

LINGUISTICS AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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ENGLISH AND SPANISH PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS WITH ZONIMAL COMPONENT «CAT»/«GATO»

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Abstract

The article studies the semantics of phraseological units with zoonimal component “cat/gato” in the English and Spanish languages. The comparative analysis is conducted according to the idiomatic classification. The result of the study shows that the majority of phraseological units are found in the thematic sphere “Person” due to the fact that these animals have lived near human beings for centuries and people used to compare each other looking at their habits and behaviour so the image of a cat has become a core component of phraseological units and is mostly used now to characterize people and their actions. The symbolic characteristics connected with the image of this animal in English culture are rather complicated as it depicts different traits of people’s character, both negative and positive. Whereas in Spanish the image of a cat received mostly negative perception as it is often implied to a hypocritical person, whose actions are aimed against other people.

Keywords: phraseology, phraseological unit, zoonimal component, cat, gato, English, Spanish

Introduction

Phraseology plays an important role in the development of nations’ language and culture. The subject of its studies is the origins of idioms and their

categorical characteristics as well as the peculiarities of their functioning in speech. It is well-known that languages and cultures are interconnected. Languages reflect the past and present of cultures and save their values for different generations.

Phraseological units reflect the rich historical experience of nations, they depict people's attitude toward work and everyday life, things and phenomena of the world around.

Developing throughout the time the national language as a social and historical category never loses its certain function of preserving cultural and historical traditions and therefore forming the national character, which is expressed by different lingual units, especially phraseological units and idioms.

In everyday communication, the emotional character of spoken language is manifested in the usage of expressive means, in particular, phraseological units with components-zoonims [1, 165]. Human history is closely connected with the history of animals. Cats have always been important for people, although attitude to these animals is different even among European countries and nations. A good example is England where cats have been treated with love and care since ancient times. There were even some laws to protect the animals. On the contrary, in Spain the image of cat is mostly negative as according to Catholic perception they have symbolized the evil and have been considered the right hand of witches. However, in languages of both nations the number of phraseological units with zoonimal component *cat* (*gato* in Spanish) is rather big and worth scientific consideration.

Names of animals (zoonims) are one of the most ancient lexical layer in all the world's languages. In order to characterize his behavior, feelings, physical conditions and appearance, a man used to compare himself with what was the closest and the most similar to him – the animal world. Thus, the inner content of phraseological units comprises images of different spheres of human life, relations between people, and their own particularities.

Material and research method

For the present research, idioms were chosen with the help of continuous sampling method from monolingual and bilingual dictionaries in these languages, particularly "Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English" [4], "Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners" [5], "Oxford Idioms Dictionary for Learners of English" [6] and "Diccionario Fraseológico Español-Ruso" [3]. On the whole, 242 units were found: 119 in English, 123 in Spanish. It proves out that this zoonimal component is of great significance for the studied languages and cultures reflecting real as well as cultural views of the world [8, 264].

Results and discussion

According to the thematic classification [9, 56], the majority of phraseological units with zoonimal component *cat* in the English language have

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been found in the thematic sphere “Person” in the group “Characteristics of a person”.

Phraseological units of this group depict both positive and negative traits of a person’s character. On the one hand, there are some positive features, such as осторожность, предусмотрительность, смелость и решительность. For instance, *the scalded cat fears cold water* expresses careful evaluation of starting a business. *To see which way the cat jumps (to wait for the cat to jump)* also shows the importance of thinking before any action. Its origins lie in an old game of soldiers to practice shooting on cats that jump off the trees, which taught the skill of patience. Courageous people are usually called people can *bell the cat*, which stresses their ability to take responsibility in a difficult situation. The proverb *it's a bold mouse that nestles in the cat's ear* also characterizes brave, risky people, while the idiom *a cat may look at a king* expresses realistic point of view of a person, who is not afraid of dealing with people of higher positions in society or business. At the same time all clerks get brave when their boss is out – *when the cat is away, the mice play*. The ability to overcome difficulties and different obstacles represent the idiom *it's enough to make a cat laugh* as cats never laugh in everyday life.

On the other hand, the variety of negative features is rather great. They are laziness, carelessness, враждебность and curiosity. For example, such idioms as *the cat would eat fish and would not wet her feet* and *a cat in gloves catches no mice* mean that without any effort and will to do something it is impossible to achieve it. Легкомысленный person can *let the cat out of the bag*, which means проговориться, нечаянно выболтать секрет or *put (set) a cat amongst the pigeons* – do something silly. The phraseological unit *to live a cat-and-dog life* represents complicated relations that are based on hatred and misunderstanding between a couple of people, which are completely different. Moreover, British culture осуждает curiosity that is proved by the idiom *curiosity killed the cat*.

