

Methods of Reflecting the Linguacultural Essence of The English Language Discourse in Translation of Business Communication

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the analysis of the ways of reflecting the culture of English-speaking countries in business discourse, as well as the techniques for translating the linguistic and cultural realities from English into Uzbek. The relevance and value of this field is determined by its focus on completely studied area of interaction between the language and culture in aspect of business communication, as well as the increased attention of modern linguistics to the problems of intercultural professional communication.

Keywords: *linguistic and regional studies, discourse, translation, business communication, cultural meaning, cultural and linguistic competence.*

Introduction

Business communication is the centerpiece of a professional partnership. The growing attention of intercultural business communication at the present stage of the development of linguistics is explained by the rapid development of political, scientific and economic contacts. This development is closely connected with the national and cultural specifics of consciousness and national originality of the world picture that has developed among different linguacultural communities entering into business contacts. In addition, the wide interest in the problems of intercultural business communication is due to the shift in emphasis in defining culture towards the priority of national traditions of linguistic communities, their way of life, specific behavior and mentality.

The problem of this study is to determine the most characteristic features of the communicative behavior of representatives of the English linguacultural community and ways of neutralize the cultural barriers that can cause misunderstanding in the process of business intercultural communication. In this regard, the methods and forms of transmission of cultural traits and components of English language spoken and written business messages are investigated when they are translated into Uzbek. At the same time, national and cultural differences are considered as a fundamental basis for the emergence of misunderstanding in communicative situations of business communication.

The value of this study also lies in the fact that the basis for the description and systematization of methods of linguacultural translation in the process of business communication in English and Uzbek cultures in a comparative aspect is the signification of the sociocultural technology of business communication. The strategies of linguacultural translation at the level of business discourse are presented as some special verbal and non-verbal operations with their own technology. Depending on the objective capabilities of the communicative message within the framework of the studied register of business communication (conducting business negotiations), the types of communicative situations in the analyzed genre (business communication), speech methods of influencing the participants of the communicative process in order to achieve successful results are determined. The results obtained can contribute to the replenishment and deepening of scientific ideas about the problem of “culture and language”, about the nature and specifics of the difficulties that arise in the process of business communication for a negotiator with a divergence of cultures. The work reveals specific ways of manifesting culture in language, namely in business discourse, strategies and techniques, which are considered to overcome difficulties in multicultural business communication generated by cultural idiosyncrasy. This study gives the deeper insight into the process of functioning of lexical and grammatical phenomena in business communication; to analyze the national and cultural specifics of business communication of native speakers of English and

Uzbek languages; identify trends in the development of business discourse in two cultures; show the formation in the analyzed genre of discourse of their own linguistic and speech norms. All above confirms the possibility of their use in training courses on the theory and practice of business negotiations, comparative linguistics, stylistics and linguistics of professional discourses in practical classes in foreign languages, as well as in writing term papers and theses in linguistic universities.

Purpose, objectives, subject and methods of the research

The purpose of this study is to systematize the elements of the English language culture, manifested in the communicative act of business communication, and describe the main ways of their reflection in the Uzbek language during translation. This purpose identifies the objectives of the study: to describe the ways of representing the English speaking culture in the language of business communication; to determine the possibilities of their communicative and pragmatic adaptation in the Uzbek language; consider the main strategies and techniques for conveying the English language cultural component of the original message; analyze the typical mistakes that arise in the process of reflecting cultural information during business communication; analyze extra linguistic parameters of business interaction.

The subject of the research is a certain aspect of human speech activity, that is, business communication, and the object of research is at the junction of several fundamental sciences - linguistics, cultural studies, ethno psycholinguistics, theory and practice of translation. Thus, against the background of the subject of research, as a rule, several objects appear, each of which, in turn, consists of separate linguacultural units; of the whole multitude that the research goals are closest to the phraseological fund of the English and Uzbek languages and the standards, stereotypes, symbols, metaphors and images of the languages and their stylistic devices, speech behavior and speech etiquette, adopted in English speaking countries and in Uzbekistan.

