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## **LINGUOCULTURAL SPECIFICITY OF ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS WITH ZOONYMIC COMPONENTS**

**Abstract:** The present article is devoted to studying Russian and English phraseological units containing a zoonymic component. The phraseological fund of a language is closely connected with the national culture representing both its international constituent and its uniqueness.

The group of phraseological units under consideration is one of the most widely presented in the phraseological fund of the Russian and English languages. Animals symbolise various traits of human character, reflect this or that quality of a person that serves as a basis for creating of a phraseological unit.

This article describes the common features and the differences of the linguocultures under consideration which are identified through the definition and linguocultural analysis of phraseological units. The similarities are mostly explained by the common origin of phraseological units, and the differences are based on the dissimilarity and peculiarities of English and Russian peoples' ways of life, their traditions, customs, religion and geographical location.

**Keywords:** linguocultural specificity, phraseological unit, zoonymic component, connotation, meaning.

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## ЛИНГВОКУЛЬТУРНАЯ СПЕЦИФИКА ФРАЗЕОЛОГИЧЕСКИХ ЕДИНИЦ С КОМПОНЕНТОМ- ЗООНИМОМ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ И РУССКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ

**Аннотация:** Данная статья посвящена изучению русских и английских фразеологических единиц с компонентом-зоонимом. На современном этапе развития лингвистическая наука проявляет повышенный интерес к проблеме взаимосвязи языка и культуры. Каждый язык отражает особенности национальной культуры и менталитета народа, понимание которых может вызвать трудности у носителей других языков. Фразеологический фонд национального языка характеризуется высокой степенью национальной самобытности, являясь своеобразным кладезем знаний о культуре народа, поэтому именно фразеологизмы зачастую выступают материалом лингвокультурологических исследований.

Рассматриваемая нами группа фразеологизмов является одной из широко представленных в фразеологическом фонде английского и русского языков. В данных фразеологических единицах животные символизируют различные положительные и отрицательные черты характера, те или иные личные качества человека, что является основой для создания фразеологизма.

Наше исследование нацелено на описание сходств и различий, сопоставляемых лингвокультур, выявленных с помощью дефиниционного и лингвокультурного анализа фразеологических единиц, содержащих компонент-зооним. Сходства в большинстве своём обусловлены общим происхождением фразеологических единиц, тогда как различия основываются на отличиях и особенностях быта, традиций и обычаев, религии и географическом положении народов.

**Ключевые слова:** лингвокультурная специфика, фразеологическая единица, компонент-зооним, коннотация, значение.

Language is a real treasure of each nation, that contains information about its ancestors, experience of previous generations and links the past of the nation with the present times and future. Language cannot be separated from the national culture, it reflects all the changes and peculiarities that happened during the language existence [1].

The history of linguocultural study begins with the ideas of Wilhelm von Humboldt, who believed that the cultural originality and structure of the language are interconnected and complement each other [5]. In a number of works by prominent linguists (Maslova (2001), Shanskiy (1979), Telia (1996), Ter-Minasova (2001)) the fact that the most important translator of cultural originality in the language is a phraseological unit is highlighted. For example, Prof. Shanskiy writes: «In the language, in its lexical and phraseological fund the national character, mental quality, its history and culture can be found» [9]. This thought was also approved by foreign scholars, that is why we are interested in the linguocultural specificity from the phraseological point of view.

Idiomatic expressions were mostly created by ordinary people, thus they are closely connected to everyday problems, interests and routine of those people [8]. Our forefathers tended to characterise their behaviour, feelings, states, appearance through animal images, as they believed in kinship between human beings and beasts. It explains the fact that the zoonymic layer of any language is one of the oldest. The first calendar with the names of animals appeared in the Ancient East, and people believed that a child born in the year of a particular animal inherits specific features of this animal. Moreover, even primitive tribes chose an animal as a symbol of their community and made it sacral. That is why the comparisons, sayings, proverbs and idioms that have a zoonymic component can be found in many languages. Many denominations of animals have become steady metaphors.

Before speaking about the practical examples and results of our research, we should state the definition of a «phraseological unit», as this topic is still disputable among linguists. Most scholars agree that the most common features of a phraseological unit are semantic indivisibility, shortness and figurativeness. Prof. Shanskiy writes «phraseological unit is a ready-made, reproducible unit, the content and form of which are fixed» [9]. Prof. Akhmanova considers that in a phraseological unit the meaning of the whole expression prevails over the meaning of each component [3]. But in English linguistics the term «phraseological unit» is not commonly used, the term «idiom» is preferable there. Let us clarify if

the difference between these linguistic phenomena is crucial. The definition provided by Longman dictionary presents the idiom as «a group of words that has a special meaning that is different from the ordinary meaning of each separate word». Thus, we may say that the discussed problem is more or less the same.

The definition of the term «zonym» is also a disputable issue. Most researchers give the following definition: «Zonym is a name of an animal, that is given by people» [7] or «lexico-semantic variations of words, that stand for the generic name of an animal» [6] or «a denomination of an animal proper». In our research we use a combination of these definitions.

We distinguish 5 main groups of phraseological units according to the type of the zonymic component:

1. Mammals:
  - domestic: sheep, dog, cat, pig, cow, horse, goat, hare, donkey;
  - wild: fox, bear, wolf, lion, rat, ape;
2. Birds:
  - domestic: chicken, goose, duck, cock;
  - wild: bird, sparrow, crow, lark, owl, pigeon, hawk;
3. Reptiles: crocodile, snake/serpent:
4. Fish, arthropods: fish, crayfish
5. Insects: bee, fly.

The most productive semes belong to the domestic mammals group as people tend to mention animals familiar to them, which they can see quite often in their everyday life. The names of any kind of exotic or mythical animals are exploited significantly rarely. This fact is reflected in both languages.

What is more, when using any animal name, people used to note mostly negative features and transfer them to people's characters. That is why the number of phraseological units with negative connotation prevails over the number idioms with positive connotation. Also, the fact that some zoosemes have only negative connotation in both languages must be pointed out.

For example, phraseological units with such components as «ass» (or «donkey»), «goat», «rat» are surely to have negative meaning both in the Russian and English languages.

Compare the connotation of the seme «rat» in two phraseological units (Russian, English):

«*SMELL A RAT*» *informal*

*COMMON If you smell a rat, you believe that something is wrong in a particular situation, especially that someone is trying to deceive you or harm you.*

*Once Caldere discovers the money is missing, he's going to **smell a rat**, isn't he? If only I'd thought it through, I'd have **smelt a rat** straight away and never touched the proposal.*

**«КАНЦЕЛЯРСКАЯ КРЫСА»**

*Бездушный бюрократ, чинуша, формалист. Имеется в виду, что лицо (X) является мелким (как правило) чиновником-крючкомтвором, погружённым в бумаги, не имеющим духовных интересов, которые ему заменяют служебные инструкции. Говорится с неодобрением.*

*И в небесной канцелярии есть свои канцелярские крысы.*

It may be clearly seen that the semes have negative meaning in both languages. At the same time, the negative features represented by the zoonym in question differ in the two linguocultures that defines their specificity.

Analysing the phraseological fund of the English and Russian languages we may come to the conclusion that meanings, connotations and images that are presented with the help of the zoonymic component may be unique and at the same time universal for each language, they represent the cultural identity of nations. Some similar concepts have different meanings and connotations in each language; some are productive in Russian and non-productive in English and vice versa. All these facts prove that international and unique linguocultural components can be found in any language.

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