

## ФИЛОЛОГИЯ

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### INTERLINGUAL SYNONYMY: CULTURAL IDENTITY OF THE FIGURATIVE COMPONENT (BASED ON RUSSIAN, ENGLISH, AND FRENCH PHRASEOLOGY)

[*Максимец С.В., Аведова Р.П. Межъязыковая синонимия:  
национально-культурная специфика образной составляющей  
(на материале русской, английской и французской фразеологии)*]

It is considered cultural identity of the Russian, English and French nations by means of analysis of its phraseology as the part of the language fund. Phraseological units taken from these three languages are examined. They have equal semantics but its figurative components, lexical and grammatical structure are different. They are considered to be the interlingual synonyms. Despite the universality of actuals in the meanings of phraseological units, i.e. having the theoretical possibility of equal perception and expressing it, its figurative components are still distinguished. On the basis of analyzed examples a conclusion about the direct relationship between unequal figurative components of phraseological units interlingual pairs and the difference in accumulated cultural legacy, traditions, religious views of these two ethnic groups are made.

Key words: phraseological unit, figurative component, semantics, lexical and grammatical structure, interlingual synonyms.

The analysis of phraseological units with an identical plan of content, but a different figurative component and, consequently, different lexical and grammatical structure, suggests a discrepancy in the perception of the surrounding world among ethnic groups that are native speakers of the analyzed languages. These differences are actualized due to the national-cultural specifics of societies, the study of which is one of the primary and most important tasks of sociolinguistics and cultural linguistics. The features of perception of objective reality are determined by the peculiarity of the material and spiritual life of the nations.

Any extralinguistic factors influence the perception of the universe, the mentality, any national experience is reflected in the language fund, in particular, in the phraseological worldview [3]. The difference in phraseology of different languages is manifested in the dissimilarity of the component structure and figurative components of phraseological units (PU) with the same or similar meaning, which represent such layer as interlingual synonyms that are the most numerous group of PU. With common semantics, they are characterized by the difference of the figurative component, often storing the information about the national-cultural experience of a certain linguistic society. The study of such experience, reflected in the mirror of phraseology, determines its relevance in the long term.

Analyzing interlingual synonymous idioms, analyzing the etymology of these phraseological units is the way to reconstruct the worldview reflected in the minds of these ethnic groups with the means of the language, which allows to highlight their national and cultural characteristics.

Thus, synonymous phraseological units “*косая сажень в плечах*”, “*shoulders a yard wide*”, “*armoire normande*” demonstrate the difference in the perception of the surrounding universe by the Russian, British and French nations. The image of the Russian phraseological unit is transmitted through an outdated measure of length (“*косая сажень*” – slanting sagene), which was equal to the distance from the end of the thumb of the right foot to the end of the middle finger of the raised up left hand. Before the introduction of the metric system of measures in Russia there was also a common sagene, which was three arshins (another old Russian measure, one arshin – 0.7112 m), and a flying sagene (“*маховая сажень*”) equal to two and a half arshins [5, p. 388]. Naturally, for the description of a broad-shouldered person, it was the largest of the existing measures of length that was chosen – the slanting sagene.

In English the PU “*shoulders a yard wide*” is associated with the corresponding national pattern of the world perception of the measure of length which appeared in the UK and was previously called a “yard”. There are several versions of the origin of this measure of length. According to the first one, the yard was introduced by Edgar the King of England (959-975 gg) and was equal to the distance from the tip of the monarch's nose to the tip of the middle finger extended in the direction of the hand. After his death, the yard lengthened, as the new king had a larger physique than his predecessor. The next time the king changed, the yard be-

came shorter again. Such frequent changes in units of length made confusion. According to another version, the yard was equal to the monarch's waist circumference or the length of his sword. In 1101, King Henry I legitimized a permanent yard and ordered a standard to be made from an elm. This yard is still used in England (its length is 0.9144 m). The origin of the expression "shoulders a yard wide" is quite natural and connected, as in the Russian language, with the greatest measure of length, the value of which was determined by the physiological measurement of the holder of power in the state.