To identify more clearly the results of the research, the corpus of the study has been narrowed to the certain number of texts. Four texts are chosen to analyze the degree of reflection of linguacultural essence of English discourse when translated into Uzbek. Two of them are dialogues taken from internet sources and presenting business communication between two people and the other two are transcripts of official meetings of the representatives of British and Uzbek companies. All texts are given with the translations in Uzbek and Russian languages. Texts in English are taken as the original and all culturally colored words and word-combinations are chosen for analysis. Then their meanings were compared to the translation variants.

The methodological basis of this research (the system of principles and methods of organizing theoretical and practical activities, as well as the doctrine of this system) is the concept of the development of linguistic theories. It includes three levels: philosophical, general scientific and private methodology. This study focuses primarily on the general scientific methodology, as for analysis generalization of methods and principles for the study of intercultural business communication by various sciences, including observation, experiment, modeling, interpretation. In addition, the goals and objectives set in the study are solved using the achievements of a private methodology, for instance methods of special sciences, in this case linguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmalinguistics, ethnolinguistics, psycholinguistics, cultural linguistics, theory and practice of translation, methods of teaching foreign languages (in particular, business competence) and stylistics (text).

The cultural information of linguistic signs creates additional difficulties in solving tasks set for this field of study. It has a predominantly implicit character, and it hides behind linguistic meanings. To solve this problem, we use the method of interpreting the national and cultural meanings of linguistic units from the position of a direct participant in the process of intercultural communication:

it takes into account not only the value modality of a number of collocations in business communication, but also what they mean from a pragmatic point of view (discomfort, disapproval, condemnation in society, etc.);

as well as in what conditions of speech, taking into account socio-cultural statuses and the roles of the interlocutors, these connotations arise. In other words, not only the method of interpreting

national and cultural meanings from the position of an internal observer is used, but also the method of analyzing linguistic facts from the position of an external observer.

In general, the study used a complex methodology that combines both traditional methods of direct observation and analytical description of linguistic facts, and modern procedures for studying the material, in particular: linguacultural analysis and the use of computer technologies, analysis of errors and the reasons for their occurrence during cross-cultural business negotiations.

Results and discussion

The language of business communication consists of a certain phrases that have become established in the speech of a particular language as the special linguistic units, which, in turn, are formed by a complete rethinking of free phrases. They combine two communicative functions: the nomination of the object of thought and its characteristics [1]. A distinctive feature of such linguistic units, which forms their specificity, is the effectiveness, preservation of the internal form, which in modern language is the figurative, socially conscious and motivating the meaning of a particular linguistic unit. Realities, gaps, phraseological units, idioms, proverbs and sayings, as well as elements of professional jargon and slang are most often used as such a peculiar linguistic unit.

The process of intercultural communication is carried out in the conditions of constant interaction of languages and cultures of the representatives participating in communication, in which various kinds of discrepancies and differences are found in the systems of contacting languages and cultures. These discrepancies cause quite a lot of misunderstandings between the communicants. When contacting with a foreign culture (foreign cultural text), the recipient sees it through the prism of local culture, which basically determines the lack of understanding of specific phenomena of the unfamiliar culture.

Literary critics and masters of literary translation [2; 5; 6; 8; 9; 15; 16] note that the national coloring of business discourse is often expressed through national and cultural realities. The closer the dialogue in its subject matter is to the life of the people, and in style to the vernacular, the more vividly its national flavor manifests itself [3]. As a result, in the field of business communication, linguistic and cultural realities, as well as words with a specific flavor, can be used in certain parts of the dialogue. For example, the most universal realities are often used at the very beginning of a business communication - when greeting, and at the very end of speech when saying goodbye. And the most “colorful” statements [4] are very rare in the dialogue itself, and the most often are directly related to jargon of businessmen and entrepreneurs.

Thus, the discussion of the research results can be divided into two sections:

- 1) discussion of translation of lacunae phrases used in the beginning and at the end of chosen business conversation;
- 2) discussion of the translation of lacunae phrases used in the main part of the chosen business conversation.

As it was mentioned above, when greeting and saying goodbye mostly the universal phrases are used. But there are some crucial differences in translation which should be underlined. The following greetings are found in the corpus of study as: “Hello!”, “Goodbye!”, “Good morning!”, “Good day!”, “Good evening!”, “Hi!”, “See you soon!”, “Good night!”. All these phrases are quite universal and can easily be translated into Uzbek as “Assalomu Aleykum!”, “Xair”, “Hayrli tong!”, “Hayrli kun!”, “Hayrli kech!”, “Salom”, “Ko’rishkuncha”, “Hayrli tun” and others. Sometimes, proper names, surnames or titles are added to the greeting or saying goodbye, and it is the characteristic feature of both English and Uzbek culture.

