

Artículo de investigación

National cultural semantics through the prism of phraseological units

La semántica nacional cultural a través del prisma de las soluciones de transición

Semântica cultural nacional através do prisma de unidades fraseológicas

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Abstract

The phraseological fund of language is the most valuable source of data on culture, stereotypes of national consciousness; it includes people's ideas about myths, customs, ceremonies, rituals, habits, morals, behavior. Each person belongs to the certain national culture including national traditions, language, history, literature. Economic, cultural and scientific contacts of the countries and their people increase the relevance of the topics connected with a research of cross-cultural communications, interactions and interferences of languages and cultures, studying of the language personality.

Studying of how the phraseological component of language reflects the outlook characteristic of "national spirit" in the images gives a special impulse to development of phraseology. Phraseological units (PU) reproduce this outlook in processes of the speech and by that form it, becoming property of language consciousness. The addressing to PU in which figurative basis is imprinted outlook of the English and Russian linguocultural societies defines relevance of the present research.

Keywords: phraseological units, cultural component, semantics, English, Russian.

Resumen

El fondo de fraseología del lenguaje es la fuente de datos más valiosa sobre la cultura, los estereotipos de la conciencia nacional; Incluye las ideas de las personas sobre mitos, costumbres, ceremonias, rituales, hábitos, moral, comportamiento. Cada persona pertenece a la cultura nacional determinada, incluidas las tradiciones nacionales, el idioma, la historia, la literatura. Los contactos económicos, culturales y científicos de los países y sus pueblos aumentan la relevancia de los temas relacionados con la investigación de las comunicaciones interculturales, las interacciones y las interferencias de idiomas y culturas, el estudio de la personalidad lingüística.

El estudio de cómo el componente fraseológico del lenguaje refleja la perspectiva característica del "espíritu nacional" en las imágenes da un impulso especial al desarrollo de la fraseología. Las unidades de Phraseological (PU) reproducen esta perspectiva en los procesos del discurso y por eso lo forman, convirtiéndose en propiedad de la conciencia del lenguaje. Dirigirse a PU en el que figura figurativa está impresa la perspectiva de las sociedades linguoculturales inglesas y rusas define la relevancia de la presente investigación.

Palabras clave: unidades fraseológicas, componente cultural, semántica, inglés, ruso.

Resumo

O fundo de fraseologia da linguagem é a fonte mais valiosa de dados sobre cultura, os estereótipos da consciência nacional; Inclui as idéias das pessoas sobre mitos, costumes, cerimônias, rituais, hábitos, moral, comportamento. Cada pessoa pertence à cultura nacional determinada, incluindo tradições nacionais, língua, história, literatura. Os contatos econômicos, culturais e científicos dos países e seus povos aumentam a relevância de temas relacionados à pesquisa de comunicações interculturais, às interações e interferências de línguas e culturas, ao estudo da personalidade lingüística.

O estudo de como o componente fraseológico da linguagem reflete a perspectiva característica do "espírito nacional" nas imagens dá um impulso especial ao desenvolvimento da fraseologia. As unidades de fraseologia (PU) reproduzem essa perspectiva nos processos de discurso e, portanto, formam-na, tornando-se propriedade da consciência da linguagem. Dirigindo PU em que figura figurativa é impressa a perspectiva de sociedades lingüísticas culturais inglesas e russas define a relevância da presente investigação.

Palavras-chave: unidades fraseológicas, componente cultural, semântica, inglês, russo.

Introduction

The necessity of learning foreign languages in close liaison with ethno-cultural component, is dictated by the fact that the understanding of other cultures is possible only on the basis of knowledge of own national culture (Kuzmina, K.A., Danilova O.A, 2016). A foreign language, as one of the sources of communication and cognition of the world around, takes a special place in the system of modern education thanks to its social, informative and developing functions (Shangaraeva, L.F. et. al, 2016). E. Sapir wrote: "Language is the guide gaining the increasing importance as the leading beginning in scientific studying of culture" (Sapir E, 2002).

