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VARIATION TYPES OF RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS AND THEIR REFLECTION IN PHRASEOLOGICAL DICTIONARIES

Variation of phraseological unit (PU) components is a common phenomenon both in the Russian and English languages. R.Moom points out that about 40% of stable expressions either have lexical variations or may be easily transformed, 14% of such expressions have two or more variants in their main, basic form (Moon 1998). R.Ekkert stresses the fact that variation occupies a very important position in phraseology not only because many phraseological units have two or more variants but also because of a great variety of them. Of course the great importance of variation in phraseology must have its reflection in phraseography (Эккерт 1987).

The problem of phraseological unit variation was in the focus of study of a number of linguists. We can mention the latest works of such scientists as T.Fedukenkova, R.Moon, the candidate theses of A.Zholobova (Fedulenkova; Moon 1998; Жолобова 2005).

Variation in phraseology may occur in different ways. It may affect separate components of a PU or it may affect the whole PU.

Phonetic variations occur only in the Russian language: «свистеть /свистать/ в кулак», «посыпать голову /главу/ пеплом». As a rule, phonetic variation is connected with sound interchange. **Accentological variations** are also characteristic of the Russian language: «пасть на се́рдце /на́ сердце/, кому» (obsolete). The so-called **spelling variations** are typical of the English language, in Russian we find only several examples of them: «Merrie /Merry/ England», «the land of Cockaigne /Cockayne/», «number one /Number One/», «arty and crafty /arty-and-crafty/» (jocular col.), «Jack in office /jack-in-office/», «Jack and Gill /Jill/», «Jack Tar /tar/», «can't fight his way out of a paper bag /paperbag/» (Austral. col.) , «превратиться в соляной столп /столб/». As it is seen from the above mentioned examples, variation may affect the spelling of a separate component of a PU, its solid, hyphenated or separate spelling (but in such a case we deal with the problem of distinguishing compound words from PUs), and also the spelling of some components with the capital or small letter. The PU «Jack /a jack/ of all trades», in which the proper name Jack and the common noun derived from it due to its wide use, serve as variation components, is an interesting example.

Grammatical variations embrace morphological and morphologica-syntactical ones. **Morphological variations** may be of different types: with the variation of Sg and Pl:

«открывать Америку /Америки/», «ковать деньги /деньгу/» (low col.), «grow like a weed /weeds/», «the era of good feeling /feelings/» (Amer.), it must be mentioned that in Russian in comparison with English not only nouns but also adjectives may have the forms of Sg and Pl: «власти имущие /власть имущий/»; with suffixal modifications in Russian only: «аннибалова /аннибаловская/ клятва», «ни один волос /волосок/ не упадет с головы», «разливаться соловьем /соловушкой/»; with variations of verbal Number and Time in English only: «there's /there are/ as good fish in the sea <as ever came out of it>», «as ever is /was/» (col.). There are two verbal forms of Aspect (Perfective and Imperfective) in Russian only: «падать духом. упасть /пасть/ духом», «показывать класс /марку/. показать класс /марку/», «приставать /приступать/ с ножом к горлу. пристать /приступить/ с ножом к горлу». **Morphological-syntactical variations** are characterized by change of syntactic relations and part of speech reference: «Иудин поцелуй /поцелуй Иуды/», «alien enemy /enemy alien/», «the land of promise /the promised land/», «the Procrustean /Procrustes'/ bed /the bed of Procrustes/», «a banquet of Lucullus /a lucullan, Lucullean, Lucullian banquet/». The change of the pronoun *somebody* position: in preposition in non-prepositional word combinations and in post-position in prepositional combinations is typical of the English language: «be at smb's beck and call /be at the back and call of smb/», «step /tread/ on smb's toes /on the toes of smb/», «sing smb's praises /the praises of smb/». All mentioned types of variants can be termed formal.