According to the number of phraseological units, the dominating trait in the character of British people is осторожность и осмотрительность that is followed by courage and laziness. However, many communicative idioms are многозначны so they can highlight several features at once.

Generally all idioms reflect national culture in three different ways:

1) In a complex by its idiomatic meaning and all components together that make a core of any phraseological unit. This helps a language native speaker easily identify the image of an idiom thanks to his national cultural background, while for a foreigner brought up in a different national culture this idiom will be difficult to understand. E.g. *copycat* is a phraseological unit which means to обезьянничать, кривляться, it is also used to compare new crimes with well-known or previously committed ones.

2) National and cultural peculiarities can be described just by a part or parts of an idiom. These are usually background schemes of those phraseological units, the core component of which contains an exoticism for foreigners. E.g. *fraidy-cat* names a modest person or a person who can be easily scared. This expression is connected with British national cuisine.

3) Phraseological units reflect the national culture by their prototypes – free word combinations that depict special customs, holidays, traditions or national way of life. This group contains the majority of animalistic idioms. In addition A. V. Shevchik provides the classification of figurative zoonyms of the English language that endow animals with features peculiar to an animal (zoomorphisms), a man (personifications), objects and phenomena produced by a man (artefactmorphisms), myths (mythomorphisms) and plants (phytomorphisms) which are all widely presented in the national phraseological system [3, 32].

As well as in the English language, in Spanish *gato (gata)* is one of the most frequently found zoonimal components in the group of domestic animals which, according to V. M. Kamenskaya [2, 90], is the biggest of all the groups of phraseological units with zoonimal components. The image of this animal is particularly negative. In Spanish phraseology the cat symbolizes deception, fraud and cheating. It is used to describe 1) a person himself : *gata de Juan Ramos* (the cat of Juan Ramos) – a make-believe, hypocrite or *gata de Mari-Ramos* (the cat of Mari-Ramos) – a prude, nice Nelly; *gatito muerto* (a dead kitten) – a hypocrite, double-dealer; *gato manso* (a meek cat) – a disloyal, traitorous friend; 2) a person's actions aimed against others: *tener gato encerrado* (to hold a closed, hidden cat) – to compass, complot something; *vender (dar) gato por liebre* (to sell (give) a cat for a hare) – to fraud, to counterfeit; *a lo gato* (as a cat) – underhand, on the quiet; *hasta los gatos tienen tos* (while cats are coughing) – to cheat, to deceive.

In general, the majority of phraseological units which characterize a person have negative meaning. They can be divided into two groups, where the first depicts a person's character and behaviour (both negative and positive ones as long as negative ones prevail): *como gata en Enero* (like a cat in January) – lascivious; *ata el gato* (he who ties the cat) – mean, greedy; *hasta los gatos quiren zapatos* (while cats want boots) – too ambitious, self-confident; *como el gato en el agua* (like a cat in water) – awkward or helpless; *como gato en tejado* (like a cat on the roof) – importunate, intrusive; *arisco como el gato* (unsociable as a cat) – unfriendly, unsociable; *mas envidioso que un gato* (more envious than a can) – very jealous and stingy; *mas salvaje que gato montés* (wilder than a mountain (wild) cat) – barbarian, savage, heathen; *todo lo huele como los gatos* (smells everything like a cat) – very curious, nosy; *no hacer mal a un gato* (not to do harm to a cat) – kindhearted, harmless; *hacerse la gata mocha* (to become a cat trimmed off) – very shy, goody-goody; and the second

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describes his appearance (only negative): *gata parida* (a delivered cat) or *gato de azotea* (a cat for the attic) – a very skinny and unneat woman or man; *parece que ha dormido con los gatos* (look like he has slept with cats), *parece que le han peinado los gatos* (look like his hair has been combed by cats) or *parece que han reñido los gatos en su cabeza* (look like cats have gamboled on his head) – blowzy, mussy; *como gato mojado* (like a wet cat) – to be soaked through.

