

WUT 2020

10th International Conference “Word, Utterance, Text: Cognitive, Pragmatic and Cultural Aspects”

MYTHOLOGICAL LANGUAGE WORLDVIEW AS THE ETHNIC BASIS OF MODERN ENGLISH WORD USE

Evgeniya A. Damman (a)*

*Corresponding author

(a) South Ural State University (National Research University), Chelyabinsk, Russia, evgeniya_damman@mail.ru

Abstract

This article is devoted to the study of the mythological component in the English-language worldview. In recent years, much attention has been paid by linguists to the problems of the language and culture of a particular ethnic group. The article pays attention to such concepts as a conceptual and linguistic worldview and their relationship. The purpose of this work is to determine the mythological language worldview, which acts as the basis of modern word usage. Mythopoetic mentality is considered as the basis of the language worldview. The ways of expressing mythological concepts, their changes and impact on modern English usage are the subject of this study. The lexical units of the English language that we selected for analysis are studied in terms of their origin, the presence of semantic change and its type. Classical mythology and national mythological ideas form the core of the mythological language worldview, reflected in modern English. Thus, classical mythology is represented by a large number of distinguished units and affects the English language more than any other mythological system. A significant part of all analyzed lexical units does not have semantic changes recorded in the dictionary. However, most of the studied words and phrases have undergone semantic changes that are represented differently in the English language: either by an additional meaning within the main meaning, or by a separate word or phrase without a fixed connection with the original mythology.

2357-1330 © 2020 Published by European Publisher.

Keywords: Mythologeme, lexical units with a mythological component of meaning, semantic changes, secondary nomination.



This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported License, permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

1. Introduction

The problems of the relationship between language and culture remain one of the most urgent problems of modern linguistics. One of these problems is the use of lexical units of the English language in a mythological and religious cultural context. The first form of thinking by which the model of peace was formed was mythopoetic mentality.

1.1. The Concept of Myth and Mythological Thinking

Myths are seen as specific narratives of gods or superhuman beings involved in emergencies or circumstances at indefinite times. The form in the myth is identical to the content. Makovskiy (2014) defines two main patterns characteristic of primitive thinking: lack of causality and relationship of past and present. Myth as a conceptual worldview includes a set of individual and ethnic knowledge about the objects of reality and represents one or another at the level of national knowledge about the world. Perceiving and structuring the world with the help of mythological thinking, a person tried to determine some laws and bring the incomprehensible world to a certain norm and system (Aidarkhan, 2018; Khayrullina & Berger, 2018; Makovskiy, 2014; Mechkovskaya, 1998; Stavitskiy, 2019; Syamili & Rekha, 2018). Nominalism is crucial for the mythical mentality: names (nouns, noun phrases) that represent the core of the mythological worldview and reflect archetypal images are realizations of mythological images, that are usually called mythologemes. Mythological thinking is an integral part of thinking, and its implementation is carried out in myths and mythologemes that make up the mythological conceptual sphere of the national-cultural worldview.

1.2. Mythologeme as the Central Unit of the Mythological Worldview

There is no consensus among scholars on the term mythologeme. Makovskiy (2014) defines mythologemes as the unity of several concepts that are inseparable from each other in terms of magical thought about primitive man. Bykova and Rakitina (1999) consider the mythologeme as an actualized meaning of the mytheme. The significant structure of the mythologeme contains signs of denotative and connotative aspects. Its actualization is based on the transition of the denotative or connotative characteristics pass from the signifier to the signified, so the connotation penetrates into the denotative meaning of the mytheme. According to Pitina (2002), a mythologeme is a discrete unit of collective consciousness, a concept that reflects the objects of possible worlds, which is verbally represented in the national memory of native speakers. The verbal way of representing the mythologeme is carried out using dictionary units, lexemes and word combinations used in the direct and figurative meaning. In cases of secondary nomination, various external and internal characteristics of the mythologeme appear, giving reality to the initially ideal images. Krutalevich (2016) defines a mythologeme as a concrete interpretation of the universal model of the collective unconscious possessing such features as retrospectivity, and regional and ethnic special character. A mythologeme is a meaningful unit, stored in the ethnic memory, which reflects the cultural features in the particular language worldview (Ivanov, 2019; Kayumova, 2019; Kleymentova, 2019; Stoyanova, 2018).

