



THE REFLECTION OF CUSTOMS OF ENGLISH CULTURE IN COMPARISONS BELONGING TO THE HUMAN GROUP

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15079011>

Abstract. *English culture is rich with norms and customs, many of which are manifested through language, particularly in the form of comparisons rooted in the human experience. These linguistic expressions, often idiomatic, not only reflect cultural values but also shape the way individuals perceive and interact with their world. The examination of such expressions offers insight into the societal norms and moral codes that underpin English-speaking communities.*

Key words: *customs, norms, culture, comparisons, cultural code.*

Comparisons are an important element of language that helps to express thoughts, feelings, and cultural features. There are many similes and idioms in the English language that reflect the customs, values, and traditions of English culture. These comparisons not only enrich the language, but also serve as indicators of cultural identity. Comparisons in the English language can be direct and indirect. Direct comparisons are usually expressed through comparative and superlative adjectives, as well as through constructions with “like” and “as.”

According to Sh. Usmanova “Comparisons are considered the oldest methods of knowing the external world. Comparisons represent the first way of thinking and imagination of a particular people.” [2, 102]

In examining the reflection of norms and customs of English culture within comparisons pertaining to human groups, it becomes evident that linguistic expressions often carry profound cultural significance. These expressions reveal not only the inherent values and beliefs of a society but also its historical context and social structure. For instance, in English, comparisons such as “*as brave as a lion*” or “*as busy as a bee*” not only embody qualities admired in British culture but also draw from a communal understanding and historical background shared by its speakers.

To begin with, these comparisons often emphasize certain traits that are culturally valued. The English inclination towards industriousness and bravery is clearly illustrated in idioms that highlight these characteristics. The lion, a symbol of courage, is frequently celebrated in English proverbs and tales, reflecting the long-standing British veneration of bravery and valor, partly influenced by historic narratives of chivalry and nobility. Meanwhile, the bee’s industrious nature is seen as a virtue, aligning with the Protestant work ethic that underscores much of English cultural philosophy.



Furthermore, these linguistic comparisons are steeped in cultural narratives and collective memory, sometimes perpetuating historical biases. For example, the depiction of foxes as cunning, as in “*as sly as a fox*,” stems from medieval folklore where foxes were depicted as tricksters. This not only reflects an anthropocentric perception of animal behavior but also projects human societal values onto the natural world, thus shaping the cultural lens through which certain human behaviors are judged.

Moreover, the comparisons often portray social norms and expectations. Consider the adage “*as right as rain*,” which communicates the English appreciation for predictability and stability. This metaphor subtly underscores the British affinity for orderliness and tradition, values cherished within the society and mirrored in its cultural psyche. Such expressions offer a glimpse into the collective mindset, inviting reflection on how linguistic habits shape interpersonal interactions and societal expectations.

However, one must be mindful of the homogenizing effect of these idioms, which often fail to encapsulate the diversity within English culture itself. While these expressions elucidate certain dominant cultural narratives, they may omit or oversimplify alternative viewpoints present within diverse subcultures. Thus, while a linguistic analysis of English comparisons is insightful, it is crucial to consider the broader societal context and recognize the multifaceted nature of culture.

Critics might argue that such linguistic comparisons oversimplify and romanticize cultural norms; however, their value lies in illustrating the convergence of language and cultural perception. By examining these idioms closely, one can discern how language both shapes and reflects societal norms, offering a mirror to cultural identity. Language, as a living entity, evolves with its speakers, and thereby serves as both a historical record and a vessel for cultural evolution.

English comparisons offer rich insights into the norms and customs that define English culture, highlighting admired traits and societal values. While not exhaustive, these idioms embody the interplay between language and culture, illustrating how collective consciousness and historical narratives continue to influence modern English society. Through greater awareness of these expressions, speakers can gain deeper cultural understanding and reflect on their own role within the tapestry of human social interaction. This awareness promotes a more nuanced appreciation of cultural diversity and the linguistic nuances that both reflect and shape societal legacies.



According to V.A. Maslova, comparison is not only a means of knowing the world, but also “a means of strengthening this knowledge with culture” [1, 147].

Expressions like “*as stubborn as a mule*” and “*as meek as a lamb*” highlight a cultural spectrum between obstinacy and docility. The former, suggestive of obstinacy, often bears a negative connotation, reflecting a culture that values compromise and cooperation over inflexibility. On the other hand, the comparison to a lamb signifies gentleness, a revered trait in social interactions that emphasizes harmony and mildness as ideal social conduct.

Moreover, comparisons related to intelligence and wit, such as “*sharp as a tack*” or “*as wise as an owl*,” underscore a societal esteem for intellectual acumen and wisdom. These comparisons indicate that English culture places a high premium on cognitive prowess, perhaps reflecting the competitive and evolving nature of educational and professional arenas within English-speaking societies. Hence, individuals are encouraged to nurture mental alertness and sagacity, qualities that are often celebrated and aspired to throughout various stages of life.

Material wealth and social status also find their reflections in English idiomatic comparisons. Phrases such as “*living the high life*” or “*as rich as Croesus*” illustrate an underlying admiration for affluence and luxury. These expressions are not merely descriptive but serve as aspirational benchmarks within a culture that often associates success with economic prosperity. On a broader scale, they manifest the social dynamics and aspirations fueled by a capitalist framework, where material success equates to personal achievement.

Furthermore, the comparison of human emotions and behavior with natural phenomena paints a vivid picture of cultural norms regarding emotional expression. For instance, “*as calm as a millpond*” or “*as fierce as a storm*” suggest societal attitudes toward emotional regulation and its impact on social interactions. The former is praised for its tranquility and composed demeanor, reflecting a cultural preference for emotional restraint. Conversely, association with a storm implies unpredictability and intensity, characteristics that can be both admired for their passion or critiqued for their volatility.

These linguistic comparisons also serve a didactic purpose, shaping societal values and behavioral norms from an early age. They function as cultural tools for imparting moral lessons, embedding societal ideals into everyday language. Through habitual use in conversation, media, and literature, these expressions reinforce and perpetuate the deep-seated values they embody, thereby influencing individual behavior and societal expectations on a subconscious level.



In conclusion, English cultural norms and customs are intricately woven into the fabric of its linguistic traditions, particularly through the use of comparisons related to the human experience. These idiomatic expressions are not mere linguistic artifacts; they are dynamic reflections of societal priorities that influence and reinforce cultural values. As such, understanding these comparisons provides a window into the essence of English-speaking cultures, revealing the complex interplay between language, culture, and social norms. Analyzing these expressions delivers keen insight into how English culture enshrines and perpetuates its core values through language, influencing both individual and collective identities.

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