

Axiological Phraseological Units at Foreign Language Lessons at University as a Reflection of National Mentality

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Abstract

The article reveals the importance of studying axiological phraseological units at foreign language lessons in higher school in the process of forming a communicative competence that provides an opportunity for effective intercultural communication. Communication with native speakers cannot be effective without taking into account their national characteristics and national mentality. In addition, understanding the national mentality contributes to the formation of a value system for future professionals, which is an indispensable component of the educational process at university. The most vivid reflection of values, traditions and features of the perception of the world of particular peoples in the language occurs through phraseological units. The analysis of German axiological phraseological units makes it possible to determine values and anti-values in the German linguoculture that are a reflection of the national mentality and are manifested in all spheres of life of the Germans. The research methods are the following: descriptive method, analysis of lexicographical interpretations and etymology of German phraseological units; the method of component analysis to research the structure of meaning of studied units; the method of conceptual and interpretative analysis. As a result of the study of German axiological phraseological units, the following features of the German mentality were revealed: a clear delineation of the private and public sphere, the closure of the private sphere and the emotional closure of the individual; diligence and condemnation of laziness; the value of time – rigid planning and strict adherence to the plan, high pace of life; the idealization of order, the desire for orderliness; hypertrophied sense of responsibility for their actions and their consequences, foresight, caution; thrift and practicality, condemnation of prodigality. Research results can be helpful for the German language training, in professional activity of translators, linguists. To assimilate the German axiological phraseology at foreign language lessons, the article presents interactive tasks created in the Hot Potatoes program (task for filling in passes, restoring sequences, establishing correspondences, multiple choice of answers).

Keywords: Linguistics; Language; University; Education; Communication.



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1. Introduction

At the time of social and economic changes educational approaches are transformed. Studying a foreign language at university promotes the development of the general cultural and professional competencies of students. The main task of teaching a foreign language is to form a communicative competence, that is, ability for interpersonal and intercultural communication in another language. Communication with native speakers cannot be effective without taking into account their national characteristics and national mentality. Gurevich notes that “*the purpose of teaching a foreign language is currently defined as mastering the skills necessary to perform various types of speech activity in the condition of intercultural communication*” (Gurevich, 2006). One of the most effective ways to achieve this goal is the active introduction into the teaching materials of a very significant language stratum reflecting the national mentality, namely, phraseological units. In addition, interpretation of images in the axiological phraseological units is based on revelation the inner form of phraseologisms as interlink between value /antivalue and the linguistic picture of the world. Understanding of the national mentality contributes to the formation of a system of values for future professionals, which is an indispensable component of the upbringing process in the university, including the presentation, comprehension, acceptance, realization, consolidation, ideology of values and value orientations (Maltseva, 2002).

The research methods are the following: descriptive method, analysis of lexicographical interpretations and etymology of German phraseological units; the method of component analysis to research the structure of meaning of studied units; the method of conceptual and interpretative analysis. As a result of the study of German axiological phraseological units, the following features of the German mentality were revealed: a clear delineation of the private and public sphere, the closure of the private sphere and the emotional closure of the individual; diligence and condemnation of laziness; the value of time – rigid planning and strict adherence to the plan, high pace of life; the idealization of order, the desire for orderliness; hypertrophied sense of responsibility for their actions and their

consequences, foresight, caution; thrift and practicality, condemnation of prodigality. Research results can be helpful for the German language training, in professional activity of translators, linguists (Andreeva et al., 2017a;2017b; Andreeva et al., 2017c;2017d).

2. Methodology

The research methods are the following: descriptive method, analysis of lexicographical interpretations and etymology of German phraseological units; the method of component analysis to research the structure of meaning of studied units; the method of conceptual and interpretative analysis.

3. Results and Discussion

As a result of the study of German axiological phraseological units, the following features of the German mentality were revealed: a clear delineation of the private and public sphere, the closure of the private sphere and the emotional closure of the individual; diligence and condemnation of laziness; the value of time – rigid planning and strict adherence to the plan, high pace of life; the idealization of order, the desire for orderliness; hypertrophied sense of responsibility for their actions and their consequences, foresight, caution; thrift and practicality, condemnation of prodigality. Research results can be helpful for the German language training, in professional activity of translators, linguists. To assimilate the German axiological phraseology at foreign language lessons, the article presents interactive tasks created in the Hot Potatoes program (task for filling in passes, restoring sequences, establishing correspondences, multiple choice of answers). The mentality of particular peoples is described as the totality of certain patterns of behavior, habits and attitudes that are not perceived by the bearers of another mentality. Mentality includes certain behavioral patterns and emotional reactions, formed under the influence of the national image of the world of people or peoples with a single historical past and a single cultural tradition. As Geller points out, *“the mentality hides in behavior, assessments, the manner of thinking and talking”* (Geller, 1996). You cannot learn and forge it, you can only absorb it together with a language that contains the worldview and codes of a given culture.

