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GENDER ASPECT OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE

Abstract. The article addresses the conception of phraseological unit as one of the basic elements of culture. The author focuses on the difference in the perception of gender differences of the phraseological units by the example of the French language.

Keywords: phraseological units, gender, conception, semantic field, criterion.

Each culture differentiates human behaviour depending on the gender, prescribing certain social roles, a pattern of behaviour and feelings. In this sense, being a man or a woman means following certain social expectations imposed by society on a person based on the «rules of gender». Gender is somehow present in all areas of our life. The language area is no exception. Its content can be revealed by analysis of the language structures [1], which explain the necessity of linguistic study of the cultural representation of the gender. The conceptions of «masculinity» and «femininity» are considered not as an immanent factor, but as the cultural concepts [1].

The phraseological fund provides great opportunities for the gender research, which brings other previously not emphasized aspects to the study of this fund. Set expressions containing a gender aspect make up a very interesting and important layer of the phraseological fund of any language, although it is insignificant.

In a recent work, A. M. Chervony identifies some semantic relations that underlie the internal form of phraseological units, among which we are interested in «gender — the level of intelligence» [2, 197]. A woman or a man, as a subject of mental and intellectual activities, has both positive and negative assessments.

The study of the peculiarities of the gender factor's functioning at different language levels raises the question of the relevance of gender research on the material of phraseological units of the French language.

Phraseological expressions are one of the most productive means of verbalizing the conceptual content of French cultural attitudes. Phraseological semantics is considered from the point of view of gender asymmetries associated with the distribution of men and women role functions in French society.

According to the definition of the word *homme* which is given by «Explanatory Dictionary of the French language Larousse» [3], it is possible to divide the material analyzed by us into two semantic fields:

- 1) phraseological units in which *homme* is understood as *l'être humain* (par opposition aux animaux) «human being»,
- 2) phraseological units in which *homme* implements the meaning of «*personne de sexe masculine*» (par opposition à *femme*) «male (as opposition to female)».

The analysis of the studied PU is based on three main criteria, namely physical properties (appearance, age, physiological characteristics), psychological characteristics (character, emotional state,

behavioural characteristics) and social-role parameters (marital status, social status). The semantic field «Human» is represented by a large number of phraseological units, but we will focus in more detail on the phraseological units of the second less numerous group, which are combined into the semantic field «Man».

The criterion of a man's appearance, i.e. his physical parameters, is reflected in phraseological units combined with a positive assessment, actualizing the seme of attractiveness, for example:

Un beau brin d'homme;

Un homme à la redresse;

Un vieux jeune homme.

The criterion of a man's inner world, based on his psychological characteristics, is manifested by the behavioural attitude of a man to a woman and a husband to a family and a house. This aspect is reflected in the following phraseological units:

Homme à femme;

Homme à succès;

Homme galant;

Homme de famille;

Homme de foyer.

The criterion of the social-role relations is manifested by PU in which a man is directly called, and the lexeme *homme* is most often used in the opposition «man/woman» (*homme/femme*):

Paris est le paradis des femmes, le purgatoire des hommes et l'enfer des chevaux;

Fumée, pluie et femme sans raison chassent l'homme de la maison.

When analyzing PU with the meaning "man", it is possible to distinguish a number of PU into a separate subgroup which includes phraseological units with paired correspondences, i.e. those that have a pair in the feminine gender, for example:

Le premier homme / la première femme;

Homme de ma vie / femme de ma vie.

Also, these PU nominate a man and a woman by internal and external characteristics, pointing to height —

petit bout d'homme / bout de femme,
to character — Bel homme / belle femme,
to behavioural habits — Homme d'intérieur /
femme d'intérieur

According to the social-role parameters, this subgroup includes PU nominating a person by the type of activity, and there are both names of professions and activities which are traditionally considered as male and female:

— Homme de lettres / femme de lettres;

Les hommes en blanc / les femmes en blanc;

Homme à gages / femme à gages,

— and implying male heavy physical labor —
Homme de peine / femme de peine.

As for the definition of the word *femme* which is given by the «Explanatory Dictionary of the French language Larousse» [3], it is possible to divide the material analyzed by us into such semantic fields:

1) phraseological units in which *femme* is understood as *l'être humain du sexe féminin* «female human being»

2) phraseological units in which *femme* implements the meaning of *Épouse* (spouse, wife).

3) phraseological units in which *femme* is considered as a female human being with its advantages and disadvantages, its activities and origin.

If we analyze phraseological expressions by appearance, age and physiological characteristics, we can point out their small number. And they are associated with age and oldness. A woman starts to lose attractiveness and feel the lack of male attention with age, but at the same time, a woman starts to use the strengths of the years of matureness.