The national and cultural specifics of semantics of PU characterizing work in English and Russian have the special and relevant importance when understanding depths of national consciousness. This research is devoted to identification and comparative description of the semantic field PU of the studied type. Universal and unique features in semantics of PU for both languages are investigated, the cultural connotation via the mechanism of cultural interpretation of all substantial components of the studied PU is defined and described.

For more detailed studying of phraseological fund of the studied languages we selected PU characterizing work in the English and Russian languages. This results from the fact that expedient activity of the person in society is considered the integral element of the society itself and cultural consciousness of the people. Besides, the considered PU occupy a large part

of phraseological fund of both languages, that is connected with the public importance of work.

Materials and Methods

Methods of study

The specific nature of the material under study and the assigned tasks have determined the choice of methods of the linguistic analysis. The main methods used in the work are: comparative-typological analysis, component analysis, inductive analysis.

Semantic field "Skill, mastership, experience and their absence" in the studied languages.

PU were considered in the following semantic microfield: "Skill, mastership, experience and their absence". Further semantic groups are allocated as a part of each microfield. Such division allows to describe and study national and cultural specifics of PU of the studied languages most precisely.

Based on the foregoing, we presented a complex of the criteria defining understanding of national and cultural specifics of PU that characterize work in both languages:

- Establishment of compliance between images of all PU and the basic metaphor characterizing the semantic field.
- The description of cultural components of PU by means of the analysis of semantic fields.
- Perception of literal and metaphorical image which is the cornerstone of PU of both languages.

Let us consider "Skill, mastership, experience and their absence" microfield. Examined microfield was grouped into the following semantic groups: "Experience. Mastership", "Respect to the master", "Unskilful people", "Knowledge of one's work".

The basic metaphor for PU of this field is "qualitative characteristics of professional skills" which holds the whole semantic field "Skill, mastership, experience and their absence". Qualitative assessment indication of man's skills in both cultures finds it's direct reflection in lexical definitions of studied PU. The following components of definitions point at it: "dexterous", "skillful", "master", "is lack of skills, abilities", "corresponds to one's power, abilities, facilities", "good specialist", "poor master", "unskillful", "incapable".

The common and specific notions and stereotypes about mastery in English and Russian cultures are considered in semantic group: "**Experience. Mastership**". Mastery and craft are highly appreciated in Russian working sphere. **Не то дорого, что красного золота, а дорого то, что доброго мастерства**. It is no exaggeration to say – there was a cult of craftsman among the people (Platonov O.A, 1991). In Russian culture PU note that an experienced master had a respect throughout the neighborhood. «Мастерство везде в почете», «Работнику полтина – мастеру рубль», «Не работа дорога – умение», «Мастер один – а подносчиков десять», «По закладке мастера знать», and many others.

The English respect the professionals and specialists, but in contrast to Russian culture, they don't extol the craftsmen: **a dab hand, be a leading light, a class act**. The craftsmen were spoken about with warmth: **мастер своего дела** "a man skillful in his own work", **золотой человек** «a valuable person, indispensable», **золотые руки** у кого-л. "very skillful, able person" and so on.

A lot of legends about extraordinary abilities of craftsman were created in Russian culture. Superhuman capabilities were ascribed to craftsmen which can be seen in folk and literary texts: remember the legend about Levsha who shod a flea (**подковать блоху** "to show the extraordinary ingenuity"). But this man had a real prototype. Such people were said: **на обухе рожь молотит, зерна не уронит** "to demonstrate mastery in something", **комар**

носу не подточит "made so that nothing to complain about" and others.

Historical social system, the folk life and crafts are different. In addition to farming, which occupied a leading place in the life of the Russian people, no less valuable was blacksmithing, jewelry, armory, carpentry and woodworking. But perhaps most of the masters were the carpenters. The evidence was seen in the wooden churches and houses of Russian villages and towns at the beginning of last century (today they are preserved mainly in the photos).

