



## NATIONAL AND CULTURAL REALIA REFLECTED IN ENGLISH PROVERBS

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### Abstract

The article is devoted to the analysis of English proverbs, which express the national and cultural specifics of the people. The promotion of such a meaning in proverbs is carried out through the use of national realias. Realias are words that reflect cultural peculiarities of the people of the world. There are a great deal a realias in any language (realias of clothes, food, drink, holidays, customs etc.). Most importantly, their functioning in proverbs has a linguistic and cultural significance, as they demonstrate cultural values in the history of the people and the state. English proverbs with national realias show the richness of a certain language, national-cultural specifics and historical value of the people. In the course of the work, such methods as the semantic-stylistic, the method of intralingual comparison and the descriptive method were used.

**Keywords:** Proverb, analysis, national, cultural, English, realia.

### Introduction

Proverbs reflect the worldview and life of the people in all their diversity. They convey the everyday, philosophical, social, aesthetic, religious, moral and ethical views of the people. The main purpose of proverbs is to give a popular assessment of the impartial phenomena of reality, thereby expressing a worldview. They cover all aspects of human life, the most diverse interrelationships between various phenomena of reality. Proverbs demonstrate the national and cultural characteristics of the language (for example, realias), the way of thinking, the

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inner and outer world of the people, i.e. as a whole reflects the mentality of the ethnic group.

### Methods:

While conducting scientific research the method of linguistic description, comparative method, semantic-stylistic method etc. were used.

### Results and Discussion:

Proverbs have become the object of study not only paremiologists, but also linguists, methodologists, literary critics as well as writers and poets I. Disraeli, V. I. Dal, E.Ya. Kokare, R. Norrick, W. Mieder, E.V. Ivanova, A. Dundes, M. Dzhusupov, P.U. Bakirov [3; 2; 7; 10; 8; 6; 4; 5; 1] etc.

In English culture, high society did not accept proverbs for a long time, since their use in speech was considered inappropriate, especially for members of the intelligence and the aristocracy. While interest in proverbs became widespread in Europe in the 16th–17th centuries, even in the 18th century their use in everyday English speech was sharply rejected: “the rationalistic cast of mind found little in proverbs to admire” [8, p. 162]. A vivid confirmation of the rejection of proverbs by the upper circles of the British Empire can be found in the letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield, to his son Philip Stanhope: “There is also an awkwardness of expressions and words which should be most carefully avoided, such as false English, bad pronunciation, old sayings and common proverbs, which are very clownish and as such are a proof that a man has kept ill company or is not used to genteel society. For example, if instead of saying that people have different tastes, and each has his own, you allow yourself to use a proverb and say What is one man’s meat is another man’s poison, or Everyone as they like, as the good man said when he kissed his cow, everybody will imagine that you have associated with none but footmen and chambermaids” [9, p. 163]. However, as W. Mieder confirms: “People, both then and now, resort to well-known proverbs, using their traditional metaphors as part of the communicative art of allusion” [9, p. 171]. He also claims that “proverbs are short, generally known sentences of the folk that contain wisdom, truths, morals, traditional views



in a metaphorical, fixed and memorable form and that are handed down orally from generation to generation” [9, p. 5], i.e., proverbs are “short, commonly known folk sentences that contain wisdom, truth, morals, traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorable form and are transmitted orally from generation to generation.”

There are several definitions proposed by English linguists that point to the importance, value, and folk nature of proverbs: S. Gallagher: “A proverb is a short statement of an obvious truth that has (had or will have) currency among the people” [9, p. 4]; W. Emerson: “Proverbs are boulders, and have the conciseness of boulders” [9, p. 166]; N. Norrick: “A proverb is a traditional, conversational, didactic genre with a generalized meaning, a potentially free phraseological unit with a figurative sense” [11, p. 78]; A. Dundes: “A proverb is a traditional propositional statement consisting at least of a descriptive element, which consists of a topic and a comment”. He clarifies his definition by stating that the topic of a proverb is the main element, the core that conveys its basic meaning, while the descriptive element is the part that supports, explains, or comments on the first part. Examples: Time flies, Money talks, and Opposites attract. In the proverb Time flies, there is only one topic – time – and one comment – flies [4, p. 127].

