

## COMMON AND SPECIFIC IMAGES OF THE RUSSIAN AND GERMAN AXIOLOGICAL PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN THE CULTURAL CODES

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### ABSTRACT

This article discusses common and specific images of the Russian and German axiological phraseologisms through the prism of cultural codes. The authors have differentiated 14 cultural codes within which the common images of the Russian and German axiological phraseological units are defined, carried out the quantitative analysis of distribution of phraseological units in the codes of the culture and images of set phrases according to the type. It has been found that the basis of interpretation of the images is revelation of an internal form of the phraseologism that binds the value / antivalue and a language picture of the world. Specific images in the Russian and German phraseological units correlate with the Russian and German cultures.

**Key words:** cultural code, axiological phraseological unit, axiological vector, value, antivalue, common image, specific image

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Russian and German phraseological units representing the values and antivalues have common or specific images, correlated with cultural codes.

Cultural codes are interpreted as a «system of signs (symbolic objects) of the material and spiritual world that have become the bearers of cultural meanings» [1] and are internally bound system of the barriers of cultural and value information and sets [2].

Cultural codes are the realities that make cultural sense to human and are «initial material for cultural perception of phraseological image». They are thematically combined according to the features and actions of a human himself, the animal, plant, object, natural and landscape, spiritual and religious worlds [3].

V. V. Krasnykh stresses the close correlation of culture codes with the outside world: «... cultural code is a «net» that culture «throws» onto the world, divides, categorizes, structures and evaluates it» [4]. It follows from the definition of V. V. Krasnykh that cultural codes are a bearer of information about the values of linguocultural community. Therefore, cultural codes are a kind of prism through which images of the Russian and German axiological phraseological units are considered.

### 2. CULTURAL CODES AND IMAGES OF THE RUSSIAN AND GERMAN AXIOLOGICAL PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

In the process of cultural interpretation of a phraseologism, an image is «immersed» in the cultural space. The process of cognitive-cultural interpretation of the phraseological unit, according to M. L. Kovshova, has a multistage character. At the first stage, the phraseologism is perceived through the prism of base cultural knowledge of a man that contains the archetypal forms of consciousness and world modeling. At the second stage, the image of phraseological unit is correlated with cultural codes. The third stage of the cognitive-cultural interpretation of the phraseologism is connected with defining the role (the role of symbol, model, stereotype, etc.), which is acquired by this linguistic sign in the course of perception and description of the world [5].

The interpretation of the image of phraseological unit in culture occurs when «searching» for cultural meanings by means of the system of thematic codes, with which the words-components of a phraseological unit are correlated in the human mind. M. L. Kovshova considers cultural codes as the secondary sign systems. There are used different means for attributing cultural meanings or a valuable content that is acquired by a human being in the process of world-viewing. The coded value content creates a picture of the world, which reflects the outlook of a cultural society [6].

G. A. Bagautdinova notes that « the images of anthropocentric phraseology of the Russian, English and Tatar languages are a reflection of the way of the world view and can be described in the following cultural codes: a) an anthropomorphic cultural code representing the human and parts of his body; b) biomorphic cultural code representing the images of animals, birds, insects, plants; c) object cultural code representing images of household goods; buildings, dwelling, its parts, etc.; d) animistic cultural code representing images of natural phenomena; e) mythological cultural code representing images of religious and supernatural ideas of a man, fairytale characters, etc.; f) temporal cultural code representing conception of time in phraseological units; g) spatial (geographical) cultural code; h) colouration cultural code representing the images associated with the symbolism of colours; and) quantitative cultural code that represents images through the units of measurement, etc.» [7].

Based on the classification by G. A. Bagautdinova, we have singled out 14 cultural codes within the framework of which one can determine the images of the Russian and German axiological phraseologisms. Besides, we have included the cultural code representing the images, being traced back to the real historical events (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** The Cultural Codes within the Framework of Which the Images of the Russian and German Axiological Phraseological Units are Represented

