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ENGLISH-BULGARIAN PARALLELS IN ANIMALISTIC PAREMIA (A CONTRASTIVE STUDY)



PARALLÈLES EN PROVERBES ANIMALISTIQUES (ÉTUDE COMPARATIVE ANGLAISE-BULGARE)

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Abstract

The investigation aims at analyzing the resemblances and the differences in respect to the existing language symbolism based on animal paremiology in English and in Bulgarian. The methods of the investigation include: a contrastive analysis of the units' structure that requires the structural-typological procedure and a contrastive analysis of the units' meaning that requires the identification procedure in order to find the closest match in each of the investigated languages. The leading role is given to the overall expressive meaning.

Extrait

La recherche a pour objectif d'étudier les ressemblances et les différences concernant les symboles linguistiques existant dans la parémiologie animale dans les langues anglaise et bulgare. Les méthodes de l'étude comprennent : l'analyse comparative des structures des unités sous l'optique de l'approche structurale typologique et l'analyse comparative du sens qui implique le processus d'identification dans le but de trouver l'équivalence la plus proche dans les deux langues. Le sens expressif joue le rôle primordial.

Entradas para indexação

KEYWORDS: Animalistic paremia. Zoonyms. Semantic center. Semantics.

MOTS CLÉS: Proverbes animalistiques. Zoonymes. Centre sémantique. Sémantique.

Texto integral

Defining the semantic center (base, core, etc) is hardly an easy task bearing in mind the fact that the meaning of the these unit exists only as a unity that cannot be traced back to the object relations directly denoted by the separate words themselves but to the entire semantic transformation (Spasova-Mihailova, 1979:334). This problem is undoubtedly related to the semantics of the units and their etymology. V. Zhukov defines the semantic center of a phraseme as the element that contributes mostly to the semantics of the whole unit (Zhukov, 1978:91-102). The most dominant meaningful component is the component that has experienced the slightest semantic transformation and it's motivated to the greatest extend. Not all of the units that contain a zoonym are units with *an animal semantic center*. The factor "semantic phraseological modeling" should be taken into consideration in order to solve the problem (Nicheva, 1978:125; 1986). For example, many of the phraseological models containing an adjective in the structure, it's the adjective that happens to be the semantic center:

adjective + noun

English (component: a dog)

A clever dog – умен човек	A yellow dog – страхливец
A dead dog – ненужен човек	A top dog – господстваща страна, господар
A dirty dog – мръсник	A sad dog – мрачен, унил човек
A gay dog – веселяк	A sly dog – хитрец
A dull dog – скучен човек	A lame dog – неудачник
A dumb dog – мълчаливец	The under dog – победена, подчинена страна; потиснат човек

A clever dog means a clever man, *a sad dog* – a sad man, *a top dog* – a boss, etc. In the above examples it's exactly the adjective that is crucial for the meaning of the unit. The second component, the dog, has the overall meaning of man. The fact that 90% of the language phraseology is anthropocentric¹ transforms the second component of those units (dog) into somewhat purely grammatical element that gives the construction a substantival nature. Thus units whose meaning is not determined by the animal component are excluded from the investigated corpora both in English and in Bulgarian.

Structural organization

Until recently researches have treated the proverbs and the sayings as unique formations both from structural and semantic viewpoints. Contrastive studies shed a new light upon the traditional understanding of uniqueness and modeling. Scholars have proved that these units are structured using the model of the syntactically formed sentences (Mokienko, 1980:43, Nicheva, 1982).

The contrastive analysis of the units' structure helps us to outline the resemblances and the differences in respect to the various sentence models in animalistic paremiology.

English and Bulgarian proverbs with a simple sentence structure

<i>English</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>
<i>N1 + V + N2 + Prep + N3</i>	<i>N1 + Prep + N2 + V</i>
No man will buy a pig in a poke.	Агне в чувал се не купува.
<i>Adj1 + N1 + V + Adj2 + N2</i>	<i>Adj1 + N + Adj2 + Pron + V</i>
The hasty bitch brings forth blind whelps.	Бързата кучка слепи ги ражда.

The following structural models are the most productive:

<i>English</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>
<i><Attribute> + N1 + V + Adj + Prep + Pron + Adj2 + N2</i>	<i>Attr + N1 + Prep + N2 + V</i>
A cock is bold on his own dunghill.	Всеки петел на бунището си пее.
Every dog is valiant at his own door.	Всяко куче пред вратата си лае.
Every bird likes her own nest best.	Всяко птиче своето гнездо хвали.
The wolf must die in his own skin.	

<i>N + V + <Attr / Gen> + N2</i>	<i>N1 + N2 + не+ V</i>
The leopard cannot change his spots.	Вълк куче не става.
Wolf does not eat wolf.	ВЪЛКЪТ ВЪЛК НЕ ДАВИ.
Crows will not pick out crows eyes.	
Eagles catch no flies.	Орел мухи не лови.

