

ANTHROPOCENTRIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS WITH COSMONYM COMPONENTS IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH

Svetlana L. Yakovleva^{1*}, Ksenia Y. Vavilova², Tatiana A. Soldatkina³

¹Assoc. Prof., Mari State University, Russia, zavkaf1@gmail.com

²Assoc. Prof., Mari State University, Russia, vuk_2004@mail.ru

³Assoc. Prof., Mari State University, Russia, fia.solta@gmail.com

*Corresponding Author

Abstract

The object of the research is the phraseological units in the English and French languages with cosmonym components having an anthropocentric characteristic. The subject of the research is the semantic features of these phraseological units which carry the characteristics of a person and his/her activities. To achieve this goal, the following tasks are solved: 1) to study the concept of phraseology and phraseological units, identify the features and characteristics of phraseological units; 2) to conduct an ideographic classification of phraseological units with cosmonymic components in the English and French languages; 3) to perform a comparative analysis of the phraseological units in both languages and identify their similarities and differences. In the research, the following methods are used: a continuous sampling method; registration and processing of the obtained data; observation; analysis of each phraseological system and its specific features; a comparative analysis of the phraseological units in English and French. According to the results of a comparative analysis, it can be concluded that most of the phraseological units in the English language are concentrated in the "Human activity" group and in the "Man as a living and rational being" group in the French language. This shows that the attitude towards life of the British and the French people is different. Actions and deeds are the most important features in English phraseology of the group under analysis, while in French culture feelings and emotions are of greater importance.

Keywords: phraseology, phraseological units, English, French, cosmonymic components.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development and study of phraseology as a science has been conducted for a long time. When learning a language, it is important to know its grammatical and lexical composition but to "understand" a given language it is important to refer to its phraseological composition. Phraseological units convey the characteristics of a particular language, as well as features of the worldview of people who speak it: they carry in their content the experience accumulated by the people, convey a description of the linguistic picture of the world of a given nationality. Most phraseological units not only name the phenomena of reality but also characterize these phenomena in a certain way.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

The objective of the research is to characterize specific features of English and French phraseological units with cosmonyms in their structure, having an anthropocentric characteristic.

3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The material of the study is 102 phraseological units – 49 English and 53 French PhU. Phraseological dictionaries by A. V. Kunin (Kunin, 1984), Ya. I. Retsker (Retsker, 1963), Oxford Dictionary of Idioms (Siefiring, 2004), Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms (2002) and the Dictionnaire des expressions idiomatiques françaises” (Asharf, 1999) served as the basis for data collection. In the research, the following methods are used: a continuous sampling method; registration and processing of the obtained data; observation; analysis of each phraseological system and its specific features; a comparative analysis of the phraseological units in English and French.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Phraseology is intensively developing on the material of different languages. The phraseology of the English language was studied by such Russian classical scholars as N. N. Amosova, A. I. Smirnitsky, A. V. Kunin and numerous modern authors. The basics of French phraseology are described by A.G. Nazaryan, V.G. Gak.

In linguistics, the concept of phraseology has two meanings: 1) the section of linguistics, the science of idioms; 2) idioms in a language.

However, N. M. Shansky believes that phraseology is “a section of the science of language, which studies the phraseological system of a language in its current state and historical development” [Shansky, 1985]. According to his research, phraseology studies stable combinations of words, i.e. phraseological units.

Currently, there are various definitions and classification of phraseological units. A. V. Kunin defines a phraseological unit as “a stable combination of tokens with a fully or partially rethought meaning” [Kunin, 1972].

Phraseological units have the following characteristics: they are known to native speakers; reproducibility; grammatical organization of phraseological units; elements of a phraseological unit are at least two words; the separate formalization of the elements of phraseological units, each of which is identified with a word; unchanging word order; stability of lexical and grammatical composition; some features of stress inherent in a phraseological unit; semantic integrity; synonymic substitutability by a word or the whole, or some of its elements, depending on the semantic type of a phraseological unit; semantic idiomaticity (the impossibility of literal translation into other languages); unmotivated and motivated significance; the integrity of the nomination; stability of meaning; the syntactic role of phraseological units, which turns out to be different for phraseological objects of different types .

Most scholars distinguish three main features of phraseological units: reproducibility, stability of the component composition and separability.

