

Phraseology of Emotions and Emotive Phraseological Units in Global English

¹ Nigar Cingiz Valiyeva

¹ Professor, Doctor of Philology, Azerbaijan University of Languages (AUL), Baku, Azerbaijan

Abstract

This article is dedicated to the investigation of emotive phraseological units in global English. The corpus of phraseological units in terms of emotiveness, just as in the case of lexemes, is divided into two unequal parts — the phraseology of emotions and emotive phraseology. A total of 1971 phraseological units were analyzed, extracted using a continuous sampling method from the idiomatic dictionary. There are 797 units denoting emotions in the material, or 40.4% of the total. Emotive phraseological units are a set of phraseological units with emotional meaning; they represent a special type of unit that expresses the emotional attitude and emotional state of a person. Phraseologisms of emotions are characterized by a predominance of units of a procedural nature, and the process, as a rule, involves active action or influence. Emotive phraseological units, like argotic phraseology in general, are characterized by the dominance of units of procedural semantics. The ratio of non-procedural to procedural phraseological units is 1:4, which indicates the active manifestation of the emotional attitude expressed by argotic phraseology.

Keywords: phraseology of emotions; emotive component; linguocultural coordinates; subcultural identification lexeme; irony; argot

Xülasə

Diqqətinizə təqdim olunan məqalə global ingilis dilində emotiv frazeoloji vahidlərin öyrənilməsinə həsr olunub. Qeyd etmək lazımdır ki, frazeoloji vahidlərin korpusu emotivliyə görə leksemlərdə olduğu kimi, iki qeyri-bərabər hissəyə — emosiyaların frazeologiyasına və emotiv frazeologiyaya bölünür. Frazeoloji lüğətdən davamlı seçmə yolu ilə cəmi 1971 frazeoloji vahid təhlil edilib. Emotiv frazeoloji vahidlər emosional məna daşıyan frazeoloji vahidlərin məcmusudur; onlar insanın emosional münasibətini və emosional vəziyyətini ifadə edən frazeoloji vahidlərin xüsusi tipini təmsil edir.

Açar sözlər: emosiyaların frazeologiyası; emotiv komponent; lingvokulturoloji koordinatlar; subkulturoloji identifikasiya leksemi; ironiya; arqo

1. Introduction: English as a Global Language

Language is not merely a system of signs but a fundamental social resource through which individuals construct meaning, communicate experience, express identity, and establish relationships. Although several thousand languages are currently used throughout the world, only a relatively small proportion have acquired extensive institutional or international functions. Among them, English occupies a particularly influential position as a language of communication across national, linguistic, and cultural

boundaries. Its contemporary status is therefore closely associated with globalization, since the worldwide circulation of information, people, technologies, and cultural practices both supports and is supported by the use of a shared contact language.

The international expansion of English developed gradually through several interconnected historical processes. Its early geographical spread was closely related to British colonial expansion during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The economic and technological influence of Britain during the Industrial Revolution subsequently strengthened its international position. In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the political, economic, scientific, and cultural influence of the United States further accelerated its development as a global means of communication. More recently, digital technologies, international education, global mobility, popular culture, and online communication have contributed to the continuing use and diversification of English around the world (Valiyeva, 2018, p. 22; Baker & Ishikawa, 2021).

From a genealogical perspective, English belongs to the West Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family. It is historically most closely related to Frisian and is also connected with Dutch, Low German, and Modern High German. The development of English is conventionally divided into Old English, Middle English, Early Modern English, and Present-Day English. Nevertheless, these periods should not be regarded as entirely separate or precisely bounded stages. Linguistic change normally occurs gradually, and features associated with one period may continue to function while new phonological, grammatical, and lexical patterns are emerging (Valiyeva, 2018, p. 80).

The lexical system of English has expanded continuously throughout its history as a result of language contact, cultural exchange, scientific development, migration, and technological innovation. Its vocabulary contains a substantial Germanic foundation inherited from Old English and reinforced by contact with Scandinavian languages. At the same time, extensive borrowing from French, Latin, Greek, and numerous other languages has given English a highly diverse lexical structure. Basic grammatical vocabulary, personal pronouns, numerals, and many frequently used nouns and adjectives originate from Old English, whereas French and Latin contributed considerably to the language of government, law, religion, scholarship, social status, and abstract thought.

Vocabulary expansion has also occurred through productive internal word-formation processes. These include affixation, compounding, blending, conversion, back-formation, shortening, semantic change, and onomatopoeia. Compounds such as *downpour*, blends such as *brunch*, and the conversion of nouns into verbs illustrate the flexibility of English word formation. Affixation and conversion have been especially productive because the structural characteristics of English permit words to move relatively freely between grammatical categories. These mechanisms continue to generate new vocabulary in response to social, cultural, and technological developments (Valiyeva, 2018, p. 83).

