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# FORMATION OF LANGUAGE PERSONALITY AS A REFLECTION OF CONTEMPORARY PROCESSES OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The article deals with role and significance of phraseologically marked units of the formation of a secondary linguistic personality. The aim of this study is determination of the place and role of idiomatically colored units in the formation of the linguistic consciousness of foreign students.

The article gives a detailed analysis of class of lexical units from the position of their ability to reflect the extralinguistic reality that forms the linguistic picture of the world of two ethnic groups — Russian and Arabic. Phraseological units are compared, representing a mental essence lying deep in the mind of a person. The formation of a secondary linguistic personality reflects a new system of values and allows a new way to model the process of teaching Russian to foreign students. The main idea of the article is as phraseologisms help to understand the national and cultural identity of the speakers of the language studied by foreign students, as well as to establish a dialogue of cultures.

The article is of interest to linguists who study the formation of language personality. The article is of great help to teachers who work with foreign students.

**Key words**: secondary linguistic personality, phraseological unit, linguistic picture of the world, dialogue of cultures.

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# ASYMMETRIES OF EMBODIMENT: WHY THE BODY BOTH HELPS AND HINDERS OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

This essay deals with the issue of how and why the body both helps and hinders our understanding of the world. There is a curious dichotomy at work between two aspects of embodiment when it comes to meaning-making. On the one hand, we regard the experiences immediately related to the body as inherently meaningful and rely on them to make sense of more abstract ideas. On the other hand, it is common to speak about the ineffability of subjective experience. In this essay, I argue that literary scholars and linguists need to outline the contours of the underlying tension between meaningful and incomprehensible bodily experiences.

**Key words**: asymmetry, comprehension, embodied realism, embodiment, metaphor, language

On 2 June 2014, shortly after 3pm, I was talking to my mother on the phone when I heard an explosion on the other end. My mother was at home in the city of Luhansk in eastern Ukraine, when rockets hit the regional administration building close to her block of flats. I had left my home town a few weeks before, because my then employers – a team of international observers – had decided to move to another location for safety. As their language assistant, I followed them because staying seemed unreasonable in view of the developing conflict. During the phone call, I was hundreds of kilometres away from my mother, and my new employers (another monitoring team) had just been detained by armed men. I was supposed to come back to Luhansk, but the escalation caused my plans to fall apart. I could relate to my mother's voice on the phone. It was familiar and understandable. We shared our worries and tried to process the rapidly unfolding events. The war had not yet distorted our perception, and the blast did not make sense to us when we heard it. My mother's voice, which had given meaning to much of my life, was shattered by a sensory assault that resists description. In what follows, I argue that the juxtaposition of the deeply meaningful with the incomprehensible and inexpressible is far from extraordinary. On the contrary, it is one of the fundamental asymmetries that shape our lives.

In *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), Maurice Merleau-Ponty argued that we are our bodies [1]. Today embodiment is one of the key ideas in cognitive psychology. From this perspective, sensory impressions, emotions and even abstract thoughts are the product of the body. The mind is part of the body. In its turn, the body interacts with its environment and cannot be abstracted from the world in which it is situated. All meaning emerges through the interaction between the body and its environment. Merleau-Ponty suggests that we make sense "by being this body and this situation" [1: 525].

There is a curious tension at work between two aspects of embodiment when it comes to meaning-making. On the one hand, we regard the experiences immediately related to the body as inherently meaningful, and rely on them to make sense of more abstract ideas. On the other, it is common to speak about the ineffability of subjective experience. Language and conscious thought do not encompass all that we feel and perceive.

If I say that something is a "hot topic", I am using the embodied experience of heat to comprehend, and make comprehensible, the abstract idea of importance or relevance. However, the same sense of heat might defy my capacity for intellectual comprehension and self-expression in the case of a painful burn. I might engage figurative speech to say that it hurts as if I were on the surface of the sun, or I might choose to swear to alleviate my pain or not to speak about it at all. In this second case, the embodied experience of heat becomes incomprehensible and inexpressible in literal thought and language.

Embodiment appears to be ambivalent: it both creates and confounds meaning. The first facet of this ambivalence has recently drawn the attention of cognitive psychologists, linguists and philosophers, whereas the second has long been intuited by the practitioners of meaning-making, including dancers, writers and everyday speakers of natural language. Both aspects have been explored separately in philosophy, psychology and linguistics, but their interplay has not been previously in the limelight of research. To fill this lacuna, literary scholars, psychologists and linguists will need to outline the contours of the underlying tension between meaningful and incomprehensible bodily experiences.

This conundrum can be thought of in highly specific terms such as metaphor and sensory impressions, and at the same time it can be scaled up to the general ambivalence of human existence. The imbalance between meaningful embodiment and ineffable bodily experience both plays out in everyday language and lies at the heart of being human.

