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ENGLISH BIBLICISMS IN COLLOQUIAL SPEECH AND A LITERARY TEXT: LOOKING FOR THE RIGHT INTERPRETATION

Abstract

In several cases, the function of colloquial speech, English biblicism, does not cause common associations with their former meanings or the original context in the speaker's mind. The absence of corresponding marks in phraseological dictionaries confirms the fact that biblicisms, possessing a particular source, lose their connection with it. This research aims to trace the original and transformed semantic content of English phraseological units of biblical origin and provide the correct interpretation of the semantic peculiarities of biblical citation both in colloquial speech and literary text. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to identify a number of specific tasks: to define the universal features of biblicism; classify English biblicisms according to their origin and structure; study the semantics of phraseological units of biblical origin and establish the relationship between the original meaning of English biblicism and their transformed meaning in colloquial speech and literary text; to explore semantic and stylistic peculiarities of English biblicism and to identify the main thematic groups of the units under analysis in colloquial speech and literary text.

Keywords: Bible, biblicism, colloquial speech, semantic transformations, literary text.

Introduction

Based on the object of the research, one should consider the notion of "biblicism" and dwell on the problem of the Bible's influence on the fund of nominative expressive units of the English language, as well as the role of the Bible as one of the powerful sources of expressive means in colloquial speech and literary text.

In this research, biblicism is understood as in-

dividual words of modern languages directly borrowed from the Bible or subjected to the semantic influence of biblical texts and set phrases, expressions, and idioms, dating back to the Scripture texts.

Biblicisms of the English language represented both by separate words and phraseological units are always of great interest to researchers. However, stylistic peculiarities of their usage in different functional styles, namely in colloquial

speech and literary text, from a functional perspective were considered only sporadically.

Biblical phraseological units represent an important and interesting layer of phraseology in many languages, which has significant differences from phraseology, dating back, for example, to Greek and Roman mythology, literary or historical allusions. Units of this kind are borrowed mainly from literature, while biblicisms were not borrowed by one language from another. They result from a selection from one common for many languages source – the Bible.

The characteristic features of biblicism include the reflection on their semantics, moral and ethical norms, rules of conduct established in the Bible, as well as positive from the point of view of the Bible, qualities and character traits of a person. Besides the connection with the concept of sin, the reflection of people's inappropriate behaviour and negative qualities are also of primary importance.

Literature Review

There are many scientific studies on the problem of distinguishing the status of biblical studies. The Bible undoubtedly stands at the origins of European culture, forming a “spiritual code that unites the peoples of Christian cultures” (Lilich, Mokienko, & Stepanova, 1993, p. 51) and influences the development of relevant linguistic cultures.

Within the framework of literary studies, *biblicism* is viewed as a reference to the Bible (allusion, quotation or reminiscence) (Volkov, 2001; Kovaliv, 2007). In the broad linguistic sense, biblicisms are viewed as words or word combinations that might be derived from the Bible or have prominent associations with the Bible (Shevelov, 1993; Akhmanova, 1969). In the narrow sense, it is a phraseological unit – with the respective prototype found either in the Bible or Apocrypha (Zorivchak, 2005; Mokienko, 2013; Chlebda, 2005; Vereshchagin, 1993). The research studies the Biblical idiom that is viewed as a connotonym, i.e. a proper noun that has de-

veloped a secondary connotation or a set expression – phraseological unit, proverb, saying or maxim – deriving from the Bible, Apocrypha or Divine Liturgy. A distinctive feature of Biblical idioms is their functioning in non-Biblical contexts in literary, colloquial and dialectal speech.

The Bible has been available to ordinary readers in English-speaking countries for a long time. However, it has been admitted that elementary knowledge of the Bible has declined among young English speakers in recent years since public schools no longer teach religion (Alter & Kermode, 1987).

