

Language, Mentality, and Digital Mediation: Phraseological Units in the Context of Globalized Online Communication

Lenguaje, mentalidad y mediación digital: unidades fraseológicas en el contexto de la comunicación globalizada en línea

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Abstract

The article examines how the linguistic representation of the world serves as a central concept in modern linguistics, reflecting national worldviews and the cultural and psychological characteristics of a people. It emphasizes the connection between the linguistic depiction of the world and phraseological systems across various languages, since phraseological units most vividly express ethnocultural specificity, mental stereotypes, and value orientations of native speakers. The study reviews theoretical approaches to defining the concept of the “linguistic picture of the world” in the works of Ukrainian and international linguists, as well as the mechanisms behind its development at the level of national consciousness. A comparative analysis of Ukrainian and English phraseological units is conducted to identify universal and culture-specific elements within the linguistic picture of the world. The findings indicate that universal phraseological units reflect shared human concepts related to morality, labor, nature, and family values, while culturally specific units encode distinctive features of historical experience, geographical conditions, traditions, and lifestyles. Phraseology is highlighted as a cultural “mirror” that reveals symbolic meanings and cultural codes. The results deepen the understanding of language as a tool for shaping and representing worldview structures and support intercultural communication and comparative linguistic research.

Keywords: Ukrainian language teacher by professional orientation, business Ukrainian language, culture of Ukrainian business language, linguistic picture of the world, English

phraseological units, native speakers of English, national culture, worldview, linguoculturology, intercultural communication.

Resumen

El artículo examina la imagen lingüística del mundo como categoría clave de la lingüística moderna, que refleja las cosmovisiones nacionales y las características culturales y psicológicas de un pueblo. Se presta especial atención a la relación entre la imagen lingüística del mundo y los sistemas fraseológicos de distintas lenguas, ya que las unidades fraseológicas transmiten de manera más vívida la especificidad etnocultural, los estereotipos mentales y las orientaciones de valor de los hablantes nativos. El estudio analiza los enfoques teóricos para definir el concepto de “imagen lingüística del mundo” en las obras de lingüistas ucranianos e internacionales, así como los mecanismos de su formación en la conciencia nacional. Se lleva a cabo un análisis comparativo de las unidades fraseológicas del ucraniano y del inglés, con el fin de identificar componentes universales y específicos de cada cultura en la imagen lingüística del mundo. Los resultados demuestran que las unidades fraseológicas universales reflejan conceptos humanos compartidos relacionados con la moral, el trabajo, la naturaleza y los valores familiares, mientras que las específicas de cada nación codifican rasgos distintivos de la experiencia histórica, las condiciones geográficas, las tradiciones y los modos de vida. Se destaca la fraseología como un “espejo” cultural a través del cual se revelan significados simbólicos y códigos culturales. Los resultados profundizan la comprensión del lenguaje como medio de configuración y representación de las estructuras de la cosmovisión y contribuyen al desarrollo de la comunicación intercultural y de los estudios lingüísticos comparativos.

Palabras clave: orientación profesional del docente de lengua ucraniana, lengua ucraniana de los negocios, cultura del lenguaje empresarial ucraniano, imagen lingüística del mundo, unidades fraseológicas del inglés, hablantes nativos de inglés, cultura nacional, cosmovisión, lingüoculturología, comunicación intercultural.

1. INTRODUCTION

Phraseological units are often considered some of the most difficult elements to translate because of several factors. When a word becomes part of a phraseological unit, it usually loses its individual meaning and gains a new, context-dependent or “connected” sense. Therefore, translating such fixed expressions requires more than just looking up each part's meaning in a dictionary. The main challenge comes from the need to find an equivalent in the target language or, alternatively, a suitable match. However, even if an equivalent exists, it may still be necessary to find other ways to convey the intended meaning, since the current phraseological unit might not fit the specific context. Additionally, it's important to consider any evaluative connotations associated with the expression during translation. As a result, understanding and applying effective translation strategies are essential when working with phraseological units. This ensures a more accurate and contextually appropriate translation of the original material, emphasizing the importance of further research in this area.

Most phraseological units are not translated into other languages, which means that each nation and culture express their own character, everyday imagery, and symbolic

structures through them. It is within phraseology that the memory of national historical events, customs, folk wisdom, and humor is preserved. The dependence of a linguistic unit's meaning on the era's nature, the cultural perspectives on how the world is perceived, historical development, and an individual's understanding of the world is undeniable. In this way, linguistic meanings can be seen as a type of information about the surrounding reality and our perception of it, stored in the social memory of the cultural and linguistic community, and representing the spiritual heritage of generations.