Mythologemes can belong to a culture in general and reflect the general features of mythological thinking that have been preserved in modern society (e. g: giant, fairy, dwarf) due to the mutual influence of cultures and stereotypical reflection of the unreal in all peoples (Rettig, 2017; Rubert, 2015; Sushiy, 2016; Vorob'eva, 2018). Such universal, understandable mythologemes are called international. International mythologemes represent only a part of the mythological conceptual sphere. In a specific mythological worldview, international mythologemes acquire specific characteristics and vary depending on the specific linguistic and cultural situation.

2. Problem Statement

In order to determine the mythological language worldview as the basis of modern word usage in English, we analysed the English vocabulary. Since the mythologeme is the main linguistic unit of mythological representations, the objects of research were units that contain some element that can refer the unit to mythology. Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture (1999) is subject to continuous sampling. Out of 80,000 lexical entries, 374 lexical units were selected that contain a mythological element. Geographical names and some other proper names (for example, entries marked as trademarks) are excluded from the analysis because their origin is not clear and is not specified. However, derivatives (for example, *dragonfly* < *dragon*, *fiendish* < *fiend*, *nymphet* < *nymph*) and articles that contain either direct (for example, *Janus in Roman mythology, the god of gates and doorways and of new beginnings*. <...> The word “January” comes from its name, so the word “January” is included in the range of lexical units analysed), or indirect reference to mythological units (for example, *Achilles tendon or fairy lights*, which have an obvious connection with the mythologemes “Achilles” and “fairy”, respectively, although this is not noted in the dictionary), were taken into account together with units directly borrowed from myths and serving as a source for analysis.

3. Research Questions

The main aspects of the analysis are:

1. To determine the origin of the mythological component of the modern English language.
2. To consider the types of English mythological lexical units with semantic changes.
3. To define the semantic changes of the mythologemes in contemporary English.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of our research is to analyse the mythological and linguistic worldview in order to determine the cases of modern word usage in the English language. The object of the study is modern English lexical units, which in some way represent elements of the mythological English-language worldview.

5. Research Methods

The research material is presented by words and phrases extracted from *Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture* (Longman, 1999), *English-Russian Dictionary of Culturally-Marked Words* (Tarkhanova & Philippenko, 2003), the number of which is 374 lexical units. To effectively achieve the goals of this work, such research methods as the continuous sampling method, the method of dictionary definitions, the historical and etymological method, and elements of statistical analysis are used.

6. Findings

Most of the modern lexical units in question contain proper names taken from myths. One of the main aspects of the analysis is to determine the origin of the selected lexical units.

6.1. The origin of the mythological component of the modern English language

The results concerning the origin of units that reflect the mythological worldview are presented in the Table 01 below.

Table 01. The origin of the mythological component (in the modern English language)

Origin	Quantity	%
Classical Mythology (Greek+Roman)	223	59,63%
Indo-European mythology	106	28,34%
Scandinavian mythology	13	3,48%
Oriental mythology	11	2,93%
Hinduism	8	2,14%
Miscellaneous including:		3,48%
Jewish mythology	2	
Egyptian mythology	2	
Indian mythology	6	

1. The largest share (59.63%) belongs to Roman and Greek mythological ideas, which are traditionally united as **Classical mythology**. This fact can be explained by the popularity of Greek and Roman myths in the world as a result of the great attention paid in recent centuries to the study of classical languages. This group consists mainly of:

- a) different gods (*Aphrodite, Apollo, Zeus, Mercury, Juno, Jupiter*, etc.);
- b) heroes (*Achilles, Hector, Hercules, Jason*, etc.);
- c) their exploits (*Androcles and the Lion, golden fleece, the Augean stables*, etc.);
- d) various derivatives (*Amazonian, narcissism, nymphet, Saturday*, etc.) and

e) various derived concepts as in the form of separate words (**fury** 1 *very great anger* 2 *wildly excited state* 3 *old-fashion fml a fierce angry woman or girl*; **grace** *a fine and attractive quality in movement or form*; **volcano** *a mountain with a crater at the top, and often others on the sides, through which lava, steam, gases etc, sometimes escape with explosive force*) and phrases (*Achilles' tendon, the Midas touch, Oedipus complex* etc).

