



Linguistic and cultural representation of success in English: British and American perspectives

*Cholpon Bekbalaeva**

PhD in Philological Sciences, Assistant Professor
Bishkek State University named after Kusein Karasaev
720044, 27 Ch. Aitmatov Ave., Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic
<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-2002-4523>

Jildizkan Beyshenova

PhD Candidate
Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University
720044, 56 Ch. Aitmatov Ave., Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic
<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-4879-8375>

Gulnura Dzhumaliev

Doctor of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor
Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University
720044, 56 Ch. Aitmatov Ave., Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5609-7345>

Aida Kasieva

PhD in Philological Sciences, Associate Professor
Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University
720044, 56 Ch. Aitmatov Ave., Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9605-7460>

Abstract. Success as a cultural concept plays an important role in British and American societies, yet its linguistic representation and cultural interpretation remain insufficiently studied from a comprehensive cultural linguistics perspective. The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the semantic structure and culturally specific features of the “success” concept in English examining its linguistic objectification and culture-specific representations through a systematic comparison of British and American linguistic cultures. The research combined componential analysis, conceptual analysis, dictionary definition analysis, contextual analysis, conceptual metaphor theory, and comparative analysis. The material included data from English dictionaries, sources with phraseological units, literary works, and research papers. Key findings showed that “success” has eight semantic components: conceptual, axiological, figurative, symbolic, social, emotional, functional, and etymological. By means of the componential analysis it was revealed that while “success” is the broadest term, the related terms, like “achievement”, “accomplishment”, “prosperity”, and “triumph” focus on specific aspects. The study identified significant Anglo-American differences in “success” conceptualisations: while British culture values understatement and work-life balance, American culture values self-made success and competitiveness. Gender analysis showed women value balance while men value status; generational analysis showed a shift toward flexibility and experience over career markers. The research contributes new empirical data to cultural linguistics by showing how concepts can change depending on culture, gender, and age. Practical application includes training in intercultural communication, teaching English as a second language, and marketing strategies that need to be aware of cultural success orientation

Keywords: “success” concept; cultural linguistics; semantic structure; Anglo-American culture; cultural values; conceptual analysis; comparative linguistics

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*Corresponding author



Introduction

The concept of “success” occupies an important place in the modern world and is one of the main values that motivates people to achieve significant results in various activities. However, the concept of success is relative and can be interpreted differently depending on cultural, social, and personal characteristics. The “success” concept is examined in the from an English perspective, analysing its meanings and expressions, its mental component, and how it reflects the uniqueness of English-speaking society. The topicality of this study is determined by several factors. First, the concept of success is key to English-speaking culture, making its study essential for understanding the values and worldviews of English speakers. Second, in the context of globalisation and active intercultural interaction, there is a growing need for a deep understanding of the culturally specific features of the perception of universal concepts in different linguistic cultures. Third, despite the existence of works devoted to individual aspects of the concept of “success”, a comprehensive study of its semantic structure, methods of verbalisation and cultural specificity in British and American linguistic cultures remains insufficiently developed. The notion of “concept”, derived from the Latin “conceptus” (idea) and the verb form “concipere” (to conceive), is a fundamental unit of cultural and linguistic analysis. This has been widely discussed in recent scholarly works, such as those by F. Polzenhagen *et al.* (2024) and X. Zhao *et al.* (2023). In contemporary cultural linguistics, this term denotes a mental unit encoding cultural knowledge and values within a given linguistic community. Following Yu.S. Stepanov (2004) influential definition, which is widely cited in recent research, a concept is understood as the concentration of culture in human consciousness, by means of which culture penetrates the mental world of the individual.

Latest studies have shown an increasing focus on the cultural and gender aspects of defining success. F. Pace & G. Sciotto (2022) highlight that research on work-life balance reveals significant gender gaps, with women placing more emphasis on integrating work and life compared to men, while also facing greater challenges in advancing in their careers. Furthermore, cross-cultural research conducted by I.A. El Husseiny *et al.* (2025) on cultural values and economic success emphasises the importance of autonomy, personal fulfilment, and new materialism in contemporary definitions of success. British research on class and professionals’ life shows that people from different social backgrounds have divergent understandings of what success means. S. Friedman *et al.* (2021) note that working-class individuals are more likely to frame achievement in terms of community, stability, and effort against the odds, while those from privileged backgrounds define success through meritocratic and career-oriented narratives. These findings align with significant developments in cultural linguistics research, as L.T. De Beer *et al.* (2022) emphasised that

cultural values are reflected in linguistic representations. Even when there are a lot of studies in this respect, the number of works related to comprehensive linguocultural studies that include semantic structure, metaphorical representation, and cross-cultural comparison alongside gender and generational factors is still few.

Contemporary studies of the concept of “success” in various linguistic cultures demonstrate the relevance of this issue. Foreign scholars are actively studying the culturally specific features of perceiving success in an English-speaking society. The cultural roots of the Western orientation toward achievement and individual success have been traced back to the Protestant work ethic, whose foundational role in shaping capitalist values was established by M. Weber (1905); drawing on this legacy, J.J.B. Mijs (2021) demonstrated through the analysis of cross-national longitudinal survey data that citizens of more unequal societies, including the United States and the United Kingdom, tend to endorse meritocratic beliefs more strongly, attributing success primarily to personal effort and hard work rather than structural conditions. As globalisation and digitalisation have altered social values in English-speaking cultures, the very concept of “success” has undergone a transformation. For example, S. Butler (2024), studying youth engagement with social media in globalised market cultures, demonstrated that digitalisation has strengthened a competitive understanding of success based on status, material achievements, and public visibility.

Cognitive linguistics provides various theories for studying concepts, such as conceptual metaphor theory, prototype theory, and mental space theory, as outlined by N. Mushyrovskaya *et al.* (2022) and S.S. Hammadi (2023). However, these approaches have faced criticism regarding their alignment with real cognitive processes. For instance, A. Lenci & S. Padó (2022) question whether the theoretical constructs in cognitive linguistics accurately reflect the actual mechanisms involved in language perception and understanding. However, in this work, authors decided to use a conceptual approach to study lexemes, as it offers a convenient and understandable unit of analysis. In the opinion of authors, a concept is a mental unit that unites various lexical and phraseological units related to a specific topic or field of knowledge. It helps to “map” the mental structures and processes associated with the perception and interpretation of certain language units.

