MOTIVATION REFLECTED IN ROMANIAN AND ENGLISH ANTONYMIC PHRASEOLOGIES FOR "SUCCESS" AND "UNSUCCESS"

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This article is devoted to the analysis of motivation as a cognitive process that leads to the creation of phraseological units in the English and Romanian linguistic pictures, focusing on the antonymic relationship between the concepts of "success" and "unsuccess". Motivation is also analysed as the ability of the individual to understand idiomatic expressions. The aim of the article is to find both common and particular parametric components of English and Romanian antonymic phraseologies and investigate the relationship between the phraseological units that build them up. The methods used for this research are those of general linguistics, but also those specific to cognitive linguistics.

Keywords: *antonymy, phraseology, motivation, cognitive process, conceptual metaphor, success, unsuccess.*

Introduction

Phraseological units are often created from the need and the ability of the individual to interact with other people that have the same needs and abilities to understand the context, the intention, the motivation that stands at the base of this process of creation. In order to communicate, a person has to be motivated to transmit a message and has to adopt an adequate and an efficient behaviour for a certain context, making himself/herself understood. In this article, we will deal with the analysis of motivation trying to define it as a cognitive process, but also with the types of motivation, a classification made on the factors that it derives from. Therefore, motivation can be *metaphorical*, based on conceptual metaphors, with a serious role in mental representations, *symbol-based*, where motivation is focused on one component, and not on the entire phraseological unit, or it can be *etymological*, where the most important factors are the intertextuality and the cultural frame that help motivate the creation of phraseological units.

The article gathers theoretical aspects regarding motivation and its classification, but also a comparison of different phraseological units regarding the concepts of *success* and *unsuccess* from the Romanian and English phraseologies.

Definitions of Motivation

In an attempt to define *motivation*, we refer to the work of A. Langlotz, *Idiomatic Creativity: A cognitive-linguistic model of idiom-representation and idiom-variation in English*, where motivation is seen as the cognitive process that leads to the creation of phraseological units and the ability of the speaker to understand their meaning by 'reactivating or remotivating their figurativity, i.e. to understand why the idiom has the idiomatic meaning it has with a view to its literal meaning' (Langlotz, 2006, p.45). The author offers as an example the phraseological unit *tip of the iceberg*, where the speaker talks about a part of a serious problem or situation, using his understanding that the iceberg usually causes problems for navigation.

Cristina Cacciari talks about motivation as a process behind the creation of phraseological units and distinguishes the *analyzability* as 'the extent to which the speaker of the language can trace the relations between the two levels of meaning', the literal-local and the figurative-global (Cacciari, 1993, p.35) and the *predictability*, where the use of a certain phraseological unit is considered rational for the individual to be used as such, it 'is following the normal conventions governing its use and

beliefs' (Cacciari, 1993, p.35). Therefore, motivation is not the same thing with analyzability or predictability, but they are only characteristics of the cognitive process that stands behind the creation of phraseological units.

In order to distinguish the types of motivation, researchers consider that the first aspect to be taken into consideration when classifying motivation is the *metaphorical* meaning of phraseological units which is not only a classificatory construct, but it has a serious role in the mental representations that come to the mind of the speaker when they are used. When used in antonymy, the phraseological units are better understood and it becomes easier to use them to transmit the desired message.

A second component is the motivation rooted in *symbol-based* phraseological units, for example, the word *wolf* stands for greediness, hunger and danger, but in the phraseological unit *to keep the wolf from the door* the symbol recalls economic despair and failure.

Motivation Based on Conceptual Metaphor

In *Metametaphorical Issues. Image Metaphors*, Lakoff states that there is a link between the phraseological unit and its figurative meaning, which constrains people to understand it or form mental images (Lakoff, 1987, p.219). The cognitive-linguistic model of the motivation for phraseological units is based on conceptual metaphors (Lakoff, 1987: 450). The metaphorical structures that come up in phraseological strings and their patterning by conceptual metaphors is supported by Gibbs and O'Brien's study on the mental imagery evoked for particular idioms.

