Worldwide trends in the development of education and academic research, 15 - 18 June 2015

Cognitive-Comparative Analysis of Phraseological Units
(on the Material of Kazakh-French Phraseology)

Sabira Issakova, Kulzat Sadirova, Maira Kushtaeva*

K. Zhubanov Aktobe Regional State University, 34 A. Mul dagulova Street, Aktobe, 000003 Kazakhstan

Abstract

The object of this research is phraseological units (PU) dealing with the sphere of human mental activity. The existence of active, productive components, such as somatisms, is characteristic for component structure of the phraseological units characterizing "mental activity of a person". In this paper, we discuss the PU of the studied phraseosemantic field, including component-somatism bass/tête and zhurek/coeur which in their turn brightly reflect a linguistic view of the Kazakh and French world. Conclusions are drawn about the universal nature and a national originality of PU. Practical importance of such studies is very topical in teaching languages to a foreign-language audience, in teaching comparative linguistics, when developing thematic dictionaries, in teaching theory and practice of translation. Research of this type is closely connected with psycholinguistic problems of teaching the language facts and phenomena that are especially relevant for cognitive and comparative analysis.

1. Introduction

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +7-705-539-8277; fax: +8-7132-57-91-26
E-mail address: sabira-i@yandex.ru
At the current stage of linguistic science development and against universal trends to continuous cooperation in various areas and fields of activity, there is an urge for comparative and typological researches intended to provide a comprehensive and full-scale study of various linguistic categories. First of all, this results from the fact that features of mentality, a centuries-old history and culture of speakers of this or that language are reflected in these categories just like in a mirror.

Comparative studies of language consciousness as the certain direction of psycholinguistics started being formed in the early 1990's. As an impulse for ethnopsycholinguistic research, the methodological base of the Moscow psycholinguistic school acted. In the focus of attention of contrastive studies, there were national and cultural specifics of language consciousness. The development of new psycholinguistic approaches to studying the language material influenced all spheres of the linguistic science, in particular, methodological base of the contrastive phraseological research. The modern approaches to studying the language phraseology in comparison to other unrelated languages – Russian, English, German, French, Chinese, etc. are created in Kazakhstani comparative linguistics.

As the analysis of works on comparative phraseology of the Kazakh and French languages has shown, unfortunately, a lack of the basic research directed on identification and comparison of a phraseological picture of the world with carriers of these languages is noted. Up to this date there has been observed insufficient study of the theory and methodology of the comparative description of phraseology, absence of uniform understanding and interpretation of a subject, object and metalanguage of comparative phraseology, to say nothing of cognitive, ethnopsycholinguistic, and linguoculturological approaches. We have to point out that these facts complicate and, to some extent, slow down the development of the theory of comparative phraseology, from the standpoint of new approaches in the linguistic description of language which assumes turning to a human as the national linguistic identity.

At the same time, the data obtained by comparative phraseology now becomes necessary and important for compiling bilingual dictionaries, including the contained linguoculturological description of phraseological components, a figurative basis and value in general; for development of the modern principles of language education; for improvement of the theory and practice of the Kazakh-French and French-Kazakh translation. The practice of compiling bilingual dictionaries, including thematic ones, using the material of phraseology demands an essentially new approach both to development of structure and to the content of phraseological dictionaries.

The modern science about language, phraseology in particular, involves achievements of psychology, cultural science, sociology, ethnography, philosophy and other sciences into the sphere of linguistic interests. Integration of the scientific directions of various spheres has led to any modern linguistic research being unimaginable without an integrated approach to studying the facts of language in its attitude towards a person. The identity of the native speaker and his cognitive sphere was nominated as the focus of linguistic descriptions.

Numerous fundamental works, published papers, various linguistic centers and institutes, scientific conferences etc. confirm this. All linguistic directions existing today, in fact, are united by one general object – the language identity of a person in the system of culture.

The foundation of linguoculturological approach to language was laid by W. Humboldt and A.A. Potebnya's basic researches. Modern linguistics integrating with other humanities develops this direction and considers language as a nation's cultural code and not only a tool of communication and knowledge.

2. Objectives, methodology and research design

The starting point of this research is understanding of language as an integral part of knowledge displaying the interaction of cultural, psychological, communicative and functional factors (Kravchenko, 2005). Consideration of phraseological value in linguocultural space of a language seems very relevant with regard to this. The phraseological units representing fragments of human cognitive sphere, in particular, such as "intelligence, mind, mental capacities", served as material for this research. The specifics of reflection of culture and language in the phraseological system (in this case, in the phraseological macrosystem "intelligence, mind") comes to light on the basis of the contrastive-semantic and linguoculturological description.

