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IDIOMŲ SU KOMPONENTU „BITĖ“ ETIMOLOGIJOS IR SIMBOLIKOS TYRIMAS

An analysis of Symbolism and Etymology Relative to “Bee” Idioms

SUMMARY

This article deals with the analysis of a phraseological system that reflects knowledge about the world and about the notions and images in people’s consciousness which contains not only a cognitive and nominative components but also embodies symbolic semantics. Attention is payed to the richness of the phraseological units which express the national character and the distinctive features of Ukrainians. An attempt is made to identify the correlation of language and culture, and of language and mentality which are involved in the cultural and national coloring of phraseological units; to trace the dynamic processes of linguistic culture studies potential of the analyzed units. An extensive analysis of phraseological units with the component “bee” is carried out. Their ethnocultural characteristics and some reasons for their usage is identified. The symbolic meaning of phraseological units is analyzed, and historical and etymological approaches to the interpretation of the image of the bee in different nations is studied.

SANTRAUKA

Straipsnyje tyrinėjama ukrainiečių frazeologizmų sistema, teikianti žinių apie pasaulį, tautos sąmonės sąvokas ir vaizdinius, kurie kartu išreiškia simbolių prasmes. Domimasi kalbos frazemų gausa, atspindinčia tautos būdą ir ukrainiečių koloritą. Bandoma atkurti kalbos ir dvasinės kultūros, kalbos ir mentaliteto santykį, kuris formuoja frazeologinių vienetų kultūrines ir etnines ypatybes, ištirti analizuojamų frazeologinių vienetų kalbinio potencialo dinaminius procesus. Aptarti frazeologiniai vienetai, turintys komponentą „bitė“, pateiktos jų etnokultūrinės charakteristikos ir vartojimo priežastys, ištirta simbolinė frazemų reikšmė, palygintas bitės įvaizdžio istorinis ir etimologinis suvokimas įvairių tautų kultūroje.

RAKTAŽODŽIAI: frazema, frazeologinis vienetas, etnokultūra, semantika, simbolis, istorinė etimologinė analizė.
KEY WORDS: phraseme, phraseology unit, ethnoculture, semantics, character, history-etymology analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Areal phraseology is a highly dynamic linguistic domain that contains information and knowledge about the world around us, about the concepts and images which emerged within the consciousness of Ukrainians and acquired a nominative function which replaced a cognitive function. The phraseological stock of a people is a living and inexhaustible source that enriches literary language with new means of expression, conveying the national character and the unique spirit of Ukrainians.

In this urbanized world of the twenty-first century it is of current relevance to investigate national-linguistic and the ethno-cultural specifics of the nation. Scientists are shifting their attention to the area of the mental semantics involving language units, and this makes it possible to thoroughly analyze and to understand the phenomenon of the national language. The issue of the national-cultural specificity of the language is not new; reference can be made to the research of scholars such as N. Arutyunov, W. Zhayvoronok, and Oleksandr O. Potebnya). However, it is particularly relevant nowadays.

This linguistic research focuses on the study of folk beliefs, traditions and symbols. The interdependence of language and culture, language and ethnicity, and language and mentality is at the core of understanding the historical memory of people, their spiritual and material identity, analysis of cultural and language competence of members of a particular ethnic group, investigation connected with mentality. This is the top research priority with respect to ethnocultural language semantics.

Phraseological units constitute the source material for such investigations, as they do not convey direct meaning, but reflect the ethno-cultural traditions of a nation. In the opinion of Ivan Franko, phrasemes reflect the intellectual and moral character of the people (Pilipchuk 2008: 108), so they characterize the material, social and spiritual culture of a linguistic community. "They express the outlook of people, their religious, moral and legal concepts better than any other kind of folk literature. It is a living monument, describing people as individuals and representing the spirit or character of a nation in its original, natural state" (Pilipchuk 2008: 37).

Ethnocultural and ethnolinguistic data associated in the mind with a relevant word or idiom is important in this sphere of investigation. Phraseological units can indicate many cultural/historical and socioethnic characteristics (Budnyak 1997: 203–207).

Professor S. Georgieva has the opinion that words which are components of phraseological units acquire a semantic reconsideration on the level of categorical, subcategorical and individual value. The degree and nature of the semantic transformations are distinctive and are directly related to the role of the component in the syntactic structure of phraseologism (Heorhyeva 2005: 170–181).

