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# Evaluative Aspect In The Semantics Of Phraseological Units With The Toponymal Component

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## Abstract

The purpose of this article is to study the axiological potential of phraseological units of the English language, one of the components of which is the toponymic element via the method of semantic analysis of the studied units. In result, in English linguistic culture people from northern counties are considered to be healthy tough simple-minded. In conclusion, evaluative potential of the studied units of the language is great, but the character of the described evaluative features is mostly different.

**Keywords:** English Phraseological Units, Evaluation, Image.



# Aspecto evaluativo en la semántica de unidades fraseológicas con el componente toponímico

## Resumen

El propósito de este artículo es estudiar el potencial axiológico de las unidades fraseológicas del idioma inglés, uno de cuyos componentes es el elemento toponímico a través del método de análisis semántico de las unidades estudiadas. En consecuencia, en la cultura lingüística inglesa, las personas de los condados del norte se consideran sanas, duras y de mente simple. En conclusión, el potencial evaluativo de las unidades estudiadas del lenguaje es grande, pero el carácter de las características evaluativas descritas es mayormente diferente.

**Palabras clave:** Unidades de Fraseología Inglesa, Evaluación, Imagen.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the article is to study the phraseological units of the English language, expressing evaluation, one of the components of which is the toponymical element. By the phraseological unit is meant the figurative name of the object, phenomenon, process, sign, action, etc. (Alefirenko, 2008; Mokienko, 2007; Fleischer, 1991). They are a special kind of statements, in a succinct form expressing moral norms and bearing a figurative character (Kanyo, 1981; Gibbs, 1994; Cowie, 1998). Toponymical elements are often found in phraseological units. The object of the study of this work are toponyms - the names of the

largest cities in England, found in the studied language material. Phraseological units are explored in this article from the linguistic-cultural positions. The paper also aims at the identification and study within the sphere of phraseological units those of them that reflect the most relevant toponyms, which, in turn, are used to express a number of evaluative meanings.

The study of the phraseological units of the English language with the toponym element took place in the classical works of Russian linguists of the mid-twentieth century on phraseology. Amosova (1963), Kunin (1998) mention them in their research. Note that the units described were studied by the form, in other words, the structural-syntactic component was put at the center of these studies. The turn to the study of the content plan of phraseological units took place somewhat later (Likhovidova, 1971; Alefirenko, 2008). The linguo-culturological aspect of phraseological units in general and of units containing a toponymic element, in particular, was studied in the works of a number of researchers (Mokienko, 2007; Alpatov, 2015). A number of recent works Artyomova & Leonovich (2003) of particular interest to researchers of proper names represented in phraseological units (Kondakova, 2004). In the minds of native speakers, the given toponym gradually acquires a number of connotative shades of meaning. Accumulated over the centuries, they form the basis of the image of the city. Toponyms became an integral part of phraseological units. They are marked by the ability to reflect connotative meanings of figurative and metaphorical nature (Godino et al, 2019).

The image is the main means of a figurative generalization of reality, a sign of the objective correlate of human experiences and a

special form of social consciousness. In a broad sense, the term image means the reflection of the external world in consciousness (Arnold, 2006). Hume describes images as perceptions that enter the consciousness with the greatest force and uncontrollability, he called them impressions (Hume, 1995). The image is born in the mind as a visual sensory representation, a mental picture (Nikitin, 2004). In our work, we accept the definition of an image formulated by Alefirenko (2008) is a subject-sensual reflection in the consciousness of a person of a nominated object, arising from communicants (Alefirenko, 2008). He considers figurative character of meaning as a property of phraseological units to preserve and reproduce the image when used in speech. (Alefirenko, 2008). Only those conceptual formations that have a perceptual (visual-figurative) basis can have an unambiguous and irrelevant cultural-axiological character (Rosch, 1978; Arnold, 2006). According to Lakoff & Johnson:

Thinking is imaginative in the sense that concepts that are not based directly on experience use metaphor, metonymy, mental images — all this goes beyond literal reflection or representation of external reality ... it is the ability of imagination allows us to think abstractly and bring the mind beyond the limits of what we can see and feel (1980: 13).

