

LINGUACULTURAL FEATURES OF PROPER NOUNS AS COMPONENTS OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

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Abstract: This paper delves into the role of proper nouns in phraseological units (idioms), metaphors, and expressions, analyzing how these elements transcend their basic reference function and evoke deep cultural, historical, and symbolic connotations. By focusing on examples from English, Russian, and Uzbek, the study illustrates how personal names embedded in idioms not only represent individuals but also convey broader societal meanings, collective memories, and values. The research underscores how proper nouns in idiomatic expressions act as powerful symbols, cultural markers, and conveyors of moral messages, offering insights into the intersection of language, culture, and collective memory.

Keywords: noun, proper noun, phraseological unit, idiom, semantics, structures of knowledge, linguacultural content.

Introduction

Proper nouns, especially personal names, are fundamental elements of language that extend far beyond their simple function of identifying individuals or places. They serve as critical components in idiomatic expressions, metaphors, and cultural references, providing a window into the deeper layers of cultural, historical, and symbolic meaning. In many languages, these personal names embedded in phraseological units act as symbols of broader societal values, historical events, and collective memories. They are not merely identifiers but carry connotations that reflect the cultural identity and societal norms of a language community. As such, proper nouns offer more than just a point of reference; they encapsulate the essence of a culture's history, values, and collective consciousness.

The study of proper nouns in idiomatic expressions is essential for understanding how these names contribute to the formation of meaning in language. Idiomatic expressions, or phraseological units, are fixed combinations of words where the overall meaning cannot be inferred from the literal meanings of the individual words. These units often feature proper nouns that add weight and significance, evoking a range of symbolic, moral, and historical meanings. Through these names, language users communicate complex social judgments, cultural ideals, and historical legacies in a concise and impactful manner.

Several scholars have contributed to the study of proper nouns and their use in language, providing valuable insights into their linguistic and cultural significance. Sloat [1969] in "Proper Nouns in English" explored the syntactic and semantic roles of proper nouns in English, illustrating how they function beyond mere reference to contribute to the structure of language. Gary-Prieur [1991], in his work "Syntax et Semantique des Noms Propres", delves into the interplay between the syntax and semantics of proper names, shedding light on their syntactic properties and cultural meanings. Hockett [1958], in "A Course in Modern Linguistics", emphasized the importance of proper nouns in linguistics, noting how these names serve as anchors in the structure of communication and contribute to the socio-cultural fabric of language. Van Langendonck [2007] in "Theory and Typology of Proper Names" advanced the

typological analysis of proper names, considering how they are categorized and function across languages.

Other scholars, such as Kunin with his “Anglo-Russian Phraseological Dictionary”, and Artyomova & Leonovich [2003], who analyzed proper names in phraseological units, have explored how these names are embedded in idiomatic expressions across different languages and cultures. In addition, Ermolovich [2001] focused on the use of proper names in different linguistic styles, discussing their role in stylistic and rhetorical contexts.

Building on these foundational works, this study aims to explore how proper nouns in idiomatic expressions transcend their literal meanings and contribute to cultural narratives. By examining how these names function in English, Russian, and Uzbek, we aim to uncover the complex relationship between language, culture, and identity. Through this lens, proper nouns are not simply linguistic elements but rich cultural symbols that offer a deeper understanding of the societal values, historical context, and collective memory embedded within a language.

Materials and Methods

This study adopts a comparative analysis approach, examining proper nouns in idiomatic expressions across English, Russian, and Uzbek. It investigates how these names contribute to the formation of idioms, focusing on how cultural, historical, and moral connotations are embedded within these expressions. The analysis relies on literary works, historical texts, and proverbs that feature personal names within their phraseological structures.

The research follows a dual methodology of corpus-based analysis and cultural-historical interpretation. The first step involves identifying idiomatic expressions from diverse sources, such as literature, folklore, and everyday discourse, that include proper nouns. The second step interprets these expressions in their historical and cultural context, analyzing how the proper nouns are utilized to communicate specific meanings. The study also examines translation strategies to see how these names are adapted or maintained in the transition from one language to another, particularly in the case of proverbs and idioms translated from English to Uzbek.

Results

Mythonymy, a sector within onomastic space, involves the use of names drawn from mythological sources, ranging from characters to places, objects, and events that, although they may never have existed in reality, carry significant cultural, historical, and symbolic weight. This linguistic phenomenon is reflected in a variety of phraseological units (idioms, metaphors, and expressions) that draw upon the mythological world. These expressions often transcend their literal meanings to invoke deeper societal, moral, or historical lessons, embedding rich cultural knowledge into everyday language.

Historically, mythological references in language have been a source of inspiration, with ancient stories providing the foundation for a wide array of idioms. For instance, terms such as Pandora’s box, a labor of Sisypheus, and the hound of hell (representing the mythical creatures Cerberus) refer not only to their mythological origins but have evolved to encapsulate broader meanings. The phrase Pandora’s box symbolizes the unleashing of unforeseen trouble, while a labor of Sisypheus refers to any task that is arduous and ultimately futile. These mythological idioms carry significant cultural connotations that go beyond their initial stories, offering metaphors for understanding human experiences, struggles, and societal values.