<i>English</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>
<i>N1 + that + V1 + Prep + N + V2 + Prep + N2</i>	<i>Който + V1 + Prep + N1 + V2 + N</i>
He that has been bitten by a serpent is afraid by a rope.	Който е хапан от змия се бои и от въже.
He that lies down with dogs must rise up with fleas.	Който спи с куче, навъжда бълхи.

Semantic characteristics

It's important to point out that not all of the animals in the nature are presented in the paremia. Some of them are rarely used and others are not used at all. The following table shows the number of the paremia in the two investigated languages according to their zoonym:

Table 1.

English		Bulgarian	
Zoonym	Number	Number	Zoonym
bird / chicken ²	5	3	птиче / пилци
bull	0	1	бик
calf	0	2	теле
cat	1	1	котка
cock	1	2	петел
crow	1	1	гарван
dog / bitch	10	8	куче / кучка
donkey / ass	1	4	магаре
eagle	1	1	орел

flea	1	1	бълха
fox	2	4	лисица
horse	0	2	кон / ат
lion	1	1	лъв
lizard	1	1	гущер
monkey / ape	1	0	маймуна
mouse	1	2	мишка
ox	1	0	коч
pig / hog	2	1	прасе / свиня
serpent / snake	2	1	змия
sheep / lamb	1	1	агне / овца
wolf	4	7	вълк

It's evident from the table above that the two investigated languages show the same tendencies. The images of dog / bitch – куче / кучка; wolf - вълк; bird / chicken – пиле / пилци; fox – лисица are the most frequently used both in English and Bulgarian. Others are rarely used: lizard - гущер; flea- бълха; lion - лъв; eagle - орел, etc. This uneven distribution of images is a result of *a selection process*.

Naturally the way of life and the characteristic features of *the domestic animals* are much more represented in paremia than those of the wild.

Paremia are characterized by their form brevity and semantic accumulation. Different lexical, syntactical and phonetic means are found to be present within the structure to strengthen their expressiveness.

Syntactic model (word order)

<i>English</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>
<Adj> + N1 + <Prep> + is better than +<Adj> + N2 + <Prep> + N3	По-добре + <Adj> + N1 + <Prep + N>, а не <Adj> + N2 + <Prep + N>

<i>Something is better than something</i>	<i>По-добре нещо, а не друго нещо</i>
A sparrow in hand is better than the pigeon in the sky.	По-добре сврака в ръка, а не сокол в гора.
A living dog is better than a dead lion.	По-добре жива мишка, а не умрял аслан.

Lexical opposition

The lexemes within the unit can express true or relative antonymy. For example:

- True antonymy:

<i>English</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>
A <u>living</u> dog is better than a <u>dead</u> lion.	По-добре <u>жива</u> мишка, а не <u>умрял</u> аслан.
The <u>worst</u> hog often gets the <u>best</u> pear.	
You cannot teach an <u>old</u> dog <u>new</u> tricks.	

- Relative antonymy:

Certain elements are considered to express opposite meanings although they are not true antonyms outside the unit's structure:

<i>English</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>
The <u>mountains</u> have brought forth a <u>mouse</u> .	Напънала се <u>планината</u> , та родила <u>мишка</u> .
To set <u>the wolf</u> to keep <u>the sheep</u> .	Викал <u>вълка</u> да му варди <u>овцете</u> .
Whom a <u>serpent</u> has bitten, a <u>lizard</u> alarms.	Който е хапан от <u>змия</u> , той се бои и от <u>гуцер</u> .
Better be <u>the head</u> of a dog than <u>the tail</u>	

of a lion.	
A <u>sparrow</u> in hand is better than <u>the</u> <u>pigeon</u> in the sky.	

Rhyme

Rhyme usually enables the paremia to be easily remembered:

<i>English</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>
An <u>ape</u> is ne'er so like an <u>ape</u> , as when he wears a doctor's <u>cape</u> .	Хитрата <u>сврака</u> с двата <u>крака</u> .
Birds of a <u>feather</u> flock <u>together</u> .	Хитрата <u>лисица</u> право в <u>стъпица</u> .

Alliteration

<i>English</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>
No man will buy a <u>p</u> ig in a <u>p</u> oke.	<u>В</u> икал <u>в</u> ълка да му <u>в</u> арди овците.

Lexical repetition

<i>English</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>
<u>W</u> olf does not eat <u>w</u> olf.	<u>В</u> ълкът <u>в</u> ълк не дави.
<u>C</u> rows will not pick out <u>c</u> row's eyes.	<u>Г</u> арван <u>г</u> арвану око не вади.
	За <u>в</u> ълка говорим, а <u>в</u> ълка в кошарата.
	С <u>в</u> ълците <u>в</u> ълк бъди.

All these phonetic peculiarities are undoubtedly related to the semantics of the units in some way or other. Animalistic paremia in English and Bulgarian are related to the following notions:

1. *Slyness*

<i>English</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>
An old fox is not easily snared.	Лисицата дважд в капана не влиза.
You cannot catch old birds with chaff.	Стар вълк в капана не влиза.
	Хитрата сврака с двата крака.
	Хитрата лисица право в стъпица.