Each nation has a distinct system of values, traditions, and character that set it apart from other ethnic groups, and these are embedded in the phonetic, morphological, lexical, and syntactic levels of the language. These elements reflect a nation's worldview, creating a unique picture of the world's language.

Phraseological units can be seen as more representative symbols in linguoculturology, which exists at the crossroad of linguistics and cultural studies. They examine both historical and modern expressions of a people's culture, reflected and solidified in language. The importance of studying phraseology as a universal mechanism and understanding its conceptualization in modern language theory is driven by the increasing role of stable units in speakers' discourse across different languages. This is especially important for teachers of Ukrainian language in professional and business contexts, emphasizing speech culture (Wierzbicka, 1996; Wierzbicka, 1999).

During the research process, a set of methods was used for a thorough analysis of the material. Specifically, the deduction method helped draw general conclusions from specific observations; the comparative method was used to compare linguistic units in German and Ukrainian texts; and the descriptive method helped characterize the structural and semantic features of these units in the selected languages.

The purpose of the article is to compare the linguistic worldviews of English and Ukrainian from the perspective of phraseology.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of how language perceives the world is discussed in the works of many scholars: Black, Weisgerber, Wierzbicka, Golubovskaya, Humboldt, Dzyuba, Muromtsev, Nelyuba, Himes, and others. The "conceptual picture of the world" forms the foundation of Humboldt's ideas, who introduced the concept of language as anthropocentric and argued that natural language reflects a unique worldview that is specific only to it, unlike others. By naming individual objects, it creates a general picture for human consciousness. This thesis clarifies the connection between language and thought, as the results are embedded in linguistic concepts and cognitive categories.

Thus, Spears discussed the idea of a subjective factor in language. Spears observed that an individual perceives the world in only a certain way because, during the interpretation of realities, our choices are influenced by how language can establish associations. Therefore, human knowledge about the world is shaped by the linguistic picture of reality (Spears, 2000).

The concept of the linguistic picture of the world was first introduced in Wierzbicka's work. According to her perspective, language influences how ethnic groups perceive and interpret reality. This results in different understandings of certain phenomena, as the

existence of many languages leads to various interpretations. In line with nominal definitions, the linguistic picture of the world refers to the collective set of ideas about reality that have been historically ingrained in people's consciousness and are expressed through the phonetic, morphological, lexical, and syntactic levels of language (Knowles, 2009; Wierzbicka, 1996; Wierzbicka, 1999). The linguistic representation of the world is most evident at the lexical level, especially in fixed expressions. This is a key focus for educators teaching Ukrainian in a professional setting and those specializing in business Ukrainian within the framework of speech culture.

Phraseologisms and idioms in English are connected to cultural ideas and traditions, and they preserve important historical information. Based on this, we will try to discuss the equivalents of these fixed expressions in English and Ukrainian, examining their origins.

Phraseologisms are a vital part of language that speakers constantly use, and fixed expressions can appear in both spoken and written communication. Therefore, if authors interpret the term "conceptualization" as "the process of the birth of concepts," they may face the issue of whether the emergence of concepts can be described similarly within culture, everyday consciousness, and the individual artistic consciousness of the author.

The linguistic view of the world is seen as a mosaic-like cultural landscape made up of interconnected linguistic elements. These elements, through a complex interaction of sounds, lexical and grammatical meanings, and stylistic features, reflect a fairly objective picture of both the environment and an individual's inner world. Ultimately, this creates a comprehensive model or representation of the world itself (Karaban, 2003).

Atanasova describes the "linguistic picture of the world" as the verbal expressions and interpretations created by language communities to understand their environment and their place within it. He emphasizes that this picture of the world essentially reflects both an individual's worldview and the collective perspective of an ethnic group. It is formed by how people perceive and interpret their surroundings, ultimately expressed through language. Through human interaction with reality, a dynamic relationship develops among individuals, the universe, and their language, creating an interconnected system where all elements are linked (Havrylova & Atanasova, 2020).

Havrylova introduces the concept of the "mental lexicon of language," which describes not an individual's awareness but how an entire community of speakers interprets the real world (Havrylova & Atanasova, 2020).