When analyzing functions and features of culturally marked idioms, we

discover that the majority of them contain ethnic concepts in their structure, which, in one specific phrase, is intended to transfer the main informative capacity, and shed light upon some tradition or belief in deepest and most accurate manner.

The analysis of phraseological units is related to the study of their semantics and internal forms to determine the characteristics of attitude and the reconstruction of certain ethnic stereotypes of man, his place in the world, life, and coexistence with other living beings, because "the phraseological system of any language presents unique samples of nation-specific logic and evaluation of the world" (Golubovska 2010).

The feature of stereotypes associated with certain beings, animals, plants etc. directly determined the mythological and religious beliefs of an ethnic cultural community. As it views the outside world, each culture defines its attitude to flora and fauna, and forms conceptual associations with them on an emotional and imaginative level. According to scientists, the lexical and phraseological levels most accurately reflect the originality of the cognitive and emotional experience of the ethnicity, at the same time maintaining guidelines of morals and values. Thus, research connected with the ethnocultural aspect of phrasemes promotes the expression of the dominant features of the mentality of native speakers.

Nation-specific intellectually estimating concepts superimposed on a single conceptual basis of human language, thought and culture, detailing and incarnating it in nationally specific forms, largely determine the nature of the national mentality. Being a link between perception, thought and language, definite concepts implemented at the lexical level of the language system in the form of certain images and stereotypes of standard symbols that function usually as a part of idiom – the quantities of intermediate phraseology of language. Undoubtedly, lexical and phraseological levels of a language system are key substances of the expression of national and cultural specificity of mentality, ethnic character (Matsyuk, Fenko 2015: 71).

An analysis of phraseological symbols shows that one particular symbol can correspond to the structural portions of different concepts. It is demonstrated that even in closely-related languages, phraseological symbolism can have significant ethnically-marked sets, and that in accordance with this, concepts are likely to have intrinsic nation-based specificity (Ilarion 1994: 242–245).

Aim. Problems of relations between language and spiritual culture, language and mentality, their interdependence, nationally cultural idioms semantics and attention to dynamic processes, opportunities of linguistic geography of phrasemes that accumulate and store knowledge about the world, encourage the search for new aspects of phraseological research; intensify the analysis of system relations in phraseology by studying idiomatic material – characteristics of the image of bees in the Ukrainian language dialects based on structural and semantic analysis of phrasemes, taking into account the historically etymological and cultural aspects.

In terms of the chronology of insects appearing on the earth, scientists give the almost unimaginable date of 50 to 130 million years BC. Primitive peoples, being well acquainted with their natural surroundings and themselves forming an integral part of that environment, loved honey and knew how to obtain it from bees without being harmed (Lepekha 2005: 218).

HISTORICAL AND ETYMOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE COMPONENT *BEE* IN LINGUISTICS

Honey-producing insects such as bees, wasps, and hornets were familiar for people long before our era. Bees' honey had beneficial properties, so people used it as a food and as a raw material for the manufacturing of many drugs, such as propolis (bee glue), wax, honey, bee venom, and royal jelly. The first recorded information about bees is found in the writings of the Greek historian Herodotus, who claimed that the Scythians sold large quantities of honey and wax to Greek city-colonies. India is considered to be their place of origin. The first references to beekeeping are found in the writings of the chroniclers Nestor and Gall about the rich Slavic lands from which furs, honey and wax were exported.

In phraseologisms, love and respect for honey are manifested in various semantic units:

1) good: *as good as honey* "good man" (Matsiuk 2013: 387);
2) excessive desire: *wants to eat honey with a spoon* | "to want something in great quantities" (Matsiuk 2013: 130); *honey will flow from the belly* (Arkushyn 2003: 104); yak honey | loshkoyu (Arkushyn 2003: 104); *to want honey during a fast* "to want something intensely" (Kovalenko 2011: 60);
3) self-assuredness in one's desires: *The bee flies to the place where there is a smell of honey* (Matsiuk 2006).

The image of bees, as various sources show, is multi-faceted and unusual. It has been well known since ancient times, and was embodied and redefined in various eras. According to the Lithuanian-American archaeologist Marija Gimbutas, during Neolithic times the bee was one of the incarnations of the Great Goddess. In some systems it symbolized the soul, and heaven.

In the mythological traditions of the Greeks and Romans, the image of bees is an attribute or one of the incarnations of the Great Mother. The bee is associated with Diana, Demeter, Persephone, and Aphrodite. The image of the bee was thus depicted on their emblems. Priestesses of these goddesses were called "bees lungwort", and eunuch priests were called drones. The following idioms were formed on the basis of image-associated perceptions: a drone 'silent woman', and 'lazy man' (Matsiuk 2013: 209).

