Lingvocultural Interpretation of the Lexical Units, Referring to the Toys and Games in Great Britain & the USA

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Abstract

Today the problems of human-language interaction have become paramount in Linguistics, which has the tendency to consider a human being as the centre of the Universe and the main aim of all the occurring events in the world. This article discusses lexical units on the theme “games and toys”, relating to the culture of the UK and the US. The role of culture through the study of the above units is significant and immense in the process of language learning. At the same time language serves as the main tool with the help of which we study the culture, it is its constituent part. In this respect, culture and language are interdependent and there is. There is an attempt of classification of lexical units for the studied subject. For about 200 lexical units on the theme “games and toys” were found in the English language within the framework of this research. We attempted to analyze the culture of the US and of the UK on the basis of these lexical units for the successful formation of knowledge of the language.

Keywords: language; culture; linguistic culture; lexical unit; realia; quasi-realia; game; toy; classification; semantic feature; analysis.
Introduction

The article is devoted to the study of the lexical units related to the games and toys of Great Britain and the United States.

The issue of this work is significant, since modern linguistics has the focus on the interaction of language and culture that allows us to speak about the possibility of the formation of language awareness and the capacity for language communication through the study of national-marked lexicon, which is an important unit in the culture of the country of the studied language.

Relevance of the work is reflected in the fact, that "toys and games" are one of the most important parts of the culture that promote the development of cultures and their interaction. In the course of time some of the traditions and rituals of the nations become obsolete and remnants. However, toys and games, keeping a given, valuable material, from the point of view of the linguistic study of the country, are improved and transformed over time by acquiring cultural values. Most often, the evolution of the games is associated with the improvement of man's spiritual culture. With the disappearance of a ritual in a society its cultural importance is not lost, because the games, as the bearers of cultural values, remain in society as leisure. That’s why, the study of the vocabulary on the theme "games and toys" promotes the further development of ideas about the culture of the country of studied language. Games and toys are an important element of the UK and US culture, on the basis of which it becomes possible to trace the characteristics peculiar to the national culture and the people of these countries.

Language is an indicator of the level of people’s culture development. Vocabulary as the content side of the language always appears in the form of a set of characters that reflect the cultural background of a society. Changes in vocabulary are accompanied by a variety of causes, most of which are cultural. Vocabulary is a reflection of people's culture. Therefore, the appearance of new words, the rejection of the old ones, borrowing and changing of the values depend on the cultural history of particular people. Each new cultural wave is a source of new lexical structures [Hrolenko, 2014].

S.G. Ter-Minasova believes that the existence of a language out of a culture is impossible, since the culture of people is a set of practical skills and social ideas that are passed from generation to generation. Language is an integral part of the culture in the aggregate of results and achievements of the activities of certain people in various spheres of life (social and spiritual life, the production sphere). However, the language is equal to the culture when it is viewed in the context of the form of existence of thinking and as a means of communication [Ter-Minasova, 2000: 14].

A man captures in words, not only certain knowledge, but also the attitude towards it. These experiences are further fixed on the level of associations, which are transformed into stereotyped ethnic and cultural judgments and representations of reality [Kutjeva, 2011: 11]. According to this, it can be assumed that the study of the national character of the culture is the interaction of different cultures and their languages, their joint enrichment to world culture, which is an achievement of all mankind [Vorobjev, 2006: 15].

The study of the native speakers’ culture is aimed to facilitate the study of the language, understand the peculiarities of the use of different units of speech, additional connotations of language units and speech units.

Considering the cultural marked referents, A.R.U. Room picks out 3 groups of lexical units, from the point of view of their uniqueness as elements of the culture: 1) identical in essential and
secondary characteristics (universals, such as water, earth, sky, sit, and others); 2) different in minor characteristics, but with a common essential feature (quasi-realnia, for example, Hopscotch game – classics, is identical in many countries in a common goal of the game, but the methods of its implementation may differ substantially); 3) unique for significant and secondary signs (realia) [Room, Kolesnikov 1978: 463]. The study of the second and third groups of words seems to be important in the study of the culture of the country of the studied language.