Cultural Code	Examples of the Russian and German Axiological Phraseological Units, the Images of Which are Represented within the Framework of a Cultural Code	Number of Axiological Phraseologism (in % ratio to total number)
Anthropomorphic	<i>вешать голову</i> ; ( <i>hang one's head</i> ) <i>sich(D)SchwielenandieHändearbeiten</i> (lit. работать до мозолей на руках) – to work a lot	10%
Zoomorphic	<i>ловить мух</i> ( <i>snap at flies</i> ), coll. iron.; <i>wissen, wie der Hase läuft</i> , coll. (lit. знать, как бегают заяц/to know how hare runs) – be good at smth, разбираться в чем-л.; знать, как взяться за дело / to know much about the matters	9%
Plant	<i>нет розы без шипов</i> ( <i>there's no rose without a thorn</i> ); <i>J-s Lebensweg war nicht mit Rosen bestreut, высок</i> . (lit. чей-л. жизненный путь не был усыпан розами) – чей-л. жизненный путь был труден / <i>smb's course of life was difficult</i>	5%
Object	<i>плевать в потолок</i> , coll. ( <i>sit twiddling one's thumbs</i> ); <i>reinenTischmachen</i> , разг. (lit. сделать чистый стол / to make the table clean) – объясниться начистоту с кем-л./to have it out	9%
Animistic	<i>бросать слова на ветер</i> ( <i>to waste one's breath</i> ); <i>von etw. Wind bekommen</i> , coll. (lit. погнучить ветер о чем-л./ to get wind of sth) – узнать о чем-л. тайном / to know about sth secret, to smell sth out	8%
Biblical	<i>волк в овечьей шкуре</i> ( <i>wolf in sheep's clothing</i> ) – <i>ein Wolf im Schafskleid</i> , <i>bookish, dispar.</i>	13%
Mythological	<i>ящик Пандоры</i> ( <i>Pandora's Box</i> ) – <i>die Büchse der Pandora / Pandoras</i> (lit. банка Пандоры)	12%
Historical	<i>как швед под Полтавой</i> ; <i>esabwartenwiederHanauer</i> (lit. ждать как ганауцы) – ожидать чего-л. напрасно / wait for sth. in vain	9%
Temporal	<i>момент истины</i> ( <i>the moment of truth</i> ) – <i>der Augenblick der Wahrheit</i> (lit. мгновение истины).	3%
Food	<i>питаться акридами и (диким) медом</i> ( <i>feed on locusts and wild honey</i> ), <i>obs. bookish and iron.</i> ; <i>aus jeder Blüte Honig saugen wollen</i> (lit. желать высосать мед с каждого цветка) – всюду снимать пенки / skim the cream everywhere	5%
Spatial	<i>Москва слезам не верит</i> ( <i>Moscow does not believe in tears</i> ); <i>mit Alsterwasser getauft sein</i> , coll. (lit. быть крещенным водой из Альстера) – быть урожденным гамбургцем	6%
Colouration	<i>голубая кровь</i> ( <i>blue blood</i> ), <i>bookish.</i> ; <i>ein schwarzer Freitag</i> (lit. black Friday) – несчастливый, крайне неудачный в деловом отношении день <i>unlucky day in business</i>	4%
Quantitative	<i>двадцать два несчастья</i> ( <i>walking catastrophe</i> ); <i>J-m drei Fuß Wasser unterm Kiel wünschen</i> (lit. желать кому-л. три фута воды под килем) – желать кому-л. счастливого плавания	3%
Terminological	<i>сесть на мель</i> ( <i>be in low water</i> ), coll.; <i>von der Pike auf dienen</i> (lit. служить с пики) – начинать службу с самых низов (обучаться чему-л.)	4%

The cultural connotation of figurative axiological phraseological units lies in their internal form, which can be considered as an image.

Based on the analysis of figurative axiological phraseological units, it has been established that they reflect common (equivalent), specific (lacunar) and general-specific images (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** The Images in Axiological Phraseological Units

Type of Image	Number of Axiological Phraseological Units (in % ratio to total number)
Common in Russian and German	47%
Specific	48%
– in Russian in relation to German	25%
– in German in relation to Russian	23%
General-specific	5%
– in Russian in relation to German	3%
– in German in relation to Russian	2%

### 3. ANALYSIS OF IMAGES IN THE RUSSIAN AND GERMAN AXIOLOGICAL PHRASEOLOGISMS

Common images include the images that are present in the phraseologisms of the Russian and German languages. The most numerous groups are presented by the axiological phraseological units having common sources of origin: the biblical and mythological.

The Biblical cultural code reflects images dating back to the Bible: *Дерево познается по плоду – Jeder Baum wird an seiner eigene nFruchter kann / A tree is known by its fruit: Нет доброго дерева, которое приносило бы худой плод; и нет худого дерева, которое приносило бы плод добрый, ибо всякое дерево познается по плоду своему, потому что не собирают смюк с терновника и не снимают винограда с кустарника* (Лк. 6: 43-44) – *Dennes gibt keinen guten Baum, der faule Fruchträgt, und keinen faulen Baum, der guteFruchträgt. Denn jeder Baum wird an seiner eigenen Frucht erkannt. Man pflückt ja nicht Feigen von den Dornen, auch liest man nicht Trauben von den Hecken* (Lukas 6: 43-44) There is no good tree that would bring corrupt fruit; and there is no corrupt tree that would bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by its fruit, because they do not gather figs from thorns, and grapes are not removed from the bush (Luke 6: 43-44).