In literary works of modern English writers' biblicisms receive a complex rethinking and transformation, which lead to the acquisition by the latter of deep symbolic meaning and their transformation into the brightest poetic symbols. The active use of biblicisms in literary works and colloquial speech testifies to the continuity of cultural traditions and the fact that religion continues to play an essential role in the worldview of Christian peoples.

Methods

In this research, the attempt is made to trace peculiarities of usage of English biblicism in colloquial speech and literary text. For this purpose, the observation method and the informant method were used. The observation method confirmed the assumption that phraseological units under consideration are of high frequency both in colloquial speech and modern literary text.

In the further development of the problem, the informant method was used to identify the facts of the use of these units in everyday speech and possible options for their use in other functional styles. Using this method, sociolinguistic observations were made to answer the following questions: is the fact of using phraseological units of biblical origin in speech directly dependent on the age, social status, education of the speaker and his attitude to religion.

The semantic analysis method of English biblicisms made it possible to highlight the differ-

ence in their numerous semantic transformations, rethinking of their general meanings, and define changes in the connotative meanings of such phraseological units.

The method of functional differentiation turned out to help classify English biblicisms based on their connection with the primary source, thus highlighting primary and secondary phraseological units of biblical origin.

Data Collection Procedure

In modern linguistics, there is still no consensus about the linguistic status of a phraseological unit. Therefore, there is no unity of views among different scholars. For example, in the “The Dictionary of Linguistic Terms”, we find the following definition: “a phraseological unit is a lexically indivisible, stable in composition and structure, a holistic word combination, reproduced in the form of a finished speech unit. From a semantic point of view, they differ, exploring such terms as phraseological adhesions, phraseological unity, phraseological combinations” (Rosenenthal & Telnikova, 1985, pp. 377-378).

Mendelson (2001) understands the following by the notion of phraseological units: “a phraseological unit is a stable lexical and semantic unity, which outwardly resembles a phrase or a sentence, that has reproducibility, a holistic, usually figurative meaning and, as a rule, performs a stylistic evaluative function” (p. 25).

From the above definitions, it is clear that different scholars understand the meanings of phraseological units differently. Some linguists prioritize the lexical indivisibility of phraseological units. Shansky (1985) states that the reproducibility of phraseological units plays a central role. In this work, we will start from the definition given by Shansky since, in our opinion, it reveals the essential features of phraseological units as ready-made, reproducible constituent units, the degree of semantic integrity and lexical indivisibility of which can be different.

Based on the availability of a well-known source, biblicisms are often classified as so-

called “phraseological units”. They are words that have become widespread and are distinguished by significant expression; stable phrases, similar to proverbs and sayings, but originating from a specific literary or historical source” (Admony, 1988, p. 212).

Biblical phraseological units received several specific features from their source, the presence of a broad and complexly organized associative field. It is a collection of different associations that arise in the reader or listener in connection with a given biblicism.

Biblical associative fields are capable of having not only *biblicisms proper* (language units taken directly from the Bible) but also “*near-biblical*” units (taken indirectly, through works of art, religion, and folklore). Arising at a particular stage, biblical association during further narration can be designated verbally; that is, one biblical phraseological unit seems to continue the other: their fields, correspondingly, create a common thematic field and thereby ensure the coherence of any literary text at the semantic level.

The function of a reminder turned us to the literary term “allusion”, considered a stylistic device that evokes memories of another work of literature when reading a concrete literary text. Here, allusion is a form of realization of special literary ties, and from this point of view, it is close to borrowing, imitation, parody, and stylization. At the same time, however, it is necessary to distinguish phraseological units of biblical origin from allusions.

In our opinion, the names of historical and mythological events and realities and personal names of historical, mythological and literary characters cannot be considered phraseological units because any phraseological unit is a genetically phraseological combination, that is, a set of no less than, two components. For the language mentioned above phenomena, the broader term “textual allusions” is more suitable for our minds.