The slight difference sometimes can be found in word “aka”, which is often added to the Uzbek version of the text. This word comes after the proper name and shows specific respect to the person addressed. For example, “Good morning, Azam” is translated as “Hayrli tong, Azam aka”, moreover, in some translations the word “aka” substitutes the word “Mister” as in “Hello, Mr. Akram” – “Assalomu aleykum, Akram aka”. If the dialogue is too official the following universal phrases are used more frequently instead of “Hello”: “Hayrli tong!”, “Hayrli kun!”, and “Hayrli kech!”.

Another difference between English and Uzbek versions is in the way people say goodbye. If the English phrases “Goodbye!” and “Bye” are sound naturally in almost all situations, in Uzbek

people prefer not to use them at all, trying to use so-called “wish” phrases, in which Uzbek people wish something to their business partners. That is why translators and interpreters are often using to show that a person says goodbye as: “Sog’ bo’ling!” (“Be healthy!”), “Yaxshi qoling” (“Stay well”), “Korinib turing” (“Do not disappear”!) etc.

In general, this kind of phrases is one of the most developed in Uzbek vocabulary with a number of synonyms and equivalents. These phrases can be used to greet person in specific situations, for example, “Tug’ilgan kuningiz bilan tabriklayman” (Happy birthday), “Sizga uzoq umr, sihat – salomatlik va baxt tilayman” (Wish you long life, health and happiness), “Chukur ta’ziya izhor etaman” (“My deepest condolences”), “Joyalari jannatda bo’lsin, arvohlari sho’d bo’lsin” (For the soul to be in paradise and the body to be in peaceful”), “Bardam bo’ling” (“Hold on”).

Finally, standard English phrases of saying goodbye can be translated as the words aimed at saying thanks to the partner. It absolutely depends on the context and should be carefully used as most to change the cultural coloring of the text. Along, with more neutral “Raxmat!” (“Thanks”) and “Katta raxmat!” (“Thank you very much!”), more specific “Kam bo’lmang” (“Stay on the level”) is also used to show admiration and gratitude for the work. This phrase in Uzbek shows not only admiration for the quality of the work, not only thankfulness for doing the work, but also shows that in future you are waiting the same results.

The main parts of the business discourses chosen for the research possess some culturally colored phrases and collocations, which also arise some difficulties in the process of translation. Most linguacultural lacunae and realities of core business communication acts are expressed in the form of phrasal verbs like: (“get away with”, “turn in”, “work out”), nouns (“hot dog” – “sosiskali bulochka”, “the White House” – “Oq uy”, “bread and butter” – “the most important thing”, “old bird” – “tajribali odam”), adjectives (“the long green” – “dollar”, “bad is the best” – “juda yomon vaziyat”), adverbs (“to the bad” – “daromatsiz”), and even numerals (“a hundred to one” – “bir narsa qilishdan uzoq bo’lmoq”).

The words that make up such linguistic and cultural lacunae phrases lose their independence, “dissolve” in the significance of whole, do not act as independent communicative units of speech, but are reproduced as parts of a stable linguistic unit.

In English, the most common linguistic and cultural phrases are those that contain of a verb, or rather, begin with it.

“Blow hot and cold” – “Fikrni ko’p marta o’zgartirish (haftada yetti juma)”

“Close one’s eye’s to something” – “E’tibor bermaslik”

“Kill two birds with one stone” – “Bir oq bilan ikki quyovni urmoq”

“Hate somebody/something like poison” – “Birovdan yoki biron bir narsadan qattiq nafratlanish”

“Be in the balance” – “Qil o’stida”

“Get on very well” – “Til topmoq”

“To make up one’s mind” – “Qaror qilmoq”

“To play with fire” – “Tavakkal qilish”

“Catch time by the forelock” – “Imkoniyatdan foydalanmoq”

“Go to the bad” – “Yo’ldan adashmoq”

“To have other fish to fry” – “Bajarish kerak bo’lgan muxim ishlar”

This is the most common type of lacunae and realities [7]. Their first component is always a verb, which grammatically forms a phrase as a linguistic unit. Through morphological changes, the verbal qualities of the entire phraseological unit are realized.

