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ENGLISH PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS OF LATIN AND FRENCH ORIGIN: COMPONENT “DOMESTIC ANIMAL”

Any language is a living phenomenon that verbalizes the existence of a particular cultural-historical era. This phenomenon is constantly changing and evolving: something new comes and something useless, unnecessary disappears. In the process of long historical development, the English language has borrowed a significant number of foreign words and expressions that penetrated the vocabulary of the language. Among these borrowings the great inflow of the borrowed phraseological units (especially from Latin and French languages) should be noted. The great number of the Romance elements can be explained by the certain historical conditions of the development of England.

As the problem of the phraseological borrowings is not worked out properly in the linguistic literature, this article is devoted to the study of English phraseological units of Latin and French origin with the component “domestic animal”, which exist in modern English. An attempt was made to make a sample of them, to investigate the origin of the chosen phraseological units and to analyze the inner form of the domestic animal component in English phraseological units of Latin and French origin.

Key words: English phraseological units, Latin origin, French origin, component, domestic animal, borrowing.

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АНГЛІЙСЬКІ ФРАЗЕОЛОГІЗМИ ЛАТИНСЬКОГО ТА ФРАНЦУЗЬКОГО ПОХОДЖЕННЯ: КОМПОНЕНТ «СВІЙСЬКА ТВАРИНА»

Стаття присвячена дослідженню англійських фразеологізмів латинського та французького походження з компонентом «свійська тварина», які існують в сучасній англійській мові. Було здійснено спробу зробити їх вибірку, дослідити походження та проаналізувати внутрішній зміст компонента вибраних фразеологічних зворотів.

Ключові слова: англійські фразеологізми, компонент, свійська тварина, запозичення, походження.

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АНГЛИЙСКИЕ ФРАЗЕОЛОГИЗМЫ ЛАТИНСКОГО И ФРАНЦУЗСКОГО ПРОИСХОЖДЕНИЯ: КОМПОНЕНТ «ДОМАШНЕЕ ЖИВОТНОЕ»

Данная статья посвящена исследованию английских фразеологических оборотов латинского и французского происхождения с компонентом «домашнее животное», которые существуют в современном английском языке. Была сделана попытка произвести их выборку, исследовать происхождение и проанализировать внутреннее содержание выбранных фразеологизмов.

Ключевые слова: английские фразеологизмы, компонент, домашнее животное, заимствование, происхождение.

The applicability of the article. Every language is a system that has been changing during centuries. All this is due to various historical processes, which in its turn affect different language phenomena. One of such phenomena is borrowing, a process owing to which a new element from another language appears in the language. And English language is not the exception as the amount of the borrowings in its stock is rather notable.

If to speak about borrowed phraseological units it should be mentioned that the great inflow of the borrowed phraseological units (especially from Latin and French languages) into the phraseological stock of the English language caused a deep interest to their study as phraseological units are the wealth of a language, which express the particularities of national culture. This interest is evoked by the necessity of the theoretical working out of the questions of the borrowing of phraseological units. But it should be noted that only few scientists, such as O.V.Kunin, A.G.Nazarian and E.M.Soloduho investigate such an interesting phenomenon but the problem of borrowed phraseological units is still unstudied in details.

That is why *the subject-matter* is the inner form of the domestic animal component in English phraseological units of Latin and French origin.

The tasks of the research are:

- 1) to single out English phraseological units with domestic animal components;
- 2) to make the etymological investigation of the borrowed phraseological units of Latin and French origin with domestic animal components;
- 3) to analyze the inner form of the domestic animal component in English phraseological units of Latin and French origin.

If to speak about Latin borrowings it should be mentioned that they came into English language because Latin language during many centuries has been used in England as a functional language in the sphere of science, school and administration. The wide use of Latin language was peculiar not only for England but also for the catholic part of Europe. That is why, from the 12th century, it becomes difficult to determine whether the given Latin expression was borrowed directly from Latin or it came into English through any other language – mostly from French [1, p. 10]. French borrowings came into English mainly from the Norman dialect during the first centuries after the Norman Conquest, and from the national literary French language starting from the 15th century [1].

As far as understanding phraseology enables a deeper comprehension of the history of people, their attitude to human strengths and weaknesses, specific outlook, let us investigate the borrowed phraseological units of Latin and French origin with domestic animal components more precisely.

Phraseological units with the component “ass”. Recollecting the book which is of great importance for the mankind – the Bible – we should name animals mentioned there. One of them is *an ass* which is an embodiment of humility and gentleness in the Bible (e.g. *Balaam’s ass* etc.). However, in the real life the representation of *an ass* is different – the animal is also treated as an example of laziness, stupidity and obstinacy. That’s why at cognitive level of the inner form the phraseological units contain the knowledge connected with negative conception of this animal.