Motivation stands at the basis of the conceptual level, not at the lexical one (there is a correlation between word meanings). Langlotz says that the meaning of the phraseological unit is motivated because the conceptual knowledge associated with that certain phraseological unit and the metaphorical knowledge provide a link that makes it possible to relate the literal meaning to the phraseological meaning (Langlotz, 2006, p.46).

The mental mapping is achieved by means of phraseological units that refer to colours, human body parts, sound effects or even animal associations that create the image and the feeling of having success or that of failing at a certain point. In his *Image Metaphors*, Lakoff argues that in the case of abstract notions, there can be no image mapping because even if there is a source domain image in the foods, colours, human body parts and so on, the concept of *success* or *unsuccess* has no target domain image (Lakoff, 1987, p.222).

Being an abstract notion, *success* or *failure* has no visual representation. The emitter creates a certain image when broadcasting a message, but it depends on the receiver to determine what gets mapped onto what. Therefore, in order to understand the speaker, the receiver creates an image mapping and transposes it onto the images proposed by the conceptual metaphors.

For example, for the concept of *success*, the English phraseological unit *to bring home the bacon* and the Romanian correspondent *a aduce acasă caşcavalul* have the literal meaning of bringing home the type of food that is always present in the household in different cultures: for the English, the bacon is a an essential and common article of food and for Romanians, *caşcavalul* is a type of cheese that is better and longer preserved in the household, very popular in traditional meals.

As for the conceptual meaning, *to bring home the bacon* refers to having success, to winning a contest, earning money or reaching a target. The origin of this phraseological meaning is not clearly defined, since there are sources stating that it comes from the 12th century, in a small town in Essex, England, where there was a tradition for the church to award a side of bacon for married couples who demonstrated wedded bliss. Other sources say that it was first used in the United States and it is related to a box fight in 1906 where Joe Gans was up against Oliver Nelson. After a 42-round battle, in the Syracuse NY Post-Standard Newspaper there was an article saying that Gans' mother asked her son in a telegram *to bring home the bacon*, as in win the fight. And Gans' reply to his mother was that *he had not only the bacon, but the gravy* (New York Times). Either way, both sources refer to having achieved something, winning a prize for something that they have done, therefore, having success.

For the Romanian phraseological unit, the conceptual meaning is the same of having success, earning money or reaching a target. Being an article of food that could be preserved longer and better

than other types of cheese, it was often used in business transactions or as gifts from the governors of the country to other rulers. Other sources say that *caşcavalul* was mentioned among the items that were offered by Mircea cel Bătrân to maintain the Tismana monastery and its inhabitants in good conditions.

The concept of *unsuccess* is also well represented by the English phraseological unit *to go down the drain* and the Romanian *a se duce pe apa sâmbetei*. The literal meaning for these expressions is that something is so insignificant that it washes with the waste water down the drain. The conceptual meaning refers to losing something forever, wasting an opportunity, a situation that has a futile end, such as the water that runs down the drain after it was used. The origin of the English phraseological unit goes back to the beginning of the 1900's when it was used to compare a situation to watching the water going down the drain, meaning that there is nothing to show for it. The Romanian phraseological unit has a mystical origin, from the north of the country where there was a place were water was boiling every day of the week, but on Saturday it stopped and this water was poured into a river. Other Romanian beliefs are that Saturday is a day full of secrets, spells and bad timings, associated even with the great end, with death. The orthodox church chose Saturday to officiate sermons in the memory of the deceased.

English and Romanian phraseologies have enough examples that show the way individuals process certain situations of success or unsuccess, using the figurative meaning of the language and creating conceptual metaphors. This is achieved either through mental imagery, the images created in the examples we offered are speaking for themselves, or through metaphorical knowledge where the literal meaning is mapped onto the phraseological or conceptual meaning.

