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TITLE: ANALYSIS OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS EXPRESSING BELIEFS AND TRADITIONS IN THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

Abstract: In this article, some phraseological units related to Russian weddings have been analyzed, revealing how they reflect the spiritual values, beliefs, and moral norms of the Russian people. The analysis shows that these units convey Russian customs and cultural values clearly and meaningfully. All these units are used positively within the wedding context and enhance the emotional expressiveness of speech. They express popular beliefs in blessing and purity for the newlyweds. Phraseological units, including proverbs, idioms, and metaphors, are analyzed for their semantic layers and cultural meanings, revealing insights into Russian cultural mentality, ethical norms, and value systems.

Keywords: phraseology, national identity, language users,

Introduction: It is well known that phraseological units, as products of collective thinking, serve as a spiritual bridge between the past and the present, reflecting the worldview, moral values, as well as religious and mystical beliefs of a particular linguistic community. Phraseological units related to wedding customs constitute an important linguocultural source that reveals a nation's attitudes toward family, marriage, and the social roles of men and women.

In the phraseological units connected with wedding ceremonies in the Russian language, the beliefs, religious perceptions, traditions, and social moral norms of the Russian people are clearly reflected. Russian linguist V.Teliya emphasizes that phraseological units express certain aspects of national culture and embody the everyday practical, historical, or spiritual experience of language users[3].

Phraseological units, as it were, "offer" ways of interpreting culture through their figurative foundations, establishing a two-way relationship with culture. First, their external form already constitutes the language of culture, since it is well known that their literal interpretation acquires stereotypical, conventional, or symbolic meaning. That is, if a certain image has a conventional or symbolic meaning within a given linguistic culture that reflects a quality, situation, or phenomenon, then, on the other hand, this image is recognized and interpreted by speakers of the language in accordance with their cultural competence. Thus, phraseological units are created by language users, applied to specific events, individuals, or objects in the course of social experience, and demonstrate the expressive potential of the language.

The concept of a phraseological unit refers to a set expression formed through semantic change. Such units enter speech in a ready-made form and are therefore not generated spontaneously during thought. In other words, phraseological units are not created anew in each utterance; they exist in the speaker's memory as ready-made expressions, entering speech as stable units. This explains their frequent use, significance, and transmission from generation to generation.

Methods: In phraseological units, the general character traits specific to a people are clearly visible. This relates to the concept of mentality, indicating the degree of interdependence between social roles in human society. Arutyunyan comments on the Russian national character: "The Russian national character is, above all, a spirit, usually accompanied by a permanent epithet: mysterious. For foreigners who speak or write extensively about it, the Russian heart sometimes appears mysterious, sometimes astonishing, sometimes mocking" [2].

We argue that social environment, the behaviour of people around an individual, and, certainly, religion exert a strong influence on character formation. Christianity, with its moral principles and rituals, served as a crucial cultural source in shaping Russian spirituality and worldview. The renowned ethnographer D. Frazer noted that all cultures are connected to temples. According to P. Florensky, Christianity is a religion that brought high spirituality, emphasising the significance of the inner subjective world of the individual. Religion is reproductive, and because it dominated the moral and spiritual search for meaning in life for a long period, it became deeply ingrained in the Russian people. An illustrative example is the influence of the Christian church calendar on the scheduling of weddings, which prohibited marriages during fasting periods. N. Zorin reports that weddings were not held during the Christmas week, Meatless Week (мясопустной), Easter Week, major church holidays, or fasting periods [1]. Marriage ceremonies are not performed during Easter, the Ascension, and Pentecost, or on their preceding days. In addition, weddings do not take place during the Great Fast, Holy Week, the Feast of the Assumption (1–15 August), and the Christmas Fast (13–25 December). During these periods, weddings are only permitted in exceptional circumstances with the metropolitan's approval [4].

In Russia, seasonal considerations also influenced wedding timing. Weddings were generally held in autumn and winter, when agricultural work ceased. May weddings were traditionally avoided, as reflected in the saying: *“Старались избежать свадьбы в мае, чтобы не маяться всю жизнь”* (“They tried to avoid a May wedding so as not to ‘suffer all their lives’”).

Results: Some Russian phraseological units associated with weddings are linked to weather on the wedding day:

Дождь на молодых – счастье (“Rain on the newlyweds – happiness”).

Here, rain on the wedding day symbolizes good fortune, blessing, and purity, reflecting both figurative meaning and the positive emotional expressiveness characteristic of Russian oral tradition.

Жених на коне (“Groom on a horse”).

This expression conveys a positive and romantic meaning, symbolizing the man as strong, courageous, and worthy of anticipation. It is related to the widely used Russian image *Принц на белом коне* (“Prince on a white horse”), reflecting the hope for a happy life and the realization of a young woman's dreams. Today, the expression *“Я всё ещё жду своего жениха на белом коне”* (“I am still waiting for my prince on a white horse”) denotes an ideal partner for unmarried women.

Скатертью дорожка! (“May your path be smooth!”).

Although literally meaning “a tablecloth-like path,” this phrase is used humorously to wish a bride leaving her parental home a smooth journey. According to the *Big Phraseological Dictionary of the Russian Language*, it expresses a wish for a smooth and fortunate path, symbolizing that, like the tablecloth—a valued household item in all cultures—the bride's life journey should be cherished. Beyond weddings, this phrase can also convey irony, equivalent to “get out of here.”

Душа в душу (“Soul to soul”).

This expression conveys mutual understanding and harmony. In Russian weddings, it is used to bless the newlyweds: *Живите душа в душу!* (“Live in harmony and mutual understanding!”) D.Sirotkin notes its frequent appearance in Russian literary texts: *Мы жили душа в душу. Другого ментора я и не желал.* (A.S. Pushkin, *The Captain's Daughter*) – “We lived in complete harmony. I wished for no other mentor.”

Conclusion: The analysis of Russian phraseological units related to wedding traditions demonstrates that language serves as a powerful repository of cultural memory, preserving the beliefs, moral values, and spiritual ideals of the Russian people. Wedding-related phraseological units embody collective representations of happiness, harmony, purity, and social approval, reflecting deeply rooted national traditions and ethical norms. Through figurative imagery and symbolic meaning, these expressions convey positive evaluations of marriage and family life, reinforcing cultural expectations associated with marital union.

The study shows that such phraseological units are not merely decorative elements of speech but function as meaningful cultural markers that transmit religious beliefs, social customs, and emotional attitudes from one generation to another. In our view, Russian phraseological units related to weddings exemplify the intrinsic link between language and culture, preserving centuries-old Russian beliefs and traditions in linguistic form. They highlight the influence of Christianity, folk beliefs, and social traditions on the Russian linguistic worldview.

In conclusion, the investigation of wedding-related phraseological units contributes to a deeper understanding of the Russian national mentality and cultural identity. Studying these units is crucial for a deeper understanding of the cultural context of the Russian language, as well as for exploring its semantic and cultural dimensions.

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