

CULTURAL VALUES LEXICON IN ENGLISH: A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF KEYWORDS AND IDIOMS

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Abstract

This article maps the cultural values lexicon of English—from longstanding abstract nouns (e.g., tradition, heritage, honor) to modern ideals (e.g., diversity, sustainability, human rights)—and illustrates how both single keywords and set phrases encode collective identity, moral norms, and historical change. Employing a secondary-data review of idiom dictionaries, encyclopedic entries, and image archives, we identify core terms and trace their semantic characteristics, collocations, and usage contexts. We also discuss the role of figurative expressions (e.g., “old school,” “melting pot,” “when in Rome”) in conveying evaluative attitudes. Our findings highlight the dynamic interplay between linguistic form and cultural narrative.

Keywords: Cultural values; axiological lexicon; tradition; diversity; idioms; collocations; cross-cultural linguistics.

Introduction

A society’s value system—its shared beliefs about what is important, good, or desirable—is deeply inscribed in its language (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.-a). In English, abstract nouns such as **tradition**, **heritage**, **identity**, and **multiculturalism** serve as linguistic signposts to collective ideals, while adjectives like **traditional**, **modern**, **conservative**, and **liberal** modify practices and beliefs. Moreover, idiomatic expressions—“old school,” “melting pot,” “time-honored tradition,” and “when in Rome, do as the Romans do”—function as compact moral lessons or cultural scripts (The Free Dictionary, n.d.-a; Wikipedia, n.d.-b). This study surveys these lexical items, categorizes them by value domain, and examines their historical and pragmatic dimensions to illuminate how language both reflects and shapes evolving cultural narratives.

Methods

To write article we used comparative method, and each lexical item was coded for: (a) value domain (e.g., collective identity, innovation), (b) grammatical category (noun, adjective, idiom), (c) collocational patterns, and (d) pragmatic usage contexts.

Results

During searching we identify these results that cultural axiological lexicon are referred as Abstract Nouns and Adjectives

- **Tradition, heritage, customs, identity:** Central to discussions of continuity versus change (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.-a).
- **Diversity, multiculturalism, inclusivity:** Late-20th-century terms reflecting positive valuation of variety (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.-b).

Collocations

- **Cultural heritage, core beliefs, shared values, deep-rooted traditions**—frequent pairings that foreground group identity and historical depth.

Idioms and Figurative Expressions

- **“Old school”, “old-fashioned”:** Pejorative or nostalgic valuation of tradition (The Free Dictionary, n.d.-b).
- **“Melting pot”:** U.S.-centric idiom emphasizing assimilation and unity amid diversity (Wikipedia, n.d.-b).
- **“On the cutting edge”, “break with tradition”:** Valorize innovation and change.
- **“When in Rome, do as the Romans do”:** Advocates contextual adaptation and respect for local norms (Wikipedia, n.d.-a).

Loanwords and Slogans

- **“American Dream”:** Encapsulates opportunity and success through effort (Wikipedia, n.d.-c).
- **“Ubuntu”, “karma”:** Recent borrowings conveying shared humanity and moral reciprocity, respectively.

Discussion

The **cultural values lexicon** in English spans a broad semantic field—covering tradition, identity, innovation, and inclusivity—and employs a mix of abstract nouns, descriptive adjectives, and vivid idiomatic imagery. Collocations like **“shared values”** signal communal consensus, while metaphors such as **“melting pot”** and maxims like **“when in Rome”** package complex socio-cultural advice into memorable units. The diachronic layering—from Enlightenment ideals (progress, humanism) to contemporary emphases (diversity, sustainability)—reveals how English adapts to shifting moral landscapes.

For cross-cultural communication, awareness of these items is vital: literal translation often fails to convey the embedded value judgments. In language pedagogy, explicit instruction on both denotative meaning and axiological connotations can improve pragmatic competence and intercultural sensitivity.

Conclusion

This survey demonstrates that the **axiological lexicon** of cultural values in English is both richly historical and dynamically evolving. From venerable terms like **tradition** and **heritage** to emergent concepts such as **multiculturalism** and **sustainability**, the language continually

incorporates new value markers. Recognizing and teaching these lexical items—and their idiomatic forms—can foster deeper understanding of cultural narratives and facilitate more effective intercultural interaction.

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