

UDC 811.111:81'373.2

DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/2412-933X/2024-XXI-7>

BIRDS' NAMES AND THEIR SYMBOLIC MEANINGS IN ENGLISH PHRASEOLOGICAL WORD COMBINATIONS

Khalabuzar Oksana

Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor of the Department of Foreign Languages
and Teaching Methods

Berdyansk State Pedagogical University

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2338-0854

Shymanovych Iryna

Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor of the Department of Foreign Languages
and Teaching Methods

Berdyansk State Pedagogical University

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-9788-3169

In this article, the authors undertake an exploration into the intricate dynamics of ornithonomies within the English linguistic conceptual framework, delving into the frequency of utilization of bird names and their symbolic significance within English phraseological expressions. The research not only scrutinizes the prevalence of these avian lexical elements but also discerns the underlying factors that contribute to the formation of a distinct national ornithosymbolism. This comprehensive analysis extends to the axiological potential embedded in these ornithonomena, unraveling the motivational forces that drive their integration into the linguistic fabric.

By systematically examining the frequency of bird names in phraseological combinations, the study sheds light on the nuanced interplay between language and cultural symbolism. The authors systematically dissect the semantic weight carried by these avian descriptors, discerning their role in shaping the metaphorical richness of English expressions. Furthermore, the exploration extends to the sociocultural factors that influence the development of national ornithosymbolism, elucidating the intricate web of cultural, historical, and environmental elements that contribute to the lexico-cultural tapestry.

The elucidation of the axiological potential of ornithonomies not only deepens our understanding of linguistic symbolism but also offers insights into the broader cultural values embedded in the English language. Through meticulous analysis, the article contributes to the scholarly discourse on the motivations behind the incorporation of bird names into the linguistic repertoire, unraveling the layers of cultural significance that enrich the linguistic picture of the world in English.

Key words: *zoolexema, ornithonomen, symbol, phraseological unit, axiological potential, linguistic conceptual framework, motivation.*

Халабузар Оксана

кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент,
доцент кафедри іноземних мов і методики викладання
Бердянський державний педагогічний університет

Шиманович Ірина

кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент,
доцент кафедри іноземних мов і методики викладання
Бердянський державний педагогічний університет

НАЗВИ ПТАХІВ ТА ЇХ СИМВОЛІЧНЕ ЗНАЧЕННЯ В АНГЛІЙСЬКИХ ФРАЗЕОЛОГІЧНИХ СЛОВОПОЛУЧЕННЯХ

У статті автори досліджують складну динаміку орнітономенів в англійській мовній картині світу, заглиблюючись у частотність вживання назв птахів та їх символічне значення в англійських фразеологізмах. Дослідження не лише ретельно вивчає поширеність цих пташиних лексем, а й виявляє основні чинники, що сприяють формуванню особливої національної орніто-символіки. Цей комплексний аналіз поширюється на аксіологічний потенціал, закладений у цих орнітономенах, і розкриває рушійні сили, що зумовлюють їхню інтеграцію в мовну картину.

Систематичний аналіз частотності вживання назв птахів у фразеологічних сполученнях проливає світло на тонкий взаємозв'язок між мовною та культурною символікою. Автори систематично аналізують семантичну вагу, яку несуть ці пташині дескриптори, визначаючи їхню роль у формуванні метафоричного багатства англійських виразів. Крім того, дослідження поширюється на соціокультурні чинники, які впливають на розвиток національної орнітосимволіки, прояснюючи складну мережу культурних, історичних та екологічних елементів, що сприяють створенню лексико-культурного простору мови.

З'ясування аксіологічного потенціалу орнітономенів не лише поглиблює наше розуміння мовного символізму, але й дає уявлення про ширші культурні цінності, закладені в англійській мові. Завдяки ретельному аналізу стаття робить внесок у науковий дискурс про мотиви включення назв птахів у мовний репертуар, розкриваючи шари культурного значення, які збагачують мовну картину світу в англійській мові.

Ключові слова: зоолексема, орнітономен, символ, фразеологізм, аксіологічний потенціал, картина світу, мотивованість.

From time immemorial, the development of a simplistic worldview has been influenced by visual observation, direct contemplation, and human engagement with the surroundings. Specific narratives emerged within ethnic consciousness, finding expression in the linguistic conceptual framework of the world. These narratives became verbalized, notably in established phrases. Given that the phraseological repertoire of a language is never exhaustive, it remains an ever-relevant subject for scholarly exploration and investigation.

One of the most productive ways of phrase derivation is their formation on the basis of word symbols. Phraseological symbols are usually based on commonly used, well-known words, usually the names of objects in the world around us. These include, in particular, the names of animals. We assume that zoonyms are one of the oldest layers in folk symbolism, since observations of animals and their behavior were made by primitive man.