However, the worldwide position of English should not be interpreted as the global reproduction of a single uniform linguistic system. Contemporary research increasingly employs the term *Global Englishes* to encompass World Englishes, English as an international language, and English as a lingua franca. This perspective recognizes that English is used in different national, regional, professional, and digital communities and is adapted to diverse communicative purposes. Many users of English operate outside traditionally defined native-speaker settings and combine English with other linguistic, cultural, and semiotic resources (Ishikawa, 2022; da Costa & Rose, 2024; Baker et al., 2026). Consequently, English functions not only as an international language but also as one component of complex multilingual repertoires.

The global diversification of English is particularly important for the study of phraseology. Phraseological units are culturally embedded and often preserve collective evaluations, metaphors, social experiences, and conventional ways of expressing emotion. Their meanings cannot always be explained through the literal meanings of their individual components. Moreover, the comprehension and emotional interpretation of English idioms may vary according to linguistic background, cultural knowledge, familiarity, transparency, and cross-language similarity. Recent studies involving first- and second-language users demonstrate that idiomatic expressions have measurable affective and sensory-motor properties and that their interpretation is influenced by speakers' previous linguistic experience (Morid & Sabourin, 2024; Soto-Sierra & Ferreira, 2024). The study of emotive phraseological units in Global English must therefore consider both the relatively stable meanings of conventional expressions and the multilingual, cultural, and contextual conditions under which those expressions are interpreted.

2. Globalization and Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication is an essential feature of contemporary social life. Individuals and communities increasingly interact across linguistic, cultural, political, and geographical boundaries through migration, education, tourism, international employment, digital media, and transnational institutions. Globalization has intensified these interactions by expanding the movement of information, technologies, cultural products, economic resources, and people. Although globalization is frequently discussed in economic terms, its effects extend far beyond production and consumption. It also transforms linguistic practices, cultural identities, social relationships, and the ways in which communities understand one another.

The growing interconnectedness of societies has made many previously localized concerns international in scale. Environmental degradation, public-health emergencies, forced displacement, irregular migration, organized crime, economic instability, and political conflict frequently cross national borders. As a result, such problems cannot always be addressed effectively by individual states acting in isolation. They require cooperation, information exchange, and communication among institutions and populations with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. At the same time, increased mobility and intercultural contact may produce social tensions, especially when migration, cultural difference, or linguistic diversity is represented as a threat rather than as a normal feature of contemporary societies.

Globalization nevertheless creates opportunities as well as challenges. It facilitates international scientific cooperation, educational exchange, access to information, and the circulation of cultural and intellectual achievements. It also encourages awareness that environmental, humanitarian, technological, and public-health problems are interconnected. Events occurring in one region may produce economic, ecological, political, or social consequences elsewhere. Consequently, global interdependence requires communicative practices that permit people to negotiate different perspectives and coordinate collective responses.

English has acquired an important role in this context because it is widely used as a lingua franca in international education, science, diplomacy, commerce, tourism, digital communication, and professional exchange. However, communication through English does not necessarily involve the transfer of a single, fixed Anglophone culture. Contemporary users draw upon multilingual repertoires and diverse cultural experiences while adapting English to particular relationships, settings, and communicative goals. Therefore, intercultural communication through English is more accurately

understood as a dynamic process of negotiation than as the simple transmission of information between clearly separated national cultures (Baker & Ishikawa, 2021; Baker, 2022).

Recent scholarship has consequently moved from static models of intercultural communication towards transcultural approaches. Traditional models sometimes present cultures as internally uniform and clearly bounded systems. In practice, however, speakers participate in overlapping local, national, professional, digital, and global communities. Their identities and communicative resources may change according to context. Transcultural communication emphasizes this fluidity and recognizes that meanings emerge through interaction among people whose linguistic and cultural affiliations cannot always be reduced to a single national category (Baker, 2022).

Cultural globalization may promote dialogue, mutual understanding, and the sharing of knowledge, but it may also strengthen unequal relations between dominant and less widely represented cultures. The international circulation of powerful languages, media products, and cultural models can reduce the visibility of smaller linguistic communities or encourage cultural standardization. Global communication must therefore balance international intelligibility with respect for linguistic diversity and local cultural expression. As Valiyeva (2018, p. 22) observes, intensified cultural contact can bring societies closer together while simultaneously placing distinctive cultural practices under pressure.

This tension is especially relevant to phraseology. Idioms and other conventional expressions preserve culturally specific images, evaluations, humour, historical experience, and emotional associations. When such expressions circulate through Global English, their interpretation may be influenced by speakers' first languages, cultural knowledge, communicative setting, and familiarity with the expression. Phraseology therefore provides a productive field for examining how global communication combines shared linguistic resources with culturally variable meanings.