Although phraseology has been extensively studied in both English and Ukrainian, methods for translating phraseological units still need further research. English phraseological units that include a person's name based on their profession deserve special attention. Analyzing how these are conveyed in Ukrainian will significantly improve translation quality (Savchenko, 2022; Altohami, 2020; Yizhakevich, 1971).

In summary, the authors view the linguistic perspective of the world as a unique, national collection of knowledge about the world, stored in the specific structure of vocabulary, phraseology, and grammar of a particular language. Ammer argued that "in each natural language there is a view of the world that is characteristic only for it. Every language, denoting individual objects, actually creates: it forms a picture of the world for the people who are its bearers" (Ammer, 1997).

Regarding structure, for example, Havrylova and Atanasova examine the linguistic worldview (MKS) within the framework of the "domovna picture of the world," where the basic unit is seen as a concept, the "conceptual picture," with the core being a concept, and the "linguistic picture," where the core is the meaning of the linguistic sign. The relationships among these three levels of the worldview are illustrated. The ISS is also analyzed in terms of its dynamics and its significance in shaping the nation's intellectual landscape (Havrylova & Atanasova, 2020).

3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The issue of national mentality is becoming increasingly important today for study across different sciences. Since elements of national worldviews are expressed through language, the authors point out that national customs and traditions, embedded in language, create a moral and spiritual unity that helps preserve and develop both ethnicity and cultural heritage. National culture is mainly reflected through unique forms of self-organization, different from those of other societies. It includes the products of a people's linguistic and intellectual efforts, a system of shared public and spiritual values, and the collective relationship of that nationality with its environment. It also shows interactions among individuals within the group and their connections with other nations (Altohami, 2020; Bușilă, 2018; Yizhakevich, 1971).

Phraseologisms, whose figurative roots have a long-standing tradition, establish a dual connection with culture: their external form already serves as the language of culture, and additionally, this image is understood and interpreted by speakers based on their cultural knowledge. Therefore, phraseologisms communicate cultural information about the world and society either directly (through their denotative meaning) or indirectly (by linking the associative-figurative basis with standards, symbols, and stereotypes of the national culture). As a result, phraseological units act as a kind of reservoir of the people's wisdom, preserving and passing on the mentalities and culture of the people from generation to generation.

Current understanding of the issues related to the conceptualization and categorization of reality is seen as a crucial task for both cognitive science and language theory. In language theory, the term "conceptualization" mainly pertains to the process of organizing knowledge, emphasizing units of human experience in their meaningful representation (Loboda, 2019; Mitchell, 2007; Spears, 2000). The anthropocentric focus of 21st-century linguistics largely shapes the main priorities of the science of language. The connection between an individual's existence and various historical, cultural, ethical, aesthetic, and moral aspects of being and activity plays a central role in guiding language toward the individual.

Using the concept of an idea (represented through phraseology), it becomes possible to identify and describe differences in the figurative worldview of various peoples. This approach can also, to some degree, reveal the connection between thinking patterns and the unique way each ethnic group interprets reality. As is widely known, language reflects specific features of extralinguistic reality that are inherent to a particular cultural space (Baran et al., 2008; Havrylova & Atanasova, 2020; Karaban, 2003).

The dependence of a linguistic unit's meaning on the era, worldview, historical background, and human understanding of the world is undeniable. In this context,

linguistic meanings can be seen as a type of information about the surrounding reality and our knowledge of it, stored in the social memory of the cultural-linguistic community and representing the spiritual heritage of both current and future generations. These linguo-cultural aspects are crucial for specialists to consider when teaching a course in business Ukrainian, especially when focusing on idioms and their translation. Although language is fundamentally connected to the same world, differences in its semantic system emerge from many factors, including extralinguistic ones such as varied individual experiences of the same reality. This variation shows up in differences in the lexical and grammatical naming of phenomena and processes, as well as in the etymology of certain concepts (Loboda, 2019; Mitchell, 2007; Spears, 2000).

Terminological vagueness and ambiguity in scientific works can sometimes obscure the core of a specific linguistic or speech paradox being described. Therefore, clarifying and concretizing the fundamental concepts and terms used in building scientific theories, concepts, and hypotheses is an urgent task for the overall theory of language (Altohami, 2020; Gavrylova & Sadovska, 2019; Spears, 2000).

