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PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS AS FRAGMENTS OF THE LINGUISTIC PICTURE OF THE WORLD

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ABSTRACT

The theme of the nationally and culturally specific features of phraseological units is quite traditional in phraseology research. In these studies, phraseological units are viewed as nationally specific language entities that accumulate the cultural potential of a people. In this context, phraseology, as fragments of the linguistic picture of the world, expresses both the material and spiritual culture of a nation. Researchers have often noted the national uniqueness of phraseological units within the linguistic picture of the world of various nations, reflecting elements of national mentality. The differences between phraseological units of different peoples are determined by religion and history, customs and traditions, natural conditions, and the value systems of specific nations. The national peculiarities of worldview of any ethnocultural community are rooted in the lifestyle and psychology of its people, reflected in the language through the semantic structure of linguistic signs.

Keywords: *phraseology research, linguistic, conceptualizing, customs and traditions, uniqueness of phraseological units, linguistic picture.*

INTRODUCTION

Currently, modern linguistics increasingly examines phraseological units within the cultural context. That is, the linguocultural approach to the study of phraseological units is employed. V.N. Telia sees the main task of linguoculturology in relation to phraseology as the research and description of the mechanisms through which the

interaction of phraseological units as elements of natural language with cultural semantics occurs, thereby fulfilling their function as verbalized signs of the “language” of culture.

Phraseological units preserve and transmit knowledge about the established system of customs, traditions, laws, and everyday perceptions of the world from generation to generation. This allows scholars to discuss phraseological units as means of verbalizing certain concepts of mental formations, which are generalized and holistic cognitive units encoding culturally significant meanings in various configurations.

Phraseological units are among the most semantically complex groups of linguistic units. One characteristic feature of phraseological units is that the overall meaning of these figurative expressions cannot be understood simply as the sum of the meanings of their components. For example, the well-known expression "a dog in the manger" implies a person's position of being "neither for oneself nor for others," rather than a literal interpretation of an animal laying on dried grass meant for livestock feed. This explains the fact that phraseological units often appear unclear to other people and are thus perceived literally. The frequent literal interpretation of phraseological units is usually due to a deficiency in the speaker's or listener's background contextual knowledge. Such knowledge is always a result of existing in a certain environment and belonging to it—those sociocultural insights that are characteristic only of a specific nation or nationality, mastered by a significant number of its representatives and reflected in the language of that national community.

METHODS

This is precisely why phraseological units, being a reflection of national culture, present certain challenges when translated into another language. Even if phraseological units in different languages are similar in meaning, they may have different expressive-stylistic connotations, differing figurative foundations, and serve different evaluative functions. V.N. Telia proposes two postulates for investigating the interaction between language and culture. The first postulate assumes that speakers of a language possess—more or less consciously—knowledge of precedent cultural texts

or linguistic entities, which may serve as sources for cultural-national interpretations of phraseological units.

In a preliminary approximation, V.N. Telia suggests identifying eight sources for the linguocultural analysis of phraseological units:

- Ritual forms of folk culture, such as matchmaking, memorials, etc., as well as superstitions, myths, spells, etc. An example of this is the phraseological unit "soul flies to another world."

- The paremiological fund, for example: "Babushkin vek - сорок лет" (a woman's age - forty years) and "Сорок пять - баба ягодка опять" (At forty-five, she's still a berry).

- A system of archetype images, such as "dumb as a ram," "slender as a birch," and "like water off a duck's back."

- Symbolic words or phrases that have a symbolic interpretation. Culturally national symbols embodied in the linguistic "body." For instance: "the soul is out of place," "the soul bleeds," "the soul has left the heels."

- Christianity with its theosophy, moral injunctions, and rituals. Examples include: "scant vessel," "pitch darkness," and "give one's soul to God."

- The intellectual heritage of a nation and humanity as a whole. Examples include: "an elephant in a china shop" and "smoke of the homeland."

- Realities that serve as subjects of description in culture-oriented dictionaries. For instance: "sokol" (as naked as a falcon), "medny grosh" (not worth a copper coin).

- Intralinguistic resources for cultural interpretation. For example: "the sea of life," "the ship of perestroika."

