

Exploring the Role of Animal Phrases in English and Russian

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Abstract: Phrases are used to express emotions and states of mind. Phrases are a special lexical level of any language, reflecting the culture of the people and are widely used in various fields of communication. The aim of this paper is to study animal phrases in English and Russian. Firstly, phraseology is studied as a science, phrases are categorized and the concept of "animal" is defined. The second part of the discussion is devoted to the semantic classification of English and Russian phrases with the word "animal" and their comparative analysis. The semantic character of the phrases depends on the semantics of the animal words, which reflect the everyday experience of Russians and Englishmen, their historical and cultural experience, their national mentality and the uniqueness of their evaluation of the world around them. The study of English and Russian phrases allows us to gain a deeper insight into the history and character of the two peoples, to compare the pictures and imagery of the two countries, and thus to better understand their languages. Both languages play a fundamental role in our time. Phrases have already been the subject of a great deal of linguistic research.

Keywords: Languages, Animal phrases, English, Russian.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of Study

English and Russian have centuries of history. During this time, many stable combinations have appeared in both languages, giving the languages of different peoples a special color. As many scientists note, terms are used to express emotions and mental states. Phrases are the special lexical level of any language, reflecting the culture of the people and widely used in various spheres of communication. And the phraseological dimension of a language, characterized by the focus on the expression of emotions, feelings and mental states, is very important for determining the specific content of speech of a particular language user, which is very important for the teaching of English.

1.2. Purposes and Significance of the Study

Linguistic research focuses on the cultural and historical traditions of the people who use the language. In this work in this study the originality of phrases as linguistic symbols is studied through their linguistic and cultural traditions. The semantic and linguistic-cultural features of phrases with the component "animal word" in English and Russian are compared by means of the semantic taxonomy proposed by Kunin. The definition of the word "animal" includes all animals associated with the animal kingdom. Since human beings have dealt with the zoological world in one way or another throughout their history, animal names have been used to describe human behavior. The existence of these phrases is important for any language and culture.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Language

Language is the conventional system of spoken, signed or written symbols that humans use to express themselves. It is an umbrella term for any complex system of communication

used by humans, which consists of words and phrases that can be combined to create an infinitely varied discourse. How humans originally developed language is not entirely clear, so linguists are still studying it. Let us take a look at some of these definitions: the famous American linguist Sapir suggested that "language is a purely human, non-instinctive method of communicating thoughts, feelings, and desires by means of intentionally created symbols" [1]. Chomsky believes that language is a uniquely human capacity and is the primary way in which humans produce and communicate ideas. He further states that language is a system of symbols and symbols represent meanings. Through language, people are able to express an infinite number of meanings, which makes language a very powerful communication tool. In addition, Chomsky argues that language is a natural ability of people and that everyone possesses the ability to use language, but that this ability develops to varying degrees under certain circumstances [2].

In modern languages, the interconnection between language and culture is unquestionable. The linguistic system of each particular language is unique. Because a person does not exist outside the language, he utilizes the language to learn the culture of his people, the language not only reflects the modern culture in an instant, but also records the cultural conditions of the past and transmits its values from generation to generation. Thus, language is the guardian of cultural traditions [3].

2.2. The relationship between phrases and language

Phrases are inextricably linked to language, and phrases are one of the linguistic devices often used in any language. Phrases help to enhance the expressiveness of language by making it more graphic, expressive and persuasive." The term "phrasaeologia" (phrasaeologia is a Latin word in which phrasia means "turn of speech, expression" and logia means "collection, assembly") was first used in 1558 by the German linguist and humanist Neander to denote the turn of speech

and collection of expressions of the ancient Greek orator Isocrates, which Neander translated into Latin [4].

Koonin attached great importance to the phraseology of English, which he defined as follows, "Phraseological phrases are combinations of words, i.e., independent forms with fully or partially reinterpreted components" [5].

2.3. Classification of phrases

The problem of phrases is a subject of close attention and many discussions in linguistics. Although to date linguists have not developed a unified approach to the classification of phraseological units, their interest in this linguistic phenomenon has not waned.

The classification of phrases was first proposed by the Franco-Swiss scientist Pauli in 1909. In his book *Traite de stylistique française*, the scientist divided phraseological units into two categories based on the degree of stabilization:

(1) Combinations (groups of phrases) in which the components can be freely combined;

(2) There are no such free combinations (phraseological units) [6].

However, Bowley only summarized these types graphically and did not describe them in detail. Following him, Russian linguists began to categorize phrases at the end of the 19th century.

Kunin is a famous linguist in Russian linguistics who played an important role in the development of the theory of phrase classification. Kunin's semantic classification of phraseological units is widely recognized. He classified all phraseological units into three categories:

(1) Phraseological units with positive meaning;

(2) Phraseological units with negative connotations;

(3) Phraseological units of neutral meaning.

The object of the study is phrases with animal vocabulary, and the concept of defining "animal" will be discussed in the next section.

