

**FROM BIRTH TO DEATH: THE PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS THAT SHAPE OUR  
PERCEPTION OF LIFE**

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**Abstract:** Life, a universal yet deeply personal journey, is often framed and understood through the lens of phraseological units. These idioms, proverbs, clichés, and other fixed expressions serve as cultural shorthand, encapsulating societal values, emotional responses, and historical perspectives associated with the various stages of existence – from the anticipation of birth to the contemplation of mortality. This study delves into the rich and varied landscape of phraseological units related to the human life cycle, examining how they shape our perception of life's milestones, influence our attitudes toward different age groups, and reveal both universal human experiences and culturally specific nuances. By analyzing examples from a range of languages and cultures, this research demonstrates the profound impact of phraseology on our understanding of life's inherent transitions and the enduring human quest for meaning. Furthermore, this study recognizes the significance of health and well-being as integral aspects of the human experience, acknowledging the role of phraseology in reflecting attitudes towards physical and mental states across the lifespan, as highlighted by Khodzhaieva (2021).

**Keywords:** phraseology, idioms, life cycle, birth, death, aging, culture, language, cross-cultural, perception, metaphor, fixed expressions, proverbs, linguistic relativity, cognitive linguistics, cultural scripts, conceptual metaphors, health, well-being, values, political discourse, onomastics.

**Introduction.** Language, far from being a neutral conduit of information, is a dynamic and culturally embedded system that shapes our thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions. Phraseological units, in particular, offer a rich and nuanced window into how societies conceptualize abstract concepts such as life, death, and the passage of time. These fixed expressions, often metaphorical in nature, serve as cognitive shortcuts, allowing us to quickly and efficiently communicate complex ideas and emotions related to the human experience. This article explores the profound influence of phraseological units on our perception of the life cycle. By examining a diverse range of idioms, proverbs, and other fixed expressions related to birth, childhood, adulthood, aging, and death, we seek to understand how language shapes our attitudes, beliefs, and emotional responses to these fundamental stages of human existence. Furthermore, we will investigate cross-cultural variations in phraseology, revealing how different societies conceptualize and communicate about the life cycle, reflecting their unique values, traditions, and historical experiences. This exploration also considers the role of phraseology in reflecting and shaping societal attitudes toward health and well-being, recognizing the interconnectedness of physical, psychological, and social dimensions of the human experience. The study also acknowledges the relevance of political discourse and the use of onomastics in phraseology, as explored by Sadykova et al. (2024).

**Relevance of Work.** The value aspect of health has gained prominence in recent psycholinguistic, sociological, pedagogical, and linguistic studies. Modern phraseological research emphasizes phraseological and ideographic classification, as demonstrated by Khodzhaieva (2021) in her quantitative thematic and ideographic modelling of the value of 'health' in English phraseology. The study of phraseological units in political discourse, as examined by Sadykova et al. (2024), highlights the importance of understanding how political figures utilize language, including

onomastic components, to shape public perception. This is particularly relevant in understanding how attitudes towards different stages of life and concepts of health are constructed and disseminated through political rhetoric. Proverbs, as noted by Anikin (1961) and Arewa & Dundes (1964), offer insights into cultural wisdom and ethnographic understanding, providing a valuable lens through which to examine societal values related to the life cycle. Isakova & Shamsiddinova (2023) provide a classification of phraseological units according to value theory, further emphasizing the importance of this approach in linguistic analysis and offering a framework for understanding how different cultures prioritize different aspects of life and health. Furthermore, the philosophical dimensions of life, value, and meaning, as explored by Belliotti (2019), Belshaw (2021), and Benatar (2006), provide a crucial context for understanding the deeper implications of phraseological units related to mortality and the human quest for purpose.

**Purpose.** This study aims to demonstrate the multifaceted influence of phraseological units on our understanding of the life cycle, from birth to death. It seeks to explore cross-cultural variations in these expressions, revealing how different societies conceptualize and communicate about the various stages of human existence. Furthermore, it examines the role of language in shaping attitudes towards different life stages and concepts of health and well-being, recognizing the interconnectedness of physical, psychological, and social dimensions of the human experience. By analyzing a diverse range of idioms, proverbs, and other fixed expressions, this research aims to illuminate the ways in which language both reflects and reinforces cultural values, societal expectations, and emotional responses associated with each phase of human existence. Finally, it considers the philosophical dimensions of life, value, and meaning, as discussed by Belliotti (2019), Belshaw (2021), and Benatar (2006), providing a broader context for understanding the significance of phraseological units related to mortality and the human quest for purpose.