Based on the foregoing, it can be argued that lexical units on the theme "games and toys" that make up the group of ethnographic realias and quasi-realialis, should be regarded as special elements of objective reality reflected in the mind, in the study of linguacultural aspects of the country of studied language. Linguistic expression of realias and quasi-realialis on the theme "games and toys" is represented in language realities and quasi-realia on this topic.

Some scientists consider love, death, work, play and domination to be the basic phenomena of human existence. The game, in his opinion, as well as all the other phenomena of life, encompasses all human life, from the beginning until the death. The game characterizes the existence of people, by playing people master the principles of life [Radugin, 2001: 30].

Dutch philosopher and historian Johan Huizinga gives a universal definition to the word “game”. In his opinion, it is the totality of all human activities, it is the foundation of the culture of human society and its highest manifestation [Hyoyzing, 2011: 37].

Nowadays in Webster thesaurus, there are two concepts for the word “game”: play and game. However, these concepts are slightly different in the English language. The concept of "play" is used when we refer to the game as a way of entertainment, in which there are no specific goals and rules. The concept of the "game" is used to refer to the game with a purpose and a certain set of rules.

The synonyms of these words are amusement, diversion, entertainment, festivity [Webster, 1986: 248]. By analyzing these concepts, we can conclude that the game is understood as a way of fun and pleasure.

Methods: During our work, the following methods were used: the method of classification; conceptual method; descriptive method.

The classification method is foremost a development of comparison and distinction methods. The descriptive method is a scientific method, which is considered as a system of procedures necessary for acquisition, initial analysis and presentation of data and their characteristics. That is why in this respect both methods are of great theoretical and diagnostic value in our research.

It is well-known that within the research the conceptual analysis method can be based on the analysis of data from the lexicographical sources. The study of lexicographic data is an important component of the whole study of all the linguistic material, since the very vocabulary sources help to make the primary idea of realities and linguistic means of their expression.

Results

Further, during the analysis of lexical units on the theme "games and toys" it was found out that there is no unified principle of lexical units’ classification on the subject under study. It was decided to classify the studied vocabulary according to the semantic, structural and morphological principles.

Three groups were identified in the classification according to semantic features: games, toys and manufacturers of toys and games. The first group is divided in its turn into two subgroups:
mobile and immobile, the first subgroup of which is divided into multiple semantic subgroups. The detailed description is given below.