In the above listed phraseologisms with the meaning 'Man is known by his deeds', fruit of the tree is compared with the deeds and actions of the person which he commits during his life, and by which he is estimated. The phraseological units also realize the plant and cultural code, in terms of which the images of the *tree* (*Baum*) and its *fruit* (*Frucht*) are determined. The phraseologisms represent value of «Work» and have a positive axiological vector.

The mythological cultural code represents the images dating back to mythology, fabulous characters, etc.: *двуликий Янус* (*two-faced Janus*); *zweigesichtiger / zweige sichtiger Janus*, *bookish obs.* (*lit.* *двулицый Янус*) – insincere, double-faced man. In ancient Roman mythology Janus (Janus) – the god of time, and also of any beginning or end. Janus was portrayed with two faces, facing in opposite directions (to the past and the future). One of his faces was the face of a young, beardless man looking into the future, another person was the face of a bearded old man, facing the past. The very name Janus is from <Lat. *janua* ('door', 'beginning'). The name of month January originated from this word [8].

It should be noted that the above-mentioned idioms are also correlated with anthropomorphic cultural code as they have designations of the parts of human body – the face, and the quantitative culture code.

The components of phraseological units *двуликий* and *zweigesichtiger* (*two-faced*) are composed of two numbers, the symbolic function of which is duality, controversy. Besides, this symbolic function is supported by the cultural symbol. The head of Janus with two faces, facing in opposite directions, symbolizing the inner conflict [9]. The phraseological units represent antivalue «Lies, hypocrisy» and are marked by a negative axiological vector.

The common images of the Russian and German axiological phraseologisms, contained in their internal form, can combine different cultural codes, for example:

– zoomorphic-biblical: *волк в овечьей шкуре* (*a wolf in sheep's clothing*); *ein Wolf im Schafskleid*, *bookish. disapp.* (*lit.* *волк в одежде овцы*). The phraseological units go back to the Bible (Matthew 7: 15, Matthäus 7: 15) and have a negative axiological vector.

They represent the images of *волк / the wolf (Wolf)* – a dangerous predator and *овца / sheep (Schaf)* – a harmless animal, that are found in one person – the hypocrisy that hides vices under the guise of virtue. The component of German phraseologism *Kleid* – 'платье, одежда' / 'dress, clothing' as the part of a compound word *Schafskleid* – 'одежда овцы' / 'sheep's clothing' creates a shade of irony;

– object-anthropomorphic: *золотые руки / one has hands of gold; goldene Hände* (*lit.* *gold hands*). Axiological phraseological units represent the value «Мастерство» / «Skill» through the image of the parts of human body with which the work is performed – *рук / hands (Hände)*. The components *золотые / gold (goldene)* create an image, which is based on a comparison of the precious metal gold with skill which is also valuable;

– animistic-spatial: *страна восходящего солнца / the Land of the Rising Sun; das Land der aufgehenden Sonne, euph.* (*lit.* *страна восходящего солнца*) – Japan. The components of phraseological units *страна / land (Land)* have a geographical indication, the components *восходящее солнце / the rising sun (aufgehende Sonne)* represent the image of the natural phenomenon. The inhabitants of Japan first on the globe meet the dawn, so Japan is called the country of the rising sun. The Japanese associate the sunrise with prosperity and happy future [10], which creates a positive axiological vector of the above-mentioned phraseological units.

As M. L. Kovshova notes rightly, «the interpretation of phraseological units in the cultural codes makes it possible to reveal the cultural significance of the words-components that constituent it, define its role as a cultural sign, describe how culture is embodied in a phraseological sign» [11].

Specific images of axiological phraseological units reflect national and ethnic originality of the cultures of the Russian and German peoples.

The Russian phraseological unit *ерунда на постном масле* with the meaning 'rubbish, absurdity, nonsense' represents a specific image realized within the framework of the food code of culture. This is the Russian expression proper. V. I. Zimin gives a popular explanation of the phraseologism. The word *ерунда* was coined by the Germans. Trading with Russia, they invited people to look at their goods *hierundda* (here and there). The goods were of no value and they were called *ерунда* (*nonsense*). The German dish *beetroot salad* to be considered tasteless was called *ерунда* by Russian people. Coming to Russia, the Germans treated the visitors to their national dishes, stressing that this or that dish was cooked with vegetable oil. When keeping the fast that remark was relevant, and on ordinary days it caused ridicule. Thus, «over time everything that was called nonsense (*ерунда*), firmly intertwined together with vegetable oil – *ерунда на постном масле / nonsense*» [12].

The specific image in the internal form of phraseologism is created at the expense of the absurd combination of its components. The above-mentioned phraseological unit represents the antivalue «Глупость» / «Stupidity» and has a negative axiological vector.