3. Phraseology and the Emotive Component

Phraseology examines conventional multiword expressions that are stored, reproduced, and interpreted as relatively stable units of language. Phraseological units include idioms and other fixed or semi-fixed combinations whose overall meanings may be completely or partially different from the literal meanings of their individual components. Their principal characteristics commonly include reproducibility, relative structural stability, semantic unity, and varying degrees of idiomaticity. Unlike freely constructed combinations, phraseological units are generally recognized by members of a speech community as established patterns (Valiyeva, 2019, p. 296).

Nevertheless, phraseological stability should not be interpreted as complete formal or semantic immobility. Idioms can vary according to discourse, genre, communicative intention, and speaker creativity. Experimental evidence indicates that familiar canonical idioms are normally processed efficiently, whereas creatively modified forms may require additional interpretive effort. The processing of such expressions is influenced by familiarity, decomposability, predictability, literal plausibility, and contextual support (Carrol & Segart, 2024). Phraseological units should therefore be understood as conventional but potentially flexible constructions rather than as entirely unchangeable combinations.

Multiword expressions occupy an important place in everyday communication and language processing. Recent psycholinguistic research has expanded beyond isolated words by developing large-scale datasets for English multiword expressions and investigating properties such as concreteness, familiarity, semantic transparency, and imageability (Muraki et al., 2023). This

development supports the view that phraseological meaning cannot be adequately explained by examining individual lexical components alone.

A substantial part of phraseology is associated with human feelings, attitudes, evaluations, and emotional states. Emotions may be described through categorical models—including happiness or joy, anger, fear, sadness, disgust, and surprise—or through dimensional models based on variables such as valence and arousal. Contemporary emotion research also recognizes additional categories such as anticipation and trust, demonstrating that no single classification exhaustively represents the complexity of emotional experience (Wierzba et al., 2022). Accordingly, the emotional meaning of a phraseological unit should not be limited to a rigid division into positive, negative, and neutral emotions, although this three-part classification remains useful for broad semantic grouping.

A distinction can be made between the *phraseology of emotions* and *emotive phraseology*. The phraseology of emotions includes units that name or describe an emotional state, reaction, or experience. Emotive phraseology has a broader evaluative function: it expresses the speaker's emotional attitude towards a person, object, situation, or action, even when no emotion is explicitly named. An idiom may therefore describe fear, anger, pleasure, or sadness directly, or it may communicate contempt, admiration, irritation, mockery, sympathy, or approval indirectly through its figurative image and contextual use.

Recent psycholinguistic studies confirm that idiomatic expressions possess measurable affective properties. Their valence and arousal may interact with familiarity, transparency, predictability, knowledge of figurative meaning, and sensory-motor associations. Gavilán et al. (2021), for example, demonstrate that familiarity is closely related to knowledge of idiomatic meaning, while Morid and Sabourin (2024) show that English idioms can be evaluated according to affective and sensory-motor dimensions by both first- and second-language users. These findings indicate that emotive meaning is shaped by the linguistic properties of an expression as well as by the language experience of the person interpreting it.

The identification of an emotive component therefore requires attention to several interrelated levels of meaning. The first is the denotative component, which concerns the person, action, state, object, or situation designated by the unit. The second is the motivational or image-bearing component, which explains the figurative association underlying the expression. The third is the evaluative component, through which the denotation is represented positively, negatively, ambivalently, or ironically. The fourth is the contextual-pragmatic component, which concerns the speaker's intention, the relationship between participants, and the communicative situation.

The interaction of these components may differ according to the semantic structure of the phraseological unit. In relatively transparent expressions, individual words contribute recognizably to the figurative meaning. In more opaque idioms, the connection between the lexical components and the conventional meaning is less accessible. Emotional interpretation may consequently depend on conventional knowledge, cultural background, discourse context, and familiarity with the phraseological image. Recent research similarly shows that transparency, figurative usage, familiarity, valence, and arousal are interconnected dimensions of idiomatic meaning (Zhong et al., 2025).

The emotive component should thus not be treated as an optional addition to an otherwise complete denotative meaning. It emerges through the dynamic interaction of denotation, imagery, evaluation, cultural knowledge, and discourse. In this respect, a phraseological unit functions not merely as an isolated lexical object but as a discourse-oriented unit whose meaning is activated and modified

through communicative use. This interpretation corresponds to Telia's (2008, p. 177) view that the internal organization of phraseological meaning resembles a dynamic discourse rather than a mechanically divided textual structure.

4. Analytical Meaning in Argotic Phraseological Units

The interaction of denotative, motivational, and evaluative components can be observed particularly clearly in argotic phraseological units with an analytical type of meaning. In such units, semantic reinterpretation does not normally affect the entire expression to the same degree. One component may preserve its established subcultural meaning, whereas another undergoes partial or extensive semantic transformation. The overall meaning of the phraseological unit is consequently produced through the interaction of the retained and reinterpreted components.

