



TERMINOLOGY AND PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN TRANSPORT

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Annotation: *Transportation terminology and phraseological units serve as essential elements in both technical and everyday language, revealing much about how different cultures understand and interpret concepts related to movement, direction, and speed. Transport terminology spans diverse sectors, such as road, rail, maritime, and aviation, each with its own specialized vocabulary. These terms have practical applications within their respective fields, while transport-based phraseological units enrich language through metaphorical uses, influencing how people express complex ideas and emotions associated with travel and direction [Smith, 2015, p. 45]. This article examines the importance of transport terminology and phraseological units, addressing their role in providing technical specificity as well as reflecting cultural and linguistic diversity. By comparing terminology across transport sectors and exploring transport-based idioms from various languages, this article demonstrates how transport terminology serves functional needs while idioms and metaphors deepen our cultural understanding of movement.*

Keywords: *transport terminology, phraseological units, idioms, cultural diversity, linguistic metaphor, road transport idioms, maritime language, rail transport idioms, aviation idioms, cross-cultural communication, transport-based expressions.*

Transport Terminology: Precision and Technicality

Transport terminology is highly specialized, crafted to ensure clear communication of technical details in safety-critical environments. Each transport sector requires precise terms to describe specific features, processes, and regulations that are crucial for operational safety and efficiency. For example, in road transport, terms like “junction,” “roundabout,” and “right of way” denote infrastructure and rules essential for safe driving [Johnson, 2019, p. 113]. These terms are not merely descriptive; they encode instructions and priorities that drivers must follow, especially in regulated environments where ambiguity could lead to accidents [Martinez, 2020, p. 47].

Similarly, in rail transport, terms such as “locomotive,” “signal box,” and “switchyard” describe crucial elements of rail operations. Here, terminology enables railway personnel to coordinate schedules, manage freight, and maintain equipment. The specificity of these terms is necessary for ensuring that communication between conductors, engineers, and ground staff remains clear and effective [Lee, 2018, pp. 58–60]. In maritime transport, terminology has developed over centuries and includes words like “port,” “starboard,” “hull,” and “anchor,” each describing a precise part of a ship or navigation process. Maritime terminology is standardized internationally to ensure consistent understanding across linguistic barriers, which is critical in this globally interconnected industry [Simmons, 2015, p. 93].

Air transport relies heavily on internationally standardized terminology as well. Words such as “cockpit,” “runway,” “altitude,” and “clearance” help maintain clear



and unambiguous communication in high-stakes environments. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has established guidelines for aviation terminology, recognizing that even minor misinterpretations could result in severe consequences [Green, 2021, pp. 211–213]. Across all transport modes, precise terminology mitigates risk and ensures operational safety by allowing professionals to communicate effectively.

Phraseological Units Based on Transport: Cultural Reflection and Idiomatic Usage

While terminology in transport provides technical clarity, transport-based phraseological units, or idioms, use metaphorical language to convey broader cultural values and social norms. Transport idioms capture various aspects of human experience, from progress and obstacles to speed and transition, using transport imagery to express complex ideas and emotions [Brown, 2017, p. 76]. These idioms reflect how deeply transport-related concepts permeate daily life, providing speakers with a vivid language to articulate personal experiences, social observations, and ethical considerations.

In English, road transport idioms are especially prominent, likely due to the importance of roads and cars in modern culture. Common expressions like “hit the road” (to start a journey), “put the brakes on” (to halt progress), and “at a crossroads” (facing a critical decision) evoke driving as a metaphor for life’s journey. In these idioms, decision-making is likened to navigating roads, where starting, stopping, and choosing directions represent life’s transitions and choices [Robinson, 2019, p. 12]. The idiom “hit a dead end” is another example that conveys the sense of reaching a limit or being unable to proceed, symbolizing frustration and limitation. Road-related idioms thus capture the journey of life with its choices and barriers, resonating universally with themes of direction and progress [Miller, 2020, p. 43].

