

SYMBOLIC IMAGES IN THE SYSTEM OF ENGLISH  
AND FRENCH LANGUAGES

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The article is devoted to the analysis of symbolic images and the language picture of the world in the system of English and French languages. Symbols are the result of the work of human co-knowledge; they accompany it from the moment of birth. The symbolic nature of the language and the symbolic activity of people are interrelated. The main purpose of the work is the research of national and cultural specifics of a language which promotes identification of the cultural background of lexis, including knowledge of features of the cultural environment, existence of an object, knowledge of stereotypic and figurative associations and also the stereotypic and valuable relation to the object of nomination. Representatives of culture should interpret and eventually reinterpret the symbol. Cultural symbols, in fact, reflect the ideas and concepts that are the foundation of a particular culture. Symbols are found in various forms: verbal or non-verbal, written or oral.

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It is a well-known fact that any language imposes a certain imprint on the vision of the world of people speaking on this language. Thanks to the national language, a person realizes his spiritual essence and comprehends the ancestral consciousness, which is deeply hidden in each of us. Nowadays, the issue of this awareness is particularly acute. Modern philosophy, linguistics and culturology, shows an increased interest to the symbolic content embodied in the lexical system of a language, which is part of the language picture of the world of a particular nation. The language picture of the world is displayed in the forms of the language of the device of the non-linguistic reality. Extra linguistic reality or cultural space is called specific cultural codes, which are represented as a "grid" that attacks the outside world, thus, the structure of culture, divides and classifies the surrounding reality by evaluating it. The somatic cultural code can be represented in the language picture of the world in several ways, the main ones of which are metaphors, phraseological units, symbols are considered as linguistic exponents of cultural signs.

There is a particular importance of the research that is aimed at comparative analysis of the realities of one language in comparison with others, which gives a more complete picture of the world of the bearer of another language.

Symbolism is a system of signs and symbols, which are usually, differ in the variety of their content, through which abstract concepts are expressed. For example, "the swastika", in ancient times it was the emblem of fertility, in the twentieth century has also become a symbol of fascism and cruelty. The value of symbols lies in the fact that they reflect the culture, history and way of life of different countries.

In modern science there is a set of approaches for understanding culture. In a sym-

bolic approach an attention is focused on the use of symbols in culture. Y.M. Lothman writes that "Culture is a symbolic universe" [6: 115]. Some elements of culture acquire a special ethnic meaning and turn into peculiar symbols of the nation: for example, for the French, it is +cheese; tour Eiffel (Eiffel Tower); the English – oatmeal for breakfast, Big Ben (clock tower of Westminster Palace) and legends of castles; etc. Semiotic function of culture is manifested in the fact that any product of culture can become a symbol or a sign of a specific national culture. For example, a scarlet rose with inner white petals became a floristic symbol of England, and a cock, a lily and a young woman (Marianne) – symbols of France. Shanyrak, for example is a symbol of the Kazakh people, birch is the symbol of the Russians.

Representatives of culture should interpret and eventually reinterpret the symbol. Cultural symbols, in fact, reflect the ideas and concepts that are the foundation of a particular culture. Symbols are found in various forms: verbal or non-verbal, written or oral. It can be anything that conveys the meaning, for example words on the page, drawings, images and gestures [5: 201]. Clothing, homes, cars and other commodities are symbols that imply a level of social status. According to O.A. Leontovich, the most effective way of "subtracting" national-specific linguistic symbols in systems of different languages is their interlingual juxtaposition [5: 223]. Thus, in this work we will compare and analyze the national symbols inherent in English and French languages, sustainable cultural associations, compiled on the basis of the national image of people who are the historical speakers of the language, their stereotypes of behavior and their historical homeland.

There are certain signs that testify to the ethnic and cultural originality of the nation. For example, words-realities that reflect the characteristics of the natural and geographical environment of the Great Britain, express its national identity. Among them you can note such as *dale*, white cliffs, *fen country* (swampy places in the east of England), etc. Sometimes the names of animals and plants widely distributed on this territory are perceived with a whole range of stereotyped associations, fixed in the background knowledge of the linguistic culture bearer. Thus, they gradually become symbols. For example: the emblems of England – Rose, the lion and the Unicorn. A huge role in the life of the English is played by the house, which is evident not only from the world-famous proverbs “East or West home is best” and “There’s no place like home”, but also from a large number of nationally-labeled units, such as: *anglepoise lamp* – table lamp, *villadom* – world of luxury country villas, *teathings* – tea service, *purdonium* – a bucket of charcoal for use inside the house, *sheltered housing* – shelter for pensioners and elderly people in a new apartment building, *snug* – lounge with bar (in the hotel, beer and etc.).

