



RUSSIAN CULTURE IN PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

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Phraseology, as a branch of linguistics, clearly reflects cultural aspects, especially when analyzing the etymology of phraseological units and identifying the historical context that influenced the emergence of a particular expression. By studying the origin of phraseological units, one can often uncover cultural characteristics within them, as “almost all phraseological units carry elements of the culture of their respective ethnos” [4, p. 58–62].

Historical changes in social life, culture, and language play a significant role. Many elements enter Russian culture from other ethnic groups and become integrated, which, over time, makes it difficult to determine the origins of certain phenomena or words. Simultaneously, unique aspects of Russian culture may lose their relevance due to societal changes.

The phraseology of the Russian language reflects the worldview of the Russian people, influencing their thinking and behavior. By studying these stable expressions, one can discover information about the past and the foundations of popular culture. Russian phraseological units embody historical events, daily life, traditions, customs, beliefs, and cultural codes, making them important indicators of national identity.

Language reflects the uniqueness of national culture, encoding social customs and values through phraseological expressions. As a product of its environment and behavioral norms, language mirrors the realities of people’s lives. Phraseological constructions develop under the influence of various life situations, becoming an integral part of the language system and reflecting cultural aspects. As one scholar notes, “one of the basic principles of ethnolinguistics is the identification of culturally significant meanings in various forms of their embodiment. The systematic use of clothing elements as signs in the symbolic language of culture allows us to speak of the existence of a conceptual code of clothing” [6].

Phraseological units involving names of clothing items contain not only linguistic structures but also deep meanings that reflect the mentality and traditions of Russian society. Such expressions offer insights into how these garments were used in everyday life, making them a valuable element of the Russian phraseological system. The study of such expressions is particularly useful for foreign learners of Russian, as they contain significant cultural content.

Phraseological expressions may include words that have no full equivalents in other languages. When compared with similar concepts in other cultures, these words reveal





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unique content and convey culturally specific knowledge. Examples include *lapti* and *sarafan*.

“*Lapti* – footwear for women, men, and children, made from tree bark—mainly linden, willow, birch, elm, or juniper. These were low, lightweight shoes worn year-round, fastened to the foot with long cords called *obors*. In ancient and medieval Russia, *lapti* were common among rural populations, while townspeople rarely wore them, preferring leather shoes” [6, p. 28].

The *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* provides the following definition:

“*Sarafan* (from Turkic, originally Persian *serapa* – ‘honorable clothing’) is a traditional Russian women's garment—usually a sleeveless dress worn over a blouse or shirt” [1].

Furthermore, phraseological expressions reflect Russian culture through their prototypes—free word combinations that have evolved to encapsulate specific customs, traditions, daily life, historical events, and other cultural aspects.

Phraseological expressions are rightly considered vivid manifestations of a language’s national and cultural distinctiveness. Phraseology combines both general and culturally specific elements of language in a harmonious way. While national identity is evident on many linguistic levels—such as phonetics, morphology, word formation, and grammar—it is most prominently expressed in phraseology.

National identity may be understood as “the nation as a coherent whole, represented by unique traditions, culture, and language” [5]. It is closely associated with concepts such as identity, continuity, stability, self-identification, and ethnic belonging, and is characterized by distinct qualitative features [3]. These are encapsulated in such concepts as “cultural uniqueness” and “national linguistic features.”

Phraseological expressions indirectly convey the worldview of the people, the social structure, and the ideology of their time, serving as reflections of social life. Studying and analyzing phraseological expressions while learning a foreign language is a meaningful and engaging way to immerse oneself in its cultural heritage. At the phraseological level, the link between history, culture, and language becomes especially vivid. The national specificity of such expressions is shaped by the unique living conditions of native speakers. Phraseology also preserves archaic words, obsolete grammatical forms, and syntactic constructions, reflecting national customs, beliefs, legends, rituals, and traditions. The origin of phraseological expressions is closely tied to the life and history of the people: many are based on reinterpreted free word combinations, whose semantics reflect particular social realities.

In conclusion, phraseological expressions are important elements of the Russian language that illustrate and preserve the uniqueness of Russian life, traditions, customs, and national character. They reflect the wisdom of the people and cultural heritage, allowing for a deeper understanding of Russian culture and society.





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