

**RLMSEE-2020****The Russian Language in Modern Scientific and Educational Environment****PHRASEOLOGISMS WITH THE SEMANTIC COMPONENT  
“DRINK” IN THE RUSSIAN AND ITALIAN LINGUOCULTURES**

Margarita E. Kaskova (a)\*, Olga V. Demina (b), Elizaveta K. Bolshakova (c)

\*Corresponding author

(a) Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University), 6, Miklukho-Maklaya street, Moscow, 117198, Russian Federation, 37margo@rambler.ru

(b) Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University), 6, Miklukho-Maklaya street, Moscow, 117198, Russian Federation, deptphilology@gmail.com

(c) Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University), 6, Miklukho-Maklaya street, Moscow, 117198, Russian Federation, bol.elisabetta.k@gmail.com

**Abstract**

This article deals with the contrastive analysis of the Russian and Italian phraseological units with the semantic component “drink” in their structures. The paper provides with basic information about the functioning of phraseological units with the semantic component “drink” in two different linguocultures, gives their classification and the frequency of their occurrence in dictionaries and in the colloquial speech. Such linguistic research helps to reveal culture-bound peculiarities and determine similarities as well as differences in a cross-linguistic perspective. The object of the research is the functioning of phraseological units with the semantic component “drink” in Russian and Italian. The subject of the linguistic analysis is the resort to the lexemes "water", "wine", "kvass" as fragments of the lexical and phraseological systems of the Russian and Italian languages. The research is highly relevant due to a wide range of factors. Firstly, nowadays phraseology is regarded to be one of major fields of research both for Eastern European and Western European linguists as the number of research works on phraseological units has considerably arisen in recent years. Secondly, a language is considered to be a means of decoding a definite culture and phraseology to this extent is a domain of linguistic analysis which demonstrates the deep-rooted interdependence between language and culture. Thirdly, in modern linguistics the growing interest to the mechanisms of secondary nomination is noted in different languages, the analysis of phraseological units serves to reveal the peculiarities of verbal thinking and perception of reality by speech community.

2357-1330 © 2021 Published by European Publisher.

*Keywords:* Contrast linguistics, culture, language, lexemes, phraseological unit



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 linguistic picture of the world is one of the key concepts that determines the specific relationship of people with the outside world, since it “captures in itself a certain image of the world, which is never a mirror image of the world” (Maslova, 2014). Phraseology reveals its national specific character in the most vivid way. Phraseology as a linguistic discipline began to evolve at the beginning of the twentieth century due to the works of Buslaeva, Vinogradov and others. The ideas of these scientists are reflected in the studies of Teliya, who offered a classification of phraseological units, as well as in the works of Maslova, Vereshchagin, Kostomarov and others.

According to the researchers, phraseological locutions of the language reflect the features of verbal behavior, the specifics of national mentality, and they are crucial for modeling the linguistic picture of the world of a certain people, speaking a particular language, structuring its fragments, linking them with the phenomena of the surrounding reality, with a figurative perception of objects

## 2. Problem Statement

The language, as a mirror, reflects the mentality of the people, their spiritual needs and experiences. The structure of language, including word formation, gender category, phonetic system, synonymy, is directly related to the mentality of people - the culture bearers. But especially close connection can be traced at the level of fixed phrases that have remained unchanged in the language for centuries. So, in cognitive phraseology appeared the concept of "phraseological picture of the world", a person's worldview, which includes a set of universal human and individual knowledge about the world, as a result of creative reflection in our minds not only of the real world, but also of something thinkable, of something experienced, but also of something that does not reflect the reality.

Gastrological vocabulary and phraseology, both in literal and figurative use, have a bright national coloring, are always nationally marked and, according to the “linguistic and cultural theory of the word” (Vereshchagin & Kostomarov, 2008), contain the so-called “cultural” or “cross-cultural” component. We share the position of Teliya (2006) that phraseological units are the items of the cultural code that hold the important place in the language system and reflect the cultural and national values of the linguistic community.

The phraseological system of the language has an important function which encompasses the transferring of the national self-consciousness and cultural identification. Its metaphor embodies the worldview and national character of the people, thus the motive of food is reflected in the phraseology of any language. As the analysis presumes, phraseological units with a food code have a distinguished form and a wide range of meanings and connotations.

## 3. Research Questions

Besides, phraseology still remains one of the most interesting and, at the same time, one of the least studied areas of linguistics. Due to this factor at the moment such studies occupy an important place in linguistic science, which cannot be imagined and realized without a comparative analysis of

phraseological units having a common component, which is carried out by using cognitive and linguocultural approaches. Phraseologisms promote a better understanding of the culture and history through a cultural lens of the national language.

