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ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКАЯ, ПРИКЛАДНАЯ И СРАВНИТЕЛЬНО-СОПОСТАВИТЕЛЬНАЯ ЛИНГВИСТИКА/THEORETICAL, APPLIED AND COMPARATIVE LINGUISTICS

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RUSSIAN AND CHINESE NATIONAL PERSONALITIES: BASED ON THE MATERIAL OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS, PROVERBS AND SAYINGS WITH THE CONCEPT OF “FAMILY”

Research article

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the characteristics of Russian and Chinese national personalities (RNP, CNP) based on the material of phraseological units, proverbs, and sayings with the concept of "family."

Russian and Chinese national personalities are considered for the first time in the article, which has yet to previously be described in a comparative aspect. The family's traditional spiritual and cultural values of Russian and Chinese cultures are analyzed for the first time. Their ideas and attitudes toward marriage, love, women, men, wives, husbands, parents, children, and relations to relatives indicate common or different cultural attitudes among representatives of both linguistic cultures. This is the scientific novelty of this study.

This study shows that phraseological units, proverbs, and sayings with the concept of family recorded in Russian and Chinese lexicographic sources differ in quantitative and substantive terms. Russian and Chinese personalities view traditional family values such as marriage, love, women, men, wives, husbands, parents, children, relatives, etc. differently. For the Chinese, family and kinship relations are of great importance, and the preservation of these relations is carried out with the help of cultural values such as marital harmony, procreation, filial piety, fraternal friendship, and peaceful family relations.

Keywords: national personality, concept of "family", phraseological units, proverbs, sayings.

РУССКИЕ И КИТАЙСКИЕ НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЕ ХАРАКТЕРЫ: НА МАТЕРИАЛЕ ФРАЗЕОЛОГИЧЕСКИХ ЕДИНИЦ, ПОСЛОВИЦ И ПОГОВОРОК С КОНЦЕПТОМ «СЕМЬЯ»

Научная статья

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Аннотация

Данная статья посвящена характеристике русских и китайских национальных характеров (РНХ, КНХ) на материале фразеологических единиц, пословиц и поговорок с концептом «семья».

В статье впервые рассматриваются русские и китайские национальные характеры, которые ранее еще не были описаны в сравнительном аспекте. Впервые анализируются традиционные духовные и культурные ценности семьи в русской и китайской культурах. Их представления и отношение к браку, любви, женщине, мужчине, жене, мужу, родителям, детям, отношениям с родственниками свидетельствуют об общих или различных культурных установках представителей обеих лингвокультур. В этом заключается научная новизна данного исследования.

Данное исследование показывает, что фразеологические единицы, пословицы и поговорки с концептом семья, отмеченные в русских и китайских лексикографических источниках, различаются в количественном и содержательном плане. Русские и китайские персоналии по-разному воспринимают традиционные семейные ценности, такие как брак, любовь, женщина, мужчина, жена, муж, родители, дети, родственники и т. д. Для китайцев семейные и родственные отношения имеют огромное значение, и сохранение этих отношений осуществляется с помощью таких культурных ценностей, как супружеская гармония, деторождение, сыновняя почтительность, братская дружба, мирные семейные отношения.

Ключевые слова: национальная индивидуальность, концепт «семья», фразеологические единицы, пословицы, поговорки.

Introduction

As an integral component of the totality of cognitive activity of national spiritual culture, family and social relations are reflected in the system of phraseological units, proverbs, and sayings, the main purpose of which is to fix the mentality and worldview of the national personality. The relevance of this research topic is determined by the active development of intercultural relations between Russian and Chinese societies and their interest in studying the national personality of various representatives of linguistic cultures.

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to solve the following tasks:

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1) to determine the composition of Russian and Chinese phraseological units, proverbs, and sayings that reflect the traditional national values of family relations.

2) to comparatively analyze the spiritual and mental characteristics of Russian and Chinese national personalities in phraseological units, proverbs, and sayings in relation to marriage, love, women, men, wives, husbands, parents, children, and relations to relatives.

3) to identify the universal and national-specific family values of the compared national personalities.

58 Russian phraseological units, proverbs, and sayings, 125 Chinese phraseological units, proverbs, and sayings were used as the research material, selected by the method of directed sampling from the following dictionaries: *Russian Proverbs, Sayings, and Catchphrases. Russian Dictionary* edited by E.M. Vereshchagin and V.G. Kostomarov [22], *Proverbs of the Russian People* by V.I. Dahl [7], *Dictionary of Russian Proverbs and Sayings* by V.P. Zhukov [10], *Russian Phraseology: Russian Phraseological Dictionary* by V.N. Telia [18], *Chinese Folk Sayings, Proverbs and Expressions* by A. Tishkov [19], *Chinese-Russian Phraseological Dictionary* by K.V. Tolmats [20], *Chinese-Russian Phraseological Dictionary* by O.M. Gottlieb, and Mu Huain's [5] *Xinhua Phraseological Dictionary* [23].

