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Comparative analysis of the concept of beauty in linguistic space

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Abstract

The research objective is to study the stereotyped perception of the concept of beauty in the Chinese and Russian linguocultures. Comparative analysis of 450 Chinese understatement-allegories and 550 Russian phraseological units and proverbs was performed. As a result, there are common characteristics of synonymic units in these languages, while the differential traits also reveal similarities. In conclusion, Language is the main instrument for the formation,

development and preservation (in the form of written manuscripts) of culture, because the linguistic system forms key moments of material and spiritual culture.

Keywords: Intercultural, communication, language, culture, linguoculturology.

Análisis comparativo del concepto de belleza en el espacio lingüístico

Resumen

El objetivo de la investigación es estudiar la percepción estereotipada del concepto de belleza en los linguocultivos chinos y rusos. Se realizó un análisis comparativo de 450 subestimaciones-alegorías chinas y 550 unidades y proverbios fraseológicos rusos. Como resultado, hay características comunes de las unidades sinónimas en estos idiomas, mientras que los rasgos diferenciales también revelan similitudes. En conclusión, el lenguaje es el principal instrumento para la formación, desarrollo y preservación (en forma de manuscritos escritos) de la cultura, porque el sistema lingüístico forma momentos clave de la cultura material y espiritual.

Palabras clave: interculturalidad, comunicación, lenguaje, cultura, linguoculturología.

1. INTRODUCTION

At present, linguistic space actively discusses and develops cognitive tendencies, the aim of which is research in the linguistic environment, as well as studies of cognition or the cognitive process, i.e. concentration of the intellectual and mental capabilities of the individual. Cognitive developments in the field of linguistics are

particularly effective in the study of the phraseological component of a particular language, because there is an opportunity to rediscover the vocabulary in new ways while touching on the main provisions of the problematic of concepts. Carrying out a full, meaningful study in the analysis of conceptual manifestations contributes to a new perception of phraseological units, to the definition of unified, universal semantic groups that form concepts (Mikeshina, 2002; Teliya, 2008). In linguistics, a special place is given to the research of the linguistic consciousness of a particular group, which contain a number of questions concerning the relationship of man, language and culture. At the same time, three main disciplines are singled out: linguoculturology, ethnolinguistics and linguistic geography.

The consideration of concepts in the aspect of intercultural communication and linguodidactics is because of the identification of similarities and differences in the presentation of concepts promotes more effective communication between different ethnic groups. The aim of intercultural communication is to promote the interaction of societies, as well as representatives of different cultures based on tolerance and mutual understanding. The formation of polyethnic states throughout the world dictates their specific norms and standards of acculturation, makes it necessary to search for new ways leading to the tolerance of interethnic groups (Askoldov, 1997). The formation of concepts based on phraseological units demonstrates the enormous undiscovered potential of these language expressions.

The phraseological foundation of any language contains representations and an assessment of certain phenomena or stereotypes changing over the centuries. Idioms, like other phraseological units, define cultural symbolism on the example of capacious semantic concepts: love, hatred, beauty, ugliness. Note that the components, which appear in the idioms of one group of the semantic concept, may be completely different. The combination of these components creates a certain stereotype inherent in a particular culture. Correct use of idioms in speech is possible only with absolute knowledge of all the meanings of related words in the phrase and of the peculiarities of their use in speech. (Voynova et al., 1986). Chinese phraseological units include ready-made expressions, habitual expressions, proverbs, sayings, understatements-allegories.

2. METHODOLOGY

The main method is the linguocognitive method, thanks to which the classification of the concept of beauty was made on the material of 450 Chinese understatements-allegories and 550 Russian phraseological units and proverbs. By the statistical method, the material is distributed among 30 groups in Chinese and 20 groups in Russian. The notion of beauty always aroused great interest among humankind, and the difficulty in defining and establishing its norms and criteria in different cultures remains relevant at the present stage. In the first group there are understatements-allegories based on the