In the process of business communication, proverbs and sayings are very often used, since this genre of verbal communication combines features of formal and informal genres. Proverbs are understood as compressed aphoristic sayings with an edifying meaning in a rhythmically organized form [10; 11]. Proverbs are often complex sentences, the main purpose of which is to teach and warn. A proverb is a non-verbal communicative phrase. Their feature is reproducibility: they are used as ready-made speech units with a constant lexical composition and certain semantics. They are used in their direct meaning, without a figurative allegorical meaning:

“Great cry and little wool” – “gapi ko’p – ishi kam”.

“Somebody is as smart as a steel trap” – “Unga faqat sabab kerak”

“Mend your sail, while the weather is fine” – “Hammasi uchun ozini vaqti bor”.

“Live and learn” – “Umrbod o’qib o’rganasan kishi”.

“Better untaught than ill taught” – “Bilimsiz odam, noto’g’ri bilim olgandan yaxshi”.

“Many men, many mind” – “Qancha odam – shuncha fikr”.

In turn, distinguishes only sayings into a separate third group of idioms [17]. Here, the following sayings can be found in the corpus of this study “don’t count your chickens before they are hatched» – “jo’jani kuzda sanaydilar”, “a leopard cannot change his spots” – “bukrini gor tuzatadi”.

In our study, we consider the types of proverbs and sayings according to their estimated meanings: 1. with a positive rating (“the flower of nation” – “eng yaxshi”; “to live in clover” – “yaxshi yashamoq”); 2. with a negative rating (“to let the grass grow under one’s feet” – “hech narsaga qo’l bormaydi”); 3. with edifying meaning (“every bean has its back” – “oyda ham dog’ bor”; “forbidden fruit is the sweetest” – “mamnun ne’mat”).

Considering the selected units from the point of view the classification of lacunae can be distinguished the following subgroups:

1. phraseological lacunae of color symbolism: “be in the black”, “white elephant”, “pink slip”, “pink elephant”, “red eye”, “blue collar”, “pink collar”;

2. phraseological lacunae of digital symbolism: “Catch-22”, “happy hour”, “the sixty-four-thousand-dollar question”, “the million-dollar question”;

3. phraseological lacunae of animalistic symbolism: “white elephant”, “seeing pink elephants”, “fat cat”, “fishing expedition”, “kangaroo court”, “lame duck”, “grin like a Cheshire cat”, “snake oil”, “cock-and-bull story”, “dark horse”, “pack rat”, “play possum”;

4. phraseological lacunae of vegetative symbolism: “coffee-table book”, “cotton-picking”, “dead wood”, “couch potato”, “meat and potatoes”, “open sesame”, “small potatoes”, “knock on wood”, “Big Apple” [20];

5. phraseological lacunae of nominal symbols: “John Doe”, “keep up with the Joneses”.

From this list, we can notice that the black connotation is not negative, but quite the opposite, symbolizes the well-being and prosperity of the business: “be in the black” – “foydali daromadli ish”. The expression «cotton-picking» – “bu sizning ishingiz emas” or “buning sizga daxli yo’q”, for prim aristocrats it is completely unacceptable to pick cotton, because of this business was entrusted exclusively to slaves. In the numerical quantity, phraseological adhesions prevail, which speaks of the figurative content, lack of motivation, the figurative meaning of the lacunae, as a result of which difficulties in understanding appear. For instance, “Catch-22” – “mushkul ahvol”. The expression “Catch-22” is rooted in Joseph Heller’s novel of the same name. One of the heroes of the novel, a military pilot, is not sure of his mental stability. According to section 22 of the instructions, in this case, pilots are required to report this and be suspended from flights; at the same time, in order not to allow irresponsible pilots to “skip” from the service using this rule, the same instruction states that pilots who claim to be abnormal should be considered normal [12]. Thus, the hero of the book, on the one hand, according to the instructions, should be removed from flights, since he is abnormal, but on the other hand, by openly declaring this, he, according to the same instructions, will be considered normal and, therefore, cannot be suspended from flights.