Potebnya noted that the image replaces the complex and elusive with close, vivid, figurative symbolism polysemantic (Potebnya, 1999; Widiastuti et al., 2018). The figurative character of the reflection of reality represents one of the types of thinking (Sartre, 2002). An image is a category of consciousness, not reality. In consciousness, it cannot be completely objectified through the mechanisms of language. Equivalent exchange is impossible between a picture and words.

Toponymic images in the framework of idioms express evaluative meanings. Assessment is defined as an objective-subjective attitude of a person to an object, expressed by linguistic means explicitly or implicitly (Ivin, 2017; Hassan et al., 2019). Russell also believes that the defining property of the axiological dichotomy good - bad is its relative character. The positioning of objects relative to this scale depends on the attitudes and feelings of the speaker. This category is selective. The concept of evaluation, like the concept of time, is very difficult to describe, relying only on irrelevant judgments. At the same time, like the category of time, assessment is fundamental in the intellectual hierarchy of concepts developed by the human consciousness (Russel, 1953). When a person interacts with the outside world, phenomena and objects of the latter have an effect on him, which may not correspond to the complex influence of these phenomena and objects on another person. The subjective nature of evaluative statements is irresistible: otherwise, they will cease to perform their axiological function (Quine, 1967; Searle, 1970; Piriya et al., 2018).

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The first stage of the study was the identification of phraseological units with a toponymic component, which, in this case, express the estimated values. They turned out to be quite numerous, but not all of them expressed evaluative meanings. In this paper, an approach is used, according to which the number of idioms includes

proverbs and sayings, in other words, a broad interpretation of idioms is used. Proverbs and captions reflect stereotypical situations that allow expressing an assessment. Modern statistics offer us the following list of the largest settlements in England (the first twenty points): London, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol, Coventry, Bradford, Nottingham, Leicester, Newcastle, Kingston, Plymouth, Derby, Southampton, Nordampton, York, Portsmouth, Oxford, Cambridge. And the preference was made to those of them that are better known to the reader. If one considers representation of the names of Russian cities in phraseology it will be as follows. A brief outlook on the map on Russia may show dozens of big cities Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, Kazan, Saratov, Samara, Novosibirsk, Chelyabinsk, and Vladivostok. The next step was to determine which of the above names to enter the linguo-culturological foundation of the English and Russian language correspondingly in the form of elements of phraseological units, as well as to identify which evaluative meanings are meant to be expressed in phraseology.

### **3. RESULTS**

This part of the paper is dedicated to the study of phraseological units both English and Russian containing a number of topographic units engaged in figurative situations expressing evaluation. The representation of the studied toponymical elements is uneven. A number of major cities such as Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Liverpool, Bradford, Leicester, Kingston, Southampton, Nordhampton, and Portsmouth are not represented in the phraseological units of the

English language at all. The largest city in the country, the second largest city in Europe, as is known, is London. Not surprisingly, it is found in many of the units studied. At the end of the sixteenth century, a unit appears: they agree like the clocks of London (WDP) (literally: they are similar in looks, like a London clock). She gives a positive assessment of punctual people. This unit relies on the reality of London life when several tower clocks appear. A special place in the cognition of Londoners is occupied by the London Bridge, the first stone bridge of the city. Songs were dedicated to him, he appears in phraseological units: London Bridge was made for smart people to walk on it, and for stupid people to live under it (WDP). This unit is based on the dichotomy of the concepts of wisdom and stupidity by means of spatial realities top and bottom (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). At the same time, there is an allusion to another phraseologism: to go under the bridge (ODP), which figuratively describes a situation of bankruptcy and impoverishment.

