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## **CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF IDIOMS FROM THE COGNITIVE SEMANTIC PERSPECTIVE**

*The paper summarizes findings of a cognitive semantic analysis of the English and Ukrainian motion idioms that determined common aspects of motion representation by the idioms and found a different division of the corresponding fragment of reality, certain semantic characteristics, and lacunary zones. Cross-linguistic verbal patterns of motion are underpinned by universal conceptual structures, while peculiarities of national cognition condition different configuration of conceptual features within the models of the motion concept.*

As a fundamental ontological category, motion belongs to the earliest experiences in our life; it is a basic human concept with various ways of representation and projection onto other conceptual domains in different languages. It has been shown by numerous linguistic surveys, from the pioneering work of Talmy [1] to recent cross-linguistic studies [2; 3], that human languages conceptualize and express motion differently, although there exist typological universals.

The research is conducted within the framework of cognitive linguistics underpinned by three fundamental principles: the primacy of semantics in linguistic analysis, the encyclopedic nature of linguistic meaning, and the perspectival nature of linguistic meaning [4, p. 5]. From the standpoint of cognitive linguistics, human cognition mediates the relationship between language and reality. Linguistic categories and constructions are largely motivated by our bodily and mental experiences of the world and the ways we perceive and conceptualize reality [5, p. 2].

The main method of cognitive linguistics is conceptual analysis [6; 7; 8], which is a logical extension of the traditional semantic analysis: while it

is enough for semantic analysis to detect semantic components that contribute to adequate interpretation of a sign, the ultimate goal of conceptual analysis is to build a conceptual model of an information fragment, which is fixed by this sign [9, p. 85]. Thus, the key to the understanding of mental categories, including motion in space, is the analysis of language data, mainly studied by means of semantic analysis [10, p. 81]. The meaning of linguistic units is “built into” the structure of knowledge about the world, so the data obtained from semantic analysis (of lexical and phraseological units, of structural patterns in the system of language, and also of texts) provide access to units of the cognitive plan [11, p. 5; 12, p. 91].

For the analysis we chose idioms as the most colorful and expressive part of vocabulary, which represents conceptual dependence of idiom components on the cultural knowledge, our understanding of the world, and stereotypical figurativeness [13, p. 210]. The corpus of the analyzed phraseological units contains 330 Ukrainian and 340 English motion idioms selected by means of continuous sampling from lexicographical sources. The use of these operational units is verified by two criteria: first, by inclusion of the motion idioms into lexicographical registers and, secondly, by examples of communicative (discourse) use.

The effectiveness of comparative analysis is determined by the choice of the basis of comparison – an extralinguistic notion (or a phenomenon) not belonging to any of the compared languages deductively determined by means of a metalanguage. On the basis of current provisions of comparative studies we identified the *tertium comparationis* of our research to be the model of the concept MOTION.

In the linguistic consciousness the concept MOTION embodies both naïve and scientific ideas about motion, which make it complex and multi-dimensional with a number of relevant conceptual features grouped around the center of the concept formed by the gestalt idea of motion – prototypical model “subject + action/change + locus”. The conceptual features of MOTION include the deictic features DIRECTION and LOCALIZATION, TRAJECTORY (correlative with the concept PATH), MEDIUM, MANNER, INTENSITY, and MOTIVE that are differently distributed within the English and Ukrainian models of MOTION. The features determine the choice of linguistics means, motion idioms in particular, that explicate meaningful characteristics of the concept MOTION in speech.

In most cases English and Ukrainian motion idioms have a head verb, the conceptual features DIRECTION and LOCALIZATION are verbalized by means of verb prefixation (in Ukrainian), with the help of contextual specifiers, adverbial and prepositional elements (including adverbial motion idioms), e.g.:

*І принесла таки лиха година отого лаща, отого непросипленого п'янюгу, – зашепотів Єремія до Гризельди [CTUL].*

The use of the prefixal verb *принесла* without specifying the endpoint of motion is understood as ‘brought here, in the direction of the speaker’.

In the English language the major role is played by prepositions, adverbs, and postpositions, e.g.:

*He ploughed his way along, head down [UERPD].*

The idiom *to plough one's way* conveys unidirectional movement. The postposition *along* in conjunction with the idiom denotes directed movement of the object along the trajectory of motion.

Although the parameters of idiomatic conceptualization of MOTION by the English and Ukrainian units are largely isomorphic, comparison found a couple of lacunary zones and different detailing of the described fragment of reality. In most cases the English motion idioms depict motion with many more details. For example, in the corpus of the Ukrainian motion idioms there are no units that indicate motion through a reference point, while the English sample is represented by 12 idioms built by the model “verb + locative (*way*)”. The brightest image is formed by the verb *to worm*, which describes complicated movement through a crowd likening the moving object to a creeping worm, e.g.:

*‘Excuse me,’ he said. The woman didn’t react. He touched her jacket and tried again: ‘Excuse me?’ The woman turned and looked at Nick as if he were slathered in shit, then stepped several millimeters to the left. He wormed his way past her and through the audience and into the reporters’ area [COCA].*

The predominant type of relations between the analyzed idioms is interlanguage phraseological synonymy; there are also equivalent motion idioms in the English and Ukrainian languages. For example, the equivalent comparative motion idioms *ходить як тінь* and *to move like a shadow* mean ‘to move silently, furtively in order to remain unnoticed’:

*А попри ті двері й засуви в кожному коридорі ходив, як тінь, навшпиньках стандартний наглядач, – ходив нечутно й до чогось прислухався, витягуючи шию, мов пец [CTUL].*

*Johnny Action Space Punk is a resident of Jersey City. His stated mission is to entertain, challenge readers, and use foul language. He moves silently, like a shadow in the night collecting dirt on the powers that be. Now he calls on a silent army of many to expose the corrupt and irretrievably stupid around town [GloWbE].*

We can state that the isomorphic prototypical model of motion is verbalized by the English and Ukrainian idioms with some special features due to different structures of the languages and specific perception of the

world by English and Ukrainian speakers. Further research is to determine whether the multiple lacunary zones in the Ukrainian verbalization of motion are conditioned by the absence of corresponding idioms or by peculiarities of lexicographic practice.

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### **Dictionaries and corpora**

14. COCA = Davies, Mark. The Corpus of Contemporary American English: 450 million words, 1990-present. Available online at <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>.

15. CTUL = [The Corpus of Texts of the Ukrainian Language]. Available online at <http://www.mova.info/corpus.aspx>

16. GloWbE = Davies, Mark. The Corpus of Global Web-Based English: 1.9 billion words from speakers in 20 countries. Available online at <http://corpus.byu.edu/glowbe/>.

17. UERPD [Unabridged English-Russian phraseological dictionary] = Кунин, А. В. Большой англо-русский фразеологический словарь: Около 20000 фразеологических единиц / А. В. Кунин. – М.: Живой язык, 2005. – 1210 с.