CULTURAL ASPECTS OF RUSSIAN AND POLISH PHRASEOLOGY

Abstract. The article is devoted to the study of cultural features of phrasemes. The practical material for the study were the works of G. Senkevich. Attention of readers is offered to groups of phrasemes that are valuable from the point of view of linguocultural studies, as well as analysis of their key features. Cultural comments allow to reveal the essence of such phrasemes.

Key words: phrasemes, phraseology, cultural linguistics, anthropocentrism.

Modern science is characterized by a tendency to anthropocentrism. That allows one to take a fresh look at the usual facts and extract the previously unknown information from them. Such a process is clearly demonstrated by modern phraseology. If a few decades ago, the attention of researchers was focused mainly on the structural and semantic features of phraseological units, aka phrasemes (we would further use the abbreviation PU), today's linguists tend to look inside the semantic essence of phraseological units and to identify their relationship with the mentality of native speakers.

Without an exaggeration, phraseological units of each language can be referred to as its soul. J. Szerszunowicz wrote that “phraseology is one of the areas in which the language-culture relation is manifested to a great extent” [4]. Each phraseme contains a special code that reflects the traces of national culture. It is no coincidence that V.A. Maslova called phraseology «the mirror of the nation's life» [2]. The linguistic and cultural potential of phrasemes is due to the fact that it arises on the basis of the figurative perception of reality, reflecting the everyday-
empirical, cultural and historical experience of the corresponding ethnic-lingual community. Moreover, PUs are often communicative-event fragments of fairy-tale, mythological, religious, and literary discourses.

The focus of our attention is the phraseological corpus of Russian and Polish languages. In this article, we offer a general overview of phrasemes of interest for study in the cultural aspect. Following N.F. Alefirenko [1] we refer to such phrasemes, among others, the following:

• phrasemes reflecting elements of ancient culture (Rus. танталовы муки, Pol. syzyfowa praca);
• phrasemes arising from phraseological units-combinations of words from works of art (Rus. хоть видит око, да зуб неймёт (I.A. Krylov), Pol. różę pachną profesjonalnie (Stanisław Jerzy Lec);
• phrasemes of biblical origin (Rus. вавилонское столпотворение, Pol. kamień węgialny);
• phrasemes, reflecting the ethnic and cultural particularities of a popular nature (Rus. как с гуся вода, Pol. zniknąć jak kamfora);
• phrasemes rooted in folk beliefs and customs (Rus. в рубашке родился, Pol. w czepku się urodził).

In addition to the hidden, semantic cultural component of the PU, we can distinguish the external one that relates to the features of some part of the phraseological unit. For example, it may be a dialecticism that makes a great impression on the reader with its originality and expressiveness and also carries subjective-evaluative information. Zoomorphism is no less complex and important in the composition of the phraseme because the name of the animal might harbor a huge semantic component. In the minds of different peoples, representatives of the animal world play different roles. For example, in the Russian culture, it is
customary to associate the fox with the cunning men, bear or elephant – with clumsy, chicken – with stupid.

Anthropocentricity is a bright feature of culturally marked phrases. That means that the concepts attached to the phraseme's semantics are either directly tied to the characteristics of a person, or relate to his/her vision of the world. For example, a field analysis of the group of Polish and Russian phraseological units allowed us to see that each highlighted field somehow correlates with a person: his/her activities, feelings, emotions, and assessments. At the same time, the most charged fields were ‘action’ (Rus. распускать язык, Pol. rozpuszczać języki) and ‘state’ (Rus. дрожать как лист, Pol. drżeć jak liść).

Phrasemes that include theonyms and demonyms are significant in the linguistic and cultural aspect. By theonyms we mean not only the proper names of deities (Artemis, Perun, etc.) but in general, all their appellative meanings. These words are contrasted by demonyms denoting the images considered negative in a religion (in Christianity – demon, heathen, in paganism – wood-spirit, female hobgoblin, etc.). Despite the different denominations (Orthodoxy – in Russia and Catholicism-in Poland), the same images function in the religious and everyday consciousness of Russians and Poles: God, demon, angel, devil. etc.. Interestingly, the ratio of the number of phrases with theonyms and demonyms in Russian and Polish varies: in Polish, the frequency of demonic images is higher, and their palette is broader. It is noteworthy that the number of phrasemes with words 'God' and 'devil' is almost a match. That is the evidence that the national consciousness, the opposition "God – devil" is so strong that it reflects in idioms. No less significant is the fact that the phrase with the component Bóg still prevails.

Frequently enough, both in Russian and in Polish, we can encounter phrasemes like Бог мой (Pol. Bóg mój). They serve as traces of a kind of dual religion, preserved in the Slavic world to this day (a mixture of Christianity and
paganism). V.M. Mokienko believes that these are phrases that "clearly refute “from within” the Christian semantic strata and return us to the pagan ideas about the gods» [3].

It is obvious that the idiomatic composition of each language is an inexhaustible source for the study of cultural characteristics of a particular ethnic group. The crystallization of national consciousness in phrasemes makes them extremely important and interesting for lingua-culturology.

References