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CLASSIFICATION OF IDIOMS DESCRIBING PEOPLE'S INDIVIDUALITY**Vasylenko O., Shestak O.**

Стаття присвячена англійським фразеологічним одиницям, які характеризують особистість. Відібрані із різноманітних лексикографічних джерел ідіоми було класифіковано по групах з врахуванням їх структурного і семантичного аспектів. Наведено приклади перекладу ідіом.

Ключові слова: фразеологізм, ідіома, класифікація.

Статья посвящена английским фразеологическим единицам, характеризующим личность. Отобранные из различных лексикографических источников идиомы были классифицированы с учётом их структурного и семантического аспектов. Приведены примеры перевода идиом.

Ключевые слова: фразеологизм, идиома, классификация.

In the article we investigate English phraseological units describing people's individuality. Idioms selected from different lexicographic sources are classified into groups according to their structural and semantic aspects. There are some examples of idiom translation.

Key words: phraseological unit, idiom, classification.

In our article we investigate English idioms describing people's individuality. Idioms reflect the culture and values of the people and are widely used in communication. An idiom is a number of words which, taken together, mean something different from the individual words of the idiom when they stand alone. The way in which the words are put together is often odd, illogical or even grammatically incorrect. Idioms make language more colourful. Moreover, idioms help to understand better people's character, their tradition and culture. Because of these learners need to learn how to use idioms to speak fluently. Furthermore, it is important to realize that idioms are not only colloquial expressions, they appear in formal style, poetry and slang.

There are a lot of scientists who investigate the features of idioms. For example, A. I. Arslanova studied German phraseological units describing negative people's features, G. Babaeva investigated structural-semantic models of comparative phraseological units in English. Phraseological units in modern and comparative linguistics also studied V. Kaminska, U. Kovaluk, B. Lokket, O. Soshko etc. In our investigation we will classify idioms describing people's individuality.

The focus of this paper is to analyze English idioms describing people's individuality for their better understanding. The **aim** of the investigation is to create structural and semantic classification.

The English language itself possesses a huge diversity of idioms. They are used in both spoken and written English and appear in all spheres of life. Because of this the **main task** of the paper is to identify common components of idioms that will help non-native speakers understand the meaning of idioms.

Semantic classification

a) Idioms with positive person evaluation.

Idiom can be defined as a number of words which when taken together, have different meaning from the individual meaning of each word. These numbers of words taken together often describe various aspects of people. English language has a rich number of idioms that have a positive person evaluation. Cambridge idioms dictionary submits those idioms: **go getter** - активна, енергійна людина; **a mover and shaker** – активна, готова завжди допомогти; **a "man of his word"** or **"woman of her word"** – людина, якій можна довіряти і яка дотримує слова; **a social butterfly** – екстраверт; **stickler for the rules** – людина, яка наполягає на підтриманні одних стандартів, правил; **down-to-earth** – практичний, реалістичний; **a knight in shining armour** – героїчний лицар, який спасає жінку.

So, some idioms with positive person evaluation (e.g. *go getter*, *a mover and shaker*) are difficult to guess correctly because they have no association with the original meaning of the individual words, but they can be guessed in the context. Some idioms are easy to guess (*social butterfly*, *a knight in shining armour*) and they have the same equivalents in Ukrainian (*людина слова*).

b) Idioms with negative person evaluation.

A. I. Arslanova provides such idioms with negative person evaluation which describe bad behavior: *lose one's temper* – втратити контроль над собою; *up in the air* – зірватись, вийти з себе; *one's blood is up* – вийти з себе (кров застигає); *as fierce as a tiger (as bull as fits)* – розлючений, як тигр (розлючений як бик); *as mad as a cut snake* – оскраженілий; *get (put) smb.'s (one's) back up*; *get (have) one's (smb.'s) blood up* – розгніватися; *go over the edge*; *go off (at) the deep end* – втратити самоконтроль.

English phraseological units with negative personal evaluation consist of different adjectives such as "crazy", "mad", "fierce", "hot", "crook", and also consist different verbs expressing a change of state: "get, go, lose". For example: (as) *fierce as a tiger, as mad as a meat, go crook, hot under the collar, get one's hair off, lose one's shirt*. There are some units with verb "fly", which transmits agility and sharpness mood swings: *fly off the handle*, *fly into a tantrum*, *fly into a temper* [1; p. 20-21].

