

Extended metaphor as one of the types of occasional use of phraseological euphemisms: An experimental study

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Abstract

The article presents the results of an experimental study of extended metaphor - one of the most complicated types of occasional use of English phraseological euphemisms. A short survey of the experimental study of phraseological units by native and foreign linguists is given. It was initiated by American researcher R.G. Gibbs and his colleagues at the University of California in the USA at the end of the 1980s, and continued by the representatives of the Kazan school of linguists. Phraseological euphemisms are characterised by the following typical features: they represent complex language units and combine typical features of both phraseological and euphemistic units. As phraseological units, they are characterised by transference of meaning, inseparability, stability (lexical and grammatical) with the possibility of contextual transformations, figurativeness and a great significance of connotation in the structure of their phraseological meaning. As euphemisms, they represent units of indirect nomination the main aim of which is to alleviate and veil tabooed and socially and morally blamed real designators. The design, hypothesis and the aim of the complex experiment conducted are described in the article. Third-year students of Kazan Federal University - future specialists of English who had already attended the course of specialisation "Fundamentals of English Phraseology" - participated in the experiment as informants. So they were already acquainted with the mechanisms of phraseological unit occasional transformations and approbated the use of them at their seminars applying to the examples taken from the works of fiction of English and American writers. Students were given eight phraseological euphemisms belonging to the phrase-semantic group denoting poverty, hard financial position, and the task of making examples of using extended metaphor was put before them. The main requirements of successful use of extended metaphor by non-native speakers of language were determined on the basis of the data obtained through the experiment. They are as follows: high level of foreign language acquisition (no less than Upper Intermediate), well developed figurative and logical thinking, knowledge of complex mechanism of creating extended metaphor. This mechanism includes simultaneous use of a number of complex cognitive processes: phraseological pun based on the direct meaning of the prototype and the transferred meaning of the phraseological euphemism, the ability to create subimage(s) on the basis of the direct meaning of one or more phraseological unit components, or the whole unit, the subimage(s) being able to develop and intensify the meaning of the whole phraseological euphemism.

Keywords

Extended metaphor, Metaphorical transference of meaning, Occasional use, Phraseological euphemism, Types of transformations

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