

**THE BIBLE'S LINGUISTIC LEGACY: HOW SACRED TEXTS SHAPED OUR  
EVERYDAY SPEECH**

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**ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКОЕ НАСЛЕДИЕ БИБЛИИ: КАК СВЯЩЕННЫЕ ТЕКСТЫ  
ПОВЛИЯЛИ НА НАШУ ПОВСЕДНЕВНУЮ РЕЧЬ**

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**MUQADDAS KITOBLARNING TIL MEROSI: QANDAY QILIB MUQADDAS  
MATNLAR KUNDALIK NUTQIMIZGA TA'SIR KO'RSATGAN**

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**Annotation:** Formulaic expressions - such as idioms, proverbs, collocations, and set phrases play a crucial role in communication, reflecting the cultural and historical background of a language. In both English and Russian, these expressions are deeply rooted in the Bible as a religious perspective to formulaic language. This paper explores the historical factors that have influenced formulaic language in English and Russian, providing examples that illustrate these influences. Religious texts have significantly shaped formulaic expressions in both English and Russian. Many English idioms come from the Bible, as Christianity had a profound influence on the language. The King James Bible (also called the Authorized Version) played a crucial role in shaping and standardizing the English language. Commissioned by King James I of England in 1604 and completed in 1611, this translation was based on original Hebrew and Greek texts and was intended as a definitive version for the Church of England.

**Keywords:** speech patterns, formulaic expressions, religious texts, Bible, cultural universality, secular integration.

Formulaic language today is widely used in both spoken and written communication across various contexts. It refers to fixed or routine phrases, expressions, or chunks of language that are often pre-learned and used automatically by speakers. The development of formulaic language today reflects the growing need for efficient, predictable, and culturally appropriate communication in a fast-paced world, facilitated by technology and globalization. Written in Early Modern English, the King James Bible used a formal and elaborate style to ensure accessibility while maintaining the solemnity of the text. Its widespread use significantly influenced the development of English grammar and syntax, contributing to the language's standardization. Additionally, the Bible introduced numerous idioms—phrases with figurative meanings that differ from their literal interpretations. Many of these expressions have become an integral part of everyday English, helping speakers convey ideas more effectively. Understanding these idioms enhances language comprehension and communication, particularly when interacting with native speakers or interpreting texts.

For example:

**Table 1. Biblical Idioms, Their Meanings, and Usage**

Idiom	Meaning	Origin & Example
<b>The salt of the earth</b>	A person who is honest, humble, and reliable.	Origin: Jesus calls his followers “the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13). Example: Despite his wealth and fame, he remained down-to-earth—the salt of the earth.
<b>A wolf in sheep's clothing</b>	Someone who hides their true, deceitful nature behind a false appearance.	Origin: Jesus warns about false prophets who appear harmless but are actually dangerous (Matthew 7:15). Example: Maria's new colleague seemed helpful but secretly wanted her job—a true wolf in sheep's clothing.
<b>By the skin of my teeth</b>	Barely managing to escape a difficult situation.	Origin: Job states that he “escaped by the skin of my teeth” (Job 19:20). Example: A student who needs 60% to pass an exam and scores exactly that has passed by the skin of their teeth.

The language of the Bible has had a tremendous impact on the formation of literary languages of many peoples historically associated with Christian culture. Translations of the Holy Scriptures into vernacular languages became the foundation of the literary languages of Europe, including the Slavic languages. While commentary on the biblical text is one of the oldest and most traditional activities of philologists, many aspects of this complex issue remain underdeveloped. These include, in particular, questions regarding the specifics of how certain elements derived from the Bible are adopted by specific languages, the nature of their subsequent development in each of these languages, and so on. [Mokiyenko 2013: 144]. The interest in the Bible as a source for the formation of phraseological units has remained in domestic linguistics for the past twenty years [Fedulenkova 1996: 76; 1998: 461; Dubrovina 2012]. Despite the peculiar “linguistic” fashion that has affected biblical phraseology and the numerous studies undertaken in this area [Mokiyenko et al. 2010], a terminological framework has not yet been fully developed, and there is no clear definition of the term “biblicism.” The varying orientations of the earliest translations of biblical texts into different languages and the differing manifestations of the general semantic potentials in the development of biblicisms lead to a differentiation of winged words and

expressions that share a common source. At the same time, the pan-European linguistic space and the commonality of Christian culture also contribute to the erasure of this differentiation. The number of Biblicisms and their variants in the Russian language increases not only due to the growing interest in Orthodox literature but also due to the continuous integration with European literature and art. Many Russian Biblicisms are calques from German, French, and other European languages, which our aristocracy freely used since the time of Peter the Great. The stock of Russian Biblicisms continues to be replenished to this day. [Mokiyenko 2013: 149].