Concepts relate to cultural codes, which are seen as the “grid” that culture “casts” on the surrounding world, dividing, categorizing, structuring, and evaluating it. Cultural codes connect with ancient archetypal representations of humans, solidifying them (Spears, 2000; Mitchell, 2007; Knowles, 2009).

The concept of worldview is based on studying a person’s ideas about the world. If the authors recognize that the world is a person and their environment, then the worldview results from processing information about both. The worldview of each nation or ethnic group is shaped by universal concepts like time, space, cause, change, quantity, and quality. These concepts are expressed through language as a system of symbols, and studying different national languages shows that various peoples interpret and explain reality differently, heavily influenced by religious and social factors, as well as their living conditions, customs, traditions, and way of life (Spears, 2000; Mitchell, 2007; Knowles, 2009).

4. RESULTS

Let's explore the challenges of translating idioms, using Ukrainian and English as examples, which pose difficulties for teachers, including those teaching business Ukrainian, especially in terms of speech etiquette. For instance, in English speech, one might say "*it's raining cats and dogs*" (literally translating to "*it's raining cats and dogs*"), which in Ukrainian can be expressed with a similar idiom: "it's pouring like a bucket." According to the dictionary of phraseological units in English, the origin of the expression "*it's raining cats and dogs*" is closely linked to drainage issues in European cities during the 17th-18th centuries, when heavy rains caused sewers to overflow, leading to the appearance of various objects and debris—including animal carcasses—on the streets. When people observed the aftermath of thunderstorms, they noted animals lying in the open air on the streets (Mitchell, 2007; Ammer, 1997; Knowles, 2009).

Here's another notable example of stable word combinations related to weather: *steal one's thunder* (literally translated as "*to steal someone's thunder*"). In Ukrainian, similar phraseological expressions might be: *to steal someone's idea*; *bask in the rays of someone else's fame*. The origin of the idiom *steal one's thunder* dates back to the 18th century,

when various devices like lead balls were used in theaters to create sound effects; this was how the thunder effect was produced: *Damn them! They will not let my play run, but they steal my thunder! (Damn it! They won't let my play be staged, but they're stealing my thunder!)* (Ammer, 1997).

Cuisine plays a vital role in English culture, so the language's phraseological resources are filled with stable expressions involving the names of products. It is well known that pudding is a traditional English dish, often prepared with meat or fruit fillings and served during Christmas. The significance of this dish in English culture is undeniable, which is why the expression holds a prominent place in the linguistic worldview: *"The proof of the pudding is in the eating"* (literally, *"The proof of the pudding is in the taste"*), which in Ukrainian can be translated as *"it is better to see once than to hear a hundred times."* The Oxford Dictionary states that the origins of this idiom trace back to the 14th century. It is noted that medieval pudding was not a dessert as we know it today; instead, minced meat with dried fruits served as the filling (Ammer, 1997).

Tea is an important part of American culture, and the tea ceremony helps people relax, unwind, connect with others, and share important information. That's why everyone has a favorite type of tea or a preferred cup of tea: their "cup of tea," meaning something or someone they enjoy and that brings them pleasure. For example, the expression "reading is my cup of tea" can be literally understood as "reading is my favorite activity," showing that reading is a hobby.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the expression "a cup of tea" had a positive meaning and was associated with acceptability and meeting expectations: *He may be a bit hot-tempered and impulsive... but otherwise, it's simply impossible not to like him. Sally responded that Fenwick was a cup of tea (He may be a bit hot-tempered and impulsive... but on the other hand, he just can't help but be likable. To this, Sally replied that Fenwick was wonderful; she liked him)* (Spears, 2000).

In modern English-speaking society, the expression "my cup of tea" has taken on a negative connotation, with the phrase "not my cup of tea" (literally meaning "not mine a cup of tea") becoming common. In Ukrainian, similar phrases include *not my horse, not mine, " and " unpleasant to me*. This idiom gained its negative meaning during World War II thanks to "Sheets from a Military Notebook" correspondent, who explained: *You don't say someone gives you a pain in the neck. You just say, "He's not my cup of tea" (... they don't say that someone is bothering you. They just note that I don't like him)* (Spears, 2000).