**Materials and Methods of Research.** This research employs a qualitative approach involving the analysis of idioms, proverbs, clichés, and other fixed expressions related to the life cycle across a range of languages and cultures. Data is gathered from a variety of sources, including dictionaries, corpora (such as the Corpus of Contemporary American English and the British National Corpus), online resources (such as Wiktionary and specialized phraseology databases), and existing literature on phraseology, cultural linguistics, cognitive linguistics, and political discourse analysis. The analysis focuses on identifying recurring themes, metaphorical patterns, and cultural scripts embedded within the phraseological units. Particular emphasis is placed on how these expressions reflect attitudes towards age, health, mortality, and the overall value of human life. The research also draws upon philosophical perspectives on the value and meaning of life (Belliotti, 2019; Belshaw, 2021; Benatar, 2006) to provide a theoretical framework for interpreting the findings. Comparative analysis is conducted to highlight cross-cultural similarities and differences in the conceptualization of the life cycle, drawing upon the insights of Anikin (1961) and Arewa & Dundes (1964) regarding the cultural significance of proverbs. The study also considers the role of political discourse in shaping attitudes towards different life stages, drawing upon the work of Sadykova et al. (2024) on the use of phraseological units in political speeches.

**Results and Discussion.** The anticipation of birth and the arrival of a new child are often marked by a unique set of phraseological units that reflect cultural values and societal expectations. In English, expressions such as "expecting," "with child," or the more colloquial "bun in the oven" reveal varying degrees of directness and cultural attitudes toward pregnancy. In some cultures, there may be specific idioms related to the gender of the expected child, reflecting societal preferences or biases. For instance, in some societies, there may be celebratory expressions specifically for the birth of a son, reflecting patriarchal values. Idioms describing newborns, such as "bundle of joy," "a ray of sunshine," or "a gift from God," highlight the positive emotions and

hopes associated with birth. These expressions often emphasize the innocence and potential of the newborn, reflecting a sense of optimism about the future. In contrast, expressions like "a crying shame" (used ironically) can reflect the challenges and anxieties that often accompany parenthood. These expressions acknowledge the difficulties and responsibilities that come with raising a child, providing a more realistic perspective on the experience.

Phraseological units related to childhood often emphasize innocence, vulnerability, and the potential for growth. Expressions like "in one's infancy," "wet behind the ears," "knee-high to a grasshopper," or "a blank slate" convey a sense of inexperience and immaturity. These expressions often highlight the dependence of children on adults and the need for guidance and protection. Proverbs such as "children are the future" or "as the twig is bent, so grows the tree" underscore the importance of nurturing and educating the younger generation. These proverbs emphasize the long-term impact of childhood experiences on adult life, highlighting the responsibility of parents and educators to shape the character and values of children. The phrase "to spoil a child" carries different connotations across cultures, reflecting varying approaches to parenting and discipline. In some cultures, spoiling a child may be seen as a sign of affection and indulgence, while in others it may be viewed as detrimental to the child's development.

Adulthood, characterized by responsibility, productivity, and the pursuit of personal goals, is also reflected in a distinct set of phraseological units. Idioms such as "coming of age," "taking the reins," "standing on one's own two feet," or "flying the nest" signify the transition to independence and self-reliance. These expressions often mark the point at which individuals are expected to take on adult responsibilities and make their own decisions. Expressions related to work and career, such as "climbing the corporate ladder," "making a name for oneself," "burning the candle at both ends," or "bringing home the bacon," highlight the importance of achievement and success in adult life. These expressions often reflect the societal emphasis on productivity, ambition, and financial stability. The use of such phraseological units in political speeches, as analyzed by Sadykova et al. (2024), can reveal strategies for influencing public opinion about economic policies and social mobility.