PU of English culture have no contrasting of mastery and craft, unlike in Russian PU, where this is clearly identified. Knowledge of a particular craft was also highly valued by people, but stood below the concept of mastery. "Not every craftsman was a master. There was no such a cult of personality around a craftsman as it was around the master"(Platonov O.A, 1991). Thus, PU indicate that knowledge of a particular craft will never be unnecessary: «**Ремесло за плечами не висит (не тяготит)**», «**Ремесло не коромысло, плеч не оттянет**». The British acquired different skills in case of a failure: **have another string to his bow**.

PU, reflecting the importance of the worker, his value and indispensability, are special for the English language: **be worth one's salt, pass muster, win one's spurs / to earn one's spur, be worth one's weight in gold, fill the bill, be nuts on smth**.

The individuality of each craftsman can be seen primarily on his work: **the workman is known by his work / the work shows the workman, practice makes perfect**.

In the PU of English and Russian languages of the semantic group "Knowledge of one's work" there is craftsman's desire to impart his knowledge and skills: **show smb. the ropes, get a fair crack of the whip; брать на буксир/взять на буксир**, taking into account the students' abilities: **horses for courses; подает большие надежды** "to demonstrate the ability to smth.", **ловит на лету** "easy to understand and to learn smth.", **работа по плечу** "available for implementation; corresponds to smb's abilities". In Russian culture the transfer of labor traditions in the hierarchy of family relations was carried out within the family. There is a point of view in the PU of the English language that only through daily work and

activities, it is possible to acquire sufficient knowledge: **in doing we learn, get (or to have) one's eye (well) in, get (or to learn) the trick of it, get one's hand in, get the hang of smth.** This idea can be seen in the Russian PU, according to which the craftsmen perfected their skills and gained experience throughout their life: «Век живи – век учись».

Knowledge and learning are positively assessed in PU of both peoples. According to PU of the English language, every craftsman has his own secrets which are known only to him: **smb's bag of tricks.**

The peculiarity of a craftsman in these attitudes is a perfect skill: **have smth. at one's fingers' ends, know smth. like a book, know the ropes, have an eye for smth.;** **показывать класс** "prove oneself from the best side", **собаку съел** "has a good experience, skill, proper knowledge in smth", **знать вдоль и поперек** "very good, in all details", **как свои пять пальцев** "very good, down to the smallest details", **рука набита** "to acquire skill, knack, experience in some work".

PU pay attention that it is an honor to take a leading position, to accomplish the most important role in any work: **играть первую скрипку** and to be **на (своем) месте** "to meet the qualities, knowledge, talent to that work, which you are busy with".

According to the English PU the craftsman can lose his knack in any work with the years.

In PU of the semantic group "Unskillful people" incapable and unskilled workers are derided. Inability to work was ridiculed and in Russian culture was seen as a kind of moral defect: **ничем хвалится, как все из рук валится; за все берется да не все удается, швец Данило, что не шьет, то гнило.** Helplessness and inability of people is very often criticized in the English culture. This feature is characterized by the following phrases: **be good for nothing, can't do smth. for toffee, be all thumbs, neither fish, flesh, nor good red herring.**

Incapable and bad workers were said: **ни в куль, ни в воду** "about unskilled, stupid person", **слаб в коленках** "somebody who doesn't have enough skills to do something", **гайка слаба** "somebody who is not able to do something", **пороха не выдумает** "second-rate worker".

It is noticed in Russian culture that bunglers who are lack of sufficient knowledge and training do the work which does not match their forces, abilities and exceed their capabilities: **не по носу, не по плечу, не по ноздре, не в жилу, не в подъем, не по зубам, не по силам.**

However, unskillfulness in any work is not only because of inability of workers, but the lack of experience and youthfulness: **a spring chicken, not to cut the mustard, square pegs in round holes; нос не дорос** "somebody is too young to do something", **мелко плавать** "to be lack of knowledge, experience, opportunities and so on to do something serious", etc.

