

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH IDIOMS WITH HEART- AND SOUL- ELEMENTS

Galina ERTAȘ, student, Faculty of Philology,
Alecu Russo Bălți State University

Scientific adviser: Diana GRÎȚUNIC-MIRCA, lecturer

Rezumat: *Studiul contrastiv al unităților frazeologice din diferite limbi relevă asemănările, precum și deosebiri între culturile corespunzătoare, fiind importante pentru problematica lingvisticii generale. Studiul încearcă să coreleze idiomuri în limbile engleză și rusă pentru a defini echivalențele inter-lingvistice interculturale.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *unități frazeologice, studiu contrastiv, lingvistică contrastivă, locuțiuni și expresii frazeologice, idiomuri, echivalente lingvistice.*

Nowadays great attention is given to learning the language system in its relation to thinking. In this connection language is anthropocentric representing the national and cultural mentality and specific way of thinking of speakers, preserving the culture and transmitting it to other generations.

The Polish linguist Anna Wierzbicka states that *language is a mirror of culture, as well as being a part of culture* [4, p. 373]. So, language is a mirror that reflects the one's own image of the surrounding world and cultural realities.

The results of conceiving the objective world are reflected in the so-called subjective *linguistic world image*. The concept of *language worldview* is rising to the Humbolt's philosophical teaching: *languages are different nation bodies for their original thinking and perception* [4, pp. 234-236]. German linguist Leo Weisgerber was the first scientist to coin the term *language of the world* into semiotics.

Proceeding from this idea, phraseological units featuring history, culture, traditions and culture of native speakers are of particular interest in researching any

language. Comparative analysis of these categories reveals similarities as well as differences between cultures.

Phraseology is considered to be a young branch of linguistics. A great importance to the development of the Phraseology as a science was brought by world-wide linguists such as Ch. Bally, V.V. Vinogradov, F. Sailer, M.M. Shanskiy, L. Smith, V.L. Arkhangelskiy, Ch. Fillmore, D. Sinclair, V.M. Telia, R. Moon and others. However, there is still no unambiguous definition of the phraseological unit. The term is used in Russian and Eastern Europe linguistics and is usually defined as non-motivated expressions, *that cannot be freely made up in speech but are reproduced as ready-made units* [3, p. 74].

The second important problem that should be solved is whether the terms *phraseological units* and *idioms* can be considered as synonyms. Ch. Fernando, J. Strassler, A. V. Koonin, N. N. Amosova and other Europe and Russian linguists prefer to use the term *idiom* instead of term *phraseological unit*. Makkai defines an *idiom* as a *polylexonic lexeme which is made up of more than one minimal free form or (morphological) word, each lexon of which can occur in other environments as the realization of a monolexonic lexeme* [10, p. 121]. So, comparing various definitions of *idioms* and *phraseological units* one can see both these terms are usually used to define the same linguistic item. We will use term *idiom* as a synonym to the term *phraseological unit* in this paper.

Lack of clarity over the definition of the phraseological unit is the main reason why linguist's opinions differ upon what the object of study of Phraseology is. Scientists use the term *idiom* in both broad and narrow meanings. In the broad sense, phraseology deals with fixed word combinations as phrasemes, collocations, routine formulae and proverbs. The narrow definition considers only true idioms. We use the term in its narrow view that consists of lexical combinations whose meaning cannot be understood from the separate meaning of its parts.

Linguists study Phraseology from different points of view. One of the most used ways to show both differences and similarities between cultures by studying the languages is to identify correspondences between phraseological units as idioms are phrases whose meaning cannot be understood literally. That's why it is important to find equivalents and analogues in other languages. For example, when one says *I go there with half a heart*, he doesn't mean that he has only the half of his heart, but rather that he doesn't want to go somewhere.

Comparing various Russian as well as English idioms, Kunin A.V. identifies four types of correspondences: *full, partial and zero equivalents and analogues* [8, p. 113].

