ENGLISH NATIONAL CHARACTER REPRESENTATION IN THE PHRASICON

The article deals with the study of phrasicon of the English language that reflects the features of a national character. This topic of study is relevant as in the era of rapid development of cross-cultural communication the question of national cultures of countries participants of such communication is rather urgent. Communication won’t be successful if national-cultural experience of language bearers who carry out intercultural communication won’t be taken into account. Such experience study in the article is done through the prism of the historical past, spiritual life, values, mentality, customs, traditions of a Britain society.

Key words: phrasicon, phraseological unit, national character, culture, intercultural communication, community values.

The article deals with the representation of national character in English phrasicon. The question of national cultures of different member countries in cross communication is urgent in the modern period of rapid development of such communication, which won’t be successful if national-cultural experience of speakers isn’t taken into account. To study this experience is possible through studying the historical background, values, mentality, traditions and customs of the definite nation.

The study of the phrasicon is of particular importance in this regard, since it is the national-specific features of the people, semantics and internal image with national-cultural coloring, that is most clearly manifested. The study of the phraseological units
component gives us the opportunities to gain the information about the system of ethnic community values.

The rationale of the study is connected with the necessity to describe common and regular peculiarities of national cultural peculiarities of the phraseological units, which are the national culture-bearer and reflect national character in view of anthropological paradigm of modern linguistics and the interest to the language and culture relationship.

National character defines the form of nation existence in history, which is fixed in the language, in the systems of values, in social and psychological behavior. All this parameters are connected and interdependent and define the unity of national character, its development logics, social behavior types and systems of values, which is the measure of the proportion of ethnic representatives of their actions and choices.

The formation of the national character is influenced by various factors and conditions: language; climatic, geographical conditions, common territory; historical experience; the presence of ethnic identification and ethnic identity.

Language is one of the factors identified by a number of scientists (A. A. Potebnya, V. Humboldt, S. G. Ter-Minasova, etc.). Human perception of the world is carried out through the language. From S. G. Ter-Minasova point of view a language confirms the existence of national character, reveals national traits and all its aspects. A man and a language are inseparable, so it is necessary to study them in connection with the culture created, preserved and passed on to future generations.

The national character is explicated in the people’s consciousness and reflected in the word. The most obvious reflection of the national character is manifested in the phrasicon.

Phraseological units have national cultural peculiarities, which reflect national language features and nation originality. That is why the study of phraseological units is impossible without studying the role they play in nation culture representation. V. N. Telia, speaking about phraseological units specificity, pointed out that the phraseological composition of the language plays a special role in the transition of the cultural and national consciousness of the people and its identification as well, since the figurative content of its units embodies the cultural and national worldview [1, c. 231].

I. Ya. Ikonomidi having analyzed the phraseological units with the national specific component distinguished 3 groups:

1) phraseological units that reflect national specific concepts by their composition, which doesn’t have lexemes with the national specific component;

2) phraseological units that reflect national specific concepts by their composition, which have lexemes with the national specific component;

3) phraseological units that have lexemes with the national specific component and which reflect universal concepts [2, p. 7].
National-cultural specificity can manifest itself in phraseological units in different ways. In the combined sense, it is manifested in nonequivalent units, while nonequivalence can be interpreted both in the broad and in the narrow sense of the world. In the broad sense of the world we can talk about the presence in the phraseological unit a number of phraseological and semantic groups that are not present in other languages. This phenomenon is caused by extralinguistic factors and confirms the thesis that certain fragments of reality are not equally interpreted by different linguistic communities.

In a narrower sense, nonequivalence is present at the level of phraseological units. The language may have chronological exotisms and ethnographisms, however, they are borrowed units and do not belong to equivalent vocabulary.

In different world views there are phraseological units that denote and symbolize the same specific cultural phenomena, therefore they are usually equally understood by representatives of different cultures.