2. The second in number (28.34%) is the group of **Indo-European mythological ideas**, referred to as native with a variety of fairy creatures both good and evil (*banshee, gnome, hobgoblin, kelpie, sylph*, etc.) which is but natural, since these ideas are national and deeply penetrated into the language. There are many derivatives in this group: a single word can give rise to up to 4 derivatives (e. g., *demon* has the following derivatives: *demoniacal, demoniac, demoniacally, demonic, demonically*) or up to several derivatives and derivative concepts (e. g., *fairy – fairyland, fairytale adj, fairy godmother, fairy lights, fairy tale (story)*).

3. Next is **Scandinavian mythology** (3.48%), i.e. ancient Scandinavian legends (*Asgard, Odin, Loki, Kraken, basilisk, Valhalla*, etc.). Much of this mythology of Indo-European origin took shape in Germanic Europe between 1000 BC and our era. The Vikings were northern neighbours of the British and their mythology consequently influenced the worldview of the British and penetrated into English.

4. A small number of mythological concepts reflected in the English dictionary stock include the elements of:

a) **Oriental mythology** (2.93% are heroes and stories from Arab Nights: *Ali Baba, Sinbad, the Roc, the Old Man of the Sea, open sesame*, etc.);

b) **Hinduism** (2.14% – *Vishnu, avatar, Kali, Krishna, Brahma*, etc.);

c) some others mentioned as miscellaneous (*golem, Lilith* – Jewish, *Isis, Osiris* – Egyptian, *Quetzalcoatl* – Native American; *Moloch, zombie, Mithras*).

To sum up, Classical mythology is the main source of the mythological component, it constitutes the greater part and in terms of mythology affects English more than any other mythological system. The Indo-European element is also of great importance, while other groups are less significant and may be considered minor.

6.2. Types of English mythological lexical units with semantic changes

Within a mythological text, mythologemes function in their primary meaning. In non-mythological texts, they appear as the result of “poetic thought”, as a unit of secondary nomination – a symbol, an image, a metaphor. In this case, an image is used as a means of explanation, and only some features are used (as compared with the mythological way of perception, when the image is completely transferred into the meaning).

In a neo-mythological text, the mythologeme loses those characteristics that are due to the originality of mythological thought – verity and genuineness. It is no longer a form of knowledge storage, since there is no denotatum in the environment. A mythologeme retains such features as locality, ethnic connotation, sign characteristics, and affectiveness, and acquires some new ones, i.e., symbolism and figurativeness.

Naturally, this change occurs in the course of time. We are interested, first of all, in studying the change of meaning within mythologemes. Therefore, it is necessary to dwell on the semantic changes in the vocabulary.

There is no unanimity between the scholars about the types and number of semantic changes. We use the classification of semantic changes, namely: widening of meaning, narrowing of meaning, shift of meaning, deterioration and degeneration of meaning, reclamation or improvement of meaning, hyperbole, euphemism, metonymy, metaphor.

First of all, all selected lexical units were classified based on the presence of any semantic change registered in the dictionary. As a result of this analysis, a significant part of all units do not appear to have semantic changes registered in *Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture*, namely 167 dictionary entries, which comprise about 44.65% of the total number of initially selected units. The detailed analysis results with the number of entries from each source group and their proportions are presented in Table 02.

Table 02. Lexical Units without Semantic Changes

Origin	Quantity	%
Units with semantic change	207	56%
Classical Mythology	99	26%
Indo-European mythology (native)	34	9%
Scandinavian mythology	11	3%
Oriental mythology	9	2%
Hinduism	8	2%
Miscellaneous	8	2%

As can be seen from Table 02 above, the main part of the selected lexical units contains a certain semantic change. Semantic change is registered in different ways in the dictionary. As a result of the analysis, we consider it appropriate to separate the following types of lexical units with semantic changes:

1. Derived concepts with semantic changes registered: 1) after explanation (as a secondary meaning); 2) before explanation (as the primary meaning); 3) within the major meaning; 4) without explanation.
2. Semantic change registered in the mythologeme: 1) after explanation (as a secondary meaning); 2) within the major meaning; 3) before explanation (as the primary meaning); 4) within the major meaning.
3. Derivative.

