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Animal idioms in English and Russian: are we always right when we use them?

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There are loads of idioms in the English language that include animals. Many people have heard of the famous “it’s raining cats and dogs”! Of course it’s not really raining cats and dogs, it’s just raining a lot.

In general, English and Russian are rich in vocabulary containing animal idiom as the carrier. However, due to the origin of language, cultural background, traditional practices and religious beliefs, which appear in the idiom of animal words in their language system, the association may have different meaning. Carol R. Ember American social linguist once said that the language be able to reflect the vocabulary corresponding to culture. All cultures will be left traces in the vocabulary. Words by becoming the carrier of culture much attention in the Research community, animal vocabulary is one of them. In English there are a lot of words with the animal idioms. According to the habits of animals, often those words with a specific personality and characteristics of the link, so these words will, in turn inspired in people’s minds the meaning of a particular association [1, p. 96–104].

Well-known British linguist G. Leech, in its ‘semantics’, a book that the associative meaning is a general term, which contains the implicit meaning, social meaning, emotional significance, with significance and meaning of the word match.

Lenovo significance is established by analogy to rely on symbols and the semantics of the world. In a certain culture of people in society through the summary of their perceptual and emotional experience, will be good and evil, beauty and ugliness and other content onto the word, and will, within the meaning of the term culture, the associative meaning will be created [2, p. 65–82]. This will be some representative of the animal words classification, trying to compare their meaning in English and Russian idioms similarities and differences in the association.

Because the same kinds of animals have the same characteristics, and thus in different cultural and social people in the same animal words produce the same psychological associations is not surprising. In this category, the most common to the number of 'mouse' (rat). Either in Russian or English, the associative meaning of mice are negative. For instance, we use 'timid as a mouse', (as) quiet as a mouse and so on, to describe the cowardly, humble, short-sighted people. In the United States slang, rat is the lowly and disloyal people. For example, 'to smell a rat' means to suspect that something is wrong, or that someone is doing something dishonest or incorrect [3].

1. The same animal vocabulary carrier, different associative meaning

Usually this type of animal words most able to cross-cultural communication and translation of an obstacle, the most common is 'dog'. Dog frequently has a pejorative connotation in Russian idioms, such as 'dog's life', 'an old sick dog', but 'a dog loyalty' [4]. However, Westerners are very fond of dogs, but also give them high status. 'Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture' in the definition given in the dog, not only includes 'a kind of pet', but also includes 'a member of the family' [5]. Therefore, the English idiom associated with dogs are usually with a positive meaning, such as 'every dog has his own day', 'love me, love my dog', 'help a lame dog over a stile'.

2. Different animal words carrier, the same associative meaning

There are two kinds of people in society in different languages, due to different social experience and customs and they are likely to lead to looking at things in different ways and angles. Therefore, different animal words carriers may generate the same association of two cultures. When we talk about silly and fool person, we describe him or her as a person who has 'brain of a pigeon', instead of Russian 'brain of a hen'. 'Black sheep' is one who is very different from the others, and least respected by the other members of the family or other group of people. In Russian language this person is compared with 'white crow'.

From the above discussion, we can see that the animal words in English and Russian Idioms carrier can be triggered by the associative meaning of the same, it can be different. This is not just a language difference, but also a kind of cultural differences. Thus as a language learner we should start our studies from a cultural point of view, to explore those with a strong cultural flavor of the terms of the Cultural Origins, at a higher level and a deeper grasp the meaning of language

and cultural differences so as to enhance sensitivity and eventually to the cross-cultural communication and direct translation of the practice. [6, p. 78]

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O índio: diferente mas igual

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*“Nós os índios, sempre cantamos e dançamos nas nossas cantarias,
como forma de manter a unidade do nosso povo e a alegria da comunidade.
Se a gente cantar e dançar, nós nunca vamos acabar.”
Verônica Tembé, líder da aldeia Tekohaw, do povo Tembé*

As pessoas, normalmente, têm uma imagem do índio de 1500, da época da colonização, que vive na mata e é alheio às tecnologias. Mas a maioria das nações indígenas hoje mantém contato com o homem branco e em muitas aldeias há quem sabem vestir roupas e sapatos, ir a escola, usar computador e falar a língua portuguesa além do seu idioma próprio. Isso, no entanto, não significa que eles abandonaram seus valores e tradições. O modo de vida de toda sociedade transforma-se com o passar do tempo e com eles não poderia ser diferente.

Cada grupo tem seus costumes, modos de pensar e maneiras de organizar a vida. É necessário destacar o respeito que todos os índios têm pela natureza e tam-