This structure can be illustrated by units containing the component *thief*, such as “a thieves’ mother,” referring to the owner of a brothel; “a thieves’ family,” denoting a group of thieves in prison; “a thieves’ piece,” referring to food or other goods purchased from a shared criminal fund; “a thieves’ community,” denoting an organization that unites groups of thieves with different specializations; and “a thieves’ caste,” referring to the highest group within the hierarchy of thieves-in-law. In these expressions, the component associated with thieves preserves its subcultural reference, whereas the accompanying noun is reinterpreted in accordance with the social organization, practices, and values of the criminal community.

These examples also demonstrate the difficulties involved in the lexicographic description of argotic phraseology. A dictionary definition may provide the referential meaning of an expression without fully explaining its evaluative force, hierarchical associations, or emotional implications. The meaning of such a unit cannot therefore be reconstructed solely through the literal meanings of its components. It must also be interpreted in relation to the social structure and value system of the subculture in which it functions.

The presence of a subculturally identifying component may initially suggest a neutral or moderately positive evaluation within the relevant community. However, this does not mean that every unit containing such a component possesses a strongly positive emotive meaning. Its evaluative force depends on the denotation of the complete expression, its customary context of use, and the status assigned to the referent within the subculture.

A similar analytical structure appears in combinations containing verbs glossed as “hold” or “take” with the specialized meaning “to steal.” For example, “hold a ban” is interpreted as “to steal at a station,” while “hold a passage” means “to steal on public transport.” In these constructions, the verbal component identifies the general action of stealing, whereas the nominal component specifies the location, circumstances, or method associated with that action. The global meaning remains partially decomposable because the components make different but recognizable contributions to the interpretation.

Nevertheless, even apparently decomposable units may involve substantial semantic and evaluative transformations. This is evident in expressions containing the component “godfather.” Within the relevant argotic system, “godfather” may designate an experienced thief and mentor, the head of a criminal group, an authoritative thief-in-law, the owner of a thieves’ den, or an arbitrator at a criminal gathering. The component therefore carries associations with authority, seniority, and leadership.

In expressions such as “godfather” and “godfather table,” however, the denotative reference is markedly different. The first may designate a prisoner responsible for arranging beds, while the second refers to a prisoner assigned to clean tables and wash dishes. The prestigious semantic feature of leadership is thus transferred to activities perceived as subordinate or insignificant within the criminal hierarchy. This discrepancy produces an ironic reversal: a title associated with power is applied to a low-status function.

The resulting emotive effect is therefore not contained in the component “godfather” alone. It emerges from the contrast between the component’s conventional subcultural prestige and the socially devalued activity identified by the complete expression. The evaluative component becomes negative, while the emotive component conveys ridicule, contempt, or dismissive mockery. Such cases demonstrate that emotive meaning may arise through semantic incongruity rather than through explicitly emotional vocabulary.

These units may be classified as examples of analytical or partial reinterpretation because only part of their lexical structure undergoes decisive semantic transformation. Their interpretation depends on the relationship between the retained component, the reinterpreted component, and the knowledge shared by members of the relevant community. Baranov and Dobrovolsky’s (2005, p. 289) typology of reinterpretation provides an appropriate theoretical framework for describing these mechanisms.

Recent research on nonliteral language similarly indicates that figurative interpretation requires more than the recognition of lexical meanings. It involves the integration of linguistic information, contextual expectations, speaker intention, social knowledge, and inferential processes (Hauptman et al., 2023). Research on idiom variation also shows that conventional forms are generally easier to process, whereas modified or semantically unexpected expressions demand greater interpretive effort (Carrol & Segart, 2024). In argotic phraseology, this effort includes reconstructing the hierarchical and evaluative assumptions that connect the expression to its subcultural environment.

5. Types of Rethinking and Expressive Effect

The emotive and expressive force of an argotic phraseological unit is closely related to the mechanism through which its components are reinterpreted. Lexical elements such as “rotten” and “poison” possess negative associations even outside phraseology. When incorporated into argotic expressions, they can activate evaluative meanings connected with rejection, corruption, hostility, danger, or disgust. Their contribution is therefore simultaneously descriptive, evaluative, and emotive.

Some mechanisms of reinterpretation are especially likely to produce an emotional effect because they establish a noticeable contrast between the literal image and the socially intended meaning. Krassa’s classification extends the mechanisms discussed by Baranov and Dobrovolsky by including reinterpretation based on enantiosemy (Likhachev, 1992; Baranov & Dobrovolsky, 2005). Enantiosemy involves the development or contextual activation of meanings that stand in opposition to one another within a single lexical or phraseological form. The phenomenon is found in both English and Azerbaijani (Valiyeva, 2019, p. 237).

Examples include “smelling lilies of the valley,” used to refer to inhaling an unpleasant smell or miasma, and “saying good morning,” used to denote committing a theft or robbery in the morning. In both cases, the literal expression activates a positive, polite, or pleasant image, whereas the argotic meaning refers to a negative or socially condemned action. The expressive effect arises from the deliberate incompatibility between the surface form and the intended denotation.