The national image of the world and mentality are connected with the historical development of the country, its geographical location, the presence of cultural heritage. The formation of the German mentality was influenced by the following factors: the later formation of a national state (the seventies of the nineteenth century), the long existence of fragmented small states, and participation in the last two world wars. Features of the cultural heritage of Germany (the philosophical tradition in culture and literature, a significant number of world-class composers, the beginning of the Reformation, and the birth of European romanticism) affected the national image of the world and the mentality of the German people. The above factors contributed to the Germans' perception of themselves as a significant nation. In the mentality of the Germans, there are many traits that unite them with the Scandinavian peoples and with the Englishmen. They are less emotional than the southern peoples of Europe. They are more closed and cautious in their contacts. The main characteristics of the mentality are: the perception of space, the perception of time, the ratio of private and public in the perception of the person himself. Space is one of the central, system-forming concepts in the philosophy of the world order – the mental picture of the world. As Kubryakova notes, *“spatial experience is what holds a person, what he is aware of around himself, what he sees stretching before him”* (Kubryakova, 2004). National-cultural fullness of the concept space in the German picture of the world is associated with the relationship of vertical and horizontal. According to Gachev (1998), in the Cosmo-Psychology of Germany from the spatial axes, the vertical dimension predominates over the horizontal axis.

The vertical scale of reality is fixed in mythology, philosophy, the main symbols of Germany. The space in the German mentality is perceived as small, narrow and closed. In the language, the value picture of the world is reconstructed in the form of interconnected appraisal judgments correlated with legal, religious, moral codes, generally accepted judgments of common sense, typical folklore and well-known literary plots. Between appraisal judgments, inclusion and associative intersection relationships are observed, as a result of which it is possible to establish the value paradigms of the corresponding culture. In the value picture of the world there are the most important meanings for the culture, the value dominants, the totality of which forms a certain type of culture, maintained and preserved in the language. In the language the most vivid reflection of values, traditions and features of the perception of the world of particular people occurs through phraseological units. An analysis of German axiological phraseological units (phraseological units having a value or anti-value meaning) allows us to determine values and anti-values in the German linguoculture that are a reflection of the national mentality (Villalobos, 2013).

The Germans are characterized by the closeness of the private sphere and the emotional closure of the individual, which is confirmed by phraseological units: *Das bleibt in der Familie* – It will remain between us; *Selbst ist der Mann* – Everyone has his own will; *seine Zunge hüten* – to keep your mouth shut; *das Glück im Winkel* – happiness in a corner (after the name of the drama of Zuderman, used in the meaning of philistine well-being). The Germans are hardworking. This quality is reflected in German proverbs and aphorisms with positive axiological status: *Ohne Fleiß kein Preis* – Without effort there is no result; *Von einem Streiche fällt keine Eiche* – The oak does not fall from one blow. You cannot cut a tree at a time; *Wer den Kern essen will, muss die Schale knacken* – Who wants to eat the grain, he must split the shell; *Geduld und Fleiß bricht Eis* – Patience and work break the ice.; *Arbeit ist des Bürgers Zierde* (F. Schiller, *Das Lied von der Glocke*) – Work makes the man better. The value of labor is emphasized in the condemnation of laziness, which is detrimental to man, as recorded in the following phraseological units: *Ehrlichkeit und Faulheit können niemals Freunde werden* (Esther Klepffen, 1965) – Honesty and laziness can never become friends; *Müßiggang ist aller Laster Anfang* – Idleness is the beginning of all vice; *Nichtstun ist die Mutter aller Missetaten* (Napoleon I. Bonaparte) – Idleness is the mother of all atrocities; *Rast 'ich,*

so rast' ich – I rest, so I rust. A rolling stone gathers no moss; Faulheit geht so langsam, daß Armut sie überholt. (Aus Holland) – Laziness goes so slowly that poverty outstrips it.