notion appearance - 外貌 wàimào: 1. 碾磨道上寻驴蹄印 – 步步不缺 niǎnmòdàoshàngxúnlú tí yìn-bù bù bù quē to be flawless, impeccable 2. 娘骂闺女 – 好东西 niángmà guīnǚ - hǎodōngxi a wicked thing, a nice thing. The second group contains the component quickly - 快 kuài, which is viewed from the positive side: 1. 老和尚剃眉毛 - 一扫净光 lǎohéshàngti méimao - yīsàojìngguāng to finish with someone/something in one fell swoop 2. 送饭摘豆角 – 两当一 sòngfānzhāidòujiǎo - liǎngdàngyī to kill two birds with one stone. In the third group, the concept of beauty is viewed through the prism of main, important - 重要的 zhòngyào de: 1. 老鼠拖葫芦 – 大头在后头 lǎoshutuō húlu - dà tóuzàihòutou – the main, the important things are to come 2. 乡下人看告示 – 一篇大道理 xiāngxiarénkàngàoshì - yī piāndà dàoli an important thought, a great truth, a big idea.

The first group contains phraseological units and proverbs based on the concepts of mind, insight. A person with bright, extraordinary talents, gifted, without a doubt, is worthy of admiration: 1. To see 7 feet through the earth (to be distinguished by great insight, enterprise) 2. The bird is beautiful by its feathers, man by his mind (proverb). The second group contains the components of determination, will. This group is about the inner qualities of a person. Decisiveness is a manifestation of inner strength and, accordingly, of the beauty of the human soul: 1. To grapple (to act decisively) decide to act with respect

to someone 2. To make the weather (to have decisive importance). In the third group, beauty is represented through the meaning of appearance, manners.

A person, being respectful and polite, knows how to attract others, at the same time bringing dialogue to a higher intellectual level: 1. As pretty as they come 2. A beautiful gesture. The meaning of the phraseological units of the fourth group is based on the concept of impeccability – a person having no shortcomings appears exclusively from a positive point of view: 1. Without a hitch (no shortcomings) 2. As in the pharmacy (absolutely accurate). The fifth group is based on the meaning of nature that is more than anything else is connected with the notion of beauty. Nature is the conductor of human mood and emotions: 1. Spring is beautiful by its flowers, autumn by its sheaves (proverb); 2. The snow is deep – the year is good (proverb) (Yang et al., 2019; Soo et al., 2019; Fitriani & Suryadi, 2019).

The sixth group represents phraseological units representing beauty through internal manifestations of human emotions, feelings and qualities of character; here, not so much the external beauty but the inner beauty is spoken of. Humility, honesty, devotion, sincerity, generosity have positive connotations: 1. From a pure heart (quite sincerely, unmistakably, quite frankly) 2. A knight without fear and reproach (a brave, generous man). The seventh group is represented by the concepts of work and labour (the conditional formulas being work, labour = good). Here, the authors proceeded from the fact that labor

ennobles a person: 1. Patience and work conquer all (proverb); 2. Hold on to the plow: it is the breadwinner (proverb).

In the eighth group, beauty is manifested through abundance, wealth: 1. To shower with gold (generously endow, enrich) 2. On a broad foot (rich, luxurious life. The ninth group is the intersection of the concepts place, position in society. The group includes Russian phraseological units used to speak of a high-ranking official. Analyzing these phraseological units and the way they sound, the authors conclude this concept is associated with beauty: 1. To fly high (to occupy a prominent position in society) 2. To rise in the world (to achieve a good position in life, in society. The tenth group is based on the concept of origin. High origin implies education, manners and the presence of a certain cultural potential, although not always; nevertheless, the authors will refer it to the positive side: 1. Blue blood (noble origin) 2. Salt of the earth (the most prominent representative of the society.

The eleventh group is based on cause-effect relationships. In this group, the authors proceeded from the premise that development leads to prosperity: 1. to boil over (to flow, to manifest itself (about life, energy)) 2. The sky feels hot (stronger, more active, as good as it gets. In the twelfth group, beauty is associated with the concept of quality not only in objects or phenomena, but also in humans: 1. First grade (very good, excellent in all respects); 2. By all the rules of art (very skillfully, expertly. The thirteenth group consists of phraseological units with the meaning of freedom, which is positioned

as beauty: 1. A free bird (a person not constrained in their actions; not dependent on anyone) 2. Dairy rivers and kissel banks (good, happy life).

