

TOTEMISTIC PHRASEOLOGY IN MODERN MEDIA, ADVERTISING, AND POP CULTURE: A LINGUOCULTUROLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Annotation

This article is devoted to the study of totemistic phraseology in the context of modern media, advertising, and pop culture. Totemism, rooted in ancient beliefs about the symbolic power of animals, plants, and objects, continues to influence the linguistic and cultural space of contemporary communication. The research highlights how totemic symbols, traditionally associated with mythological thinking, have been transformed into powerful tools of emotional influence in brand names, slogans, memes, films, and music. Special attention is paid to the linguoculturological functions of totemic phraseology and its ability to reflect and shape cultural identity in the globalized world.

Keywords: totemistic phraseology, linguoculturology, media discourse, advertising, pop culture, symbols, branding, memes, animal metaphors.

Аннотация

Статья посвящена изучению тотемистической фразеологии в контексте современных медиа, рекламы и поп-культуры. Тотемизм, укорененный в древних верованиях о символической силе животных, растений и предметов, продолжает оказывать влияние на языковое и культурное пространство современной коммуникации. В исследовании подчеркивается, как тотемические символы, традиционно связанные с мифологическим мышлением, трансформировались в мощные инструменты эмоционального воздействия в названиях брендов, слоганах, мемах, фильмах и музыке. Особое внимание уделяется лингвокультурологическим функциям тотемической фразеологии и ее способности отражать и формировать культурную идентичность в глобализованном мире.

Ключевые слова: тотемистическая фразеология, лингвокультурология, медиадискурс, реклама, поп-культура, символы, брендинг, мемы, метафоры животных.

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqola zamonaviy media, reklama va pop madaniyat kontekstida totemistik frazeologiyani o'rganishga bag'ishlangan. Hayvonlar, o'simliklar va narsalarning ramziy kuchi haqidagi qadimgi e'tiqodlardan kelib chiqqan totemizm zamonaviy muloqotning lingvistik va madaniy makoniga ta'sir qilishda davom etmoqda. Tadqiqot an'anaviy ravishda mifologik tafakkur bilan bog'liq bo'lgan totemik belgilar brend nomlari, shiorlar, memlar, filmlar va musiqalarda qanday qilib kuchli hissiy ta'sir vositalariga aylantirilganini ta'kidlaydi. Totemik frazeologizmlarning lingvokulturologik vazifalari va globallashtirilgan dunyoda madaniy o'ziga xoslikni aks ettirish va shakllantirish qobiliyatiga alohida e'tibor qaratilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: totemistik frazeologiya, lingvokulturologiya, media-diskurs, reklama, pop-madaniyat, ramzlar, brending, memlar, hayvonlar metaforalari

Language has always been a repository of cultural codes, national mentality, and collective memory. One of the most ancient manifestations of the connection between

language and culture is totemism — a belief system in which certain animals, plants, or objects serve as sacred symbols of a tribe, clan, or social group. Over time, totemic symbols have migrated from mythology and folklore into the linguistic sphere, giving rise to a vast array of phraseological units that reflect human attitudes toward the surrounding world.

Modern media, advertising, and pop culture have reinterpreted these totemic symbols, adapting them to the realities of the 21st century. Brands exploit animal images to evoke desirable associations. Slogans borrow the metaphorical power of totemic phraseology to create memorable messages. Memes, films, and songs reinterpret ancient symbolic patterns, transforming them into ironic or aesthetic elements of global communication. The relevance of this research lies in the fact that, despite the technological progress of society, archaic totemic models continue to function actively in everyday language practices, including media and advertising discourse. This confirms the thesis that phraseology with totemic roots remains a productive mechanism for encoding cultural meanings and influencing the recipient.

The purpose of this article is to identify and analyze the linguoculturological features of totemistic phraseology in modern media, advertising, and pop culture, using concrete examples from contemporary discourse.

The term totem originates from the language of the Ojibwa tribe (North America) and means “his kinship group” (Frazer, 1910). Totemism is based on the idea that a particular natural object — most often an animal or plant — is a symbolic ancestor, protector, or emblem of a human group.

As Claude Lévi-Strauss (1962) emphasized in *Totemism*, this phenomenon reflects the human tendency to classify the world through binary oppositions and symbolic thinking. In the sphere of language, this has led to the formation of stable symbolic images embodied in metaphors, comparisons, and phraseological units.

