

Lexical nominations of wolf in Russian, Kalmyk, Mongolian and German phraseology and paremiology

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Abstract. Zoo lexemes, being separate lexical units and components of animalistic phraseological units (APU) and animalistic proverbial mini-texts (APMT), contribute a significant global presence in all languages. Nevertheless, the world of wild fauna is still poorly understood from a linguistic and cultural perspective. In particular, the relevant vocabulary remains understudied, although it is rich in compositional diversity encapsulating a huge body of materials. Many questions are still out of linguistic sight, although the need for a comprehensive study of animalistic vocabulary is long overdue. Lexical consistency is precisely discovered when various kinds of lexical groupings are addressed. This approach seems to be the most preferable for the authors who study APU and zoo proverbs representing a certain system. The paper proposes to use such terms as faunism, animalism, zoosemism for denoting animals and zoomorphism – for metaphorical designation of humans. The authors are concerned with Russian-Kalmyk-German-Mongolian similarities and differences in APU and zoo proverbs but they are few. Meanwhile, based on APU and APMT it is important to compare LWI animalistic fragments used by native speakers inhabiting the Caspian Sea, Central Asian and European territories for developing an adequate methodology for teaching languages within an ethno-oriented paradigm. This research area has not yet provided a systematic insight into the linguistic status of the object under study. The issues of attributing proverbs and sayings to phraseology, as well as their differentiation, remain debatable. Considering Russian phraseological and paremiological materials against a foreign language background will help to identify its idioethnic specificity and universal features. Understanding the specific phraseological and proverbial coding of the world provides better characteristics of particular ethnic linguistic and cultural attitudes. The study is relevant due to the need to produce a multilingual dictionary composed of zoo vocabulary, zoo idioms and zoo proverbs. Russian APU and APMT studied against foreign languages (Kalmyk, Mongolian and German) will result in their different types identified, both universal and specific.

Keywords: zoolexeme of *wolf*, zoo proverbs and idioms, linguocultural code, Russian language, Mongolian languages, German language

1 Introduction

Most often proverbs present the figures of wild animals living in the same territory with people. A range of basic faunal nominations generally shows similarities. The paper comparatively describes a lexical nomination of *wolf* as a typical representative of wild fauna, based on Russian, Kalmyk, Mongolian and German APU and APMT and identifies an axiological potential of zoo metaphors. Lexical explications of animal imaginary in proverbial discourse is of particular interest. The term “proverbial discourse” is employed here as a set of thematically related texts and, somewhat more broadly, as a set of texts characterized by specific linguistic features: lexical, syntactic, etc.

2 Problem Statement

Subsequent upon the purpose of the study, the paper seeks to trace through the meaning of zoo nominations in APU and proverbial texts, the way the figure of the same wild animal (*wolf*) is differently mirrored in a phraseological (paremiological) world image created by four nations; to compare positive and negative personal qualities approved or condemned in different linguistic cultures; to identify the specifics of this fragment constituting a Russian zoological world image and to compare it with a similar segment in a foreign language culture.

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3 Research Questions

The paper deals with the “wolfish” APU and APMT in four languages – Russian, Kalmyk, German and Mongolian. It analyzes their specific detail referred to as zoo metaphor. Zoological nomenclature has a long history. The nominations of wild animals originated in hunting life. Large predatory animals played an important role in daily lives of primitive hunters. In proverbs, the names of animals such as fox, wolf and hare are most common.

The authors attempt to convey a linguistic and cultural potential of the zoolexeme of *wolf* in proverbial text formations. The paper focuses on the meaning of the lexeme in multi-structural languages of the Caspian Sea, Central Asia and Europe: Russian belongs to inflectional languages, Kalmyk and Mongolian – to agglutinative, German – to Indo-European.

4 Purpose of the Study

The authors seek to describe the semantic originality of the zoolexeme of *wolf* in APU and zoo proverbs as a means of axiological characterization of a person through zoological comparisons and zoo metaphors. So far, idioms and proverbs with this zoo component have not been holistically studied within a stated dimension on the materials of these languages. Why did the animal gain entry into proverbs or phraseological units? Of interest is a three-factor anthropozoomorphic model exhibiting close links with the animal that people feel: 1) appreciation or sympathy for the animal, 2) spiritual or mystical connection with it, and 3) a feeling of identification with a definite species.