According to the anthropocentric paradigm, language is the main characteristic of a person, one of its main components. Process of thinking is impossible without language. The intellectual abilities of a person are impossible outside the language and language ability – the ability to generate and perceive speech. In linguistic studies, the understanding of anthropocentrism lies in the fact that man is central in his learning approach.

4.1 English Phraseological Units with Cosmonyms

The objective of the research is to study phraseological units containing cosmic components having anthropocentric characteristics. Thus, we managed to select 102 phraseological units (49 of them are English phraseological units, 53 French ones).

The group of English idioms includes lexemes containing the following components: *sun, star, sky, moon, orbit, rocket, atmosphere, space, planet, Mars, Earth*.

The group of French idioms includes lexemes containing the following components: *l'étoile – star, la planète – planet, la lune – moon, le soleil – sun, le ciel – sky*.

Based on the analysis of the meanings of the phraseological units, an ideographic classification of phraseological units in English and French was created. According to it, all the phraseological units with the cosmic components are distributed in one semantic field “Man”. In this field, two main groups “Man as a Living and Rational Creature” and “Human Activity” have been revealed.

The social status of a person can be determined both low and high. Examples of phraseological units that give a characteristic of a person's low social status: a person who is no longer in demand in his field of

activity; *cover with the moon* – to sleep under the open sky (about the unemployed and of those having no shelter), i.e. not have a roof over your head. This idiom is used to characterize the unemployed and those without shelter. *Rising star* can be regarded as a characteristic of a successful person, his high social status.

English phraseological units give a negative assessment of a person's character, describing him as conceited or insane. So, *aim / level at the moon* (literally, *aiming / leveling at the moon*) is used in the meaning "to be vain, ambitious, to mark highly" and phraseological units a space cadet (literally a space cadet) is crazy. In the "Physical state" conceptual subgroup, only one phraseological unit was identified *to be in the sun / sunshine* – to be drunk.

The following subgroups were identified in the semantic group "Human Activities": "Activities without naming the action itself" and "Activity in a team". When characterizing a person's action, the complexity of the action itself (*ask / cry / wish for the moon* – "ask the moon from the sky", desire, demand the impossible; *reach for the stars* (to reach the stars) – to have high, hard-to-reach goals and ways to perform an action (*bless / thank one's stars* – to bless, thank your destiny; *follow one's star* – to follow your destiny, to fulfill what was destined by destiny. The image of the star is associated in English phraseology with fate.

From the analysis of phraseological units with cosmonym components having an anthropocentric characteristic, it can be concluded that the phraseological units characterizing human activity are rather numerous. This conclusion can be explained by emotional restraint and strict education of the representatives of the English-speaking world.

4.2 French Phraseological Units with Cosmonyms

In the French language, the dominating group of phraseological units refers to the characteristics of the person himself, i.e. his appearance, character traits, social status, intellectual abilities and emotional state. The second largest group describes the actions or activities of a person. The smaller part is distributed in the section "Independent of the person himself".

The range of emotions expressed by phraseological units with cosmonym components is quite extensive. With their help confusion, joy and sadness can be expressed. To express confusion, the *tomber de la lune* phraseologism (literally, fall from the moon) is used – to be completely at a loss, to fall from the moon. When describing a joyful state, the following phraseological units can be noted: *être au ciel* (lit. *be in the sky*) – to bliss, soar in the clouds; *être / ravi au septième / troisième ciel* (lit. *to be in the seventh / third heaven*) – to be in the top of bliss; *être dans une bonne lune* (lit. *to be in a good moon*) – to be in a good mood. Examples of phraseological units, such as *avoir des / ses lunes* (lit. *to have the moon*) – act up [30, p. 624]; *mal luné* is a badly-minded person show that cosmonyms can also be used to describe negative emotions.

In the field "Man as a living and rational creature" enter 31 phraseological units. The greatest number of them characterizes the emotional state of a person, his emotions.

As for the appearance of a person, the following examples of phraseological units in the French language describe the beauty of a person: *un soleil de beauté* (lit. "the sun of beauty") – a beauty; *beau comme un / le lever du soleil* (lit. beautiful as the sunrise) – beautiful as the morning dawn. In some other cases we may observe neutral assessment, for example, *fondre comme la cire au soleil* (lit. *melt like wax in the sun*) – melt like wax (about a person who is losing weight quickly) *piquer un soleil* (lit. *prick like the sun*) – flare up, turn red; *c'est une pleine lune* (lit. *this is the full moon*) – a face round like the moon.