In terms of color, it can be concluded that blue is responsible for being male, such as, “blue collar” – “zavod yoki fabrika ishchisi”, on the contrary, pink is female: “pink-collars” – “kotib, yozuv mashinasida ishlovchi ayol, ofitsiantka”. Moreover, pink has a negative assessment: “pink slip” – “ishdan bo’shatilish haqida ma’lum qilinadigan xat”.

For the translation of the English words that do not have direct lexical correspondences in Uzbek, there are a number of special translation techniques, and it is important to be able to choose the technique that is most suitable for the translated text.

1. Translation using transliteration and transcription. When it is necessary to convey an English word that does not have a correspondence in the Uzbek language, you can try to recreate the form of the English word in translation in order to introduce into the Uzbek language a lexical unit corresponding to the translated English word. In this case, a new borrowing word will appear in the Uzbek language. There are two ways to convey a foreign language form in translation: transliteration or transcription. The transliteration method is that with the help of Uzbek letters the letters that make

up the English word are transmitted and vice versa, for example, “Waterloo” – “Uoterlou”, “robot” – “robot”, “boss” – “bos”, “business” – “biznes”, “establishment” – “isteblishment” etc.

2. Tracing translation. Tracing is the translation of the parts of English word (or phrase) with the subsequent addition of the translated parts without any changes, for example, «sky-scraper» - «osmon-upar», “brain drain” – “ziyoli odamlarning chiqib ketishi” etc. Tracing of stable phrases is widespread: «the United Nations Organization» - «Birlashgan Millatlar Tashkiloti», or «Third Reich» - «Uchinchi Reih». When tracing, there is a danger of unnecessary literalism appearing in the translation. This method of translation can be used only when the corresponding word or expression is really absent in Uzbek, and the result of the tracing does not violate the compatibility of words in the target language. These phrases can often be accompanied by an introductory lexical phrase “so-called” – “nomli” in the translation to show the reader or listener that these phrases have been translated approximately.

3. Descriptive translation. Descriptive translation consists of conveying the meaning of a word through explanation. Such a descriptive translation can be used both to explain the meaning of a word in a dictionary and to translate words that have no direct correspondences in a specific text. Here are some examples of descriptive translation of the English linguacultural realities of business discourse into Uzbek: “landside” – “saylovda g'alaba qozonish”, “bull” – “narxlarning ko'tarishidan foyda qilayotgan birja spekulyanti”, “bear” – “narxlarning tushishdan foyda qilayotgan birja spekulyanti”, “floorer” – “qiyin savol yoki vaziyat”.

4. Approximate translation. An approximate translation or translation with the help of an “analogue” [13] consists in the selection of the closest match in the target language for a lexical unit of a foreign language that does not have exact matches in the target language. An analogue is only an approximate designation (explanation) of a foreign cultural element: “associate professor” – “dotcent”. Applying “analogues” in the process of translation, it should be borne in mind that they only approximately convey the meaning of reality and in some cases may create a not entirely correct idea of the nature of the object or phenomenon they designate [14]. Thus, the usual transfer of the reality of “drugstore” as a “apteka” does not give a complete picture of the functions of this institution - in Uzbek “apteka” only medicines and (sometimes) cosmetics are sold, while in American “drugstores” newspapers, magazines, coffee, ice cream and other essential items are also sold, and, in addition, they function as cafeterias [18]. Therefore, when the replica of the heroine of one of the American films, translated into Uzbek, “Food is awful in the drugstores” translated in subtitles as “Aptekalarda ovqat yaxshi emas”, this caused confusion among the audience. In this case, another Uzbek “analogue” would be appropriate - «kafe». Another example of this translation method found in the corpus of the study is the translation of the English term “holding company”, which is given as “holding kompaniyasi”, followed by an explanatory translation in brackets: “to'g'ridan-to'g'ri ishlab chiqarishni boshqarmaydigan, faqat o'z qo'llarida ‘portfel kapitali’ni ushlab turadigan firmalar”; in the further text of the article, the transcription holding is used without explanation. In this case, an approximate translation is also possible – “monopoliya kompaniyasi”.