The national-cultural specificity of phraseological units can be manifested through the presence of a culturally marked component in its composition - realities, toponyms, anthroponyms, hydronyms, etc. In addition, the phraseology may reflect the history of the people, traditions, customs, phenomena that are embedded in its prototype. Often, the national-cultural specificity of phraseological units is characterized by the presence of several features, which allows us to talk about the degree of manifestation of cultural-national information embedded in the meaning of phraseological units.

National content is more intensively represented in phraseological units, which include a nationally-marked element, as compared to phraseological units, which do not contain similar tokens.

Consequently, it can be concluded that national specificity will be most fully expressed in the presence of all the above signs - nonequivalence, culturally-labeled component in the phraseological unit, a nationally significant prototype and a vivid image that is characteristic of only one linguoculture.

All these signs maximize phraseological units with specific information that expresses the history and culture of the people both explicitly and implicitly.

National specificity is manifested in national self-consciousness, which is a subjective form of manifestation, which is defined as a feeling of belonging to a particular socio-ethnic community and referring oneself to a given national group.

The perception of the world is reflected in the language, which means that anyone who speaks it owns the conceptualization of the world. The idea of the world consists of the meaning of words and expressions of the language that form the belief system of all representatives of the nation, from which it follows that it is the vocabulary that carries the main cultural burden. The results of the cultural experience
of society are most clearly represented in the phrasicon, since it reflects the ideas of society participants about the properties of a person that comply/ do not comply with ethical standards and rules of social life accepted in culture and society.

The formation of the national character of the British was influenced by a mixture of different ethnic groups - the Angles, Saxons, Celts, Jutes and other peoples, as well as the island position of the country, which formed the basis for the British to realize their exclusivity. The British experience a sense of superiority, bordering on contempt, pride. On the one hand, they do not accept other people's customs and culture; on the other, they sacredly keep their own traditions.

For the British, the concepts of freedom, justice, and objective truth are key concepts. They have a sense of patriotism. One of the characteristic features of the representatives of the English nation is the freedom of the individual, which is understood as the freedom to have your own house, to do what you want in your free time, to choose the pastime yourself.

They respect their own and other people's personal space, do not interfere in other people's affairs, and do not ask unnecessary questions. Intervention in other matters is considered unacceptable and condemned by society.

The British are law-abiding citizens. They believe in and respect the law which is higher than the state and the individual for them. The British are quite conservative, they value public order, are committed to traditions, are proud of them and try to keep them in their original form. They value discipline and are considered the most educated and polite nation in the world. A good upbringing and education is one of the traditional values for the British. They are moderate both in work and in entertainment, they are distinguished by a love of order and mental activity.

Restraint and a sense of proportion are the main features of the English character. The British are committed to all sorts of activities and hobbies: traditional tea parties, gardening.

In order to live with dignity and have a good income, the British are ready to work hard, which characterizes them as hardworking people.

Let’s analyze how all these characteristics are reflected in the phraseological units. We will start the analysis of character traits manifestation from the word “character”. It is defined in Macmillan English Dictionary as follows:

**Character**

1) the qualities that make up someone’ personality (in/out of character); the qualities that people from a particular place are believed to have;

2) the qualities that make something clearly different from anything else; a quality that makes something interesting or attractive;

3) someone’s reputation, especially when this shows how honest or reliable they are;
4) a person of a particular type; someone with special qualities that make them different from most people and interesting to know;

5) good personal qualities, especially the qualities of being brave and determined when doing something difficult [3, p. 225–226].

As it is seen from the definitions, the main semantic features of the word “character” are a set of qualities, qualities belonging to a person, distinctive features.

Having analyzed selected English phraseological units we selected several groups characterizing the human character traits characteristic of members of the ethnic community: conservatism, restraint, eccentricity, sociability, resilience.