In Philosophy in the Flesh (1999), George Lakoff and Mark Johnson devise the paradigm of "embodied realism" and argue that our bodies give meaning to thought and language [2]. On this view, reason is embodied, largely metaphorical and mostly unconscious. First, the mind cannot be separated from the body: "what we call 'mind' and what we call 'body' are not two things, but rather aspects of one organic process, so that all meaning, thought, and language emerge from the aesthetic dimensions of this embodied activity" [3: 1]. Second, we often create new meaning by metaphorically associating abstract phenomena with familiar experiences. In their evocatively titled article "Metaphors We Think With", Lera Boroditsky and Paul Thibodeau give empirical evidence in support of the idea that "metaphors have profound influences on how we conceptualize and act" [4: 1]. In his major new book Behave: The Biology of Humans at Our Best and Worst (2017), Robert Sapolsky highlights the significance of metaphorical thought and writes that it must be an evolutionarily recent skill that we have not yet mastered [5: 553-579]. Finally, most cognitive processes remain under the radar of consciousness. Not only breath, but also abstract thought can be unconscious. In A Skeptic's Guide to the Mind (2013), Robert Burton recognizes that "without unconscious cognition, there would be no complex thought" [6: 66].

We intuitively use touch, vision, temperature, space, motion, balance and force to understand politics, social interaction, language, time, causation, physical processes and other ideas. It is true that all these concepts are ultimately embodied, but our sensorimotor experiences are more directly related to the body than are politics or time. Theoretical approaches to the study of the mind account for the processes that allow people to understand more abstract ideas with the help of concrete phenomena. According to this line of argument, embodied experience facilitates the understanding of less tangible entities. In linguistic and psychological research, it is commonly assumed that embodiment underlies everyday meaning-making. We speak about feeling warmth when receiving acts of kindness. In English and other languages, loneliness is associated with being cold. To discuss time, we use spatial language and categories of motion. Sounds are described using our understanding of space and touch: voices can be characterized as high or low, soft or flat. Embodiment empowers us to make sense of the world.

The relationship between embodiment and meaning-making, however, can be less propitious. We often struggle to express our feelings and sensory impressions, and we reach for familiar images to present them figuratively. In such cases, language appears to lack the means to help us comprehend and represent our bodily experience, and we fall back on metaphor and metonymy, or admit that words fail us. Furthermore, it can be challenging to reflect on our feelings and perception. We do not know ourselves because we do not understand our bodies. Such embodiment is no less real or immediately relatable than those sensorimotor experiences that illuminate other ideas. Yet we have difficulty comprehending it and seem to lack the tools to speak about it. We miss Ludwig Wittgenstein's "private language" that would allow us to "refer to what can only be known to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations" [7: 89°, §243].

Because much of what we think and feel is unconscious, we are not fully aware of our embodiment. As a result, the body does not always make sense to us. We tend to take the body for granted without recognizing its limitations or potential bias. The instrument that we use to measure the world is not precise. How can we be expected to understand the world and present it in language with the help of such an imperfect tool?

In her recent essay "The Curse of the Perceptual", Patricia Kolaiti observes that "when trying to communicate phenomenal states, speakers are, more often than not, likely to see themselves stumble and fall" [8: 62]. For example, it can be extremely difficult to describe dance moves or facial expressions. When somebody exclaims: "You should have seen his face!", it is far from clear what it means. Not only is it challenging to speak about the emotion giving rise to the observable physiological change, but it can be hard to explain the physical movements themselves. Such sensorimotor experiences and emotions may lack their own concrete language.

When we are overwhelmed with pain and suffering, or joy and happiness, language reveals its limitations, even though it might let us express such bodily experiences by way of figurative images. In the best-case scenario, ideas that are presumably less relatable to the body serve as tools to elucidate how our bodies feel and perceive the world. For instance, we can say that we are *on cloud nine*, or *down in the dumps*. Neither "cloud" nor "dumps" intimately relates to the body but being up or down is inherently meaningful thanks to our natural ability to maintain our body orientation, and it helps us reflect on euphoria and melancholy. Unfortunately, we often neglect our feelings and misunderstand thought, and hence we cannot register the biases and needs of our fragile bodies. Metaphors can help us make sense of ourselves, but they can also mislead and obscure our thoughts and feelings.

There is a strange asymmetry between the way our bodies shed light on things around us, and those moments when we fail to understand and express how those same bodies feel, look and function. Some bodily experiences are directly accessible in thought and easily expressible in language, whereas other aspects of embodiment are ineffable and hard to grasp. This agrees well with Merleau-Ponty's observation that "radical reflection amounts to a consciousness of its own dependence on an unreflective life which is its initial situation, unchanging, given once and for all" [1: xvi].