5 Research Methods

Figures of wild animals, including wolves, are well depicted in proverbs and idioms that in different linguistic cultures can either coincide (fully or partially) or diverge [1–9]. The APU and APMT derived by continuous sampling from authoritative phraseological dictionaries and collections of proverbs were explored [10–14]. A descriptive analysis became a key method; linguocultural and interpretive analysis, semantic modeling, and analysis were also used. A comparative method is used for systematic comparison of the Russian zoolexeme with its equivalents in other languages in order to feature the figure of wolf in different linguistic cultures and to discover its phraseological and paremiological potential. It is all the more relevant here to deal with the denotation of wolf as an archetypal image because a cluster approach is applied to study animalistic glossary to reconstruct a corresponding LWI fragment of native speakers.

6 Findings

Let us consider the most linguistically and culturally interesting Russian zoolexeme of *wolf* (*волк* – *volk*)

being part of APU and faunal proverbs against its lexical correspondences in other languages (*chon/chono/Der Wolf*). The figure of this animal is often negative, which is understandable. Wolves pose a real threat to livestock and poultry. Wolves appear in APU and zoo proverbs as a symbol of brute strength, greed and anger. They depict the image of a cunning, dodgy and cruel predator. The famous American paremiologist Wolfgang Mieder called one of his paremiological collections “Howl Like a Wolf: Animal Proverbs” [15]. It is not uncommon for people to have to adapt to their surroundings, to get used to new circumstances: Russ. *С волками жить – по-волчьи выть* – *S volkami zhit' – po volch'i vyt'*, Live with wolves, Howl like wolves.

The Russian zoolexeme of *волк* (*volk* – *wolf*) is recorded in many proverbs and phraseological units: Russ. *волчий аппетит* – *volchii appetit*, wolf appetite (ravenous hunger), *смотреть волком* – *smotret' volkom*, glare daggers (scowl); *волчьи законы* – *volch'i zakony*, dog eat dog (gross violation of generally accepted norms of behavior in society); Mong. *chonyn amnaas garaad baryn amand oroh* (Escaped from the wolf's mouth and got into the tiger's mouth). In the latter case, it refers to a person who tried to avoid trouble, but got into an even more dangerous situation: c.f. Russ. *от волка бежал* (*ушёл*), *на медведя попал* – *ot volka bezhal, na medvedya popal*, (Fled (ran) from a wolf, Hit a bear). In both cases, there is a general image of wolf, but the image of the second animal is different: in the Russian example, it is about a bear, and in the Mongolian one, about a tiger. The difference in the images is quite clear. However, the meaning is the same: *from the frypan into the fire*. It is about danger. However, wolves do not hurt the ones of their own kind: Russ. *Волк волка не съест* – *volk volka ne est*. *Волк волком не травится* – *volk volkom ne travitsya*. *Волк волку хвоста не отдавит* – *volk volku khvosta ne otdavit* (The wolf will not eat the wolf. The wolf is not hunted by the wolf. The wolf will not bite the tail of the wolf). Moreover, the wolf in proverbs can also become a scapegoat: Russ. *На волка помолвка, а заяц кобылу съел*. *Na volka pomolvka, a zayats kobylu s'el* (The wolf is badmouthed, and the hare ate the mare).

The figure of wolf symbolizes the difficulties encountered by every person in their everyday lives: Russ. *Волков бояться — в лес не ходит* – *volkov boaytsya v les ne khodit'*. (If you're afraid of wolves, don't go into the forest): c.f. Kalm. *Chonas aasn kyn mal oskdg uga* (A man who is afraid of wolves does not breed cattle).

The figure of wolf is associated with energy and vigorous activity, rejection of a passive lifestyle: c.f. Russ. *Волка ноги кормят* – *volka nogi kormyat* (Feet feed the wolf); Mong. *Hooltoy chono hongild, hooson chono homorgond* (A wolf with food is in a cave (in its lair, at home), a wolf without prey is in the hunting field). But even an old maid can have a bad day: Kalm. *Ol ergsn chon havkhdg tordg* “The wolf that often visits sheep falls into a trap.”

Idioms reflected a superstitious idea that even one reference to the wolf can invite trouble: the Russian proverb *Помянули волка, а волк тут!* – *potyanuli*

volka, a volk tut (They recalled the wolf, and the wolf is here!) is connected in meaning with the expression *легок на помине – lyogok na pomine* (Talk of the devil and he is sure to appear) (The wolf was mentioned, and the wolf is here; Once we've talked of the wolf, and he is towards).

The wolf embodies a mean, hypocritical person who should not be trusted: Russ. *Как волка ни корми, он все в лес смотрит – kak volka ni kormi, on v les smotrit* (No matter how well you feed the wolf, he keeps looking into the forest, c.f. Kalm. *Chonyn kichgig kedu asrv chign, chik khalədg uga* 'No matter how big a wolf cub can grow, it will not look the right way; Kalm. *Chonyn kichgig surhəj boldg uga* 'You cannot tame a wolf cub'; Kalm. *Chonyn kichgig kedu asrv chign, nokha boldgo* 'No matter how well you feed a wolf, he will not become a dog'. These proverbs are often used in a situation where a person forgets all the good done to him, appreciates absolutely nothing and does not feel gratitude.

