

## The figurative idioms of English, German and Kazakh in contrast

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### Abstract

This article discusses the figurative phraseological units, namely, the idioms of English, German and Kazakh languages in comparative aspect. It appeals to the phraseology of imagery due to the fact that the imagery—a defining component of semantic derivation and semantics of phraseological units in particular. The main goal is to make a contribution to the theory of phraseology, based on the tradition of comparative phraseology. Also, a brief review of domestic and foreign publications in the field of comparative phraseology is done and the article describes the results of practical analysis of idioms in three languages. The main features of the analysed units are multi-component structure, stability, idiomaticity that distinguishes them from other expressions. They can be interpreted in two different conceptual levels: literal sense and figurative sense. In the analysis are used the method of field simulation. The study aims to identify and develop a model describing visual images as elements of the cognitive system.

**Keywords:** Imagery, visuality, imagery means, imagery structure.

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## 1. Introduction

The study of imagery and the language-image-relations is a quite new field in linguistics. Linguists focus their studies on combinations of text and image but the theory and methods are not researched well.

The representatives of different branches (philosophy, anthropology, psychology, paleontology, history and art) consider the problem of relations of image and meaning using different means and pursuing different aims (Schemann, 2000).

In linguistics, there is a generally accepted belief that the imagery is expressed with a certain lexis, figurative phrases, sentences and larger units. The researchers say that the linguistic science always had the contradiction in the notion 'image'. The notions 'image' and 'imagery' are considered from the point of view of linguistics and lexicology, the part that is described is structural and semantic types of figurative language units, and more precise meaning.

After the overview of the studies on the problem of imagery in linguistics, the article presents the results of the analysis of idioms with image component of English, German and Kazakh languages in contrast.

## 2. Imagery as an object of linguistic theory

The imagery in many studies is considered as a stylistic, psycholinguistic, literature and common language category.

The representative of the stylistic branch is Riesel. The researcher differentiates the means of visualisation and imagery 'Bildhaftigkeit und Bildlichkeit' (Riesel & Schendels, 1985). 'Bildhaft (synonym zu anschaulich, sinnfällig) sind Wörter und Wendungen, die zwangsläufig mit einer konkreten, klaren Situation, mit einem leicht erfaßbaren Wirklichkeitszusammenhang assoziiert werden. Bildlich nennen wir Wörter und Wendungen auf Grund von Vergleich, Tropen, metaphorischen und metonymischen Periphrasen sowie expressiver Phraseologie'. (Riesel & Schendels, 1985). Riesel states that the visual are words and phrases which are associated with a certain situation. The imagery is the words and phrases which have in their basis the comparison, tropes, metaphors, metonymy and expressive phraseology.

According to Riesel, words and expressions which associate with a certain clear situation and which are perceived easily by reality are the means of visualisation. In its turn, the means of imagery are figures of speech and comparison. The figures of speech include metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, paraphrase, personification, synaesthesia, allegory, symbols, parable, litotes and hyperbole, which are implemented in lexical and phraseological units. Riesel shows the expressive abilities of comparisons and figures of speech using the example of various functional styles: fiction, every-day speech, business and mass media language (Riesel & Schendels, 1985).

The means of visualisation and imagery are defined by G. Burger as a figure of speech 'bildkraftige Ausdrücke' (Burger, 2003).

According to Sowinski (1999), imagery is an essential stylistic principle. In business communication, it is used very rare to make the matter precise; in fictional texts, it plays an important role in making a fictitious reality.

The stylistic imagery of texts includes images expressed with the help of particular words, figures of speech, sentences and bigger units. Sowinski (1999) differentiates the images according to their content (direct images) and according to their form (indirect images).

In the studies of imagery as a literary category, there are the following things discussed: relations between imagery and metaphor, types of imagery. While researching the role of imagery in fiction texts, it is described as a stereotype or as a creative chaos (Stockl, 2004).

Yurina (2005) also has a noteworthy research of the imagery category based on the structure of the Russian language. The imagery language structure states for the system of images, metaphorically implemented in the semantics of lexical and phraseological units.

In the research by Yurina (2005), the imagery language structure is considered as both a systematic-language phenomenon and a cognitive structure. Yurina (2005) considers image and imagery as an object of the research in linguistics and lexicology, the researcher describes the structure and semantic types of imagery language units and specifies the imagery meaning.

The research represents an integral model of field interpretation of language imagery means. The developed analysis procedure of the imagery structure of Russian language presents a general idea of metaphorization and conceptualisation of the lexical and semantical field with the feature 'solid'. The description and analysis are proved in various microcontexts.

Kabakowa (2002) studies the imagery base and image underlying the inner form of idioms. The traditions of the analysis of idiom imagery are preserved in different aspects—psycholinguistic, linguistic and cultural. The defining of imagery language structure as a systematic phenomenon stays traditional as well (Kabakowa, 2002).

According to the structural and semantic classification and the criterion of divisibility and indivisibility, the imagery means are divided to lexical and phraseological.

The divisible means are characterised by their motivation, semantical transformation in the structure of meaning, metaphorical inner form. Native speakers realise the usual imagery idea. The imagery meaning is defined in the context.

Therefore, the language imagery structure is culturally-based and metaphorically implemented in the semantics of lexical and phraseological units; it is a system that forms native speakers' linguistic world view. On one hand, the language imagery structure is a systematic phenomenon with sign forms and sign meaning. On the other hand, it is certain knowledge in the system of thinking of native speakers and which form the ability of language to imagery association in speech.

