

Comparative Phraseological Phrases with Components of Zoonyms in English and Russian

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Abstract: This group of phraseological units is one of the numerous ones in the phraseological fund of the English and Russian languages. Animals in these units symbolize this or that quality of a person. The common features and differences of the languages under consideration are distinguished in the article. Similarities are explained by the common origin; differences result from peculiarities of life of every nation, geographical conditions, traditions, customs, etc.

Key points: phraseological unit, zoonyms, proverbs, sayings.

Speaking about the phraseological fund of Russian and English languages we would like to note a large number of anthropocentric phraseological units (PU) with the component zoonym. In its vast majority of idiomatic expressions were created by the people, so they are associated with the interests and everyday concerns of ordinary people. Our distant ancestors believed that there is a kinship between people and animals. Each tribe chose such a "relative" and made it a symbol of the family or tribe - totem. After that, the animal could not be killed or eaten. Totemism was widespread among all peoples, and its vestiges were preserved in religions. Animal names (zoonyms) are one of the oldest layers of vocabulary in all languages of the world. In an attempt to characterize his behaviour, feelings, states, appearance, man resorted to comparison with what was closest to him and similar to himself - the animal world. Let us recall at least the Japanese horoscope with "zoological" names. People born in a certain year, according to ancient sages, were endowed with the features of the corresponding animal. Therefore, in the languages of different nations we find a large number of comparisons, proverbs and sayings and phraseological expressions that include zoonyms.

It is not by chance that we have singled out this group of PUs, as PUs with zoonyms are one of the most numerous groups of the phraseological fund. These PUs reflect centuries-old human observations of the appearance and habits of animals, convey the attitude of people to their "lesser brothers", thus being a cultural-information fund in every language. A language contains a certain code of culture, which is fully accessible only to the bearers of a given culture or to people familiarised with the symbology of a given culture. Thus, a phraseology describing a cow as a slow and stupid animal in English would be incomprehensible or at least perplexing to a people whose culture holds the cow as a sacred animal.

The use of the description of actions and states of an animal in a certain situation as a figurative core of PUs to denote this or similar situations in the sphere of human relations by corresponding phraseological expressions is characteristic of many languages. Components-names of animals easily pass into the category of words-symbols reflecting people's perceptions of different animals: "cunning as a fox", "cowardly as a hare" and others.

Many names of animals have become stable metaphors denoting human properties and qualities. For example: fox - "a cunning, flattering person", bear - "a clumsy, clumsy person", etc.

The image-symbol naming the animal was formed under the influence of various beliefs. Therefore, there could be two or even several opinions about this or that animal. As an example, we can cite the attitude to the hare. D. K. Zelenin, a famous Russian ethnographer, wrote: "In bans and other beliefs about hare there are many of them, which were obviously created not in the hunting environment, in any case - not by a primitive hunter. Such as, for example, the belief about the proximity of the hare to the unclean force". [1] According to the beliefs of the ancient Slavs, the hare was represented as an image of the devil. Meeting with a hare was considered a bad omen in all Slavs, in Germany and France. In the Russian language, the hare is represented in folk oral art with sympathy. For this animal, although he is a symbol of cowardice, usually stand up for the protagonists of fairy tales. Both in Russian fairy tales and in phraseology, it is not at all associated with evil forces, but only represents cowardice: "hare's soul", "cowardly as a hare".

Horse, horse are great labourers who played a very important role in the peasant economy. They symbolise this quality in phraseology: "Уставший как лошадь", "крутые холмы скатились на Сивку". But these animals are also represented by the words "gelding", "mare". They have the opposite meaning: "Лежит, как сивый мерин", "мечта голубой кобылы", "пришить кобыле хвост". The zoonym "horse" in English is associated with a significant number of PUs: "Сильный, как лошадь"; "слезть с лошади"; "пороть дохлую лошадь"; "держат лошадей"; "есть, как лошадь" and others. Rus. "Темная лошадка" (about a person whose character, inner qualities, principles are unknown, unclear) - English "a dark horse". This expression originally belonged to the argot of racing fans. Without having information about the horse, it is impossible to judge its chances of winning. This image embodies the unknown and a share of risk.[2]

In contextual realisations, the greatest percentage of examples with negative evaluative connotations is accounted for by the component "donkey". The paradoxical nature of the interpretation of this image in Russian and English ethnoculture is that in ancient times both peoples considered the donkey a sacred animal. Certain rituals connected with the glorification of the donkey have become part of both Catholic and Orthodox churches. In some counties of Great Britain and in the western United States there are still held competitions of "donkey beauty" and "donkey parades" in memory of the flight of the Holy Family on donkeys to Egypt. Russian PUs with the zoonym "donkey" invariably have a negative evaluative connotation. In the English phraseological fund only one proverb contains a positive evaluative component "Asses as well as pitches have ears" (Fools and children understand much more than speakers think).[3] In Russian, "Buridanov donkey" is used when referring to a person who is extremely indecisive and has difficulty choosing between two equally valuable possibilities. This expression is attributed to the French philosopher of the XIV century Jean Buridan. To prove the absence of free will, he allegedly cited the example of a donkey who, being at an equal distance between two identical bales of hay, would starve to death if he had absolute free will, as he would not be able to choose which bale to eat first. In English there is an analogue of this PU - "Buridan's ass"; "an ass between two bundles of hay", but this expression is a bookish one.