The full equivalents are understood to be idioms of the first compared language that coincide with idioms of the second language *by meaning, lexical composition, stylistic coloring, and grammatical structure* [2, p. 2]. For example, to express one's very alarmed state both English and Russian use the idiom *with a sinking heart* – *с унывшим сердцем*.

Partial equivalents are idioms that are adequate by their meaning and stylistic coloring to source language idioms, differing with lexical and grammatical

features. The partial inter-language equivalence is presented with such idioms as *one's heart is in one's mouth* – *сердце не на месте* that are used to express one's sense of danger both in the English and Russian languages. These phraseological units fully coincide by their meaning and stylistic coloring, but differ with their components and grammatical structure.

Zero equivalence is also called phraseological lacunarity. It reflects *absence of phraseological equivalent to impact meaning of phraseological unit of other language* [2, p. 5] For example, English idiom *to know [learn] smth. off by heart* that means *to memorise smth. or to know smth. from memory* can not be either translated or replaced by a Russian equivalent owing to the lack thereof.

Inter-language analogues are idioms that coincide by their meaning with idioms of the source language, but differ *completely or partially by image basis* [7, p. 137.] A thing or a reality of collated languages can be transferred by different phraseological units that contain conditionally called cultural component. For example, Russian word *душа* is contextually translated into English as *life*. It is reflected in the following idioms: Russian *класть душу* that means *to sacrifice one's life* has not identical equivalent in English, though the reality is reflected in the idiom *to give up one's life for smb./smth* with the same meaning. The same pattern is reflected in the idioms that are used when someone does smth. for as long as he/she is alive: *пока душа держится в теле* – *for as long as someone has some life left in him*.

Comparing Russian and English phraseological units with the words *heart* and *soul*, we classify them as:

- I. full, partial and zero equivalents and analogues with the word *soul*;
- II. full, partial and zero equivalents and analogues with the word *heart*.

I. Full, partial and zero equivalents and analogues with the word *soul*:

- a) full equivalents: *to pry inside one's soul* – *лезть в душу* (to inquire in someone's personal life); *to torment one's soul* – *бередить душу* (to evoke painful memories); *a living soul* – *живая душа*;
- b) partial equivalents: *to bare one's soul* – *выворачивать душу* (to reveal one's feelings); *a twin soul* – *родственная душа* (someone whom one knows inside and out); *эле-эле душа в теле* – *body and soul are scarcely held together* (ill);
- c) zero equivalents: *poor heart* (an exclamation of pity); *to take the heart out of smb.* (discourage); *плюнуть в душу* (to insult what is most dear to someone); *not to be able to call one's soul one's own* (spends most of one's time working for others); *тянуть за душу* (to vex, exasperate someone to an extreme degree); *с души воротит* (to be nauseated by smth.); *кривить душой* (to say smth. false); *ни душой, ни телом* (absolutely not [guilty etc.]); *в одну душу* (repeatedly, persistently); *кошки скребут на душе* (to feel terrible); *душа в душу* (in complete agreement); *брать грех на душу* (to take moral responsibility for a reprehensible deed); *как бог на душу положит* (anyhow);
- d) analogues: *стоять над душой* – *to look over someone's shoulder* (to weary someone with one's presence); *выматывать душу* – *to wear some out* (to

vex someone); *вытрясти душу* – *to shake the life out of someone* (to harass someone); *отдыхать душой* – *one's mind is at rest* (to free oneself of stress).