The theoretical basis of the research was the publications of Russian and Chinese authors who consider the problems of the Russian national personality in the aspect of linguoculturology (Vorobyev [3], [4], Rapoport [16], Nedosugova [15], Letova [11], Vasilyuk [2]), as well as an analysis of Chinese culture and the linguistic picture of the world (Domenak [8], Abramova [1], Tan Aoshuang [17], Guruleva [6], Ye Lan, Zhu Liangzhi [9]).

The practical significance of the work lies in the fact that the lexical-semantic and linguocultural analysis of phraseological units, proverbs, and sayings of family subjects can be used in educational activities in courses of lexicology, linguoculturology, linguistic and cultural studies, and sociolinguistics.

To solve the problem, the following research methods are used: continuous sampling of material from dictionaries of the Russian and Chinese languages, linguistic and cultural commentary, and comparative-contrastive methods.

Main results

"A family is a small closed community where all cases are solved together and without witnesses" [13, P. 59]. A kindred personality develops in the family, which is transmitted by a national personality. The family determines and establishes the structure of social and interpersonal relations.

Family is an undoubted value for both the Russians and the Chinese. However, there are big differences between RNP and CNP concerning family and family relations.

For RNP, the value of the family and its irreplaceability are apparent:

"The whole family is together, and the soul is in place."

"Your family has its own space."

"The porridge is thicker in the family."

"The lad widens the hut."

"Where there is harmony, there is treasure."

For CNP, the fate of an individual and their happiness begins with their family, and the perfection of personality is also manifested in family perfection and happiness:

"A family in which the traditions of writers have been maintained for many generations."

"If there is peace in the family, then all things prosper."

"To strive for self-improvement, to keep a family in order, to govern the state, and to bring peace to the Celestial Empire."

Marriage is perceived by Russians as a necessity, as a natural phenomenon. For the Chinese people, it is necessary to create a family and open businesses at the appropriate age:

RNP:

"Every bride will be born for her groom."

"You can't ride a horse around a betrothed."

CNP:

"Create a family, organize your own business."

"When a man grows up, he should get married; when a girl grows up, she should get married."

"The time when the plum blossoms" – it's time to get married.

At the same time, it is noted that marriage is a restriction of freedom, which Russian men do not like much, whereas marriage helps Chinese men get more freedom without household chores. Let's compare:

"He got married in a hurry but for a long time."

"To marry is *not to attack, but as if, having married, not to disappear."*

"Take it so as not to repent, to live in love, and not to worry."

"A wife is not a lapot: you can't throw her off her feet."

"Cares of internal affairs" – not having a wife, taking care of the house.

For RNP, a love marriage is not the best invention in the world:

"Grief marries, but needs marries."

"When she gets married, she sings songs, and when she gets out, she sheds tears."

"A poor man gets married, and the night is short."

The Chinese people attach great importance to marriage. For them, marriage is a matter of two families (the husband and wife's families) and not just a matter of married couples:

"(About traditional weddings) *The parents decided, and the matchmaker introduced them."*

"A [couple] of the same social status and origin."

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So, in a traditional Chinese marriage, it is not love that is important but post-marital harmony, which is the basis for the harmony of a particular family. It is easy to notice that such marital and family values are reflected very vividly in the Chinese language. We can find a large number of Chinese phraseological units on the topic of marital harmony:

"A pair of phoenixes went on a flight" – a happy couple.

"The husband sings, the wife picks up" – family harmony.

"The Firebird and the Phoenix sing together" is a happy marriage.

"Hold the tray (with food) at eyebrow level" – mutual respect of spouses.

"A wife's skirt bandage" means a husband who has a career thanks to his wife.

"Honor to the husband and respect to the wife" – the husband's honors go to the wife.

"Harmony of Qin and se (zither and gusle)" – marital happiness; family harmony.

"Respect each other like a guest" – mutual respect of spouses.

"Zhang Chang draws eyebrows" is a wonderful, tender relationship between spouses.

"Holding hands, grow old together."

For RNP, the national ideal is a kind wife and a strong, friendly family. This is evidenced by many proverbs:

"Without a wife, that's being without a sword."

"Beauty until evening, and kindness forever."

"A good wife and an honest husband."

"A good wife and fat cabbage soup – don't look for any other good."

"Don't look for beauty. Look for kindness."

"To take a good wife is neither boredom nor grief."

"There is no need for a treasure if the husband and wife are in harmony."