The common-specific images are presented in the axiological phraseologisms having dual imagery: an image being present in the Russian and German phraseologisms (common image), and an image reflecting the cultural identity of the Russian or German languages (specific image). The common-specific images of axiological phraseologisms correlate with several cultural codes.

Thus, the Russian idiom *молочные реки [и] кисельные берега / молочные реки с кисельными берегами* (*rivers flowing with milk between banks of sweet jelly*) is the object-spatial-biblical cultural code. The meanings of the phraseologism 'сказочное изобилие' / 'fabulous abundance', 'привольная жизнь' / 'free and untrammelled life', 'недостижимый идеал' / 'unattainable ideal' determine its positive axiological vector. The internal form of phraseologism contains an image that goes back to folk fabulous texts about an ideal happy land in the realm of the dead, where *rivers flowing with milk and honey* (*молочные реки с кисельными берегами*). In the Bible, *молочные реки с кисельными берегами* – an unusually fertile land, which is called a *land flowing with milk and honey* – *ein Land, darin Milch und Honig fließt*.

The component *молочные реки / rivers flowing with milk* creates the common image which is present in the German axiological phraseological unit *ein Land, darin Milch und Honig fließt / a land flowing with milk and honey* (*Milch fließt* – flowing with milk). The components *молочный / milk* < *молоко* (*molokoi*) *Milch* (*milk*), in the Russian and German phraseological units denote nourishment which gives vitality to a man. The image of abundance is created at the expense of the components *река* (the river) and *fließt* (flowing). As V. M. Mokiienko notes, «the very folkloric image of the milk, honey... river is universal – a symbol of material prosperity and easy, free life in many nations» [13].

The specific image (in comparison with the German language) is conveyed by the component *кисельные берега*, which, as I. V. Zakharenko notes, attaches national identity to the image, as *kissel* – is a ritual dish of funeral and sacrificial character in the Eastern Slavs; *берега из киселя* (*banks of jelly*) «indicate, as well as *река* (river), to association with the next world» [14].

The phraseologism *молочные реки [и] кисельные берега* (*a land flowing with milk and honey*) / *молочные реки с кисельными берегами* (*rivers flowing with milk between banks of sweet jelly*) is marked with a positive axiological vector, representing the value «Счастье» / «Happiness».

The common-specific image consists in the inner form of the German phraseological unit *j-dist schon auf dem trojanischen Pferd geritten*, *j.-iron. obs. (lit. кто-л. уже ездил верхом на троянском коне)* with the meaning 'человек пожилого возраста' / 'a man of elderly age'. The phraseologism correlates with the zoomorphic-spacial-mythological cultural code.

The expression dates back to the phraseologism *Trojanisches Pferd* (*lit. Trojan horse*), having the meaning: 'коварные дары, приносимые с предательской целью; обманчивая услуга; тайный замысел' / 'gifts given with perfidious purpose; deceptive service; secret intention'. The image equivalent with the one in German is represented in the Russian phraseologism *троянский конь*.

Gomer in «Odyssey» and Vergilius in «The Aeneid» described the episode from an ancient Greek epos about the Trojan War when the Greeks resorted to stratagem: they, feigning their retreat, concealed themselves inside the huge wooden hollow figure of a horse built by them. The inhabitants of Troy, having lost concentration and believing that horse was a gift from the Greeks, let it enter the city. At night the greekes left the horse-concealment and, together with the Greek soldiers arriving, brought about ruin and downfall of Troy to its very foundations [15].

The specific image of man who has already ridden the Trojan horse is realized in the phraseological unit *j-dist schon auf dem trojanischen Pferd geritten*. The image of the phraseologism is based on the fact that all that already happened long ago [16], that is, man has been living very long – since the time of the Trojan war. The absurdity of the literal meaning 'smb who has already ridden the Trojan Horse' (which was wooden) creates a facetious and ironic shade. The above-mentioned German phraseological unit reflects the value «Жизнь» / «Life» and has a positive axiological vector.

#### 4. SUMMARY

The analysis of common and specific images in the Russian and German axiological phraseological units allows to summarize:

- 1) Interpretation of images is based on revelation the inner form of phraseologisms as interlink between value / antivalue and the linguistic picture of the world.
- 2) Common images in axiological phraseologisms of the Russian and German languages represent conventional values / antivalues and are realized within the framework of 14 cultural codes that can go with each other.
- 3) The most numerous groups of axiological phraseologisms with common images are represented by the phraseological units that have common sources of origin: biblical and mythological.
- 4) Specific images in the Russian and German axiological phraseologisms are associated with the Russian and German cultures.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

The results of the investigation can be used in compiling the dictionaries, in the professional activity of the translators, linguists, at the lessons of German Practice.

#### THE CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors confirm that the data do not contain any conflict of interests.

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