RESULTS

Thus, from the sources of cultural interpretation of phraseological units mentioned above, it should be noted that these sources of information can overlap and even contain contradictory elements. This is quite natural since they are distinguished not by a single categorical-cultural basis (a task that, while difficult, is intriguing for addressing the issue of the "language of culture"), but rather by the type of knowledge corresponding

to the semiological nature of these sources. Moreover, culture itself, along with the mentality formed on its basis, can reflect and reproduce the cultural traditions of various "social times" and the cultural values of different social strata and even individual people.

Knowledge of cultural signs, or "culturèmes," belonging to these various sources is part of the cultural competence of a people. Although this verbalized knowledge, in V.N. Teliá's view, should be regarded as belonging to the world of material and spiritual culture, which finds its sign expression in linguistic form through the process of semiosis. Therefore, the interpretation of linguistic signs, in particular phraseological units, within the conceptual space of these cultural signs is a procedure that correlates the units of the language system with cultural taxa. The result of such correlation is the content of cultural connotation, equally marked by national characteristics, as is the idiomatic content of cultural signs.

In the modeling of the linguistic picture of the world, the phraseological image plays a significant role. The phraseological image contributes to the structuring of fragments of the linguistic picture of the world associated with the figurative perception of objects and phenomena of the surrounding reality, which is realized in the actual (dictionary-fixed) meanings of phraseological units. Phraseological units have the ability to reflect fragments of the linguistic picture of the world of a specific people speaking a particular language. Language serves as a mirror of the people's mentality. The entire structure of a language, its derivational possibilities, grammatical categories, phonetic features, and synonymy are all interconnected with the mentality of the language's speakers.

DISCUSSION

The connection between phraseological units and the mental traits of a people can be traced in two directions: moving away from mental traits to find their reflection in phraseological units, and conversely, using the analysis of phraseological units to reveal the mental traits characteristic of the language speakers.

For example: “Looking at him, I remembered the bedbugs, Zinochka, my diagnosis, and it wasn’t just frost; a whole Ice Ocean ran down my spine.” (The Night Before the Trial, 24).

As a result of the research in the works of F.M. Dostoevsky, phraseological units have been identified that primarily convey psychological states: “His initial astonishment gradually changed to horror, as if frost had passed down his spine.” (Crime and Punishment, 15) and human behavior: “and that none of them has the right to ‘raise their nose’ in front of him.” (Crime and Punishment, 66).

CONCLUSION

Summarizing the results of the above study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. A phraseological unit in modern linguistics represents a rather complex and contradictory unity. As a separate formation, it possesses a holistic meaning. From the standpoint of semantic cohesion, phraseological units in contemporary Russian literary language can be divided into four types: phraseological fusions, phraseological unities, phraseological combinations, and phraseological expressions. Some properties bring a phraseological unit closer to a phrase, while others align it with a word.

2. V.N. Telia proposes two postulates for studying the interaction between language and culture:

a) Language speakers possess—more or less consciously—knowledge of precedent culturally significant informational texts or linguistic entities, which can serve as sources for cultural-national interpretation of phraseological units.

b) The correlation of phraseological units with the “language of culture” in linguocultural analysis is done through representative arrays of ideographic fields such as “properties of a person,” “feelings,” “intellectual abilities and states,” “behavior,” “space,” etc.

3. As a result of the study of different groups of phraseological units used in the works of N.V. Gogol, A.P. Chekhov, and F.M. Dostoevsky, we can conclude:

a) N.V. Gogol's works have a satirical character. The author, not limiting himself to the phraseological meanings of stable expressions, uses them against the background of the specific meaning of each individual word. In N.V. Gogol's works, phraseological constructions of all four types were found, with a predominance of phraseological unities and combinations.

b) In the works of A.P. Chekhov, phraseological units belonging to various styles of language were identified: bookish, colloquial, and vulgar. Among them, there is a large number of phraseological units of the vulgar style of language.

c) In the works of F.M. Dostoevsky, phraseological units conveying psychological states and human behavior were identified. In F.M. Dostoevsky's writing, the central element is the description of a person's psychological state.

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