2.4. Animal phrases in English and Russian

As the oldest and most commonly used words, "animal phrases" are widespread in all the languages of the world. Animals are closer to human beings than any other objects in the world around them in terms of form of existence and corporeality, because of all living creatures, only animals have their own habits and special tendencies like human

beings.

"Animals " The term was introduced into science in the 1960s and consists of the words "zoo" (a foreign root word indicating a relationship with the animal world) and "nym" (from the Greek word *onyma*, meaning "name") [7]. The interest of scientists in this issue has been growing day by day in recent decades. Despite the popularity of the term, there is no clear definition. To date, there are two main approaches to the definition of the term "animal": 1) the lexicographic approach, in which the proponents believe that animal is the exclusive name of an animal belonging to the animal world, and 2) the lexico-semantic approach, in which the proponents believe that the term refers not only to the name of an animal belonging to the animal world, but also to a number of other words denoting words related to the life of an animal.

3. Methodology

3.1. Objectives of the study

The basic aim of this study is to compare the semantic and linguistic-cultural features of phrases containing the component "zoonim" in English and Russian.

3.2. Semantic Categorization Framework

In this study, we adopted Kunin's semantic classification method due to its scientific rigor and accuracy compared to other phrase classification methods proposed by linguists. This categorization method is very useful for completing our study.

3.3. Research methodology

In order to collect information for the study, the following sampling method was used.

(1) English Phrase Dictionary: We have selected phrases from the English Phrase Dictionary that contain words related to animals, such as "rabbit", "horse" and "cat". "dog", etc.

(2) Dictionary of Russian phrases: Again, we have selected words related to animals from the Russian phrasebook.

(3) Specialized phrase-expression sites: In addition to dictionaries, we have collected phrases from specialized English and Russian phrase-expression sites.

As a result of this comprehensive sampling process, a total of 56 English phrases and 56 Russian phrases were selected for analysis (Figure 1 and Figure 2).

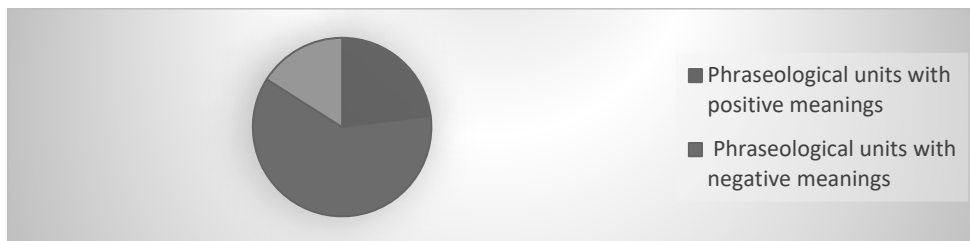


Figure 1. Russian phrases with animal words

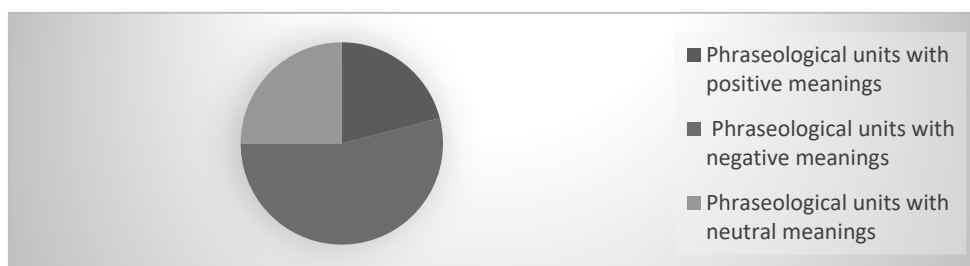


Figure 2. English phrases with animal words

4. Findings and Discussion

According to Kunin's semantic categorization data. Animal word phrases expressing negative meanings account for 61% and 54% in Russian and English, respectively; animal word phrases expressing neutral meanings - 16% and 25% in Russian and English, respectively; animal word phrases expressing positive meanings - 23% and 21% in Russian and English, respectively.

This shows that phrases with animal words with negative meanings are used most often in Russian, and phrases with animal words with neutral meanings are used least often. English phrases with animal words also most often have a negative meaning, but less often a positive one.

From these data, it can be concluded that from a thematic point of view, phrases with Russian animal words do not differ much from English: in both Russian and English, negative meanings predominate in phrases with animal words. In Russian, the most common animal words with negative connotations include cat, dog and wolf. In English, on the other hand, it is cat, crocodile, fox, and so on. This difference perhaps reflects the differences in the everyday experience, historical and cultural experiences, and national mentality of the people of the two countries. For example, Russians may have a more complicated relationship with cats, as the term may represent something mysterious or obscure in their culture. In contrast, in British culture, cats are more often seen as pets or companion animals. It is also important to consider the semantic properties carried by the different animal terms themselves. For example, the crocodile is often seen as a symbol of viciousness and danger, and may be more easily associated with negative connotations in English. For Russians, on the other hand, they have specific feelings and evaluations about a different animal vocabulary.