Artemis was linked with the image of the sacred bees, Demeter was called "the pure Mother Bee", the great mother – "the Queen of the Bees". In honey-rich Epidamnos, particular honour was given to their ancestress, the bee-nymph Me-

lissa. In the ancient world bees were considered to be the protectors of eloquence and singing, "the birds of the Muse". Zeus of Crete was considered to have been born in a bee-hive and to have been fed by bees. In Greece the shape of the beehive was often used for burials; it was connected with the theme of immortality. In addition, it was believed that the souls of the dead could migrate to bees. A Pythian prophetess was called the "Delphic Bee" because it was believed that she could predict the future. According to the Delphic tradition, bees built the second temple in Delphi. Later, the bee became an emblem of the Virgin Mary. Because of that, Ukrainians called the bee "holy", and the Germans gave it the name "God's bird" and "the bird of Mary."

Many legends refer to a connection between bees and the Thunder-god, and also with the oak, which has the name of being the tree of the world, and the tree of thunder. Thus the bee is a symbol of supreme power. It symbolized the monarchical system in the ancient Middle East, ancient Greece, and ancient Egypt. The ideal social structure in monarchy was often compared with that of a bee hive.

The Egyptians used a bee on the emblem of Lower Egypt. It was a symbol of birth, death and resurrection, of a harmonious life, and of hard work and integrity. The bee was also an image of imperial might, the particular vital force, imperial wisdom, which was accumulated in the same way as bees collect nectar.

In ancient India, a bee was a symbol of Indra, Vishnu, Krishna, and Shiva. A blue bee on the forehead was the sign of Krishna; on a lotus, of Vishnu; above the triangle, of Shiva. Among the bees which personified "the sweet torment", was the bowstring of Kama, the god of love, with a line of bees being drawn forward eternally.

THE SYMBOLIC CONDITIONALITY OF SEMANTIC PHRASES CONTAINING THE COMPONENT *"BEE"*

Symbolism connected with romantic love is reflected in the mythology of the ancient Slavs. The superstition exists that the Great Mother Lada conceived human children through the vibration of the celestial bee house. Thus the bee personifies romantic love and procreation, as it combines "sweet honey and a bitter sting". (An echo of this can be seen in the expression "honeymoon"). In addition, in the broad functional range of Ukrainian folk philosophical ideas, the bee as a symbol of the soul possesses important mythical significance.

The similar phraseological unit *"л'ýбит' гречáну кáшу йíсти"* (Matsiuk 2013: 327), which has been recorded in the area under investigation, can be interpreted as an ethnic phraseme which is euphemistic in nature, the noun component of which designates a plant that is symbolic of productivity (involving a semantic shift from 'the productive sphere to the popularly well-known sphere of childbearing'). The use here of the component "buckwheat" is completely logical for describing a honey-bearing plant, which is correlated with

the "bee" symbols (the symbol of pregnancy) (Lepekha 2005: 84). Inasmuch as honey is especially honoured in our nation for its effective influence on the sex life, it being the best restorer of sexual energy, it is a component of all recipes of the arousing dishes. Among Ukrainians there was the custom according to which mead [a honey drink] was prepared for newlyweds, who drank it not only on their wedding day, but also thirty days later. No other stronger liquor was permitted, hence the term "honeymoon." Newlyweds abstained from liquor, taking the honey drink instead, because of the possibility of conceiving a child during that time.

Along with a number of semantic layers, the following phrasemes funtion: *зале|т'іла йак бджу|ла в |вулик* 'a girl who became pregnant out of wedlock' (Matsiuk 2013: 54). It was thought that bees reproduced without coition, so the implication of an 'immaculate conception' is also present.

The image of a swarm of bees appears as a continuation of the symbolic perception of impregnation and childbirth. In West Polesie it embodied the idea of life being cyclical: the dying of the old and the beginning of a new life. The swarm of bees signifies land, the soul earth, protection and motherhood, so it is to be expected that Polesians would use phraseological units such as *р'ій |випустила* || *р'ій |вилит'ів* 'to bear a child' (Matsiuk 2013: 175); *|баба зло|вила ро|йа* 'to bear a child at home' (Arkushyn 2003: 76), which means 'to give a birth to baby'. In ethnographic sources of the 19th and early 20th century, it is written that bees have a soul (Ilarion 1994).