In the fourteenth group, phraseological units with the main meaning luck are collected based on cause-effect relationships (successful means beautiful): 1. The first youth (the very first success, recognition) 2. To reap laurels (to enjoy the fruits of success. The fifteenth group is connected to the concepts of happiness and love. A happy, loving person is undoubtedly beautiful, they seem to be shining, in other words, they have a distinctive feature expressed in appearance and in relation to people around: 1. To dote upon (to love dearly and to deeply respect) 2. To be born in a shirt (to be happy, successful). The main components of the concept of beauty in the sixteenth group are youth and old age. They both have their own charm: youth is power, energy; old age is wisdom, experience: 1. The second youth (the influx of new forces in old age); 2. Fine young fellows in a row.

The seventeenth group has the idea of diversity, heterogeneity (variety is beautiful): 1. Overchoice (inability to concentrate on one due to many choices, too many impressions) 2. This, that and the other (both, different). In the eighteenth group, beauty is associated with abundance, having common traits with the previous group: 1. To eat (drink) to satiety (plenty, more than enough) 2. No room to drop a needle (overcrowded, poky). The nineteenth group is based on the concepts of fame, glory. Fame and popularity make a person seem attractive (in appearance): 1. To enter into the proverb (to become

known, to be widespread) 2. Star of premium magnitude (widely known, famous in any field of activity).

In the twentieth group, phraseological units with the meaning of eloquence are presented. The ability to speak beautifully is undoubtedly evaluated from a positive point of view: 1. It is nice to listen to a beautiful speech (proverb) 2. A red word (witty, accurate expression; bright expressive words, a phraseological unit (phraseology) (Voynova et al., 1986). In all the presented phraseological units, the criterion of explication and of division into certain groups was the semantic meaning rather than the way of constructing phraseological units and their content (Indriastuti, 2019; Kosari, 2018; Sears, 2018).

Thus, the results allowed drawing the conclusion that the main components of the concept of beauty, represented in proverbs and phraseologies in the Russian language, are intelligence, shrewdness; determination, will; appearance, manners; impeccability; nature; internal manifestations of human emotions; work, labour; abundance, wealth; position in the society; origin; development; quality; freedom; luck; happiness, love; youth, old age; diversity, variety; abundance; fame; eloquence. Having counted the number of components, the authors came to the conclusion that beauty in Russian proverbs and phraseological units is transmitted through images, phenomena, everyday situations, but to a lesser degree than in the Chinese understatement-allegories. As a rule, they bear an instructive, edifying

character. Based on Russian proverbs and phraseological units, 20 components that position the concept of beauty were identified.

3. RESULTS

The leading method of contrast analysis revealed the following images underlying the consolidation of the concept of beauty in Russian phraseology: 1) external attractiveness (in the fullest juice, in a row); 2) positive internal manifestations of human emotions (from a good heart, with an open soul); 3) youth (the young and attractive will get anywhere); 4) good health (healthy as a bull; health is more valuable than gold); 5) fame/glory (a rising star, a star of premium magnitude); 6) eloquence (it is nice to listen to beautiful speech); 7) freedom (free bird, free Cossack). Positive aesthetic evaluation is in the following semantic signs of Chinese understatement-allegories: 1) appearance (碾磨道上寻驴蹄印 – 步步不缺 niǎnmòdàoshangxúnlú tí yìn – bù bù bù quē not to have the slightest flaw, to be impeccable); 2) Talents and abilities (锭子春海椒 – 辣 (拿) 手 сыч.диал.дигзичōnghǎijiāo - là(ná) shǒu a professional, a great craftsman);

3) conscience and justice (大葱拌豆腐 - 一青 (清) 二白 dàcōngbàndòufu - yìqīng (qīng) èrbái crystal clear, untainted (about a

person); 4) durability, perseverance (山里的石头 – 雷打不烂, 风吹不动 shānlideshítou – léidǎbulàn, fēngchuī budòng escapologist); 5) joy, rejoicing (化子拾黄金 – 乐不可支 huàzishíhuángjīn – lè bù kě zhī there is no limit to joy); 6) family (城隍庙的鼓捶 – 一对 Chénghuángmiàodegǔchuí – yíduì good match, good couple); 7) old, new (寿星老放屁 – 老气 shòuxīnglǎofàngpì – lǎoqì in the good old spirit (style); 灶王老爷回家 – 一堂儿新 zàowánglǎoyé huíjiā – yī tángxīn everything is brand new); 8) wealth (棺材店里的耗子 – 闹材 (财) guāncáidiànlièdehàozǐ – nàocái (cái) to get rich, to make wealth; riches have piled up). Comparison of the relevant signs of synonyms that underline the concept of beauty in Chinese and Russian leads to the following conclusions:

1. The common signs of synonyms in the languages being compared to coincide.

2. The differential signs of the synonyms also reveal differences.

The following traits can be assigned to coinciding characteristics: a) conformity to the ideal; b) intensity; c) ironic assessment of beautiful appearance. The distinctive features are: 1) the opposition of external and internal beauty (in Russian); 2) the opposition of rational and emotional satisfaction from the

contemplation of beauty (in Chinese); 3) emphasis on choice as a basis for aesthetic evaluation (in Chinese); 4) accentuation of the supernatural power of beauty (in Russian); 5) specification of the value of the object of aesthetic evaluation (small size, fragility, delicacy) (in Chinese); 6) specification of the unspoiltness of the object of aesthetic evaluation (purity, freshness, impeccability) (in Chinese).

4. DISCUSSIONS

Investigating Russian and Chinese phraseology related to the concept of beauty, the authors conclude that in Russian phraseological units:

- Beauty occupies an important place: Modesty makes a person beautiful;
- Beauty is inferior to the mind: Beauty till the wedding day, wisdom till the dying day;
- Actions are valued more than appearance He is good who is capable, and not who is handsome.

Moreover, Russian phraseological units and proverbs, besides the aesthetic evaluation (beautiful, correct) have an instructive character (sell a coat, buy a book), determine the fact that beauty alone is not enough (beauty without mind is a purse without money). Russian

flowers carried away by water (there is nothing more fleeting than spring and youth). The article details the features of linguocultural concepts in the research on the interaction of language and culture, as well as intercultural communication and linguodidactics. In this study, the authors seek to fully identify all the basic principles of the problem in question, and to determine the exceptional characteristics of each of these cultures, which is different from previous studies in this area (Hasanova, 2014).

5. CONCLUSIONS

Analyzing the interaction of language and culture reveals that culture is a social phenomenon reflecting the achievements of society in a material, spiritual sense. After examining the problems of interaction between language and culture, the authors identified several basic theses for the study:

1. Language contains not only the prerequisites of culture but also the conditions for the existence of culture. This is a special way of manifesting culture, through which cultural codes are formed;

2. Language is the main instrument for the formation, development and preservation (in the form of written manuscripts) of culture, because the linguistic system forms key moments of material and spiritual culture;

3. Man receives information from the outside world through the language. Language determines the system by which a linguistic worldview of a particular nation is built; it is subject to the influence of social and cultural stereotypes, people's way of thinking and awareness of reality. Culture and language exist, develop and change together, while a person and society remain the subject of culture.

Modern linguoculturology examines communicative processes and the connection of linguistic expressions used in them; determines the language picture of the world and at the same time is not purely national. At the present stage, several methods are identified in the study of the linguistic worldview: a typological examination of the concepts of the given language; the study of the linguistic worldview through the prism of spiritual culture or special connotations under common concepts; consideration of different independent language aspects – the manifestation of the language worldview in vocabulary, in word formation and phraseology, taking into account linguistic features. The linguocultural concept is certain information embodied in the frame; it contains the knowledge and experience of one person and, moreover, of a whole society; it is a multidimensional, discrete, culturally significant, sociopsychic education, cultivated in the collective consciousness.

Concepts are, as it were, clumps of national cultural meanings, cells of the culture. The process of linguocultural research has the following stages: 1) the interpretation of the reference or culturally-related component of the word combination; 2) explication of its

relations with the basic metaphor and with other phraseological units which employ this basic metaphor; 3) the ratio of the sign manifestation of the word combination to the manifestations of culture - stereotypes, standards, symbols, through verbal and non-verbal methods, projecting stable and reproducible signs; 4) definition of the functions of phraseology as a cultural symbol in the worldview of the given language group.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed hypotheses, theses, results, and conclusions can serve as a basis for research in the field of typological and comparative study of Chinese and Russian languages, cognitive linguistics, linguodidactics and intercultural communication.

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