

THE ROLE OF FOOD IDIOMS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

For centuries, the English language has been created by many nations introducing new words. Sayings reflect the history of the country and language, cultural phenomenon, the human wisdom and experience. Thus, a special layer in the language was formed connected with phraseology, it is a set of stable expressions – idioms or phraseological units having independent meaning which generally does not coincide with the literal translation.

Idioms and phraseological units can be characterized as lexical and linguistic material which adorns language, makes it structural and expressive, replacing cumbersome sentences by appropriate expressions [1. P. 348]. The main peculiarity of idioms is that their meaning is not the meaning of their components. For example, if we translate idiom «You took the cake» literally, we get «You have taken the cake», although the meaning of the idiom is «You have won (or you were the best)». Therefore, the study of English idiomatic expressions facilitates the reading of publicistic literature and fiction alike, it also enriches vocabulary. English idioms often have equivalents in the Russian language.

Comparison of phraseological units, which correspond to their form, meaning and stylistic nuance demonstrates not only the structural differences, but the imagery thinking of the British and Russian people.

Many idioms originated from colloquial speech and slang, the others can be presented as the result of specific historical circumstances. Sometimes in translation of set expressions context helps to understand the meaning, but it can not be always used, therefore it is important to know how they are translated and what their story is.

For example: «to be worth one's salt» – is expression meaning «someone getting a salary not for nothing», literally it is translated as «to be worthy of salt». Although today salt is one of the cheapest products in the history of mankind there have been periods when the salt was equal to gold [2. P. 624]. Even before the introduction of various preserving agents and technology capable of products conserving for a long time, salt was the only method available for it, making it expensive and irreplaceable. Thus, «to be worthy of salt» was a recognition of human rights importance.

In any language there are so many idioms and expressions, because we can divide them into thematic subgroups. The main aim of

the given article is to present and analyze idioms which relate to food, and give a more detailed description of the structure and content of phraseological units connected to the subject.

As food is a fundamental principle of human physical existence in almost every culture it finds important ceremonial, ritual and symbolic meanings connected with lexical and phraseological level of language.

Theoretical significance of the given article is in clarifying definitions of cultural features in the sphere of food for reflection of cultural identity of the British nation.

In English, many set expressions with the words denoting food are formed. Despite the fact that the English and Russian languages are very different, the meaning of some idiomatic expressions coincides.

There are many phraseological units related to food, which are classified into groups, for example: apple idioms, bean idioms and others.

In the given work the most frequently used and popular idioms which we can find in spoken English are presented.

To understand the idioms in detail it is necessary to point out the most important methods of translation used in modern science.

1. Idiomatic equivalent method. This method is used in the Russian language for direct translation, for example: food for thought - food for the mind, the salt of the earth- salt of the earth, swallow the pill-swallowing (bitter) pill.

2. Method of idiomatic analogue. In the absence of idiomatic equivalent, we should choose the idiom with the same figurative meaning, but based on other words. For example: as like as two peas, in English it sounds like «as like as two peas» in the Russian language there is an analogue of «similar like two water drops».

3. Descriptive translation. This translation is done using free phrases. Descriptive translation is used when there are no idiom equivalents and analogues in Russian, such as: cook (someone's) goose «cook someone's goose» – hurt somebody mischief; cut the mustard «cut the mustard», to achieve the desired.

4. Antonymic translation. This method consists in the transfer of negative values using assertive design or vice versa, for example: to keep one's head – not to lose their heads, to keep one's head above water – do not go into debt, to keep one's pecker up – do not lose heart.

5. Tracing (literal translation). Tracing phraseological units may be applied only if the transfer is obtained for adequate understanding by Russian reader and does not resemble unnatural generally accepted standards of the Russian language.

6. Combined translation. This method is used when the Russian analogue can not fully convey the meaning of English idioms. Then the descriptive translation is applied and Russian analogue to compare, for example: carry coals to Newcastle-»to carry coals to Newcastle», that is to carry anything where there is a lot of it – Russian analogue of it is the «to go to Tula with one’s own samovar».

The article describes the most frequently used and common idioms found in spoken English. They should be presented according to the type of food mentioned.

Apple idioms

1. Apple of (someone’s) eye – «яблоко глаза» – delight the eye. For example: Lucy is the apple of her mother’s eye.

2. Apple pie order – «порядок яблочного пирога» – perfect order. For example: In my sister’s room apple pie order reigns always.

3. Bad apple/rotten apple – «плохое/гнилое яблоко» – a bad man. For example: The boy is a bad apple and he is always in some kind of trouble.

4. Compare apples and oranges – «сравнивать яблоки и апельсины» – compare things that it is impossible to compare. For example: It was like as comparing apples and oranges when we compared our new boss to our old boss.

5. Polish the apple – «полировать яблоко» – flatter someone. For example: Nobody likes the girl because she is always polishing the apple with her teacher.

Cake idioms

1. Eat one’s cake and have it too – «иметь торт и есть его» – to reconcile the irreconcilable. For example: The man refuses to give up anything and he always wants to eat his cake and have it too.

2. Icing on the cake – «сахарная глазурь на торте» – something that makes a good situation even better. For example: The purple color of my new car is the icing on the cake.

3. A slice of the cake – «ломтик пирога» – share with anyone (including money). For example: Two brothers always did a slice of the cake from each other.

4. Piece of cake – «кусочек пирога» – a task that is easy to perform. For example: To translate the text into Latin is the piece of cake for her.

Egg idioms

1. Bad egg – «плохое яйцо» – a bad person. For example: I count my neighbor is bad egg after his offense.

2. Egg (someone) on / egg on (someone) – incite, instigate someone. For example: Boys egged their friend on to swim across the river.

3. Good egg – «хорошее яйцо» – Well done! For example: You are good egg, not everyone can do it!

4. You can't make an omelette without breaking the eggs – «вы не сможете сделать омлет, не разбив яиц» – it is impossible to do anything without problems. For example: You can't make an omelette without breaking the eggs and problems will not pass you, when you'll make this project.

Potato

1. Couch potato – «диванная картошка» – lazy people, who almost all the time watch television. For example: My husband has become a couch potato, he should walk more.

2. Drop (someone/something) like a hot potato – «уронить, как горячую картошку» – stop doing something. For example: I can't carry on to do karate so I have decided to drop it like a hot potato.

3. Hot potato – «горячая картошка» – thorny subject. For example: My relationship with parents is hot potato for me.

4. Meat and potatoes – «мясо и картофель» – simple food, simple tastes. For example: The man is a meat-and-potatoes person who enjoys the simple pleasures of life.

5. Small potatoes – «маленькая картошка» – small stuff / small men. For example: Severities of sitting with baby are small potatoes for me because I have worked in the kindergarten.

In one work, it is impossible to collect and analyze the diversity of English idioms and Russian phraseological units, even in one taken theme – food.

To read and understand the original English text, it is important to understand English idioms. They help to perceive the foreign language, as well as pay attention to our mother tongue. In order to translate idioms into Russian correctly, it is necessary to use special dictionaries, it is very important to convey the meaning of idioms and reflect its imagery, finding similar expression in the Russian language.

References

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