The authors applied a comprehensive approach to the analysis of the concept of “success”: examining its conceptual, figurative, and value components, identifying the culture-specific features of its representation in British and American cultural linguistics, and analysing gender and age differences in the perception of success by native English speakers. The aim of this study was to identify and describe the semantic structure and culturally specific features of the concept of “success” in English cultural linguistics. To achieve this goal, the following objectives



were implemented: analysed the theoretical and historical foundations of the concept of “success”, including the theoretical premises of concept study in modern linguistics and the historical context of the concept’s formation in English-speaking culture; identified and analysed key lexemes representing the concept of “success” in the English language and to describe the semantic structure and ways of its verbalisation; studied the culturally specific features of the concept of “success” in British and American linguistic cultures.

The research material consists of data from authoritative English-language explanatory dictionaries (Oxford English dictionary (n.d.), Cambridge dictionary (n.d.), Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.d.)), phraseological dictionaries (White, 1998; Simpson & Speake, 2009), contexts from works of fiction (Fitzgerald, 1925; Dickens, 2008), journalistic and popular science texts (Carnegie, 1936; Fox, 2004; Sandberg, 2013), as well as scientific works devoted to the study of the concept of “success” and related issues. To achieve the set goal, a comprehensive approach was used in the work, including the following methods: component analysis to identify and describe the semantic features of the lexeme “success” and related words; conceptual analysis to study the semantic content of the concept of “success” and its place in the concept sphere of the English language; analysis of dictionary definitions to identify and compare different interpretations of the lexeme “success” in authoritative lexicographic sources; analysis of linguistic means of objectifying the concept to identify and systematise lexical units, phraseological units, proverbs, and aphorisms representing the concept of “success”; contextual analysis to study the functioning of the concept in various types of discourse (literary, journalistic, business); the conceptual metaphor method developed by G. Lakoff & M. Johnson (1980) to analyse the figurative component of the concept; comparative analysis to compare the features of the concept of “success” in British and American linguistic cultures, as well as to identify gender and age differences in the perception of success. The use of a comprehensive approach combining various methods of analysis allows for a comprehensive study of the concept of “success”, revealing its semantic content, features of verbalisation, and functioning in the English-speaking linguistic culture.

Theoretical basis for studying the concept of success in linguistic cultural studies

A concept can be viewed as a mental construct/formation that expresses a person’s knowledge, associations, values, and ideas about the world. Concepts are formed as a result of interaction with the world in a person’s mind based on personal experience and practical activity. They reflect not only a rational but also a sensory, visual understanding of the world (Babushkin, 1996). A concept is understood as the basic unit of mentality in language. It is stable, constant, and independent of the form of its representation, i.e., its objectification in the form of an image, symbol, or notion. A concept is not merely an abstract idea, but rather

real knowledge that reflects human experience and views of the world. (Pimenova & Kapenova, 2016). The following characteristics can be identified in the structure of a concept: conceptual (distinctive features of the concept); imagery (based on sensory perception); value-based (in terms of emotional and evaluative attitudes toward the concept). Concepts themselves are dynamic; they change over time depending on cultural and historical factors. For example, the concept of “freedom” had different meanings for different peoples and in different historical periods (Arutyunova, 1999).

Concepts find a wide variety of expressions in language. There are several basic ways of representing concepts in language (Vorkachev, 2001). The primary means are lexical where the concept is named directly by words in its literal sense. The word “success” represents a similar concept. Synonyms (e.g., “prosperity”, “achievement”), antonyms (e.g., “failure”, “flop”), and derivative words (e.g., “successful”, “luck”) can also be used to express the concept. Such lexical units contribute to the expansion and more specific expression of a given concept in language. Phraseological and paremiological means, which are fixed expressions, proverbs, sayings, etc., reflect the cultural and national uniqueness of the concept. For example, the concept of “success” can be characterised by such phraseological expressions as “to hit the jackpot”, an expression that originally came from gambling but is now used to denote unexpected and significant success in various areas of life. Syntactic structures also serve as characteristic patterns for a given concept. For example, the concept of “success” is often expressed through conditional sentences that indicate a cause-and-effect relationship between actions and the achievement of success: “If you work hard, you will succeed”. Texts, which are works of art, messages, speeches, journalistic writing etc., provide the most detailed representation of a concept allowing for its interpretation in full cultural and historical context (Derbisheva, 2020). For example, the concept of the “American dream” is described in detail in F.S. Fitzgerald (1925) novel *The Great Gatsby*. The author depicts how the main character, Jay Gatsby, gains wealth and status by adhering to the ideals of success and prosperity accepted in the “American dream”. But all these values turn out to be an illusion and ultimately lead to tragedy. Thus, through the fate of his hero, F.S. Fitzgerald reveals the most important idea about the contradictory nature of the concept of “success” in American culture. Finally, associative and figurative means such as metaphors, comparisons, and epithets express the sensory and visual aspects of a concept. Thus, the concept of “success” is represented through metaphors such as “Riding the wave of success”, which views success as a powerful force of nature that a person can use to their advantage; “The fruits of success” – success is compared to a harvest, emphasising the result of effort and labour.

Associative and figurative language helps visualise the abstract concept of success, making it more concrete and often tangible. They show how culture perceives success

as something bright, noticeable, and desirable. For example: “Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that’s no matter – tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther...” (Fitzgerald, 1925). Here, the “green light” symbolises success and the American dream that the main character strives for. This symbol shows that success seems attractive but is difficult to achieve, which is typical of early 20th-century American culture. “I have been bent and broken, but – I hope – into a better shape” (Dickens, 2008). Here personal development and achievement of success are compared to the formation of an object, which shows that difficulties and trials can lead to success and self-improvement.