Totemistic phraseology refers to stable linguistic units (idioms, proverbs, metaphors) that contain references to totemic symbols and express culturally significant meanings. According to Nakhimova (2013), totemic elements in phraseology function as “cultural markers,” encoding ideas about desirable or undesirable qualities of a person.

For example, the lion traditionally symbolizes strength and nobility in many cultures (“lion-hearted”, “king of beasts”), while the fox represents cunning (“sly as a fox”). The presence of such phrases in modern discourse demonstrates the continuity of symbolic thinking across eras.

Modern marketing actively exploits the symbolic potential of totemic phraseology, primarily through animal images in brand names, logos, and advertising slogans. This practice is not accidental. As George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) argue in *Metaphors We Live By*, metaphorical thinking, including totemic symbols, allows people to structure their perception of reality and instantly decode associative meanings.

The usage of animal totems in branding is based on the principle of symbolic transfer — qualities of an animal are transferred to the product or service

Advertising slogans often reinforce these meanings through explicit or implicit phraseological constructions, for example:

- **Red Bull gives you wings (activation of animal symbolism in the metaphor of flight and freedom).**

- **Strong as a lion (common in fitness or sports-related ads).**

Totemistic Phraseology in Cinema and Animation

Pop culture, especially cinema and animation, continues to popularize totemic symbols, creating entire mythologies based on animal characters with human features. Such representations often embody ancient cultural stereotypes and phraseological associations.

Key Examples:

- **The Lion King (Disney, 1994)** — the lion as a symbol of royal power, wisdom, and bravery.

- **Kung Fu Panda (DreamWorks, 2008)** — the panda combines external clumsiness with inner strength and wisdom.

- **Zootopia (Disney, 2016)** — a world built on animal stereotypes: fox = cunning, rabbit = speed and energy, sloth = laziness.

These films reflect phraseological models rooted in totemistic thinking:

- **Lion-hearted**

- **Cunning as a fox**

- **Slow as a sloth**

Totemistic Metaphors in Music and Pop Texts

Music culture often uses totemic symbols in song titles, lyrics, and images of performers to convey strength, individuality, or emotional states.

Examples:

- **Eye of the Tiger (Survivor, 1982)** — symbol of perseverance and courage.

- **Roar (Katy Perry, 2013)** — metaphor of inner power and freedom.

- **Black Horse and the Cherry Tree (KT Tunstall, 2004)** — metaphorical combination of mystery and folklore images.

Functions of Totemistic Phraseology in Modern Communication

The functioning of totemistic phraseology in media, advertising, and pop culture is not accidental — it performs several important linguoculturological functions:

1. Identification and Branding Function

Totemic symbols help brands, artists, and media products create a recognizable image. The animal or symbolic element acts as a verbal and visual marker that quickly establishes associative links in the consumer's mind. Example:

- **Puma** = speed and sport

- **Red Bull** = energy and vitality

In these cases, the totemic phrase functions as a verbal marker of strength, rebellion, or emotional energy.

The analysis of totemistic phraseology in modern media, advertising, and pop culture demonstrates the vitality of ancient symbolic thinking within contemporary discourse practices. Despite globalization and digitalization, archaic forms of metaphorical perception — including totemic symbols — retain their communicative power and cultural relevance.

2. Emotional and Persuasive Function

Totemistic phraseology intensifies emotional perception, appealing to unconscious archetypes and stereotypes. According to Zheltukhina (2015), phraseology “serves as a ready-made carrier of evaluation, expressiveness, and cultural memory.” Example:

- “Fight like a lion” (heroic effort)
- “Clever as a fox” (positive or ironic evaluation)

4. Cultural Coding and Stereotyping

Totemistic phraseology helps to transmit cultural values, social norms, and national character traits. These codes may differ from culture to culture. Example:

- Fox in English culture = cunning;
- Fox in Japanese culture = wisdom, even sacred power (Kitsune).

Totemic phraseology continues to function as an effective mechanism of emotional influence, identity construction, and cultural transmission. Modern branding, cinema, music, and memes use totemic images not only as decorative elements but as deep linguoculturological codes that shape the recipient’s perception of reality.

Thus, the study of totemistic phraseology at the intersection of linguistics, cultural studies, and media analysis opens new perspectives for understanding modern communication processes and their connection with cultural memory and mythological consciousness.

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