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SOCIOLINGUISTIC FEATURES OF RUSSIAN AND VIETNAMESE USING ANTHROPOCENTRIC METAPHOR

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Abstract

The paper presents and considers only a few main aspects of the attitude of Vietnamese and Russian people towards the way of expressing the attitude to people via an anthropocentric metaphor. The paper also compares phonetic systems of Russian and Vietnamese to demonstrate the non-gentility of two languages. While the study of interrelations of language, culture and thinking within one ethnic group already makes it possible to form a certain opinion, there is very little comparative research on this matter. Besides, this paper deals with the formation of the Vietnamese national mentality. Such formation is analyzed through the lens of historical formation of Buddhist and Confucian traditions in Vietnam. The paper presents a statistical analysis of the results of using anthropocentric metaphors in Vietnamese and Russian, which allowed revealing similarities and differences of considered zoomorphisms and phytomorphisms. The results of the study showed significant differences, and at the same time similarities in the meanings of considered zoomorphisms and phytomorphisms. The results of the study were analyzed and tabulated.

Keywords: Zoomorphism, phytomorphism, phonetic system, Vietnamese language, Russian language, metaphor.

1. Introduction

Evolving in time linguistics makes researchers to pay increasing attention not to the actual linguistic aspects of the studied phenomena, but to processes accompanying human communication – social, gender, cultural, ethnic. According to Kubryakova (1995), there is an expansion of science, namely the blurring of its lines. The scientists study objects, which require combining conceptual framework and methodology of various sciences – sociology, psychology, cultural studies, ethnology and ethnography, statistics, etc. for a comprehensive study. The current situation in science, as well as globalization processes in the society, require a transition to deep comparative research of different languages, not only related, but also typologically distant.

It is this fact that made it possible to study complex comparative ethnopsychosociolinguistic aspects, which are becoming increasingly popular at present.

It seems logical to study and compare languages by describing the differences caused by the characteristics of ethnicity – culture and mentality of its representatives.

A large number of works are written about the ratio of language, thinking and culture. Since the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, for several decades foreign and domestic researchers have been trying to answer questions about how language is transmitted from person to person, whether there is a genetic or only social pathway to transmit linguistic ability; what is first: language or thinking; how culture manifests itself in a language, etc. Many questions have not yet been answered in science, but the actual existence of a connection between the three entities is beyond doubt. While the study of interrelations of language, culture and thinking within one ethnic group already makes it possible to form a certain opinion, there is very little comparative research on this matter. Talking about the connection between language and culture and noting the insufficient study of this topic Chudinov (2017) emphasizes that linguistics, or more precisely linguoculturology, should reveal "the peculiarities of Western and Eastern languages, and a number of Asian languages, through the lens of differences in their cultures" (para. 7).

2. Problem Statement

The study describes some aspects of expressing the attitude of Vietnamese and Russian people to the way of expressing the attitue to people by means of an anthropocentric metaphor. This study also covers a comparative semantic study of Russian and Vietnamese languages belonging to different linguistic families – Indo-European and Austro-Asiatic.

3. Research Questions

1. To consider the features of the two non-related languages, namely Russian and Vietnamese.
2. To identify similarities and differences between Russian and Vietnamese languages while using the anthropocentrical metaphor.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify and study the national-specific nominal anthropocentric metaphor in non-related languages.

5. Research Methods

Statistical and descriptive methods were used as the main methods of the study.

6. Findings

6.1. Peculiarities of the phonetic system of Vietnamese and Russian languages

The phonetic system of Vietnamese language is very rich in vowel sounds. In Vietnamese there are 14 vowels, each of which can be said in 6 tones (static tone, fall smooth, abrupt fall, fall rise, rise, high broken). Thus, there is far less vowel phonemes in Russian.

Native language pronunciation skills prevent Vietnamese from distinguishing between stressed and unstressed syllables in the flow of the Russian speech. The duration and intensity of the articulation of a stressed vowel forms the articulatory nature of the Russian verbal stress. It is difficult for Vietnamese to focus the longest duration and intensity of articulation on a stressed syllable and at the same time ease the intensity of unstressed syllables. The work on stress takes a very important stage in the study of the Russian language, because it is the nondistinction of stressed and unstressed syllables that leads to the difficulty of listening comprehension of the Russian language.

In Russian, vowels are reduced in unstressed positions, which is hardly observed in Vietnamese, because all phonemes are characterized by the accuracy of pronunciation. For this reason, one of the main mistakes of the Vietnamese is the lack of reduction and the clear pronunciation of vowels in unstressed syllables, which also affects the pace of speech in general (Remarchuk & Ngu, 1970).

As for consonants, there are fewer in Vietnamese than in Russian. In total, there are 22 phonemes. One of the main difficulties for Vietnamese students is usually the combination of consonants, which is not acceptable in the Vietnamese language. At the beginning of syllables the consonants are pronounced less intensively, and when saying consonants at the end of a syllable there is no break in the occlusion of articulation organs, which is typical for the Russian language, which often causes Vietnamese to insert vowel sounds between consonants. In Russian, the combination of consonants is possible at the junction of individual words, therefore when pronounced by the Vietnamese these consonants often undergo similar changes as within a word.

