

DOI: 10.7596/taksad.v6i4.1113

Citation: Makleeva, E., Shangaraeva, L., Sheinina, D., & Acar, F. (2017). The Category of Time in English, Russian and French Phraseology. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 6(4), 451-459. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v6i4.1113>

The Category of Time in English, Russian and French Phraseology

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Abstract

In the paper we make an attempt to analyze linguistic and cultural descriptions of phraseological units of English, Russian and French reflecting the category of time. In the study of each language about 200 of phraseological units associated with the category of time were taken, which were divided into 5 groups representing different phraseo-semantic concepts. We have carried out a semantic analysis of the data of phraseological units identified by national-cultural peculiarities of expression of time category. The results can be used in the practice of teaching English, Russian and French as foreign languages, in courses on linguistics, and are also taken into account compiling dictionaries.

Keywords: Time, English, Russian, French, Phraseological units.

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1. Introduction

The perception of time, accuracy and punctuality, the desire to do things consistently or constantly switch from one to another, the value of time — these and many other features and aspects concerning time, fundamentally different in different parts and regions of the world.

This work contributes areas of social and humanitarian knowledge, cultural studies and linguistics studying the relationship and interaction of language and culture. At the present stage of linguistics much attention is paid to comparative analysis of languages.

Many scientific schools and scientists recognize time as one of the basic universals of culture. There are differences in the perception of the category of time in different linguistic cultures, as in the modern world there is a clear separation of cultures on monochronic in which the main emphasis is on individual achievement and work with formal data as well as polychronic, where there is an emphasis on developing interpersonal relations and dealing with people.

The aim of the study: the identification and description of the ways, expressing the category of time in the phraseological units (PUs) in English, Russian and French.

The object of the study has the following objectives in accordance with the aim:

to study and carry out a semantic analysis of the PUs which expresses the category of tense in English, Russian and French;

to identify national-cultural peculiarities of PUs in terms of the category of time.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

180 English, 190 Russian and 195 French PUs selected from unilingual - and bilingual phraseological dictionaries, handbooks and encyclopedias are served as methodological basis of research.

The theoretical base for the study was the work of Russian and foreign scientists who have made significant contributions to elaboration of the problem: Arsenyeva, 2016; Vinogradov, 1977, Kunin, 2005; Maslova, 2004; Teliya, 1996; Wierzbicka, 1992; O'Dell & McCarthy, 2010; Lakoff. & Johnson, 1980; Glucksberg, 1993; Makkai, 1987; Cacciari & Tabossi, 1988 and so on.

PUs were selected from several phraseological dictionaries, forming a semantic field of time. The term semantic field is a set of language units united in a certain common component of value - semantic sign. The semantic field including PUs linked by a categorical value - the

temporality, is called "phraseo-semantic group". In this study, the time category was considered as the basic semantic component.

The presence of the key words in the language is an important principle linking the culture of the people with the lexical language structure. Precisely key words can give an idea about a particular culture. This concept is used to transmit subtle shades of meaning in different languages. Wierzbicka (1992) states that every language has its own set of lexicalized concepts and offers its own categorization and interpretation of the world. She claims that the concepts are needed to explain and describe surrounding reality with the help of "keywords" of the language (1992, 1999). Wierzbicka (1992) suggested about 60 universal semantic elements: movement, action, life, death, possession, speech, similarity, space and time, the key words of this category are "before, after, now, long, long time and some time".

The national identity of the concepts is the most clearly manifested in the presence of non-equivalent concepts in national sphere of concepts. The nonequivalent concepts can be identified through the non-equivalent linguistic units. The non-equivalent unit is always an indicator of the presence of some uniqueness, the national identity of the concept in the minds of the people (Nagumanova, Gainullina, & Shemshurenko 2017).

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Methods of study

The specific nature of the material under study and the assigned tasks have determined the choice of methods of the linguistic analysis. The main methods used in the work are: the comparative-typological method, the method of a component analysis, as well as the inductive method in identifying and interpreting the national-cultural specifics of PUs characterizing time.

3.2 Semantic analysis of phraseological units of time

In our study, with the purpose of carrying out a semantic analysis of English, Russian and French PUs expressing the category of time, the following phraseo-semantic groups were formed, expressing concepts: early - late; the past - the future, always - never; now - later; long - fast.

1. In the studied languages, the concept of "early" is of great importance, especially in business. Time is always appreciated very highly, so working people do not waste it in vain.

As a rule, such PUs get a positive evaluation in these languages, confirming the value of time. Examples of PU expressing the concept of "early" can serve: 1) *long before dawn* - *ни свет, ни заря, под утро* - *au point du jour, a la pointe du jour, a l'aube*; 2) *at the first hint of day, at the peep of day* - *чуть свет, с первыми петухами* - *a l'aube, au petit matin*; 3) *the sooner, the better* - *чем раньше, тем лучше* - *le plus t ô t sera le mieux*; 4) *early in the morning* - *рано утром* - *dans la matinee, de bon matin* and etc.