Animal symbolism has been the subject of research by many scholars. The functioning of animal images in the linguistic pictures of the world has been studied in the works of M. Kyrylyuk, H. Onufriychuk, L. Savchenko, O.I. Skopnenko, T.V. Tsybalyuk, V.D. Uzhchenko, D.V. Uzhchenko, V. Zhaivoronok, E. Pedeson, M. Post and others.

In our opinion, the study of the zoomorphic picture of the world in its ethnic specificity based on English phrases remains unresolved.

The source of the factual material is the English-Ukrainian phraseological dictionary compiled by Konstantin Barantsev.

Using the method of continuous sampling, we examined phraseological units containing zoolexemes. We found 143 such phrases. We classified these phrases into thematic groups according to the name of the animal. We have identified the following groups: 1) predators; 2) domestic animals; 3) livestock; 4) birds; 5) fish; 6) insects; 7) others. They were processed taking into account the frequency of use of certain thematic groups in them. The statistics show that the most significant share is occupied by the groups "Birds", "Pets (cat/dog)", and "Livestock", with the latter having parity rates. The groups "Predators" and "Fish" are somewhat smaller in number. The phraseological units containing the component "Insects" are sporadic. The group "Others" includes names of amphibians (5), rodents (3) and exotic animals (3).

As we can see, phrases based on ornithonyms account for the largest share. The names of birds have been repeatedly studied by both domestic and foreign researchers. Thus, E. Rosh studied the characteristics of the prototypical image of birds [13; 12]. Fauconnier G. studied the structural-semantic, onomasiological, and cognitive characteristics of ornithonominations [10, p. 99–107].

The study of ornithonomies in English phraseological units remains among the unresolved issues. As we have already mentioned above, their share represents an important fragment of the English conceptual framework. Therefore, we have set ourselves the goal of describing an important fragment of the English linguistic picture through ornithomorphic standards.

The realization of this goal involves solving the following tasks:

- 1) to establish the frequency characteristics of the use of bird names in phrases;
- 2) to identify the factors of influence and trace the process of formation of ornithosymbolism on the studied material;
- 3) to study the phrases in terms of axiological potential;
- 4) to determine the degree of motivation/unmotivation of the studied phrases.

We analyzed phrases with an ornithological component to determine the frequency of their use. According to our research, the most prominent share is made up of phrases with the hyperonym *bird*. The number of these combinations is almost 40 % of the total. The number of phrases with *duck* (16 %) and *pigeon* (11.1 %) is quite significant. There is a clear trend in the choice of the name of a bird as a component: it is, first of all, generalized information about the life and behavior of birds and, as a result, the choice of the hyperonym *bird* as a figurative specifier.

Another tendency in the formation of the phraseological corpus is the pronounced influence of human economic activity on the choice of an ornithonym as a symbol. Of the 11 hyponyms, 6 are names of poultry: chicken, cock, dove, duck, goose, pigeon, and pigeon.

As for other ornithonyms, their choice was influenced by the landscape in which the speakers live. These are the names of birds that are most common in Europe: cuckoo – cuckoo, magpie – magpie, swan – swan. The choice of these birds as a symbol is also dictated by their unusual behavior in nature. As for the name peacock, which is exotic for Europeans, and turkey-cock, which is a peacock, this choice was influenced by the unusual appearance of the bird.

Phraseological units formed with ornithonyms usually reflect the real behavior of birds in nature and create quite similar images. We refer to them as motivated.

Motivation is usually understood as a structural and semantic property of a word that allows us to realize the rationality of the connection between the meaning and the sound shell of a word based on its lexical and structural correlation [3, p. 30]. It is well known that a phraseology

can be identified with a word in terms of its meaning, so we consider it appropriate to use this determination in our study.

We refer to motivated phrases as those based on real, logical situations, i.e. on the bird's natural behavior.

The bird's way of life provided the basis for creating its image as a symbol of freedom: a bird of passage (a person who does not live in one place for a long time); as free as a bird (a person who is independent in his or her actions). That is why a bird even in a golden cage is a symbol of captivity: like a bird in a gilded cage.