Lexical variation is the most common type both in Russian and in English. The following types of units may function as variation components: *synonyms*: «наставлять на ум /на разум/ кого», «проглядеть /просмотреть/ все глаза», «close /shut up/ shop» (col.), «be fond of /love/ one's own way»; *semantically similar lexemes with the same seme (semes) in their significational-senotational macrocomponent of meaning*: «перемывать /мыть/ косточки кому», «eat the bread of affliction /humiliation, sorrows/», «a bit /a piece/ of one's mind»; *components with hyper-hyponimic relations*: «пересчитывать ребра /кости/ кому», «sift the grain /wheat/ from the chaff»; *words of the same thematic group*: «беден как церковная крыса /мышь/», «the King's /Queen's/ England», «put a /more often the/ cat among the canaries /pigeons/», «on cloud seven /nine/» (col.); *components based on metonymic relations (part and the whole)*: «хромать на оба колена /на обе ноги/», «smb's days /hours/ are numbered», «the question of the day /of the hour/», «shoot off one's face /mouth/», «show one's face /joc. one's nose/»; *components which are not semantically connected with each other*: «бить /кипеть/ ключом в ком, у кого», «объехать на кривой /на козе, на вороных/ кого» (low col.), «live on air /on

nothing/», «a queer beggar /card, cove, duck/». Variable lexemes may also differ in connotation component (components). For example, the use of stylistic synonyms , i.e. the use of archaic, bookish units together with the neutral ones is typical of the Russian language: «складывать /слагать/ оружие», «Иудин поцелуй /лобзание/». In the English language variation components may belong to Americanisms or words used in Australia: «stand /stick/ to /Amer. stand by/ one's guns», «blow a fuse /Amer. one's stake, Austral. one's boiler/» (col.). In such a case the question arises whether it is right or wrong to consider them as variation components of PUs. R.Moon, stressing the extraordinary complexity of this problem, is keen to consider such stable expressions as «the shoe is on the other foot» (AmE) and «the boot is on the other foot» (BrE), «blow off steam» (AmE) and «let off steam» (BrE), as synonymous (Moon 1998:122). But in the majority of unilingual and bilingual dictionaries these units are considered to be the variations of one and the same PU.

As is seen in the above mentioned examples, nouns and verbs function as lexical variations and this phenomenon is observed in both languages. Common verbs may vary with phrasal verbs in the English language: «charge /fight with, tilt at/ the windmills», «shorten /take in/ sail», «lay /play, play with, put, throw/ <all> one's cards on the table», «come into /enter/ one's head».

Adjectives as well may function as variation components both in Russian and in English: «Фома неверный /неверующий/», «ангельское /адское/ терпение у кого», «живой /вылитый/ портрет кого» (col.), «называть вещи своими /настоящими, собственными/ именами. назвать вещи своими /настоящими, собственными/ именами», «square /straight/ shooting» (Amer. col.), «bad /foul, Amer. jarg. warm/ language», «in a fine /pretty, sorry/ pickle» (col.), «hairbreadth /narrow/ escape». Variation of the definite or indefinite article is typical only of the English language: «care killed a /the/ cat». We can also observe variation of a possessive pronoun (which has the form *one's* in the basic form of a PU) and the definite article: «one's /the/ last card», «one's /the/ latter end», «sport one's /the/ oak».

Variation of prepositions is more typical of English PUs, although there are also some examples of such variation in Russian: «lucky at /in/ cards», «be on /Amer. in/ the cards», «be slow in /on/ the uptake» (col.), «from /out of/ the jaws of death», «a land flowing with /of/ milk and honey», «shake the dust from /off/ one's feet», «книга за /под/ семью печатями», «насыпать соли на /под/ хвост кому» (rude low col.), «небо с /в/ овчинку кажется кому. небо с /в/ овчинку показалось кому» (low col.), «не от /из/ мира сего». There are also some examples of pronoun variation in English, and of adverb

variation in Russian: «get his /theirs/» (jarg.), «как будто /словно, точно/ громом пораженный кто» (col.), «как /будто, словно, точно/ банный лист пристал».

The so-called **lexico-grammatical variations** are found in the English language only. We observe the interchange of different parts of speech, Participle I and Participle II, Gerund, adjective and the negative particle or preposition in such PUs: «Jesus Christ! /Jesus wept!, Jumping Jesus!/», «one's cup is filled /full, full to the brim, overflowing, running over/», «not to mince /without mincing/ matters», «have a bad /no/ head for smth».