In this article, the analysis of the concept of “success” focuses on several interconnected aspects. First, the attention is given to the significance of the concept in English-speaking culture, particularly in relation to the values of hard work, determination, individualism, and pragmatism. Second, the study examines how understanding of success has changed in English culture over time. Third, differences in the perception of success between men and women, as well as different age groups, are considered. Finally, the paper addresses the ways of representing the concept of “success” in language, including words, idioms, phrases, texts, and associative images. It is important to note that the selected aspects do not cover all possible directions of analysis of the concept of “success”. Nevertheless, authors believe that they represent the most important and interesting aspects for studying this concept in the context of the English language and demonstrate the effectiveness of the conceptual approach in linguocultural studies. Thus, the concept as a unit of linguistic and cultural analysis is a complex multidimensional mental construct that is objectified in language in various ways and reflects the national and cultural specificity of world perception. The concept of “success”, being one of the key concepts of English-language cultural linguistics, requires comprehensive research using a variety of analytical methods to reveal its semantic structure, modes of verbalisation, and culturally specific features.

Historical context of the concept of success in English linguistic culture

The concept of success in English culture has long historical roots, and its meaning and interpretation have changed at different stages of society’s development. The issues surrounding concepts, their nature, and their relationship to objective reality are rooted in the ancient philosophical tradition of studying human cognitive processes. M. Weber (1905) work “The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism” is fundamental to understanding the special role and value of success in Western cultural tradition drawing attention to how the Protestant work ethic, especially in its Calvinist form, shaped a completely new attitude toward work, wealth, and success in professional activities. Unlike the medieval Catholic view, Protestants did not consider the pursuit of wealth to

be sinful. On the contrary, commercial success and the accumulation of capital were seen as signs of godly behaviour and God’s blessing. In the Middle Ages, success was associated with belonging to an aristocratic family, titles, and hereditary land holdings. Genuine membership in the upper classes was automatically considered a sign of a successful life. The idea that financial success and prosperity in business are manifestations of virtue rather than vice had a profound influence on the formation of the capitalist spirit in Western Europe and North America. Protestant values of thrift, asceticism, and hard work contributed to the emergence of the “spirit of capitalism” – a rational economic ethic that made unprecedented economic growth possible. Thus, according to M. Weber (1905), the pursuit of success, especially commercial success, became not only acceptable but also socially approved, backed by religious sanction. Success in business came to be seen as a sign of being chosen and morally superior in the eyes of God. These philosophical and religious ideas formed the basis of a special value system in which success, achievement, and professional advancement are desirable and respected goals, rather than something immoral. This shift in values played a key role in the formation of modern Anglo-American business culture, where success is almost the highest goal and measure of human worth.

In English society, noble birth was long considered a necessary condition and prerequisite for success. Aristocratic descent opened the door to high social status, wealth, and influence, regardless of personal merit (Fox, 2004). In this cultural system, success was inherited, not earned – a reality critically explored by Ch. Dickens (2008) in “Great expectations”, where the protagonist’s quest for gentlemanly status reveals profound contradictions between privilege based on birth and individual worth. In contrast, American society, from its inception, positioned itself as a society of equal opportunity, where success is determined not by origin, but by individual abilities and hard work (Mijs, 2021). Since the famous geographical discoveries and colonisation of the New World in the 16th and 17th centuries, success has been viewed as an opportunity to get rich quickly and achieve success in a new land. This is how the concept of the “American dream” came about. The understanding of success began to shift away from aristocratic privileges. The idea that anyone can achieve success through their own efforts became one of the core cultural myths of the “American Dream”. As J.J.B. Mijs (2021) shows, belief in meritocracy and effort-based success has actually strengthened in more unequal societies like the United States, where surveys show that up to 95% of Americans attribute success to hard work, even as actual social mobility has declined.

In the 19th century, during the Victorian era, the emphasis was on hard work and thrift. Success was primarily defined by the ability to achieve material well-being through hard work and dedication. S. Smiles (1859) in his book “Self-help” popularised the idea that success is achieved through personal effort and perseverance. In the



20th century, with the development of consumer society, success was increasingly associated with external manifestations such as material well-being, especially in American society, luxury, and high social status. D. Carnegie (1936) in his book “How to win friends and influence people” links success to social skills and personal effectiveness. In the 21st century, in the era of digital technology and media, the concept of success is expanding to include factors such as a harmonious work-life balance, stability, and social influence. Particular attention is paid to achieving public recognition, celebrity, and popularity as new signs of success. S. Sandberg (2013) rethinks the concept of success in the context of gender equality and leadership. This evolution of the concept of “success” reflects profound changes in the values and worldview of English-speaking society, showing how language adapts to changing socio-cultural realities.

Keywords related to the concept of “success” in the English language

According to definition, key words are those whose analysis provides an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the essence of a particular culture and identify its characteristics (Surzhanskaya, 2014). M.V. Pimenova (2007) also notes the importance of key concepts that are reflected in frequent lexical and phraseological units of the language. It is precisely the key words often found in proverbs, sayings, and metaphors that are peculiar “markers” of concepts in culture. The concept of “success” is very important for English cultural linguistics, as evidenced by the presence of a number of key words and expressions associated with it. Table 1 represents dictionary definitions identifying interpretations of the lexeme “success” and words with similar meanings in English, using reliable lexicographic sources.

Table 1. Dictionary definitions of the lexeme “success” and words with similar meanings

Lexeme	Key aspects of definitions
“Success”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achieving the goal or the result desired - Gaining fame, wealth, status - Favourable outcome - Degree of success
“Achievement”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Successfully realised work - The outcome gained through efforts - Great or heroic deed
“Accomplishment”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Successful achievement - Task implementation - Special skill or capability
“Prosperity”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State of success or prosperity - Financial well-being
“Triumph”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Great victory or accomplishment - Jubilation and joy of success

Source: compiled by the authors based on Oxford English dictionary (n.d.), Cambridge dictionary (n.d.), Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.d.)

An analysis of the definitions shows that the concept of “success” in English has several key aspects. First, virtually all definitions emphasise the aspect of achieving a desired outcome or goal, making goal attainment the central and most universal component of the concept. Closely related to this is the concept of a positive outcome, as success is consistently associated with a favourable or desired result in all lexicographic sources examined. A third important aspect is material well-being, with many definitions explicitly including aspects such as wealth, economic prosperity, and financial achievement. Success is also often associated with social status, understood as the attainment of fame, notoriety, or high social standing, reflecting the deep connection between personal achievement and social recognition in English-speaking culture. Beyond material and social aspects, some definitions highlight the role of effort and skill, emphasising that success is not simply

a state but a result actively achieved through persistence, competence, and courage. Finally, the emotional aspect of success is particularly clearly reflected in the lexeme “triumph”, the definitions of which emphasise the personal satisfaction, joy, and delight that accompany achievement, pointing to the subjective and empirical side of the concept along with its more objective indicators.

