

COGNITIVE APPROACH TO THE CLASSIFICATION OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS WITH THE COMPONENT “WATER”

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КОГНИТИВНЫЙ ПОДХОД К КЛАССИФИКАЦИИ ФРАЗЕОЛОГИЧЕСКИХ ЕДИНИЦ С КОМПОНЕНТОМ «ВОДА»

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Abstract. Phraseology has been at the focus of attention in different fields of linguistics because of its important role in verbalization of a particular nation’s mentality and cultural values. According to cognitive linguistics, phraseological units verbalize on language level cognitive models produced in our minds by comparing one phenomenon to another. This article is aimed to analyze phraseological units with the component of “water” in English language according to a cognitive parameter and to group them in accordance with the metaphorical meanings they denote.

Аннотация. Фразеология была в центре внимания в различных областях лингвистики из-за ее важной роли в вербализации менталитета и культурных ценностей конкретной нации. Согласно когнитивной лингвистике, фразеологические единицы вербализируют на уровне языка когнитивные модели, созданные в наших умах путем сравнения одного явления с другим. Цель данной статьи — проанализировать фразеологические единицы с компонентом «вода» в английском языке по когнитивному параметру и сгруппировать их в соответствии с метафорическими значениями, которые они обозначают.

Keywords: phraseology, cognitive aspect, metaphor, conceptual model, proverbs, idioms.

Ключевые слова: фразеология, когнитивный аспект, метафора, концептуальная модель, пословицы, идиомы.

Phraseological units are one of the most studied language means in modern trends of linguistics, such as cognitive and cultural linguistics. Phraseology of any language usually reflects the life style, mentality, history and cultural beliefs of this nation [9], that’s why phraseological units convey different types of knowledge structures. There are different approaches to analyze and classify phraseological units as semantic, etymological, contrastive, linguo-cultural and linguo-cognitive approaches. In this article, our aim is to analyze phraseological units according to cognitive and semantic approach and to identify cognitive models presented by the phraseological expressions with the component of natural phenomena.

According to modern views in the theory of linguistics, the main problem of this field is to give explanation to the mechanism of processing natural language and to form models of understanding this language. Modern linguistic theories seeks for the answers to the problems connected with the role of a language in perception of the world; the connection between conceptual and linguistic systems; the role of a language in receiving, processing, storing and

transferring information; the investigation of the processes of conceptualization, categorization and perception of the world information, knowledge structures and their verbal representations. To find answers to above-mentioned issues, a separate trend of linguistics – cognitive linguistics appeared.

Cognitive linguistics, according to E. S. Kubryakova, is intended to study the language as cognitive mechanism that plays role in encoding and transferring information. Another linguist N. N. Boldirev defines the subject as “one of the most modern and perspective trends in linguistic researches, which studies language in connection with different mental structures and processes: attention, perception, memory” [9]. One of the areas of research in cognitive linguistics is the process of modeling the world with the help of concepts. Concepts assist us to store and save knowledge about the world in our mind. While communicating with others, we try to understand what others are talking or we tell our own opinions. In the first case, our aim is to understand the views expressed with the help of a language. The language is the tool of sending and receiving information in the process of which it appears as “a pack” [8]. However, the knowledge used while decoding the language does not consist of only linguistic knowledge. It also embraces the knowledge about the world, social context in which the information has been sent, the ability of using the information stored in mind, etc. For this reason, one of the main tasks of cognitive linguistics is to explain the mechanism the mechanism of processing natural language and to form models of understanding this language.

A model used in the formation of phraseological units is metaphorical in its nature. Creating idioms can not be imagined without participation of metaphors and metonymy. Metaphor should be defined as a special cognitive mechanism, a cognitive action that results in the formation of idioms. It explicates conceptual models of the world and deep mental structures [9]. On the other hand, a language with the help of its meanings and associations transforms conceptual model of the world to nationally and culturally colored models. Metaphor is accepted as a model of formation new meanings, but it works rather implicitly. It is intended to compare similarities of two different in nature things. In reality, these two things are completely different by their ontology, but metaphor finds and connects their similar features.