Within the framework of modern linguistic science, the theoretical significance of phraseological units of the culinary semantic sphere in the Russian and Italian languages has not been fully determined. Due to the fact that the comparative aspect of idiomatic expressions in the linguistic picture of the world has not been sufficiently studied, it is getting complicated to understand more deeply the culture and history of the country through a cultural lens of the national language.

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned statements, the following research tasks can be formulated: to conduct a comparative analysis of phraseological units with the gastronomic component “drink” as units of the cultural code; to offer a translation of figurative phraseology; to present the arguments for having the similarities and differences in the structure of phraseological units with the component “drink” in the Russian and Italian languages

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this work is to identify the similarities and differences of phraseological units in the Russian and Italian languages which have the semantic component “drink” in their structure.

The theoretical significance of the work is to enhance the insight of the phraseological units of the Italian and Russian languages of the culinary semantic sphere with their component, functional-stylistic and structural-semantic composition.

The practical significance of this study lies in the possibility of implementing its theoretical results in the process of teaching foreign languages, translation theory, intercultural communication and cultural linguistics.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The theoretical corpus of this study comprises the works of domestic and foreign scientists in the field of phraseology and cultural linguistics in which the concept of “food code of culture” is investigated (Buslaev, 2016; Druzhinina, 2015; Kry’lova, 2018; Yurina, 2018). The research data was selected from the most famous sources of the Russian and Italian languages - these are dictionaries such as “Proverbi e modi di dire. La saggezza dei nostri vecchi” (edition of Colognola ai Colli – Verona, 2020); “Dictionary-thesaurus of Russian proverbs, sayings and apt expressions” (Zimin, 2018); “Phraseological Dictionary of the Russian Language” (Rosenthal & Krasnyanskiy, 2017); “Multilingual Dictionary of Modern Phraseology” (Vinogradova, 2012); “New Russian-Italian Dictionary” (Zorko & Cheredeva, 2010); Italian-Russian and Russian-Italian short phrase” (Cherdantseva & Giusti Fici, 1994). It seems fruitful to resort to the Italian and Russian periodicals for a deep linguistic analysis (<https://www.repubblica.it/esteri>, <https://it.sputniknews.com/italia/>). Those articles were translated, however, in the course of the study only translation of phraseological units was used.

## 6. Findings

The comparative analysis of Russian and Italian phraseological units with the component “water” through the cultural codes and connotation showed that the Russian and Italian linguocultures are replete with the idioms which have the component “water”. Nevertheless, there are similarities and differences in both languages. For example, in Russian we find the following units: “(БЫТЬ ПОХОЖИМИ) КАК ДВЕ КАПЛИ ВОДЫ” [“(to be similar) be like two drops of water”], where a drop symbolizes the smallest part of something, and two drops of water, due to their small size, are hardly distinguishable in shape and volume; “ЛИТЬ ВОДУ НА Ч.-Л. МЕЛЬНИЦУ” [“pour water on one’s mill”], that is, “to assist someone by actions”; a colloquial or/and derogative meaning “ТОЛОЧЬ ВОДУ В СТУПЕ” [“to pound water in a mortar”] means “to waste time in empty talk”; about the time that has passed long ago they say: “МНОГО ВОДЫ УТЕКЛО (С ТЕХ ПОР)”; «БУРЯ В СТАКАНЕ ВОДЫ» [“much water has flowed under the bridge (since then)”; or “storm in a glass of water”]- a dispute or excitement over trifles, the expression belongs to the French writer Montesquieu, who used it speaking about the political turmoil in the mini-state of San Marino; “МУТИТЬ ВОДУ” [“muddy the waters”] is used deliberately to introduce ambiguity into something, like fish, which, escaping pursuit, muddy the water, mixing it with sand and silt; “НАБРАТЬ В РОТ ВОД” [“take water in your mouth”] - all these are international phraseological units, some of them date back to ancient Greek or Latin expressions, therefore, they are also widely-used in Italian: “*somigliarsi come due gocce d’acqua*”; “*tirare l’acqua al mulino*”; “*pestare l’acqua nel mortaio*”; “*tempesta in un bicchiere d’acqua*”; “*confondere le acque*”; “*è passata molta acqua sotto il ponte*” (literally means “much water has flowed under the bridge”); “*acqua in bocca*”.