All types of the above mentioned lexical units with semantic change can be found within the origin of groups of Classical and Indo-European mythology. These mythological systems demonstrate greater parts of the units within these groups have some semantic change registered in the dictionary. Therefore, these mythologemes have deeply penetrated into the English language, got assimilated into it and given rise to a number of new lexical units.

This is evidenced by the fact that in the group of classical mythology, most of the units with semantic changes belong to derivatives (59 units):

aphrodisiac *n, adj* (a medicine, drug etc) causing sexual excitement;

chimerical *adj* often derog. imaginary, fanciful.

Quantity-wise semantic changes fixed within entries describing mythologemes (42 entry) follow the derivatives. The change is recorded in different ways, indicating the degree of frequency in speech and assimilation in English:

- Semantic change registered after interpretation as a secondary value (20 units):

chimera, -maera *n* 1 an imaginary terrible female creature, made up of parts of different animals, which breathes fire 2 a dream that can never become true; unreal fancy.

- Semantic change registered after explanation within major meaning (7 units):

Hercules in ancient Roman stories, a hero known for his very great strength and for performing 12 very difficult and dangerous jobs known as **the Labours of Hercules**. People sometimes use the name 'Hercules' to describe a man who is physically very strong.

- Semantic change registered before explanation as a primary meaning (10 units):

gorgon *n* 1 *infml* an ugly angry-looking woman whose appearance causes fear 2 (usually *cap.*) any of three imaginary sisters in ancient Greek stories who had snakes on their heads instead of hair, and turned anyone who looked at them to stone.

- Semantic change registered before explanation within major meaning (5 units):

amazon *n* (often *can.*) a tall strong woman, especially one who likes sports. In classical mythology, the Amazons were a nation of fierce fighting women.

Then there is a group of derived concepts (21 entries) when the semantic change is not interpreted (12 units) in the dictionary entry:

narcissus *n pl -suses or -si* a white or yellow spring flower, such as the daffodil;

when the meaning with a semantic change is placed as a separate primary meaning or before explanation:

Electra complex *n* according to the ideas of Sigmund Freud, the unconscious sexual desire of a girl for her father, combined with hating her mother. In ancient Greek stories, Electra helped her brother Orestes to kill their mother Clytemnestra, because Clytemnestra had murdered her father Agamemnon.

There is one example of a derived concept registered as a separate secondary meaning: **Morpheus** *n* 1 in Greek mythology, the god of dreams and sleep 2 **in the arms of Morpheus** lit asleep.

The group of Indo-European mythologemes is characterised by units which have become an integral part of the English language. It is in this group that we find the largest proportion of units with semantic change in various forms. Among them there are many derivatives (e. g., *fiend* – *fiendish*, *fiendishly*, *fiendishness*; *ghoul* – *ghoulish*, *ghoulishness*, etc.), mythologemes with semantic changes fixed in the dictionary entry either as separate primary or secondary meaning (1), or before / after explanation (2):

(1) **sylph** *n* 1 a graceful slender woman or girl 2 according to old stories, a spirit of the air;

(2) **corn dolly** *n* a figure made from straw, used for decoration. Corn dollies were originally made in many societies to give thanks for the harvest and to wish luck for the next year's crop.

As for other groups of origin, they are characterised by a small number of words with semantic changes. Therefore, the lexical units of these groups were only slightly assimilated in English.

Two derivatives of the Scandinavian group have penetrated very deeply into the English language, so that nowadays the connection between derivatives and their sources is poorly perceived: **Thursday** – on behalf of Thor and **Wednesday** – on behalf of Woden. This fact can be explained by the historical period when these derivatives were formed: in the old English period, the cult of Scandinavian gods influenced the English language and two days were dedicated to these gods.

Semantic changes in other minor groups are represented by derived concepts (1), additional meanings in dictionary entries (2), and derivatives (3):

(1) **Aladdin's Cave** *n* a place that contains a large variety of interesting, valuable, or exciting things;

(2) **avatar** *n* 1 the appearance of a Hindu god, especially Vishnu, in human or animal form: Krishna was an avatar of the god Vishnu 2 a person who represents (an idea etc) completely; embodiment;

(3) **shamanism** *n* any system of belief in shamans and the world of spirits.

