

# Когнитивные и культурные аспекты идиом с животными в английском языке

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**Аннотация:** В данной статье рассматриваются когнитивные и культурные особенности идиом с животными в английском языке. Анализируется, каким образом такие выражения отражают мышление человека, его восприятие окружающего мира и культурные ценности. Особое внимание уделяется роли метафоры и символики животных в формировании значений идиом.

**Ключевые слова:** идиомы, когнитивная лингвистика, символика животных, английский язык, метафора, культура, мышление

## Cognitive and cultural aspects of animal-related idioms in English

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**Abstract:** This article explores the cognitive and cultural aspects of animal-related idioms in English. It analyzes how such expressions reflect human thinking, perception, and cultural values. Special attention is given to metaphor and animal symbolism in the formation of idiomatic meanings.

**Keywords:** idioms, cognitive linguistics, animal symbolism, English language, metaphor, culture, thinking

Language functions not merely as a formal system of communication but as a profound reflection of human cognition and ontological perception. Among the most evocative linguistic components are idiomatic expressions, which provide critical insights into how individuals conceptualize their environment. Zoomorphic idioms, in particular, serve as an essential academic focus, illustrating the process by which humans interpret faunal behavior and metaphorically project these observations onto the description of human characteristics.

From a cognitive perspective, idioms are intrinsically linked to internal mental processes. Rather than being arbitrary lexical strings, they constitute structured units

that reflect the categorization and comprehension of reality. Animal-related idioms are predicated on metaphorical thinking, wherein specific attributes of the animal kingdom are utilized to articulate complex human behaviors, emotional states, and social dynamics.

Within the framework of cognitive linguistics, metaphor is recognized as a fundamental mechanism of thought. In this context, animal-based idioms operate as conceptual metaphors. For instance, the simile "as brave as a lion" exemplifies the conceptual association between leonine species and the virtue of fortitude. This correlation is deeply embedded in human perception and reinforced by long-standing cultural traditions.

Similarly, the expression "as stubborn as a mule" characterizes an individual's obstinacy. Here, the perceived recalcitrance of the mule is cognitively mapped onto human behavior. Such examples demonstrate the systematic process through which animal characteristics are projected onto human traits via cognitive mapping, allowing for the expression of abstract personality features through concrete, familiar imagery.

Zoomorphic idioms serve as a sophisticated cognitive mechanism for the simplification of complex conceptual frameworks. Rather than employing protracted explanations, speakers utilize these concise phraseological units to encapsulate dense semantic content. A salient example is the expression "a fish out of water," which articulates an individual's acute discomfort within an alienated environment. This metaphor is predicated upon the biological reality of aquatic life, where the inability of a fish to survive subaerially is mapped onto human psychological displacement.

Sociocultural variables exert a profound influence on the configuration of these cognitive patterns. While certain faunal associations possess a universal character, a significant portion remains culture-specific. In the Anglophone tradition, for instance, the dog is predominantly envisioned as a symbol of fidelity and companionship, a sentiment crystallized in expressions such as "a faithful dog." Conversely, in disparate cultural paradigms, the same biological entity may evoke entirely different symbolic resonances, illustrating the non-universal nature of animal metaphors.

The genesis of these idioms is also inextricably linked to the historical accumulation of empirical experience. Centuries of anthropogenic interaction with the natural world have catalyzed the linguistic codification of faunal observations. Through the systematic monitoring of animal behavior, human societies gradually established stable metaphorical structures to describe analogous patterns in human existence - a process that underscores the symbiotic relationship between language, cognition, and the physical environment.

Furthermore, cognitive analysis reveals that idiomatic expressions are stored and retrieved as holistic lexical units within the human mind. Rather than undergoing a word-by-word compositional analysis, the speaker recognizes the figurative intent of

the idiom instantaneously. This holistic processing renders idioms an exceptionally efficient instrument of communication, particularly in registers that demand high levels of expressiveness and emotional resonance.

In conclusion, animal-related idioms within the English linguistic system represent a sophisticated intersection of language, cognition, and cultural heritage. These expressions transcend their role as mere phraseological units; they function as indispensable cognitive instruments that enable individuals to conceptualize and articulate the complexities of their reality. The systematic study of these idioms offers a more profound perception of human ratiocination and underscores the fundamental role of conceptual metaphor in the structural and semantic evolution of language.

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