The internal form of the French PU "*armoire normande*" etymologically represents the national reality of France, where in one of its provinces, Normandy, production of cabinets, which are distinguished by their massiveness, bulkiness and large dimensions, was established. Residents of this region of France have earned a reputation as rude, impolite, loving to embellish something and to deceive people, which added a negative expressive connotation to this unit, which is traced in its supplementary meanings "overstuffed muscle-head, scary dude". Due to the absence of a settlement called "Normandy" on the territory of the Russian Federation, this component is not captured in the phraseological fund of the Russian language.

Synonymous PUs "*приказать долго жить*", "*casser sa pipe*", "*kick the bucket*" describe a universal reality for representatives of any ethnic group, but the fundamental images of this group of PUs have different etymologies. The basis of the Russian PU is the idea that a person lying on his deathbed makes a memorial speech to his closest people gathered around him and wishes them good health and long life. The performance of this "rite" in the minds of the Russian people was associated with the subsequent inevitable death of the speaker, which served as an internal form of PU with the meaning "to die". It seems to us that in this PU there is a lexical component "to order" based on the prevailing opinion that the dying person's last wish is necessary for execution, which may be equivalent to an order.

The French PU "*casser sa pipe*" has several etymological interpretations, none of which is officially proven and generally accepted, which increases the research interest and provides an opportunity to independently choose the likeliest internal image. According to the basic version of the origin of this PU, it was used for the first time in 1649 in a pamphlet ridiculing Cardinal Mazarin in the so-called

Mazarinade, but this PU had different semantics at that time – “get into a rage”. In the modern meaning this PU began to be used since the end of the 17th century. However, despite the existence of the above explanation of the etymology of this PU, two more interpretations of the image were found. The first tells us that on the battlefields of the Napoleonic wars, the surgeons did not have anesthetic drugs for pain relief during operations. Therefore, they put a fictile pipe into the soldier’s mouth so that he would squeeze it with his teeth and, therefore, could not scream. The patient, emaciated by pain, could not stand it and released the pipe from his mouth, which, falling to the ground, broke. The second interpretation is about the theatrical career of the actor Mercier, who often played the role of Jean Bara in the tabloid play. The role required to hold a pipe for smoking tobacco in the mouth constantly, which was an indispensable attribute of this character. Once, during the performance, the pipe fell to the ground from the actor’s mouth and broke. Already dead Mercier fell to the ground right after it [1].

The English PU “*kick the bucket*” is associated with the traditional United Kingdom execution by hanging and came to English language from the middle Ages. When a person was sentenced to death, he was hanged with a rope around his neck, and then hangman removed the bucket on which the condemned was standing.

The interlingual synonymous PUs “*нож в спину*”, “*be stabbed in the back*” and “*coup de Jarnac*” (the term “Jarnak’s punch” is used for dishonest, perfidious act) represents universal notions of unworthy, treacherous behavior through the original internal images. The image of Russian and English PUs is based on a parallel with the mean act of any kind and also with the sneaky stab in the back with a knife. The cultural identity of both the Russian and the English ethnic groups is the cultivation in the people’s consciousness of honesty, valor, courageous behavior on the battlefield and in a peaceful life. This, for example, is reflected in folklore which gives a model of behavior of a worthy person. Suffice it to recall how the Russian bogatyrs openly called upon the enemies of the Russian people to fight, standing tall and shouting about their desire to fight with the enemy. There is a great contrast with a strike without warning, in the back, an insidious act, when the addressee does not see the strike and is not ready for it, cannot defend himself and fight back. This model of behavior is regarded as unworthy, perfidious, that served the basis for the creation of this PU in both languages.

