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CONTRASTIVE RUSSIAN/PORTUGUESE STRUCTURING OF VERBAL IDIOMS FROM THE CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN OF 'DEATH'

The paper deals with the comparative scrutiny of semantics of Portuguese and Russian idioms which constitute the conceptual domain "death". On the material of distantly related languages the semantic structure of idioms, presenting one of the basic concepts of various linguistic cultures, is proposed. The facts of idiomatic asymmetry based on the peculiarities of connotative processes involved in the idioms decoding mechanisms are presented.

Key words: *idiom, semantics, connotation, concept, comparative analysis.*

The topicality of the research is determined by the growth of interdisciplinary linguistic studies as well as comparative ones. W. von Humboldt highlighted the importance of comparison of languages as it gives the opportunity to demonstrate "which various ways a human being created a language and which part of the world of thoughts he managed to transfer into it, how the individuality of the nation influenced the language and which reverse impact the language had on the people's individuality" [Гумбольдт 1985, 311]. In this respect the investigation of the information **obtained as** a result of human's cognition of the life's essence and its ontologically important aspects which are conceptualized and categorized in the mind and language according to geographical and cultural- historical peculiarities of the ethnos is of great importance. The concepts of {LIFE} and {DEATH} are the basic concepts of the core of the conceptual sphere of any linguistic culture. Being the archetypical images, {LIFE} and {DEATH} are ontologically interlaced and are able to reflect the peculiarities of the national consciousness presented in the idiomatic stock of the language [Каракевич 2009,

131]. The comparative scrutiny of the concepts {LIFE} and {DEATH} in French and Russian has been done [Грабарова 2005]. It is notable that idioms verbalizing the concept {LIFE} in Russian linguistic culture have negative connotation. It may be explained by the fact that, being born, a person has no right to choose: he is born at a definite time, at a definite place, in definite conditions, to a definite family; he is doomed to fight against his vicious traits and has to put up with such a situation [Грабарова 2005, 276]. The representation of the concepts {DEATH} and {LIFE} in the English and Ukrainian phraseological pictures of the world is described in the paper of К. Кутайгородська [Китайгородська 2008]. The researcher highlights that in spite of cultural peculiarities there are some universals common for the humanity: "life is better than death", "death is inevitable", "death makes everyone equal", "nobody knows the time of death's coming" and "dead people are not remembered in a bad way". Linguocognitive characteristics of metaphoric representation of the concept {DEATH} in English have been prepared by Л. Гнаповська [Гнаповська 2008]. The current research is focused on the analysis of the concept {DEATH} in Russian and Portuguese idiomatics.

The goals of this paper are twofold: on the one hand, we propose a strategy to the semantic structuring of verbal idioms from the conceptual domain associated with {DEATH}, based on the connotative processes involved in the idioms decoding mechanisms; on the other hand, we assess the usefulness of this strategy by comparing data from two distantly related languages, Russian and Portuguese.

Verbal idioms can be defined, in the first approach, as a syntactic-semantic lexical-grammatical unit, composed of a verb and at least one main constituent (usually a complement, more rarely the subject) that is distributionally frozen with the verb; in most cases, the overall meaning of the idiom cannot be calculated by composition of the meaning of the individual elements of the expressions, as they are interpreted when used separately in other contexts. Hence, for example, in the idiom, *отбросить коньки* (compare English idioms *pop one's clogs*, *kick the bucket*) the meaning is not derived from the meaning of its lexical constituents.

The method of componential analysis and the comparative method is used in order to carry out this research.

Though several collections of idioms are available for the Portuguese language, including dictionaries, they usually do not distinguish verbal idioms from many other formal types of idiomatic expressions, including compound words. A survey of many of these sources [Baptista et al. 2004, 2005] resulted in the extensive encoding in tabular format (in view of its computational processing) of about 2,360 verbal idioms, organized in several formal classes, depending on the structure of the verbal idiom (one or more fixed complements, its relative position, transformations they accept, etc.)