The original Italian expressions are remarkable: “*navigare in cattive acque*” (literally means “to swim in dirty water”) – “a streak of bad luck”; “*essere con l’acqua alla gola*” (literally “to be with water in the throat”) – the mouth is full of worries; “*gettare acqua sul fuoco*” (literally “pour water into the fire”) - to moderate passions, tame one’s ardour; “*fare un buco nell’acqua*” (literally “to make a hole in the water”) - it is clear that no one will be able to make a hole in the water, as they say about people who have not achieved anything and suffered a fiasco.

It should be noted that there is a number of old traditional Russian phraseological units with the component “water”: “*вывести на чистую воду*” [literally means “bring someone to clean water”], that is, to expose someone's dark deeds; the following expression arose from the custom in Russian villages to pour water on fighting bulls – “*водой не разольёшь*” [“you can't pour water”], hence the association “these friends stick together firmly that you can't even spill them with water”; in Russian fairy tales, the motive of “*ношения воды в решете*” [“wearing water in a sieve”] appears as an overwhelming task that is given to a person for testing, this expression is also associated with some ritual actions, it was believed that water pouring through a sieve helps to bring rain, but now this phraseological unit means useless occupation (Sklyar, 2019; Ustinova, 2019).

Italian phraseological units with a “water”/ “acqua” component are often combined or contrasted with the word “wine” / “vino”. In such sayings, water acquires a derogatory connotation: “*l’acqua fa male e il vino fa cantare*” [literally, “water is not useful, but wine makes you sing”]; “*a chi non piace il vino, il signore faccia mancare l’acqua*” [literally “whoever does not love wine, the Lord will not give even

water”]; “bevi il buon vino e lascia andare l’acqua al mulino” [literally, “drink the wine and leave the water for the mills” or “let the water flow to the mill”]; “bevi l’acqua come un bue ed il vino come un re” [literally, “drink water like a bull and wine like a king”]. According to our data (Kotok, 2012), in the Italian language, phraseological units with the “wine” / “vino” component make up more than 150 units and represent the largest group among phraseological units with the “food” component, most of them represent the concept of “good mood”, which cannot be implemented to the Russian language. This is due to the fact that Italy is a wine-making country and the attitude to wine is special; it would not be an exaggeration to say that wine is the national drink of many Italians and no one has meal without a glass of wine.

This is the main difference between Italian and Russian phraseology with the semantic component “drink”, if in the Italian picture of the world it is customary to praise wine, then in the Russian one - the strong drinks or alcoholic beverages are considered to be a real challenge, thus, the bulk of proverbs and sayings show the negative attitude towards alcoholic drinks in the Russian culture.

There are some examples: “il vino e` latte dei vecchi” [literally “wine is the milk of ancestors”], while in Russia “вино с разумом не в ладу живут” [“wine does not live in harmony with reason”]; “buon vino fa buon sangue” [literally “wine makes good blood”] - good health from good wine, but it is believed that a Russian person does not know the measure, therefore “много вина пить – беде быть” [“drinking a lot of wine is trouble”]; “vino non è buono se non rallegra l’uomo” [literally, “wine is bad if it does not make a person laugh”], but in Russia “вино сперва веселит, а потом с ума сводит” [“wine at first makes you laugh, and then drives you crazy”]; “fa piu` miracoli una bottiglia di vino che una chiesa di santi” [literally “more miracles come from a bottle of wine than in a church”] - more people drown in a glass of wine than in the sea. “Amico e vino vogliono esser vecchi” [literally “friend and wine must be old”) - wine is famous for one quality, the older it is, the more mature it is, what means the better quality and the more taste pleasant it has, very few will doubt that over time, not only wine grows stronger, but also real friendship. The expression “il vino fa dire la verita`” [literally “wine makes you speak the truth”] is translated by using Latin calque in Russian – “истина в вине” [“truth in wine”] - came from the work of the ancient Roman scholar Pliny the Elder (24-79 AD).

“Natural history”, where it is used in the sense: “что у трезвого на уме, то у пьяного на языке” [“what is on the mind of a sober, then a drunk on the tongue”]. Today this expression is widely used in any sense: from the condemnation of drunkenness to its complete justification. This expression is typical for the book vocabulary, for example, “and next to the neighboring tables sleepy footmen stick out, and drunkards with rabbit eyes“ in vino veritas ”scream” (A. Blok).