To express the concept "early" in the English, Russian and French cultures, images such as the sun, dawn, birds are used: a cock, a lark and a chicken. In these languages, there is no particular difference between PU expressing the concept "early".

PUs with the concept "late" have often a negative connotation - inaction, fatigue or delay in the given languages.

The following PU have the meaning "late": 1) *at the last minute* - *в последний момент* - *au dernier moment*; 2) *at this time of day* - *так поздно, на ночь глядя* - *a l'approche (a la tombée) de la nuit, entre chien et loup*; 3) *late in the day* - *к вечеру* - *vers le soir* and etc.

2. In the English, Russian and French languages, there is a tendency to hyperbolize the prescription of events. If it is necessary to show that the event took place a long time ago, historical events, names from fairy tales or the Bible are most often used, and also differences in constituent images are observed.

To express the concepts of "the past", "long ago" the following PUs exist in these languages: 1) *for ages (амер. in ages)* - *целую вечность, не помню и когда* - *cela fait un bail/ une paye*; 2) *the good old days* - *старое доброе время* - *bon vieux temps*; 3) *in the days of old/ in olden days; in the days of yore* - *в былые времена, в старину, во время оно* - *de longue date* and etc.

Specific realities are used to refer to the past, such as proper names, which can only be understood in the context of a particular culture: *when queen Anne was alive, when Adam was a boy*; *в незапамятные времена, во времена царя Гороха, Адамовы веки*; *dans des temps antédiluviens* and etc.

PUs expressing the concept of "recently" are not well spread in English, Russian and French, in general, they are interpreted negatively. Such connotation emphasizes the conservatism of people, the preference for the stability of life, and also the cautious attitude to the new in these cultures.

Representatives of monochronic cultures are characterized by a significant number of idioms expressing the future because the English and French live for the future, unlike the Russian rather polychronic culture. Such PUs are characterized by a positive evaluation such as: 1)

time to come - будущие времена - *l'avenir*; 2) *in days to come* - в будущем - *dans l'immédiate, dans le plus bref délai*; 3) *one of these days* - в ближайшие дни, на днях, вскоре - *de jour en jour, d'un jour a l'autre* and etc.

3. According to the semantic analysis the abstract concept "always", as a rule, differs in a positive connotation of meaning in the PUs of English, Russian and French. Such idioms often refer to "eternal" themes: love, hate, friendship, gratitude, and have some poetic loftiness.

There are the following PUs expressing the concepts "always, forever, permanently" in the given languages: 1) *all the time* - во все времена - *comme toujours, de tous temps*; 2) *for the ninth time* - в который раз, вечно одно и то же - *a tout coup, a toute heure*; 3) *every blessed day* - каждый божий день - *chaque jour que Dieu fait* and etc.

Following idioms convey the meaning "often": 1) *every so often/ at times/ from time to time* - время от времени, каждую минуту - *a tout moment, de temps en temps, de temps a autre*; 2) *every time one turns around* - очень часто, то и дело - *a tout moment, a tout bout de champ*; 3) *from day to day/day after day* - изо дня в день, день за днем - *chaque jour* and etc.

Negative connotation is inherent in PUs expressing the concept of "never" in English, Russian and French. For example, 1) *under the circumstances; on no account* - ни под каким предлогом - *pour rien au monde*; 2) *the day pigs fly; when the moon turns green cheese; when two Sundays comes together; when hell freezes over; to put off till Doomsday* - когда рак на горе свистнет, после дождичка в четверг - *la semaine des quatre jeudis, tous les trente-six du mois, a la Saint-Glinglin, a Pèques ou a la Trinité*; 3) *not for a minute* - ни на минуту, ни на миг - *pas une seconde* and etc.

The idea of inaction or passive expectation is expressed in different ways in English, Russian and French cultures. For examples, *to let the grass grow under one's feet* - ждать у моря погоды - *attendre que les alouettes vous tombent toutes rôties*. Thus, these PUs are used to denote a very remote time or one that never comes.

4. According to the national mentality of the English, Russian and French people, such qualities as speed of action, punctuality, helpfulness and politeness are undoubtedly important and contribute to prosperity and material gain (*time is money* - время – деньги - *le temps c'est de l'argent*).

Among the PUs expressing the concept of "now" and "in time" can be singled out the following units: 1) *better the day, better the deed, everything is good in its season* - всему свое время - *chaque chose a son temps*; 2) *in these latter days* - в наши дни - *actuellement*,

par le temps qui court; 3) time and tide wait for no man, time presses - время не ждет, время не позволяет - le temps presse, il n'est que temps и т.д.

In the compared cultures delay in the performance of work, postponement of important cases for later, idleness or laziness are condemned.