Both cultures speak ironically about those who do a lot of work but without a high level of skill: **head cook and bottle-washer.** People in the event of failure always blame someone or something, but not themselves: **a bad shearer never had a good sickle, a bad workman finds fault (или quarrels) with his fools; it's a poor workman who blames / quarrels with his tools.**

Results

On the basis of the done comparative research of the semantic field "skill, mastership, experience and their absence" in English and Russian it is possible to draw the following conclusions:

1. The semantic field "skill, mastership, experience and their absence" of PU, characterizing work, is grouped by us into the following semantic groups: "Experience. Skill", "Respect for the master", "Knowledge of one's craft", "Unskillful people".
- 2) The allocated basic metaphor was correlated to cultural installations that connect language and cultural knowledge of the people – English and Russian. Interpretation of cultural components allowed to compare objects of the outside world with the substantial plan of the cultural signs embodying these or those cultural categories.
- 3) Cultural features were revealed in various figurative bases of PU characterizing work in both lingual cultures and in discrepancy of the PU components of the allocated type and also in that space which consists of numerous spheres of cultural data.
- 4) The parallel method of the description of PU semantic fields of the allocated type established general, in whole or in part coinciding cultural

connotations and figurative content of PU in the studied languages that tells about existence of universal cultural knowledge.

5) Semantics of many studied PU has a highly evaluative character. The evaluative component of the considered PU was developed in the process of lingual and cultural semantic comparison and was predetermined by a wide range of cultural data on the basis of which the figurative basis of PU was perceived.

Discussion

The interrelation of culture and language is the most distinctly expressed in work of the person in society. Language is a component of the cultural environment which plays an important role in formation and preservation of culture. Language units, PU in particular, are "the most valuable source of data on culture and mentality" (Maslova V.A, 2001). V.A.Maslova says that two national cultures (the native culture and the culture of the studied language) never coincide completely, that is, they have a universality for the majority of people and national (Maslova V.A, 2012). The language always embodies the uniqueness of the people, national vision of the world and national culture (Yusupova Z.F, 2016).

Communications of words at the semantic level allow to reveal significant for the person interrelation between objects and the phenomena of the world around, and, thereby, reflect bases of national outlook and also the outlook models put in an individual.

In this regard, the structural-semantic relations of words as semantic fields should be considered not only as lingual, but also as linguoculturological phenomena. In this research the central place is taken by field structure of language which cornerstone the set of the semantic fields representing the interconnected and multilevel constructions of language. In other words, the semantic field is considered as set of units grouped under certain features.

The description of language material by means of semantic fields was the object of interest of many scientists (Ufimtseva A.A, 1961; Karaulov J.N, 1981; Shendeleva E.A, 1999), but in linguistics there's still no standard concept of the field. In understanding of the field we adhere to the definition given by A.A. Ufimtseva. "The semantic field is a set of the language units having invariant properties that allows to reflect objectively

existing groups of language reality elements" (Ufimtseva A.A, 1961).

It's worth noting that the content of PU can include cultural components, just as "the words containing cultural seme in the "usual" values can be their part" (Teliya V.N, 1996). And only in rather extensive space of semantic fields culturally significant information can be revealed. On the basis of such semantic groups basic metaphors which characterize this or that semantic field and who can be correlated to cultural installations are established. In our research the central place is taken by the analysis and the description of phraseological fields that is caused by special attention to studying of PU semantics.

Semantic fields are interconnected and built by the principle of subordination therefore fields can be narrow or wide (Tarlanov Z.K, 1988). They can be crossed or be a part of each other. Therefore, PU can be grouped into macrofields and microfields. As a rule, in structure of microfields semantic components are of more concrete and narrow character, than of macrofields. They can also unite lexical-semantic subgroups in themselves as a part of which there are elements with even more specific semantic components according to the meaning.

Conclusions

To summarize, it is worthy to emphasize that such field of linguistics as phraseology and its basic concepts – PU, are an inexhaustible source for researches. Language is the phenomenon which is constantly developing thanks to the native speakers, but also it is a subject for influence from other languages, other cultures and their native speakers. Language changes, also its structures and units change. For this reason studying of PU is continuous and dynamic process.

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