Reflection of Religious Worldviews in Arabic, English, and Russian Phraseology

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ABSTRACT The present study is devoted to examination of reflections of religious worldviews in Arabic, English, and Russian phraseological funds. One of the tendencies in modern linguistics is directed to the study of relationship between language and culture as two forms of a nation's spiritual culture expression. Religious worldview reflected in a language as an important part of culture also throws light on a nation's self-identity, self-awareness, and worldviews as a whole. Nevertheless, a contrastive study of religious phraseological units in the mentioned languages has not been so far a topic for profound investigation. In order to describe reflections of religious worldviews; contrastive and typological methods, continuous selection methodology, conceptual analysis, componential analysis, as well as descriptive, definitional, and mathematical statistics was applied. As the research showed; common ideas on God, devil, angel, heaven, and other religious concepts, as well as unique religious worldview components were revealed in the three languages.

INTRODUCTION

Considering the importance of the topic, it should be noted that appearance of ethnolinguistics (that is, cultural linguistics) at the intersection of linguistics and culturology in the 20th century has raised academic interest of many researchers reflecting on relationships between language and culture. It is also regarded as a related branch of linguistics exploring the relationship between language and cultural conceptualizations (Sharifian 2011; Sharifian 2017), whose main field of investigation includes different national worldviews reflected in the system of language communication. According to Karasik (2004), Sharifian (2014) and Giles and Clair (2018), a rapidly growing interest in cultural linguistic studies can be explained by globalization of problems worldwide, need for knowing about situations in which misunderstanding can occur, importance of revealing values underlying communicative activities, integrative tendency of development of humanitarian studies, etc. (Karasik 2004; Rodley 2015).

Language and religion, being two different forms of spiritual national culture reflections, also demonstrate close relationships. The importance of the study of the interrelationship between language and religion is further observed within anthropological orientation of linguistics, since religion is taken into account as one of the most vital values of humanity reflected in language which can throw light upon national identity, self-awareness, as well as worldviews in general; which is one of the issues in linguocultural paradigm of linguistics. Religion also combines beliefs and actions to help people solve the problem of their existence. It is based on the belief in the existence of God. Moreover, it is considered as a combination of actions by which religious people can demonstrate their attitudes to God and rules of behavior which they must follow. Religious factors are so important in life of various nations, so it is impossible to imagine development and formation of a culture as a whole without incorporating peculiarities of religious perceptions of life (Hasanova 2014; Mattingly and Throop 2018).

Despite an outstanding number of studies on reflections of religious beliefs in languages, there are many white spots for investigation explained by rather newly existing and extensive fields of research. The study of numerous linguistic works devoted to different spheres of religion reflection in language (that is, religious worldviews in national languages, religious concepts, study of language features in religious texts, and reflection of religion in separate literal

works, etc.) has thus demonstrated absence of a contrastive study based on phraseological units in these three distant languages and cultures, since phraseology encodes religious beliefs and becomes a useful source to throw light on general and specific features in religious-linguistic worldviews of Arabic, Russian, and English speakers.

The present study was based on reflections of religious worldviews in phraseology with a special place in formation of a linguistic picture of the world demonstrating cross-cultural relationships, storing a system of values and public morals, serving as a "mirror" for identifying national consciousness, and reflecting a special vision of the world (Goshkheteliani 2013).

Objectives

The present study contributed to contrastive linguistic studies aimed at gaining a general understanding of relationships between language and culture, highlighting the necessity to describe national worldviews of speakers of different languages, creating dictionaries, taking into account the specificity of national languages in the process of foreign language learning and teaching, and performing a search on historical links of languages and cultures.

METHODOLOGY

This study was based on a contrastive linguistic method, as a subdiscipline of linguistics concerned with comparison of two or more languages in order to determine differences and similarities between them. In this work, contrastive description occurred at the collocation (that is, phraseological) level of linguistic structure; moreover, contrastive and typological methods, continuous selection methodology, conceptual analysis, componential analysis, as well as descriptive, definitional, mathematical statistics and others were used.

