



Native Phraseological Units Containing Colorative Component In The English And Turkish Languages

Iana A. Byiyk, Kazan

(Volga region) Federal University, Institute of Philology and Intercultural Communication

Elena F. Arsenteva

Kazan (Volga region) Federal University, Institute of Philology and Intercultural Communication

Natalia G. Med

Saint Petersburg State University, Department of Romance Philology

Abstract

The article is devoted to the etymological study of native phraseological units containing colorative component in the English and Turkish languages connected with the culture-bound items and events in the history of the language bearers. The main aim of the investigation is to reveal general and specific peculiarities of the phraseological units of the group under study from the point of view of their origin in the comparative aspect. A short overview of works devoted to the study of phraseological units with colorative component as well as to the determination of native phraseological units is presented in the introduction. In the main part, by using actual material taken from the dictionaries, phraseological units which owe their appearance in the language to some definite culture-bound items and events in the historical development of peoples – the English and Turkish language bearers are examined. The English and Turkish phraseological units which have emerged in the languages during a rather long period of time (especially in the English language) are under analysis. All cited facts are valid and are taken from authoritative dictionaries. Both general and specific etymological peculiarities of the phraseological units under investigation are revealed in the languages being compared as a result of the research which was carried out.

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Introduction

Phraseological units with colorative component in the English language were studied in the dissertations of A. I. Burlak [1], N. N. Repnikova [2], E. V. Shevchenko [3]. The main aim of their investigations was to find out the symbolic meaning of colorative lexemes and its influence on the transferred phraseological meaning of the PUs under study.

As far as Turkish phraseological units with colorative component are concerned, they were partly investigated in the Magister dissertation of M. Meskhoidze [4], and in the dictionary of the Turkish language compiled by D. Karakurt [5]. It is important to stress the fact that in the dissertation of M. Meskhoidze the sources of Turkish and Kirghiz phraseological units were investigated as well as the attitude to the notion of color in the Turkish and Kirghiz cultures. On the whole, we may state that the influence of the symbolic meaning of some names of color on the PU transferred meaning in the process of coining such units as well as the colors actively participating in this process

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and the etymology of some Turkish phraseological units under study were partially analyzed.

Phraseological units with a colour component in such typologically unrelated languages as English and Turkish have never been the object of a contrastive thesis research before. In the dissertation of I. A. Byiyk [6] the author represents quite a wide and idiosyncratic group of elements with their own distinctive features that are quite often used in speech. One of the main subject matters of the research is the semantic characteristics of the English and Turkish phraseological units containing colorative component in terms of motivation of their meaning, their occasional functions and interlingual equivalences. It is for the first time in the linguistic literature that the results of the experiment with the informants, native English and Turkish speakers, conducted to study different types of occasional transformations of the phraseological units in the contrasted languages, have been featured and analyzed. With consideration to the achievements in the theory of phraseology at the current stage of development of the science of language, isomorphic and allomorphic features of the motivation of the phraseological meaning of phraseological units containing a coloronym component have been discovered as part of contrastive analysis and the types of equivalences of phraseological units in the English and Turkish languages have been defined. The research also determines interlingual equivalences of the English and Turkish phraseological units containing a coloronym component, as well as to define and characterize the English and Turkish equivalents and counterparts; and the methods used to translate the English non-equivalent phraseological units containing a coloronym component into the Turkish language.

A comprehensive and deep study of the entire phraseological stock of any language and its subsystems is impossible without etymological study of its components, i.e. phraseological units. A significant contribution to the study of the etymology of phraseological units of terminological nature in English was made by L. P. Smith, who compiled a collection of idiomatic expressions greatly exceeding both in volume and in diversity, all the collections of stable word combinations existing at the time. In his book "The Phraseology of the English Language", the researcher examines in detail the English PUs, and the sources of their formation.

In his etymological analysis, L. P. Smith refers only to one criterion - the sphere of human activity. According to his point of view, idioms that are based on metaphorical transference of meaning appeared in professional speech because each kind of human activity has its own vocabulary (and special terminology as well). His division of native idiomatic expressions of terminological nature according to the source of their origin and the sphere of human activity (for example, related to navigation, military sphere, sports, agriculture, hunting, etc.) is considered to be quite traditional.