Summing up, we can say that semantic changes are expressed in English in different ways from an additional meaning within the major one to a separate word or phrase without any fixed connection with the original mythologeme. At the same time, this diversity is typical only of the two most numerous groups of origin: Classical mythology and Indo-European mythology. In addition, semantic changes are usually registered as derivatives (99 words) or as a secondary meaning within a dictionary entry (45 words). Thus, the English language is more influenced by mythologemes from classical and native English myths, and these words and phrases have become an integral and productive part of the language.

6.3. Semantic Changes in Mythologemes in Modern English

The secondary nomination of the mythologeme is defined as metaphor, although in fact different types of semantic changes are registered within a mythologeme. However, metaphor remains the main form of expression of the secondary nomination, i.e. the most frequent type of semantic change in mythologemes is metaphor. The detailed results of the analysis regarding the types of semantic changes are illustrated in Table 03.

Table 03. Semantic Changes in Mythologemes in Modern English

Types of Semantic Change	Quantity	%
No Semantic Change	167	44%
Metaphor	153	40%
Metonymy	16	4%
Semantic Shift	30	9%
Widening of meaning	5	1,3%
Narrowing of meaning	2	0,5%
Euphemism	3	0,7%
Hyperbole	2	0,5%

Metaphorical change of the meaning occurred in 153 words and phrases, which proves that the secondary nomination of a mythologeme is primarily metaphorical. Myths have always produced strong influence on people; nowadays this effect can be partially preserved in resorting to a stylistic device as metaphor, which is one of the favorite and easily understandable to be used in everyday speech, which as a result is fixed in the dictionary. Usually a mythologeme acquires more abstract meaning:

ambrosia *n* [U] *lit something with delightful taste or smell (from classical mythology, where ambrosia was the food of the gods).*

In many cases the metaphor emphasises a particular characteristic and attributes it to a person:

satyr **1** *(in ancient Greek literature) a god usually represented as half human and half goat* **2** *(lit) a man with very strong sexual desires.*

An ordinary situation, which is similar to some events in myths, can be described with the help of a phrase borrowed from the myth, and the expression itself, in turn, becomes more abstract:

apple of discord *n* *a cause of argument (from the story in classical mythology in which a golden apple with 'For the Fairest' written on it causes an argument between the goddesses Hera, Aphrodite.*

As for the metaphorical meanings of words and phrases from the Indo-European group, they mostly refer to a different notion or a human being; there are no mythologemes in this group by origin based on the plot of a myth and, therefore, there are no new meanings describing the situation:

dwarf *n pl. dwarfs or dwarves* **1** a small imaginary manlike creature **2** old-fash a person, animal, or plant of much less than usual size.

The dominance of the metaphorical changes in the meanings of mythologemes is also supported by the fact that this type of semantic change occurs in almost all minor groups:

Oriental: **open sesame** *n [(to)]* often humor a completely certain way to a desired end that would otherwise be beyond one's reach (from the magic words used for opening a hidden door in the Arabian Nights stories);

Hindu: **avatar** *n* **1** the appearance of a Hindu god, especially Vishnu, in human or animal form. **2** a person who represents (an idea etc) completely; embodiment;

Miscellaneous: **zombie**, **-bi** *n* **1** derog someone who moves very slowly, behaves in a lifeless way etc **2** (according to certain African and Caribbean religions) a dead person who is made to move by magic.

The transfer of the word from the usage in dealing with the gods to everyday events and phenomena has resulted in metaphorical change with some degree of pejoration:

libation *n* **1** an offering of wine to a god, especially in ancient Greece and Rome **2** pomp or humor a drink of wine or other alcohol.

