

METAPHOR AS THE BASIS OF THE IMAGERY OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS, CONTAINING THE NAMES OF HOUSEHOLD ITEMS, IN THE ENGLISH AND GERMAN LANGUAGES

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the comparative analysis of the semantic processes forming metaphorical meanings of phraseological units (PUs), containing the names of household items in English and German. The relevance of the research is determined by the insufficient knowledge of the problem of the really functioning images of the consciousness of representatives of English and German ethnic groups. The study allows to identify similarities and differences between the two phraseological systems, helps to better understand the mechanisms of the language development, and the relationship of the language with thinking. The vast majority of PUs in their basis contains an image, the metaphorical rethinking of which creates the meaning of the PU (the image and the pre-image). In the process of the metaphorization some semantic features of the denotate are actualized and others are reduced. The choice of this or that image – the motive of the metaphor – is connected not only with the intention of the subject, but also with his worldview and with the system of stereotypical images and standards belonging to his world picture.

Key words: phraseological unit, imagery, metaphor, figurative metaphor, image-metaphor, anthropocentrism.

1 Introduction

PUs belong to the most complex semantic group of language units. One of the characteristic features of PUs is that the general meaning of these figurative expressions cannot be understood from the simple sum of its components (Zhukov, 1978).

In recent years, the phrasicon of different languages has often become the object of attention of researchers (Zhukov, 1978; Bilyalova, 2018; Kunin, 1972; Gilyazeva & Bazarova, 2018). Such important tasks as determination of PU, methods for their study, the system character of phraseology, classification of PUs (V.V. Vinogradov, N.N. Amosova, V.L. Arkhangel'sky, A.V. Kunin, V.N. Teliya) were solved. The study of phraseological semantics and basic semantic categories in phraseology were studied in the works of Yu. D. Apresyan, L.I. Roizenzon, I.I. Chernysheva, A.V. Kunin, E.F. Arsentieva. A large number of works are devoted to PU studies in comparative aspect. In connection with the development of such branches of linguistics as cognitive linguistics, genderology, linguoculturology, PUs became the subject of research in accordance with the paradigms of these branches.

The study of the phrasicon of any language allows us to solve two main tasks: 1) studying phraseology as a fact of modern literary language, we learn to think in images of native speakers of the language; 2) studying phraseology as a reflection of national realities, we comprehend the uniqueness of the culture of the people (Cherdantseva, 1988).

The ethno-cultural value of a PU can be revealed through the identification of cultural meanings in the semantics of PUs, that is, myths, stereotypes, customs, etc.

The aim of the study is to determine the role of metaphor as the basis of the imagery of PUs, containing the names of household items in English and German.

We consider metaphor first of all as a semantic phenomenon – a special type of derivative-nominative meaning that contains an assessment of the phenomena of reality. The main feature of the metaphor is its semantic duality: there are two plans of meaning – figurative and direct.

2 Research Methodology

The choice of methods of linguistic analysis is determined by the specificity of the material and the purpose of the research. Along with the descriptive method, the elements of logical, comparative,

component analysis are applied in the context of problems of anthropological linguistics.

The material of the study consists of 143 English PUs and 164 German PUs, selected by the method of continuous sampling from monolingual and bilingual phraseological dictionaries (Cowie, 1993; Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2000; Steffens, 1992; Herzog, 1993).

3 Study Results and Their Discussion

Human consciousness, anthropocentric in its nature, is able to think things, natural phenomena or abstract concepts as “objectified” as persons or living beings possessing anthropomorphic qualitative, dynamic and value properties: *as round as a barrel* – about a thick person, *a wet blanket* – a person who acts as a chiller on others, *as lean as a rake* – very thin, *die Löffel spitzen* – (word-based translation: prick up spoons) – prick ears, *zu blöd/dumm, einen Eimer Wasser umzustößen* – (word-based translation: too stupid to pour a bucket of water) very stupid, clumsy, etc.

The addressee's factor obliges the creator of the metaphor to predict its understanding when choosing the features of similarity in the already named reality and the reality that receives this name. W. Quine wrote that there is nothing more fundamental for thinking and language than our sense of similarity (Quine, 1977). At the same time, the creator of the metaphor appeals to the figurative-associative complexes of these realities. For example, when the German fairy-tale character Frau Holle knocks out her feather-bed, it snows all over the country. The PU “Frau Holle schüttelt ihre Betten [die Federn] aus”, which means “a thick snow”, is created on the basis of this image.

The English PU “a wet blanket” means “a person acting coolly on others”. The imaginative-motivational basis of this PU is the extinguishing the fire with a damp blanket.

It is generally known that the basis of metaphor is the mental operation of comparison. In linguistic works it is common to call what is compared with something, the prototype of comparison, and what the prototype is compared with, what it is likened to, its image (Gilyazeva & Bazarova, 2018). The language is arranged so that for one pre-image there are a number of images. For example, in the phraseological field “surprise”: Engl. *put a wet blanket on, jerk the rug out from under smb.*; Ger. *jmdn. aus dem Tisch hauen, jmdn. vom Stuhl hauen*.

It should be noted that the lexical content of PUs in the compared languages is different, which indicates a different mentality. For example, to express the meaning of “reprimand” Englishmen use to “call smb. on the carpet” – to give a scolding to someone, the core component of which is the lexeme “carpet”, whereas in German the prototype of the comparison becomes “cover” – “der Deckel” – *jmdm. eins auf den Deckel geben* – make a sharp reprimand.

The similarity of the denotations (image and pre-image) in the designation of similarity (compare, fiction) may be partial and random, which can be “thought out, imagined and reinterpreted” (Nikitin, 1979), not motivated, as in the case of English PU “cry cupboard” – to be very hungry, Ger. *jmdm. brennt der Kittel* – to be out of his mind. However, in the vast majority of the studied PUs, it is adequate to the relations between the objects of comparison, based on the knowledge of the internal form of the names of comparison.