It is well-known that all subtleties of national culture are reflected in its language the particularities of which reflect both the surrounding reality and a person learning this world. People gain information and knowledge about the world around them via the linguistic channel, therefore they live in "the world of the concepts" created by it for their various requirements. Hence, a profound knowledge and understanding of language can be identified with deep understanding of culture of the people.
From the standpoint of language and culture interaction, the linguistic and extralinguistic phraseological units' interrelation represent the brightest and rich source of data on the culture, mentality, outlook, identity of the people. Phraseological structure of language, as worded by V.N. Telija (1996), is a mirror in which the linguocultural community identifies the national consciousness.

As the cognitive and comparative analysis of these phraseological units has shown, it is only the phraseology that is capable to reflect idiothetic features of language figuratively. It concerns not only the "culturally" marked phraseological layer but also the phraseological units which are characterized by "universality, neutrality" of the reflected reality subject. In this case, we mean the intelligence, intellectual activity, mind, mental capacities of a person falling within the cognitive scope of the person. Representatives of psychological, neurolinguistic sciences, etc. have repeatedly spoken about the universal character and community of the cognitive processes course (in particular, cogitative processes) in speakers of various languages. However, this fragment of reality (as it was revealed in the analysis) finds the figurative, idioethnic reflection in language phraseology too that is especially brightly demonstrated by the comparison and linguocultural approach to studying these units. It has been found out that phraseological units of this semantic macrosystem differ in national and cultural specifics of semantics.

Thus, phraseological units as indirect and nominative figurative units of the language alongside with words designate a wide range of fragments of reality. One of the extremely extensive fragments reflected by phraseology is the fragment "Man, his activity, characteristics, properties, abilities".

3. Discussion of the research outcomes

In the compared languages, a large scope of phraseological units is revealed reflecting the human cognitive sphere. These units were considered from the viewpoint of typological, functional and stylistic, structural-semantic description. The current analysis assumes the linguocultural description of the phraseological units forming the same phraseological macrosystem in the compared languages, namely, a macrosystem of the extensive semantic field "mental activity" defined as "intelligence", "mind, mental capacities".

Research has shown that definition of cultural background underlying a phraseological unit and allowing us to get into the profound essence of these units can be the purpose of such analysis. In fact, we can reveal specifics of logical and language knowledge which are reflected by phraseological units of a macrosystem "intelligence", "mind, mental capacities". Logical and language forms of knowledge alongside with a sensual form of knowledge are included into structure of one's mental activity.

The studied phraseological units represent indirect and nominative means of designation and reflection of the logical thought processes being the second step of cognition (the first step of cognition is sensory perception of the world) which, being expressed in certain language forms, gain a nationality-caused character. The point is language and thinking are interconnected yet are not identical to each other. As the great Russian psychologist, L.S. Vygotsky (1999) fairly emphasized, the thought is never equal to a direct sense of the word, however it is also impossible without words. A language develops under the influence of subject activity and traditions of culture of society, and thinking is connected with mastering the laws of logic and it depends on informative abilities of each person.

If we address interpretation of the concepts "intelligence" and "mind", it is possible to find out the following: intelligence – 'power of thinking, the intellectual principle of a person, his defining activity' (cf.: the intellectual - 'intellectual, spiritual; with highly developed intelligence'). Mind – 'ability of a person to think, a basis of adult, reasonable life' or in figurative sense ‘a person by his mental capacities; thinker, scientist'.

So, the structure of phraseological semantics is understood by us as a set of three components: denotative, significant and connotative ones. However, we have to recognize that the semantic structure of phraseological units is wider than its value as it cannot be settled by existence of the above three components and it is also defined by creation of all formation in general (Kuinin, 1996). The semantic complexity of phraseological units allows them to carry out specific functions in language.

At present, an active interest in phraseological semantics is observed from the standpoint of linguoconceptology. In this case, reflecting linguocultural concepts brings to light the linguistic mentality of a certain ethnus. The linguocultural concept (unlike "a cultural concept") is, as a rule, connected with language implementers.

We have an opportunity to reveal and define not only anthropocentric, but also ethnocentric properties of the phraseological macrosystem "intelligence", "mind, mental capacities" if we take a linguocultural approach (to this object of research). The ethnocentric properties are understood as ones focused on a certain ethnus, whereas
anthropocentricity is expressed in the general properties of a human nature.

All the above features of phraseological units of the studied fragment of reality reflect national and cultural specifics of these units which confirm their idiothetic character, as well as designate such cognitive processes which in essence are not nationality-specific and differ in "universality" and "community" in various cultures that are uniform for carriers (means cognitive activity of representatives of civilized cultures).

