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TRANSFORMED PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN MASS MEDIA HEADINGS IN ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN LANGUAGES

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Abstract

This article deals with English and Russian phraseological units (PUs) with the component denoting family relationship (Russian семья and English family) within its structure; the study of their semantic, emotionally expressive and stylistic features. Thus, PUs were selected from a number of mass media texts and phraseological dictionaries. Phraseological unit has always been considered the most important bearer of specifics of the language. Therefore, constant studies of functioning of the native and non-native languages, the process of teaching and cross-cultural communication demands the skillful use of languages. The relevance of the research material is explained by the fact that phraseology is an important part of the language system that reflects the picture of the world of native speakers. Such effective transformations as: 1. Lexical transformations, 2. Syntactic transformations, 3. Morphological transformations are under study in this article. Phraseological unit is analyzed in the context that combines both information and influence on the reader or listener. The author expresses his own attitude using emotional, expressive phraseological units.

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Keywords: Phraseological transformation, phraseological unit, semantic characteristics, mass media text, cross-cultural communication, process of teaching.



1. Introduction

Our research investigates semantic transformations. We made an attempt to pay special attention to the notion of semantic stability as transformation presupposes modifications not only in semantic but also structural, grammatical and other components of the existing phraseological units. Any transformation is a purposeful modification of a phraseological unit. Customarily modifications are marked stylistically as a result of full or partial change in the meaning of a phraseological unit, these changes freshen up or renew the meaning. Such refreshments are implied not only in literary works.

The study deals with the facts of improvised changes in the structure and the meaning of PUs in order to achieve expressive and stylistic purposes in the context; the reasons of phraseological transformations are explained.

The article for the first time examines in detail the functional and semantic features of the transformed phraseological units, which contain components denoting family relationship in their structure. Participation of these components in the structure of PUs reflects the peculiarities of perception of family relations by native speakers of English and Russian languages.

The study and teaching native and non-native languages, the process of intercultural communication becomes more effective and resultative, if carried out in comparative terms. In our opinion, the development of the theory of phraseology is important, since phraseological corpus of the language has always been considered an expressive means of the language.

The components denoting family relationship were chosen as family is one of the basic elements of the universe.

Individual author's transformations become especially interesting when understanding the role of phraseology in media texts. The author's transformation adds a living element to the material, conveys a hidden meaning to the recipient, since phraseological transformations always attract attention and evoke certain reader's associations and emotions.

Metaphor, metonymy, oxymora, and some other "figures of speech" involve semantically "deviant" usages of language (Gibbs, 2007).

"...linguistic picture of the world is inextricably linked with culture, as it is nothing but the reflection in the mind of his world, as well as its cultural, spiritual, social and physical experience" (Rakhimova, Zaripova, Sharipova, & Gurianov, 2015, p. 4).

"National-specific models of the representation of concepts in different linguistic views of the world have been revealed, ... reflecting the national and cultural specifics" (Tulusina, Sadykova, & Carlson, 2016, p. 1).

"Stylistic effect obtained from the use of all investigated types of contextual use of phraseological units ranges from amplification, attenuation, or clarifying the meaning to making expressive the most stable unit or raising emotional and expressive richness of context etc." (Arsentyeva, 2006, p. 17).

"Studying ... idioms, we are guided by the criterion of functional-stylistic attribution of phraseological units, which covers quantitative component, semantic and etymological ones..." (Guryanov, Zamaletdinov, & Yarmakeev, 2017, p. 2).

Transformed PUs like a language code are used to attract addressee's attention. The reader, after reading the title, will try to unravel, decipher the idea put by the author in the article.

Phraseology makes images connected with the mentality of a nation, with religion, rituals, mythology, lifestyle, folklore, world, nature and weather learning styles and stereotypes.

PUs are culturally marked. National memory saves intertextual connection to a cultural code or symbol which can be traced in cultural reference of an individual; repetition of phraseological signs leads to forming of individual cultural self-consciousness and national identity.

2. Problem Statement

The article for the first time examines in detail the functional and semantic features of the transformed phraseological units, which contain components denoting family relationship in their structure. Participation of these components in the structure of PUs reflects the peculiarities of perception of family relations by native speakers of English and Russian languages. These points are new because, for the first time, we attempt to reveal common and different peculiarities within significative-denotative and connotative meaning of such PUs on the basis of analysis of their semantic aspect.