In phraseologisms reflected not only the memorable places in London, but also events. In London, as in any other ancient city, there were many fires, but the most devastating was the fire of 1666, when almost the entire city died in a fire. This fire was remembered even a hundred years later, when a dictionary was recorded in the sources: the fire of London was a punishment for gluttony, which hints at the cause of the fire, which according to legend, began in the kitchen (ODP). Cf. Russian unit: Москва сгорела от копеечной свечи (STRPP) (Moscow burned down from a penny candle). The English have composed a phraseological unit about the inhabitants of the capital: Londoners like to ask more than you are ready to take (ODP). It

denounced the arrogance and greed of the inhabitants of the English capital. The same idea is expressed about the Russian capital: Москва деньги любит (STRPP) (Moscow loves money). A certain amount of irony is present in the phraseological unit: Lincoln was, London is, York will be (WDP). It talks about the past, the present, connected with the capital, and the future. The Russian phraseologism Москва – третий Рим (STRPP) (Moscow is the third Rome) also manifests its eternity, comparing itself with the great capital of the Roman Empire.

The modality of impossibility within the framework of spatial realities describes a phraseological unit: I cannot be at York and London at the same time (WDP). The cities of York and London are located in different parts of the country. Comparison of the center and the periphery is found in the unit: Kingston Down well-wrought is worth London Town dear bought (WDP) (literally: made with art in Kingston Down is expensive to sell in London). It expresses the idea that exquisite things made in the province are sold at an exorbitant price in the capital. In other words, the capital margins, the greed of London merchants are criticized. Old Russian phraseologism criticizes high prices in Saint-Petersburg, former Russian capital: Питер бока повытер (STRPP) (Peter wiped your sides), which means that it left you without money in your pockets, in other words - with thin sides (Safdari & Asadi, 2013; Dana & Sabzi, 2013).

Oxford and Cambridge have the worldwide fame of university cities. They are also presented as constituent parts of a number of English phraseological units. Noteworthy is the phraseological unit: Oxford for learning, London for wit (WDP). In it, we see the opposition of the concepts of knowledge and mind. Oxford is a center of university education, London is a center of trade and commerce, for

success in business education alone is not enough. The Russian unit *Кострома полна ума (STRPP)* (Kostroma is full of wit) describes the citizens of the Russian provincial town in an ironical and rather in a sarcastic way. This Russian town cannot boast of great educational institutions. The phraseological unit: *Cambridge requires all to be equal (WDP)* uses the toponym Cambridge, the second most important University City after Oxford, to express a positive assessment of justice, the spirit of universal equality in university life. The talkativeness, the inability to keep secrets, is attributed in the English linguistic culture to the residents of the city of Manchester: what is said in Manchester today, the rest of England will be discussed tomorrow (WDP).

Rudyard Kipling in the story *a day's work*, published in 1898, uses the model of construction of the unit being described. He preserves its syntactic construction, and at the same time replaces lexical components, adapting it, thus, to the realities of contemporary America: what the horses of Kansas think today, the horses of America will think tomorrow (WDP). People in several cities and provinces are said to be strong in body, but weak in mind. So they say about the inhabitants of York: *Yorkshire born and Yorkshire bread: strong in the arm and weak in the head (WDP)*. In English linguistic culture, people from northern counties are considered to be healthy tough simple-minded. Since a number of phraseological expressions are built on the basis of some syntactic and lexical models, Zimin notes that in structural terms, teasers can act in a proverbial and verbal form. Dahl identified the teasers with the proverb. Teasers are popular expressions. Used in a comic form as a characteristic of the inhabitants

of a particular region, district, city. In some cases, residents of a given locality do this, in most cases, they are created by residents of neighboring villages and cities against each other. The pragmatics of their use characterizes the situation when there are many people from different places (Kahaki & Jenaabadi, 2014).