In the phraseological stock of the English language there are native phraseological units with the component “ass” that present the complex of associations “an ass – a stupid animal”:

- make an ass of oneself (nat.) – to behave stupidly and look silly;
- play / act an ass (nat.) – to behave in a foolish way, to fool around.

The borrowed phraseological units with the key component “ass” are also presented in the English phraseological stock, for example,

lay the burden on the lazy ass (Lat. *onus segni impone asello*) – to act foolishly and uselessly;

dispute about / wrangle for an ass’ shadow (Lat. *de asini umbra disceptare*) – to quarrel or argue about a trifle (Aesop “The Ass and His Shadow”)

***an ass in a lion’s skin* (Lat. *Leonis exuvium super asinum*) – fine clothes may disguise, but silly words will disclose a fool (Aesop “An Ass in a Lion’s Skin”)**

The metaphorical transfer *an ass – an awkward and clumsy person* is presented in the following borrowings:

- an ass among perfumes (Lat. *asinus in unguento*) – a person who causes damage by his clumsiness;
- (an) ass at the lyre (Lat. *asinus ad lyram*) – an awkward or incompetent fellow.

In fables and legends, the ass is also presented as an object of ridicule. The most famous is the story of the French philosopher Jean Buridan (14th century) in which an ass died of hunger being unable to make a choice between two identical piles of hay: Buridan’s ass/ an ass between two bundles (bottles) of hay (Fr. *L’âne de Buridan*). It should be noted here that “*bottle of hay*” was an old alternative for “*haystack*”, which was current in this expression from the 16th to the 18th centuries. “*Bottle*” was an old word for a bundle of hay or straw, from the Old French “*botel*”. O. Kunin gives the following explanation of this phraseological unit: Buridan’s ass (Fr. *L’âne de Buridan*) – a person who can’t make a choice between two identical things or decisions [30, p. 231].

Therefore, the component “ass” has associations connected with a stupid, stubborn, clumsy and absolutely worthless animal.

Phraseological units with the component “cow”. It is considered that the phraseological unit speak French like an enraged cow (Fr. *parler Français comme une vache espagnole*) – to speak the French language very badly is semantically transparent, as cows can’t speak, they can only produce certain sounds – moo.

Also in English language there are such native phraseological units with the component “cow” as till/ until the cows come home – for an extremely long time (cows walk very slowly from the fields to the milking sheds unless someone hurries them along) or its variant when the cows come home – never and a milch / milking / cash cow – a dependable source of money; a good investment [Kunin, 182].

Phraseological units with the component “dog”. The human’s attitude to a dog has been twofold from ancient times. In the Bible, the dog is mentioned as a persecuted creature. The name of this animal gives a large number of negative connotations in the borrowed and native phraseological units:

a dirty dog (Fr. *crotte corré in barbet*) – a low and sneaky person;

(a) dog in the manger (Lat. *canis in praesepi*) – someone who keeps something that he/she does not want in order to prevent someone else from getting it;

wake a sleeping dog / ant. let sleeping dogs lie (Fr. *il ne faut pas réveiller le chat qui dort*) – to provoke a dangerous person / to leave something alone if it might cause trouble;

During the research, any of the native and borrowed phraseological units with the component “dog”, which has a positive connotation, wasn’t found. Although, there are some exceptions, like be like dog and shadow (nat.) – to be inseparable, one to be always following the other, to dog person’s (smb’s) footsteps (nat.) – to follow a person like a dog and a clever dog (nat., fam.) – a smart, clever fellow. However, one cannot be sure which connotation – positive or negative – the given phraseological units possess out of the context.

The following native phraseological units with the component “dog” belong to the phraseological stock of the English language:

- (the) black dog is on one’s back (nat.) – to be in depression, low spirit, melancholy;
- the dogs of war (nat., Shakespeare) – the havoc (disease, famine, death etc.) accompanying military conflict;
- lead a dog’s life/ lead the life of a dog (nat.) – to lead a drab or boring life;
- give / throw to the dogs (nat., Shakespeare) – to throw away as smth. worthless.

The examples show that this language community has developed the pejorative (deprecativ, neglectful) attitude to this animal. The “dog” is associated with melancholy, depression, hunger, fire, war and purposelessness.

Knowing how important the Bible is for people, we can suppose that it was the influence of the Bible due to which all phraseological units with the lexeme “dog” have negative connotation.

Phraseological units with the component “goat”. A very small number of borrowed phraseological units with the component “goat” is presented in the English phraseological stock. Here are some examples:

goat’s wool (Lat. *lana caprina / de lanā caprinā* (rixari)) – something imaginary; a dispute respecting a matter not worth discussion
play (or act) the giddy goat – fool around; act irresponsibly; behave in a silly or playful way.

So, the cognitive structure “goat”, correlated with the borrowed phraseological units, has the meaning “foolishness”, “thoughtlessness” and even “trifle”.