The scrutiny of idioms in Russian and other European languages, namely English, German and French, their structure, semantics and problems of classification by the Russian scholars is quite numerous and goes back to the first half of the XX century. However the issues of defining and classifying idioms are still open for discussion. The review of the fundamental theoretical works on Idiomatics in Native and Foreign Linguistics has been done [Chornobay 2010, Чернобай 2010] along with the survey of different approaches to defining the term 'IDIOM' [Чернобай 2011] and the main trends in the current studies of idioms as well [Чернобай 2012].

The main idea supporting this paper proposes that it is possible to structure a semantic domain, in this case, the idioms associated with the concept of {DEATH} and obtain coherent subsets by relying on the tropological processes involved in the idiomatic interpretation of these expressions. This approach has two advantages over a simple, flat, classification that would only rely on the generic concept, or even one that would distinguish features associated with the main concept, such as {CAUSE} (e.g. *send smb. into the bottomless pit*), {AGENT-VOLITION} (*Smb. put the horse/dog/etc. to sleep*), or even aspectual features, e.g. {unaccomplished – *глядеть в гроб (look into coffin)*}.

The adoption of this strategy has to do with the dual readings of many idioms: while their meaning is non-compositional, their insertion in discourse still holds a link with the non-idiomatic, literal meaning of the components, which must be accounted for in many situations.

For the structuring of the idioms associated with the conceptual domain of {DEATH}, the following subsets were found:

1. {DIE-GO}

This metaphor involves *verbs of movement*, among which one finds the basic equivalent to ‘go’ (PT: *ir*). An inchoative aspect is associated to other verbs of this type such as PT *partir* (depart) RU *отправиться, отойти*.

e.g. (RU) *отправиться на тот свет* (go to the other world)

(PT) *ir/partir para o outro mundo* (go to the other world)

This metaphor is related to joining the ancestors:

e.g. (RU) *отойти к праотцам* (go to the forefathers)

A causative value may be added to this basic metaphor. In Portuguese, this is carried out by verbs such as PT *mandar* (send), with a Human (agentive) or a non-constraint subject, properly a cause, e.g. PT *Isso/O Pedro mandou o João para o outro mundo* (That/Pedro send João to the other world). In Russian, the causative construction is expressed by the verb *отправить* (send), e.g. *Когда через несколько месяцев маленькая царица умерла, в народе пошли толки, что Борис отправил ее на тот свет* (When some months later a young queen died, rumours spread that Boris had sent her to the other world). However, some idioms resource to this construction with a reflexive suffix *отправляться* (go myself), here the subject and the direct object are the same: *Целые три года оставался он в самом жалком положении: и если бы он не получил от природы железного телосложения, то верно бы отправился на тот свет* (For three years he stayed in a pitiful condition: if he had not been of a strong constitution, he would have gone to the other world).

The locative-destination complement can be varied:

- PT: *o outro mundo*/RU: *мир иной, тот свет* (the other world); PT: *céu* / RU: *небеса* (heaven); PT: *paraíso* / RU: *рай* (paradise); and, with the same meaning but with a negative connotation, PT: *o inferno*/RU: *преисподняя* (go to hell; not an interjection)

One also finds metonymy-derived expressions of some of the above:

- RU: *райские кущи* (bushes of the paradise)

- RU: *отойти к праотцам* (go to the forefathers) (to the forefathers =to the place where the forefathers are) (very rare in PT)

- PT: *mandar alguém para os anjos* (send smb to the angels = the place where the angels are)

A subtype of locatives involves the concept of *inhumation* with verbs such as PT: *baixar/descer* (descend)/RU: *сойти* and a variety of synonyms for ‘grave’ (the verb-locative noun combinations are quite idiosyncratic). PT: *O corpo do Pedro desceu à sepultura* (The body of Pedro descend into the tomb/grave). RU: *Он раньше времени сошёл в могилу* (He went untimely to the grave). The causative construction is also attested in PT: *Isso levou o Pedro à cova* (That led Pedro to the grave).