Even though the analysis of dictionary definitions enables to identify the main aspects of the concept of “success” in English, a componential analysis is necessary for a deeper understanding of the differences between synonyms related to this concept, which will help discover subtle differences in meaning and determine how different aspects of success are manifested in each of the lexemes under consideration. Table 2 considers the semantic characteristics of the lexemes “success”, “achievement”, “accomplishment”, “prosperity”, and “triumph”.

Table 2. Componential analysis of synonymous lexemes of the concept of “success” in English linguistics and culture

Semantic property	“Success”	“Achievement”	“Accomplishment”	“Prosperity”	“Triumph”
Goal achievement	+	+	+	–	+
Desired outcome	+	+	+	–	+
Gaining fame	+	–	–	–	+
Gaining wealth	+	–	–	+	–
Gaining status	+	–	–	+	–
Favourable outcome	+	+	+	+	+
Degree of success	+	+	+	+	+
Effort / hard work	+	+	+	–	+
Great / heroic deed	–	+	–	–	+
Implementing objectives	+	+	+	–	–
Special skill / capability	–	–	+	–	–
Financial well-being	+	–	–	+	–
State of prosperity	+	–	–	+	–
Jubilation and joy	–	–	–	–	+
Personal satisfaction	+	+	+	+	+
Social recognition	+	+	+	–	+
Individualism	+	+	+	–	+
Team work	+	+	+	–	–
Competitiveness	+	+	+	+	+
Innovation	+	+	+	–	–
Responsibility	+	+	+	–	–

Note: “+” indicates the presence of the given semantic property in the lexeme; “–” indicates the absence of the given semantic property

Source: developed by the authors based on Oxford English dictionary (n.d.), Cambridge dictionary (n.d.), Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.d.)

An analysis of the synonymous lexemes reveals both shared features and meaningful differences. All lexemes are associated with a positive outcome and achievement, and all share the characteristics of “favourable outcome” and “degree of success”. However, there emerge significant distinctions when the lexemes are examined more closely. “Success” has the broadest set of characteristics, covering almost all aspects of the concept, while “achievement” and “accomplishment” are similar in meaning, with “achievement” more often associated with great or heroic deeds. “Prosperity” stands apart in its particular association with financial well-being and a state of material prosperity, whereas “triumph” is distinguished by its strong emotional component – the joy and exultation of victory – and its association with great achievements. Regarding the material aspect, it is most clearly expressed in the lexemes “success” and “prosperity” and less prominent in the remaining words. The social aspect is present across all lexemes but is most pronounced in “success” and “triumph”. Personal growth is reflected in all lexemes, particularly in “achievement” and “accomplishment”. Effort and skill are important for all exercises except “prosperity”, which focuses more on the result than on the process by which it is achieved. The emotional component is most strongly manifested in “triumph”, present to a notable degree in “success”, and less prominent in the other lexemes. Finally, with regard to the individual versus collective dimension, individualism is present in all lexemes except “prosperity”, while

teamwork is particularly relevant to “success”, “achievement”, and “accomplishment”.

This componential analysis shows that the concept of “success” in English linguistics and culture is diverse and includes both material and spiritual goals, as well as individual and group achievements. This concept can be expressed by different lexemes, each of which has its own specific meaning. The lexeme “success” is the most general and comprehensive concept, while other lexemes focus on specific aspects of success. Based on the analysis, it is possible to say that the concept of “success” is seen as an active process that depends on actions and acquired skills, not just natural abilities. Recognition by society is important, but it is not the only indicator of success. Such a broad understanding of success demonstrates its flexibility and inclusiveness in culture. This analysis confirms the multifaceted nature of the concept of “success” in the English language, which includes both tangible and intangible aspects, personal achievements, and social recognition. It also emphasises the importance of purposeful effort and skills in achieving success, which is consistent with the values of English-speaking culture, which is focused on individual achievements and results. This multifaceted understanding of success reflects the values and priorities of English-speaking society, where both individual achievement and the ability to contribute to the public good are highly valued. This complex view of success forms an important part of English-speaking linguistic culture and worldview.



Culturally specific features of the representation of the concept of success in British and American linguistic cultures

Success is one of the key concepts that plays a significant role in world cultures. In English-speaking culture, success is associated with achieving high results or set goals. A characteristic feature of the English language is the use of phrases and proverbs that emphasise individual achievements and the pursuit of excellence. For example, T. Edison's phrase "Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration" implies the need for hard work to successfully achieve goals (Rosanoff, 1932). American writer R.W. Emerson (2005) also wrote, "To be great is to be misunderstood", which emphasises the importance of achieving outstanding personal results. However, its content and meaning can vary significantly depending on cultural characteristics. Despite a common language and many shared cultural traits, the British and American understanding of success has a number of significant differences that reflect the unique historical, social, and cultural characteristics of these countries. These differences can be observed in the following aspects.

Origin and social mobility. Historically, British society has placed great importance on origin and social class. Success was often associated with belonging to a certain social stratum, education at prestigious institutions, and having the "right" connections (Goldthorpe, 2016). In American culture, on the contrary, the idea of the "self-made man" plays a central role. The American dream is based on the belief that anyone can achieve success regardless of their background (Cullen, 2004). An example of this is a study conducted by the Sutton Trust in 2019. It showed that 65% of senior judges, 59% of cabinet ministers, and 57% of permanent secretaries in the UK received a private education, even though only 7% of the population attends private schools (The Sutton Trust, 2019). In the US, according to the Pew Research Center (2012), 70% of Americans born in the bottom income quintile leave it in adulthood.

Attitudes towards wealth and displaying success. British culture has traditionally been more reserved in its attitude towards displaying wealth and success. K. Fox (2004) in her book "Watching the English" notes that openly boasting about wealth is considered vulgar in British society. American culture, on the other hand, is more open to celebrating financial success. T. Veblen (1899) described the phenomenon of "conspicuous consumption" in American society. Example: A study by A. Zakrzewski *et al.* (2019) showed that American millionaires spend an average of 65% of their income on luxury items, while British millionaires spend only 41%.