II. Full, partial and zero equivalents and analogues with the word *heart*:

- e) **full equivalents**: *with a heavy heart* – *с тяжелым сердцем* (feeling upset); *to take [right] to heart* – *принимать [близко] к сердцу* (to be deeply affected by smth.); *to give one's heart to smb.* – *отдавать сердце* (to fall in love with smb.); *to open one's heart* – *открывать сердце* (to reveal one's feelings); *to win one's heart* – *покорять сердце* (to be infatuated with love); *heart aches* – *сердце ноет, разрывается* (to experience emotional sufferings); *heart bleeds* – *сердце кровью обливается* (someone feels deep emotional pain); *to rip smth. from someone's heart* – *отрывать от сердца* (to give up smth. dear); *a broken heart* – *разбитое сердце* (feeling sad and unhappy); *a heart of stone* – *каменное сердце* (a stern or cruel nature);
- f) **partial equivalents**: *to carry a child under one's heart* – *носить под сердцем* (to be pregnant); *heart skipped [missed] a bit, heart jumped, heart stood still* – *сердце оборвалось, закатилось, ёкнуло* (someone feels as if his heart has stopped beating); *to lift up one's heart, to take heart of grace* – *скрепя сердце* (with great unwillingness); *to harden one's heart* – *сердце мохом обрастает* (to become heartless); *in the depths of one's soul* – *в глубине души* (innermost feelings);
- g) **zero equivalents**: *вымещать сердце* (to let out one's anger); *отлегло от сердца* (a feeling of alarm left someone); *to sob one's heart out* – *горько рыдать*;
- h) **analogues**: *в сердцах* – *in a fit of anger [temper]* (to display a very bad temper); *to lose heart* – *руки опускаются* (become discouraged).

The phraseological research shows that there is a common ground between these groups both in Russian and English. So, we can also identify 2 groups of inter-language equivalents and analogues:

1. equivalents with both words *soul* and *heart*;

2. partial equivalents with the words *heart* (in English) and *soul* (in Russian).

1. Full equivalents with both words *soul* and *heart*. We have found 3 heart- (*душа*) and soul- (*сердце*) idioms of this type both in English and Russian. This phenomenon reflects the commonality in people's thinking independently of language and culture: *in someone's heart [soul]* – *на душе* (innermost feelings); *with all one's heart [soul]* – *от всего сердца [всей души]* (sincerely); *to open [unburden] one's heart [soul]* – *to someone* – *открыть [распахнуть] душу [сердце]* (to tell someone openly one's innermost feelings).

2. Partial equivalents with the words *heart* (in English) and *soul* (in Russian). As the phraseological study shows, there is a specific type of inter-language idiomatic analogues in the compared languages. 33 English phraseological units with the word *heart* have analogues in Russian with the same meaning, stylistic coloring, but different lexical components and grammatical structure. So, our research notes that in English feelings and thoughts proceed from the heart while Russian prefer to demonstrate their innermost feeling using *soul-* (*душа*) related idioms: *dear heart* –

душа моя (a friendly way of addressing); *have one's [whole] heart in smth.* – вкладывать [всю] душу (to apply one's all energy, efforts); *close to one's heart – no душе* (of deep interest and concern to one); *to be sick at heart* – болеть душой (to experience emotional pain); *to make one's heart ache* – надирать душу (to make someone depressed); *open [pour out, uncover] one's heart to smb* – открыть душу (one's thoughts and feelings); *young at heart* – молод в душе (an adult person enjoys doing things young people do); *eat one's heart out* – травить душу (to cause someone emotional pain); *to wear one's heart upon one's sleeve, to open heart to people* – душа нараспашку (to be open with people); *to have one's heart into one's boots, one's heart failed him* – душа уходит в пятки (to experience very strong fear); *to lose one's heart to* – прійтись по душе (to fall in love with); *chicken-hearted* – заячья душа (a cowardly, timid person); *heart-to-heart talk* – разговор по душам (a frank discussion); *in one's heart of hearts* – в душе (deep within oneself); *as long as one's heart desires* – сколько душе угодно (to the extend one wants); *whatever [anything] one's heart desires* – что душе угодно (whatever one wants); *to one's heart content* – как душе угодно (the way one wants); *to put one's heart into smth.* – вкладывать душу (to do smth. with enthusiasm); *to engrave [up] on one's heart* – западать в душу (to be remembered for a long time); *to have a soft corner in one's heart for smb.* – души не чаять (to love someone deeply); *to search one's heart* – заглянуть к себе в душу (to think about one's feeling, actions); *to look into the hidden places of one's heart* – заглядывать в душу (to understand someone's feelings, thoughts); *from the [very] bottom of one's heart, straight [right] from the heart, with an open heart* – от всей души (sincerely); *to have a big heart, to be bighearted* – большой души (to take care of others); *to wrench smth./smb. out of one's heart* – вырывать от души (to make an emotional break with smth./smb. dear); *to steal one's heart* – входить в душу (to become the object of someone's affection, love etc.); *to touch the heart* – брать за душу (to affect someone deeply); *to see into one's heart* – читать в душе (to understand clearly what someone's thoughts, desires are); *heart isn't in smth./smb.* – душа не лежит (not to like smth./smb.); *to take heart* – воспрять душою (to feel encouraged); *to lie [heavy] at smb.'s heart, to weigh upon smb.'s heart* – камень на душе (to feel unhappily); *to break smb.'s heart* – выворачивать душу (to have a strong emotional effect on someone); *with one's heart laid open* – с открытой душой (sincerely).