Let’s illustrate this with the examples: to be set in his or her ways (means that a person is stubborn and committed to the current way of doing things), bull-headed (means to be stubborn and inflexible), sit tight (to refuse to change your mind), as cold as ice (means that a person doesn’t show his emotions), to keep a level hand (means that a person always remain calm), moderation in all things (to advise someone that is best not to have or do much or too little of anything), big (great) card (means a popular person, a funny person).

These examples illustrate the fact that the inhabitants of the UK have these qualities and pay the special attention to them.

The analysis of phraseological units made it possible to distinguish two large groups of phraseological units that reflect the character of a person: character as a mental phenomenon and the orientation of character.

Within the first group, there are four subgroups: moral traits, strong-willed traits, emotional traits, and intellectual traits. Within the second group, four subgroups were also identified: attitudes towards people, the world around them, activities and property.

It is possible to allocate the following oppositions among phraseological units reflecting moral qualities of the person:

«nobility-meanness»: good as gold; a big heart, a high mind – false heart, point smb black;

«kindness/cordiality-cruelty/indifference »: big heart; a kind soul; good egg – stony heart, cold as charity; cool as cucumber; to have a thick skin;

«sincerity – hypocrisy»: single heart; open as the day; make a clean breast of smth – as if butter wouldn’t melt in one’s mouth (used when someone looks as if they would never do anything wrong, although you feel the might); a wolf in sheep clothing; tricky as a monkeys; play fast and loose (treat something or someone without enough care); eat somebody’s toads (behave obsequiously to someone important); all sugar and honey; cupboard love (love shown in order to get smth they want);

«honesty – trick»: straight as a die; as honest a man as ever broke bread (extremely honest); clean hands; straight dealing – pull the wool over eyes (to deceive smb in order to have an advantage over you); lie in one’s teeth; lie like a gas meter;

«the audacity/arrogance-humility»: dead to shame (to feel extremely ashamed); shame isn’t smoke that makes one cry when gets in the eye; high (proud) stomach (insolence); a stiff neck (a proud or stubborn person); get the high hat (behave arrogantly) – keep a low profile (avoid attracting attention to oneself);

«be true to your beliefs»: to be as good as a one’s word; stick to one’s gun (remain determined, resolute, or steadfast in one’s opinion, belief or perspective); keep one’s word.

The group «strong-willed character traits» includes phraseological units that describe such character traits as:

«restraint/self-control»: in one’s sober center (in one’s mind); sober as a judge, level head (calm and able to deal easily with difficult situation); possess one’s soul (control oneself, be patient);

«courage»: stout heart, make the best of a bad bargain; put on a bald front (be brave);

«cowardice»: get (have) cold feet (too suddenly become too frightened to do smth you had planned to do); show the white feather (to act like or appeal to be a coward, to exhibit cowardly traits or behavior); faint heart (to not be strong enough to handle a situation);

«independence»: hoe one’s row (to mind one’s own business); go on one’s own hook (by one's own effort or energy); stand on one’s own bottom (everyone must be self-sufficient);

«determination, strong character»: solid as a rock;

«indecision»: soft as butter; neither flesh nor fowl (no one or another, not something fitting any category under discussion).

The group «emotional traits» is represented by a description of such traits as

«cheerfulness»: merry as a cricket (very happy and carefree); free and easy (calm and relaxed); light heart (freedom from the weight of sorrow); see through rose-coloured glasses; jolly as a sandboy (very happy, high-spirited);

«energy»: draw the bow up the year; full of beans (to be very lively and have a lot of energy and enthusiasm); rough and ready (produced quickly with little preparation);

«despondency, boredom »: see through blue glasses; a wet blanket (someone who is ruins people’s fun); a dull beggar (a very dull and heavy person).

Phraseological units of the group «Intellectual traits» were selected by the presence of semes, which characterize the manifestation of mental activity (clever, stupid, crazy, intelligent, knowledgeable).
Phraseological units with a positive connotation describing «mind», «wisdom» include: *turn of mind* (a characteristic way of thinking), *have more brain in one’s little finger than one has in his whole body*; *a clever dog*; *a clever head*; *sharp as a tack* (intelligent and a quick thinker); *as smart as paint* (very smart in appearance, intelligent).