When French people see misbehavior, a sneaky and dishonest act, in their minds an image of an unusual sword blow by Baron de Jarnach during his duel with Francois de Vivonn is objectified. Jarnach was insulted by King Henry II, who spread at the court unflattering rumors about the love relationship of Jarnach and his stepmother, Magdalena de Puigigon. Jarnach demanded justice for this insult, but the king could not participate in a duel with a simple nobleman, therefore, he provided an opportunity to defend the royal honor to another nobleman Francois de Vivonn. Twenty-seven-year-old Francois de Vivonn was a master of a sword, a skilled warrior and a physically developed wrestler, he was confident of his victory over thirty-eight Baron de Jarnach, who was a man of strong frame and didn't have brilliant military training. Being in a difficult situation, Jarnach needed to prepare for the fight, for which he hired an Italian fencing teacher named Captain Kaizo. The mentor taught the Baron several tricks of sword mastery, which, however, were not prohibited by the rules of duels of that time. When the time for the duel came, the King and his retinue were confident of the victory of his protégé, seeing how he oppressed the enemy. However, an unexpected blow of Jarnach with a sword under the left knee of Francois de Vivonn, cutting the tendons to the very bone broke the course of the duel. Fallen Francois de Vivonn was unable to continue the fight, and Jarnach demanded recognition of his rightness from the king. Henry II's protégé could not stand the shame of losing, tore the bandages from the treated wounds and died a few days later. Despite the fact that the blow of Jarnach was absolutely legal and did not contradict the rules, it began to be perceived as a dishonest and unworthy act, after which all official duels in France were even banned, and served as an image for the PU with the meaning "dishonest, perfidious act" [6, p. 219].

The next serie of PUs is "*ко второму пришествию*", "*the Arks rise again*" and "*à Pâques ou à la Trinité*" (a time that is unknown when it comes; the distant future; never). Russian PU objectifies the universal conviction of the Christian religion about the indispensable return of the son of God Jesus Christ to Earth. The fact is that this idea is based on some prophetic statements both of Jesus himself and of his apostles, as set forth in the holy Christian books: the Old and New Testaments. The exact date of the second coming is not indicated anywhere; moreover, some words speak directly about the impossibility for a person to find out the time of the appearance of the son of God on our planet. However, the sacred

books speak of symbolic signs preceding the coming. For example, the emergence of false Christs, the Antichrist, disappointment in faith, global cataclysms and natural disasters, etc. Many theologians tried to link certain historical events (Lisbon earthquake on November 1, 1755, Solar eclipse on May 19, 1780, and some others) with the probable beginning of the second coming, but it did not happen, which gave reason to associate the image of the expected religious event with extremely uncertain period in the future, moreover, which will never happen with a high degree of probability [5].

The image of the French idiom “*à Pâques ou à la Trinité*” goes back to the lines of a mocking song composed by French soldiers in the early 18th century. The fact is that, starting from the end of the 17th century, Lord Churchill, Duke John Marlborough, was in the position of captain, commander of the British army. In this position, he had already inflicted several defeats on the French forces, and in 1709 the allied Anglo-Austro-Dutch army defeated the French army again at Malplaquet. Despite the loss of the French army, the British combined forces suffered significant losses, more than twice the losses of the enemy. That is why the French soldiers got a reason to consider Lord Churchill whom they hated so much to be dead, and they made up a mockery of his song with the main idea that the captain would never return from the war. The excerpts from this song are as follows: “Marlborough goes to war. ... He will return at Easter or at the Trinity. ... the Trinity passes, Marlborough does not return ... ”. Thus, the words of the song became the basis for the emergence of a new idiom in the language worldview of French people [4].

However, S.M. Kravtsov offers another version of this expression’s origin, based on earlier historical events in France. In the medieval state, the French kings had a special attitude to the money they had borrowed. The monarchs pledged to pay debts at Easter or at Trinity; both days have officially designated celebration dates, the time between which is nine weeks. But very often, after both holidays had passed, the debts remained not repaid, which gave rise to consider these promises as illusory, without a correctly set deadline and perhaps even as unrealizable ones [2, p. 240].

So, the analysis of interlingual (Russian, French and English) synonymous PUs suggests that their different figurative components determine the ability of these units not only to transmit information about the cultural and historical ex-

perience of their carriers, but also to help identify the cultural identity of this experience. The study of the internal form of interlingual phraseological synonyms also makes it possible to establish the features of the world perception of different ethnic groups, which makes it possible to significantly facilitate the process of intercultural communication.

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