As our ethno-linguistic analysis shows, to display one's thoughts and feelings English use the word *heart* while Russian use the word *soul*. This phenomenon might be explained by the fact that English people are more concentrated on the material world, where as Russian are focused on the spiritual one. For example, to revenge someone in Russian is *прійти по чью-либо душе* while the English say *to be after someone's skin [head, blood]*. However, both words *soul* and *heart* are related with something clear, sacral and clandestine for both English and Russian native speakers. When one promises or pledges something, he *crosses his heart* in English and *кладет руку на сердце* in Russian.

As the language is the mirror of the mentality, zero equivalents most closely reflect the native speakers' language worldview, their figurative meaning reflects the natives' consciousness. For example, the phraseological unit *a heart of oak* that is usually used for description of a brave person can be neither literally translated nor replaced by an equivalent in the Russian language. It can be explained by the realities and history of the English people: *oak's enormous height, age and strength made it king of the English woods and a symbol of endurance* [13, p. 21]. As for the United States of America, the mighty oak was also adopted as its national symbol. In Russian language we can not find an equivalent with the same meaning, lexical composition, stylistic colouring and grammatical structure. That shows the difference between cultures might be understood by the contrastive analysis of the phraseological units.

References:

1. COLLINS, V.H. *A Book of English Idioms With Explanations*, London, 1958. 423 p.
2. FAZLIEVA, Z.K. Types of Interlanguage Phraseological Correspondence (Based on English and Turkish Languages). In: *Canadian Center of Science and Education*, Review of European Studies, 2015, nr. 9 (7), 9 p. ISSN 1918-7173
3. GINZBURG, R.S. *A course in modern English lexicology*, Moscow: Higher School Publishing House, 1966. 269 p.
4. HUMBOLDT, W. Von. *Language and philosophy of culture*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1985. 168 p.
5. KIRKPATRICK, B. *Chamber's Dictionary of Idioms and Catch Phrases*, Edinburgh, 1986. 432 p. ISBN 978-0521325394
6. KUNIN, A.V. *English-Russian phrase book*, Moscow: Russky yazyk, 1984. 942 p.
7. KUNIN, A.V. *Modern English phraseology course: Textbook for institutes and faculties of foreign languages*, Moscow: Vysshaya shkola, 1986. 336 p.
8. KUNIN, A.V. Regarding phraseological definition. Voprosy angliiskoy frazeologii (communicative and phraseological aspects). In *Collection of scientific papers*, 1987, nr. 278, p. 109-118
9. LUBENSKY, S. *Russian-English Dictionary of Idioms*, USA: Yale University Press, 2014. 992 p. ISBN: 978-0-300-16227-1
10. MAKKAI, A. *Idiom Structure in English*, The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton, 1972. 371 p.
11. MOLOTKOV, A.I. *Phrase book of the Russian language*, Moscow: Russky yazyk, 1986. 543 p.
12. MULLER, V. K. *new English-Russian dictionary*, Moscow: Russky yazyk, 2004. 946 p.
13. PEREMITINA, O.V. Analogues of English Symbols in Russian society. In: *Language and culture*, Supplement, 2014, nr. 3, p. 18-23
14. WIERZBICKA, A. *Semantics, culture, and cognition: Universal human concepts in culture-specific configurations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992. 496 p.