Motivation Based on Symbols

This type of motivation is based on one component, or the concept behind it, and not the entire phraseological meaning. It relates to the cultural knowledge of the speaker and it has clear semantic autonomy. The link of motivation between the literal and the conceptual levels is created by the semiotic knowledge of the cultural symbol in question. Here lies *the coherence between coherence between the symbolic concept in the language and similar symbolic phenomena in relevant cultural codes other than language* (Dobrovol'skij, Piirainen, 2018, p.16), as Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen state in their study *Figurative Language.*

A very explicit example is the phraseological unit *to know which side the bread is buttered on*. In this phraseological unit, the symbol used is the *bread*, which functions as a means of livelihood, sustenance, work or source for someone's living, or even money. The meaning of this phraseological unit is to know how to achieve success and to have the means for it. The Romanian correspondent is *a pune mâna pe pâine și cuțit*, which has the same meaning of having the means to being successful and having all the power. So, the term *bread* also stands for power, success.

On the not so bright side, that of failure, we have *to keep the wolf from the door*. The *wolf* is the symbol of hunger, greediness and danger. The cultural knowledge is that the *wolf* is a predator, it is a dangerous animal with a ravenous appetite which also can devour humans (in the folk belief of werewolves). The user does not speak from his/her own experience with the animal, but from an age-old knowledge coming from literary sources or biblical parables. Used in this phraseological unit, the speaker translates it into danger, economic despair, poverty and ruin, proving that the functions of this symbol are seen as a cultural code. A Romanian example is *A intrat lupul în coșar*, meaning that a person should protect himself or herself from thieves, from not losing everything they achieved so far, leading to economical despair.

Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen conclude that *the difference between metaphoric motivation and symbol-based motivation is that the former involves the idea of similarity between the entity encoded in the inner form and the entity denoted by the actual meaning, whereas the latter exploits certain cultural conventions* (Dobrovol'skij, Piirainen, 2018, p.17). Therefore, even if we analysed them separately, it does not mean that the symbol-based motivation cannot be metaphorical or vice-versa.

Motivation Based on Intertextuality

This type of motivation includes phraseological units that are created using well-known texts or passages. Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen believe that there are two major requirements: first, the lexical structure is derived from an already existing text and second, the individual must have proper knowledge regarding the text in order to connect it with the phraseological unit (Dobrovol'skij, Piirainen, 2018, p.23-24). Such is the case of *the Trojan horse* which stands for deceit and concealed danger. Nowadays, it refers to a dangerous program which has a concealed function that, when downloaded on a computer, it damages other programs as well. The motivation in this case comes from the fact that there is a certain knowledge behind the phraseological unit, even if not all the details of the story are known to the speaker or hearer. We can say that this is the etymological aspect of the motivation, but the phraseological unit is also motivated synchronically. Here, the representation is not a transfer onto a mental image or a symbolic base, but a reference to a known text. The reason why intertextuality sometimes causes irregularities in motivation is that the speakers from a certain culture may not know for sure which is the origin of the phraseological units they use or which language or cultural fragment it comes from. Therefore, the link of motivation is not easily identifiable and the phraseological unit may lose the characteristic of being analysable.

Conclusions

In conclusion, motivation comes from the universe of the speaker, from his or her cultural knowledge and the images he or she tries to evoke through the phraseological units that are used. This cognitive process presumes that the speaker makes sense of the phraseological units and reactivates or remotivates their figurativity for his or her own needs. This process is valid as long as it is addressed to interlocutors who have similar knowledge and abilities to complete this type of cognitive processes.

The two linguistic pictures have enough phraseological units dedicated to the concepts of success and unsuccess in order to allow a proper analysis from the point of view of motivation.

Either metaphorical, symbol-based, or intertextual, motivation is not only a criterion for classification, but it has an important role in the mental representations of the phraseological constructions.

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