To summarize, although this conclusion is drawn only from phrases with animal words, it does not fully represent the overall assessment of the world by Russians and Britons. However, it provides a unique perspective to understand the emotions, cultures, and experiences embedded in the everyday use of language by the people of both countries.

4.1. Semantic characterization of phrases with animal words in the Russian language

An interesting phenomenon can be observed when it comes to the phrases used by Russians when describing animal-related topics: in the largest group of phrases, 34 phraseological units have a negative connotation. This implies that Russians are more inclined to adopt a negative approach in their expressions in this area. These phrases reflect not only subjective human perceptions of animals, but may also derive from observations of animal behavior and animal-human interactions.

Some of these phrases with negative connotations, such as "упрямый как осел", convey the animal's inherent characteristics in their expression. It is widely believed that the African wild ass is the ancestor of the modern domestic donkey, while Russian speakers perceive the donkey as having a stubborn nature and often refusing to obey. This perception provides the basis for the expression "упрямый как осел", which evokes the stubborn and uncontrollable character of the donkey.

Another example is "как кошка с собакой", a phrase used to describe someone's shrewd and deceitful behavior. The

relationship between cats and dogs is perceived to be tense, and since ancient times they have been portrayed in opposing roles. Interactions between these animals are often accompanied by conflict and arguments, thus "как кошка с собакой" derives the meaning of cunning and deception.

However, alongside these negative expressions, there are also positive phrases based on animal vocabulary. For example, "собаку съесть", although usually used to describe a professional and experienced person, may have its origins in the ancient Hindu game of dice rolling. In this game, a bad roll was called "собака", while a successful roll was called "съел". This origin infuses the phrase with a mysterious layer of historical context, linking animal vocabulary to human behavior.

There is also a group of neutral phrases which are often used in everyday life and have a wide range of applications and understandings. For example, the phrase "как пчелы на мёд" is based on bees and conveys activity, enthusiasm and concentration. The efficient honey-gathering behavior of bees associates them with positive human traits, creating a graphic and vivid metaphor.

Finally, "спать как сурок" is another interesting neutral phrase that derives from the hibernation habits of groundhogs. This phrase describes a person who sleeps for a long time and is difficult to wake up, linking animal behavior to human sleeping habits.

To sum up, the phrases about animals used by Russians reflect their perception of animal characteristics and behavior, which are expressed both negatively and positively and neutrally. These phrases not only enrich the expressive power of the language, but also reveal human observation and understanding of the animal world.

4.2. Semantic characterization of phrases with animal words in the English language

An equally interesting phenomenon can be seen when it comes to the phrases used by the British when describing animal-related topics:

In the largest group of phrases 30 phraseological units had negative connotations. Phrases with negative connotations focus on conveying negative emotions such as false sympathy, corruption, and injustice. For example, the phrase "crocodile tears" is used when describing false sympathy, and comes from the observation that crocodiles seem to cry when swallowing, but in reality crocodiles are emotionless. Similarly, the phrase "a fat cat" is used to refer to rich and extravagant people, especially those who make huge profits at the expense of others, suggesting greedy and immoral behavior.

Also outside of these negative expressions, there are positive phrases based on animal vocabulary. These positive phrases express positive qualities such as good luck and grace. For example, the phrase "a lucky dog" is used to describe someone who is very lucky and shows appreciation for their good fortune. Similarly, "as graceful as a swan" is used to describe someone who moves or behaves smoothly and gracefully, associating grace with the swan's dance and conveying positive praise.

In addition, there is a group of neutral phrases with neutral meanings that focus more on neutral contexts such as resource distribution and distance measurement. For example, the phrase "the lion's share" describes an unequal distribution of resources and is derived from Aesop's fables, but in modern

contexts it only denotes a majority share and does not necessarily carry explicit positive or negative connotations. Similarly, the phrase "as the crow flies", when describing the shortest distance between two points, emphasizes straight-line distances and ignores obstacles and detours.

To sum up, these phrases with animal vocabulary convey a wealth of semantic features in English, covering negative, neutral and positive emotions and perspectives, enriching the expressive power of the language, while reflecting human observation and understanding of animal behavior and characteristics.

5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis, it is concluded that the phraseological units with animal words in Russian and English are very similar: in both Russian and English, phrases with animal words have predominantly negative meanings. These phraseological units with negative connotations reflect specific ideas of Russian culture about the character of animals and the way they interact. They reveal subjective perceptions of animal behavior and character traits that are used to describe human behavior or character. It can be seen that phraseological units with animal words in Russian are dominated by negative connotations, which may be closely related to the specific viewpoints held by the Russian people about animal behavior, character and ways of interaction. The

obtained results and conclusions can be used for further linguistic research, as well as for consideration of issues related to lexicography, phraseology, and research on the use of phraseological units with animal names in Russian and English in the educational process.

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