Interestingly, not all consonant sounds of the Vietnamese language may take the initial or final position in a syllable – only 8 sounds may act as the final consonant. In Russian, there are 23 final sounds (Efremova, 2000).

It is equally important to note that in the Vietnamese language there are only two pairs of consonants opposed in hardness and softness, namely: [t]-[t'] and [n]-[n'], other consonants are always pronounced firmly. Therefore, it is difficult for Vietnamese people to differentiate between hard and soft syllables, as well as syllables where the yod (letter J) is present or absent before a vowel sound (Remarchuk & Ngu, 1970).

In Vietnamese there are no sounds [sch] and [ts], so during the first lessons both of these sounds are pronounced by Vietnamese as [s]. This error can be solved by explaining the features of articulation of each sound and training them via phonetic exercises.

The specific laws of syllable construction of the Vietnamese language are also caused by nondistinction of the main syllables [b] and [p] in Russian words by some students. In Vietnamese, the sound [b] is possible at the beginning of a word, while the sound [p] is only possible at the end.

In addition to the above, there may be errors in the pronunciation of final [l], [v] and [f] because the number of consonants at the end of a syllable in Vietnamese is limited. Instead of [l] students usually pronounce [n], and the sounds [f] and [v] are replaced by the sound [p].

Vietnamese is considered a syllable language, meaning a syllable is equal to a morpheme. Phonetic and semantic autonomy of the Vietnamese syllable is the cause of the following errors in the pronunciation of Russian words: lack of smooth articulation in the transition from one sound to another and absence of contiguousness of syllables in a word.

6.2. Nominal anthropocentrical metaphor in non-related languages (Russian and Vietnamese)

Comparative linguistics deals with the degree of structural and genetic similarity of languages, closely related and unrelated idioms. The question of kinship and typological similarity of Russian and Vietnamese languages is beyond any doubt since it is absent. Therefore, there are different genetic and structural classifications of them in linguistics.

Language similarity is the result of linguistic contacts. It is characterized by a certain number of similar structural and material features acquired as a result of long and intense contact within one geographical area.

According to comparative-historical linguistics, Vietnamese belongs to the northern (Viet-Myong) subgroup of the Viet group of the Mon-Khmer branch of Austro-Asiatic linguistic family. As time passes, Vietnamese is distanced from the rest of the Mon-Khmer languages, subject to intense Chinese. Vietnam has been won many times by China because it borders it in the north. Over a few centuries of co-existence, the languages have come quite close, particularly up to 60 % of the vocabulary of modern Vietnamese is borrowed from Chinese. But there is no genetic relation between them, at least close. It is not fortuitous that most genetic classifications refer to them in different linguistic families: Chinese – to Sino-Tibetan, and Vietnamese – to Austro-Asiatic (Kalkova, 2012).

In order to reflect the cultural characteristics of each nation, let us consider semantic similarities and differences of Russian and Vietnamese zoomorphisms. We studied 83 animal names that are used to characterize humans and found zoomorphisms-correlates and zoomorphisms-divergents. Let us give you some examples.

To a greater or lesser extent in the consciousness of the Russian, Vietnamese lexical unit pava means "a woman with haughty posture and graceful carriage". Native speakers of Russian and Vietnamese languages use the word nightingale to call a person who possesses a beautiful, mainly high voice, a person known for his art of singing, but also a gasbag, a chatterbox.

It shall be noted that there are not so many words with an absolute coincidence of meanings in two languages – only 14 % of the total number of zoomorphisms. In our opinion, a significant difference is caused by different cultures and backgrounds (in particular, geographical distance).

There are much more divergent formations. Differences are found at the level of a lexical unit and LSV (lexical-semantic variants).

In Russian, the word turtle means a slow person. The Vietnamese noted that the zoomorphism of a "turtle" can characterize not only a slow person, but also a coward who hides his head in the sand, like a turtle in a shell, in any dangerous situation.

Buffalo in Russian is rarely used, but, according to the Dictionary of the Russian Language by Ozhegov (2014), this is how the Russians call a stodgy, fat person, i.e. characterize external features. In Vietnamese, this zoomorphism characterizes abilities and moral principles: 1. when a person has no ear for music; 2. about a hard-working, kind man. Similar is the zoomorphic LSV of a lexical unit dog: in Russian it is an external feature, a manner of behavior; in Vietnamese language – moral-psychological characteristic.

In Vietnamese culture and language there is a metaphorical use of the word dragonfly when talking about an irresponsible, careless person. This meaning is based on the features of an insect (dragonfly larvae develop in the aquatic environment, and imago (adults) live on land, mastering the air environment and becoming excellent flyers. Adults rise over water to give life to larvae. Through the instant process of birth, the Vietnamese reflect recklessness, carelessness of a person in some case). In Russian, this nomination is associated with a living, lively, active child (usually about a girl). It is interesting to note that the zoomorphism of a "dragonfly" in Russian can be used with the same meaning as in Vietnamese, but not in the form of a zoonotic metaphor: the potential seme "irresponsible" develops on the basis of a famous Ivan Krylov's fable The Dragonfly and the Ant.