The wolf's habits are ineradicable and cannot be tamed: Russ. *Волк каждый год линяет, а нрава не меняет – volk kazhdyi god linyaet, a nrava ne menyaet* (A wolf changes its fur (sheds) every year, but does not change its temper); c.f. Kalm. *Cholug bushlvchn – devshgo, chonyg surhvchn – kelshgo* (No matter how to boil a stone, it will not get wet, No matter how to train a wolf, it will not speak); Kalm. *Chon, Khotan idchkad, uul tal khəlanə, Kyn, Khotan idchkad, ger talan khəlanə* 'A well-fed wolf aspires (looks) to the mountains, a well-fed man strives home (looks towards its house). Another Kalmyk example: *Газahasн хэлэхлэ – naadha, dotrasн хэлэхлэ – chon* (Look outside – a toy, look inside – a wolf), c.f. Russ. *волк в овечьей шкуре – volk v ovechei shkure* (Wolves in sheep's clothing).

In proverbs, the wolf is opposed to different animals. The Russian proverb *Волк коню не товарищ – volk konyu ne tovarishch* (Wolf is not a friend to horse), contrasting a wolf to a horse, emphasizes that people different in character, status or position do not match. In Mongolian paremiology, a rabbit is trying to take the place of a wolf: Mong. *Chonyn ezguid chandaga noyon* (In the absence of a wolf, a rabbit is a noion).

The German zoolexeme of *Wolf* (*волк – volk – wolf*) is found in many phraseological units and proverbs. The German APU explicate the image of a perpetually hungry wolf well: *hungrig wie ein Wolf* (as hungry as a wolf). *Ein Wolf lässt wohl seine Haare, aber nicht seine Nicken* (A wolf probably leaves its hair, but does not nod); Ger. *Auch der Wolf will satt werden* (A wolf also wants to be sated).

The APU *sich bessern wie ein junger Wolf* (to get better as a young wolf) reminds of an unsuccessful attempt to fix something, which led to the worst: to deteriorate, to get worse, c.f. *из кулька да в рогожку исправляться – iz kul'ka da v rogozhku ispravlyat'sya* (to be corrected from a bag into a matting); *den Wolf bei den Ohren halten* (hold the wolf by the ears): about what can neither be canceled nor completed.

"German" wolves do not hurt the ones of their own kind: *Ein Wolf kennt den anderen Wohl*. c.f. *Рыбак*

рыбака видит издалека – rybak rybaka vidit izdaleka (Birds of a feather flock together).

The wolf cannot be trusted: *den Wolf zum Hirten machen* (to turn a wolf into a shepherd); entrusting a task to someone who is not at all qualified to perform it. c.f. *Пусть козла в огород – pustit' kozla v ogorod* (Give the sheep in care of the wolf).

The Germans use the figure of wolf to condemn laziness and idleness: *Selten bekommt liegender Wolf einen Schinken* (A lying wolf rarely gets ham). *Ein Wolf im Schlaffing nie ein Schaf* (A sleeping wolf did not catch a single sheep). *Schlafendem Wolf läuft kein Schaf ins Maul* (A sheep does not run into the mouth of a sleeping wolf).

A figurative characteristic given to the wolf primarily stems from aggression. The wolf has a negative effect on others, it relates to a person who sets a contagious bad example: *Bei Wölfen und Eulen lernt man das Heulen* (Wolves and owls teach to howl (hoot): Live with wolves, howl like wolves. *Mit den Wölfen muss man heulen* (One must howl with wolves). *Heult mit den Wölfen* (someone howls with wolves): someone sings along with others.

Their habits, their nature of the beast are inextinguishable: *Der Wolf ändert wohl das Haar, doch bleibt er, wie er war* (Although wolves shed, they remain the same). *Der Wolf stirbt in seiner Haut* (A wolf dies in its own skin). The image of the wolf is used to objectify a whole "bunch" of negatively perceived qualities (duplicity, hypocrisy, greed, deceit and betrayal). The idiom *ein Wolf im Schafspelz* (wolves in sheep's clothing) sarcastically describes an extremely selfish person who wrong others. *Der Wolf frisst auch die gezählten Schafe* (A wolf also eats counted sheep): c.f. *Волк в овечьей шкуре – volk v ovechei shkure* (Wolves in sheep's clothing).

