

Phraseological Units with National-Cultural Components In English And Russian Languages

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Annotation: This article examines the role of national cultural components in phraseological units in both English and Russian languages. It explores how idiomatic expressions that incorporate toponyms or historical events reflect national identities, values, and cultural memory. Using examples such as "to meet one's Waterloo" and "Сибирская душа," the article highlights how language serves as a repository of cultural history and societal norms. By analyzing these expressions, the article provides a deeper understanding of how cultural identity is embedded in language and how it shapes linguistic expressions across different cultures.

Key words: Phraseological units, national cultural components, English idioms, Russian idioms, cultural identity, history and language, national pride, regionalism, linguistic expressions,

Language is not merely a tool for communication; it is a reflection of the cultural fabric of the society that speaks it. One significant feature of language that ties it directly to culture is the use of phraseological units, which are idiomatic expressions that carry meanings not directly related to the individual words they consist of. These phraseological units often include national cultural components, particularly when they reference specific cultural norms, historical events, or geographical locations. This article explores phraseological units in both English and Russian, emphasizing those with national cultural components. We will analyze how these expressions reflect cultural identity and historical contexts, illustrating their significance in the understanding of language and culture.

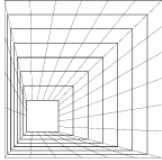
Phraseological units are fixed expressions that have a figurative meaning. Unlike individual words, PhUs cannot always be understood by the meanings of their parts. They include idioms, proverbs, sayings, and collocations that have a set structure, and their meanings often reflect cultural context. For instance, "kick the bucket" in English means "to die," and this meaning cannot be deduced by analyzing the individual words.

Language is deeply intertwined with culture, and it serves as a mirror of societal values and historical experiences. According to Sapir (1921), language and culture are inseparable, as the language a person speaks shapes how they perceive and experience the world. Similarly, cultural nuances are embedded in language through phrases and expressions that reflect the collective identity and worldview of a society. Phraseological units, due to their fixed nature and widespread use, are often a direct reflection of national culture.

Phraseological units with national cultural components carry references to historical events, customs, beliefs, or social practices that are characteristic of a particular country or community. These Phraseological Units convey deeper meanings that are often unintelligible to speakers of other languages who are unfamiliar with the culture. As such, Phraseological Units are essential for understanding how a language reflects its cultural heritage.

Phraseological Units are more than just linguistic structures; they serve as cultural symbols. They can evoke images, memories, or feelings that are specific to a certain society. For example, the phrase "break the ice" in English, which means to initiate conversation in an awkward or formal situation, may relate to a historical or metaphorical understanding of ice-breaking in social contexts.

In both English and Russian, Phraseological Units often reflect values such as humor, respect, hierarchy, and relationships with nature. By examining these cultural components, we



gain insight into the attitudes and experiences that shape communication within each society.

English, as a global language, is rich in Phraseological Units that carry national and cultural significance. These PhUs often arise from historical events, literature, or common cultural practices.

1. **"To spill the beans"**

Meaning: To reveal a secret or disclose information prematurely. This expression is believed to originate from an ancient Greek voting system where people would use beans to vote, and spilling them would reveal the results prematurely (Campbell, 2004). The phrase encapsulates the value placed on secrecy and discretion in English-speaking societies.

2. **"A penny for your thoughts"**

Meaning: A way of asking someone what they are thinking. This phrase has a historical connection to the value of a penny and is used as a polite way of requesting someone's opinion or insight. It reflects the cultural significance of monetary value in social exchanges.

3. **"The apple of my eye"**

Meaning: A cherished or beloved person. This expression traces back to the Old English period, where "apple" referred to the central part of the eye, symbolizing something precious. It reflects the cultural importance of love and affection in relationships.

4. **"Bite the bullet"**

Meaning: To endure something painful or unpleasant. The origin of this phrase comes from soldiers in wartime who would bite on bullets to endure pain during medical procedures. The phrase is culturally connected to British military history and endurance.

These PhUs demonstrate the ways in which English-speaking cultures, particularly those influenced by history and social norms, convey values like secrecy, personal worth, and endurance through idiomatic expressions.

Russian language and culture also feature numerous Phraseological Units that are imbued with national cultural significance. Many Russian PhUs come from folk traditions, historical events, and interactions with nature, which hold deep cultural meaning.

1. **"За дворѣцъ подмигнуть" (Za dvoréts podmignút')**

Meaning: To take something lightly or playfully, to make light of a situation. This expression originates from Russian court traditions, where "подмигнуть" (podmignut') referred to a subtle, playful gesture within the court's social atmosphere. It reflects the Russian value of wit and humor in the face of seriousness.

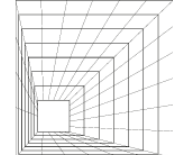
2. **"Как сельдь в бочке" (Kak seld' v bochke)**

Meaning: "Like herring in a barrel" – used to describe a crowded, uncomfortable situation.

The phrase is often attributed to the crowded conditions in Russian fish markets, where herring was sold in large barrels. The phrase carries a cultural understanding of physical discomfort and crowded conditions, often used to describe difficult or unpleasant social situations.

3. **"На чужой карман не взглянешь" (Na chuzhoj karman ne vzglyanesh')**

Meaning: It is not good to covet what belongs to others. This idiom reflects a moral teaching that resonates in Russian culture, which has historically emphasized communal values and the ethical consequences of greed.



4. "He всё то золото, что блестит" (Ne vsyo to zoloto, chto blestit)

Meaning: All that glitters is not gold. This expression warns against superficial appearances, a concept deeply ingrained in Russian literature and philosophy, where inner virtue is often valued more than external wealth or beauty.

These examples show how Russian Phraseological Units reflect values such as humility, respect for others, and the importance of inner character over outward appearances, offering a lens into the national psyche.

While both English and Russian Phraseological Units serve to convey cultural values, they reflect different societal contexts. For instance, English P Phraseological Units like "a penny for your thoughts" reflect the cultural importance of personal opinion and individuality, while Russian PhUs like "He всё то золото" emphasize moral and philosophical wisdom.

Both languages use Phraseological Units to express social relations and respect, but the emphasis in Russian often leans more heavily toward humility and collective good, while English PhUs tend to prioritize individualism and personal achievement.

The presence of national cultural components in Phraseological Units presents both challenges and opportunities in translation and language teaching. Translating Phraseological Units without understanding their cultural context can result in misinterpretations or loss of meaning. For example, the English Phraseological Units "kick the bucket" does not have a direct equivalent in Russian, and its translation would require either a description or an idiomatic substitution.

In language teaching, recognizing the cultural origins of Phraseological Units can help students better understand how these units are used in real-world communication. Teachers can incorporate cultural lessons alongside linguistic lessons to enhance students' comprehension and usage of these expressions.

Phraseological units are not just linguistic tools; they are carriers of national culture. In both English and Russian, Phraseological Units reflect cultural values, historical experiences, and societal norms. By studying these expressions, we can gain insight into the worldview of a language's speakers. Moreover, understanding the cultural components of Phraseological Units is essential for effective communication, language teaching, and translation, making it a key area of interest in linguistics.

The list of used literature:

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