A great linguist A. V. Koonin devotes an entire chapter of his monography to the study of the problem of the origin of phraseological units of modern English. [Rightly pointing out the diversity of the origins of English PUs, the researcher defines two classes: native English PUs and PUs borrowed from other languages.](#) Among native phraseological units A. V. Koonin distinguishes stable and transferred units of non-terminological nature, connected with the traditions, customs and beliefs of the English people, with some historical facts, realities and legends; PUs of terminological origin, as well as phraseological units, which owe their appearance in the language to some outstanding figures of the English culture, primarily to W. Shakespeare [7].

"Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable" also presents a great wealth of etymological data for researchers [8]. Its most important contribution is collecting historical facts referring not only to the history of Britain but also to the peculiarities of development of the USA and the former colonies of the British Empire. Therefore, in our research of the etymology of English phraseological unit with colorative component we apply to the data presented in these two authoritative dictionaries. As far as Turkish phraseological units are concerned, the etymological data are taken from the dictionary "Atasözleri ve Deyimler Sözlüğü" [9], written by a well-known Turkish linguist; and "English-Turkish Etymologic Dictionary", "İngilizce-Türkçe etimolojik sözlüğü" [10].

Methods

Thorough study of the etymology of native phraseological units with colorative component demands using different methods of investigation.

First of all, etymological analysis is of great importance in finding culture-bound items and events in the history of the language bearers. Secondly, comparative method is considered to be invaluable while comparing phenomena of two languages belonging to different language families. We also apply structural-grammatical analysis to research the connection between the direct meaning of PU prototypes based on culture-bound items and events of two language bearers (which are in fact word combinations), and the phraseological units' transferred meaning.

Phraseological units for the research were chosen from English and Turkish phraseological dictionaries by using sampling method. We apply A. Koonin's definition of phraseological unit in our work: "Phraseological units are stable word combinations with wholly or partially transferred meaning" [7:16].

Results

The results of our research show that a group of native English and Turkish phraseological units is based on some culture-bound items and events in the history of the language bearers which, on the whole, present a rather varied picture of different historical facts and events. Let us present some vivid examples.

The PU "the Black Prince" naming 'Edward, Prince of Wales (1330-76), and the eldest son of Edward III' appeared because of the fact that the Prince of Wales was "popularly supposed to be so named from his black armour. The name does not appear to have been used before the latter part of the 16th century, and first appeared in writing in 1569" [8:151].

The unit "the Oxford Blues" with the meaning 'the Royal Horse Guards' appeared in the second half of the 17th century. "The Royal Horse Guards were so called in 1690, from the Earl of Oxford, their commander, and the blue uniform, which dates from 1661" [8:988].

The historical event in 1725 when six companies of clansmen loyal to the king were raised and were stationed in small detachments to keep watch on the Highlands and the clans of Scotland is considered to be the basis of the phraseological unit "the Black Watch". "Their tartan was dark, and their name, which was coined from a combination of this and their function, was used to distinguish them from the English troops performing the same duty. These companies later became the 42nd Foot and subsequently the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) [8:1126].

The stable expression "black Friday" is connected with three events in the history of Britain and one in the history of the USA. "Among the most notable days so called are: (1) 6 December 1745, the day on which the news arrived in London that the Young Pretender had reached Derby; (2) 11 May 1866, when the failure of the London bankers Overend, Gurney & Co. caused widespread panic; (3) in the USA, 24 September 1869, when many speculators were ruined by the Government's release of gold into the open market in order to bring down the price, which had been forced up by stock manipulators; and (4) 15 April 1921 in Britain, when the alliance between the three main trade unions broke down over the refusal of transport workers and railway men to strike in sympathy with the miners" [8:149].

The historical unit "brown Bess" – 'flint-lock' is connected with the name of the arms the British army used in the XVIII century [8:162].

Some native English phraseological units with colorative component referring to the British history appeared in the 20th century. One of them is "black and tans" with the following etymological data: "The name of a pack of hounds in County Limerick, applied to the specially recruited auxiliary force sent to Ireland by the British government in 1921 to supplement the Royal Irish Constabulary. Its members were so called from the colour of their uniforms" [8:1123].