APU allegorically warn that in response to excessive gullibility, you can get black ingratitude: *dem Wolfe die Jungen aufziehen* (raise wolf cubs): instead of gratitude, receive an unexpected blow from someone you constantly cared about, whom you favored, did something good, whom you saved, rescued, c.f. Russ. *пригреть змею на груди – prigret' zmeyu na grudi* (to cherish a viper in bosom).

You should not say the wolf's name needlessly: *Wenn man vom Wolfe spricht, ist er nicht weit (guckt er über die Hecke)* 'When you talk about a wolf, it is not far away (it looks through the bushes)': whoever mentions evil, it overtakes those. Other examples: *Wer vom Wolf spricht, findet ihn an seiner Tür* (Those who talk about a wolf finds it at their door) = *Wenn man den Wolf nennt, kommt er gerennt* (If you mention a wolf, it comes). *Wie ein Wolf in der Fabel* (Like a wolf in a fable): Speak of the wolf.

The wolf quite often appears in APU together with the lamb (sheep): *Lehre den Wolf das Vaterunser, er sagt doch Lamm* (Teach a wolf the Lord's Prayer but it keeps saying "lamb"): *Как волка ни корми, а он все в лес смотрит – kak volka ne kormi, on vse v les smotrit* (once a wolf always a wolf; no matter how you feed a wolf, it keeps looking towards the forest). Other examples: *Wann der Wolf das Maul leckt, so gelust dem*

Wolf nach dem Lamm (When a wolf licks its mouth, it craves a lamb). *Das Lamm beim Wolf verpfänden* (trust the lamb to the wolf): *Пусть козла в огород – пусть козла в огород* (Give the sheep in care of the wolf). *Wer sich zum Lamm macht, den fressen die Wölfe* (Whoever makes themselves a lamb will be eaten by wolves): c.f. Russ. Don't pretend to be a sheep, the wolf will eat you. *Es grüßt kein Wolf ein Lamm* (The wolf does not greet the sheep).

People should not be afraid and allow fears to seize them; you should do what you enjoy or benefit: *Wer Sich Vor Dem Wolf Fürchtet, Geht Nicht in Den Wald* (*Волков бояться — в лес не ходит – volkov boaytsya v les ne khodit*). (If you're afraid of wolves, don't go into the forest). *Geschrei Macht Den Wolf Grosser Als Er Ist* (howling makes a wolf greater than it is): c.f. Russ. *He так страшен черт, как его малюют – ne tak strashen chyort, kak ego малыуют* (the lion is not so fierce as he is painted).

The figure of wolf is quite ambivalent: on the one hand, it is a symbol of experience, on the other, the wolf is aggressive, rude, ruthless, hypocritical. The American folklorist Donald Ward [16] writes about the contradictory character of the wolf.

7 Conclusion

The authors obtained the results of a comparative analysis of one basic zoonomination fixed in phraseological and paremiological systems of four languages. The paper, through the example of a key animalistic marker of *wolf* employed in different linguistic cultures, provides a comparative analysis of the corresponding zoolexeme in different languages, based on ethnolinguistic commentary of the image, which resulted in a clear idea of this wild animal.

Having analyzed the key zoo-lexeme used to convey a proverbial and phraseological animal, it shows that in the languages above, APU and APMT reveal both similarities and differences. Accordingly, three groups are distinguished: equivalents, analogues and non-equivalent units, which are considered for their national and cultural specifics. Particular attention is paid to the symbolism of the image of the animal, what associations it elicits, and, consequently, what personal qualities are most valued or condemned in the analyzed linguistic cultures. The paremiological and phraseological activity of the considered zoolexeme in a particular language indicates the level of significance this animal has for a given nation.

The figure of the animal presented in Russian APUs and zoo proverbs has much in common with Mongolian, Kalmyk and German languages. Despite being very similar, the image in the compared languages is nationally specific. A comparative analysis of APU and APMT showed that, along with full equivalents, there are some differences in their figurativeness and semantic meaning, which must be taken into account when translating texts from one language to another. Therefore, only being good at the linguocultural code (LC) of each of the languages (here the zoocode), you

can most adequately understand the meaning of a proverb or phraseological unit [4, 8–10]. Its core can be represented as a proverbial idea (proverbial condensate), expressing in a compressed form through the LC the meaning of the proverb. Proverbs combined in one way with similar meanings form a universal soft ethnic proverbial type, which can serve as a “unit of measurement” of the paremiological space. Here the notion of a frame as an element of the metalanguage of linguistic semantics plays an important role. Considering the meanings of proverbial statements from the point of view of frame theory will give a full-fledged systematic description of Russian proverbs and their foreign language equivalents.

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