A mayfly is an insect that lives only one day. It is probably this feature of a moth that caused the development of meaning in Chinese zoomorphism: "a man of action living for a short time". The Vietnamese zoomorphism is based on a different notion of these insects, namely: the meaningless existence and submission to others. Mayflies perform their short-lived flight-dance usually in a large nest creating a real vortex over the water body. Besides, in Vietnamese, another meaning develops in relation to the features of insect behavior – "a mad man that acts crazy".

Deer in Vietnamese means "a simple, naive person". The Russians do not have this zoomorphic image (Nguyen, 2009, 2014).

From the point of view of a native Russian the nomination of piglets (pigs) can characterize an untidy or dull, ungrateful child, a teenager. In Vietnamese, "piglet" is used in relation to a person, has figurative meaning – "pleasant, nice, round child, a teenager". The same zoomorphism in two languages has different connotation, i.e. in Russian the word may have an emotional evaluativity in a wide range – from negative, dismissive to ironic and jokingly-affectionate, and in Vietnamese the word has a stable positive connotation.

The Russian zoomorphism toad was formed on the basis of the motivational sign "external physical abilities", and it is easily semanticized since the ugly appearance of an animal is an objective characteristic in Russian culture. Meanwhile, the figurative meaning of the zoonym toad in Vietnamese –

a "brave and smart person" – requires linguistic investigation. Seemingly, the meaning of zoomorphism is related to a phraseological unit of the Vietnamese language gan cóc tía – (literary a toad's liver) meaning "brave and intelligent man" and goes back to the Vietnamese legend "The toad was complaining about the God": once the God sent a drought on earth. The toad – the leader of all animals – brought a lawsuit against the God. A smart toad with the help of its troops caused panic in paradise, and the God agreed to send rain on earth. Since then the toad has been called the Uncle of God. When there is drought, the toad screams three times and it stars raining.

The study revealed zoomorphic lexical units, which semes are not present in Vietnamese, but are absent in Russian: tiger, crocodile, swallow. Russian zoomorphisms also do not include some Vietnamese divergents, such as a stork, a mayfly, a snail, a deer, a crab.

The analyzed languages have national-specific zoomorphic metaphors, i.e. those that are not among the zoomorphisms of the two of the three studied idioms. In Russian, the nonequivalent zoomorphisms include a goose, a punch, a magpie, a lamb, fish, an aunt, a seal, sheep, a beetle; in Vietnamese – a frog, a grasshopper, an armadillo (pangolin).

The analysis of phytonyms in three languages allowed identifying a) semes-correlates (2.5 %); b) semes-complete divergents (2.5 %); c) equivalent-free semes (45 %). Non-equivalent phytonyms reflect national-cultural characteristics. In Russian, phytonyms mainly characterize the appearance and intellectual qualities of humans. In Vietnamese – mainly human behavior. Russian national phytonyms include a fly agaric, a great burdock, a horseradish, a berry; Chinese – a peony, a plum, a leaf cactus, a lily of the valley; Vietnamese – a banyan, a jasmine, a ginger, a cassowary tree, a potato, a lotus, a spinach, a duckweed.

The comparative analysis of zoomorphisms and phytonyms in Russian, Vietnamese and Chinese can be presented in the following table 01:

Table 01. Comparative analysis of zoomorphisms and phytonyms in Russian, Vietnamese and Chinese

Language	Zoomorphism				Phytomorphism			
	Similarity		Dissimilarity		Similarity		Dissimilarity	
	Word	LSV	Word	LSV	Word	LSV	Word	LSV
Vietnamese and Russian	34 %	44 %	66 %	56 %	22 %	30 %	78 %	70 %

Zoomorphic and phytomorphic metaphors in two languages: Russian and Vietnamese have both similarities, the presence of which is possible due to the commonality of human observations over the character and behavior of animals, over the appearance, color, biological description of plants, and differences due to national cultural specificity. It is the specific values of lexical units revealed in the comparative analysis that bear the imprint of the cultural experience of each nation.

7. Conclusion

Zoomorphic vocabulary based on similarity/difference in two compared languages can be contrasted with phytonyms. This may be explained by the fact that animal habits and, accordingly, their figurative rethinking in a language to a greater extent than plants, are universal since the animal behavior does not depend on the distribution area. Therefore, zoomorphisms of the Vietnamese language are

slightly different from the Russian one as opposed to phytonyms. Phytonyms are formed on the basis of the local plant kingdom. A banyan, a jasmine, a ginger, a cassowary tree, a lotus, a spinach, a leaf cactus are plants common in Southeast Asia, and hence the epidigmatics of their names is caused by territorial and climatic factors based on ethnic perception.

Thus, by comparing Russian and Vietnamese zoonic and phytonic metaphors, some similar comparison models can be identified, which are explained by the typological similarity of human figurative logic, however, the choice of a particular comparison image and a particular plant or animal depends on the characteristics of the national culture and climatic conditions of species.

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