The distinctive features of a typical Briton can be considered in a spirit of independence, freedom and endurance. The family and the school are aimed at the upbringing of these qualities [6; 76]. The British have a practical approach to moral and aesthetic problems: all institutions emphasize human behavior. These features also manifest themselves in the language picture of the world: *toffee-nosed* (si.) / *Upstage and county* (coll.) – arrogant, *waffle* (coll.) – shorting for a long time and for nothing; *weasel* – behaving evasively, cater to-condone bad taste; *div* (si.) – an eccentric person, an idiot; *a swollen head* – too much self-conceit [2: 147].

England is a country of monarchy and tradition. The English treat with great respect all that is somehow connected with these two concepts. And this, of course, is reflected in the vocabulary: *backwoodsman* (coll.) – a peer who rarely visits the House of Lords, *take silk* – become a royal lawyer, *toff* (obs. Coll.) – a gentleman, a dandy, a high society representative, *Trooping the color* – annual solemn ceremony with banner removal in London, *true-blue* – consecutive conservative, *wowser* – strong puritan, *crown estate* – state lands, *Christmas box* (obs.) – Christmas gift to the postman, milkman and other people for their services, *the Flower of Cities All* – London [4].

The Englishman feels himself to be a part of nature and does not think of his existence

outside of it. Hence the presence of such brittishisms as: *beer garden* – a small garden in the “pub”, where customers can sit in good weather, *lung* – city park, *spinney* – a scaffold, a grove, *a spring garden* – a public park, *unspoilt* – a beautiful, virgin (about the place, which is not built up by houses, roads, etc.), *conservancy* – a nature protection body; Protection of a Nature [4].

The following symbols occupy an important place in the system of cultural symbols of the British: the lion as a symbol of the British people and of the United Kingdom itself; Unicorn as a symbol of honor and purity; the symbol of the monarchy is the crown; symbols of the service of the monarchy of honor – the Life Guards; a symbol of British rule on the seas – frigate “Victoria”; symbols of the royal dynasties of England – for example, the Tudor Rose; one of the symbols of the world – a poppy flower, which is an indispensable attribute of marches in defense of peace. The British have a sense of dignity, pride in their nation, their country and its world achievements. The song “Rule, Britannia!” (“Rule, Britain, the seas!”) is still a patriotic anthem of the British.

Somatic symbolic images and the most commonly used stable expressions of English language: *as fast as one’s legs can carry one* (literally: as quickly as the legs are carried away); *be up to one’s neck in smth.* (to live, having everything you need, in abundance); *body and soul* (completely). In the English language system there are many examples of anthropocentric symbols: *as one man* (all as one, unanimously), *avoid smb. like a leper* – (avoid, avoid anybody). Thus, national symbols occupy an important place in the minds of the British. In English, this unity is based on common national pride, which is caused by various representations: visual (for example, a national flower), verbal (for example, a national anthem) and sign (for example, a flag) [1].

Next step of the research are symbols and symbolic images of French language. France and French language are associated with the following associations: wine – *le vin*, cheese – *le fromage*, love / romance – *l’amour / romance*, gallantry – *de la galanterie*, Jeanne Dark – *Jéanne Dark*, revolution – *la révolution*, marseillaise – *la marseillaise*, constitution – *la constitution*, special national cuisine – *la cuisine nationale*, gastronomic pleasure – *le plaisir gastronomique*, art of living – *savoir vivre*, etc. The national symbolism reflects the national character of the French:

1. The motto: “Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite”, means “Freedom, Equality, Brotherhood”.

2. The French flag Tricolor consists of three vertical bands of equal width, reflecting the national colors of the country: blue, white and red. Red is associated with Saint Denis, and blue with St. Martin.

3. Marianne: she takes pride of place in town halls and courts. It symbolizes the “Triumph of the Republic”.

4. One more historical symbol of France is the national flower – lily. It symbolizes beauty and purity.

Summarizing all the above, it can be noted that the basis for all national symbols are three basic concepts: *la patrie* (homeland), *la gloire* (fame), *la force* (force / power).

The first group is the somatic symbols. The carrier of the somatic code of culture is the human body as a whole. For example, in French linguistic culture, the liver was seen as a symbol of courage, and its discoloration is interpreted as a sign of fear, from which the internal form of the phraseological unit is *avoir les foies blancs* (to be afraid, afraid). The internal form of a number of phraseological units contains somatisms such as a spleen (*rate*) with semantics of joy (*bile*) with the semantics of anger (*allumer la bile*, *avoir de la bile*, *echauffer la bile a qn*).