The way of life of the Germans, like other peoples, gives value to time. The perception of time is characterized by rigid planning and strict adherence to the plan, a high pace of life (compare: Time is money): Zeit ist Geld – Time is money; Zeit und Stunde warten nicht – Time does not wait; Morgen, morgen, nur nicht heute, sagen alle faulen Leute (lit. Tomorrow, tomorrow, only not today, as all lazy people say); Was du heute kannst besorgen, das verschiebe nie auf morgen – Do not ever put off till tomorrow what you can do today; des Faulen Werktag ist immer morgen, sein Ruhetag heute (lit. For a lazy person the working day is always tomorrow, and the day off is today); Aufschub ist ein Tagesdieb (lit. If you puts something off, your day is stolen); Wer kommt nicht zur rechten Zeit, der muß essen, was übrigbleibt (lit. who does not come on time, he has to eat the rest). Another defining moment for the German mentality is the idealization of order. The Germans are characterized by the complete sequence, often brought to the point of absurdity, when executing instructions or when implementing their principles. This quality is reflected by phraseological units: auf strenge Zucht halten – to observe strict order; j-d kommt mit dem Glockenschlag – smb. Comes strictly by the hour, minute by minute; Ordnung muss sein (lit. The order should be); Ordnung ist das halbe Leben (lit. Order is half the life); Ordnung im Haus ist halbes Sparen (lit. The order in the house is half the savings); Ordnung hilft Haushalten (lit. The order helps to keep house); Lerne Ordnung, übe sie, sie erspart Dir Zeit und Müh (lit. Learn and practice to keep order – this will save your time and energy); Heilige Ordnung, segensreiche Himmelstochter – The holy order is the blessed son of heaven (the expression belongs to F. Schiller); Deutsch sein heißt, eine Sache um ihrer selbst willen treiben (lit. to be a German means to do business for its own sake; this winged phrase goes back to the work of Richard Wagner *Deutsche Kunst und deutsche Politik*) (Nazmieva *et al.*, 2017a; Nazmieva *et al.*, 2017b).

As Bernard Shaw wrote, Germans have great virtues, but they also have one dangerous weakness: an obsession to take every good thing to the extreme, so that good turns into evil. The above point of view on the idealization of order by the Germans shows that the conventional axiological status can be reversed, namely, the extremes turn good into evil, value into anti-value. The German people are characterized by a hypertrophied sense of responsibility for their actions and their consequences, foresight, caution: Kleine Löchlein machen das Schiff voll Wasser (lit. Because of small holes, a ship can sink); Aus einem Funken wird oft das große Feuer (lit. from a spark a fire often comes) – Moscow has burned from a penny candle; Ein Funken noch so klein, äschert ganze Städte ein (lit. Such a small spark turns cities into the ashes); Geringe Ursache, große Wirkung (lit. Small cause – great consequences); Vorsicht schadet nicht (lit. Caution does not harm); Vorsicht ist besser als Nachsicht – If you do not know the ford, do not poke into the water; Vorsicht ist die Mutter der Weisheit (lit. Forethought is the mother of wisdom); Erst wägen, dann wagen; Erst bestimmen, dann beginnen; Besser zweimal messen, als einmal vergessen – Measure seven times, cut once. The integral features of the German mentality are frugality and practicality, manifested in all spheres of life of the Germans. Sparen (to save) is the favorite verb of the Germans. Saving does not mean being a miser. It means to be so economical that a person has everything and he can afford a lot and at the same time he is generous. Adjective sparsam (economical) in relation to a person is perceived as a compliment.

The frugality of the Germans is fixed in phraseological units: den Daumen auf etw. halten / haben, colloquial (to hold a thumb on smth.) – to monitor the economical expenditure of something; Geld auf der hohen Kante haben, colloquial (lit., to have money on a high shelf) – to have savings (the origin of the phraseology is not known exactly). The basis of the image may be the custom to store the saved coins, stacking them in columns (in Rollen verpackt). But on the other hand, the Kante component could mean a shelf on the wall, the cornice, the closet, where the money was stored); Geld auf die hohe Kante legen, colloquial (lit., put money on a high shelf) – save money; save money for a rainy day; mit etw. Haus halten – save on something; sich für etw. krumm legen – save on everything for smth. The values frugality and practicality are reflected in proverbs: Der kluge man baut vor (lit. Smart man makes a reserve); Sparen ist verdienen (Savings are earnings); Spare was, dann hast du was (Save something, then you will have something); Mit Dank schmelzt man keine Suppe (lit. You will not put thank you in the soup); Hab'Dank füllt den Beutel nicht (lit., Gratitude will not fill the wallet); was nutzt mir ein Lob, wenn ich hab kein Brot (lit., Why do I need praise if I do not have bread). The above values are also reflected in German proverbs containing the names of monetary units: Meine Kreuzer sind auch Geld (lit. My kroytsers is also money); Aus Pfennigen werden Taler (lit. Pfennigs make thalers); Es ist ein guter Batzen, der einen Gulden erspart (lit. That batzen is good, which is guarded by the guilder); Ein Groschen zum andern wird mit der Zeit ein Schatz (lit. Pennies make a fortune); Drei Heller sind auch Geld (lit. Three hellers is also money) (Since the heller coin was minted in large quantities, its value gradually decreased (Gutknecht 2002, 60), and the heller was used to characterize the insignificant value of smth). The value of frugality shows the condemnation of extravagance, which is represented in proverbs: Wer den Heller nicht ehrt, ist des Talers nicht wert (lit., who does not honor the heller, he is not worthy of thaler); Wer den Pfennig nicht ehrt, ist des Talers nicht wert (lit., who does not honor pfennig, he is not worthy of thaler); Wer den Pfennig nicht spart, kommt nicht zum Groschen (lit. Who does not save pfennig, he does not get a penny) (Fakhrudinova *et al.*, 2013)).