O. G. Soshko provides such idioms with negative person evaluation with different elements in their contexts: *a bad egg* – негідна людина, темна особистість; *a rotten egg* – мерзенна особистість (букв. "тухле яйце"); *a tough egg* – грубіян, небезпечний противник; *small potatoes* – заурядна людина; *not (quite) the clean potato* – безсовісна людина, непорядна людина; *all sugar and honey* – (букв. "весь цукор та мед"), гіперболізований смак солодкого передає улесливість людини, її нечесність. *Be (get / rise) above oneself*. 1. Величатися, зазнаватися. 2. відбитися від рук. *Fly high* – бути честолюбним, високо заноситися. *Be (get / grow) too big for one's boots (breeches)* – зазнаватися, бути занадто високої думки про себе [3].

Idioms with negative person evaluation are combinations of words, which meaning cannot be worked out from the meanings of its constituent words. It is a tolerant way to mention negative character traits. Most of these idioms are fixed.

Goody-goody / goody two shoes – зарозуміла людина, яка хизується своєю ідеальною поведінкою. *An armchair critic* – людина, яка коментує і критикує, але нічого не робить для вирішення проблеми. *Can't do something to save my life* – гіперболічний спосіб вираження повної нездатності. *Pot calling the kettle black* – критикує те, в чому винен сам. *Head in the clouds* – нереаліст; *Mad as a hatter* – божевільний; A similar expression is "*mad as a March hare*". *Busybody* - is a person who constantly wants to know about or interfere in the details of other people's lives. Another way to describe someone like this is "*nosy*," or you can say the person is always "*poking their nose into*" other people's lives. The expression "*mind (your) own business*" means to focus on your own life without interfering in other people's. *Cheapskate* – скупий. Another way to describe a person like this is *stingy*. *A couch potato* - лінивий. Describing someone as "*behind the times*" means the person is old-fashioned and has not adopted certain modern customs, beliefs, or behaviors. A more negative word to describe a person who is "*stuck in the past*" is *fuddy-duddy*. This word is more of a criticism, whereas "*behind the times*" is more diplomatic. *A know-it-all* is a person who thinks he knows everything, and that his opinions and ideas are the best. The idioms "*smart Alec*" and "*wise guy*" are similar, but have more of a connotation of a person who demonstrates their cleverness in an arrogant or sarcastic way. A person who is *set in his or her ways* is stubborn and committed to their current way of doing things. *A slime ball* – мерзенна людина, яку ненавидять. *Wet blanket / party pooper / spoilsport / killjoy / stick-in-the-mud* – людина з негативним ставленням до веселощів. *A worrywart* is a person who worries constantly and excessively.

So, semantic classification of English idioms shows that there are a lot of idioms, which describe people's character in one or another way. They can consist of different elements which have another meaning from the whole combination of words. Therefore, we should be very careful when we translate them.

Structural classification

a) Idioms with the elements of colour describing people's character.

• **Colours with predominantly positive symbolic meaning.**

White colour symbolism. "White" is an achromatic colour, a sign of snow, milk, chalk. This colour has a great emotional and expressive influence on human cognition. To describe fully the development of different meanings of the white colour it is necessary to contrast it with the black one. The opposition of white and **black**, the light and the dark appeared at the earliest stages of art and religion existence. It is necessary to mention that at first the Indo-European stem of the word "white" meant "to light", "to shine", "to sparkle" and "to unite". We can provide such idioms with the white colour element describing people's character:

As white as the driven snow – білий, як наметений сніг.

In English white colour means intellectual labour in contrast to hard and "dirty" manual labour: **white-collar job** – a non-manual worker, office worker. But sometimes white colour gains a bit negative meaning: **as white as a sheet / ghost** – very pale because of fear, shock, illness, etc.

Show the white feather – проявити себе боягузом, малодушним ("показати біле перо") [6].