Many of these expressions trace their roots to the epic works of Homer, particularly the “Iliad” and the “Odyssey”, which have shaped numerous phrases in the English language. Phrases such as like a Trojan are symbolic of heroism, valor, and courageous actions. Homer's epic stories

serve as a foundation for multiple idiomatic expressions that continue to reflect human nature, from triumphs to flaws, and the universal themes of human struggle and victory.

In addition to mythological references, historical and life-related idiomatic phrases often incorporate anthroponyms, or personal names, which invoke not only individuals but the psychological perceptions and attributes associated with them. Such expressions offer insights into societal roles, character traits, and cultural perceptions of various figures throughout history. For example, terms like John Thomas (representing a liveried footman) or Tom, Dick, and Harry (meaning any person, or an ordinary individual) are used to describe not just people but the stereotypes, perceptions, and traits commonly associated with them. These names often symbolize a wide array of human behaviors, both positive and negative, and encapsulate public perceptions of these types.

Furthermore, proper names in idioms often point to geographical and historical landmarks, with names of places taking on significant metaphorical meanings. Geographical names such as Cleopatra's needle—the nickname for the Egyptian obelisk on the Thames Embankment—are used in expressions to not only point to specific locations but to imbue them with cultural and historical connotations. These expressions encapsulate the historical importance of the place and its associated events, often preserving the memory of significant historical occurrences. For instance, the term Hercules' Pillars refers to the Strait of Gibraltar, evoking the idea of an ancient geographical boundary once thought to mark the edge of the known world.

National-specific knowledge also plays a crucial role in the creation of idiomatic expressions. In American English, idioms frequently reflect the country's unique cultural and historical background. Terms such as a Rip Van Winkle (a man who is out of touch with reality after a long absence) and a man of color (referring to someone with African ancestry) draw on national narratives, whether rooted in folklore, literature, or social history. Expressions like the last of the Mohicans (referring to the last representative of a dying social phenomenon, inspired by James Fenimore Cooper's novel) encapsulate specific historical moments, while slang expressions like dumb Dora (stupid girl) or coal-oil Johnny (a wasteful spender) reflect American cultural attitudes toward various archetypes.

As with mythological expressions, idioms drawn from geographical locations also embody the cultural memory of specific regions. Geographical names like Father Thames for the River Thames or Father of Rivers for the Nile evoke not just the rivers themselves but their broader cultural, economic, and historical significance to the societies around them. This intertwining of physical geography with cultural identity highlights the important role of place in shaping language and expression.

The development and use of these idiomatic expressions, drawn from mythological, historical, and geographical sources, offer a lens through which to examine the evolution of language as it adapts to societal values, cultural norms, and historical contexts. By understanding the linguistic structures and meanings of such phrases, one gains insight into the deeper layers of cultural identity, collective memory, and the psychological perceptions that underlie the language we use today. This study examines how these rich cultural references continue to shape idiomatic expressions in modern languages, including English, Russian, and Uzbek, and explores how they function as both linguistic and cultural artifacts.

Discussion

Proper nouns embedded in phraseological units serve not only as linguistic elements but also as powerful symbols that connect language users to historical events, cultural practices, and societal values. In English, Russian, and Uzbek, personal names in idiomatic expressions evoke

complex layers of meaning that reflect the collective memory of each culture. These names are often associated with traits, virtues, or flaws, enabling speakers to communicate intricate ideas quickly and efficiently.

In addition to their symbolic function, proper nouns in idioms reflect the broader cultural and historical landscapes in which these phrases developed. They allow individuals to draw upon shared knowledge and experiences, facilitating communication that resonates on a deeper, more culturally significant level. The adaptability of these proper nouns in translation further emphasizes their importance in maintaining cultural relevance, even as idiomatic expressions are transformed from one language to another.

The study of proper nouns in idioms offers insights into how societies encode their values, historical events, and cultural memories within their languages. This not only enriches our understanding of language but also enhances our appreciation of the ways in which culture and identity are reflected in everyday discourse.

Conclusion

Proper nouns are integral components of idiomatic expressions, serving as powerful symbols of historical events, societal values, and collective memories. In English, Russian, and Uzbek, personal names embedded in idioms transcend their literal meaning, evoking cultural, moral, and historical associations that deepen the significance of the expression. This study underscores the importance of proper nouns in both language and culture, highlighting their role in shaping collective identity and facilitating communication.

As idiomatic expressions continue to evolve, proper nouns will remain essential tools for encoding cultural knowledge and historical context. By understanding how proper nouns function in idiomatic language, we gain a deeper appreciation of the complex relationship between language, culture, and collective memory.

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