I. Games:

1) mobile:
   a) race, catching: aeroplanetig; animal tig; bedlams (relievo); biddy-base (prisoner’s); black man’s tig; blindman’s buff; British bulldog; broken bottles; budge; chain tig; cock; cops and robbers; cowboys and Indians; crack the whip; currants and raisins; duck-on-a-rock; exchange race; fielding race; fairies and witches; Farmer, farmer, can we cross your golden river?; fishes in the sea; fishies in the sea; French and English; giant steps; Granny’s fridge; hare and hounds; he; hen-and-chickens; hide-and-go-seek; high tig; hospital tig; hunters hair; hunt-the-thimble; Indian; keeper of the treasure; king’s chair; knock, knock, ginger; loop touch; Marco tig; mother-may-I; Mr Crocodile; musical chairs; oranges and lemons; papercrash; pom-pom-pullaway; prisoner’s base; puss in the corner; red letter; red light, green light; relieve; Scots and English; shadow tig; soldier; statues; streets and alleys; tackle tig; toilet tig; Tom Tidler’s Ground; tunnel tig; twos and threes; What’s the time Mr Wolf; witch’s fingers; witches in the gluepot; whirling circles;
   b) jumps: bob cherry; cat gallows; half hammer; hi, Jimmy Knacker; hopscotch; jumping forward race; ladder jump; leapfrog;
   c) songs, dances: All the Boys in our Town; Alligoshee; Auntie Loomie; barbarie, king of the; basket; bell-horses; Betsy Bungay; boys and girls; carry my lady to London; duck dance; gipsy; here we go around; here’s a soldier; jolly hooper; leaves are green; nettles; in and out the dusty bluebells;
   d) in a circle: bull in the park; bonnety; bunch of Ivy; cat after mouth; circle thread the needle; doctor, doctor, we are in a twist; drop the handkerchief; duck, duck, goose; doll tree; fishes in the sea; frog in the middle; hunt-the-slipper; keeper of the treasure;
   e) claps: baker’s man; down, down baby; cup game; down by the banks; handsclapping; Mary Mack; Miss Susie; pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake; pease porridge hot; pretty little dutch girl; Stella Ella Ola;
   f) with kisses: kiss cam; post office; red lips; seven minutes in heaven; spin the bottle;
   g) with a ball: ande over or ante over; ball; ball tig; bowls; cricket; dodgeball; dools; fire, air and water; five-a-side; fives; hot potatoes; kingy; Monday, Tuesday; one old cat; pig in the middle; queeliocockio; queenie-queenie; run the gauntlet; shiny; tandem tag;
   h) dangerous: block, hammer and nail; chicken; fly away; knights; last across; roadkill;
   i) others: Aunt Sally; badger the bear; beaver; bend-leather; block, hammer and nail; captain’s coming; cherry odds; cross and pile; cuckoo; dare base; Dodgems; duck under the water; follow the leader; fool, fool, come to school; Goose fair; granny in the graveyard; Highland games; human dominoes; May games; mount the tin; my lady’s toilet; postman’s knock; pretty girl station; Relay games; sardines; Simon says; tin-tin-come-in;
   j) immobile: Animal, Vegetable or Mineral; beetle; cat’s cradle; chucks; clap in, clap out; conkers; consequences; crambo; darts; dibs; ducks and drakes; dumb crambo; Dungeons and Dragons; favors; fox and geese; hanging; hangman; happy families; I-spy; jacks; Jerusalem; Kim’s game; London bridge; ludo; marbles; Monopoly; mumble-the-peg or mumblety-peg; nine men’s Morris; Pelmanism; quoits; ring around the roses (Ring a Ring o’Roses); Simon says; Scrabble; snakes and ladders; snap; squares; Trivial Pursuit; truth, dore, promise or opinion; What’s my line?
II. Toys: action figure; action man; Barbie; Cabbage Patch Kids; Candyland; commony; fairy cycle; jacks; Humpty Dumpty; jack-in-the-box; Kewpie-doll; letter-card; Lincoln Logs; merils; marbles; pogo-stick; Raggedy Ann; sandpit; Silly Putty; Teddy; the Magic Eight Ball; the Slip ’n Slide; troll doll.

III. Manufacturers: Corgi toy; Dinky; Frog; Hornby; Lesney; Letraset; Line Brothers; Meccano; Paint by Number kits; Pedigree; Scalextric; The Ant farm; The Erector Set; Tri-Ang; Skalextric [Longman, 1998; Longman, 2002; Cambridge, 2014; Concise Oxford, 2014; Stevenson A., 2015].

Conclusion

The analysis of the classification makes it obvious that mobile games are widespread in the US and the UK. This fact characterizes the representatives of these countries as very dynamic, constantly seeking for development. Moreover, it may indicate a desire not to be satisfied only with the reached result, but the inclination to constant improvement. The presence of games, accompanied by songs and dances, characterizes a positive attitude, a desire to strive for the best results and positive emotions despite the arising difficulties of life and indestructible optimism of the people of these countries. The Americans and the British consider sport to be an important element in life, so the sport serves as a hobby among young people as well as among adults. This is evidenced by the presence of mobile ball games in the culture of these countries. A large group is made up by the games in the circle and the games with kisses that can be interpreted as a desire to form close trusting relationship between the members of the society of English-speaking countries. In contrary to prevailing stereotypes about the emotional restraint and an overwhelming desire to keep distance with anyone, the representatives of cultures of the US and of the UK, as can be seen from the presence of these games that are aimed at rapprochement are in need of more intimate communication. The presence of the dangerous games in these cultures may be explained as the willingness to take risks of life with the aim to win not only the competitors, but also to cope with their own fears. This characterizes the representatives of these cultures as competitive and able to overcome all the difficulties of life, to deal with their shortcomings, and to improve constantly.

Thus, it can be affirmed that the problem of the study of national-marked lexical units related to games and toys, is relevant in the linguistics study of the country, which studies the relationship between culture and language. As the bearers of valuable national and ethnic information, the lexical units acquire a significant role in the study of national and cultural characteristics of the country in the process of a foreign language study. That is why the study of this topic is a perspective direction in the context of the linguistic study of a country.

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References