Work-life balance. In British culture, success often includes achieving a balance between work and personal life. This is reflected in legislation: in the UK, 28 days of paid vacation per year are guaranteed (GOV.UK, 2020). In American culture, success is often associated with a more intense work ethic. The US is the only developed country that does not have a legally established right to paid leave

(OECD, 2019). Example: according to Eurostat (2019), the average British worker works 36.5 hours per week, while the average American works 38.6 hours.

Attitude towards failure. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor reports that fear of failure is a significant barrier to entrepreneurship in the UK. In 2023, more than half of British adults who perceived good business opportunities would nonetheless not start a business due to fear of failure. This rate is higher than in the USA and above the average for comparable high-income economies (GEM, 2024). In American culture, failure is often seen as a step on the path to success. Research by the Global Entrepreneurship Institute (Acs *et al.*, 2018) and Development showed that 43% of Americans see good opportunities for starting a business, despite the risk of failure.

Education and success. In British culture, success is often associated with getting an education at prestigious universities. Research by Sutton Trust (Kirby, 2016) showed that 31% of Oxford and Cambridge graduates hold top management positions in the UK. In American culture, although prestigious education is valued, there is more emphasis on practical skills and entrepreneurship. According to a Forbes study, 30% of American billionaires do not have a college degree (Henrekson & Sanandaji, 2014).

Gender differences. In British culture, gender differences in the understanding of success are less pronounced, but still exist. For women, success is often associated with achieving a balance between career and family life and work-life conflict is a particular concern in the context of the UK (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006). Part-time work after having children is more common in Britain than in the USA, where dual-earner full-time couples are considered to be the norm (Lyonette *et al.*, 2011). For British men, success is traditionally associated with career growth and financial stability, but since the early 2000s there has been a trend toward a more emotionally engaged and involved model of fatherhood (Dermott, 2008). In the US, gender differences in the understanding of success are more pronounced. For American women, the concept of "having it all" – a successful career and a happy family life – is a distinctively American aspiration, one that A.M. Slaughter (2015) argues remains structurally unattainable for most women. Expressions such as "Her greatest success is her children" are often found in American discourse. For American men, success is more often associated with high social status, material wealth, and professional achievements, in other words a package in which breadwinning career promotion are central to masculine identity (Townsend, 2002). The saying "Behind every great man is a great woman" reflects the traditional view of gender roles in the family (Simpson & Speake, 2009).

Age characteristics. In the UK, the younger generation – millennials (born approximately 1981-1996) and Generation Z (born approximately 1997-2012) – values flexibility at work, experiences over traditional career milestones (Deloitte, 2019). For them, success is often associated with personal growth and self-fulfilment. Research into generational differences in work values suggests that

older cohorts of UK workers – particularly Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) and Generation X (born 1965-1996) – traditionally place greater value on job stability, organisational loyalty and gradual career progression, although evidence for such generational differences remains mixed (Parry & Urwin, 2011). In the United States, research conducted among successive generations of young people shows that millennials (born approximately 1981-1996) place greater importance on financial success, status, and image than previous generations, although this increase in materialistic values has been accompanied by a decline in the centrality of work (Twenge & Kasser, 2013). Older Americans – primarily members of the Baby Boomer generation (born 1946-1964) – tend to prioritise financial security, family stability, and health, and these concerns become increasingly pressing as this generation approaches and enters retirement (Pew Research Center, 2010).

General trends. In both cultures, there is a noticeable shift toward a more balanced understanding of success, particularly among younger generations. Along with traditional metrics such as income and status, factors such as job satisfaction and opportunities for personal development are increasingly important – a trend consistent with broader evidence that economic development fosters a gradual shift away from purely materialistic values toward a greater emphasis on self-expression and quality of life (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). The influence of social media and digital technologies is also changing notions of success, introducing new indicators of status such as follower count, audience reach, and content virality – phenomena that have been particularly prominent in American digital culture (Marwick, 2013). These differences in the understanding of success are reflected in the language, literature, media, and public discourse of both countries. They

shape unique cultural narratives about what it means to be successful and influence the life strategies and goals of people in these societies.

However, it is important to note that in the era of globalisation, these differences are gradually blurring. Research by R. Inglehart & W.E. Baker (2000) shows that despite the preservation of unique cultural values, economic development is leading to shifts toward common values in many societies. As can be seen, the understanding of success in English-speaking culture depends significantly on gender and age indicators. The perception of success changes throughout a person's life, and this variable nature of the concept must be taken into account when conducting a detailed analysis.

Semantic structure the concept of success in the English language

Analysis of the semantic features of a concept is an effective method for studying the semantic structure of a word, which helps to reveal its conceptual content (Popova & Sternin, 2007). Among the approaches to the study of concepts, the method of conceptual metaphor stands out, through which it is possible to analyse the figurative component of a concept and examine the mechanisms of its objectification in language (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Within the framework of this method, various components (features) of a word's meaning are distinguished: conceptual, value-based, figurative, symbolic, etc. (Karasik & Slyshkin, 2001). The results of the analysis of the lexeme "success" are presented in Table 3, which shows in detail the content of the concept of "success" in English-speaking cultural linguistics. It reflects the value orientations and mentality of native speakers of English (British and American).

Table 3. Semantic features/components of the concept of "success" in English

Component	Features
Conceptual	Achievement of goals, desired outcomes
Figurative	Mountain Peak, trophy, gold
Axiological	Tenacity, proactivity, determination, competitiveness, individualism, teamwork ability
Symbolic	Dollar, crown, stars
Social component	Status, career, recognition
Emotional	Pride, satisfaction, enthusiasm
Functional	Motivation, guidance for actions, lifestyle
Etymological	<i>Succedere</i> (latin) – to move forward

Source: compiled by the authors based on V.I. Karasik & Slyshkin (2001), Oxford English dictionary (n.d.), Cambridge dictionary (n.d.), Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.d.)