3. Research Questions

To reach our aims in comparative study of phraseological units on linguistic and semantic levels we are dealing with the following tasks: selection of transformed phraseological units; detailed studies of the semantic, component and contextual aspects of such PUs; applying of the appropriate procedure; combining and classifying phraseological units into such effective groups of transformations as: 1. Lexical transformations. 2. Syntactic transformations. 3. Morphological transformations etc.

We have now assembled the main results of our investigation.

Such investigation proves the importance of combining PUs used in mass media headlines in English and Russian. The important point here is that such studying helps us to distinguish common features within two languages; therefore we may have the possibility of understanding PUs more clearly during the process of getting information from means of mass communication in English and Russian languages.

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the analysis is to establish paradigm of meanings of transformed PUs used in mass media headings both in English and Russian. We analyze semantic, component and contextual aspects of use of PUs. It is our intention to reveal and to clarify the levels of correlation of PUs while translating them within two remote cognates; then to combine and classify phraseological units into effective groups of transformations.

5. Research Methods

To reach our aims in comparative study of phraseological units on semantic and functional-stylistic levels in English and Russian following methods were implied:

- continuous sampling method (definition of PU's meaning, numerous samples were taken from a number of paper and online phraseological dictionaries);
- comparative analysis method (investigated phraseological phenomena met in English and Russian are compared in two unrelated languages);
- descriptive analysis method helped to reveal peculiarities of perception of family relations by native speakers in English and Russian languages.

6. Findings

The outcome of all this is that the study of PUs' etymology, structure, figurativeness, types of equivalents, frequency of use as well as revealing and comparing them as a class familiarizes us with the unique peculiarities of the national culture of people. Phraseology makes images connected with the mentality of a nation, with religion, rituals, mythology, lifestyle, folklore, world, nature and weather learning styles and stereotypes.

"Phraseological unit can be used in its transformed form with new expressive and stylistic properties" (Shansky, 1985, p. 22). "Phraseological transformation is an improvised change of PU used for expressive and stylistic purposes" (Guseynova, 1997, p. 18).

Reasons of phraseological transformation:

- 1) illiterate use of phraseological units;
- 2) intentional transformation.

Kunin (1996), Molotkov (1977), Mokienko (1989) emphasize the importance of such transformations as:

- 1) Lexical.
- 2) Syntactic.
- 3) Morphological.

We have identified the following phraseological transformations in English and Russian languages.

1. Lexical transformation is a result of changes in the component structure of PU. Consequently, the main meaning of PU acquires new shades of meaning, while the syntactic structure of phraseology remains unchanged. Changes are made to one or more elements.

"Scholars underline correlation between phraseological and paroemiological meaning and component meaning in relation to lack of possibility to derive one from another" (Ayupova & Bashirova, 2015, p. 3).

This type of transformation includes the methods of substitution and alteration of the components of PU and can be illustrated by examples in Russian:

The article titled "Robot Brothers" raises the theme of social ecology, meaning the interaction of man, society and the environment. Therefore, the author's desire to remind everybody about protection of human world and about environmental culture in a globalized society is evident.

Participants of the plot - fabulous heroes robots-friends: robot Valley, robot Cockroach and robot Scout, who not only clean up the environment from pollution but they make friends with each other, fall in love, that is, live like ordinary people. The title of the article "Robot Brothers" is a transformed use of

the original PU rabbit brothers, the dictionary definition of which is ‘joking appeal to a group of friends, acquaintances’.

It can be assumed that the author used transformed PU rabbit brothers for the title of his article to appeal to all people through the world and once again to remind them that we are all equal before the forces of nature; we must protect it as a group of robots friends did.

Previous research shows the heterogeneous nature of newspaper materials, the diversity of newspaper genres inherent in both Russian and English press.

This can be demonstrated by considering the examples in English:

The headline “Father of all Christmas holidays: meeting Santa in Lapland” a transformed PU the Father of something (somebody) is used in its meaning ‘ancestor, father of somebody or something’. Other examples of PU with the same beginning: the Father of English poetry ‘the ancestor of English poetry’ about J. Chaucer; the Father of lies ‘the father of lies’.

This example of transformation is also a semantic transformation. The title “Father of all Christmas holidays” can be compared to the PU Father Christmas. Two aspects contribute to this:

1) absence of article the before the component father. Usually PUs, having sense ‘ancestor, father’ begin in such way;

2) the content of the article with the title Father of all Christmas holidays: meeting Santa in Lapland, which refers to a family winter holiday in Lapland, Santa Claus, who will be delighting children.

