

Phraseologisms Related to Food in English as a Reflection of Popular Thought

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Abstract. Using the example of phraseological units of the Andean language with the component 'gastronomic product', the article shows that in the English-speaking environment the most important are the values of the material, physical and social level, while emotional, spiritual and moral values are poorly represented. Using the analysis of the expression plan of phraseological units, such an area of Andean life as taste habits (in relation to nutrition: food and drinks) is described.

Key words: language, culture, phraseological units with the names of gastronomic products, national specificity, values of the English-language linguistic culture.

Introduction

The relationship between "language and culture" has been a topical area of research for scientists around the world for decades. Cultural dominants (the most important traditions, life realities) of peoples are represented in a certain way in language. One of the most suitable elements for identifying the representation of national consciousness in language is such a type of stable combinations as phraseological units (PU). This fact is confirmed by famous researchers in the field of linguistics, including L. I. Roizenzon: "... the uniqueness of the life and everyday life of a particular people is reflected most of all in phraseology, which condenses the entire complex of culture and psychology of this people, the unique way of its figurative thinking"¹. However, not all phraseological units have the same high linguacultural value. Stable expressions with sufficient information content of this kind include PUs that contain lexemes related to nutrition². In this article we will try to define the national specificity of the above-mentioned units, and also use them to describe the dominant values of the English-language linguaculture.

Initially, using the method of continuous sampling from phraseological dictionaries, we obtained phraseological units, which we divided into two groups by the type of product (concepts related to the group 'food, drink'): 1) phraseological units with names of products that do not require preparation and 2) phraseological units with names of products that require preparation. The following names of products as semantic components served as the basis for further division: 1) vegetables; 2) drinks; 3) meat products; 4) spices; 5) legumes; 6) seafood; 7) confectionery and flour products; 8) dishes, if such are found in the semantics of the phraseological unit, 9) fruits and berries. Of the total number of phraseological combinations found, 36 contain names of products that do not require the use of

¹ Баркова, Л. А. Английские фразеологизмы как источник страноведческой информации (кумулятивный и коммуникативный аспекты) // Вопросы английской фразеологии (коммуникативный и фразеологический аспекты). Вып. 287. М. 1987. С. 4.

² Белецкая, А. Ю. Пословица как прецедентная единица в аргументативном дискурсе / дис. канд. филол. наук. Самара, 2002. 200 с.

culinary art (30.5% of the total), which included phraseological units with names of fruits, berries and vegetables. 90 FU contain names of products that require preparation, i.e. culinary names (76% of FU with such lexemes as, for example, 'turkey', 'pudding', 'bacon', 'sausage caKe', 'pie', 'dumpling', 'cookie', pancake). Let's consider each group in detail.

1. Phraseological units containing in their semantics the names of fruits and berries (23.7%). In English, this group of units includes: “apple of your eye”, “Big fruit”, “blow a raspberry”, “a bowl of cherries”, “like giving a donkey strawberries”, “sour grapes”.

This subgroup included 28 (23.7%) phraseological units. The most frequent lexeme was 'apple'. It is represented by 11 phraseological units, which is 9.3% of the total number of the selected gastronomic units. The least frequent lexemes were 'grapes', 'pear', 'plum', 'cherry', 'raspberry', represented in this group by one phraseological unit each. Among the phraseological units of this subgroup, the generic concept 'fruit' occurs 6 times (5% of the total number of gastronomic units of the English language), and the specific names, respectively, 22 times (18.6% of the total number of gastronomic units of the English language). The lexemes 'banana' and 'orange' are highly frequent in phraseological units, so we assume that they play a special role as components of phraseological units, and, probably, these fruits can be considered a fairly popular food among the English.

2. Phraseological units containing names of vegetables in their semantics. This subgroup consisted of 8 phraseological units (6.7%), such as 'as cool as a cucumber', 'carrot and stick', 'one's salad days', 'a hot potato'. The most frequent phraseological units are those with the lexeme 'potato', the number of which is 3 (2.5%). Consequently, potatoes played an important role in the English diet.