Green describes flora, vegetables and fruits, cultivation, farming and gardening and, as an individual case, with unripeness of plans. Green is also associated with spring, hunger, money and youth: **green as grass (green as a gooseberry)** – зелений, як трава, яскраво зелений; дуже недосвідчений, той, що не знає життя; недозрілий. **Green hands** - Новачки; **Green at heart** - молодий душею, енергійний. **Green with envy** - позеленілий від заздрощів.

Go to the greenwood - бути оголошеним поза законом, стати розбійником.

• **Colours with predominantly negative symbolic meaning.**

Black colour symbolism: black colour is often used to designate darkness, chaos and death. Black is the colour of night. Black colour is connected with witchcraft and devil: **the black man** – злий дух, диявол. **A black sheep** – "паршива вівця", ганьба родини (за старим повір'ям, чорна вівця нібито відзначена печаткою диявола). **As black as hades, as ink, as night** - Безрадісний, безпросвітний [6].

• **Colours with mixed symbolic meaning.**

Red colour symbolizes blood, anger, war, revolution, strength, courage, enthusiasm and attracts attention (**As red as cherry** – рум'яний, кров з молоком. **A / the thin red line** – невелика група відважних людей, що захищають місцевість чи принципи. **Not worth a red cent** – нікчемний, марний.)

Yellow is used for describing peoples' inexperience and youth (**Yellow-belly** – жовтороте пташеня.)

Blue colour symbolizes endlessness, eternity and truth, devotion, faith, purity, innocence, spiritual and intellectual life (**to give somebody blue** – наводити тугу на кого-небудь, бути туживим. **Dark / navy blue** – зляканий, сумовитий, пригнічений. **To be in the blues** – хандрити, бути у поганому настрої, у пригніченому стані. **Blue study** – похмурий розум. **See through blue eyes** – похмуро дивитися на речі. **Blue stocking** – синя панчоха (про жінку-педантку, учену жінку, "стару діву").

Pink or rose colour in English symbolizes health, prosperity: **in the pink** – у розквіті сил. **The pink of health** – втілення здоров'я. **The pink of perfection** – сама довершеність. **Have roses in one's cheeks** – рум'янець на всю щоку, "кров з молоком".

Grey is the colour of renunciation, humility, melancholy.

Grey eminence – сірий кардинал-людина, що знаходиться "у тіні", але в руках якої зосереджена фактична влада. **Grey mind** – сірий ум, посередність.

Grey years – зрілі роки чи поважний вік [6].

So, analyzing these idioms we can conclude that they have regular forms, but the meaning is idiosyncratic. However, even in this group, some idioms are less opaque than others, that is, some are easier to guess than others. Take the example, *to give someone the green light*. We can guess the meaning even though we may never have heard it before. If we associate 'the green light' with traffic lights where green means 'Go!', we can imagine that the idiom means 'to give someone permission to start something'. This could be an instance of an idiom inside an idiom. Therefore, knowledge of a common idiom makes the complex idiom less opaque. Other idioms can be guessed if we hear them in context, that is, when we know how they are used in a particular situation.

b) Idioms with the elements of proper names.

Considering the names in phraseological expressions, we can note a predominance of personal over place names (unsurprisingly, given the anthropocentricity of language); within the former, a predominance of male over female names, and first names over family names, with a number of hypocorisms. The very low presence of female names is motivated by socio-cultural factors: in society, men played (and still play) a more active role than women. Among them, we find: **Alice in Wonderland, Florence Nightingale, Mrs. Grundy, Aunt Sally, plain Jane, Pandora, (Darby and) Joan, Fanny Adams**. They are usually employed to convey a negative or not wholly positive evaluation.

With regard to the presence of hypocorisms derived from very common first names (*Bob, Dick, Harry, Joe, Jack, Larry, Mike, Mickey, Tom*), it seems to be a culture-specific feature of English phraseology; for example, hypocorisms are rarely found in Italian phraseology. In particular, *Mike* and *Mickey* are now the generic name for an Irishman; *Jack* has come to denote any individual person, and also occurs in compounds, denoting types of person (e.g. *Jack-in-office, jack-the-lad*), objects (e.g. *Jack-in-the-box, Jack-a-Lent, Jack-o-lantern*), plants (*Jack-in-the-pulpit*) and animals (*jackdaw*). [2, p. 106-107] In phraseological units like an **Joe Schmo**, **Joe Zilch**, **Joe six-pack** component **Schmo** describes the person with low social status, component **Zilch** means "nothing". While **six-pack** concerns beer packaging that was bought by blue-collar workers and rednecks. Phraseological units with elements **Joe, Jack, John** reveal connotations simple man, a member of society, a simple worker [2, p. 106-107].