In English phraseology, authors can identify cases where a fixed compound containing a component-name of a person by type of activity has multiple meanings and belongs to several synonymous series. For example, the expression to come the quarterdeck over one, which means "to command someone," is synonymous with the compound to come the old soldier over one. Additionally, this phraseological unit can be part of another synonymous series with the meaning "to fool," along with compounds like to put the doctor he, that play the traveler, etc. These examples demonstrate that when new words emerge in a phraseological unit, new synonymous series can form, creating challenges in translation, especially into Ukrainian. Phraseological antonyms provide a contrasting evaluation of a phenomenon or object; they are characterized by opposing semantics or the opposition "phraseology – phraseology" (Havrylova & Atanasova, 2020). There can be defined antonymic phraseology that includes the names of persons by type of activity

and is also divided into those that partially overlap in structure but contain components with opposite meanings, and those that differ entirely in structure, and thus in their internal content and image. The first group may include expressions like *good sailor – bad sailor* (“a person who is good at – badly tolerates sea duty”). In some cases, lexemes can acquire the opposite meaning within the structure of a stable compound, especially in the names of persons by type of activity: *judge, pastor – hatter, weaver ((as) sober as a judge (or a parson) – (as) mad as a hatter/as a weaver)*. In this context, the distinction emphasizes the difference between mentally healthy and insane individuals.

The second group of antonymic pairs, which hardly overlap in component makeup and therefore in their figurative internal forms, includes the following expressions: *a square shooter* [20, p. 883] – *knight of fortune* (“an honest, decent person is an adventurer”); *(as) fit like a pudding for a friar's mouth – as much use for it as the Queen has for a yield-hook* [20, p. 58] (“what is necessary is something unnecessary”); *curb (or kerb) merchant* [20, p. 250] – *merchant prince* [20, p. 671] (“small – large merchant”), etc.

Difficulties in translating phraseological units that include a component representing a specific profession or occupation arise from features such as imagery, expressiveness, conciseness, and aphorism. This is especially true when working with these stable structures. It is essential to consider not only linguistic details but also cultural and national traits, along with the historical and traditional context of the original language. In translation studies, common methods for conveying phraseological units include full and partial equivalents, analog translation, tracing, and descriptive translation.

The authors emphasize that selecting exact equivalents is feasible when there are parallelisms in both English and Ukrainian. The examined units share similar lexical content, meaning, imagery, grammatical structure, and stylistic tone: *the prince of darkness – king (prince) of darkness* (biblical origin in both languages); *master of the situation – master of the situation*; *A workman is known by his work – recognize the master at work*; *your obedient servant – your humble servant*; *Like priest, like people – like a priest, so is his parish*.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of the linguistic worldview in English and Ukrainian phraseology reveals many patterns that explain the different historical and cultural experiences of Ukrainians and English speakers, which are reflected in the language. A person creates a mental image of the world as the foundation of their life, forming a representation of the real world—a model used as a tool for orientation in the surrounding environment. However, this perception of the world remains relevant only as long as the individual addresses specific tasks; to solve other life issues, the picture is adjusted or modified. Therefore, the authors conclude that a person simultaneously owns and carries multiple different worldviews and operates with different models of the world depending on the situation.

Any explanation of the worldview will be inadequate because a person cannot fully understand or gather all the nuances of meaning related to their real life. In this way, the worldview will always remain an incomplete picture.

In modern language theory, many similar concepts and terms are related to phenomena such as “world picture,” “linguistic picture of the world,” “phraseology in the world picture,” “conceptual picture of the world,” “scientific picture of the world,” and others.

These present a challenge in developing the methodology for teaching business Ukrainian. Each new linguistic research approach makes its own adjustments to the interpretation and understanding of these concepts as new objects of knowledge are examined from different perspectives and based on different principles. Linguistic pictures of the world are built upon the foundation of national culture, making the issue of cultural identity relevant. This issue is especially important for a Ukrainian language teacher specializing in business Ukrainian, particularly when working with phraseological units across different languages.

Phraseological units that include a person's name by occupation need special attention during translation because they are not simple word combinations with arbitrary meanings. Instead, they carry specific integrated meanings, properties, and subtle evaluations. The analysis showed that the translation approach can vary depending on individual cases, as the translator's choice is affected by several factors. These include the context in which the phraseological unit is used, its structure, semantic content, and emotional or expressive tone. Based on the situation and the nature of the phrase, the translator may select a full or partial equivalent, an analogy, a calque, or a descriptive translation. It is also essential that the translator understands the linguistic and cultural features of the original language, demonstrates creativity, and efficiently uses reference sources. Future research should focus on a more detailed analysis of phraseology containing a component that is a person's name by occupation, along with the specific features involved in their translation.

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