Another subtype involves several euphemistic or dysphoric designations for ‘graveyard’, e.g. PT: *a quinta das tabuletas* (the farm of the signs [=tombstones]), *a cidade dos pés juntos* (the city of the feet-together). As a locative-transference predicates, synonyms of ‘go’ are also used with source and destiny complements: PT: *O Pedro foi desta para melhor* (lit. go from this one (life?) to a better one (life?), go to a better place); the locatives are represented by a demonstrative and an adjective, the former in the feminine-singular, hence the proposed reconstruction of *vida* (life). With the locative-source complement only, one also finds PT: *abandonar este vale de lágrimas* (to abandon this valley of tear), an idiom with biblical consonances. Finally, one finds PT: *sair com os pés para a frente* (to leave with the feet first), where a verb with a locative-source has an adverbial modifier of manner.

2. {DIE-SLEEP}

The metaphor of {DEATH} as sleep is also a recurrent trope in several languages.

In Russian one finds: *Почивать/почить в боге (боже); Почить вечным сном* (rest in god; rest the eternal sleep); while in Portuguese there is PT: *O Pedro dorme o sono eterno* (Pedro sleeps the eternal sleep)

3. {DIE-Stretch Legs}

In this case, Russian has two verbs *протянуть* (stretch-unwind) and *вытянуть* (stretch-extend), both with the same frozen direct object. However, in Portuguese, only the first connotation is involved, in PT *esticar o pernil*. Besides, in PT, the noun *pernil* literally designates ham, so there is a pejorative connotation associated to this word in the idiom, which is absent in the Russian counterparts. Russian idioms imply ‘getting the horizontal position in order to relax’. Apparently, there is no exact equivalent in English.

4. {DIE-Surrender/Give-Spirit}

RU: *Отдать дух; Отдавать/ отдать душу; Отдавать/отдать богу душу* (give the spirit/soul to god)

PT: *O Pedro deu a alma ao criador* (Pedro surrender the (=his) soul to the maker)

The metaphor involved in these idioms identifies life with a token (the soul, the spirit), which is (implicitly) borrowed temporarily (by god) and must be given back. Most of these connotative constructs are present in both languages. The recipient (god, the creator) can often be omitted.

5. {DIE-Breathe Away}

PT: *exalar/soltar o último suspiro* (RU: *испустить последнее дыхание*)

This metaphor takes breathing as the manifestation of life so that dying corresponds to stop breathing; this metaphor introduces a terminative aspect (stop living). In PT, the construct associated to ‘breath’ is represented by the noun *suspiro* (sigh/moan), whose negative connotation, however, is absent from the idiom, as this is used as a euphemistic periphrasis, *exalar/soltar/ dar o último suspiro*: *O Pedro exalou/soltou/deu o último suspiro* (exhale, release/give the last breath).

6. {DIE - SACRIFICE}

The Russian idioms *отдавать/ отдать душу* (to give the soul), *отдавать жизнь за кого, за что* (to give life for smb/ smth), *класть/положить живот, класть/положить жизнь, класть душу и живот* (give (up) one's life/stomach for smth) express the idea of dying for the sake of others, the readiness to sacrifice the life

for other people, native land or ideology. Some Russian idioms highlight the importance and honour of sacrificing the life in the battle defending the Motherland: *пасть в боге* (lit. *fall in god*), *пасть смертью храбрых* (lit. *fall/perish the death of the courageous*), *пасть как герой* (lit. *fall/perish as a hero*). The usage of the verb ‘пасть’ (fall/perish) and of the noun ‘живот’ (stomach) in the meaning of ‘жизнь’ (life) in these idioms refers to the bookish style. As E. Grabarova remarks, having a separate verb for denoting the heroic death in a battle, probably, shows that defending the Motherland/Fatherland has a slightly different meaning for the Russians than for the Europeans, namely the French [Грабарова 2005, 283]. The idioms with such a meaning have not been identified in Portuguese.

7. Isolated metaphors

A certain number of idioms do not form paradigms or only present a short number of variants. These outliers require specific description that, for lack of space, we cannot enter into:

RU: *дать дуба* (lit. *give the oak*); *сыграть в ящик* (lit. *play the box*)

Taking as a basis the synonymic relations of these idioms, which show the specifics of a funeral in a coffin, it is possible to suggest that the usage of oak as a material for making coffins is the source of the idioms. Thus, the metonymic transference is observed here (object – material of the object produced) [Грабарова 2005, 284].

