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## ОСОБЕННОСТИ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЯ НАЗВАНИЙ ЖИВОТНЫХ В РУССКИХ И АНГЛИЙСКИХ ПОСЛОВИЦАХ И ПОГОВОРКАХ

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## ANIMALS IN BRITISH AND RUSSIAN PROVERBS AND SAYINGS

*If we spoke a different language, we would perceive a somewhat different world.*  
*Ludwig Wittgenstein*

### **Introduction. The origin of proverbs and sayings**

Nowadays, the fact that languages form peoples' mentality and are closely related to it is considered almost indisputable. Folklore, without exaggeration, can be called one of the brightest lexical means of the language. It certainly includes proverbs and sayings as a folk wisdom that has been formed over the centuries. Being a cultural and historical reflection of any society, including Russian and English, these forms of folk art are of great interest, therefore they were chosen for analysis through research when writing the essay.

The relevance of this research is connected with a deeper understanding of the cultural differences and similarities between Russia and England. In addition, it contributes to the development of intercultural communication skills and the promotion of a more comprehensive approach to language learning.

Thus, the first step of this research is to characterize the origin of proverbs and sayings in both English and Russian language. One of the first attempts to describe the distinctive features of proverbs and sayings was made by one of the most famous Russian linguist Vladimir Dal [1]. According to his definitions, it's possible to consider a proverb as a complete statement that teaches something and a saying as is an incomplete statement that does not have any instructive intentions. Many Russian sayings, which have been retold from one generation to another, have been mentioned in the author's fairy tales of such writers as Pushkin, Afanasyev, and others. For instance, one of the most usable Russian proverbs is noticed in Afanasyev's fairy tale *The Frog Princess*. It can be literally translated as "*morning is wiser than evening*" with the English equivalent "*let's sleep on it*". A similar trend is observed in English too. The use of sayings and proverbs flourished in Shakespeare's time, it is likely that many of them attributed to him existed in the oral tradition before such as "listen to many, speak to a few", "a good heart's worth gold" and others.

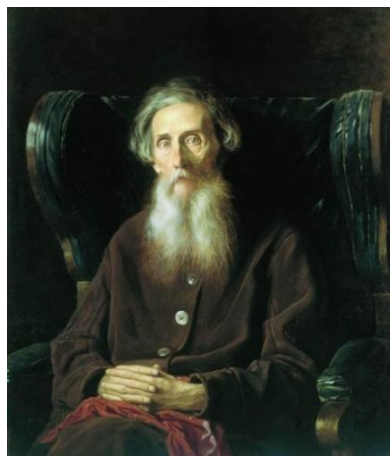


Рис. 1. Vladimir Dal

### **The nature of proverbs and sayings related to animals**

At the second step of the research, we're going to explain the presence of zoonymic components (the usage of animal names) in proverbs and sayings. Thus, a Russian philologist and folklorist Vladimir Anikin [2] caused this presence by the fact that since ancient times people had to survive in the animal world. Therefore, each ethnic group puts its own special meaning into proverbs and sayings, endowing animals with certain traits of character. Consequently, zoonymic proverbs and sayings seem to be an interesting material for comparison in the field of peculiarities of national characters especially Russian and English, performing an imaginative system that has been created for generations and reflects the centuries-old experience of communication between people of an ethno-linguistic collective and their knowledge of the environment. That means the mindset of any nation is manifested in the selection of different images to express certain concepts, including the names of animals.



Рис. 2. Vladimir Anikin

### **Analysis of similarities and differences in the use of animals in English and Russian proverbs and sayings**

The next step of our research is devoted to clarifying the specifics of usage names of animals and correlation with national peculiarities of English and Russian languages.

The culture of both countries of England and Russia has a great historical heritage and distinctive features, although there is also a lot in common.

In both English and Russian, a significant place is occupied by proverbs and sayings in which domestic animals are mentioned with the most frequent use of such as dog, horse, fish and cat. The fact is explained by the common historical development of all mankind. However, the most popular animals in English are a donkey (*A donkey in Saxony is a professor in Rome; Mules make a great fuss about their ancestors having been donkeys; My donkey is dead; let no more grass grow*) and a bird (*A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; A bird may be known by its song; Old bird is not caught with chaff*), while in Russian – a wolf (*Волка ноги кормят; Волков бояться - в лес не ходить; Сколько волка ни корми, он в лес смотрит*), a crow (*Куда ворона летит, туда и глядит; Наряд соколий, а походка воронья; Ворона в павлиньих перьях*) and a mouse (*Мышь, гложет, что может; Был бы хлеб, а мыши будут; Не велика мышка, да зубок остр*).

Animal names can be used in proverbs with a positive, negative or neutral connotation. Thus, a wolf and a bear have a negative semantic connotation in both languages. However, the negative image of a donkey and fish is more typical for English proverbs and sayings, whereas dogs and sheep for Russian. A cow and a dog are positive images in English, and bull and fish - in Russian. A horse is a common positive image in both English and Russian, which is explained by the fact horses were the breadwinners of families, were used as vehicles and on hunting.

### **Types of zoonymic proverbs and sayings**

Like all the others, zoonymic proverbs and sayings in English and Russian can be divided into three groups:

#### **a) Similar lexical description and meaning in Russian and English**

Proverbs and saying from this first group are the easiest to understand and do not require any additional clarification. Their translation from English into Russian and vice versa does not differ in meaning or vocabulary. Often such a translation is called “*loan translation*” or “*calquing*”.

The following proverbs and sayings belong to this group:

- *Take the bull by the horns* (*Взять быка за рога*);
- *Man is to man wolf* (*Человек человеку волк*);
- *Never look a gift horse in the mouth* (*Дареному коню в зубы не смотрят*);
- *One must howl with the wolves* (*С волками жить - по-волчьи выть*)

#### **b) Similar meaning and different lexical description**

Such proverbs and sayings have equivalents in both English and Russian languages. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand because they have the same structure, but the images for expression in them are different.

This group includes:

- *A hawk will not pick out hawk's eyes* - *Ворон ворону глаз не выклюет*;
- *The leopard cannot change its spots* - *Волк линяет, а натуры не меняет*;
- *Beware of a silent dog and still water* - *Берегитесь козла спереди, коня*

сзади;

- *Geese with geese and women with women - Знайся конь с конем, вол с волком, свинья со свиньей, ровня с ровней*  
and others.

**c) Proverbs and sayings in one of the languages that have no similar lexical and grammatical expression in another language**

Proverbs that cannot be translated literally, as they differ both grammatically and lexically, but semantic analogs can be matched to them.

English:

- *To wait till the cows come home;*
- *It rains cats and dogs.*

Russian:

- *Чья бы корова мычала;*
- *К нему на кривой козе не подъедешь.*

**Conclusion**

Summing up the results of this study, some important circumstances of similarities and differences between such parts of English and Russian folklore as proverbs and sayings were clarified. Thus, it was found out that these two countries, despite the fact that they belong to different language groups, generally have a lot in common. Therefore, their cultures cannot be called exotic for each other. In both languages, there is a great number of proverbs and sayings similar in meaning and sometimes in form, which is explained by the common historical development of the mankind. However, there are still local differences, such as emotional coloring of animals, the frequency of use, etc. In addition, in this case English is characterized by a more practical application, while Russian is more abstract and generalized in nature.

Nevertheless, it is important to remember that language is a projection of the culture and mentality of any nation. By studying a language and its means of expression, such as proverbs and sayings, we will be able to better understand the worldview of the nation, see the similarities that unite us, and the differences that make us unique.

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