

Expressions Of Belief And Tradition In English Wedding Phraseology

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Received: 26 December 2025; **Accepted:** 16 January 2026; **Published:** 22 February 2026

Abstract: This article explores the reflection of beliefs and traditions in English phraseological units related to weddings. It examines how seasonal, monthly, and weekly choices for marriage are culturally significant, as well as the symbolic importance of colors and idiomatic expressions in wedding customs. Phraseological units, including proverbs, idioms, and metaphors, are analyzed for their semantic layers and cultural meanings, revealing insights into English cultural mentality, ethical norms, and value systems.

Keywords: Phraseology, national identity, cultural semantics, linguocultural concept, linguocultureme, ceremony, image.

Introduction: Language functions as a living reflection of a community's cultural memory and collective consciousness. It preserves national traditions, moral values, and patterns of thinking that have developed over centuries. Among the most expressive components of any language are phraseological units, which often carry deep cultural and emotional meanings shaped by a people's historical experience.

The English language, with its rich historical evolution, embodies numerous idiomatic and phraseological expressions that illustrate the nation's beliefs, customs, and social behaviors. In particular, phraseological units related to faith, rituals, and marriage traditions offer valuable insight into the worldview of English-speaking societies. Such expressions reveal how culture and language interact, shaping both linguistic form and social meaning.

This study focuses on the analysis of English phraseological units that express traditional beliefs and customs, especially those connected with wedding ceremonies, folk omens, and proverbs. The research seeks to uncover the cultural and linguistic mechanisms through which these expressions convey moral values, aesthetic ideals, and collective wisdom. By examining their semantic and cultural layers, the paper aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the

relationship between language and culture within the framework of modern linguocultural studies.

METHODS

In English culture, attention to the season in which a wedding is held reflects the significant role of beliefs and traditions for its speakers. Research conducted under the supervision of A. Sarbassova indicates that in British culture, marriages conducted in June are believed to bring lasting happiness. A popular saying expresses this idea:

"When you marry in June, you're a bride all your life."

This can also be interpreted as:

A person who marries in June will experience happiness akin to that of a bride throughout her life.

In both instances, the lexeme *bride* conveys the notion of happiness. Unlike many Eastern cultures, in English culture the lexeme *bride* does not carry connotations such as serving or being obedient to the husband's relatives. Our research demonstrates that *bride* frequently appears in contexts associated with the lexeme *wedding*, signifying a person specifically in relation to the wedding day. In other words, the lexeme *bride* is closely associated with the wedding frame.

Continuing our analysis of marriage customs according to calendar months, it becomes evident that cultural

beliefs regarding auspicious and inauspicious times also constitute lexical units that reflect English traditions and values. For example:

“Marry in May,
Rue for aye.”

The phrase Rue for aye conveys the meaning of “eternal regret,” warning that a marriage conducted in May may lead to lifelong misfortune. A. Sarbassova explains:

“May is associated with spring and new beginnings. In the context of marriage, it may symbolize hasty decisions. This proverb serves as a cautionary reminder that marrying in May could lead to lifelong regret or sorrow. However, like many proverbs, it combines elements of superstition and cultural perspective, and may not be taken literally in contemporary times”.

According to English tradition, Friday and Saturday are considered the least auspicious days for marriage. This belief is reflected in the widely known verse:

Monday for wealth
Tuesday for health
Wednesday the best day of all
Thursday for losses
Friday for crosses
And Saturday no luck at all.

In this poetic enumeration, the days of the week are individually listed and attributed specific qualities. Notably, the final lexeme of each line rhymes with that of the following line: wealth – health, losses – crosses. These rhyming words can be grouped according to the positive or negative connotations they convey:

- Positive: wealth – prosperity, health – well-being.
- Negative: losses – deprivation, crosses – misfortune, conflict.

When evaluating the days in terms of their suitability for marriage, Wednesday is grammatically emphasized with the superlative form the best, highlighting it as the best day. This notion is similarly illustrated in another example:

Wednesday is the luckiest day to marry, and Saturday is the unluckiest.

These linguistic expressions demonstrate how lexical choices and syntactic structures in English phraseology encode cultural beliefs and societal values regarding auspicious timing for wedding.

RESULTS

It is evident that in English culture, the day of the week holds considerable significance when planning a

wedding. Days are often associated with fate, and it has been customary to choose specific times for the most important events in one’s life. Similarly, weddings were traditionally aligned with the seasons. Marriages conducted between the harvest period and Christmas were believed to signify a prosperous and fortunate life. This belief is still preserved in popular sayings such as:

Marry in September’s shine,
Your living will be rich and fine.

Although the importance of particular months or seasons has diminished in contemporary wedding practices, popular didactic verses continue to reflect the cultural perception of seasonal influence. For example:

If you marry in Lent,
You will live to repent.

These expressions illustrate how English phraseology encodes cultural attitudes toward auspicious timing, revealing the interplay between language, tradition, and social values.