The analysis shows that the concept of "success" in English is very diverse and includes practical, social, and personal aspects. It shows the connection between individualism and the ability to work in a team, emphasising the importance of both material well-being and social recognition. Success is perceived as an active process that requires certain efforts and qualities. The concept of "success" clearly reflects the values of British and American

cultures, combining material and immaterial components. Such research helps to better understand the cultural characteristics of English-speaking countries and can be useful in various fields, including intercultural communication and marketing. It provides important information about the motivations and values of English speakers, which can be useful for more effective interaction on an international scale.



To structure and visualise the concept of “success” in this study, a core-periphery model is also applicable, which allows to identify the central and peripheral components of the concept and trace their interrelationships. This concept model, developed in the works of such scholars as V.I. Karasik (2002), and S.G. Vorkachev (2003), Z.D. Popova & I.A. Sternin (2007) is based on the idea of a concept as a multi-layered mental unit with a core and a periphery. According to this theory, the core of the concept contains the most essential, stable, and universal features, while the periphery includes more abstract, context-dependent elements (Pimenova, 2007). Applying this model to the concept of “success” enables not only to structure its content, but also to identify culturally specific features of the understanding of success in English-speaking society. As Yu.S. Stepanov (2004) notes,

concepts are the basic cells of culture in the human mental world, and their analysis helps to reveal the peculiarities of the national mentality.

In the case of the concept of “success” in English (Fig. 1) (a Venn diagram is used to illustrate the structure of the concept), its core may include such fundamental aspects of success as: achieving goals, hard work, self-realisation, high social status, happiness, and satisfaction. These elements are the most universal and generally accepted in English-speaking culture. The periphery of the concept of “success” surrounding the core may include more specific and context-dependent meanings, such as balancing career and family life (for women), achieving material wealth, recognition from others, and possessing certain professional skills. These elements may vary depending on the context, social group, or individual preferences.

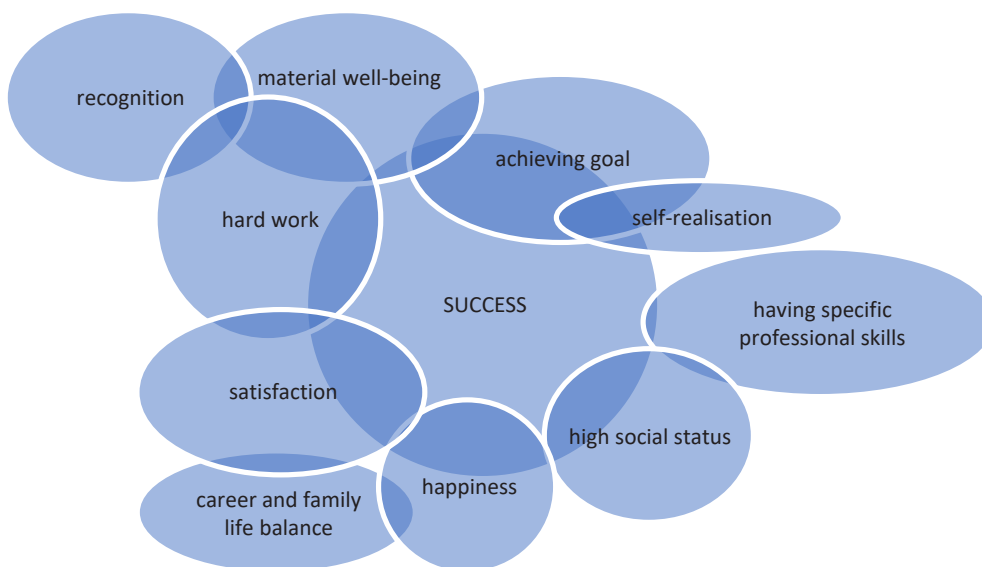


Figure 1. Core-periphery model of the concept of “success”

Source: developed by the authors based on the core-periphery concept model proposed in V.I. Karasik (2002), S.G. Vorkachev (2003), Z.D. Popova & I.A. Sternin (2007)

This model not only enables to visualise the structure of the concept of “success”, but also to trace the interrelationships between its various aspects, reflecting the multifaceted and complex nature of this concept in English-speaking culture. The diagram allows to see the possible intersections and interrelationships between different aspects of success. For example, “high social status” can be associated with “recognition” and “material well-being”. This representation of the concept of “success” reflects the specifics of English-speaking culture, where individual achievements (hard work, self-realisation), recognition in society, and material well-being are valued. Thus, the core-periphery model provides a productive analytical framework for understanding “success” not as a fixed concept, but as a culturally determined, hierarchically organised mental structure. The interrelations between core and peripheral elements reveal the dynamic nature of the concept and its sensitivity to context, social group,

and individual perspective – features that will be further illustrated through linguistic analysis in the next section. Having established the structural components of the concept of SUCCESS, it is now possible to examine specific linguistics means by means of which these components are realised and objectivised in English-speaking culture.

Linguistics means of objectivising the concept of “success” in English

In English linguistics and culture, the concept of “success” is primarily associated with the achievement of personal goals. Particular attention is paid to qualities such as persistence, competitiveness, initiative, and entrepreneurship. Success brings high status, pride, and satisfaction. English-speaking culture is characterised by a cult of success and achievement. Success is seen as the result of hard work, determination, and the pursuit of self-fulfilment. There is a proverb in English: “If a man empties his purse

into his head, no man can take it away from him". This proverb emphasises that success is based not only on material values, but also on knowledge, experience, and personal growth (Simpson & Speake, 2009). In English culture, education and continuous self-improvement are highly valued as a path to success. The constant pursuit of new knowledge, skill development, and self-education is seen as the primary way to achieve outstanding results in one's professional life and in life in general. The famous English saying "Knowledge is power" reflects this belief (Simpson & Speake, 2009). Successful people in English-speaking environments tend to value education and consider it an important investment in their future. Thus, the concept of success in English-speaking linguocultural circles includes not only material but also intellectual components. Acquiring knowledge and constantly improving oneself are seen as necessary conditions for achieving brilliant results and universal recognition. In English-speaking culture, qualities such as initiative, enterprise, and persistence in achieving goals are highly valued. This is reflected in English idioms (White, 1998) related to the concept of "success": "to build the foundations for future success", "to be on the road to success", "to hit the big time", "to make it big", etc.