This incompatibility may produce cynicism, irony, sarcasm, or ridicule. The speaker does not simply identify an action or situation but frames it through an image that communicates a particular attitude. The motivational component establishes one set of expectations, while the denotative component contradicts them. The emotional meaning develops from the collision between these two interpretive levels.

A comparable mechanism operates in expressions involving non-denotative or image-centred reinterpretation. For example, “a barn on a tether,” referring to a trolleybus, constructs a deliberately incongruous image. The component “barn” emphasizes perceived heaviness, lack of elegance, or discomfort, while “on a tether” evokes restricted movement. Together, the components represent the vehicle as both an immobile structure and a restrained animal. The incompatibility between building, animal, and vehicle imagery creates an absurd and dismissive representation of the referent.

The phraseological image therefore performs an evaluative function. It does not merely describe the trolleybus but presents it as cumbersome, unattractive, and limited in mobility. The expressive effect is intensified through the combination of semantically incompatible domains. Such absurdization allows the speaker to communicate criticism without using an explicitly evaluative adjective.

Not all argotic imagery is openly hostile. Some units may express humour, familiarity, or relatively mild mockery. The expression “thieves’ ball,” used to refer to the sun, is an example of a more playful metaphorical nomination. Nevertheless, benevolent irony appears less frequently than contemptuous, cynical, or dismissive evaluation in the analysed material.

Recent affective research supports the view that idioms differ systematically in valence, arousal, concreteness, and imageability. These properties interact with familiarity, literal plausibility, and semantic decomposability (Gavilán et al., 2021; Morid & Sabourin, 2024). In argotic phraseology, however, affective interpretation also depends on specialized cultural knowledge. An expression that appears neutral, humorous, or incomprehensible to an outsider may communicate a strong positive or negative evaluation to an initiated member of the subculture.

The expressive effect of argotic phraseology should therefore be analysed at several levels. These include the lexical associations of individual components, the figurative image created by their combination, the relationship between that image and the denotation, the subcultural status of the referent, and the pragmatic intention of the speaker. Emotiveness arises from the interaction of these levels rather than from a single isolated word.

6. Phraseology of Emotions and Emotive Phraseology

The phraseological corpus may be divided into two related but conceptually distinct categories: the phraseology of emotions and emotive phraseology. The phraseology of emotions consists primarily of units that designate, describe, or evoke particular emotional states. Emotive phraseology is broader and includes expressions through which speakers communicate emotional and evaluative attitudes towards people, actions, situations, institutions, or objects.

The distinction is important because an expression does not need to contain the name of an emotion in order to convey emotive meaning. A phraseological unit may explicitly refer to fear, anger, pleasure, or sadness. Alternatively, it may indirectly communicate contempt, hostility, admiration, approval, irony, irritation, or ridicule through its imagery, connotations, and contextual use.

Within the analysed material, phraseological units denote several emotional states. Expressions associated with fear include “catching the jitters” and “to put on a good bluff.” Calmness or

indifference is represented by expressions such as “on the drum,” “keep the stand,” and “not care a hoot.” Anger or emotional agitation is expressed through units such as “put into a bottle” and “fly off the handle.” Pleasure is associated with expressions such as “the thrill of catching” and “get a great kick from something,” whereas displeasure is represented by units such as “get off the buzz.”

These examples show that the boundaries between emotion naming, emotional evaluation, and behavioural description are not always clear. Some units identify an internal state, whereas others describe an observable reaction, a bodily response, or an action intended to produce an emotional effect in another person. The classification must therefore take account of both semantic content and communicative function.

Phraseological units denoting emotions are predominantly procedural. Most are structured as verbal or predicative combinations and represent emotion as an action, reaction, process, or change of state. Nominal and denominal formations are much less frequent. Examples include “the whisper of the stars,” which functions as a nominal combination, and “on the drum,” which functions as a denominal adverbial expression.

The predominance of verbal constructions indicates that emotion is conceptualized dynamically within the corpus. Emotional states are represented not merely as static psychological conditions but as experiences that develop, are manifested through behaviour, or are imposed upon others. Verbal phraseological units may therefore name both an emotional state and an act of emotional or psychological influence.

Expressions such as “to put someone in his or her place,” “to knock sense into someone,” “to bring someone to his or her knees,” and “to break off the horns” describe actions intended to intimidate, discipline, humiliate, pacify, or otherwise alter another person’s emotional and social position. Their meanings combine physical or behavioural imagery with evaluative and interpersonal functions.

Several lexico-thematic groups can be distinguished within emotive argotic phraseology. The first includes actions and forms of influence, including physical aggression, punishment, intimidation, psychological pressure, and other coercive practices. The second includes processes and states of different kinds. Examples are “to push one’s horns,” meaning to work conscientiously; “to pull one’s shoulders,” meaning to accept responsibility for another person’s crimes; and “to sit on a bucket,” meaning to occupy a despised or degraded position.