Another big thematic group is composed by phraseological units denoting a person's actions aimed against other people. Half of idioms here have general abstract meaning of a harmful deed: *hacer una gata* (to make a cat) – to play a dirty trick, to do in the eye; *reñir a lo gato* (tell off, fight as a cat) – to have arguments, raws (similar to the English phraseological unit *live a cat-and-dog life*); *echarle el gato a las barbas* (throw a cat to one's beard) – to insult, abuse; *mandar a uno a jondear gatos de la cola* (to order somebody catch a cat for tis tail) – send somebody off; *jugar con uno como gato con ratón* – to play with someone as a cat with a mice. Another half depicts material harm and crime: *sacar el ascua con la mano del gato* (to bank up the fire with a cat's paw) – to use others to pull one's chestnuts out of fire; *soltar la gata al uno* (to send a cat up to someone) – to steal something from somebody; *pescarle (pillarle) a uno el gato* (to get (catch) one's cat) – to take something valuable by force; *afilarse las uñas de gato* (to sharpen a cat's claws) – to rob somebody; *buscarle el gato* (to find someone a cat) – to blackmail; *echar uno el gato a retozar* (send a cat up to someone to have fun) – to knock down, pocket one's money; *hacerse el gato bravo* (to get a brave cat) – to do in the eye and steal one's money.

Moreover, in Spanish phraseology a cat represents two opposite concepts of trouble and luck. Misfortune and problems are usually described with the help of such phraseological units as *salir la gata capada* (to get a castrated cat) – miscalculate, miscount; *ser un gato escaldado* (to be a scalding cat) – to have unlucky experience; *cazar gato por liebre* (to get a cat for a hare) – to blunder, goof up; *buscar el gato en el garbanzal* (to look for a cat in chickpeas) – do something immensely difficult; *tener el gato por la cola* or *verse uno en la de amansa gato* (to hold a cat for its tail or to try to tame a cat) – to get into big trouble; *parece que han andado los gatos en ello* (it looks like cats have walked there) – the deuce and all to play. On the contrary, luck, fortune and success are expressed with such phraseological units as *como el gato que siempre cae de pie* or *caer como los gatos* (like a cat that always lands on its paws or land as cats) – to be lucky; *como el gato que tiene siete vidas* (like a cat that has seven lives) – to get the second chance; *dichoso como el gato de una casa rica* (happy as a cat from a rich house) – very lucky in life (rather similar to the English idiom *a fat cat* which is used to describe rich, successful people); *llevar el gato al agua* (to put a cat in water) – to risk and

succeed in something; *¡No es el primer gato que desuella!* (It's not his first cat to skin!) – to have no problem with making something as you are used to do it, to succeed easily in something.

Conclusion

Comparing the obtained results it is possible to make a conclusion that cats are an important part of national cultures and languages of England and Spain as they received such a great spread in their phraseological and idiomatic systems. According to the thematic classification, the majority of phraseological units with zoonimal components *cat* and *gato* have been found in the idiomatic sphere “Person” owing to the fact that these animals have lived near human beings for centuries and people used to compare each other looking at their habits and behaviour so the image of a cat has become a core component of phraseological units and is mostly used now to characterize people and their actions. The symbolic characteristics connected with the image of this animal in English culture are rather complicated as it depicts different traits of people's character, both negative and positive. Whereas in Spanish the image of a cat received mostly negative perception as it is often implied to a hypocritical person, whose actions are aimed against other people.

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LITERATURE

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GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUEZ: THE TRUTH CHANGED LITERARY WORLD

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Abstract

In the article “Gabriel Garcia Marquez: “The truth about what happened with me” we get informed about Marquez’s novels. The article starts with short interview of Garcia Marquez. From his own words, we find out that his incredible novels and short stories are result of his journalistic work. Indeed, his journalistic articles are base for his further career. Moreover, his novels would not be without his journalistic career. In article, special reference deserves his work “The story of a shipwrecked sailor”. This story caused unprecedented scandal in Colombia. Story tells us about warships that have to patrol and protect borders. Instead, they smuggle. It became huge scandal because story based on true occasion. Probity of Gabriel Garcia Marquez was trouble for many high-ranking officials. However, from his own words, “I wrote my articles to tell truth not to pleasure someone”. As a result, he owned so many foes in government. In conclusion, publication of his “The story of shipwrecked sailor” had political consequences and forced government to review their policy.

Keywords: realism and magical realism, solitude, symbiosis of East and West, Oral folk art of Azerbaijan, rigorous censorship, book of idioms

Until today from the Soviet Union for 70-80 years Spanish literature of Middle Ages and romances particularly were presented to Soviet and post-Soviet readers in face of the most remarkable and brilliant masterpieces such as “Don Quixote of La Mancha” that was created by Miguel de Cervantes, works of Lope de Vega, Pedro Calderon de la Barca and Garcia Lorca .Moreover, great works of Gabriel Marquez, Julio Cortazar, Carlos Fuentes, Jorge Luis