The moral of the above phraseological units lies in the statements: frugality and ability to save make small money big; spending money needs to be reasonable. The ability to save means for Germans the ability to live properly, intelligently and is an important virtue, while the broad Russian soul is characterized by hospitality. Therefore, German frugality is perceived by Russians as stinginess, acquiring a negative axiological status, which also the Russian hospitality receives, and which is associated with irresponsible extravagance among the Germans (Akhmetbekova and Auyesbayeva, 2018; Amirkhani *et al.*, 2018).

4. Summary

Thus, German linguoculture has certain values and anti-values, reflected in the phraseology of the language. Karasik rightly notes that “*the value picture of the world in language is a manifestation of the semantic law, according to which the most important objects and phenomena of people’s life receive a diverse and detailed nomination*” (Karasik, 2002). To consolidate German axiological phraseology at foreign language lessons, various exercises, created in the Hot Potatoes program, can be used. This is a tool-shell program that allows teachers to independently develop interactive tasks. Performing tasks and testing using the Hot Potatoes program makes it possible to implement the principles of visibility and interactivity in teaching. It should be noted that interactive forms of tasks are very effective when teaching a foreign language and can be used both in practical classroom activities and in the process of independent work of students. Students can be offered the following types of tasks created with the Hot Potatoes program:

A. JCloze – to fill gaps task.

- 1) Wer den Pfennig nicht ..., ist des Talers nicht wert.
- 2) Kleine Löchlein ... das Schiff voll Wasser.
- 3) Was du heute kannst besorgen, das ... nie auf morgen.
- 4) Geduld und Fleiß ... Eis.
- 5) Faulheit ... so langsam, daß Armut sie überholt.

bricht, machen, verschiebe, ehrt, geht

Answer:

- 1) Wer den Pfennig nicht ehrt, ist des Talers nicht wert.
- 2) Kleine Löchlein machen das Schiff voll Wasser.
- 3) Was du heute kannst besorgen, das verschiebe nie auf morgen.
- 4) Geduld und Fleiß bricht Eis.
- 5) Faulheit geht so langsam, daß Armut sie überholt.

B. JMix – to restore sequence task.

- 1) Von, Streiche, Eiche, keine, einem, fällt.

Answer:

Von einem Streiche fällt keine Eiche.

- 2) Wer, den, will, muss, Kern, Schale, knacken, die, essen.

Answer:

Wer den Kern essen will, muss die Schale knacken.

- 3) Freunde, Ehrlichkeit, und, niemals, können, Faulheit, werden.

Answer:

Ehrlichkeit und Faulheit können niemals Freunde werden.

C. JMatch – to establish correspondences task.

| jeden Sechser | halten |
|-------------------------|----------|
| mit jedem Pfennig | legen |
| auf strenge Zucht | hüten |
| Geld auf die hohe Kante | rechnen |
| seine Zunge | umdrehen |

Answer:

| jeden Sechser | umdrehen |
|-------------------------|----------|
| mit jedem Pfennig | rechnen |
| auf strenge Zucht | halten |
| Geld auf die hohe Kante | legen |
| seine Zunge | hüten |

D. JQuiz – multiple choice of answer.

- 1) Aus Pfennigen werden
 - a. Groschen
 - b. Heller
 - c. Taler
- 2) Ohne Fleiß kein
 - a. Ergebnis
 - b. Preis
 - c. Erfolg
- 3) ... ist das halbe Leben.
 - a. Arbeit
 - b. Ordnung
 - c. Geld

Answer: 1c, 2b, 3b.

All assignments are performed by students in self-control mode (the test mode is provided only for questions with multiple choice of answer). The result of the work is estimated as a percentage. Students can take several attempts to complete the tasks.

5. Conclusion

In the process of assimilation and consolidation of the German axiological phraseology, students are given the opportunity to realize that in the phraseology of the language, the inner world of man is most fully represented. The choice of the basis of the assessment can be the same for different peoples due to ontological factors, and may differ, which is due to the peculiarities of the way of life, national psychology, traditions of a certain ethno-cultural community. Knowledge of the national mentality of the speakers of the language being studied will allow students of the university to fully implement communicative competence, successfully carrying out interpersonal and intercultural non-personal communication.

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