The following PUs have the meaning "in time": 1) *to the minute, in time, on time - точно, пунктуально, минута в минуту - bien a l'heure, a temps; 2) to the (very) moment - точно в указанный срок - a l'heure indiquée; 3) in due time - как нельзя кстати, минута в минуту - fort a propos and etc.*

Such qualities as accuracy and punctuality of business and the principle of "time is money" are highly valued in Western culture, especially in business.

The PUs denote the notions of "later" and "untimely": 1) *there is no hurry, there is plenty of time - время терпит - avoir assez de temps; 2) praise a fair day at night; never fry a fish till it is caught - цыплят по осени считают; не дели шкуру неубитого медведя - il ne faut pas vendre la peau de l'ours avant de l'avoir tué, il ne faut pas se moquer des chiens avant qu'on ne soit hors du village, and etc.*

In English, Russian and French cultures the following PUs have the negative connotation with the meaning of untimely action. Representatives of monochronic cultures, known for their conservatism, prefer stability and are wary of unexpected events even to the arrival of uninvited guests.

5. PUs that reflect the concept of "long - fast" in English, Russian and French have both positive and negative connotations. Examples of PUs that express the concept of "long" can be: 1) *as long as Jared/as old as Jared - Аредовы веки - ege de Yared, vieux comme Yared; 2) as long as Methuselah/as old as Methuselah - Мафусаилов век -vieux comme Mathusalem; 3) for a long time, a soon's age - долгое время, целая вечность - longtemps, depuis une ÷ternit÷, les siucles and etc.*

To express the concept "fast" in the studied languages the following PUs are used: 1) *grow like mushrooms - расти как грибы - pousser comme des champignons; 2) by leaps and bounds - не по дням, а по часам, расти как на дрожжах - pousser à vue d'œil; 3) in a minute - через минуту, быстро - a l'instant, en un tour de main and etc.*

In English, Russian and French cultures there are also PUs that give a positive assessment of speed and swiftness when every second is valuable: 1) *smb is running for all he is worth/show a clean pair of heels - одна нога здесь, другая там, только пятки сверкают - prendre ses jambes a son cou, prendre la poudre d'escampette, a toutes jambes; 2) in the twinkling of an*

eye/at the drop of a hat, before one can say "Jack Robinson" - в два счета, в один миг, в мгновение ока - en un clin d'œil, en cinq sec and etc.

In the studied cultures the PUs characterizing excessive emotionality, incontinence or haste can be identified, such as: 1) *haste makes waste, nothing must be done hastily but killing of fleas, slow but sure, fool's haste is no speed - поспешишь - людей насмешишь, тише едешь, дальше будешь, медленно, но верно - hâte fait des déchets, qui va doucement, va loin; 2) on the spur of the moment, without rhyme or reason - с бухты барахты, ни с того, ни с сего - sans rime ni raison and etc.*

4. Results

Representatives of polychronic cultures (spiral time perception), inhabiting the countries of Latin America, southern Europe, the Arab East, Asia and Africa, never do things according to a clear algorithm or in a strict sequence by plotting them as a set of possibilities. It is not typical to attach great importance to daily routine or punctuality for these cultures trends.

Representatives of monochronic cultures (vector perception of time) – residents of the USA and Western European countries are characterized by the time and the future planning, consistent implementation of affairs, precision, punctuality, and focusing on goal achievement.

It is difficult to determine the type of time perception in Russia. For the European part of the country a vector with respect to time (monohronic) is typical, whereas in the Asian part, the linearity and value of time is markedly reduced (polychronic).

British and French representatives of monochronic culture focus on work with formal data, task, and individual achievement. While in polychronic Asian there is a focus on establishing interpersonal relationships and dealing with people.

In English, French and Russian languages, as is well known, the concept of «early» is of great importance, especially in the business community and the business, as is the personification of success in business, diligence and hard work. PUs with the concept of «later» in English, Russian and French language will have a negative connotation - inactivity, fatigue, or delay.

The concept «recently» in PUs in English, Russian and French does not appear much, and basically, they are interpreted negatively. This connotation emphasizes the conservatism of the Englishmen, a preference for stability in life, as well as the cautious attitude towards something new in these cultures.

A characteristic feature of monochronic cultures representatives is future planning, the anticipation of any event, success or failure, the British and French rather live in the future, in contrast to the Russian culture, the British and French rather live in the future.

In accordance with the semantic analysis, the abstract concept «always», as a rule, differs by a positive connotation in idioms of the English, French and Russian languages. The negative connotation inherent in the English, French and Russian PUs expressing the concept «never».

In compared cultures we usually criticize: the delay in execution of work, putting important things off for later, laziness, omission or passive waiting.

5. Conclusion

Comparative aspects of phraseological studies are of a great interest, both for the development of the General theory of phraseology and for the study of common and distinctive features of the studied languages, interrelations and differences in their subsystems. The part of this scientific problem is a comparative description of the semantic field "Time" of PUs establishing similarities and differences in the content of these PUs in English, Russian and French.

Acknowledgments

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

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