In England, there was a custom to give a newborn a silver spoon for happiness, and those who are always lucky, and now they say that he was “born with a silver spoon in his mouth”.

The PU “*make a spoon or spoil a horn*” means “everything or nothing” and goes back to the practice of making spoons from horns of cattle or sheep.

In German we find the PU “*etwas fällt unter den Tisch*” (word-based translation: something falls under the table), where the image of a product that has fallen from the table and can not be eaten extends to any fallen thing that is considered lost. This PU makes sense – something disappears without a trace, something is wasted.

The PU “*das Tisch Tuch zwischen sich und jmdm. zerschneiden*” (word-based translation: to break the tablecloth between smb.) means “to finally break up with smb.” The denotative sememe “break” bearing the meaning of “with a sharp movement a jerk is divided into parts, to violate the integrity of smth.” rethinks expands importance to the level of relations between people and it makes sense “to stop, interrupt with smb. communication, attitude, acquaintance”.

The PU “*das wird er sich (nicht) hinter den Spiegel stecken*” (word-based translation: he'll (not) put it behind his mirror) – that he will not cherish. In this PU a denotative situation is realized, connected with the German custom to put letters of only pleasant content behind the mirror so that one end of it comes out for a quick detection of the letter. Based on this reality, the meaning arose: be proud, cherish something good, pleasant.

Arising on the metaphorical basis of the phraseological image, or, according to V. N. Teliya, a figurative metaphor, expresses the connotative nature of the evaluative sign, is closely related to the evaluative metaphor, in the system of which we will look for the figurativeness of phraseology (Teliya, 1996). The phraseological image is formed on the basis of ideas about one or another reality of the surrounding world.

The vast majority of PUs in their basis contains an image, metaphorical rethinking of which creates the meaning of the PU (the image and the pre-image). For example, *as big as saucers* – goes back to the shape of a round flat vessel and means “surprised eyes”.

The evaluative meaning of the word in its metaphorical use is based on three components related to each other: the associative potential of the word, its internal form, the emotive attitude of the speaker to the object of reality. They provide the expressive function and impact of the assessments-connotations, conditioned by dependence of the word on the context, by a strong orientation of the value attitude on the author's emotional state.

Semantic “convergence and repulsion” unite seemingly opposite components revealing the ironic position of the author of the PU (collective or individual), telling about the strangeness of the world: Engl. *a dead pan* – inexpressive person, *a cup of tea* – person, type, subject, *be in the barrel* – to get the bounce; Ger. *da wird der Hund in der Pfanne verrückt* (word-based translation: the dog in the pan will go crazy) – it's unheard of, *ich fresse einen Besenstiel* (word-based translation: I'll eat a broom stick) – I swear, *noch in Abrahams Wurstkessel sein* – not yet born, etc.

The evaluative metaphor brings together the world of people and the world of things, demonstrating their intersection and mutual influence, inextricable and bizarre connections, comic and tragic relationship.

The meaning of the PU “draw a curtain on smth.” is to do not betray smth. to gloss over smth. In the German language there is no an equivalent PU. However, in the dictionary “Duden. Redewendungen und sprichwörtliche Redensarten” (1998), we meet the PU *den Schleier des Vergessens über etwas breiten* (to spread a blanket over smth.) which means “to force yourself to forget about smth.” (Steffens, 1992). The figurative components of the given PUs do not coincide. However, it becomes obvious that these PUs are synonymous. Such interactions are related to the specific perception of the surrounding world by speakers,

reflected in various aspects of linguistic meaning, and above all in the evaluative metaphor.

4 Results

The study provides a comparative analysis of the features of the semantics of phraseological units containing the names of household items in two genetically related languages – English and German.

Semantic analysis of the internal form of PUs, containing the names of household items, in the English and German languages revealed the structure of its meaning: the significative-denotative macrocomponent, reflecting the relationship of meaning and concept, and the connotative macrocomponent, reflecting the semantic essence, which expresses the emotive-evaluative and stylistically marked attitude of the subject of speech to reality.

The analyzed material demonstrates the existence of complex relations between the meaning of a phraseological unit and the meaning of a word as its component. Therefore, the description of semantics can be adequate only when referring to phraseological units through the prism of their lexical composition. When creating a phraseologism, a person relies on his intentions, because he wants to convey the concept more succinctly and figuratively. He chooses a token, which takes a large place in his life.

5 Conclusion

Being a component of a phraseological unit, a household item plays an important role in the system of language and culture, helping to identify the national and cultural characteristics of a certain people.

Comparative analysis of the figurative metaphor underlying the analyzed PUs, containing the names of household items, allows us to draw the following conclusions:

1. The selection and parallel description of PUs, containing the names of household items in English and German languages allowed to establish the common features (1) in full and partial concurrence of the image, (2) in the participation of PU components that make up the internal form, (3) in the presence of general cultural knowledge, standards. This description defines the cultural identity in the vision of the world, embodied in its imaginative representation, considered in the PU, emphasizes the universality of the structures of thinking in the representation of the world by human consciousness.
2. National identity was established by the example of the following phenomena: 1) differences in the phraseological activity of the basic components; 2) mismatch the discrepancy of phraseological imagery with the coincidence of meanings; 3) the absence of one or another unit in one of the languages. The national-cultural features have a direct explanation in differences and are caused by intra- and extralinguistic factors: historical, social and economic development, geographical position of countries, their national culture. The prototype situations underlying the PUs of the English and German languages are generally similar, but, coinciding in general, they differ in nuances, details and describe certain traditions, details of life and culture, historical customs peculiar only to Englishmen or Germans.

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