Metaphors related to achieving success are also popular, such as "to strike it rich" and "to strike gold". These idioms and phrases emphasise the importance of hard work, determination, and the pursuit of success in English culture. An important feature of the concept of "success" in English linguistic culture is its direct connection with material well-being and career growth. A successful person is associated with wealth and high social status. This is expressed in metaphors such as "career ladder", "corporate ladder", "rising star", and others (White, 1998). It is particularly noted that the path to success requires perseverance and persistence. Success does not come by itself; it must be achieved decisively, gradually, step by step. This is evidenced by expressions such as "to climb the ladder of success", "success doesn't come overnight", "no pain, no gain" (Simpson & Speake, 2009).

In English culture, an important part of success is setting high goals and striving for continuous personal growth and self-improvement. As a rule, successful people set bold but achievable goals for themselves and make every effort to achieve them. At the same time, they do not rest on their laurels, but continue to develop and improve their skills and knowledge. The need for continuous self-improvement is seen as the key to long-term success and personal growth. As S. Smiles (1859) argued in "Self-help", great results cannot be achieved at once and progress must come step by step – it is not the final result but the sustained effort, patience, and endeavour that defines genuine achievement. This quote recommends that people constantly engage in self-improvement and focus on the process of personal development, rather than focusing solely on the final goal set in advance. Success is associated not only with the daily performance of duties, but with the embodiment of bold ideas and the implementation of ambitious plans.

Success is interpreted not as a single act, but as a continuous series of achievements and constant forward movement. This view of setting high goals and striving for new achievements is an important part of the success mentality in English-speaking culture.

Individualism is characteristic of the English mentality. In English-speaking culture, success is primarily considered a personal achievement. The emphasis is on personal abilities, efforts, and the degree of responsibility. This is confirmed by expressions such as "self-made man" (a person who has achieved everything on their own), "self-reliance" (independence), "self-improvement" (self-development), and others. At the same time, English society has more collectivist ideas about success. In particular, the ability to work in a team is emphasised (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). This is evidenced by expressions such as "team spirit", "team work", "team success", "to pull together" (to work together), "to put your heads together" (to join forces), and others. A balance between individualistic and collectivist values is important for achieving success in English-speaking culture (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). From an individualistic point of view, success is seen as a personal achievement, the result of one's own efforts and self-realisation. But, on the other hand, the ability to interact effectively in a team, coordinate joint work, and leverage the effect of collective efforts is also key to success. As a rule, successful people are capable of showing individual initiative and taking responsibility, but at the same time they can easily fit into teamwork and share the common values of the collective. The ability to combine individual aspirations with collective goals is considered an important factor in achieving outstanding results in both personal and professional spheres in an English-speaking environment (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010).

A characteristic feature of the English mentality is high internal motivation and a desire for self-realisation, constant self-improvement, and success. S. Jobs' famous quote, "The only way to do great work is to love what you do", illustrates the importance of internal motivation, enthusiasm, and passion in the lives of English-speaking people (Stanford Report, 2005). If a person is truly passionate about their work, they show much more diligence, creativity, and hard work. After all, thanks to this passionate love for their profession, many successful people achieve significant results and derive true satisfaction from the creative process. In culturally significant English-speaking contexts, the dollar sign (\$) is often associated with material well-being, financial prosperity, and commercial success. Phrases such as "to make a dollar" or "dollar sign" are widely used in economic and financial contexts (White, 1998). In addition, the image of a star is traditionally associated with ideas of fame, success, and public honour. The Hollywood Walk of Fame (n.d.) in Los Angeles, California, consists of sidewalks paved with five-pointed stars. Receiving a star on this walk is considered one of the most prestigious awards in the entertainment industry and symbolises the American dream of fame. The idiomatic expression "to reach for the stars" means



striving for high goals and ambitions, and the phrase “rising star” characterises young talents with the potential for significant achievements (White, 1998). Such linguistic expressions and metaphors are part of the cultural heritage, reflecting the English-speaking mentality of striving for high achievements and universal recognition. In general, the concept of “success” in English linguistics and culture is represented by the following characteristics: result orientation, hard work, determination, pragmatism, and individualism. At the same time, there are also collectivist ideas about success. This concept is directly related to material well-being and professional growth.

Conclusions

The study of the concept of “success” in the English language led to the following main conclusions. The concept of “success” plays an important role in the culture of English-speaking countries, reflecting the core values and views of people who speak this language. The analysis of dictionaries and texts showed that the concept includes various aspects, such as achieving goals, material well-being, social status, personal satisfaction, and recognition from others. An examination of the structure of the concept revealed that it consists of various components, such as conceptual, figurative, value-based, symbolic, social, emotional, and functional, which indicates its complex nature. The study also found some differences in the

understanding of success between British and American cultures, especially in relation to the display of wealth, work-life balance, and the perception of failure. Furthermore, the concept of “success” was shown to be dynamic rather than static, changing depending on social and demographic conditions. The study proved that component analysis and conceptual metaphor analysis are effective methods for identifying culturally specific aspects of the concept. The results contribute to a deeper understanding of the values and worldview of native English speakers, which is important in the context of globalisation and intercultural communication, as well as for teaching English. The study opens up opportunities for further research of culturally specific concepts in the field of cultural linguistics and cognitive linguistics, including comparative studies of “success” across broader linguistic cultures and an investigation of its representation evolved in digital and media discourse.

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Conflict of Interest

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Чолпон Бекбалаева

Филология илимдеринин кандидаты, доцент
Кусеин Карасаев атындагы Бишкек мамлекеттик университети
720044, Ч. Айтматов проспектиси, 27, Бишкек ш., Кыргыз Республикасы
<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-2002-4523>

Жылдызкан Бейшенова

PhD даражасынын изденүүчүсү
Кыргыз-Түрк Манас университети
720044, Ч. Айтматов проспектиси, 56, Бишкек ш., Кыргыз Республикасы
<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-4879-8375>

Гулнур Жумалиева

Филология илимдеринин доктору, доцент
Кыргыз-Түрк Манас университети
720044, Ч. Айтматов проспектиси, 56, Бишкек ш., Кыргыз Республикасы
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5609-7345>

Аида Касиева

Филология илимдеринин кандидаты, доцент
Кыргыз-Түрк Манас университети
720044, Ч. Айтматов проспектиси, 56, Бишкек ш., Кыргыз Республикасы
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9605-7460>