Idioms with proper names are usually informal in character. Some of them belong to slang, which makes them unacceptable in formal speech and writing; besides, slang idioms often have undesirable additional meanings. It is important to stress that some of the idioms containing people's names, names of nationalities, cities or countries may be perceived as offensive stereotypes and clichés; such idioms should be avoided [5].

c) Idioms that in their structure have a denomination of clothes.

Button up one's pockets (purse) / keep one's pocket well buttoned – (букв. "застібнути свої кишені, тримати кишені застібнутими") – розміється, як людина, що не готова поділитись тим, що у неї в кишені, тобто скупа, жадібна людина. **A bat hat** – шахрай, недолуга, нікчемна людина. **Blue bonnet** - синій берет. **Not to see a step beyond one's nose** - далі свого носа нічого не бачити [5, p. 170].

As common as an old shoe - low class, badly mannered. **Die with one's boots on** - a person who dies with their boots on dies while still leading an active life. "He says he'll never retire. He'd rather die with his boots on!" **Too big for your boots (or britches)** - to say that a person is getting too big for their boots (or britches) means that you think they are behaving as if they were more important than they really are. "Tom is really getting too bit for his boots since he got a promotion - he hardly says hello anymore!" **Iron fist / hand in a velvet glove** - this expression is used to describe someone who, behind an appearance of gentleness, is inflexible and determined. To impose the necessary reforms, the leader used persuasion followed by force - an iron fist in a velvet glove. **Ants in one's pants** - people who have ants in their pants are very restless or excited about something. "I wish he'd relax. He's got ants in his pants about something today" [6]. **Wear many hats** - someone who wears many hats has to do many different types of tasks or play a variety of roles. "Our company is small so the employees need to be flexible and accept to wear many hats." **Give the shirt off one's back** - this expression is used to describe a kind-hearted or generous person who would give you anything he/she owns to help you. "Mike would give the shirt off his back to help a friend in difficulty" [4].

d) Idioms with the elements of animal naming describing people's character.

An old fox – хитра людина. **Play (the) fox** – хитрити, лицемірити. **Play the peacock** – гордовито поводитись. **Maggie syndrome** – "синдром сороки", означає ірраціональний потяг людини до мерехтливих речей. **Wolf in a sheep clothing** – лицемірна, жорстока, заздрісна людина. (It has a biblical origin: Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves).

This kind of idioms can rethink the exterior of animals: **hair about the heels** – "волосся над бачками", which is a sign of bad weather in horses.

Dog perfectly capable of understanding and expression of the human voice, defining its intentions. Apparently from this more of that idioms reinvented the behavior of

this particular animal. *Lick smb's boots (shoes) / lick the boots (shoes) of smb (bootlick)* – "облизувати чийсь капці", що означає бути підлабузником.

A dirty dog - погань, негідник.

A gay dog - гульвіса, розпусник.

A sly dog - потайний чоловік, хитрун.

Yellow dog - ганебна істота, пройдисвіт, підла людина.

A surly dog - похмурий суб'єкт, тип, грубіян.

A dog in the manger – "собака на сіні", людина, що сама нічим не користується і не дає іншим.

A fly on the (coach) wheel – людина, яка сильно перебільшує своє значення і вплив у певній справі [5, р. 169-171].

Idioms with the elements of animal naming describing people's character usually denote negative aspects of personality. And they may contain the names of different animals.

So, idioms have different categories because of their forms and structures. There are a lot of idioms which have a regular structure, an irregular and a grammatically incorrect structure. Most idioms have regular form, but the meaning is idiosyncratic. Furthermore, if we do not know the origins of the idiom we can guess it only in the context, because they have no association with the original meaning of the individual words. Moreover, a lot of idioms are fixed and cannot be change.

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