There is a belief that the souls of righteous people are transformed into bees, so that they gain access to paradise. The bee, seen as a "pure and temperate" insect, a creature that "loves to return", is in the words of Friedrich Creuzer, "the symbol of the soul's immortality," the image of the soul, that "comes down to this earthly vale of sorrows, but lives a righteous and holy life here and then returns to its homeland" (Klinger 1911: 4).

Ukrainians had particular respect for bees because of their industriousness, which was often compared to that of people (Gura 1997). Thanks to the fact that they worked so hard, they became a symbol of activity, diligence, and orderliness. It is thought that bees bees never sleep, so for Christians they embody the following characteristics:

1) perseverance and constant movement: *л'і|тайе йак п|ч'ілка* 'rapidity of movement' (Matsiuk 2013: 402);
2) speed: *йак бжо|ла в|жалила* 'to get up quickly and run away' (Matsiuk 2013: 406).

People often compare themselves with bees, and the church with a hive. The bee is a symbol in terms of being hard- working, tireless, self-sacrificing, and having everlasting concern for others, and these features provided the basis for the following phraseologisms: *|робит' йак б|ж'ілка* (Matsiuk 2013: 434) || *ста|райец'а йак пчо|ла* (Matsiuk 2013: 434) || *пчо|ла-труд'і|ниц'а* (Matsiuk 2013: 433) || *старо|йонца йак пчо|ла 'швидкість у роботі'* (Matsiuk 2013: 434).

As has been noted above, in the ancient world bees were regarded as the

patrons of eloquence and singing, "Birds of the Muse", so bees came to be symbols of beautiful words, and of the ability to speak captivatingly. According to legend, the Scandinavian god Odin gave men the gift of poetry, stealing sacred honey from a huge rock. In other European traditions, the story is told that when some preachers and orators were children, a swarm of bees had landed on their lips. Plato was called "the bee of Athens," as were Sophocles and others. Thus it was not by chance that the phrase "mellifluous ['honeyed'] speech" came into existence. Indeed, bees and honey are universal symbols of poetic words, and more broadly, of poetry as a whole. These perceptions are reflected semantically in the following phrases:

1) talkative [loquacious] person: *сло'ва з йа'зика йак б'ǯоли з 'вулика* (Kovalenko 2011: 60);
2) | to speak unintelligibly: *гу'де йак бджо'ла* (Matsiuk 2006);
3) to speak in honeyed tones [obsequiously]: *гово'рити йак 'медом 'мазати; йак 'медом мас'тити / йак 'медом помас'тити / йак 'медом намас'тити / гово'рити мов ме'и'док ва'рити* (Kovalenko 2011: 60); *пома'зати 'медом* (Matsiuk 2006);
4) to speak very little: *'мертв'і б'жоли не гу'дут', а йак'шо гу'дут', то 'дуже 'тихо* (Matsiuk 2006);
5) to not to be able to speak: *'нашо дзи'чати, йак'шо ти не бжо'ла* (Matsiuk 2006).

In ancient Ukrainian mythology, the bee was a predictor of spring, and along with it fertility and wealth, so the bee is often a central image in idioms: *йак б'дж'іл по вес'н'і / йак б'дж'іл у 'вулику 'дуже, надто багато, велика кількість, безліч'* (Matsiuk 2006). In terms of being so numerous, bees are considered to be similar to the stars.

This multiplicity of different interpretations of the bee's image in the world's cultures served to embody its symbolic significance in folk wisdom, which phraseological units containing the avian component clearly represented. As this study demonstrates, the bee is an exceptionally multi-faceted symbol. It can represent wisdom, fertility, diligence, thrift, order, purity and chastity. In some traditions the bee, as a symbol of heaven and the stars, also participated in the creation of the world.

This investigation of phraseological units demontrates the fact that in the Ukrainian conception of bees, the influence of pagan beliefs and the mythological ideas of various nations and traditions on the Ukrainian people played a very major part. The analysis of bee-related imagery makes evident how the bee was perceived as a holy insect that had been blessed by God. The multi-symbolic nature of the image of bees led to them being used actively in phraseological units through interpretation, comparison and pictorial perception. We consider that there are promising prospects for research directed towards the fixation, systematization, and semantic/symbolic description of phrasemes that contain an entomological component, as they constitute an important corpus in the phraseology of the Ukrainian language.

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