In cognitive linguistics, new approach to learn the problem of metaphor has been developing. In this field, metaphor is considered as an important factor in the development of cognition, because even in our subconscious state of mind, people are able to compare one thing to another. In Cognitive linguistics, a new field of study named Conceptual Metaphor theory has been developed in the framework of Cognitive Semantics. It was first proposed by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson in their revolutionary work “Metaphors We Live By” (1980) and since then has been developed, and the basic principle of Conceptual Metaphor Theory is that metaphor is not simply a stylistic device: it is a way of thinking, a tool of cognition. Metaphor operates at the level of thinking as “our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, and our ordinary conceptual systems, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature” [1].

To analyze phraseological units based on the cognitive approach, we chose the idiomatic expressions and proverbs with the component of the word “water”. Phraseological units with the components of natural phenomena are analyzed less than those taken from other fields. Firstly, grouping them according to the metaphorical model they represent has been done. Further to this, some semantic and etymological features of nationally specific units have been analyzed.

We grouped the phraseological units as follows:

Idioms verbalizing financial condition (Water — financial condition): Above water (to have enough savings for a life); get, be in low water (to have difficult financial problems); flow like water (money flows fast); watered capital (capital that is out of use). In the first two samples. Water is considered as a financial necessity, if you are above the water, you are higher than your

necessities, if you are in low water, you have obtained a lot of debts or financial crisis. The last phrase watered capital is also metaphorically formed, imagine money has been drowned in water, the paper can not be used, and it splits up. If your capital is watered, it may not be useful anymore.

Idioms verbalizing personality characteristics of humans (Water-Personality): folly grows without watering (fool people are born like this), draw a lot of water (if a person draws a lot of water, he is very important person in his circle), have water on the brain (a person with crazy ideas), still waters run deep, still waters have deep bottoms (people who don't speak much have lot of secrets), unstable as water (not reliable people, those who always change their decisions), weak as water (easily influenced person). There is a proverb "still waters run deep" which appeared in English language in the 14th century. If we pay attention to the metaphorical usage of this proverb, the image of seashore should be come into our mind. When someone watches lakes or seas from distance, he or she may feel a sense of calm and peace, but when he people come close to them, the actual strong and impulsive waves can be seen. Here the sea is compared to the person who is always very calm. As you cannot know about the strength of the waves unless you come closer, you also don't know the inner world of that type of person.

Idioms verbalizing particular actions (Water — action): pour oil on troubled waters (trying to bring commitment between those who have a disagreement or dispute), carry water on both shoulders (to play in both sides, to have two-facet game with someone), carry water in a sleeve (to act ineffectively, fruitless action), fish in troubled waters (to take advantage of something even in a very complicated situation), hold water (to act logically or to think in a right way), pour cold water on something (to be against to some ideas). As it is seen, in this group there are several idioms where metaphor is used masterfully. For example, the idiom to pour oil on troubled waters means to calm down two sides who have had an argument, has a long history dating back to the Roman's Empire period. Roman statesman and scholar Pliny once mentioned about calming effect of the oil on the agitated surface of the water [10]. The first figurative usage of the phrase was observed in the letters of Benjamin Franklin. He once told about a person whom he knows: "His presence and advice, like oil upon troubled waters, have composed the contending waves of faction." Another sample "carry water in a sleeve" is also should be mentioned, because if we imagine the scene of carrying water in our sleeves in order to pass it to someone, it is obvious that there will be no good result. That's why, it is used figuratively to mean the useless action.

Phraseological units verbalizing types of liquids: water bewitched (very light tea), water of life (alcohol). Fire water (whisky), water of forgetfulness (water given to the dead people afterlife). The last idiom has mythological origin. In Greek mythology, there were five rivers of afterlife, and one of them was called Lethe. People who were drinking waters of Lethe, started to lose their memories about their past deeds. For this reason, the water of the River Lethe was called as water of forgetfulness. In modern English, this phrase also can be used when someone wants to forget himself, his past, he may want to drink water of forgetfulness. The phrase "fire water" denotes cultural specific knowledge, as it was the term used first by American Indians when they were familiarized with whisky brought by Europeans. Because of the effect whisky may produce in people, they called as fire water. It is as hot and flaming the people's soul as fire.

In the article, there has been given several groups of idioms with the component water. Some of them were from Biblical origin (weak as water, to be in deep waters, unstable as water) while some of them had mythological history. There are also phraseological units denoting culturally-specific concepts. To sum up the analysis, we can conclude that water as a concept not always points positive meanings; it also has been used as a negative image in people's mind. Cognitive analysis of phraseological units may lead to thorough understanding of the modeling of the knowledge about the world in our mind.

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