The phrase *a bird's-eye view* has the original meaning "from a bird's-eye view" and, due to the bird's ability to cover a large enough area with its eyes, has developed its semantics: perspective, general overview, and summary. Other peculiarities of bird behavior gave rise to the motivational basis of the following phraseology:

a) traditional bird lifestyle, and habits:

– to group in flocks: *bird's of a feather* – they are people of the same composition who occupy the same place in society;

– to wake up early: *an early bird* is a person who gets up very early;

– to eat crumbs, which makes it seem as if birds eat little: *eat like a bird*;

– to live on water bodies: *swim like a duck*, this stable comparison corresponds to the Ukrainian "swim like a fish";

b) the appearance of birds:

– at an early stage of its development, a swan chick has an unattractive appearance: *an ugly duckling*. This phraseology is motivated by a famous fairy tale by H.H. Andersen; it is usually said, as a rule, about teenagers who later become attractive, or about a person who is unfairly judged and whose advantages are revealed unexpectedly to his or her environment;

– in the animal world, where natural selection is known to reign, birds with physical disabilities do not survive, they are doomed to die; hence the motivational basis of the phrase: *a lame duck*. This is what losers are called; a similar metaphor exists in Ukrainian folklore, and it is based on the folk tale "The Lame Duck";

c) specific living conditions for birds created by humans:

– in England and the United States, cockfighting has always been popular, and roosters were raised and fed specifically for this purpose, and special conditions were created for them; hence the emergence of the phrase: *live like a fighting cock*;

– if a rooster proved to be incapable of fighting, it was removed from the fight; this became the motivational basis for the phrase: *that cock won't fight*;

d) other factors:

– it was much easier to hit a motionless bird during hunting; this is the motivational basis of the phraseological phrase: *a sitting duck* is a duck that sits; this phraseology has the meaning of "a convenient target", "easy prey";

– a bird that has already been killed is useless, so the expressions *a dead pigeon* and *a dead duck* mean "a dead man," "his song is sung", and "a hopeless cause".

– the age characteristics of birds have become the basis for the following idioms: *an old bird* means "an experienced person who is difficult to deceive"; and, vice versa: *a spring chicken* means "a young, inexperienced person"; cf. the Ukrainian correlates "shot sparrow", "old sparrow", "yellow-mouthed chick".

Thus, as can be seen from the above examples, the real properties of objects in the world around us, certain knowledge of realities, culture, and traditions by native speakers of a particular language provide grounds for understanding the motivational basis of phraseological expressions.

On the other hand, in any language, there are stable phrases that reflect a non-standard vision of the environment. These phrases are formed according to the reverse principle. As a rule, they either have no real motivational basis or it remains opaque to the speaker. Such combinations are traditionally called unmotivated, unreal. The basis for such statements is the generally accepted notion that the process of choosing a certain feature of an object (in our case, birds) indicates the speaker's desire to fix certain properties and qualities of the bird in the phraseology, and, therefore, motivation.

If there are no obvious reasons for realizing the rationality of the connection between its form and content in a phraseological turn of phrase, it is considered that the internal form of the phrase is lost and it is unmotivated.

Our analysis of English phraseological units gives grounds for the following conclusions. Ornithomorphic images are an important fragment of the English world picture. For phrases with a bird component, important factors are cognitive activity and live contemplation of the subject, economic, cultural activity, folklore, and landscape.

The creative nature of nature and the human sense of beauty are key factors in the pronounced reclamation character of phrases with bird names. The studied phrases with birds' names are characterized by multi-significance; this is evidenced by phrases in which the same name can have different symbolism and different axiological potential. English phraseological combinations with the component "bird" are characterized by a high level of motivation.

References:

1. Barantsev, K.T. (ukl.) (2005). Anhlo-ukrainskyi frazeolohichnyi slovnyk [English-Ukrainian phraseological dictionary]. 2-he vyd., vypr. Kyiv: Znannia" KOO. 1056 p. [in Ukrainian].
2. Honcharova, T.I. (1996). Spilnit ta spetsyfika movnykh zoomorfnykh kartyn svitu [Commonalities and specificity of linguistic zoomorphic pictures of the world]. *Candidate's thesis*. Kharkiv. 22 p. [in Ukrainian].
3. Dudyk, P.S. (2005). Stylistyka ukrainskoi movy: navchalnyi posibnyk [Stylistics of the Ukrainian language: a textbook]. Kyiv: Akademiia. 368 p. [in Ukrainian].
4. Kutsyk, O.A. (1995). Slova iz symvolichnym znachenniam v osnovi ukrainskykh frazem [Words with symbolic meaning in the basis of Ukrainian phrases] *Materialy Vseukrainskoi naukovoï konferentsii "Problemy zistavnoi semantyky"*. Kyiv: KDLU. P. 112–113 [in Ukrainian].
5. Lazer-Pankiv, O.V. (2012). Strukturno-semantychnyi analiz frazeolohizmiv iz komponentom-ornitonimom. [Structural and semantic analysis of phraseological units with an ornithonym component]. *Studia linguistica*. Issue 6 (1). P. 259–264 [in Ukrainian].
6. Bilonozhenko, V.M. (ukl.) (2003). Slovnyk frazeolohizmiv ukrainskoi movy [Dictionary of phraseological units of the Ukrainian language]. Kyiv: Nauk. dumka. 1104 p. [in Ukrainian].
7. Uzhchenko, V.D., Uzhchenko, D.V. (1998). Frazeolohichnyi slovnyk ukrainskoi movy [Phraseological dictionary of the Ukrainian language]. Kyiv: Osvita. 224 p. [in Ukrainian].
8. Skopnenko, O.I., Tymbaliuk, T.V. (ukl.) (2002). Frazeolohiia perekladiv: Slovnyk-dovidnyk [Phraseology of translations: Dictionary-reference]. Kyiv: Dovira. 735 p. [in Ukrainian].
9. Chornobai, S. (2006). Idiomatychna frazeolohiia ta movna kartyna svitu (na materialy somatychnykh frazeolohichnykh odynyts anhliiskoi, novohretskoi ta ukrainskoi mov) [Idiomatic phraseology and linguistic picture of the world (based on the material somatic phraseological units of English, Modern Greek and Ukrainian languages)]. *Semantyka movy i tekstu: Materialy IX mizhnar. nauk. konf. Ivano-Frankivsk*. P. 291–293 [in Ukrainian].
10. Fauconnier, G. (1999). *Methods and Generalizations. Cognitive Linguistics, Foundations, Scope, and Methodology*. Berlin. N.Y. 418 p.
11. Pederson, E., Nuyts J. (1997). Overview: On the Relationship between Language and Conceptualization. *Language and Conceptualization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. P. 11–12, 121.

12. Post, M. (1988). Scenes and Frames Semantics as a Neo-Lexical Field Theory. Understanding the Lexicon: Meaning, Sense and World Knowledge in Lexical Semantics / Ed. by W. Hüllen and K. Schulze. Tübingen: Niemeyer. P. 36–37.

13. Rosh, E.H. (1975). Cognitive representation of semantic categories. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*. Vol. 104. P. 192–233.

Bibliography:

1. Англо-український фразеологічний словник / уклад. К. Т. Баранцев. 2-ге вид., випр. Київ : Знання, КОО, 2005. 1056 с.

2. Гончарова Т. І. Спільність та специфіка мовних зооморфних картин світу: автореф. дис. на здобуття наук. ступеня канд. філол. наук: спец. 10.02.2015 «Загальне мовознавство» / Т. І. Гончарова. Харків, 1996. 22 с.

3. Дудик П. С. Стилїстика української мови : навчальний посібник. Київ : Академія, 2005. 368 с.

4. Куцик О. А. Слова із символічним значенням в основі українських і російських фразем. *Проблеми зіставної семантики* : матеріали Всеукраїнської наукової конференції. Київ : КДЛУ, 1995. С. 112–113.

5. Лазер-Паньків О. В. Структурно-семантичний аналіз фразеологізмів із компонентом-орнітонімом. *Studia linguistica*. 2012. Вип. 6 (1). С. 259–264.

6. Словник фразеологізмів української мови / уклад.: В. М. Білоноженко та ін. Київ : Наук. думка, 2003. 1104 с.

7. Ужченко В. Д., Ужченко Д. В. Фразеологічний словник української мови. Київ : Освіта, 1998. 224 с.

8. Фразеологія перекладів : словник-довідник / уклад.: О. І. Скопненко, Т. В. Цимбалюк. Київ : Довіра, 2002. 735 с.

9. Чорнобай С. Ідіоматична фразеологія та мовна картина світу (на матеріалі соматичних фразеологічних одиниць англійської, новогрецької та української мов). *Семантика мови і тексту* : матеріали ІХ Міжнар. наук. конф. Івано-Франківськ, 2006. С. 291–293.

10. Fauconnier G. Methods and Generalizations. *Cognitive Linguistics, Foundations, Scope, and Methodology*. Berlin – N.Y., 1999. 418 p.

11. Pederson E., Nuyts J. Overview: On the Relationship between Language and Conceptualization. *Language and Conceptualization*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1997. P. 11–12, 121.

12. Post M. Scenes and Frames Semantics as a Neo-Lexical Field Theory. Understanding the Lexicon: Meaning, Sense and World Knowledge in Lexical Semantics / Ed. by W. Hüllen and K. Schulze. Tübingen : Niemeyer, 1988. P. 36–37.

13. Rosh E. H. Cognitive representation of semantic categories. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*. 1975. Vol. 104. P. 192–233.