The Russian woman has an unenviable fate but is famous for her courage, perseverance, and devotion. She will "stop a horse at a gallop" and "enter a burning hut," however, the rest of the sayings are difficult to regard as the "cult of a woman":

"A woman's hair is long, but her mind is short."

"A woman with a cart is easier for a mare."

"Indian cities don't last long."

"Where the devil cannot, he will send a woman there."

"Seven axes are lying together, and two spinning wheels are apart."

"Indian road – from the stove to the threshold."

In old China, there was also a traditional formula of requirements for a woman:

"The threefold obedience: to obey the father before marriage, to obey the husband in marriage, after the death of the husband, to the son and chastity, mastery of the arts; and the four virtues: marital fidelity, good manners, good looks and the ability to be good."

In Russian culture, the attitude toward women is manifested most often as an attitude toward a wife and, most of all, as a mother. The attitude toward wives in Russian is condescending and ironic. "Men probably came up with these sayings to avenge their insults, and, apparently, Russian husbands are offended more" [16, P. 116]:

"Even if the wife were a goat, if only she had golden horns."

"A wife is not a glove: you can't throw it off your hand or put her in your belt."

"A wife is not a boot. You can't get off her foot."

"Forty years is a woman's age."

In Russia, a woman receives social status only after marriage, and an unmarried woman is like an orphan. Only with her husband is she "like behind a stone wall," and therefore, only in marriage can a woman find happiness and peace:

"Parents take care of their daughters to the crown and their husbands to the end."

"Without a husband, a wife is always an orphan."

"A wife without a husband is worse than a widow."

In the traditional value of the CNP, the wife and husband constitute a "community of one destiny." In other words, the wife should follow her husband:

"A married daughter is like spilled water."

"Whoever you marry, live with him."

Russians have the strictest requirements for their wives:

"A good wife will save the house, and a thin one will shake her sleeve."

"It's not the outfit that makes the wife look beautiful – home management."

"A kind wife and an honest husband."

"It's good to look at a good one, but it's easy to live with a smart one."

In China, we find the ideal image of a wife:

"A virtuous spouse and a loving mother."

"Taking care of my husband and teaching my children."

"Bringing happiness to the whole family."

It has been repeatedly said that the image of a woman in Russian culture is associated with the image of a mother [21], which is confirmed by the following phraseological units:

"The house is held by the mother."

"Not the mother who gave birth, but the one who came out."

"There is no sweeter friend than my own (dear) mother."

"The wife will caress, and the mother will regret."

The loving mother of the CNP is reflected in this way:

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"A virtuous spouse and a loving mother."

"A strict father and a gentle mother."

"Father's love is like a rock. A mother's love is like water."

"Meng-tzu's mother moves three times (away from the cemetery and the market, but closer to school" – the parents' efforts to find a good educational institution for their children.

In Russian, the authoritative role of a man in the family is especially highlighted: he is the head of the family, the owner, and the primary breadwinner:

"A man in the family, that matica in the hut."

"The owner is in the house, and the bear is in the forest, as he wants, and turns around."

"The father is the head of everything."

"Honor your father."

The role of the Russian husband in the house is difficult to overestimate. He must take care of the family and the house:

"The husband is the builder of the house, a warder of poverty."

"The husband is in the house; that is the head of the church."

The traditional value of CNP pays attention to the harmonious division of labor between men and women:

"Men plow, and women weave."

"A man takes care of external affairs. A woman takes care of internal affairs."

Thus, a Chinese man in the family can become *the "main pillar," the owner*, and can *be under the heel of his wife.*

As a father, a Chinese man is necessarily both loving and strict:

"The father loves, the son honors."

"A strict father and a gentle mother."

"If the child is not trained, it is the father's mistake."

"A father's love is like a rock. A mother's love is like water."

The Russian language clearly reflects the parents' responsibility for the proper upbringing of children and, as a result, the parental desire for strict control:

"If you knew how to give birth to a child, you should also be able to teach."

"Not the father who watered and nurtured, but the one who taught the mind."

"Teach the child while it fits across the bench. And you can't teach it to stretch out all the way."

"The kids grew up, and the father was shaken up. They shook me up because my father knew how to give birth but did not know how to teach reason."

It also provides for the subordination of the younger generation to the older:

"Before your father, don't get into the loop."

"Honor your father."

"Eggs don't teach a chicken."

The gratitude of children and their respect for their parents are also of great importance to them:

"Heartless children destroy their father's house."

"Of the vices, debauchery is the greatest, and filial duty is the highest of the virtues."