The third group consists of expressions designating people, including police officers, thieves, prisoners, outsiders, and individuals characterized by particular behavioural or social features. The fourth includes locative expressions that identify places relevant to the criminal or prison environment. The fifth consists of expressions referring to objects or substances. Units associated with denunciation, betrayal, or informing occupy a particularly significant position because such actions receive an intensely negative evaluation within the value system of the subculture.

Contemporary corpus research confirms that the relationship between idioms and emotions is highly differentiated. The IDEM dataset, for example, connects idiom-containing sentences with 36 emotion categories, illustrating that idiomatic language can encode a much wider range of affective meanings than a simple positive–negative distinction suggests (Prochnow et al., 2024). At the same time, the emotional range found in a specialized argotic corpus may be considerably narrower because its phraseology reflects the restricted social practices and hierarchical values of a particular community.

The emotive structure of argotic phraseology is therefore rich in intensity but comparatively limited in orientation. Negative evaluation, contempt, aggression, ridicule, distrust, intimidation, and hostility

occur more frequently than subtle or internally differentiated emotional states. This supports Telia's (1988, p. 368) observation that criminal argot may contain extensive emotional and expressive marking while remaining qualitatively repetitive in the attitudes it communicates.

Overall, the phraseology of emotions primarily represents emotional conditions and reactions, whereas emotive phraseology expresses the speaker's evaluative and emotional position. The two categories overlap because expressions describing emotion frequently also evaluate the person or situation concerned. Their distinction should therefore be treated as analytical rather than absolute. In both categories, meaning emerges through the interaction of semantic structure, phraseological imagery, subcultural knowledge, and discourse context.

7. Cognitive Models of the Motivational Component

The motivational component of a phraseological unit is frequently structured through recurring figurative images or cognitive models. These models connect an abstract action, evaluation, emotional state, or social relationship with a more concrete and culturally recognizable domain of experience. They therefore provide an interpretive link between the literal image of the expression and its conventional argotic meaning.

The analysed phraseological units reveal several recurring cognitive models. The first is the animalistic model, represented by expressions such as "wagging the tail," "holding a stance," and "clicking the beak." In these units, human behaviour is conceptualized through the movements, postures, or physical characteristics of animals. Such comparisons often reduce the social status of the referent and convey criticism, contempt, ridicule, or disapproval.

The second is the mechanistic or production model, illustrated by expressions such as "open the blinds," "roll a barrel," and "put under the hammer." This model represents human actions, relationships, or punishments through mechanisms, tools, production processes, and physical operations. The individual is consequently conceptualized as an object that may be opened, moved, processed, controlled, or damaged.

The gastronomic model includes expressions such as "pour it like a rich man" and "goulash for the kidneys." It draws upon food preparation, consumption, and bodily nourishment to describe actions or consequences that may have little literal connection with eating. The expressive effect arises from the transfer of familiar culinary imagery to socially marked, violent, or degrading situations.

The medical model is represented by expressions such as "administering anesthesia," "placing a thermometer," and "placing cups." Medical procedures are metaphorically reinterpreted to refer to physical punishment, intimidation, deception, or other actions within the argotic environment. Because medical treatment is ordinarily associated with care and recovery, its application to aggressive or coercive practices may produce irony, euphemism, or cynical humour.

The physiological model is based on bodily functions, reactions, organs, and physical states. Such imagery presents social and emotional experience through the body and may communicate fear, weakness, aggression, pain, humiliation, or loss of control. This model reflects the broader embodied nature of figurative meaning, in which abstract experiences are understood through concrete sensory and bodily knowledge.

The everyday-life model, represented by expressions such as "the roof is leaking" and "beating butter," draws upon household activities, familiar objects, and ordinary routines. The apparent simplicity of

these images contrasts with the specialized or socially restricted meanings they acquire in argot. This discrepancy often creates humour, understatement, or dismissive evaluation.

The organizational model includes expressions such as “Wedding Palace,” “gypsy trade union,” and “beach parliament.” These units reinterpret criminal, prison, or socially marginalized practices through the terminology of recognized public institutions and organized social structures. The contrast between the formal associations of the source image and the informal or illicit nature of the denotation produces irony and satirical imitation.

A combined model may unite two or more cognitive domains within a single expression. For example, an argotic phraseological unit may simultaneously activate animal, medical, physiological, and mechanistic imagery. Such combinations increase semantic density and may intensify the expressive force of the unit by creating an unusual or deliberately absurd conceptual association.

These models are not merely decorative metaphors. They organize the motivational structure of phraseological meaning and guide the interpretation of the denotation. Recent psycholinguistic research demonstrates that the comprehension of idiomatic expressions is influenced by semantic transparency, imageability, familiarity, affective valence, and sensory-motor associations (Gavilán et al., 2021; Muraki et al., 2023; Morid & Sabourin, 2024). Cognitive models therefore contribute not only to figurative representation but also to the emotional and evaluative interpretation of the expression.