The study started with the examination of methodological basis in contrastive linguistics (Aijmer and Altenberg 2013; Arsenteva 2014), cognitive linguistics (Dancygier 2017; Karasik 2004; Maslova 2004; Stepanov 2001), and religious studies (Kryvelev 1968). The study of recent research works devoted to relationship between language and religion also showed

that Arabic, English, and Russian religious phraseological units had not been so far a topic for detailed contrastive work.

The key notions accepted in research come from cognitive linguistics in which one of the most important roles belongs to the notion as "a language picture of the world". In this study, it was expressed with the help of different linguistic means, as a socially important model of signs containing knowledge about the surrounding world. On the one hand, these linguistic means express a specific nation's experience, on the other hand, they are universal for humanity as a whole (Karasik 2004).

The unit to describe and to analyze the picture of the world is a concept. From many existing definitions of the "concept", Stepanov's cultuorogical view on the concept was adopted in which concept refers to an essential cell of culture in the mental world and culture itself consists of concepts and relationships between them (Stepanov 2001). Moreover, a concept is a semantic unit possessing linguocultural specificity and by this fact characterizing "owners" of a specific ethnic culture (Maslova 2004).

Having studied existing works on relationship between language and religion, the authors' main attention was turned to the study of phraseological units, reflecting religious worldviews. Kryvelev's definition of the religious worldview was also accepted as a type of worldview containing beliefs in supernatural phenomena and their reality which could help in distinguishing it from non-religious one (Kryvelev 1968). Beliefs about God and His will, requirements for people; beliefs about people, society, world, religious ethics, and religious legal ideas and norms; as well as beliefs about cults and church organization also lie in the content of religious worldview. In view of authors, all of the above-described ideas are represented in phraseological units reflecting religious worldviews. Moreover, the criterion for selection of phraseological units was their religious etymological origins and reflections of views on religious concepts. The etymological classification of more than 1000 religious phraseological units in these three languages and cultures was thus presented, phraseological equivalents and unique phraseological units were then revealed, and ultimately common and

specific linguistic characteristics of religious worldviews were given.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Holy Scriptures of Christians and Muslims, that is, the Bible and the Holy Quran, respectively, have enormously influenced development of national languages and have also become an important source of international phraseology. Arabic, English, and Russian linguistic funds are not exceptions and many idiomatic phrases in these languages originate from the Holy books. Despite the fact that Arabic culture considers the Holy Quran to be its Holy Scripture and English and Russian pay respect to the Bible, phraseological equivalents can be found in all three languages. For example, equivalents of the English phrase of "forbidden fruit" are present in Russian as well as in Arabic and many other languages. This fact, from authors' point of view, is explained by borrowings of phraseological units of Biblical origin in Arabic, unity of numerous plots described in the Bible and the Holy Quran, and the fact that both religions have Abrahamic origin.

Another example is when names of biblical characters such as "Adam", "Noah", "the Virgin Mary" and others are observed in Arabic phraseology. For example, Arabic people say that "every Adam will find his Eve". In the Arabic language, there are also phraseological units of Quranic origin in which the wisdom of this memorial of Arabic literature is reflected. For example, a large number of idiomatic phrases are used to describe "Allah" and one example is "the owner of the Judgment Day".

Some phraseological units originating from the Bible and the Holy Quran come from citations from the Holy Scriptures, other – from the plots. The citations can be either exact or changed. For example, an exact phrase for a two-edged sword comes from KJV, Proverbs 5:4 – But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as two-edged sword. The example of the changed phrase of Biblical origin in English is "to live on the fat of the land" instead of the Biblical one "to eat the fat of the land".

To give an example of the phrases originating from the plots, there are phraseological equivalents of the English phrase of "Noah's ark" in all three phraseological funds, which comes from the story of the great flood and Noah. Another example is an international phraseological unit, that is, a Judas kiss.

Phraseological units originating from citations can be metaphoric or non-metaphoric. For example, "manna from heaven" in these three languages is not metaphoric in the text of the Holy Scriptures and means food given to the Israelites during the Exodus.