Variation in phraseology may affect both the composition and the form of a PU. Such variation is called a **mixed** one. For example, we observe the combination of phonetic and lexical variations in the PU «садиться в лужу /в калошу, галошу/», and the combination of morphological and lexical variations in the unit «к черту /чертям/ на кулички /на рога/» .

In such cases the problem arises again how to treat such a phraseological unit: as one unit with variation components, or as two synonymous stable word combinations. E.I.Dibrova in her article "Syncretism of a phraseological sign" studies the borderline case presented by the PU «висеть /держаться/ на волоске /на ниточке/», when the PU as a compound sign may combine both the category of differenciation (synonymy) and the category of identity (variation) (Диброва 1989). The author stresses the fact that '…there exists an integral zone in phraseology in which it is impossible to draw the line of demarcation between phraseological synonyms and variations… In such a case variation occurs as the phenomenon of structural-semantic identity, and synonymy – as the phenomenon of relevance of this identity' (Диброва 1989:21).

The number of variation components may be great among nouns and verbs: «пороть вздор /ерунду, чушь, галиматью, дичь, ахинею/» (low col.), «мороз по коже /по спине/ дерет /подирает, продирает, пробегает, идет/. мороз по коже /по спине/ подрал /продрал, пробежал, пошел, прошел/» (col.), «валять /ломать, корчить/ дурака /ваньку/» (nlow col.), «бросать /кидать, набрасывать, наводить/ тень. бросить /кинуть, накинуть, набросить, навести/ тень», «care a bean /bit, brass farthing, button, curse, tinker's curse, tinker's cuss, darn, dern, doit, farthing, fiddlestick, fig, groat, hang, hoot, hoot in Hades, jack-straw, jot, one iota, penny, pin, rap, row of pins, straw, two straws, thing, twopence, twopenny, two hoots, two hoots in hell, two pins, whoop, etc./» (col.), «bear /have, keep/ in mind», «beat /knock, lick, whale/ the stuffing out of smb», «cut /hurt, sting, touch/ smb to the quick».

The so called **optional components** may be omitted in speech: «<одна> кожа да кости», «указать <свое> место кому», «ставить в <один> ряд кого с кем. поставить в

<один> ряд кого с кем» (разг.), «neither fish nor fowl <nor good red herring>», «<well> I'm jiggered!», «hit the <right> nail on the head». Both notional words and functional words may occur as optional components: «переполнять чашу <терпения>», «наступать на <любимую> мозоль кому», «по Сеньке <и> шапка», «садиться на хлеб и <на> воду», «sell one's birthright <for a mess of pottage>», «be one's own <worst> enemy», «it is <just> not on» (col.), «<down> on the nail». Optional components are also termed quantitative, lexico-quantitative or variations of length and are considered to be a type of phraseological variations (Диброва 1989).

Mixed variations may include all the above mentioned variation types: «направлять /обращать/ <свои> стопы /шаги/ куда, к кому», «стоять /оставаться, топтаться, танцевать/ на <одном> месте», «send a cold shiver /cold shivers/ down /up; up and down/ smb's back /spine/», «look as if one <just> came /stepped/ out of a band-box /bandbox/».

All variation components are delimited in the dictionaries with the help of the oblique stroke, for example, «рыльце в пуху /пушку/ у кого», «почва /земля/ уходит /ускользает/ из-под ног кого, чьих, у кого», «draw /pull/ the wool over smb's eyes» (col.), «be pinned /tied/ to one's wife's apron strings /apron-strings/». Such a way of variation presentation is considered to be the most economical and consistent. As far as the problem of dictionary presentation of PUs with variation components is concerned, it is usually solved by taking into consideration the frequency of occurrence of this or that PU variation (which is already registered in unilingual dictionaries due to the numerous cases of their use in speech).

Obtional components are presented in broken brackets: « <одна> кожа да кости» (разг.), «указать <свое> место кому», «садиться на своего <любимого> конька», «cash in <one's chips>», «push up <the> daisies» (разг.), «<it is easy to> be wise /prophesy/ after the event».

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