Phraseological units associated with maturity often emphasize wisdom, experience, and the ability to provide guidance to others. Expressions like "a pillar of the community," "a seasoned professional," "an old hand," or "a voice of experience" convey a sense of respect and admiration for individuals who have demonstrated expertise and leadership. These expressions often reflect the societal value placed on knowledge, competence, and the ability to contribute to the common good. The proverb "with age comes wisdom" encapsulates this sentiment, suggesting that experience is a valuable asset that can be used to guide others.

Aging, often viewed with a mixture of apprehension and acceptance, is another stage of life that is richly represented in phraseology. Idioms such as "over the hill," "long in the tooth," "getting on in years," or "past one's prime" can reflect negative stereotypes associated with aging, portraying older individuals as being in decline and no longer capable of contributing to society. These expressions often reflect ageist attitudes and can contribute to the marginalization of older people. In contrast, expressions like "golden years," "ripe old age," or "still going strong" offer a more positive perspective, emphasizing the potential for enjoyment, fulfillment, and continued activity in old age. The phrase "age is just a number" attempts to challenge ageist attitudes, suggesting that age should not be a barrier to pursuing one's goals and living a full life. Furthermore, expressions related to health in old age, such as "hale and hearty" or "fighting fit," reflect the importance of maintaining physical and mental well-being. Khodzhaieva's (2021) work on the value of health in English phraseology provides a valuable framework for understanding how these expressions reflect societal attitudes towards health and aging.



Phraseological units related to death and mortality often serve to soften the harsh reality of loss and provide comfort to the bereaved. Euphemisms such as "passed away," "gone to a better place," "kicked the bucket," "bit the dust," or "met one's maker" are used to avoid direct mention of death. These expressions often reflect a desire to avoid causing pain and to offer a more gentle and comforting way of talking about death. Proverbs such as "ashes to ashes, dust to dust" or "life is but a fleeting dream" reflect a sense of resignation and acceptance of the natural cycle of life. These proverbs often emphasize the transience of human existence and the inevitability of death. Expressions of grief and remembrance, such as "gone but not forgotten" or "resting in peace," provide solace to those who mourn. These expressions offer a way to honor the memory of the deceased and to express the enduring love and connection that remains. The cultural rituals surrounding death are often reflected in unique phraseological units, highlighting the diverse ways societies cope with loss and honor the deceased. The philosophical implications of mortality and the search for meaning are explored by Belliotti (2019), Belshaw (2021), and Benatar (2006), providing a broader context for understanding the significance of these expressions.

Across cultures, the phraseological units associated with the life cycle vary significantly, reflecting different values, beliefs, and traditions. Some cultures place a greater emphasis on ancestor worship and reverence for the elderly, while others prioritize youth and innovation. These cultural differences are often reflected in the language used to describe different stages of life. In some cultures, there may be specific idioms related to reincarnation or the afterlife, reflecting beliefs about the continuation of existence beyond death. Comparative studies of phraseology reveal fascinating insights into the cultural nuances of the human experience. Examining idioms and proverbs from different languages, as suggested by Anikin (1961) and Arewa & Dundes (1964), provides a deeper understanding of how different societies conceptualize and communicate about birth, growth, aging, mortality, and health. For example, comparing how different cultures express the concept of "midlife crisis" or the transition to retirement reveals distinct societal attitudes and expectations. The influence of political discourse on phraseology is evident in the use of cautious phrases, ambiguity, and irony, reflecting the interplay between language, power, and persuasion. The classification of phraseological units according to value theory (Isakova & Shamsiddinova, 2023) provides a framework for understanding these cultural variations and how they reflect underlying societal values.

**Conclusion.** Phraseological units exert a profound and multifaceted influence on our perception of the life cycle, encapsulating cultural values, societal expectations, and emotional responses associated with birth, growth, aging, mortality, and health. This analysis of examples from a range of languages and cultures demonstrates the complex interplay between language, culture, and cognition. By revealing how language shapes our understanding of the human experience and the enduring quest for meaning, this research contributes to a more nuanced appreciation of the richness and diversity of human expression. Further research could explore the diachronic evolution of these phraseological units, the impact of globalization on their dissemination and adaptation, and the role of individual agency in shaping their meaning and usage. Additionally, future studies could investigate the relationship between phraseology and mental health, examining how language can both reflect and influence attitudes towards psychological well-being across the lifespan.

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