The idea of having children and future generations is one of the most important parts of traditional Chinese family values and morality. This is clearly evidenced *by the phraseology, "There are three types of disrespect for parents, of which the main one is the lack of offspring."* The consciousness of the CNP about future generations is also reflected in the following phraseological units:

"Procreation."

"The orchid is fragrant, the brown tree spreads fragrance" – numerous offspring.

"The house is full of children and grandchildren."

"Numerous offspring".

"To release branches and throw out leaves" – to have numerous offspring.

Chinese also clearly reflects parents' love and responsibility for raising children.

"[How] an old cow licks her calf" –parental love.

"The great sky knows no limits, the boundlessness of the world" – the infinity of parental love, parental kindness.

"Meng-tzu's mother moves three times (away from the cemetery and the market, but closer to school" – the efforts of parents to find a good educational institution for their children.

"A stick makes a son respectful."

"If the child is not trained, it is the father's mistake."

"Father's instruction".

"Knowledgeable in parenting."

CNP emphasizes love for parents and such a major traditional virtue as filial piety.

"Of all the virtues, filial piety is the most important."

"Beans and water to please parents."

"Lying on the ice (the ideal of filial love for parents; from the story of how a certain Wang Xiang melted the ice with his body to catch fish for his sick mother)."

"To anticipate the thoughts and satisfy the desires of [parents]."

"The father loves, the son honors."

"Regurgitating what you've swallowed to feed your parents" is a feeling of filial gratitude.

"Loving grandson, exemplary (devoted) son."

"A blade of grass under the spring rays" – to be in debt to your parents.

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"The wind and the tree keep sadness" – the sadness of children about the inability to support their parents after their death.

"Children are not worthy of their ancestors" – not to follow the honor of their fathers.

In relation to relatives (blood and non-blood), there are many similarities in RNP and CNP:

RNP:

"Brotherly love is stronger than stone walls."

"Scold your son – hold on to the stove. Scold your son-in-law – hold on to the door."

"The matchmaker has the first cup and the first stick."

CNP:

"Blood and flesh are mutually one" – blood-kindred.

"Long pillow, big blanket" – fraternal friendship.

"Eating from the same cup" – fraternal-friendly relations.

"The wife of an older brother is like a mother (for younger siblings if there is no mother)."

"An older brother should be kind, and a younger one should be respectful."

"To give [the brothers larger] dates and pears" is fraternal friendship.

"Like your own hands and feet" – fraternal friendship.

"An elderly person in the family is a jewel."

"Relatives, like a membrane in the stems of a reed" – distant relatives.

"Blood is thicker than water."

"Seven older paternal aunts and eight older maternal aunts" – a bunch of relatives.

"Have close family or friendships."

"Cousins are closely related; cut off the bone – they will connect with veins."

Russian spiritual belonging in Russian culture is most clearly manifested in family life because *"a Russian person does not live without relatives"* is determined by its kinship relations: *"Every layman is a family man to his brother";* in Russia, "the world has been held by kinship and conciliarity from time immemorial" [14, P. 224]. Blood kinship was of great importance to the Chinese and, in many ways, structured the entire public relations system [8]. Some researchers even discuss the "cult of consanguinity" as a characteristic feature of Chinese culture [1]. "There is no single religion in China, and there is no such strong religious authority as in the West, but clan power and the power of family in China are very developed; they actually control people" [24, P. 7].

Conclusion

Russian and Chinese phraseological units, proverbs, and sayings related to the concept of family have been analyzed. It has been found that the phraseological units recorded in Russian dictionaries are significantly fewer than Chinese ones – 58 versus 125.

Family is an undoubted value to both the Russians and the Chinese. The universal traditional family values of RNP and CNP include the irreplaceability of the family, the need for marriage, the responsibility of parents for the proper upbringing of children, gratitude of children and their respect for parents, brotherly love, the importance of (blood and non-blood) family relations, etc. However, there are big differences between RNP and CNP in relation to the family and in family-related relations. Russian personalities view traditional family values such as marriage, love, women, men, wives, husbands, parents, children, relatives, etc. in different ways. For example, for RNP, marriage is a restriction of freedom, which Russian men do not like much, and marriage helps Chinese men gain more freedom without domestic worries.

Chinese culture is characterized by clan and family power. Family and kinship relations are of great importance to the Chinese, and their preservation is carried out through cultural values such as marital harmony, procreation, filial piety, fraternal friendship, peaceful family relations, etc.

In our opinion, further research in line with this stated problem is promising not only in concretizing the speech portrait of the Chinese language personality but also in modeling the system of traditional cultural values of Russian and Chinese national personalities.

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Conflict of Interest

None declared.

Review

All articles are peer-reviewed. But the reviewer or the author of the article chose not to publish a review of this article in the public domain. The review can be provided to the competent authorities upon request.

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