The theoretical and practical issues of visualisation and imagery in Kazakh linguistics are not well developed and the studies are mainly done in the literary context. As any other language Kazakh also has imagery. The imagery structure of literary texts of Kazakh writers is usually considered within the connection with aesthetic and semantic functions (Syzydkova, 2004; Syzydk, 2002).

### **3. Imagery constituent of idioms in English, German and Kazakh**

Interlanguage equivalence of phraseological units in two or more languages is concerned with different linguistic branches: syntax, direct and indirect meaning, cultural component, cognitive and stylistic meaning.

Exactly the semantic two-dimensional aspect of the idioms, their emotionality, expressivity and stylistic level is an important component of the semantics of the units in research (Kammer, 1985).

According to Dobrovolskij and Piirainen (2009), cognitive and cultural aspects in the theory of phraseology are the base for the analysis of the idiom in the article. The main characteristic of the idioms is multi-component structure, stability, idiomacity which distinguish them from other set expressions. Idioms can be interpreted on two different levels: on the level of direct understanding (literal meaning) underlying inner form of idioms and on the level of imagery understanding. The role of a semantic link between these two levels is played by the *image component* (Dmitrij & Piirainen, 2009).

The inner form of the idioms can be defined as a phraseological image as well. The literal meaning of the idiom, which originates from the meaning of the components, is connected with the inner form of the idioms, with its image and motivational meaning.

The idioms' conceptual structures are culturally important and influence the perception of reality. Using the idiom, the speaker offers to the listener an appropriate world segment. The imagery component of the idioms can be identical or different.

For example, idioms expressing the meaning 'exaggerate something':

- in English—*make a mountain out of a molehill*
- in German—*aus einer Mücke einen Elefanten machen*
- in Kazakh—*tuimedeydi tuidei qylu*

The literal meaning of the idiom in English is 'to make a mountain out of an elephant', in German – 'to make an elephant out of a fly', in Kazakh—'to make a camel out of a bottom'. The idiom is characterised by a strong negative emotion with an expressed inner form (phraseological image), which give the idea about conceptual base [BIG-SMALL], so somebody makes something minor to something huge.

In the base of the inner form of the idioms mentioned above, there are various images conveying the meaning of exaggeration. On that ground, the figurative meaning of the idioms is perceived.

On the other hand, the difference in the symbols has a special function of indicator for different conceptualisations of the world or reflector of cultural spheres of the language community.

*Image component of the meaning* is an important constituent in the semantics of idiom. This component allows to reveal the cognitive and conceptual structures of idioms concealed behind the meaning, these structures lead further to worldview.

The worldview is a concept which plays the role of the main idea which organises the meaning and its connection with the image of the worldview of a certain nation.

The same idea in different languages is expressed with words chosen according to the pictures of the nation speaking the language. Though each nation has its own understanding of a certain event, there is a basic knowledge for all nations. In the following, there are idioms with identical concepts:

- in English *cherish like the apple of one's eye*
- in German *etw. wie seinen Augapfel hüten*
- in Kazakh *kozining karasygyndai saqtau*

The idiom in three languages is identical both in direct and in the literal meaning. The similarity can be found as well between the imagery lexical meaning and the concept in the inner form. In idioms, the concept [EYE—AN IMPORTANT ORGAN] is implemented via metaphorical inner form, which has the following meaning—if a person has something valuable then it is compared to care for this object just like for eyes.

In the base of inner form there are images, which represent similar conceptual spheres, for example: [GET OUT OF SOME SPACE/THING]:

- in English *fly off the handle*
- in German *aus dem Anzug gehen /springen* (literal *jump out of the suit*)
- *aus dem Hauschen geraten/kommen* (literal *go out of a little house*)
- *aus der Haut fahren* (literal *slip out of the skin*)
- in Kazakh *terisine syimady, terisine taryldy (tarylyp keledi)* (literal *do not fit your skin*).

Images in three languages give us an equivalent concept [TO LEAVE ANZ SPACE], the inner form and literal meaning are different.

The concepts with different images in other examples contain names of animals, expressing various emotions in three languages. In idioms with the meaning of rage and anger the following components, zoonyms are used:

- in English—a cat and a bul
- in German—a cock, a monkey and an aper
- in Kazakh—a dog, a lion, a bear and a bull

For example:

- in English—*to have kittens; to be red rag to the bull*;
- in German—*sich wie ein wildgewordener Affe benehmen* (literal *to behave like a wild monkey*);
- *wie ein angestochener (angeschossener) Eber wutend sein* (literal. *to be angry like an injured aper*);
- *bose wie ein Wolf* (literal *to be angry as a wolf*);
- in Kazakh—*it zhyny keldi (ystadi)* (literal. *to put a dog's skin on a head*),
- *ittei yza boldy* (literal *to be as angry as a dog*);
- *ayudai (arystandai) akyrdy* (literal *to roar like a bear (lion)*);
- *koz bukasyn koersetty* (literal *to look as a bull*).

#### 4. Conclusion

Language forms a system and reflects the variety of objects, things and phenomena of the world, cultural peculiarities and concept structures.

The system of language, conceptualisation of consciousness is expressed on the semantic level. One of the groups, types of this level is imagery language structure implemented in the semantics of idioms. Idioms are a good material for the search of relations between 'image' and 'meaning'.

Imagery with the other features of idioms (multi-component structure, idiomacity, denotative and connotative meaning, expressivity, stability, reproducibility) influence the degree of equivalence of these expressions in English, German and Kazakh.

Formation of idioms—its engagement of phrases in metaphor on the basis of meaning similarity which underlying the nominative idea of the basic phraseological unit and the literal part. The idioms also include a certain structure of knowledge about the world—'scenario', 'frame' which are included in concepts.

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