Metaphoric change in the semantics often refers to a word outside the basic dictionary, making it either formal or informal. These lexical units become linguistic cultural markers that reflect the mythological worldview in modern English. Therefore, the stock of *English-Russian Dictionary of Culturally-Marked Words* has been analysed on the same basis as *Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture*. Since the former dictionary is a specialised one, there have been some differences compared with the dictionary of common vocabulary. 56 entries have been selected, all of which registered a semantic change, namely metaphor. Some words from *Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture* are not included in the analysis, although they have been selected from *English-Russian Dictionary of Culturally-Marked Words*. This is due to two reasons: either the word is not fixed (1), or there is no direct or indirect reference to the mythology (2) in the dictionary of common vocabulary:

(1) **Rhadamanthine** – (adj) similar or referring to Radamantus (judge of the underground kingdom from Greek mythology), strict and impartial;

(2) **Stygian** - (adj) stygian, referring to the Stix River, gloomy-minded.

This is because *English-Russian Dictionary of Culturally-Marked Words* is a specialised one; on the other hand, it excludes many units that are not considered culturally-marked. Culturally-marked words carry a strong evaluative load. According to the emphasized feature that underlies the metaphoric change, lexical units from this dictionary can be classified as shown in Table 04 (based on the terms and structure of the dictionary proposed by Tarkhanova and Philippenko (2003).

Table 04. Semantic Groups of the Metaphoric English Units from Mythology

Semantic Group	Quantity	%
Common Expressions: Insults and Slurs	28	50%
Common Expressions: Terms of Endearment	14	25%
Personality and Behaviour	8	14%
Physical Appearance	6	11%

As can be seen from Table 04, the largest share belongs to the expressions with the negative connotation. This indicates that English-speaking people tend to pay more attention to unfavourable phenomena and features. This attitude is expressed in the language in the form of metaphorical change within words, especially mythologemes. However, there are other than metaphor types of semantic change that have occurred in the mythological component of the English language.

Semantic change (16 words) which is based on the stylistic device of metonymy can be traced in mythologemes selected from *Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture*. The relation between the source and the new meanings is based not on identification (which is the case with metaphor), but on some kind of association connecting the two concepts which these meanings represent. Therefore, the new meaning becomes more abstract than the old one:

grace *n* a fine and attractive quality in movement or form from

Graces, the also **The Three Graces** in Greek and Roman mythology, the three goddesses of charm and beauty who are often shown in art.

To one of the significant semantic changes within mythologemes belongs the shift of meaning (30 words). In the course of time the word has acquired a completely new meaning, which is in some way related to the initial one:

hermaphrodite *n, adj* (a living thing) with the organs or appearance of both male and female – compound noun from *Hermes* and *Aphrodite*;

Saturday from *Saturn* and *day*;

sprite *n* **1** a fairy, especially a playful graceful one: a water sprite **2** an image produced on a screen by a computer, of a special type that can be drawn in layers to give a real life effect to a picture.

Among minor types of semantic changes that have occurred in mythologemes there are widening of meaning (5 cases), narrowing of meaning (2 cases), euphemism (3 cases), and hyperbole (2 cases). These types demonstrate that mythologemes can develop new meanings and give rise to new words and phrases based on relations other than metaphoric ones, although the latter remains the dominant type of semantic change:

Widening of meaning (3rd meaning): **Eros** **1** in Greek mythology, the god of sexual and romantic love. He is usually shown in pictures as a beautiful boy with wings, holding a bow and arrow **2** <...> **3** *n* [U] sexual love;

Narrowing of meaning (2nd meaning): **divine** *v* **1** [T] *fml* or *lit* to discover or guess (something unknown) by or as if by magic: [+obj/wh-] **2** [I(for); T] also **dowse** to (try to) find underground water or minerals with a special Y-shaped stick (divining rod) that is believed to point towards them. People who do this claim that it works, but many other people do not believe it because it cannot be tested or proved scientifically;

Euphemism: **Jove** **1** another name for the god Jupiter **2** *by Jove!* Old-fash an expression used to show surprise or to emphasize what you are saying;

ghost *n* **1** (the spirit of) a dead person who appears again **2, 3** <...> **4** *give up the ghost* to die;

Hyperbole: **divine** *adj* **1** [no comp.] of, connected with or being God or a god **2** *infml* old-fash (used especially by women) extremely good, wonderful.