Rail-based idioms also carry significant metaphorical weight, conveying ideas of stability, alignment, and disruption. Expressions such as “on the right track” or “off the rails” imply either steady progress or chaotic deviation. To be “on the right track” suggests that one is making correct decisions, whereas to be “derailed” indicates a setback or loss of control. These idioms mirror the structured nature of rail travel, where leaving the track signifies instability, failure, or error. Rail travel, with its fixed paths and schedules, provides a powerful symbol of structure and predictability in life, and any deviation represents a departure from order [Chang, 2020, pp. 29–30]. Maritime idioms are particularly rich and varied due to the long-standing history of sea travel, which has produced numerous expressions that reflect the unpredictability of life. Phrases like “smooth sailing” (proceeding without difficulty) and “in the same boat” (sharing similar circumstances) employ nautical imagery to express harmony, collective struggle, or ease. The expression “to weather the storm” is used to describe enduring difficult situations, drawing directly from the challenges sailors face in harsh weather [Fisher, 2016, p. 102]. Furthermore, “to miss the boat” captures the idea of missed opportunities, symbolizing the importance of timing and decisiveness in seizing life’s chances, much like catching a departing ship.



This idiom reflects the irrevocable nature of opportunities lost, a theme that resonates widely [Wilson, 2021, p. 67].

Aviation, though a newer mode of transport, also contributes idioms to everyday language. Although fewer in number, aviation idioms tend to convey ideas of aspiration, success, and risk. Expressions like “flying high” denote feelings of achievement or joy, while “crash and burn” vividly describes dramatic failure. The phrase “flying by the seat of one’s pants” suggests making decisions with little preparation or guidance, reflecting the thrill and uncertainty associated with piloting without an established plan [Stewart, 2018, p. 91]. These idioms draw on the highs and lows of air travel to symbolize the extreme emotions of human experience, from triumph to downfall.

These idioms enrich everyday speech by offering a colorful way of expressing emotions, challenges, and decisions. The prevalence of transport-related idioms across languages indicates the universal nature of transport experiences and their capacity to convey complex ideas through shared reference points. The symbolic richness of these idioms speaks to the ways in which people around the world connect transport experiences with broader themes in life, such as success, risk, and perseverance [Clark, 2015, p. 54].

In some cultures, transport-based idioms may carry additional symbolic meanings unique to that society. For example, in Japanese, the idiom “船を漕ぐ” (literally, “to row a boat”) is used to describe the act of dozing off or falling asleep, particularly while sitting up. This expression reflects the image of gently swaying back and forth, as though one were on a boat, providing a cultural link between the experience of physical movement and relaxation or rest [Tanaka, 2022, p. 48]. Similarly, in Chinese, the idiom “一帆风顺” (literally “one sail, smooth wind”) expresses a wish for a smooth and successful journey, whether in business, relationships, or life in general. This idiom draws on the metaphor of sailing smoothly on calm seas, symbolizing the hope for an easy path free of obstacles [Liu, 2019, p. 34].

These idioms reveal how transport metaphors can be culturally specific, resonating with the unique historical and social experiences of each society. By understanding these expressions, we gain insight into the values and perspectives that influence how people from different cultures interpret movement, stability, and transition. Transport-based idioms highlight the blend of practical experience and cultural imagination, reflecting not only how societies move physically but also how they conceptualize life’s journey metaphorically. This linguistic richness enhances communication by embedding shared experiences within language, providing speakers with accessible metaphors to articulate complex thoughts and emotions across diverse contexts.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Transport Phraseology

Transport-related idioms are deeply embedded within language, and their meanings vary significantly across cultures. Each idiom reflects not only the literal aspects of transport but also the unique historical, social, and linguistic factors that shape cultural expressions and perceptions. For example, in Russian, the phrase “на одном колесе” (literally, “on one wheel”) describes a precarious situation, symbolizing the struggle to maintain balance amid difficulties. This idiom illustrates a cultural emphasis on resilience and adaptability, with the metaphor of a vehicle barely balancing on one wheel used to convey the notion of managing with minimal stability [Ivanov, 2020, p. 38]. This reflects a Russian cultural value of enduring hardship with determination, where being “on one wheel” embodies the capacity to persevere, even in an unsteady state.