In argotic phraseology, cognitive models frequently support expressive strategies such as reduction, vulgarization, absurdization, imitation, irony, and ridicule. A person may be represented as an animal, an object, a mechanism, a bodily organ, a type of food, or a participant in a fictional institution. These conceptual reductions commonly convey negative attitudes, including contempt, irritation, anger, hostility, and mocking disapproval.

Nevertheless, the emotional value of a cognitive model cannot be determined independently of its context. The same source domain may express aggression in one phraseological unit, familiarity or humour in another, and neutral description in a third. Interpretation therefore requires attention to the relationship among the literal image, the conventional denotation, the evaluative orientation, the communicative situation, and the value system of the relevant subculture.

The emotive load of an argotic phraseological unit consequently emerges from the interaction of three principal macrocomponents: the denotative component, which identifies the referent or situation; the motivational component, which supplies the figurative image; and the evaluative component, which positions the referent within a positive, negative, ironic, or ambivalent system of values. The pragmatic context determines how these components are activated in actual discourse.

Because argotic phraseology belongs to a specialized communicative environment, its cognitive models cannot be interpreted adequately without knowledge of the social hierarchy, behavioural norms, prohibitions, and symbolic values of the subculture. An image that appears arbitrary to an outside observer may possess a recognizable motivational basis for members of the community. A complete interpretation must therefore combine semantic, cognitive, pragmatic, and linguocultural analysis.

8. Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between emotional meaning and phraseological structure in a corpus of 1,971 units selected from published idiomatic dictionaries through continuous sampling. The

analysis distinguished between two overlapping domains: the phraseology of emotions, which primarily designates emotional states, reactions, and experiences, and emotive phraseology, which communicates the speaker's emotional and evaluative attitude towards a person, action, object, or situation.

The findings demonstrate that these two domains are unequal in size and cannot be separated by an absolute boundary. A phraseological unit may name an emotion while simultaneously evaluating the person experiencing it, or it may communicate contempt, irony, admiration, hostility, or approval without explicitly referring to an emotional state. The distinction should therefore be regarded as an analytical instrument rather than as a rigid classification.

Procedural units constitute the dominant structural type in the analysed argotic phraseology. The ratio of non-procedural to procedural units is approximately 1:4. Most expressions are verbal or predicative and represent emotions and evaluations as actions, reactions, processes, forms of influence, or changes of social and psychological state. This predominance suggests that argotic phraseology tends to conceptualize emotional experience dynamically rather than as a static internal condition.

The analysis further shows that the emotive component is not located in a single lexical element. It emerges through the interaction of denotative, motivational, evaluative, and pragmatic information. In some units, emotional meaning is associated with negatively marked components such as words denoting decay, poison, bodily discomfort, or violence. In others, it develops from the contrast between a positive or prestigious image and a negative or socially devalued denotation.

Partial reinterpretation, enantiosemy, ironic reversal, absurdization, and cross-domain metaphor are among the principal mechanisms through which expressive meaning is produced. The collision between literal imagery and conventional denotation allows speakers to convey contempt, cynicism, hostility, humour, or ridicule without using direct emotional labels. This finding is consistent with recent research showing that idiomatic meaning is shaped by the interaction of familiarity, figurativeness, transparency, affective valence, context, and linguistic experience (Gavilán et al., 2021; Hauptman et al., 2023; Morid & Sabourin, 2024; Zhong et al., 2025).

The study also identified a set of recurrent cognitive models underlying the motivational component. These include animalistic, mechanistic, gastronomic, medical, physiological, everyday-life, organizational, and combined models. They transform abstract social relationships and emotional attitudes into concrete images derived from bodily experience, familiar activities, institutions, objects, and physical processes. Such models organize the figurative structure of argotic expressions and contribute substantially to their evaluative force.

The emotional range of argotic phraseology is marked by the prominence of negative evaluations. Contempt, aggression, irritation, distrust, humiliation, intimidation, and mocking ridicule occur more frequently than subtle positive emotions. However, the presence of playful metaphors and mildly humorous expressions indicates that argotic emotiveness is not exclusively hostile. Its interpretation depends on the communicative function of the unit and on the status of the referent within the subculture.

The findings confirm that phraseological meaning must be interpreted within its linguocultural and subcultural coordinates. Dictionary definitions that provide only denotative equivalents may fail to capture hierarchical associations, emotional implications, pragmatic functions, and culturally specific imagery. The analysis of argotic phraseology therefore requires a multidimensional approach

combining lexicography, semantics, cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, emotion research, and cultural analysis.

Overall, emotive argotic phraseology represents a structured system in which linguistic imagery reflects the social values and emotional orientations of a specialized community. Its phraseological units do more than identify people, objects, actions, and situations: they classify them, assign them positions within a subcultural hierarchy, and communicate the speaker's attitude towards them. The study consequently demonstrates that emotiveness is a central organizing property of argotic phraseological meaning rather than an optional stylistic addition.