The Bible is an exclusively orthodox and canonical text. It seems that this circumstance should guarantee a great deal of uniformity and similarity among the various translations. Orthodox Christianity, with its long tradition of religious texts, has contributed many proverbs and idioms to Russian.

For example:

**Table 2. Biblical Idioms in Russian: Semantic Functions, Scriptural Sources, and Cultural References**

Выражение	Значение	Источник и контекст	Ресурсы
Фиговый листок	1. Лицемерное прикрытие чего-то постыдного. 2. Маскировка истинных намерений или положения дел. 3. Символ стыдливости.	Бытие 3:7: «И открылись глаза у них обоих, и узнали они, что наги, и сшили смоковые листья, и сделали себе опоясания».	Аш.; Мих.; Ш.; Мол.; Аф.; Бул.; Г.
Соль земли	Лучшие представители общества, его основа.	Матфей 5:13: «Вы [апостолы] – соль земли. Если же соль потеряет силу, то чем сделаешь её солёною?»	Аш.; Мих.; Ш.; Мол.; Аф.; Г.
Иуда-предатель	Человек, предающий за личную выгоду.	Матфей 26:25: об апостоле Иуде, предавшем Иисуса за 30 серебряников.	Аш.; Мих.

There are a number of insights on fixed phrases or formulaic expressions from the Bible as an origin to formulaic language that we made throughout this article:

## 1. Historical and Linguistic Influence

The Bible, particularly in its widely read translations such as the King James Version (English) or the Synodal Translation (Russian), has significantly shaped the lexicon of many languages. The repeated use of specific phrases in religious and everyday contexts has contributed to the preservation and transmission of these fixed expressions.

## 2. Orality and Memorability

Many biblical phrases were originally meant for oral transmission, making them highly formulaic. Repetition, parallelism, and metaphorical imagery ensured that these expressions were easy to remember and pass down through generations. This quality is a key feature of formulaic language, which relies on familiar patterns rather than spontaneous composition.

### 3. Cultural Universality vs. Linguistic Adaptation

While many biblical phrases have direct translations in multiple languages, their interpretations and connotations can differ. For example:

- **English:** *A thorn in the flesh* (meaning a persistent problem)
- **Russian:** *Глас вопиющего в пустыне* (meaning an ignored warning, from Isaiah 40:3)
- **German:** *Ein Judas sein* (meaning a traitor, from Judas Iscariot)

Despite these variations, the underlying themes—betrayal, suffering, and divine justice—remain universal, showing both consistency and adaptation across cultures.

### 4. Religious and Secular Integration

Over time, many biblical expressions have moved beyond religious contexts into literature, politics, and daily conversation. Phrases like “*by the skin of one’s teeth*” [Job 19:20] or “*the powers that be*” [Romans 13:1] are used today without necessarily invoking religious meaning. This transition highlights the role of the Bible not only as a sacred text but also as a linguistic and cultural artifact.

5. Many biblical expressions have become deeply embedded in modern English and Russian, often used in both religious and secular contexts. Below are some widely used biblical idioms and fixed phrases, along with their modern applications:

Many biblical expressions remain relevant because they describe universal human experiences—justice, deception, perseverance, and morality. They are widely used in **media and journalism** (political speeches, news headlines, and opinion articles), **business and economics** (financial crises, leadership discussions, and work-related struggles), **everyday conversations** (used metaphorically in casual speech, literature, and even memes). The Bible has played a fundamental role in shaping formulaic language, embedding fixed phrases into everyday speech across different cultures. While some expressions retain their religious weight, many have evolved into secular idioms, demonstrating language’s dynamic nature. The similarities between languages show the universal impact of biblical texts, while differences reflect linguistic and cultural nuances. Ultimately, biblical fixed phrases illustrate the power of language to preserve history, convey meaning, and adapt to the needs of different societies over time.

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