Russian linguistic tradition is marked by the introduction of such names of old Russian cities into teasing phraseologisms as their relevant constituent parts, thus we find in them the toponyms of Bryansk, Kaluga, Tula, Smolensk, Rostov, Astrakhan, Kursk, Ryazan, Orel, Vladimir, Tver. A lonely person, though potentially aggressive is named, *рянский волк* (STRPP) (Bryansk wolf). This region is rich in thick forests – the home of the wolf. Aggressive, impudent or untactful behavior is marked in the Russian culture by means of phraseological units with the names of such Russian cities as Tver, Ryazan, and Smolensk. Thus a scornful woman is positioned in Ryazan: *аба рязанская* (STRPP), sneakers, complainants are marked by mentioning the city of Smolensk: *смоленские ябедники* (STRPP). An impudent man is associated in Russian culture with the goat, excessive manifestations of impudence are described by means of the phrase: *перской козел* (STRPP), when people characterized by such negative personal traits are positioned in Tver city. The aesthetic evaluation also finds its place within phraseopogical units with a toponymical element. An excessively slander woman is compared in Russian with a herring caught in Astrakhan *Астраханская селедка* (STRPP) (Kursk thieves, Rostov swindler). People from Kaluga, a town not far from Moscow are described as a place, where men of fashion live: *галужане – щеголи* (STRPP) (Kaluga citizens are dandies).

Theft and treachery get a negative evaluation in the units: гурские воры, хостовский жулик (STRPP) (Kursk thieves, Rostov swindler). These cities are associated with Russian culture with theft. One of the best known English phraseological unit possessing a toponymical element does not carry coals to Newcastle (WDP) corresponds to the Russian unit: не ездят в Тулу со своим самоваром (STRPP) (Do not go to Tula with your samovar). In Russian phraseological units a negative evaluation is given to such trait of character as foolishness. Different onomastic elements are used to mark this trait. For this purpose, such cities are mentioned as Ryazan and Orel: рязанцы мешком солнце в реке ловили (STRPP) (Ryazan men tried to catch the sun with a bag in the river), орловцы с дубиной за громом гонялись (STRPP) (Orel men chased over the thunder with a club). Addiction to alcohol is blamed in the unit where the ancient Russian city Vladimir is mentioned: владимирцы золотые ворота пропили (STRPP) (Vladimir men drunk their Golden gate), in his unit describes a nonsense situation, when the citizen of Vladimir said to sell the pride of their town – the main gate of their city.

The results of the paper on the one and may interest those who study phraseological units in general and onomastic elements within the sphere of phraseological units in particular. The paper paves the way to further development of onomastic investigations on the material of fixed expressions bearing axiologically marked string in their plane of content. On the other hand, the article under consideration was fulfilled in a comparativist plane. Though the number of works done on the material on two, three or, though seldom, more languages, is great, comparative onomastic investigations carried out

on the material of set expressions is hardly numerous. The paper enables to take a look at the names of cities from linguocultural positions, which are known to be multidimensional. Further research is sure to reveal new vectors of development of phraseologic research by linguistic and cultural methods besides axiological. There is, for example, great scope of work to be done in the sphere of application of statistic methods to onomastic units.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

As a conclusion, it should be noted that English toponyms are presented in phraseological units of the English language unevenly. Many phraseological units with the toponym element represent the capital of the country, London for the English language or Moscow for Russian. The considered phraseological units describe such positive estimated values as punctuality, wealth, intelligence, equality, pride. The phraseological units studied in the work objectify such negative meanings as poverty, gluttony, greed, impossibility, talkativeness, stupidity, meaninglessness, poverty and enterprise, distrust, hostility, rivalry. As it can be seen, the number of negative values exceeds the number of positive ones. Russian phraseological units share some common traits with the English ones, for example, they blame the citizens of the capital for their greed. Some modern Russian cities are not reflected in phraseologisms because of their shortage, they did not exist in the times when the examined units were created. Many cities are used in phraseological expressions which in a humorous or nonsense manner give their negative evaluation to such

features of human character as foolishness, aggression, impudence or bad manners. Thus we conclude that evaluative potential of the studied units of the language is great, but the character of the described evaluative features is mostly different.

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