As the analysis of the material showed, a group of phraseological units with the meaning «stupidity» was the most numerous: *cousin Betty* (very stupid); *long hair and short wit*; *not to know enough to come in out of the rain*; *as thick as two short planks* (remarkably stupid, dimwitted or obtuse); *as dumb as a rock*; *be one sandwich short of a picnic meaning* (someone who is crazy or stupid); *one cell short of a battery*; *several bricks*; *short of a load*; *daft as a brush*.

The group of phraseological units «orientation of character» includes expressions describing «attitude to people»: *queer as a clockwork orange* (strange, odd, unusual); *a nine bob note* (a dishonest person); *a three dollar bill* (fake or illegitimate).

The following oppositions can be distinguished in this group:
- «talkativeness, bragging» – «silence»: *hot-air artist*; *big mouth*; *sharp tongue*; *great boast and small roast*; *talk nineteen to the dozen, talk the hind leg off a donkey* – *still as a mose; keep a low profile; keep breath to cool porridge, keep the lid on smth*;
- «sociability” – «isolation»: *shut oneself up in one’s shell*; *the life and soul of the party – a bad mixer*; *a play one’s cards close to one’s chest (be extremely secretive and cautious about one’s intentions)*;
- «politeness, attentiveness to people» – «impoliteness», «rudeness»: *take liberties with* (behave in an unduly familiar manner towards a person); *keep on the rails* (to live and behave in a way which is acceptable); *prim and proper* (to behave very correctly and be shocked easily by anything that is rude); *punctuality* is the *politeness of kings; walk on eggshells* (be extremely cautious about one’s words or actions) – *born in a barn (a rhetorical question directed toward a person who is rude, or who displays ignorance and stupidity); hairy about the heel(an ill-bred person); rough and tumble*.

«Attitude to the world» is expressed by the following phraseological units: *stop at nothing* (unscrupulousness); *your own comfort comes first and let others got lost* (egoism); *dangerous (bad, wicked) tongue* (slander); *light weight* (levity).

The desire of a person to an active life or to idleness is reflected in the phraseological units of the group «attitude to reality». There are three subgroups: diligence, laziness / idleness, responsibility/irresponsibility.

The following units belong to the group «diligence»: *work one’s head off*; *work double tides*; *elbow grease gives the best polish* (hard work gives the best results); *an eager beaver* (hardworking person); *drop by drop the sea is drained*; *little strokes fell great oaks*. 
The following units can be pointed in group «laziness/idleness»: a lazy beggar; a man of nothing to do; swing the lead, etc.

The «responsibility / irresponsibility» group is represented by phraseological units: ace in the hole (a major advantage that one keeps hidden until an ideal time) – pass the buck (to blame someone or make them responsible for the problem that you should deal with); a bad actor (an unreliable, untruly and prone to troublesome or quarrelsome behavior person).

«Attitude to property» is expressed by the semes "generous/greedy", also phraseological units, which include the phraseoseme «theft»: spend money like water; an open hand (generosity); cheap skate; close as wax; penny-wise and pounds-foolish (greediness); have sticking fingers; have itching palms; dip one’s hand in the till (theft).

A phraseological unit, being a figurative expression, always contains some assessment of the described phenomenon. The assessment can be positive, negative or neutral. Let’s analyze phraseological units which have a negative assessment. As the analysis of examples showed, the following qualities cause condemnation: meanness and duplicity; excessive nervousness; arrogance, stubbornness, laziness; flattery, greed, impudence, indifference, cunning.