Les femmes sont comme les paons dont les plumes deviennent plus belles en vieillissent.

La vieillesse est l'enfer des femmes.

Femme barbie, de loin la salue, un bâton à la main.

Quand les cheveux commencent à blanchir, laisse la femme et prends le vin

Expressions in which a Woman is a symbol of beauty and grace:

La femme de César ne doit pas (même) être soupçonnée

La femme du voisin est toujours plus belle.

La femme est toujours femme.

La plus belle femme ne peut donner que ce qu'elle a.

Phraseological expressions that emphasize the psychological characteristics of women are the most numerous. A woman is characterized by such qualities as heartfulness, friendliness, anxiety and shyness.

Larmes de femme, assaisonnement de malice.

Femme rit quand elle peut et pleure quand elle veut.

In the French language, we have identified expressions that negatively characterize women's intellectual properties, as they indicate the inability of women to behave with dignity in society, ridicule women's simplicity and narrow-mindedness.

De ce qu'on dit des femmes, il n'en faut croire que la moitié

Femme qui rit, à moitié dans ton lit

La langue des femmes est leur épée, et elles ne la laissent pas rouiller.

Trois femmes font un marché,

It is very often possible to find phraseological expressions in which there is a comparison of a woman with animals: paon, poule, chevaux, chatte.

Animals are one of the most ancient standards of comparison, as since antiquity the lives of people and animals are inextricably linked.

La femme et la poule se perdent pour trop courir

Caresses de femme, caresses de chatte.

Paris est l'enfer des chevaux, le purgatoire des hommes et le paradis des femmes.

Des femmes et des chevaux, Il n'y en a point sans défauts.

In our opinion, these phraseological units have an expressive gender colouring. They are characterized by a feminine direction, they are associated with a woman, they mean domination and the power of a woman over a man.

That is why a Woman and a Horse are very similar. A true Woman is characterized by pride, beauty,

intelligence, self-respect and the ability to adapt to any situation. All of this applies to the Horse and only to it, but not to any other animal.

The comparison of a Woman to birds is not accidental. It is not only because the bird is able to successfully maneuver, trying to avoid the danger. Women are like birds, and they will never be happy in a cage. Holding a woman by force or circumstances, you need to prepare for the fact that you will lose her irrevocably.

La femme est un oiseau qu'on ne tient que par le bout de l'aile

Foi de femme est plume sur l'eau.

A large group is formed by phraseological units that proclaims the defining role of a woman in the family.

La femme fait la maison

Il faut être le compagnon et non le maître de sa femme

La bonne femme n'est jamais oisive.

Qui croit sa femme se trompe, et qui ne la croit pas est trompé.

L'amour des femmes que le courage des plus braves

Les hommes font les lois, les femmes font les mœurs

Traditionally, the husband was considered as the head of the house, and the wife was obliged to obey him. Quarrelsome and rebellious women were allowed to be punished by their husbands.

Il est permis de battre sa femme, mais il ne faut pas l'assommer

La femme ne doit pas apporter de tête dans le ménage

Fou est le jaloux qui tente de garder sa femme.

Sont les femmes les deux extrémités de la vie serait sans sejours et le milieu sans laisser

In the French language there are quite a large number of phraseological units about the ability of a wife to run a household:

Femme sage reste a son menage.

C'est la bonne femme qui fait le bon mari.

On ne peut avoir en même temps femme et bénéfice

Qui épouse la femme épouse les dettes

Les femmes font les hommes.

Qui femme a, noise a.

After analyzing the phraseological expressions, it can be noted that most of French phraseological units are formulated as recommendations. There are phraseological units related only to men: the predominance of the category «Man-the stronger sex», the presence of phraseological units of the category «man-lovelace» and «man-weakling». Phraseological units referring only to women are not numerous, but they characterize a woman as «a frivolous being», as «a symbol of beauty and grace» and as «the weaker sex». There is a group of phraseological units where the internal form refers to the feminine, but the expression itself applies to

all persons. Male names also contain both positive and negative connotations. PU analysis reveals that the dominant role in the family does not belong to either a man or a woman. Phraseological units do not reflect the dependence of the wife on the husband and the husband on the wife.

Thus, the phraseological expressions of the French language show the presence in the main category not of persons, but of actions peculiar to all people. In phraseology, the predominance of negative evaluation is not related to the gender factor, but to the peculiarity of human conceptualization of reality. Therefore, it can be concluded that it is not «bad women» that are opposed to «good men», but «bad» to «good» within the framework of the universal, most of the gender phraseological units are assessments of moral qualities and behavioral norms.

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