, customs, and worldview of each nation, it is possible to understand the history and character of the country more deeply by studying them. Idioms that reflect the specific features of the people's life and history show their originality and national particularity. Idiomatic units preserve human society's national-cultural heritage and give it emotional value. Using those units reveals the concepts' most prominent linguistic and cultural aspects.

The description of concepts verbalized through idioms allows us to get more complete information about their place in the mind of a native speaker, and these concepts are universal. In the linguistic landscape of the world, concepts related to moral evaluations of a person occupy the central place, for example, truth-lie, love-hate, good-bad, etc. In this regard, clarifying the concept of "good" in the national consciousness of English is very important.

As a universal concept, the meaning of the concept of "good" refers to a concept that expresses morally valuable qualities. The moral evaluation is subjective; through the subject's character, needs, tastes, habits, ideals, stereotypes, etc., it is possible to determine the expression. The question of the definition of "good", the question of what is good, led to the emergence of problems with the syntax and pragmatics of evaluative words and their use in live speech. "Good" means proper and correct for a person, environment, and society. The linguistic unit "good" has more than ten shades of meaning in the dictionary: 1) very satisfactory, enjoyable, pleasant, or attractive; 2) giving pleasure and holding attention; 3) kind and helpful; 4) healthy or well; 5) of high

quality or level; 6) used to express praise; 7) successful or able to do something well [4, 668].

Ideas about good are mentioned in many people's ancient mythology and religious beliefs worldwide. Today, "good" is a philosophically normative evaluative category that generally means what is correct and morally positive. Ethically, "good" is classified as one of the most essential categories of ethics, which meets the content of the requirements of morality.

While studying the concept of "good," we can learn more deeply about the inner world, character, language consciousness features, and national culture characteristics. "Good is considered the most basic moral value concept. The English language culture has such signs as truth, honesty, mercy, kindness, health, success, love, conscience, patience, decency, and conscience.

When talking about truth, honesty in English idioms such as *good faith – acting honestly, with pure motives, and without deceiving others; good egg – a trustworthy person, required; straight goods – the complete, unvarnished truth; deliver the goods – do what is go through proper channels – to follow the correct steps to get something done* [6, 136]; a good scout – an honest, reliable person; be as good as one's word – to be reliable and truthful; straight shooter – someone who speaks truth; turn an honest penny – to earn money in an honourable and legitimate way, typically through one's hard work is used. It turns out that expressions with the concept of "good" used in the context of truth or honesty have become an inseparable feature of English culture, meaning the ability not to lie and always to keep one's word.

It is sufficient in idioms where the concept of "good" conveys the context of mercy, benevolence, e.g. *good Samaritan – someone who tries to help people in trouble or need; be for a good cause – to have a beneficial, often charitable, armour effect; Lady Bountiful – an exceptionally wealthy and generous woman; glass half full – characterized by a generally optimistic world view*; [6, 138] these idioms reflect an ideological activity that illuminates the valuable aspects of the subject's existence.

In English, in fine fettle – in good physical and mental health; right as rain – feel healthy; in the pink – in good health and spirits; right as a trivet – in good health; such idioms emphasize the importance of a person's health.

A group of units with the concept "good" includes idioms that express a pleasant meaning, for example, a good Joe – a nice, friendly, and respectable male; a good looker – a particular person or thing; a good bet – a person or thing that is certain to be good or successful; good faith – good intentions; good word – positive or favourable information; and good works – acts, actions, or efforts that are charitable, generous, kind, or philanthropic.

The concept of "bad", like its opposition "good", is one of the universal concepts of ethno-cultural significance. Philosophically, evil is the lack of good, the avoidance of good. From a religious point of view, opposing the creator of evil is a theme related to sin. The concept of wrong is also represented in quite a large number of English idioms. The dictionary meaning of the concept of wrong is given as follows: 1) unpleasant and causing difficulties; 2) of low quality, not acceptable; 3) not successful, or not able to do something well; 4) damaging to health; 5) evil or morally unacceptable, and so on [4, 100].

For representatives of the English language culture, the concept of "bad" means lies, hostility, malice, unhappiness, anger, illness, cruelty, rudeness, and hypocrisy. For example, *bad actor – a person that is unreliable, unruly, and prone to troublesome or quarrelsome behaviour; bad egg – a dishonest or ill-behaved person; bad joke – is an event or situation that is absurd or a complete failure (just a joke that is not funny); bad penny – a person with no value; bad news – unpleasant information; bad hair day – a day on which everything seems to go wrong, and so on* [6,27]. Similar to the concept of "good", the idea of "bad" is also studied through language and culture. As a result of research, the characteristics of the thinking, cognition, ideas, moral views, and worldviews of specific people are revealed.

One of the main features of idioms with the concept of "bad" in English is that their components have a stable grammatical form. Applying a lingucultural interpretation can help clarify idioms with this concept. Knowledge of cultural and historical context plays an essential role in understanding idioms.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, studying "good" and "bad" concepts, such as value concepts, in the English language picture allows us to obtain more complete and compre-

hensive information about the place of these concepts in the mind of a native speaker. In linguistics and cultural studies, concepts are represented by idioms that express the cultural characteristics of any nation. The analysis of the concepts of "good" and "bad" in any society from a linguistic and cultural point of view forms an idea about the national realities of certain people and the

ethnic landscape of the world of a person who speaks a specific language and its reflection in the language consciousness. The concepts of "good" and "bad" are verbalized uniquely in each culture, so it is essential to consider the etymological features of those concepts, whether in English or another culture.

REFERENCES

1. Askoldov, S. (1997). *Koncept i slovo* [Concept and word]. Moscow: Academia (in Russian).
2. Gumboldt, V. (1985). *Yazyk i filosofiya kultury* [Language and philosophy culture]. Moscow: n. d. (in Russian).
3. Muradov, C. (2019). *Dil və mədəniyyət* (Language and culture). Baku: n. d. (in Azerbaijani).
4. Hornby, A. (Ed.). (1998). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (7th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
5. Sapir, E. (1921). *Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc.
6. Siefring, J. (2004). *English Idioms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
7. Stepanov, Yu. (2004). *Konstanty* [Constants] (3rd ed.). Moscow: Akademicheskiy Proekt (in Russian).