The specific feature of Russian phraseology of the Biblical origin is that one and the same phraseological unit can be used in modern and Church Slavonic variants - literal language of Southern Slavs in the 14th -17th centuries, used nowadays in churches. For example, the Russian equivalent of English knock and it shall be opened is more frequently used in its Church Slavonic version than in modern one.

Furthermore, the Bible and the Holy Quran are a source of peoples' beliefs about God, devil, angel, etc., defined as religious concepts in this work. Basic universal religious concepts in these three languages and cultures are "God", "devil", "heaven", "hell", "sin", "soul", and "angel".

In phraseological materials of these three languages, representations of God are as follows:
He is
- omniscient;
- helping people;
- merciful, gracious;
- saving from misfortunes;
- taking the dead's soul away: in Russian people say that "somebody gave soul to God" when they died, in English people say "meet one's Maker" in this case, and in Arabic "-went to Allah";
- making has will;
- creator of world, animals, people.

Unique features of God represented in Arabic are that His special love is given to children, it is humiliating to complain to anybody except God, and rude people are not in His favor. In Russian phraseology, God is represented as sinless and truthful. Russian people say that only God is without sin. However; a beautiful person is said to be God's gift to mankind, only in English.

Heaven associated with God is also a positive element in religious worldviews in these three languages and cultures. Arabic and Russian

phraseological equivalents of an English idiom of "in the seventh heaven" also mean the highest state of happiness and allude to the dwelling place of God recognized by both Muslims and ancient Jews.

Hell in the religious worldviews of the speakers of Arabic, English, and Russian is associated with torments. The phrases of "torments of hell" in Russian, "hurts like hell" in English, and "to turn life to hell" in Arabic are examples of negative attitudes to hell. Nevertheless, Russian speakers think that it is better to live with clever people in hell than with stupid ones in heaven.

According to the conceptual analysis of phraseological materials in Arabic, English, and Russian; the main manifestation of evil is "devil", which is perceived as the one who:

- catches humans' souls;
- appears where there are negative qualities: money is associated with devil in Russian, the devil (Satan) finds (makes) work for idle hands in English, and Arabic people say that the head of a lazy person is the house of the devil;
- fearful of holy places and religious symbols.

In English, phraseological worldviews of the devil is present near poor people more than the rich. The devil also visits the rich, but he visits the poor twice. Moreover, people who were always lucky were thought to have made a pact with the devil which is reflected in the idiom of "to have the devil's luck". Only in Arabic, love poetry is considered to be sent by the devil and it is called "spit of shaitan".

Angels, from the one hand, are a positive element in these religious worldviews. There is a phrase of "a guardian angel" in all three languages, denoting that people have protectors. On the other hand, death coming to a human is also considered to be approaching with coming of the angel of death. Soul as represented in phraseology is a non-corporal essence, which goes to God after a human's death.

The concept of "sin" is also present in phraseological materials of all three languages. In Russian, negative qualities are compared with the death sin; and in English, with sin which is miserable as sin, ugly as sin, etc. In Arabic, wine is referred to as mother of the death sins.

According to the mathematical statistics, God is the center of religious worldviews in all three languages and the biggest number of phraseological units contains this component. The second widely represented concept in phraseology of English, Arabic, and Russian is the concept of "devil".

Another group of religious phraseological units is connected with religious traditions and ceremonies. Unique phraseological units in Russian reflect special rituals committed in Russian Orthodox Church. For example, a Russian phrase of "na ladan dyshat", used to talk about a person who is close to death, contains the component of ladan which is a type of resin widely used during religious ceremonies in the church. In the phraseological unit of "pustitsya vo vse tyazhkiye", which is used to describe some people who start their work too intensively, the component of "tyazhkiye" means bells used in Orthodox churches and in the phraseological unit of "odnim mirom mazany miro", there is a type of oil used during church ceremonies. In Arabic, unique phraseological units are connected with the tradition of pilgrimage to Holy Muslim cities of Mecca and Medina. In Russian, when people say that someone went to Mecca, they mean that they went to their dream place. In all three languages, phrases based on the names of religious holidays are also present. In Arabic, there is a proverb that promises health to everyone who fasts. In English, phraseological units with a component of prayer in "not have a prayer" means to have no chance to succeed. For example, she does not have a prayer of winning the competition.