Phraseological units containing names of drinks in their semantics (12.7%). Among them, the following can be distinguished: 'Adam's ale', 'don't cry over spilt milk', 'not for all the tea in China', 'be meat and drink to smb'. This group includes 15 phraseological units (12.7% of the total number of found phraseological units), of which 2 (1.6%) phraseological units contain the name 'drink' in their semantics, which is of a general nature; phraseological units containing specific concepts include 13 (1%) phraseological units. The most frequent gastronomic lexeme is 'tea' (5 phraseological units 4.2%). The least frequent lexemes are 'cocoa' (1), 'lemonade' (1), 'ale' (1). Nationally specific units of the "drinks" group can be called 'ale' and “tea”³.

4. Phraseological units containing names of meat products in their semantics. This group includes 13 phraseological units (11% of the total), such as 'bring home the bacon', 'duck soup', 'curry favour', 'like watching sausage getting made', “cold turkey”. Their semantics include names of meat as such 'pork' (2; 1.6%), 'beef' (1; 0.8%), and cooked products 'bacon' (2; 1,6%) and 'sausage'. However, the most frequent lexeme is the generalizing lexeme 'meat' (4; 3.3%). The group of phraseological units containing names of meat products in their semantics includes the nationally specific lexeme “turkey” (1; 0.8%).

5. Phraseological units containing names of dairy products in their semantics. This subgroup contains 16 phraseological units (13.5% the total number of phraseological units), for example, 'butter wouldn't melt in the mouth', 'chalk and cheese', 'cream of the crop'. The most frequent phraseological units are those with the lexeme 'butter' (7; 5.9%), followed by the lexeme 'cheese' (4; 3,3%). The least frequent lexeme is 'cream' (2; 1.6%). But the generalized nomination 'milk' occurs only 3 times (2.5%). In percentage terms, this group ranks second among the total number of gastronomic phraseological units - such a ramified thematic group speaks of the importance of dairy products in English everyday life.

³ Карасик, В. И. Языковой круг : личность концепты, дискурс. Волгоград : Перемена, 2002. 114 с.

6. Phraseological units containing names of spices in their semantics. There are only 8 phraseological units of the English language (6.7%) containing names of spices in their semantics, namely 'sit above the salt', 'grain of salt', 'keen as mustard', 'pepper and salt'. The most frequent lexeme of this group is 'salt' (5; 4.2%), the second most frequent lexeme is 'mustard' (3; 2.5%). There are no general names in this group. This means that the use of spices in English national cuisine was not particularly popular, which partly explains its blandness⁴.

7. Phraseological units containing the names of legumes in their semantics. The following expressions were selected from the phraseological fund of the English language for this group (5%): 'as easy as beans', 'spill the beans', 'a hill of beans', 'as like as peas'.

The total number of phraseological units included in this group is 6 (5% of the total number of phraseological units in the English language) and they are represented by such phraseological units as 'full of beans', 'be as two peas in a pod'. The generic concept 'bean' occurs among them 5 (4.2%) times, but the specific one is represented only by the lexeme 'peas'. Thus, the dominant lexeme in this group is the lexeme 'bean'.

8. Phraseological units containing the names of seafood in their semantics. In English, the phraseological units of this group include: 'a cold fish', 'packed like herrings', 'the best fish are near the bottom', 'a boiled lobster', 'as fat as a hound'.

The group included 5 (4.2%) phraseological units - 'different kettle of fish', 'a red herring'. They contain in their semantics both generic concepts - 'fish' (3; 2.5%), and specific ones 'herring' (1; 0.8%), 'lobster' (1; 0.8%). The differentiation is explained by the island position of Great Britain and the wide range of fish products available to housewives.

10. Phraseological units containing names of dishes in their semantics were not found in the phraseological fund of the English language.

To solve the problem of identifying the dominant values/anti-values of the English national consciousness, we classified gastronomic phraseological units by levels of values with certain axiological dyads.

The following nationally specific nominations were also identified during the study: 'tea', 'pudding', 'bacon', 'cookie', 'ale', 'dumpling', 'turkey'. Probably, these were the food products that were on the tables of the English during the formation of the above-mentioned phraseological units. The results of this study indicate that the analysis of the content of phraseological units with lexemes related to nutrition allows us to determine the dominant value levels of the national consciousness of the English people.

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4. ⁴ Куниц, А. В. Англо-русский фразеологический словарь. 4-е изд., перераб. и доп. М. Рус. яз., 1984. 944 с.

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