Phraseological units with the component “horse”. A human has been using a horse in the labour activity since ancient times which is depicted in some phraseological units, such as, for example, to put/ set the cart before the horse (Lat. *currus bovem trahit*) – to

reverse the accepted or logical order of things. It is impossible not to notice that literal sense of the initial word combination contains a certain allogism: a cart can not be put ahead of a horse.

In order to control and lead a horse, there is the special device – a metal bar, bit, which is fastened to a bridle and put into the mouth of the horse (behind the back teeth). If the bridle is displaced, it is not possible to control the animal. This practical experience is correlated with the phraseological unit *take/ have/ get the bit between one's teeth* (Fr. *prendre le mors aux dents*) – 1) *to take control of a situation*, 2) *to start doing something in a very enthusiastic and determined way*. The component “horse” in this phraseological unit does not have an explicit expression, the lexeme “bit” supposes the presence of a horse. This expression alludes to a horse biting on the bit and taking control away from the rider.

Besides, we can't but mention some more borrowed phraseological units, such as (to be) *on one's high horse* (Fr. *monter sur ses grands chevaux*) – *in a haughty manner or mood* or its variant *to come/get (down) off your high horse* – *to stop talking as if you were better or more clever than other people*; a Trojan horse (Lat. *equus Trojanus*) – *a person or thing that joins and deceives a group or organization in order to attack it from the inside* (in Greek stories, the Trojan horse was a large wooden horse that the Greeks used to take soldiers secretly into the city of Troy in order to destroy it).

So, the cognitive structure “horse”, correlated with the borrowed phraseological units, contains knowledge, related to the practical activity of a human – use of an animal for his needs.

Phraseological units with the component “ox”. Some phraseological units with the component “ox” are presented in the phraseological stock of the English language. Among them the following ones can be mentioned: (have) *an ox on the tongue* (Lat. *bos in lingua*) – 1) *a weighty reason for silence* (it is possible to imagine a large and heavy animal on the tongue that prevent speaking); 2) *to be unable to talk, often because one has been bribed into silence* (in A. Hyamson's opinion, is correlated with the knowledge that an ox was represented on coins of Athens [61, p. 260]);

use an ox-knife to kill fowl (Lat. *bove leporem venari*) – *to act foolishly and uselessly* (it is pointless killing poultry using a knife for cutting a huge animal).

It is known that cattle (an ox or a bull) had a special ring in a nose in order to be controlled. This knowledge is expressed in phraseological unit *lead smb. by the nose/ be led by the nose* (Lat. *naribus trahere*; Fr. *mener qn par le bout du nez*) – *to be easily influenced; to be able to control completely*. Therefore, in spite of the fact that the component “ox” is not presented in the inner form of the indicated phraseological unit, it is possible to consider this phraseological unit in this thematic group.

Phraseological units with the component “pig”. The following phraseological units with the component “pig” are presented in the phraseological stock of the English language:

make a pig of oneself (nat.) – *to eat or drink too much, too fast or noisily; to take more of something than anyone else gets; to be selfish; drive (one's) pigs to market* (nat.) – *to snore or breathe heavily and noisily while sleeping;*

live like pigs in clover (nat.) – *extremely contentedly* (this expression alludes to pigs being allowed to eat as much clover, their favorite food, as they wish).

The examples show that the component “pig” has the associations connected with a domestic animal that drinks and eats much, and is well-fed and fat.

Also the phraseological unit *bring one's pigs to market* (nat.) – *succeed in realizing your potential* keeps the knowledge that a pig, since olden times, has been a valuable object of purchase and sale at the market. And as pigs were rather expensive some sellers played a mean trick with lazy buyers – the sack which was sold unopened contained a cat or dog and not a pig. Knowledge about this situation is fixed in the borrowed phraseological unit *to buy a pig in a poke* (Fr. *acheter chat en poche*) – *something that is bought or accepted without knowing its value or seeing it first*.

So, the component “pig”, as a result of a metaphorical transfer pig – human, gets a deprecative and, to a certain extent, pejorative meaning. In the borrowed phraseological units this metaphorical transfer is not observed. The similarity of cognitive structures connected with the knowledge of purchase and sale of the animal is observed in the native and borrowed phraseological units.

In the conclusion it should be mentioned that the vocabulary of a language is enriched not only by words but also by phraseological units. Phraseological units are the wealth of a language, which express the particularities of national culture. Understanding phraseology enables a deeper understanding of the history of people, their attitude to human strengths and weaknesses, specific outlook.

The investigation of the inner form of the phraseological units borrowed from Latin and French has shown that the cognitive level of the inner form keeps the knowledge of the specific situations connected with the world observed by a human, with the everyday life and the way of life.

So, the problem of borrowing of phraseological units is rather interesting but not completely examined, and thus, we are going to continue the working out of this problem.

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