Many beliefs and notions traditionally associated with a happy marriage continue to be passed down through generations in English culture. One popular saying reflects this enduring sentiment:

Happy the bride, the sun shines on.

In addition to the day of the week, season, and month, colors also hold particular significance in English wedding customs, often reflected in the attire of the bride. Before the widespread adoption of the white wedding dress, the choice of color carried symbolic meaning. For example, the following traditional English verse expresses beliefs associated with different colors:

Married in green, ashamed to be seen
Married in grey, will go far away
Married in red, wish yourself dead
Married in blue, always be true
Married in yellow, ashamed of your fellow
Married in black, wish yourself back
Married in pink, of you he’ll think
Married in white, sure to go right.

This verse illustrates how lexical and cultural expressions encode symbolic meanings attached to colors, demonstrating the interplay between language, cultural norms, and marital traditions in English society.

According to the article “Wedding paradoxes: individualized conformity and the ‘perfect day’”, until the mid-19th century in Britain, bridal attire was often red, brown, or even black. In 1840, when Queen

Victoria married Prince Albert, she chose a white gown for the wedding, which subsequently established the tradition of wearing white in the country. This color also became a symbol of purity and virginity. The mentioned poem similarly associates the bride's white dress with correctness and propriety. But what does "correctness" signify for a young woman on the threshold of marriage? It primarily refers to purity and virginity. Additionally, in the poem, the colors red and black are associated with the lexeme wish. According to J. Carter and S. Duncan, before 1840, bridal dresses were typically red or brown. In the poem, the verb wish conveys negative semantics: wish yourself dead ("to wish death upon oneself") and wish yourself back ("to wish oneself back"). The most appropriate option is represented by white. This poem, as an example of English folklore, reflects cultural experiences relating the bride's dress color to her future life and the necessity of the white dress becoming a tradition.

Research led by A. Sarbassova analyzes English proverbs related to weddings from lexical, semantic, and linguocultural perspectives. It highlights that, in English culture, marriage is based on personal choice and mutual understanding. The lexemes husband and wife in proverbs symbolize equality and partnership within marriage. This analysis emphasizes the significance of equality, harmony, and mutual respect in family relationships. For example:

Marriages are made in heaven.

This proverb emphasizes that the marriage of two individuals is not solely determined by their own choices, but also involves the role of fate. According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, the word heaven is defined as follows:

1. Heaven – in some religions, sometimes imagined as the sky, a place where God or gods reside and where good people go after death, enjoying perfect happiness.
2. The heavens – the sky.

In the proverb "Marriages are made in heaven," the phrase in heaven conveys the meaning of a divine realm. If the expression were in the heavens, it would imply a literal "in the sky" meaning. In most religions, particularly in Islamic and Christian beliefs, the dwelling place of God is considered to be the Throne of Allah (Arsh-i A'la). There is a widespread belief that the souls of righteous individuals, after death, ascend to a place of eternal happiness and tranquility – Paradise. The English proverb "Marriages are made in heaven" thus reflects the spiritual worldview and religious conceptions of its speakers.

The following idiomatic expression, containing the

lexeme heaven, also mirrors English religious and cultural beliefs:

"A match made in heaven" – denotes the ideal compatibility between two people.

For example:

"Everyone thought that they were a match made in heaven."

This demonstrates how linguistic expressions encode both moral and religious values within a culture, illustrating the interplay between language, belief systems, and social practices.

As previously noted, idioms, which form part of phraseological units, do not retain the literal meanings of their constituent lexemes and instead convey figurative significance. In the idiom heaven, the lexeme semantically conveys notions of ideality and perfection, qualities traditionally attributed to the divine. Similarly, the English lexicon's idiom "a match made in heaven" reflects religious belief and the concept of predestined compatibility.

This proverb also implies a firm belief in fate—the idea that people's lives are predetermined. In English, the modal verb must denotes necessity or obligation, and the phrase must have emphasizes certainty, reinforcing the notion that events or outcomes "must be" as they are.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, phraseological units constitute a vast and complex area of linguistics, the boundaries of which remain a matter of ongoing debate. Scholars continue to discuss whether idioms should be understood narrowly or broadly. In a narrow sense, phraseological units are regarded as stable expressions whose meanings are fixed and integral. In a broader sense, however, the concept encompasses various lexical and phraseological units, including proverbs, sayings, folklore-specific expressions, and conventional forms of greeting and farewell. Some researchers advocate for including these units within the wider scope of phraseology, while others prefer to study them separately, maintaining a narrower definition.

This ongoing debate underscores the need to reconsider the limits of phraseology. Despite the controversial nature of phraseological research, the study of phraseological units remains crucial for understanding the interplay between language and culture. In particular, the study of wedding-related phraseological units necessitates a multidisciplinary approach, integrating perspectives from linguistics, cultural studies, sociology, and anthropology.

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