5. Transformation (replacement). As you know, the translation process is not a simple replacement of units of one language with units of another language. On the contrary, it is a complex process that includes a number of difficulties that must be overcome by the translator. One of the techniques that help the translator are transformations. Translation transformations (replacements) occur due to the incomplete commonality or difference between the English and Uzbek languages. Zokirova distinguishes 4 types of transformations that take place in the process of translation: permutations; replacements; omission; additions [19]. When translating linguacultural realities, it is necessary to pay special attention to the context, the role of the context. In the process of translating a word, two stages are usually distinguished: a) understanding the meaning of the word in context; b) the transfer of this value by means of another language, i.e. the actual translation. Here, it is no longer a question of translating an isolated word, but of translating a word in a text. At all stages of translation of a word in a text, context analysis is critical.

Conclusion

The result of this study can be presented in the form of the following statements:

1. Business communication is an interpersonal intercultural zone of professional communication, which assumes perceptual, communicative and interactive levels of behavior, it is determined by pragmalinguistic (informativeness, regularity, implicitness, expressiveness) and pragma-psychological (interest, conflict, mutual understanding and understanding) characteristics of communication.

2. Business negotiations are a completely specific form of communication in the general system of intercultural communication, which is confirmed by the developed classification of communication signs, which is the initial prerequisite for building optimal business communication.

3. The linguacultural specificity of speech situations in English and Uzbek cultures in the field of business reflects the mental and linguistic structure of the sociocultural level and its pragmatic implementation.

4. Business communication is characterized by a rational balance of international and national elements. The national-cultural specificity of business communication has its own ways of displaying it and means of correlating it with it. Cultural-marked realities serve as a means of embodying the national-cultural specificity of the language of business communication, and the way to convey this specificity is their interpretation in the symbolic national-cultural space of a certain linguistic community.

5. The language of business communication reflects the statics of thought and focuses on the structure of its design using standardized means, clichés, idioms, metaphors and non-standard constructions.

6. Common features and differences in linguistic norms in English and Uzbek cultures in a negotiating situation are especially clearly manifested in the classification of types of utterance, in the form of alternating speeches, in the forms of feedback processes between negotiators, in a combination of frontal and lateral communication, in speed of the speech, the sequence of types of speeches and statements, the types of statements and remarks used, as well as strategies for responding to them.

7. When analyzing the features of business communication, the fundamentals are style-forming criteria, such as social and status roles; the heterogeneity of business speech in stylistic terms underlies the diversity of speech situations in business communication; speech situations, depending on the stage of negotiations, determine speech forms, speech etiquette and behavior etiquette. We can see the good examples in the following table.

Table 1. The Corpus of the Study

Lacunae phrase	Meaning	Context
the sixty-four-thousand-dollar question, the million-dollar question	an important or difficult question which people do not know the answer to	So will she marry him or not? - That's the sixty-four-thousand-dollar question.
a pink slip	a letter from your employer which tells you that you do not have a job any more	It was Christmas time when Miller got his pink slip from her company.
American dream	the idealistic notion that Americans are preoccupied with obtaining certain materialistic goals	The American dream of home ownership, a car in the garage, and a chicken in every pot started in the early thirties.
be in the black	If a bank account is in the black, it contains some money, and if a person or business is in the black, they have money in the bank and are not in debt.	Incredibly, we're still in the black after our holiday.

blue collar	of the lower class or working class; of a job or a worker, having to do with manual labor	His parents were both blue-collar workers. He was the first person in his family to go to college. They bought a house in a nice, settled, blue-collar neighborhood.
bottom line	the result; the final outcome	I know about all the problems, but what is the bottom line? What will happen? The bottom line is that you have to go to the meeting because no one else can.
bread-and-butter letter	a letter or note written to follow up on a visit; a thank-you note	When I got back from the sales meeting, I took two days to write bread-and-butter letters to the people I met. I got sort of a bread-and-butter letter from my nephew, who wants to visit me next summer.
bush league	not done to the usual or accepted standards	His article was a bush league stunt to discredit the company, and he has apologized.
Catch 22	a situation where one thing must happen in order to cause another thing to happen, but because the first thing does not happen the second thing cannot happen	Catch 22 is the title of a book by Joseph Heller about the experiences of an American pilot. If you don't have a place to stay, you can't get a job and with no job, you can't get an apartment. It's a Catch 22 situation.
chapter and verse	very specifically detailed, in reference to sources of information	He gave chapter and verse for his reasons for disputing that Shakespeare had written the play. The suspect gave chapter and verse of his associate's activities.
checks and balances	a system, as in the U.S. Constitution, where power is shared between the various branches of government	The newspaper editor claimed that the system of checks and balances built into our Constitution has been subverted by party politics.
cotton-picking	something that you say before a noun to express anger	Get your cotton-picking feet off my chair!
dark horse	someone or something whose abilities, plans, or feelings are little known to others	It's difficult to predict who will win the prize—there are two or three dark horses in the tournament.
dead wood	people in a group or organization who are not useful anymore and who need to be removed	There's a lot of dead wood in the team which needs to be cleared out