Let us cite some examples of English proverbs:

1. “The early bird catches the worm”. Meaning: those who start early or take initiative are more likely to succeed.
2. “Too many cooks spoil the broth”. Meaning: when too many people are involved in managing a task, it can become disorganized and lead to a poor outcome.
3. “Birds of a feather flock together”. Meaning: people who have similar interests, personalities, or backgrounds tend to associate with one another.
4. “The squeaky wheel gets the grease”. Meaning: people who complain or speak up about problems are more likely to receive attention or help.
5. “A penny saved is a penny earned”. Meaning: saving money is just as valuable as earning money; being frugal is beneficial.

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6. “Absence makes the heart grow fonder”. Meaning: being apart from someone often makes you appreciate and miss them more.

Proverbs are regarded as one of the fundamental “codes” of culture, as “the language of everyday culture shaped over centuries,” passed down from generation to generation and reflecting all the categories and principles of a people’s life philosophy – the philosophy of the speakers of the language [12, pp. 219–241]. Taking a people’s culture into account, one should speak of the influence of mentality on the creation of proverbs. A nation’s worldview has a significant impact on the further development of its culture, which finds expression in proverbs as repositories of language, history, culture, and everyday living conditions.

### **Realias in English proverbs**

- **A chain is only as strong as its weakest link**

Explanation: the literal meaning of this proverb is that the strength of a chain is limited to that of the weakest link in the chain. Even if the other links on the chain are strong, the strength of the chain depends on the weakest link. The phrase “weakest link” for the first time was used in a television quiz in the UK and can be considered as a realia in the English language. This phrase was also first used in an English proverb with the meaning: the success of an entire group depends on the success of each individual member of the group. It means that if one person fails, then the entire group may fail as well.

- **All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy**

Explanation: the name Jack is often used in English works, proverbs and sayings, which has become a common word for the British people. Jack can be used in different ways, namely, it has the meaning of “man” (male person). Earlier this name was often used in fairy tales and nursery rhymes such as “Jack and the Beanstalk”, “Little Jack Horner” and “Jack Sprat” etc. In this proverb, Jack is word-realias, as it can be better understood and explained by native speakers. This proverb can be interpreted in this way: if any person remains working without time off, they can be tired or bored of their work as everyone needs to have a rest.



- **The proof of the pudding is in the eating**

Explanation: The proverb draws on **English culinary culture**, where pudding was common and varied, making it relatable to everyday life. The proverb says that, a pudding (a traditional English dish, often boiled or baked with various ingredients) can only be judged by tasting it. You cannot tell whether it is good just by looking at it or knowing the recipe as it must be experienced. The figurative meaning of the proverb is that the true value, quality, or effectiveness of something is determined by experiencing it, not by appearances, promises, or theory. This also applies to plans, ideas, products, or actions: only results matter.

- **Rome wasn't built in a day**

Explanation: The literal meaning of this proverb is that the city of Rome, with all its buildings, monuments, and infrastructure, required many years – indeed, centuries – to construct. It was impossible for such a grand and complex city to be completed in just a single day. The proverb uses Rome, a real historical place, as a tangible example to illustrate the passage of time and the effort required for large-scale accomplishments. The phrase “Rome wasn't built in a day” is considered a realia in the English language, because it refers to a specific place that has cultural and historical significance. Rome, as the center of the Roman Empire and a symbol of grandeur, serves as a vivid example that English speakers can immediately recognize and associate with enduring achievement. Figuratively, the proverb means that great things take time, patience, and sustained effort to achieve. It is often used to encourage persistence, to remind people not to expect immediate results, and to emphasize that complex projects or important goals cannot be rushed.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, proverbs demonstrate what is most important to a people. They express the cultural and traditional values of a nation. They tell us about people, their character, actions, manners, as well as geography, traditions, and so on. Thus, they encapsulate historical experiences, social values, moral principles, and

everyday realities, reflecting the worldview and collective mindset of the people who coined and preserved them. By studying these proverbs, one gains insight into the cultural norms, traditions, and priorities that have shaped English-speaking communities over time. Thus, proverbs are invaluable linguistic and cultural artifacts, bridging language and culture and highlighting the inseparable connection between words and the society that produces them.

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