The phraseological unit "blue ribbon army" first appeared in the American variant of the English language, and then was borrowed as an intra language borrowing into the British variant due to the appearance of this society in Britain as well. "A teetotal society founded in the USA and extending to Britain by 1878, whose members wore a piece of narrow blue ribbon as a badge. It became the Gospel Temperance Union in 1883. The phrase came to be applied to teetotalers generally" [8:1126].

The fact of the organization in the First World War of the so-called “Blue and Gray” from National Guardsmen of New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia can be considered to be the basis of this stable expression coining in American English. “It’s shoulder patch of blue and grey, the colours of the rival armies in the Civil War (1861-5), symbolizes the unity of former embattled states” [8:1123].

The historical fact that “Siraj-ud Dawlah, Nawab of Bengal, reputedly confined (on 20-21 June 1756) 146 British prisoners in the small prison - 18×14 ft loin (5.5×4.5m) –of the East India Company’s Fort William, after its capture” may be considered to be the event in the history of expanding Britain’s power to other parts of the world, India as well, on which the PU “the black hole of Calcutta” was formed. “Only 23 people escaped suffocation. A military punishment cell or guardroom is often nicknamed the Black Hole, and dark, stuffy places are sometimes said to be ‘like the Black Hole of Calcutta’” [8:149].

Some native Turkish phraseological units with colorative component are referred to the Turkish flags, since ancient times symbolizing the guardian spirit. For this reason, the red colour is perceived as a spiritual and national colour in Turkish culture. The phraseological unit “Türk’ün gözü aldadır” [11] in the meaning of “the eye of the Turk chooses the red colour”, shows the importance of the colour “red” in Turkish culture. In the 20th century, the Turks began to use the word “al”, literally “red”, both as a name of a colour and as the synonym of the word “flag” [11:17]. During the conquest of Istanbul, it was noted that there was a green flag on top of Fatih’s ship, which symbolized the victory of warriors [11:27]. The facts of the green fabric flag presence in the 20th century was a sign of dominance; and a flagship colour in Central Asia ruled by the Kirghiz Turks; but still the red colour occupies a huge area on the Modern Turkish flag, as the symbol of blood of the soldiers battling for the Turkish Republic [11:32].

The yellow colour had been used for many years as the colour of traditional Turkish boots. The phraseological unit “Sarı Çizmeli Mehmet Ağa” [11:35], literally “Mehmet Aga yellow pants” is used nowadays to describe a stranger, an unknown person from nowhere. The source of the idiom is clearly observed through the folk stories coming back to 1224 [11:7].

The stable phrase “Ak akçe kara gün içindir” in the meaning of “save up something for a rainy day” has two colorative components “ak akçe” in the meaning of “white money” as a reward for hard work; and “kara gün” in the meaning of “black day”, a day of poverty. It is obvious that the white colour has a meaning of holiness, justice and strength in the Turkic culture [12]. Moreover, the oldest beliefs of the Shamanist period seem to be alive: Shamans’ hats were made of white lambskin as their symbol of glory [13]. White colour was always a garment of military commander; the colour was used to discern military hierarchy [11:46].

Conclusions

The results of our investigation based on the data from the authoritative dictionaries of the English and Turkish languages have shown that culture-bound items and events in the history of the language bearers are general sources of a group of native phraseological units with colorative component in both languages. These units have a folk origin in both languages.

Discussion

The distinctive feature of the English phraseology under study is the existence of the so-called Americanisms closely connected with the American culture-bound items and the history of the USA, which, in its turn, may be borrowed into British-English as intra language borrowings. Besides, there is a limited number of native English phraseological units based on some events in the history of the former British Empire in different parts of the world.

In addition, it is important to underline the great influence of Turkish History: its religious, military historical issues on the major development of the phraseological units with the component of colour in the Turkish language. The distinctive feature of the Turkish phraseology under study may be seen in the great role of symbols connected with Turkish culture-bound items and the history of the Turkish language bearers.

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