The linguistic picture of the languages under study involves animal names involved in figurative motivation:

1. Mammals: domestic animals: sheep – овца; lamb – ягненок; pig, sow, swine – свинья; ox – вол; bull – бык; cow – корова; horse – лошадь; mare – кобыла; dog – собака; ass – осел; hare – заяц; cat – кот; goat – коза, козел; дикие животные: fox – лиса; wolf – волк; bear – медведь; leopard – леопард; lion – лев; camel – верблюд; ape – обезьяна; rat – крыса.
2. Birds: domestic birds: hen, chicken – курица; goose – гусь; gander – гусак; duck – утка; cock – петух; drake – селезень; дикие птицы: bird – птица; sparrow – воробей; magpie – сорока; crow – ворона; lark – жаворонок; rook – грач; hawk – ястреб; owl – сова; pigeon – голубь.
3. Reptiles: crocodile – крокодил; snake, serpent – змея.
4. Fish, arthropods: fish – рыба; crab – краб, рак; crayfish – речной рак.
5. Insects: bee – пчела; fly – муха.

Domestic animals and wild birds receive the greatest species usage, but in terms of frequency of use in paremi, the mammal group takes the leading position.[4]

As for the English and Russian languages, these are primarily "dog", "pig", "goat", "goat", "donkey", etc..., names of which have a negative connotation based both on real observations and on the stereotype of the animal's intelligence, character and other traits: «as drunk as David's sow» (букв. «пьян в стельку»); англ. «eat like a pig» "жрать, как свинья" в значении «есть, как свинья, есть с жадностью, чавкая» meaning "очень неуклюже".

Comparisons with a dog are in many ways universal to many languages, and are inherent both in Russian: «продрог, как собака»; «замерз, как собака» (it is used to refer to a severely frozen, shivering person and emphasise a strong feeling of cold); "нюх, как у собаки", and in English: "Sick as a dog", and "work like a dog".[5]

The idea of the dog as a persecuted creature is known from the Bible, the name of this animal gives the greatest number of negative connotations: since this animal is primarily a guardian of the household, it is associated with anger ("злой, как собака"), the dog is kept in captivity: in a kennel and on a chain ("живет, как собака"), the dog is taken on a hunt, where it runs more than one verst ("устал, как собака"). Thus, the Russian expression "to hang/hang dogs". The word "dog" in this expression is used in the sense of "burdock, which is hung on clothes". Another version is the fact that the expression is associated with medieval punishment of noble people who committed a deed defaming their honour, on the back of the guilty knight hung a dog, and he had to run with it a certain distance. Instead of a dog, a saddle or a sack with stones could be attached to his back. The dog's domestication and dependence on man probably contributed to such negative figurative evaluations.[6]

O. N. Trubachev notes that "the dog" turns out to be almost everywhere the first ancient domestic animal. However, it "came close to man as a parasite, eating rubbish near human camps. This was the beginning of the relationship between man and the dog. But the Indo-Europeans also preserved until the appearance of written monuments, and in some cases up to our days, clear traces of the religious role of the dog as an animal surrounded by high honours, inviolable, endowed with divine power "

In the Russian language, the denotation "dog" in phraseological expressions is used rather in a negative, mocking, joking sense - «жить как кошка с собакой», «как с цепи сорвался»" (although in the second example the lexeme "dog" is not directly present, it is implied, as a dog usually sits on a chain), "like a lot of dogs" (in the sense of "a lot": again it is implied that the excessive number of dogs is to be destroyed); "like a dog hungry" (the hungry state of a person is compared to an eternally hungry stray dog); "like a dog in the hay" (association with an extremely greedy person).[7]

Ethnically negative attitude to a dog is also traced in English phraseological expressions: "done up like a dog's dinner" and "dressed up like a dog's dinner" - dressed vulgarly. A dog, always dirty and living in uncomfortable conditions, is compared to a defiant, inappropriate appearance and behaviour of a person, i.e. there is the already mentioned association with something unpleasant. The English phraseological expression "fight like cats and dogs", which has a correlate in Russian - "live like cats and dogs" - reflects the dog's intolerance and intolerance.

Along with the same emotionally negatively coloured PUs with the zoonym "dog" in Russian and English languages, it is possible to distinguish the presence of positive or neutral colouring of phraseological units with this component. For example, in English there is the phrase "Hot dog" (hot dog). This phraseological unit in the form of slang entered the English language, and through it into other languages of the world, in particular Russian. Physical and characteristic features of this phenomenon began to designate "sandwich" and "cool guy", which, as it turned out, have all the features of "hot dog". Here we can speak about the ethnic colouring of this comparative long before these culinary products appeared in the CIS countries, they were thrown on the market of Western countries and America, where they were consumed by the representatives of the class of "white-

collar" clerks in a hurry to work, who often had no time for a thorough process of eating; it was very difficult to hold a hot sausage sandwich in their hands, as well as a dog. [8]

The absence of negative connotation in relation to "dog" is seen in the English expression "as clumsy as a puppy"; this expression has a connotation of pleasantness and condescension. The PU "work like a dog" with the meaning of hard work indicates the positive colouring of this expression: the English pay tribute to the dog's endurance, its ability to perform heavy loads. As we can see, the series of associations characterising the attitude to the denotation "dog" in these FEs are different in the languages being compared. In English, the silent subject is also compared to a dog, "Dumb dog". The associative background is the dog's speechlessness, when it expresses its full understanding with its gaze, but cannot express its feeling with words or other intelligible sounds. The emotional colouring of this slang expression is not negative, but rather neutral.

Thus, considering and analysing PUs with zoonyms in their composition, we managed to reveal the presence of PUs in one language, which have no analogues or cripples in another - they bear the imprint of national-cultural specificity and are connected with ethnically marked elements of linguistic consciousness.

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