The quantity of French somatisms with the component tête is much greater than the Kazakh ones with the component bas (head). This results from the fact that as a result of lexico-semantic transformation the component bas/tête receives various additional values in the Kazakh and French languages. In the compared languages, the component bass/tête means "a center of thoughts, mind, judgments, representations, memories" (basy altyn, altyn basty aiel, un home de tête (a man with brains, a clever person), grosse tête (a clever, brainy person), tête d'œuf (an intellectual, an erudite, a wise man) and "a look on which it is possible to read expression of feelings and a state of mind" (bas terisi kelispegen, tête de bois (a stupid face), tête à gifles, tête à claqués (an ugly mug, a face that would stop a bus), tête de Méduse (an ugly creature, a fright), and also characterizes a person as "carrier of any ideas, views, abilities" (en avoir dans la tête (to be clever, to have something in the head), avoir qch en tête (constantly to think of something, to hold something in the head), avoir la tête à soi (to have the view of things, to show character) that substantially causes the lexico-semantic potential of this word as basic component of somatism. In spite of the fact that the words tête and bas designate the same part of body, the French word indicates the forward part of the head (face) rather more often, and quite often it appears to be a synonym of words visage or mine. As the word tête is often used to evaluate a person, a look, the word crane is sometimes used for designation the very head.

Somatisms with component bas / tête belong to the following lexico-semantic groups: character, physical state, feeling state, feeling relation, cerebration, portrait, actions and deeds of a person, social status. Thus in the Kazakh and French languages, somatisms reflecting a person's intelligence are numerous.

So, in Kazakh outlook, a silly person of no outstanding intelligence is associated with such representatives of fauna as a donkey, a sheep, a chicken. Thus in the Kazakh phraseology, these zoonyms are used with a nominal component mi (brains) which on the semantic accessory is a part of nuclear components of the semantic field "mental activity": esektin miyn zhegen, tauyktyn miyndai mi zhok, kutyrgan koidyn miyn zhegen (Kenegsbaev, 1997). All the above phraseological units designate a person with weak intellectual ability (silly, dull, stupid, a fool).

The French phraseology usually refers to people of non-outstanding mental capacities by such set phrases (nominal phraseological units) as: tête carée (dull brain), tête de chou (bad head), tête de bois (stupid person), petite tête (empty pate; bird-brainer), tête dure (head full of holes), etc. (Novyj Bol'shoi fransuzsko-russkij frazeologicheskij slovar', 2005).

As we can see from the given examples, the component tête (head), which is also a nuclear part of units of the semantic field "mental activity" is used in the French phraseology. There are phraseological units like tête d'âne 'stubborn head, numskull, stupid person', the components of which are semantically equal and cause its belonging to the nuclear layer of the semantic field "mental activity".

A distinctive feature of Kazakh phraseology in the considered semantic fragment is the use of names of precious metals, for example: ishi altyn, syrty kumis, altyn basty aiel, basy altyn. These phraseological units are used in the Kazakh speech to express admiration of mental capacities of a person, his high intelligence and mind.

The active use of somatisms as a part of phraseological units of the semantic field "mental activity" is observed in both languages. However, in the compared languages there are distinctions in some of the used somatic components.

So, somatisms are especially active in Kazakh phraseology: bas (head), koz (eyes), keude (chest cavity), kokirek (breast), alkym (throat, throat, forward part of a neck): akly alkymynan aspagan, kozi ashyk adam; akpa kulak; kokirek kozi ashlydy; basy bar; bas dese kulak deidi, etc.

In French phraseology, there are such somatisms as: tête (head), épaules (shoulders), cœur (heart): tête sur les épaules (the head on shoulders), mettre son cœur dans sa tête (to be able to subordinate the passions, the desires to reason), etc.

Curiously enough, PU with components-somatisms, defiant figurative associations – with intelligence, physical work, life, feelings, as well as ones connected with perception of the world, knowledge and change thereof are among the most widespread means for communicating human attitudes. Over 30 PU containing a coeur component-somatism are distinguished among the PU reflecting such attitude as love. In their work "Linguistique cognitive: comprendre comment fonctionne le langage" dedicated to cognitive research of language, researchers treat the lexeme of "coeur" as "keyword" of the French culture (Delbecque, 2002).
It should be noted that heart is the center of emotions and feelings almost in all cultures. In French, heart is the center of life in general: physical, mental, spiritual and sincere. Phraseological units with the component coeur can express numerous shades of feelings and conditions of a person, such as:

- love: n'avoir qu'un coeur, seRONger le coeur, ne former qu'un coeur et qu'une âme, deux coeurs dans la même culotte, avoir le coeur pris etc.
- despisal: tourner sur le coeur à qn, affadir le coeur , avoir la rage au coeur, barbouiller le coeur.
- inhumanity: avoir le coeur lèger, n'avoir rien sur le coeur contre qn, coeur (tout) neuf etc.
- one's attitude towards objects of the world: avoir le coeur sur la main, parler le coeur sur la main, de tout mon coeur, de bon coeur.
- characterizing a person, expressing one's attitude towards somebody else: avoir le coeur sec, être sans coeur, avoir le coeur dur, coeur d'acier, coeur d'airain (de bronze, de caillou), coeur de marbre, coeur de tigre, coeur de vipère, coeur de cristal, grand coeur, avoir le coeur en écharpe, coeur double.