Many proverbs are associated with a popular holiday in Italy - St. Martin's Day: “a San Martino ogni mosto diventa vino” [literally “On St. Martin's day, every must turns into wine”]; “A San Martino bevi il vino” [literally “drink wine on St. Martin's Day”] - every year, on November 11, Catholic countries, including Italy, widely and cheerfully celebrate the Feast of St. Martin, which, among other things, is the patron saint of all beggars, military men, drunks and young wine kept in barrels. On that day wine is supposed to be drunk throughout the day. Only on St. Martin's Day the barrels are uncorked for the first time and the first sample of young wine is taken. This is a special day when the quality of the

wine is determined and the verdict is made: is it good or not. Perhaps this is just an excuse to drink wine and have fun from the heart, as well as take stock of the work for the whole year.

The popularity of wine in Italy can be compared with the popularity in Russia of kvass, a low-alcohol malt-based drink.

The Slavs have known kvass for over a thousand years. The Russian Humanitarian Encyclopedic Dictionary (2002) gives the date of the first mention of kvass in Russian written sources as 996. After baptism, Prince Vladimir Svyatoslavich ordered to distribute “пищу, мёд и квас” [“food, honey and kvass”] to the people. In addition to ordinary, made from barley or rye malt, there was a wide variety of such beverage: honey kvass, berry, barley, pear, apple, etc. Among the varieties of kvass, we note unusual recipes for a popular drink: sweet, sour, mint, with raisins, horseradish, thick, kvass-shchi, daily, fragrant, white, okroshechny, aromatic, with millet, with pepper, etc. There were many varieties without yeast, that is non-alcoholic kvass, which even children used to drink. By the 15th century, there were more than 500 varieties of kvass in Russia.

In Russia, kvass was a ubiquitous and everyday drink: it was brewed by peasants, landowners, military men, monks, and its presence in the house was considered a sign of well-being. Russian peasants, going to work in the field or other hard work, took kvass with them, as they believed that it restores strength and relieves fatigue, so this drink was highly appreciated. This is mirrored in popular proverbs and sayings: “квас никогда не надоест” [“kvass will never get bored”], “ка бы вино да квас, так и всё у нас” [“if only wine and kvass, so we have everything”], “и худой квас лучше хорошей воды” [“and bad kvass is better than good water”], “русский квас много народу спас” [“Russian kvass saved a lot of people”].

Russian kvass, like Italian wine, was given free in taverns, hence the expression meaning that a person constantly feels the need to “перебиваться с вина на квас” [“switch from wine to kvass”]. The book's disapproving expression “квасной патриотизм” [“leavened patriotism”] is called the praise of various specific, often even backward, forms of everyday life in one's country, replacing true love for the motherland. The expression belongs to Vyazemsky, who first used it in Letters from Paris (1827). Kvass is a specific Russian drink which is known today in Europe as well, a lot of metaphors are based on the word “kvass”.

## 7. Conclusion

National cuisine, its symbolism, terminology play an important role in the comprehension and interpretation of culture as a system in which the past, present and future coexist, conducting a timeless dialogue. The motive of food is also reflected in phraseology. Phraseological units with a gastronomic component are a conceptual constant, since they exist in any language. The phraseological system of the language is engaged in the transferring of the national-cultural identity of the people. Its metaphor embodies the worldview and national character of the people.

In the intercultural aspect, this dialogue includes the borrowing of various products and national dishes from another culture. One can unveil the wealth of a language by studying, comparing and analyzing of its fixed phrases, turns of speech, catchwords and winged words, which determine its

phraseology. The study of idioms and phraseological units helps to discover a new, historical development and formation of civilizations.

As the analysis of the linguistic material shows, phraseological units with food code have a well-turned form, a wide range of meanings and connotations, therefore, they are highly effective means of representing human knowledge: they reflect both common human concepts which are an integral part of the conceptual sphere of any language, and specific national-bound concepts that represent in this way the unique experience of each nation, accumulated and consolidated in linguistic units (Vardazaryan, 2012).