PT: *bater a bota/caçoleta* (lit. *kick/beat the boot/frizzen, kick the bucket*)

PT: (*estar a*) *fazer tijolo* (lit. *to be making brick*)

Unlike the previous idioms, this last example expresses a durative aspect (the state of being dead) and not the process/event of dying. Aspectual values associated with idioms may also be a valid dimension for structuring conceptual domains.

Classification of the semantics of verbal idioms can be approached from different perspectives. The first step is to try and build general, semantically course classes, such as the one here discussed, {DEATH}. We posit that the metaphoric processes underlying the idiomaticity these expressions convey can be a useful strategy, especially in a contrastive setting, such as the Russian/

Portuguese comparison here made. Detailed tropological analysis is required, but this paper showed it could be done. Extension to other semantic constructs, such as {BIRTH}, {MARRIAGE}, {DIVORCE}, etc. should provide a better perspective of this approach, especially if the contrastive setting is extended to other, not closely related languages, such as Ukrainian, English and Modern Greek, aspects that will be tackled in future work.

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КОМПАРАТИВНА СИСТЕМАТИЗАЦІЯ ДІЄСЛІВНИХ ІДИОМ КОНЦЕПТУАЛЬНОГО ПОЛЯ "СМЕРТЬ" У РОСІЙСЬКІЙ ТА ПОРТУГАЛЬСЬКІЙ МОВАХ

Статтю присвячено компаративному дослідженню семантики португальських та російських дієслівних ідіом, що входять до концептуального поля "смерть". На матеріалі неблизькоспоріднених мов запропоновано семантичну класифікацію ідіом, які представляють один з базових концептів багатьох лінгвокультур. Продемонстровано випадки асиметрії ідіом, які базуються на особливостях конотативних процесів механізмів декодування ідіом.

Ключові слова: ідіома, семантика, конотація, концепт, компаративний аналіз.

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КОМПАРАТИВНАЯ СИСТЕМАТИЗАЦИЯ ГЛАГОЛЬНЫХ ИДИОМ КОНЦЕПТУАЛЬНОГО ПОЛЯ "СМЕРТЬ" В РУССКОМ И ПОРТУГАЛЬСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ

Статья посвящена компаративному исследованию семантики португальских и русских глагольных идиом, которые входят в

концептуальное поле "смерть". На материале неблизкородственных языков предлагается семантическая классификация идиом, которые представляют один из базовых концептов многих лингвокультур. Представлены случаи асимметрии идиом, которые основаны на особенностях коннотативных процессов механизмов декодирования идиом.

Ключевые слова: идиома, семантика, коннотация, концепт, компаративный анализ.

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ФРАКТАЛЬНА МОДЕЛЬ КОНЦЕПТУАЛЬНОЇ МЕТАФОРИ В АНГЛОМОВНОМУ БІОГРАФІЧНОМУ НАРАТИВІ

У статті обґрунтовано роль фрактальної моделі концептуальної метафори для опису динаміки біографічного наративу. Фрактальну концептуалізацію життєвого досвіду досліджено із залученням концептуальної метафори LIFE IS A STORY.

Ключові слова: біографічний наратив, фрактальна модель, концептуальна метафора, фрактальний фрагмент, самоподібність.

Стискання емпіричних фактів, запаковування їх у штучні абстрактні метафоричні схеми сприяє впорядкуванню фрагментів дійсності і перетворює їх у функціональні елементи людської свідомості. Метафора як схемна структура "прив'язана" до реальних прототипів і сформованих уявлень, тому вона малочутлива до постійних змін своєї фактологічної бази. Заповнити цю прогалину, відновивши гнучкість метафори, перетворивши її із способу одноразової фіксації знання у спосіб змінної символізації реальності у свідомості, покликані фрактальні структури, подібні до тих, які застосовуються в синергетиці. Такі її поняття, як ітерація, самоподібність, дивні атрактори, дисипативні структури, фрактали і, звичайно, фрактальний аналіз, тільки починають закорінюватися у