Condemnation of meanness and duplicity is present in the following phraseological units: appearances are deceptive (the way someone or something looks from outside may give us a wrong impression), as the man sows, so shall he reap (the actions dictate the consequences), avoid evil it will avoid you (do as you would be done), a bad wound is cured, not a bad name (what is done can’t be undone), turn one’s coat (change one’s allegiance of affiliation for personal gain or advantage), come to term with one’s conscience (to gradually accept a sad situation), no man can serve two masters (to divide one’s attention, efforts, or loyalty between more than one profession, goal, pursuit will result in none of them being done properly), play double (deceiving seeming to be one thing while actually being another).

Excessive nervousness condemnation: a bundle of nerves (someone who is extremely nervous), cry-baby (someone who cries a lot without any reason), a nervous nettle (very nervous), a nervous wreck (being extremely nervous), one’s nerves are on edge (to be tense, nervous and unable to relax).

Condemnation of arrogance, stubbornness, laziness: too clever by half (very confident and smug about how clever they are in an annoying way), a stuffed shirt (someone who behaves in a very formal and old-fashioned way and believe they are very important), bone idle (extremely lazy), to bang one’s head against a (brick) wall (means to stubbornly continue trying to achieve an objective that is almost impossible).

Condemnation of flattery, greed, impudence: a covetous man is good to none but worst to himself, covetousness breaks the bag (to be very greedy), cowards are cruel (having or showing a shameful lack of courage), button up one’s pockets (to be
extremely greedy), self-praise is no recommendation (if you praise yourself, people will think that you are boastful and will not respect you), velvet paws hide sharp claws (a dishonest person who says one thing but do another), as bold as brass (with extreme confidence or without a respect or politeness people usually show), a loudmouth (a person who talks too loudly, often boastfully, offensively and continually; one who talks indiscreetly; a gossip).

Condemnation of indifference, cunning: cunning craft is but the ape of wisdom; cunning is the fool’s substitute for wisdom; one lie makes many; not to give a curse (not care at all); spit in smb’s eye (to treat somebody scornfully), set at naught (to have a disregard or scorn for smb).

The second group includes phraseological units with the positive connotation. This group is formed by the units, which express staminas, strength of character, friendliness, prudence, restriction, self-sufficiency: the acceptable face of (the tolerable or attractive manifestation or aspect of), give a good account of yourself (make a favorable impression through your performance or actions), get your act together (organize yourself in the manner required in order to achieve smth), be all that (be very attractive or good), a ball of fire (a person who is full of energy and enthusiasm), on the ball (alert to new ideas, methods and trends), blaze a trail (be the first to do something and set an example for others to follow), have shot your bolt (have done all that is in your power), make no bones about something (have no hesitation in starting or dealing with something, however unpleasant, awkward, distasteful it is), work your fingers to the bone (work very hard).

One more group consists of phraseological units with the absence of clear positive or negative connotations, as in Have a finger in every pie – be involved in a large and varied number of activities or enterprises. This expression doesn’t give a clear picture of if it is good or bad. More than that, it is necessary to point out that a phraseological unit can acquire a positive or negative connotation in the context.

To make a conclusion we may say that a man in all the originality of their personal qualities, which are reflected in the phrasicon is the bearer of the national picture of the world. Natural and climatic conditions, historical development, moral principles, experience have left their mark on the nation as a whole and on the individual representative of the nation in particular. The character of a person was formed precisely under the influence of the above factors. So the English are characterized by conservatism, restraint, eccentricity, sociability, fortitude, patriotism.

The analysis of phraseological units is a promising direction and represents a wide field for further research, which will allow reconstructing fragments of the linguistic picture of the world of different ethnic groups and will contribute to improving the effectiveness of intercultural communication, education of respect and tolerance for one's own and another's culture.
References

успешной, если не будет учтен национально-культурный опыт носителей языка, осуществляющих межкультурную коммуникацию. Изучение такого опыта в статье проводится через призму исторического прошлого, духовной жизни, ценностей, менталитета, обычаев и традиций британского общества.

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