## References

- Buslaev, F. I. (2016). *Istoricheskaya grammatika russkogo yazy`ka. E`timologiya. Lingvisticheskoe nasledie XIX veka*. [Historical grammar of the Russian language. Etymology. Linguistic heritage of the 19th century]. URSS [in Rus.].
- Cherdantseva, T. Z., & Giusti Fici, F., (1994). *Ital'yansko-russkij i russko-ital'yanskij kratkij frazeologicheskij slovar'*. [Italian-Russian and Russian-Italian short phrase]. Nezavisimaya gazeta [in Rus.].
- Druzhinina, E. S. (2015). *Semantika frazeologizmov v soznanii nositelej russkogo yazy`ka: monografiya*. [Semantics of phraseological units in the minds of Russian speakers]. Izd-vo Altajskogo gos. texnicheskogo un-ta im. I. I. Polzunova. [in Rus.].
- Kotok, V. A. (2012). *Samy`e upotrebitel`ny`e ital`yanskije frazeologizmy`. Obshhenie na ital`yanskom*. [The most common Italian phraseological units. Communication in Italian]. Moskva, Astrel`, Vladimir. VKT [in Rus.].
- Kry`lova, I. E`. (2018). K voprosu ob osnovny`x tipax frazeologicheskix edinic v sovremennom russkom yazy`koznanii. [More on the main types of phraseological units in modern Russian linguistics]. *Novy`e gorizonty` rusistiki*, 5, 7-10. [in Rus.].
- Maslova, V. A. (2014). Lingvokul`turologiya kak nauka o naibolee kul`turonosny`x yazy`kovy`x sushhnostyax [Cultural linguistics as a science of the most culturally linguistic entities] *Aktual`ny`e problemy` filologii i pedagogicheskoy lingvistiki*, 16, 78-90 [in Rus.].
- Mnogoyazychnyj slovar' sovremennoj frazeologii* (2012). [Multilingual Dictionary of Modern Phraseology] Compiled: Vinogradova, V. i dr. Moscow, Flinta, Rim, Italo-slavyanskaya kul`turnaya asociaciya [in Rus.].
- Rosenthal, D. E., & Krasnyanskiy, V. V. (2017). *Frazeologicheskij slovar' russkogo yazyka: 700 frazeologicheskix oborotov*. [Phraseological Dictionary of the Russian Language: 700 phraseological units]. Mir i obrazovanie [in Rus.].
- Rossijskij gumanitarnyj e`nciklopedicheskij slovar* (2002). [Russian humanitarian encyclopedic dictionary]. Tom 3. Gl. Klubkov, P. A. (Ed.) Saint-Petersburg, VLADOS [in Rus.].
- Sklyar, P. A. (2019). *Russkie posloviy i pogovorki v illyustracijax. Istoriya i proisxozhdenie*. [Russian proverbs and sayings in illustrations. History and origins], Moscow, Eksmo [in Rus.].
- Teliya, V. N. (2006). *Bol'shoy frazeologicheskij slovar' russkogo yazyka: Znachenie. Upotreblenie. Kul`turologicheskij kommentarij* [Large phraseological dictionary of the Russian language: Meaning. Use. Culturological commentary], Moscow, AST - PRESS KNIGA. [in Rus.].
- Ustinova, T. V. (2019). Analiz konceptual`nogo sodержaniya isxodnogo i perevodnogo tekstov kak priem issledovaniya v perevodovedenii. [Analysis of the conceptual content of the source and translated texts as a research technique in translation studies]. *Mir nauki. Sociologiya, filologiya, kul`turologiya*, 1, 11-12 [in Rus.].
- Vardazaryan, A. V. (2012). *Nacional`no-kul`turologicheskije osobennosti metaforicheskix frazeologicheskix edinic v zapadno-romanskix yazy`kax*. [National and cultural features of metaphorical phraseological units in Western Romanic languages] Vestnik MGLU.[in Rus.].

- Vereshchagin, E. M., & Kostomarov, V. G. (2008). *Yazyk i kul'tura. Tri lingvostranovedcheskie koncepcii: leksicheskogo fona, rechepovedencheskix taktik i sapientemy`* [Language and culture. Three linguistic concepts: lexical background, speech tactics and sapientemes], RGB. [in Rus.].
- Yurina, E. A. (2018). *Konceptual'naya metafora pogloshheniya zhidkosti v pishhevom kode russkoj lingvokul'tury*. [Conceptual metaphor of liquid absorption in the food code of Russian linguoculture]. *Russian Language Studies*, 16(4), 428-450. [in Rus.].  
<https://doi.org/10.22363/2618-8163-2018-16-4-428-450>
- Zimin, V. I. (2018). *Slovar` tezaurus russkix poslovicz, pogovorok i metkix vy`razhenij: bolee 22000 poslovicz, pogovorok, molvushek, prislovij, prigovorok, priskazok, zagadok, primet, draznilok, schitalok*. [Dictionary thesaurus of Russian proverbs, sayings and apt expressions: more than 22,000 proverbs, sayings, gossips, sayings, sentences, sayings, riddles, signs, teasers, counting rhymes]. AST-Press Shkola [in Rus.].
- Zorko, G. F., & Cheredeeva, E. I. (2010). *Novyj russko-ital'yanskij slovar'* [New Russian-Italian Dictionary]. Saint – Petersburg, Astrel'-SPb [in Rus.]