2. *Richness*

<i>English</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>
Whom God loves, his bitch brings forth pigs.	И бика му теле родил.
	И петлите му носят яйца.

3. *Authority*

<i>English</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>
A cock is bold on his own dunghill.	Всеки петел на бунището си пее.
Every dog is valiant at his own door.	Всяко куче пред врата си лае.
Every bird likes her own nest best.	Всяко птиче своето гнездо хвали.

4. *Steadiness*

<i>English</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>
The leopard cannot change his spots.	Вълкът козината си мени, но нрава никога.

5. *Fear*

<i>English</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>
Whom a serpent has bitten, a lizard	Който е хапан от змия, той се бои и

alarms.	от гуцер.
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6. *Chance, possibility*

<i>English</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>
A sparrow in hand I better than the pigeon in the sky.	По-добре сврака в ръка, а не сокол в гора.
A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.	Неуловените птичета по хиляда за пара.
A living dog is better than a dead lion.	По-добре жива мишка, а не умрял аслан.

7. *Stinginess*

<i>English</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>
You cannot flay the same ox twice.	От една овца две кожи не се дерат.

Contrastive analysis of the units' meaning outlined two types of linguistic equivalence. They are:

- Full equivalence (The structure, the lexical elements, the image and the meaning of the units coincide fully in English and in Bulgarian):

<i>English</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>
Whom a serpent has bitten, a lizard alarms.	Който е хапан от змия, той се бои и от гуцер.
He that lies down with dogs must rise up with fleas.	Който спи с куче, навъжда бълхи.
The mountains have brought forth a mouse.	Напънала се планината, та родила мишка.
To set the wolf to keep the sheep.	Викал вълка да му варди овците.

- Partial equivalence. These units differ in respect to:

1. The nuances of meaning:

<i>English</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>
Birds of a feather flock together.	Краставите магарета през девет баира се подушват.
The wolf must die in his own skin.	Вълк куче не става.

2. The zoonyms that play the role of the semantic center:

<i>English</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>
The <u>leopard</u> cannot change his spots.	<u>Вълкът</u> козината си мени, но нрава никога.
No man will buy a <u>pig</u> in a poke.	<u>Котка</u> в торба се не купува.
You cannot flay the same <u>ox</u> twice.	От една <u>овца</u> две кожи не се дерат.
A living <u>dog</u> is better than a dead lion.	По-добре жива <u>мишка</u> , а не умрял аслан.

3. The structural (syntactic) organization:

<i>English</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>
Give a dog an ill name and hang him.	Коего куче искат да обесят, казват бясно е.
Barking dogs seldom bite.	Куче, което лае, не хапе.
Crows will not pick out crow's eyes.	Гарван гарвану око не вади.
Wolf does not eat wolf.	Вълкът вълк не дави.
Eagles catch no flies.	Орел мухи не лови.

Conclusion

The analysis of the animalistic paremia in English and Bulgarian indicated the following:

1. Structurally the animalistic paremia are simple or complex declarative sentences. The models of their structural organization differ significantly in the two investigated languages. The most productive models in English are *<Attribute> + N1 + V + Adj + Prep + Pron + Adj2 + N2; N + V + <Attr / Gen> + N2* and in Bulgarian are *Attr + N1 + Prep + N2 + V; N1 + N2 + не + V*.
2. Not all of the zoonyms are represented in animalistic paremia. This uneven distribution of images is a result *a selection process*. The images of *dog / bitch – куче / кучка; wolf - вълк; bird / chicken – пиле / пилци; fox – лисица* are the most frequently used both in English and Bulgarian. Others are rarely used: *lizard - гушер; flea- бълха; lion - лъв; eagle - орел*, etc.
3. Different syntactical (word order), lexical (true and relative antonymy) and phonetical (rhyme, alliteration, repetition) means are found to be present within the structure of the units. All these characteristics strengthen their expressiveness.
4. The semantics of the animalistic paremia is related to the notions of slyness, richness, authority, steadiness, fear, chance / possibility, stinginess both in English and in Bulgarian. Therefore the units show extreme resemblances in respect to their meaning.

The contrastive analysis of the units' meaning outlined two types of linguistic analysis – full and partial equivalence. Partial equivalents express different nuances of the meaning, they can vary slightly syntactically or have different zoonyms as semantic centers.

Notas

¹ Holandi, R. / Холанди, Р. (2009): Антропоцентризъм и пейоративна оценка на фразеологичните единици (ФЕ) със семантичен център зооним. В: Езиков свят, т. 7, кн. 1, ЮЗУ „Неофит Рилски“, Благоевград, стр. 57-64; Holandi, R. / Холанди, Р. (2010): Зоонимната фразеология в английския и българския език. УИ „Неофит Рилски, Благоевград

² The number of the zoonyms is bigger than the number of the proverbs because two zoonyms are likely to appear in one and the same unit.

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