Аннотация. Маданий концепт катары ийгилик британиялык жана американдык коомдордо маанилүү роль ойнойт, бирок анын лингвистикалык репрезентациясы жана маданий интерпретациясы маданий лингвистиканын комплекстүү перспективасынан жетишсиз деңгээлде изилденген бойдон калууда. Бул изилдөөнүн максаты – британиялык жана американдык лингвомаданияттарды системалуу салыштыруу аркылуу анын лингвистикалык объективациясын жана маданий өзгөчөлүктөрүн изилдеп, англис тилиндеги “ийгилик” концептинин семантикалык түзүмүн жана маданий-спецификалык өзгөчөлүктөрүн аныктоо жана сыпаттоо болуп саналат. Изилдөөдө компоненттик анализ, концептуалдык анализ, сөздүк аныктамаларды анализдөө, контексттик анализ, концептуалдык метафора теориясы жана салыштырмалуу анализ колдонулду. Изилдөө материалы катары англис тилинин түшүндүрмө сөздүктөрүнүн маалыматтары, фразеологиялык бирдиктердин булактары, көркөм чыгармалар жана илимий макалалар пайдаланылды. Негизги жыйынтыктарга ылайык “ийгилик” концепти сегиз семантикалык компоненттен турат: концептуалдык, аксиологиялык, образдык, символикалык, социалдык, эмоционалдык, функционалдык жана этимологиялык. Компоненттик анализдин жардамы менен “success” эң кеңири термин экени аныкталды, ал эми “achievement”, “accomplishment”, “prosperity” жана “triumph” сыяктуу байланышкан сөздөр концептинин айрым аспектилерине гана басым жасайт. Изилдөө ийгиликти концептуализациялоодогу маанилүү англо-американдык айырмачылыктарды аныктады: британиялык маданият кыйытма сөздөөнү жана иш менен жеке жашоонун тең салмактуулугун бааласа, американдык маданият өз алдынча жетишилген ийгиликти жана атаандаштыкка жөндөмдүүлүктү баалайт. Гендердик анализ аялдар тең салмактуулукту, эркектер болсо социалдык статусту баалаарын көрсөттү; муундар аралык анализ карьералык формалдуу көрсөткүчтөрдөн ийкемдүүлүккө жана жашоо тажрыйбасына карай баалуулук артыкчылыктарынын жылышын белгиледи. Изилдөө концепттердин маданий, гендердик жана жаштык факторлордун таасири астында кандайча өзгөрүүнү көрсөтүп, маданий лингвистикага жаңы эмпирикалык маалыматтарды кошот. Натыйжаларды практикалык колдонуу маданиятаралык коммуникацияны окутууну, англис тилин чет тил катары окутууну, ошондой эле ийгиликтин маданий багытын эске алган маркетингдик стратегияларды иштеп чыгууну камтыйт

Негизги сөздөр: “ийгилик” концепти; маданий лингвистика; семантикалык түзүм; англо-американдык маданият; маданий баалуулуктар; концептуалдык анализ; салыштырмалуу тил илими



Лингвистическая и культурная репрезентация успеха в английском языке: британская и американская перспективы

Чолпон Бекбалаева

Кандидат филологических наук, доцент
Бишкекский государственный университет имени Кусеина Карасаева
720044, просп. Ч. Айтматова, 27, г. Бишкек, Кыргызская Республика
<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-2002-4523>

Жылдызкан Бейшенова

Соискатель ученой степени PhD
Кыргызско-Турецкий университет Манас
720044, просп. Ч. Айтматова, 56, г. Бишкек, Кыргызская Республика
<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-4879-8375>

Гулнура Джумалиева

Доктор филологических наук, доцент
Кыргызско-Турецкий университет Манас
720044, просп. Ч. Айтматова, 56, г. Бишкек, Кыргызская Республика
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5609-7345>

Аида Касиева

Кандидат филологических наук, доцент
Кыргызско-Турецкий университет Манас
720044, просп. Ч. Айтматова, 56, г. Бишкек, Кыргызская Республика
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9605-7460>

Аннотация. Успех как культурный концепт играет важную роль в британском и американском обществах, однако его лингвистическая репрезентация и культурная интерпретация остаются недостаточно изученными с позиций комплексной культурной лингвистики. Целью настоящего исследования являлись выявление и описание семантической структуры и культурно-специфических особенностей концепта «успех» в английском языке посредством изучения его лингвистической объективации и культурно обусловленных репрезентаций путём системного сопоставления британской и американской лингвокультур. В работе использовались компонентный анализ, концептуальный анализ, анализ словарных дефиниций, контекстуальный анализ, теория концептуальной метафоры и сравнительный анализ. Материалом исследования послужили данные толковых словарей английского языка, источников фразеологических единиц, художественных произведений и научных статей. К числу основных результатов относится следующее: концепт «успех» включает восемь семантических компонентов – понятийный, аксиологический, образный, символический, социальный, эмоциональный, функциональный и этимологический. В ходе компонентного анализа было установлено, что «success» является наиболее широким термином, тогда как смежные лексемы – «achievement», «accomplishment», «prosperity» и «triumph» – акцентируют отдельные аспекты данного концепта. Исследование выявило существенные англо-американские различия в концептуализации успеха: если британская культура ориентирована на сдержанность и баланс между работой и личной жизнью, то американская культура ставит во главу угла самостоятельно достигнутый успех и конкурентоспособность. Гендерный анализ показал, что женщины придают большее значение балансу, а мужчины – социальному статусу; поколенческий анализ зафиксировал смещение ценностных приоритетов в сторону гибкости и опыта в противовес формальным карьерным показателям. Исследование вносит новые эмпирические данные в культурную лингвистику, демонстрируя, каким образом концепты претерпевают трансформацию под влиянием культурных, гендерных и возрастных факторов. Практическое применение результатов охватывает обучение межкультурной коммуникации, преподавание английского языка как иностранного, а также разработку маркетинговых стратегий с учетом культурных ориентаций успеха.

Ключевые слова: концепт «успех»; культурная лингвистика; семантическая структура; англо-американская культура; культурные ценности; концептуальный анализ; сравнительное языкознание