The PU the Father of all parties (original phrase the Father of something (somebody)) also has a general meaning ‘father, ancestor’ thanks to the component father. The article is devoted to the masquerade held in the style of Father Ted, from which the tradition to celebrate this holiday has gone. Without reading the article itself, it is difficult to understand who is father, whose father it is and to whom the author refers.

We consider the use of another type of phraseological transformation:

2) permutation of the components.

The following example of a headline is taken from a Russian newspaper:

Down the mother-river Volga (the original PU down the mother-Volga has the meaning of ‘rudely to scold someone trying to get off’. Phraseological units originated from an old Russian song, appeared and sung in a merchant family. It began with the words: “Down the mother-river, down the Volga...”.

We find changing the original PU – components mother and Volga are rearranged. When reading the title “Down the Volga-mother”, the reader may not pay attention to this change, since the components of the PU are preserved. The article offers a discussion of the topic that absolutely differs from the main meaning of the original PU: “environmental issue and the threat to the water supply of the capital”. The author uses transformed PU for the newspaper headline, playing with reader's imagination, attracting his attention by the fact that the article reveals another unexpected meaning.

“The studies demonstrated that there is a mechanism that reconstructs the structure of a large text on the basis of the material of a small text” (Lazareva, 1989, p. 56). In our case, a small text is a title, “which provides prediction of incoming information in the process of interiorization of external speech actions” (Lazareva, 2006, p. 34).

II. Among phraseological units under study, we have identified syntactic transformations of PUs, which lead to lengthening, shortening or changing the syntactic structure of PU. This type of transformation includes: 1) adding (wedging) component(s); 2) adding component(s) to the beginning of PU; 3) adding component(s) to the end of PU; 4) reduction (ellipsis); changing the communicative type of proposal; parcel; contamination; allusion.

1) Wedging (addition) of a component(s) causes “semantic overvoltage” of phraseological units and is used as a means of enhancing its expressiveness” (Mokienko, 1989, p. 46). Examples of headings in English:

In the title *Mummy's golden boy: Romeo Beckham looks the spitting image of mother Victoria with his razor sharp cheekbones* PU *Mummy's boy* with addition of the component *golden* is used, with help of which the author may have wanted to add a connotation to the main meaning of PU; logically and expressively to emphasize the semantics expressed by this PU.

2) Adding component(s) to the beginning of PUs:

In the title *In praise of the modern mummy's boy* the PU *a mummy's boy* with the meaning ‘mother's pet, pet; Mama's boy’ is used; the component *modern* is added to its beginning. The grammatical replacement of an article *a* with the article *the* is also used in the transformation.

The PU *Son of God* with the meaning ‘Son of God; Jesus Christ’ has the added component *face* to enhance its expressiveness and is used in the title: “*Jesus Christ Shoe-perstar: Face of son of God found on flip-flop*”.

A phraseological unit *uncle Stepa* has a definition in the dictionary ‘about very high people’ in Russian language. The component *violent* is added to the beginning of the PU to trigger and enhance the curiosity and interest of the reader. It is used in a transformed form in the heading “*Violent uncle Stepa*”.

3) Adding component(s) to the end of phraseological unit:

A PU *uncle Stepa* with its meaning ‘about very tall people’ in the headlines “*Uncle Stepa in his full growth*” and “*Public Uncle Stepa*” in Russian newspapers. We can assume that the content of articles is about people with a high position, about their activities in the society. The appropriate use of PUs helps to attract the recipient's attention to careful reading.

A PU *daughters and mothers* with its dictionary definition ‘family, usually, mother with children’ is used in the article titled “*Daughters and mothers by sentence*”. Two components *by* and *sentence* are added to the end of the PU in order to direct the addressee's perception to the family problems, in particular, the problems of single mothers.

Phraseological unit has an illocutive power of influence and helps listeners to understand the meaning of the statement in accordance with author’s intention.

An example in English:

A PU *father Christmas* with the meaning ‘Father frost, Christmas grandfather’ is used by the author in the title of the article “*No more sitting on Father Christmas’ knee because volunteers aren't checked by the CRB*”. A component *knee* is added to the end of the PU for emotional impact on the recipient.