In French linguistics the rose is perceived as a symbol of joy, pleasure: *etre dans ses roses* (to be in a joyful state). Or, for example, there are expressions with the word cat. The state *avoir une mine de chat fache* stands for “being in a state of anger, anger; to be furious as a tiger”. *Triste comme un bonnet de nuit* (sad as a nightcap), *triste comme une porte* (sad as a door), these are national phraseological units which in most cases are not translated.

Phraseological units, which are based on popular beliefs and traditions, in most cases date back to the distant past. Thus, for example, the phraseological composition of the French language contains the phraseological units with the semantics of anger, irritation. *Marcher sur une mauvaise herbe* (based on an ancient belief about the miraculous power of herbs).

Another source of cultural interpretation is the system of pattern images captured in “walking” steady comparisons. In the role of the standard there are stable comparisons, which are one of the bright figurative means, capable of giving a clue to the solution of the national consciousness [8: 16]. For example, in French traditional reference comparisons, joy is a bird: *gai comme un merle* (cheerful as a song thrush), *gai comme un pinson* (gay as a finch), *gai comme une alouette* (cheerful as a lark), *gai comme un oiseau* (cheerful as a bird).

There are three main groups of symbolic images in French language. The first group is the phraseological unit of somatic symbolic images: *avoir la main ouverte* – to be generous – (literally: to have an open hand); *casser les pieds à qn* – bored (sit down with someone in the liver); *comme deux doigts de la main* – (as two fingers on one hand, inseparable); *de bonne main* – (from a good hand, from a reliable source).

The second group of symbolic images, according to I.G. Pendikova and L.S. Rakitin, is a group of anthropocentric symbols. The main factor that determines the development and functioning of the linguistic units of this group and the idiomatics of the people is the human factor [7: 32]. In French language anthropocentric symbols are widely distributed. The most commonly used expressions are: *avoir le coeur lourd* (to carry a stone to the heart); *enfoncer une porte ouverte* (break through the open door); *marcher sur les pas de qn* (go at someone else's footsteps).

The third group of symbolic images of the French language include the symbols of nature and the universe: *il n'y a pas de fume sans feu* (there is no smoke without fire); *le monde est petite* (the world is small); *come un coup de foudre dans un ciel serein* (like a thunderbolt from a clear sky); *il n'y a point de roses sans épines* (there is no rose without thorns).

Such examples illustrate all the brightest moments and aspects of the life of the French nation, which make up the national and cultural specifics of the French people and, consequently, of the French language.

Our research is based on the comparative method and it is necessary to consider the symbolism of the color in the system of French and English. In the color picture of the world of the French, red color (*rouge*) connects different symbols: beauty, love, joy, as well as enmity, revenge and war: for example, *chapeau rouge* in French means decapitated, *travailler dans le rouge* – to kill. In English, the orange color symbolizes *the grace of God, angels and heavenly fire*; in the case of the French, the lexeme orange is given a negative meaning, it is used in the name orange fruit (*orange sanguine*), in the collective meaning of *aller porter des oranges à qn*, which in Russian means to carry a transfer to someone (in prison, in a hospital), as well as in the name of actions related to striking someone's fist, *balancer une orange à qn* – to hit someone. In English, yellow color symbolizes *sadness, pretentiousness, sickness and death, yellow life, melancholy*; for the French it is a symbol of similar concepts: for

example, *jaune comme un citron* – yellow as a lemon, *être jaune comme du safran* – to suffer jaundice. In the color pictures of the world of English and French, purple color symbolizes serenity, pacification and the spiritual sphere of human existence: for example, in French, *parti des bas violets* is a spiritual career. This fact speaks of the romanticism, vulnerability and credulity of the studied ethnoses.

The symbolic values of green in the perception of the English and French have a number of differences. The English green color symbolizes longing, resolution, freedom of action, holiday, New Year, ecology and protection of animals, as well as hope: green boredom, green trees, green street, green corridor, etc. Green is also associated with inexperience – green youth. In French, green is associated with something incomplete: *du bois vert* (raw wood), *vin vert* (young wine).

Two national cultures, each culture consists of national and international units. That is why the language is considered in close connection with the facts of life of its bearers, with their history, geography, and way of life, culture and literature [3]. And the totality of this knowledge is the world of the language of a given society. We can conclude that the symbolism is inextricably linked with the national characteristics of the British and the French and expresses the

mentality of these two nations. The English and the French, like all other nations, perceive the surrounding reality in different ways, which is reflected in English and French. Thus, despite the differences in the language picture of the world, there are common features in the systems of French and English. Symbols are the result of the work of human co-knowledge; they accompany it from the moment of birth. The symbolic nature of the language and the symbolic activity of people are interrelated.

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