The formation of PU with the component "coeur" was influenced by the Bible tradition. The heart is identical to reason in the Bible, and heart is associated with emotions, feelings, attitudes and relations in various languages. The culture of associations connected with the word coeur changed during the history of the French language. According to V.G. Gak (1977), coeur used to be a symbol of spirit, military bravery, persistence in the Middle Ages. These values remain in a number of PU: avoir du coeur - to be a man; homme de coeur – lion heart; haut les coeurs! – be brave!; avoir du coeur en ventre - colloquial - to be courageous, brave; donner (or mettre, remettre) du coeur au ventre à qn - colloquial - to encourage, give to bravery; homme (or femme) de coeur – a kind person, a courageous person; avoir le coeur bien accroché - to be courageous, to be no coward; avoir le coeur bien (mal) de placé - to be brave (cowardly); perdre coeur - to lose courage, to quail.

Since the XIV century, there has been an important cultural turn – from epics to tales of chivalry, lyrical poetry, and so "heart" has become a symbol of feelings, love, which is reflected in numerous phraseological units.

It is necessary to pay attention to a number of PU with a component - somatism "coeur" the formation of which was influenced by medical ideas of the previous epochs, for example: PU avoir du coeur au ventre (lit. to have some heart in a stomach) - to be brave.

The national and cultural connotation of the French PU with the component-somatism coeur speaks about such common features of national character as vulnerability (plaie du coeur - a cardiac wound), sincerity (avoir le coeur sur les lèvres - to be sincere, frank; mettre la main sur son coeur - to assure of the sincerity; avoir le coeur sur la bouche - to speak sincerely, frankly), kindness (avoir bon coeur - to be kind; n'avoir rien sur le coeur contre qn – bear no grudge for somebody, not to have anything against someone; être plein de coeur – to be generous), compassionateness and compassion (avoir qch sur le coeur - to regret for something, to repent; avoir (or porter) un coeur d'homme – to be human; prendre son coeur par autrui - to put itself to the place of another), responsiveness (chauffer le coeur à qn - to encourage someone, to lift someone's spirit; donner (or redonner) du coeur - to encourage, inspire; remettre (or remonter) le coeur à qn - to encourage, encourage someone), diligence (mettre le coeur à qch - to show diligence in smth; y aller de bon coeur - to do something willingly, with pleasure), bravery and fearlessness (avoir du coeur - to be noble, to be courageous; faire contre (mauvaise) bon coeur - to reconcile with inevitability, courageously to accept failure), openness and trustfulness (ouvrir son coeur à qn - to open the soul, avoir le coeur sur la main colloquial - and) to be generous) to be sincere, frank; faire voir son coeur à nu-open to bare the soul, the heart), ability to be self-controlled (mettre son coeur dans sa tête - to be able to subordinate the passions, the desires to reason), sensitivity (le coeur saigne - heart is covered with blood). Such traits of national character as indifference (avoir le coeur de pierre - to have a heart of stone; avoir le coeur sec - to be the heartless, dry person, to be the egoist; être sans coeur - to be callous, heartless; coeur d'acier - iron, ruthless heart), sensitivity
(garder une injure sur le cœur – to have grievance against), **malevolence** (avoir la rage au cœur - to bear malice) are not welcomed but blamed, which is evident from the lexical filling of PU reflecting these qualities.

4. **Conclusion**

The analysis of human cognitive processes under study allows concluding that in French phraseology, a given fragment of human activity is mostly associated with collocations characterized by national and cultural identity of semantics.

Kazakh phraseology reflects a true fragment of reality with such stable units' semantics that is not distinguished by a bright cultural label connotation.

Attitudes, just like mental states, are difficult to interpret so the characteristics of attitudes are passed on through similarity, through correlation with something clearer and simpler. Thus, in the basis of representation of all attitudes and relations, there lies a common principle of assimilation that is not available to direct observation, objects of reality (in this case, parts of the body). Components-somatisms which in their turn brightly reflect national and cultural peculiarities of the French people are conducive to revealing the semantic parts of phraseological units that represent PSP "human relationships".

Thus, it is important to note that the comparative study and linguoculturological analysis of the cognitive pictures of the world belonging to various linguistic pictures allows us to see how universal (human), and specific (actually ethnic) the phenomena of human existence can be. The practical significance of such studies is very relevant for teaching languages to a foreign audience, in teaching of comparative linguistics, in development of subject dictionaries, in teaching the theory and practice of translation. However, this kind of studies is closely connected with psycholinguistic problems of studying the linguistic facts and phenomena which are particularly relevant in comparative analysis.

**References**