4) Reduction (reduction of PU’s structure, omission of significant component(s) is used in newspaper headlines:

The author of the Russian article titled “Korean Kuzkin's mother” omitted the verbal component learn (show) in the PU learn (show) Kuzkin's mother, adding another component Korean, that is not the component of PU. Despite the fact that PU has lost a significant component (the verb to learn or to show), other significant components are enough to preserve the meaning of the original PU.

Here is an example of another title with the same PU learn (show) Kuzkin's mother:

Saakashvili remembered Kuzkin's mother.

The verbal component learn or show also is omitted in the title of the article, but it is replaced by another verb remembered, that is not the component of the famous phraseological unit.

Morphological transformations include changes at the grammatical level of phraseological meaning. Occasional morphological changes occur in all parts of speech: types of articles, number of nouns, degrees of comparison of adjectives, tense forms of verbs and other changes.

The change in the number of nouns:

Самцы касаток – настоящие маменькины сынки

The heading “Male killer whales are real mother’s sons” contains a transformed PU mother’s sons. An original PU is mother’s son having the meaning ‘a spineless, uncertain man’ (obviously, the component son is used in its’ plural form in the context; it means that the PU is transformed at the grammatical level).

The title of the article “To join the grandfathers Mazays” carries a transformed PU. The original PU a grandfather Mazai ‘about a man who treats animals humanely’. Components grandfather and Mazay are used in plural form in the context.

In English, we find two titles: the first is "Brothers in arms: David and Ed Miliband are Labour's Cain and Abel" and the second one "Brothers in arms: Soldier embarks on tour of Afghanistan with three of his family". PU Brother in arms with the dictionary definition of "comrade-in-arms" is used in a transformed form: the component brother is used in the plural form in both cases.

In the title "Meet the Pilgrim Fathers" PU the Pilgrim Fathers has the dictionary meaning "fathers of the pilgrim, the first English colonists in America, who arrived in 1620 on the ship “Mayflower”. Phraseological transformation is used in the context: the component Fathers in its plural becomes the only Father in its singular; the result is a modification of the meaning of PURE: the author writes an article not about the first English colonists, but about a wandering monk of Indian origin, who calls people to protect natural resources, to appreciate and see the beauty of the world.

A comprehensive comparative study of PUs requires a cross-language analysis, which inevitably leads to the dialogue between different cultures and the formation of intercultural competence. Such kind of a dialogue contributes to the correct and effective teaching a non-native language, as the crosslanguage analysis makes it possible to understand the patterns of the target language functioning better and facilitates the penetration into the structure of the investigated phenomena.

“...the findings available for a broad array of languages show that phraseology is one of the key components of human language” (Granger &Meunier, 2008, p. 3).

Studies of PUs’ behavior in the context indicate the mechanism of phraseological transformations, which is based on the internal form of PU.

7. Conclusion

The analysis of PU's behavior with components denoting family relationship in the headlines of mass media texts showed that the transformed use is an active way of expression; that phraseological transformations are also a productive way of expressing emotionality in the newspaper and journalistic style in English and Russian languages.

Reading the title, the reader imagines the picture, forecasts. He programs himself in a certain way, tries to anticipate, perhaps, to make sure that his expectations of the read title will be justified.

“Phraseological units represent a language of culture that permits scholars to draw valid conclusions about the worldview or mentality of those speakers who make vigorous and continued use of them” (Skandera, 2008, p. 14).

We have considered dependence of PUs functioning on the Pragmalinguistic context. Linguistic analysis of the use of PUs in the mass media texts such as “The Washington Post”, “Metro”, “Mail online”, “The Kazan Herald”, “The Moscow News”, “Rossiyskaya Gazeta”, “Novaya Gazeta”, “Kommersant” allows us to state that phraseological transformations help the authors of articles to attract interest and arouse curiosity of the reader when reading the title, when the addressee predicts the information of the article and makes his choice: what information is worth reading.

“...figurative language forms part of human cognitive processes. People think and conceptualise their experience and the external world in figurative terms” (Naciscione, 2016, p. 4).

“Today with the incredible power of the mass media a newly formulated proverb-like statement might become a bona fide proverb relatively quickly by way of the radio, television and print media” (Mieder, 2004, p. 7).

“Old and new proverbs have also found a fruitful stomping ground in the mass media world...” (Mieder, 2008, p. 9).

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