eyeball to eyeball	if you are eyeball to eyeball with an enemy or someone that you are arguing with, you deal with them in a direct way	Troops on the ground are likely to remain eyeball to eyeball for a while yet.
fat cat	someone, who is ostentatiously and smugly wealthy	I like to watch the fat cats go by in their BMWs. I'm no fat cat. I can't even pay my normal bills!
from soup to nuts	from the beginning to the end	She told us everything about the trip, from soup to nuts.
get/jump/leap on the bandwagon	to become involved in an activity which is successful so that you can get the advantages of it yourself	The success of the product led many companies to jump on the bandwagon. Publishers are rushing to get on the CD-ROM bandwagon
hang out your shingle	to start your own business, especially as a doctor or a lawyer	He hung out his shingle in Brandon many years ago, and has been a lawyer there ever since.
have no truck with something	to have nothing to do with something	After the way Mary treated me, I'll have no truck with her. We only show good, wholesome movies at this theater. We have no truck with most of that Hollywood trash.
have sticky fingers	Fig. to have a tendency to steal	The clerk—who had sticky fingers—got fired. The little boy had sticky fingers and was always taking his father's small change.
hot ticket	something that is really popular and attractive at the moment	Singers who can dance are a hot ticket right now. Who knows what folks will like next month?
John Doe	a man or boy whose real name must be kept secret or is not known, especially in a court of law	The patient was referred to in court documents as John Doe.
last call (for something)	the last opportunity for doing, getting, or having something.	This is the last call for ice cream and cake. It's almost all gone.
man of straw, straw man	a weak proposition posited only to be demolished by a simple countering argument	So you can knock down your own straw man! Big deal. The question is how you can deal with real problems.
old hat	old-fashioned; outmoded.	That's a silly idea. It's old hat. Hardly anybody uses typewriters anymore. That's just old hat.
open sesame	immediate means of entrance, or unobstructed access to something	Tom mistakenly believed that his wealth would be an open sesame to the world of

		creative arts.
pass the buck	Fig. to pass the blame (to someone else); to give the responsibility (to someone else).	Don't try to pass the buck! It's your fault, and everybody knows it. Some people try to pass the buck whenever they can.
pink-collars	pink-collar jobs are jobs that women usually do, often in offices and for little money	Most women returning to work after raising children, head for pink-collar jobs in sales and service.
pork barrel	the action by a government of spending money in an area in order to make themselves more popular with the people there	He was critical of these new, expensive job programs as just a form of pork barrel.
snake oil	advice or solutions to problems which are of no use	People used to sell substances called snake oil in the US which they said would cure illnesses but which were of no use. In my opinion, government measures for balancing the budget are just so much snake oil.
soft-pedal something	to play something down; to de-emphasize something	Try to soft-pedal the problems we have with the cooling system. I won't soft-pedal anything. Everyone must know the truth.
spin doctor	someone who gives a twisted or deviously deceptive version of an event	Things were going bad for the candidate, so he got himself a new spin doctor. A good spin doctor could have made the incident appear far less damaging.
spin something off	to divest itself of one of its subparts	The large company spun one of its smaller divisions off. It spun off a subsidiary and used the cash to pay down its debt.
stand pat (on something)	to stick firmly to one's position or opinions	I am going to stand pat on this issue. I thought you would stand pat in the absence of new information.
weasel out (of something)	Fig. to evade or avoid a job or responsibility	Don't try to weasel out of your responsibility! You can't weasel out! You have to do it.
white elephant	something that is large and unwieldy and is either a nuisance or expensive to keep up	Bob's father-in-law has given him an old Rolls Royce, but it's a real white elephant. He has no place to park it and can't afford the gas for it.

		Those antique vases Aunt Mary gave me are white elephants. They're ugly and I have no place to put them.
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