This work based on the materials of three distant languages contributes to the study of the role of the Bible as a source of international phraseology in many languages: рус. блудный сын – блудният сын – блудни син – marnotratny syn – the prodigal son – der verlorene Sohn – l'enfant prodigue – figlio prodigo – hijo pródigo – fiu risipitor (Soloducho 1982) and verifies the Bible's enormous influence on the formation of English, Arabic, and Russian languages. The present study revealed that the largest number of phraseological units reflecting the religious worldviews in all three languages comes from the Holy Scriptures (69. 2% of Russian, 81.9% of English, and 78. 5% of Arabic phraseological units).

The classification of religious phraseological units was also proposed by the researcher of French phraseology, Nazaryan (1987), where he distinguished the following groups:
- Containing biblical names;
- Connected with religious traditions and ceremonies;
- Describing events from Bible,

These groups were then expanded by phraseological units based on religious concepts. These group are those which characterize religious people's beliefs about such realities of the religious worldview as "God", "devil", "sin", and others and religious culture as a whole.

Starting from the end of the 20th century, research works comparing the Biblical phraseology in two languages have come to life (Fiedler 2013). In addition to the study of phraseological units of the Biblical origin in Russian linguistics, there are works devoted to the study of phraseological units of the Quranic origin in Arabic; for example, works that appeared at the end of the 20th century by Ushakov (1989, 1992). In the present study, phraseological units of the Biblical and the Quranic origin have become a part of the contrastive examination of religious phraseological units as a whole.

Another sphere of interest among researchers of language and religion interconnection was the study of language representations of the religious concepts of "God", "devil", "angel", "heaven", etc. (Stepanov 2001). The authors also examined the existing research devoted to the study of religious phraseological units based on religious concepts and presented general and specific components of religious worldviews of the speakers of the languages being investigated.

The study also showed that the etymology of religious phraseological units in Arabic, English, and Russian was the same in all three languages. The largest group of phraseological units had originated from the Holy Scriptures that once again emphasized the role of the Holy books in the formation of worldviews and cultures of different nations. Basic ideas on religious concepts were also similar. At the same time, unique ideas were present in all three languages. The main differences were accordingly observed in the group of phraseological units that originated from religious traditions and ceremonies. The general features in the study of the religious

phraseological units in Arabic, English, and Russian also confirmed the fact that the religious culture of their speakers was based on Abrahamic religions.

CONCLUSION

The research based on more than 1000 religious phraseological units selected from phraseological, bilingual, historical, and etymological dialect dictionaries and the Holy Scriptures showed that:

The importance of the study of language and religion interrelationship is obvious within anthropological orientations of linguistics, since it was considered in the present research that, firstly, religion is a value encoded by language, secondly, study of language and religion interconnection as two forms of public consciousness helps in characterizing national unity, its world perception, and self-identity which are nowadays important issues in dominant cultural paradigm of linguistics;
- The sources of phraseological units reflecting religious worldviews in Arabic, English, and Russian are universal, that is, the Holy Scriptures, religious concepts, as well as religious traditions and ceremonies;
- The largest number of phraseological units in these three languages come from the Holy books that proves their cornerstone role in formation of phraseological funds in national languages;
- The basic universal concepts in religious worldviews are God, devil, angel, sin, soul, and heaven;
- The ideas about religious concepts are in many cases universal that prove the fact that Arabic, English, and Russian speakers are followers of Abrahamic religions;
- There are unique religious worldview components in each of the languages investigated, indicating the existence of indigenous cultures and traditions.

The present study contributed to contrastive linguistic studies aimed at gaining a general understanding of relationships between language and culture, highlighting the necessity to describe national worldviews of speakers of different languages, creating dictionaries, taking into

account the specificity of national languages in the process of foreign language learning and teaching, and performing a search on historical links of languages and cultures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study is devoted to examination of reflections of religious worldviews in Arabic, English, and Russian phraseological funds. Future studies can investigate religious worldviews in different cultures with different languages and religions.

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