Change within the semantics of a single word is a complicated process that takes place over a long period of time. There may be several semantic changes of different types between the original and new

meanings. This has happened to some mythologemes that have generated new units as a result of the shift through widening of meaning (1), through metonymy (2), or through metaphor (3):

(1) **eroticism** *n* [U] *the quality of being erotic meaning appeared from the extended meaning of the word Eros* 1,2 <...> 3 *n* [U] *sexual love*;

(2) **siren** *n* 1 *an apparatus for making a loud long warning sound, as used on ships, police cars, and fire engines and for attack-warnings* 2a *(in ancient Greek literature) any of a group of woman-like creatures whose sweet singing caused sailors to sail towards them and caused the wreck of their ships*;

(3) **phantom pregnancy** also **hysterical pregnancy** *AmE* – *n* *a condition in which a woman seems to be pregnant but in fact is not* from the metaphorical meaning of **phantom** *n* 1 <...> 2 *something that exists only in one's imagination*.

Thus, many mythologemes are characterised by the secondary nomination, which is often fixed in a dictionary, and which retains some of the qualities of the primary meaning. In most cases, the secondary nomination is expressed by an additional meaning that appeared as a result of a metaphorical semantic change, other types of semantic changes being present within the mythological component of the English language.

6.4. Results

1. The constituent units of a myth, considered as a linguistic phenomenon, are called morphemes. A mythologeme is an actualised meaning of a morpheme. Myth as a semiotic system is characterised by relations between three elements: the denotation, the denotatum, and the sign. However, the peculiarity of the myth is that it has two semiotic systems, one of which is partially embedded in the other, and the final result – the sign of the first system becomes the form for the content of the second system, the sign of which is considered as the meaning of the myth.

2. In order to determine the mythological language worldview as the basis of modern English word use the English vocabulary is subject to analysis. A total of 374 words and phrases were selected from 80,000 entries in *Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture*. Classical mythology constitutes the majority of the selected units and, in terms of mythology, affects the English language more than any other mythological system. The Indo-European element is also important, while other groups are less important and may be considered minor.

3. A significant part of all units appear to have no semantic changes registered in the dictionary (167 entries). Semantic changes in English lexical units are expressed in different ways: from an additional meaning within the major one to a separate word or phrase without any fixed connection to the source mythologeme. The English language is heavily influenced by mythologemes from Classical and Native myths, and these words and phrases have become an integral and productive part of the language.

4. Many mythologemes are characterised by the secondary nomination, which is expressed by an additional meaning that arose as a result of a metaphorical semantic change, other types of semantic change have an insignificant importance.

7. Conclusion

Language is a purely human phenomenon. This is the only way to express and store systematic knowledge about the world. Different languages in terms of their semantics, grammar and phonetics reflect the way of thinking of different nations. A peculiar worldview, expressed by language means, is characteristic of any ethnic group, though it is a combination (and not presence or absence) of prevailing components that makes it different from other worldviews.

The mythological worldview was the initial one and provided the basis for the creation of the first semiotic system. As the first way of thinking expressed in the language it is characterised by a number of features, such as the authenticity of the myth at the time of its creation, its cognitive function, the accumulation of knowledge about the world, ethnic connotation, and high emotiveness.

Vocabulary is one of the most obvious ways to express a peculiar worldview. Thus, lexical units containing some mythological component clearly demonstrate the influence of the mythological worldview on the modern word usage. The analysis is based on the material of words and phrases of the English language selected from *the Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture*. As a result, 374 lexical units with mythological meaning were singled out.

Those are grouped by their origin, and it can be concluded that Classical mythology and native mythological ideas form the core of the mythological worldview reflected in the modern English language.

A considerable part of all lexical units appear to have no semantic changes registered in the dictionary (167 entries). However, most of the words and phrases selected have undergone some semantic changes. Semantic changes are expressed in English in different ways from an additional meaning within the major one to a separate word or phrase without any fixed connection to the source mythologeme.

Due to the development of the language, mythologemes have acquired a new meaning on the basis of their primary ones. The secondary nomination is primarily (72.5% of all words with semantic change) of metaphorical nature, since some peculiar feature of the initial nomination is preserved and transferred to a new characteristic of a human being, some extralinguistic phenomenon or the formation of a new expression describing a new phenomenon.

Consequently, mythologemes as lexical units that represent the mythological worldview in modern English demonstrate not only the mythological ideas proper, but also deeply assimilated in the language and, therefore, serve as the basis for the formation of new units and derivatives of a metaphoric character.