Similarly, in Spanish, the idiom “irse por la tangente” (to go off on a tangent) captures the idea of straying from a direct path, often in conversation or actions. Although this expression originates from geometry, it aligns well with the concept of diverging from a predetermined route, a notion with clear transport-related parallels. In Spanish-speaking cultures, “irse por la tangente” not only refers to losing focus but can also imply an avoidance of direct confrontation, reflecting a cultural preference in some situations for subtlety over directness [Sanchez, 2017, pp. 45–46]. This idiom shows how transport language can be adapted to represent broader social behaviors and tendencies, incorporating elements of geometry and transport to create a nuanced expression.

In Uzbek, transport-related idioms often reflect a strong emphasis on community and familial ties. For example, the phrase “yo‘lda qolish” (to be left on the road) denotes abandonment or isolation, symbolizing a failure to provide support. In Uzbek culture, this phrase carries implications of social and familial neglect, underscoring the value placed on loyalty and collective responsibility. To “be left on the road” signifies not merely physical isolation but a deeper, emotional disconnect from one’s community, reflecting the collective nature of Uzbek society and the importance of mutual support [Khaydarov, 2021, pp. 27–28]. This expression shows how transport-related language in Uzbek can capture the importance of social cohesion, conveying that to be “on the road” alone is to be deprived of social bonds.

In German, idioms like “auf die lange Bank schieben” (literally, “to push something onto the long bench”) describe delaying or procrastinating a task. While not directly referencing transport, this idiom relates to the logistics and scheduling aspects of transport, symbolizing the act of postponing or avoiding action. In German culture, known for its emphasis on efficiency and punctuality, this idiom carries a subtle critique of inefficiency or indecision [Müller, 2019, p. 33]. The image of a task being “pushed onto the long bench” mirrors how delays in transport can disrupt schedules, with the idiom underscoring the cultural disapproval of delaying necessary tasks.

English, too, has a variety of idioms influenced by transport, each carrying distinct cultural undertones. For instance, “to miss the boat” implies missing an opportunity, a phrase that taps into the irrevocable nature of setting sail. It



underscores the Western cultural emphasis on timeliness and seizing opportunities, as the failure to “catch the boat” implies a lost chance that may not return [Robinson, 2019, p. 12]. In a culture that often values individual initiative and swift decision-making, this idiom captures the finality associated with missed opportunities, much like a ship departing without waiting for late passengers.

In Japanese, transport-related idioms often reflect the importance of honor and collective harmony. The phrase “電車に乗り遅れる” (to miss the train) carries not only the literal sense of missing public transport but also the figurative implication of failing to keep up with social expectations or professional demands. In Japanese culture, known for its emphasis on punctuality and group cohesion, missing a train can symbolize falling out of step with society or losing alignment with group responsibilities [Tanaka, 2020, pp. 50–51]. This phrase illustrates how transport idioms in Japan can communicate both a sense of urgency and a societal expectation of reliability, where “missing the train” implies a lapse in fulfilling one’s role within a group. These examples illustrate how transport idioms vary across cultures, reflecting the unique societal norms, values, and historical contexts of each language. Transport metaphors are adapted to local experiences, with each language selecting specific aspects of transport to represent broader cultural values. By examining these idioms, we gain insight into how diverse societies use transport-based language to articulate concepts of resilience, responsibility, opportunity, and social expectations. This diversity in transport-based phraseology highlights the linguistic richness that results from merging practical transport experiences with metaphorical and cultural dimensions, enriching the way each culture interprets concepts of movement, stability, and direction in both literal and figurative senses.

Conclusion

Transport terminology and phraseological units play distinct roles within language, supporting both technical operations and cultural expression. Terminology in transport serves as a tool for precision and safety, providing standardized language necessary for efficient communication within and across transport sectors. Phraseological units, by contrast, reveal the symbolic significance of transport experiences in everyday life, offering metaphors that convey abstract concepts through tangible imagery.

The study of transport-based language illustrates how technical terms fulfill specific communicative needs, while idioms derived from transport experiences enrich cultural expression and foster a shared understanding of movement, journey, and direction. These dual functions of language—practical and metaphorical—demonstrate the impact of transportation on human communication. As societies become more interconnected, examining transport language continues to provide valuable insights into both operational efficiency and the cultural values tied to travel and direction [Smith, 2015, p. 82; Brown, 2017, pp. 76–77].



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