As for the character traits of a person, they can be divided into two groups: positive and negative. The following phraseological units are used to express positive characteristics of a person: *aller dans la lune* (lit., *go to the moon*) to be a dreamer, to go to distant lands, to go to transcendental distances. Phraseological units *pêcheur de lune* (lit. *fisherman of the moon*) a visionary; *prometteur de lune* (lit. *man promising the moon*) a liar; *avoir la lune / un quart de lune dans la tête* (lit. *have a moon*) or *avoir beaucoup de lunes dans la tête* (lit. *have a lot of moons in the head*) be silly, frivolous; *être aussi lâche que la lune* (lit. *be as mean as the moon*) to be unreliable; *être comme la lune* (lit. *to be like the moon*) is a dupe and *un soleil de janvier* (lit. *the sun of January*) is a weakling, weak-willed person negatively characterize a person. It follows that most units with cosmonym components give a negative characteristic of a person.

In French phraseology, there are elements that characterize an individual's intellectual abilities and moral abilities: *bonne étoile* (lit. *good star*) is a good genius; *mauvaise étoile* (lit. *terrible star*) – an evil genius; *couillon comme la lune* (lit. *fool like the moon*) is an idiot; *aboyer / bayer à la lune* (lit. *barking at the moon*) – to make a fuss about trifles.

The phraseological units in both languages demonstrate similarities and differences in meanings, and they

have a different distribution in percentages according to semantic groups and subgroups. Thus, the subgroup "Emotional State and Emotions" is numerous in both languages. The phraseological units of this subgroup express different emotions (in English – "joy" (*be / jump over the moon*), "calm" (*as calm as a toad in the sun*), "anger" (*go into the orbit*) and "grief" (*moon something away*); in French – "joy" (*être / ravi au septième / troisième ciel*), "confusion" (*tomber de la lune*) and "sadness" (*avoir des / ses lunes*)). In both languages the subgroup "Appearance" includes the phraseological units describing the peculiarity of a person's face (in French – "*c'est une pleine lune*", in English – "*like a full moon*"). In French, unlike English, a positive assessment of the external data of a person is given. The "Social Status" subgroup has a negative assessment of a person's material state in French, while in English we can see a positive assessment: a description of a person with growing wealth.

In both languages the subgroup "Character Traits" condemns a conceited, cowardly and frivolous person. In English, a distinguishable subgroup "Physical State" (*to be in the sun / sunshine*) has been identified and in French – a distinguished subgroup is the subgroup "Intellectual Abilities" (*couillon comme la lune*).

In both languages, the group "Human Activities" has been distinguished, which was divided into "Characteristics of the Complexity of the Action", "Characteristics of the Method of Performing the Action", "Action Directed at the Other Person", "Family Relationships" and "Action Performed Independently". However, in English phraseology, the subgroups "Rates of the Committed Action" and "Characteristics of another Person's Behavior of" have been identified.

During the analysis, the group "Independent from the Person Himself" has been also singled out in both languages. In English and French there are phraseological units that characterize a person who believes in destiny. In English phraseology, with the help of cosmic components one can describe a person both successful and unlucky.

In addition, it has been found out that phraseological units with cosmic components are widely used to describe and characterize a person. However, the French phraseological picture of the world is richer on the data of phraseological units. In French, the component *la lune, the moon*, occurs rather often, which is explained by the romantic kind of the French themselves. In the English phraseology, the star component was used more often, since English navigators were guided by the stars during their travels.

5. CONCLUSION

In general, according to the results of a comparative analysis, it can be concluded that most phraseological units in the English language are concentrated in the "Human Activity" group, and in French – in the "Man as a Living and Rational Being" group. As it might be seen from the results of the comparative analysis, some trends in phraseological fields of groups and subgroups show that the attitude towards life between the British and the French is different. This conclusion can be explained by emotional restraint and strict education of the representatives of the English-speaking world. The British tend to speak less, but do more, so they are famous for their efficiency, dedication and tolerance. For the British, actions and deeds are more important, in contrast to the French. For the French, it is important to express their feelings and emotions and to share them with other people. However, they do not like to work and put a lot of effort to achieve their goals. These are the main features of phraseological units with cosmonym components having an anthropocentric characteristic in the English and French languages.

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