References

- Aidarkhan, A. (2018). Correlation between language worldview and mentality in modern linguistics. *Molodoy uchony*, 20, 436-439. Retrieved December 19, 2019, from <https://moluch.ru/archive/206/50374/>
- Bykova, O. I., & Rakitina, O. N. (1999). Mythologeme as a Cultural Concept. *Proc. 3rd Zhitnokovskiy Readings "A Dynamic Aspect of Linguistic Researches"*. Chelyabinsk. [In Russ].
- Ivanov, A. G. (2019). Mythologeme of the hero in the structure of a social myth. *Bulletin of Tomsk State University*, 441, 80–88. <https://doi.org/10.17223/15617793/441/11> [In Russ].
- Kayumova, D. F. (2019). The image of a person and his fate in religious and mythological representations and in the lexical and phraseological system of English, Turkish and Tatar languages. In O.A. Gabrielyan et.al (Eds.) *Collection of materials of the III International scientific interdisciplinary conference "Myth in History, Politics, and Culture"*, 3, 37–42 [In Russ].

- Khayrullina, R., & Berger, V. (2018). Human character in the mythological world view (on the material of the Russian, Kazakh and English languages). *Philology at MGIMO*, 2(14), 61-67. [In Russ]. Retrieved January 15, 2020, from <https://doi.org/10.24833/2410-2423-2018-2-14-61-67>
- Kleymenova, V. Yu. (2019). Modern mythologeme: variability and invariance. *Proc. International scientific conference "Variability in language and speech" at Minsk State Linguistic University*. Minsk, 103-105. [In Russ].
- Krutalevich, A. N. (2016). "Mythologeme" in the conceptual apparatus of cultural studies. *Culture and civilization*, 1, 10–21.
- Longman (1999). *Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture*. Barcelona: Cayfossa.
- Makovskiy, M. M. (2014). *Language – Myth – Culture. The Symbols of Life and the Life of Symbols*. Moscow, Inst. of the Russ. lang. n. aft. V.V. Vinogradov, Russ. Acad. Sci. [In Russ].
- Mechkovskaya, N. B. (1998). *Language and Religion*. Moscow, Agency "FAIR". [In Russ].
- Pitina, S. A. (2002). *Concepts of Mythological Thinking as Components of the Concept Sphere of the National Worldview*. Chelyabinsk State University Publ. House. [In Russ].
- Rettig, T. (2017). *Belief Systems: What They are and How They Affect you [Medium]*. Retrieved January 24, 2020, from <https://medium.com/intercultural-mindset/belief-systems-what-they-are-and-how-they-affect-you-1cd87aa775ff>
- Rubert, I. (2015). Mythologeme as a Sign in the System of Cultural Concepts. *Journal of Siberian Federal University. Humanities & Social Sciences*, 12, 2982-2988. <https://doi.org/10.17516/1997-1370-2015-8-12-2982-2988>
- Stavitskiy, A. V. (2019). The Mythical Man: the role of a myth and the inevitable myth-making of people. In O.A. Gabrielyan et. all (Eds.) *Collection of materials of the III International scientific interdisciplinary conference "Myth in History, Politics, and Culture*, 3, 45–48 [In Russ].
- Stoyanova, E. V. (2018). Mythologeme as a cultural basis for conceptualizing reality (based on the Russian and Bulgarian languages). *Multilingualism in the educational space*, 10, 104–111 ([In Russ].
- Sushiy, E. V. (2016). Mythological forms of socio-psychological thinking. *Scientific studies on the social and political psychology*, 38(41), 3–18. orcid.org/0000-0002-4364-7571
- Syamili, C., & Rekha, R. (2018). Developing an ontology for Greek mythology. *The Electronic Library*, 36, 119–132. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EL-02-2017-0030>
- Tarkhanova, T. V., & Philippenko, E. A. (2003). *English-Russian Dictionary of Culturally-Marked Words*. Chelyabinsk State University Publ. House.
- Vorob'eva, E. V. (2018). Difficulties in translating Scandinavian mythologemes. *Bulletin of the Moscow State Linguistic University. Humanities*, 12(805), 9–17. ([In Russ].