Embodiment makes possible our understanding of the world, but we do it imperfectly because our bodies have their weaknesses. In the paradigm of embodied realism, all meaning is created by the body and can help it survive and flourish. Merleau-Ponty, who can be regarded as one of the predecessors of embodied realism, remarks that "because we are in the world, we are condemned to meaning" [1: xxii]. Our bodies, however, do not always make sense, because they are fundamentally limited: we misunderstand, make mistakes, hallucinate, create false memories and forget; in the end, our bodies age and die. While knowledge is highly useful, it remains deeply flawed. The body both constructs and undermines our image of reality. This unresolved imbalance merits careful thought.

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## АСИМЕТРІЇ ВТІЛЕННЯ: ЧОМУ ТІЛО ЯК ДОПОМАГАЄ, ТАК І ПЕРЕШКОДЖАЄ НАШОМУ РОЗУМІННЮ СВІТУ

У статті мова йде про те, як і чому тіло як допомагає, так і перешкоджає нашому розумінню світу. Коли відбувається смислоутворення, виникає цікаве напруження між двома особливостями втілення? З одного боку, ми розглядаємо досвід, що безпосередньо пов'язаний з тілом, як сутнісно значущий і покладаємося на нього, щоб осмислити більш абстрактні ідеї. З іншого — загальновідомою є думка про невимовність суб'єктивного досвіду. У цій статті автор стверджує, що літературознавці та лінгвісти повинні накреслити контури фундаментальної взаємодії між значущими та незрозумілими тілесними переживаннями.

Ключові слова: асиметрія, втілений реалізм, втілення, метафора, мова, розуміння.

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## АСИММЕТРИИ ВОПЛОЩЕНИЯ: ПОЧЕМУ ТЕЛО КАК ПОМОГАЕТ, ТАК И ПРЕПЯТСТВУЕТ НАШЕМУ ПОНИМАНИЮ МИРА

В статье речь идет о том, как и почему тело как помогает, так и препятствует нашему пониманию мира. Когда происходит построение смыслов, возникает интересное напряжение между двумя аспектами воплощения? С одной стороны, мы рассматриваем опыт, непосредственно связанный с телом, как существенно значимый и полагаемся на него, чтобы осмыслить более абстрактные идеи. С другой — общеизвестным является мнение о невыразимости субъективного опыта. В этой статье автор утверждает,

что литературоведы и лингвисты должны наметить контуры фундаментального вза-имодействия между значимыми и непонятными телесными переживаниями.

**Ключевые слова**: асимметрия, воплощение, воплощенный реализм, метафора, понимание, язык.

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### ФРАЗЕОЛОГІЗМИ В КАЗКАХ ВОЛОДИМИРА КОРОТКЕВИЧА: СЕМАНТИКО-СТИЛІСТИЧНА ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКА ТА ВІДОБРАЖЕННЯ В СУЧАСНІЙ БІЛОРУСЬКІЙ ФРАЗЕОГРАФІЇ

У статті розглянуто найчастотніші фразеологічні одиниці в казках класика білоруської літератури другої половини XX ст. Володимира Короткевича крізь призму їхньої семантико-стилістичної характеристики. Виявлено, що в найповніших фразеографічних кодексах сучасної білоруської літературної мови не описана певна кількість фразеологізмів, що засвідчені у творчості цього письменника. Існують усі підстави для введення низки проаналізованих зворотів до фраземної норми сучасної білоруської літературної мови.

**Ключові слова**: фразеологічна одиниця, фразеологія білоруської мови, сучасна білоруська літературна мова, Володимир Короткевич, фразеографічний кодекс.

Володимир Короткевич (1930—1984), класик білоруської літератури, широко відомий своїми творами в найрізноманітніших жанрах. Важко знайти яскравішу постать у білоруській літературі другої половини XX ст. Поет, автор численних повістей, оповідань, романів, В. Короткевич також писав казки. Деякі з них екранізовано за допомогою засобів анімації. Наприклад мультфільм "Кому чорт діток колише" (біл. "Каму чорт дзетак кальша") (1992) створено на основі казки В. Короткевича "Чортаў скарб". Мультфільм "Дід" (біл. "Дзед") (2009), як зазначено в титрах, засновано на мотивах народних казок, однак, сюжет має спільні риси з казкою В. Короткевича "Немічний батько" ("Нямоглы бацька"). Письменник справді використовував сюжети народних казок, що робило його власну казкову прозу наближеною до білоруської фольклорної традиції.

Особливу увагу В. Короткевич приділяв питанню національної свідомості. Це можна продемонструвати й на прикладі його казок, що були спрямовані на виховання почуття людяності та любові до батьківщини. У "Казці про Петра-розбійника" (біл. "Казка пра Пятра-разбойніка") підкреслено думку, що колишній жахливий розбійник та вбивця здобув прощення навіть не за свої пізніші добрі справи, якими намагався спокутувати провину, а лише за знищення того, хто знущався з пам'яті матері та зі своєї рідної землі. В. Короткевич оформлює казки в стилі легенд, тяжіє до оповідної манери, яка нагадує його історичну прозу.

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