Declarations

Ethical Approval: This study is a theoretical and corpus-based linguistic analysis of published lexicographic material. No human participants were involved. All sources are appropriately cited.

Conflict of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Data Availability: The phraseological units analysed in this study are drawn from published idiomatic dictionaries cited in the references.

Note: This article analyses argotic (criminal-subcultural) phraseology as an object of linguistic study. The examples cited are presented solely for scholarly-linguistic purposes.

References

- Baranov, A. N., & Dobrovolsky, D. O. (2005). *Aspects of the theory of phraseology* [Aspekty teorii frazeologii]. Studia Philologica.
- Bergelson, M. B. (2002). Language aspects of virtual communication [Yazykovye aspekty virtualnoy kommunikatsii]. *Vestnik MGU: Lingvistika i Mezhkulturnaya Kommunikatsiya*.
- Dashtipour, K., Gogate, M., Gelbukh, A., & Hussain, A. (2022). Extending Persian sentiment lexicon with idiomatic expressions for sentiment analysis. *Social Network Analysis and Mining*, 12, Article 9. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13278-021-00840-1>
- Gavilán, J. M., Haro, J., Hinojosa, J. A., Fraga, I., & Ferré, P. (2021). Psycholinguistic and affective norms for 1,252 Spanish idiomatic expressions. *PLOS ONE*, 16(7), e0254484. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0254484>
- Hinojosa, J. A., Herbert, C., & Kissler, J. (2023). Introduction to the special issue: Affective neurolinguistics—Understanding the interaction of emotion and language in the brain. *Language, Cognition and Neuroscience*, 38, 1339–1347. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23273798.2023.2275667>
- Krassa, S. I. (2000). *Argotic phraseological units in the modern Russian language: Semantic and linguocultural aspects* [Doctoral dissertation]. Stavropol.
- Likhachev, D. S. (1992). Features of the primitive primitivism of thieves' speech [Cherty pervobytnogo primitivizma vorovskoy rechi]. In *Dictionary of prison-camp-criminal jargon* (pp. 354–398). Kraya Moskv.
- Lindquist, K. A. (2021). Language and emotion: Introduction to the special issue. *Affective Science*, 2(2), 91–98. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42761-021-00049-7>
- López-Rodríguez, C. I. (2022). Emotion at the end of life: Semantic annotation and key domains in a pilot study audiovisual corpus. *Lingua*, 277, Article 103401. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2022.103401>

- Morid, M., & Sabourin, L. (2024). Affective and sensory-motor norms for idioms by L1 and L2 English speakers. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 45(1), 138–155. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0142716423000504>
- Prochnow, A., Bendler, J. E., Lange, C., Tzavellos, F. I., Göritzer, B. M., ten Thij, M., & Batista-Navarro, R. (2024). IDEM: The IDioms with EMotions dataset for emotion recognition. In *Proceedings of the 2024 Joint International Conference on Computational Linguistics, Language Resources and Evaluation (LREC-COLING 2024)* (pp. 8569–8579). ELRA and ICCL.
- Santos, D., Simões, A., & Mota, C. (2022). Broad coverage emotion annotation. *Language Resources and Evaluation*, 56, 857–879. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10579-021-09565-1>
- Soto-Sierra, V., & Ferreira, R. A. (2024). The influence of cross-language similarity and transparency on idiom knowledge in non-immersed L2 speakers. *System*, 122, Article 103287. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2024.103287>
- Telia, V. N. (1988). Metaphorization and its role in creating the linguistic picture of the world [Metaforizatsiya i ee rol]. In *The role of the human factor in language: Language and the linguistic picture of the world* (pp. 173–204). Nauka.
- Telia, V. N. (2008). Linguoculturology—the key to a new reality of the phenomenon of reproducibility of multi-word formations. In *Language, culture, communication*. Gnosis.
- Valiyeva, N. Ch. (2010). *A great triglot phraseological dictionary* (Vols. 1–2). Azerneshr.
- Valiyeva, N. Ch. (2018). *Synergetics of the language, national consciousness and culture by globalization*. Lambert Academic Publishing.
- Valiyeva, N. Ch. (2019). *A paradigm of contrastive lexicology of the English and Azerbaijani languages*. Science and Education.
- Zhong, Y., Shao, Y., & Yi, W. (2025). Affective and non-affective psycholinguistic norms for 500 Chinese three-character idiomatic expressions. *Behavior Research Methods*, 57, 3631–3652. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-025-02633-2>

<i>Author</i>	Nigar Cingiz Valiyeva Professor, Doctor of Philology Azerbaijan University of Languages (AUL), Baku, Azerbaijan ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0000-9809-7688
---------------	---

Received: 02.06.2026

Revised: 14.06.2026

Accepted: 16.07.2026

Published: 18.07.2026