Textual allusions are conscious or unconscious, accurate or transformed quotations or other

kinds of references to more or less known previously produced texts as part of a later text. Textual allusions can be quotations of different linguistic statuses from text fragments to individual phrases, phraseological units, singled words with specific semantic shadowing, including individual neologisms, names of characters, titles of works, names of their authors, particular connotations of words and expressions, direct or indirect reminders of situations. There may or may not be a different degree of accuracy in textual allusions, a reference to the source (Suprun, 1995).

Thus, we can conclude that biblical phraseological units are initially textual allusions from the text of the Bible and one-word textual allusions. Nevertheless, the linguistic properties of phraseological units show only stable combinations of several words, which is this study's object.

Findings

The Bible (Greek – *Biblia* – plural from *bibliōn* “book of books”) is a collection of works of different times, languages, and symbols that arose in the 8th century BC – 2nd century AD. The name Bible is understood as the written revelation of God to people. The Bible is divided into two large parts. The first part includes books that were compiled before the birth of Christ. Their totality is called the Old Testament. The second part covers books written after the Nativity of Christ – this is the New Testament. The Old Testament consists of the works of ancient Hebrew literature of the 12th and 2nd centuries BC, written in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic.

The New Testament consists of the works of early Christian literature of the second half of the 1st century and early 2nd AD, written mainly in Greek.

Like other languages of Christian nations, Modern English has been dramatically influenced by the language of the Bible. “Much has been said and written about the tremendous influence the Bible's translations have had on the

English language. For centuries the Bible has been the most widely read and quoted book in England. That is why not only single words but the entire idiomatic expression, often literal translations of Hebrew and Greek idioms, entered the English language from the pages of the Bible. The number of biblical phrases and expressions included in the English language is so great that it would be a very difficult task to collect and list them” (Smith, 1998, pp. 110-111).

Some English words, which were either directly borrowed from the Bible or were subjected to the semantic influence of biblical texts, also have a biblical origin. Among the biblical words, two categories can be distinguished. One is made up of familiar notions: *icon, amen, the devil*. Another layer is formed by an extensive group of proper male and female names currently included in the central nucleus of modern Christian canonical anthroponymy: *John, Paul, Matthew, Peter, Mary, and Anna*. However, as mentioned above, these lexical units refer to textual allusions and are not the object of this study.

Biblical phraseological units often differ in many respects from their biblical prototypes. In a number of cases, this is because the biblical prototype was rethought over time, and the order of words could be changed, or archaic forms of words could be discarded. For example, the phrase *to kill the fatted calf* in the prodigal son's parable is literally used to “slay the fatted calf.” Later, this expression acquired a new meaning to treat a guest with the best at home. In the expression *whatever a man sows, that shall he reap* the archaic form of the verb *to sow* (cf. *whatever a man soweth that shall he reap*) is present. There are cases when a biblical phrase is used in a positive sense, but in the modern English language, it is rethought and transformed into a phraseological unit with a negative meaning, for example:

Not to let one's left hand know what one's right hand does – the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing (modern version).

When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth – “When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what the

right hand does” (biblical prototype).

Interestingly, some biblical phraseological units do not go back to a biblical quotation but to a biblical story. So we find biblical images and concepts in such phraseological units as *a forbidden fruit*, *Job's comforter*, *Judas' kiss*, *a prodigal son*, and *dead letter*.

Discussion

Phraseologists who adhere to a “broad” view of phraseology usually divide biblical phraseological units into semantic groups according to their specific characteristics. The most common is the classification of biblicisms according to the degree of their semantic fusion of the components of phraseological units. Among biblical phraseological units, we can find the following types of biblical phraseological units, namely:

1. *phraseological adhesions*, which are absolutely indivisible, indecomposable stable combinations, the general meaning of which does not depend on the meaning of the words that make them up: *sounding brass*, *the salt of the earth*, *a voice in the wilderness*, *whited sepulchres*, etc.
2. phraseological unities that are *stable combinations* of words in which, in the presence of figurative meaning, signs of semantic separation of components are preserved: *bury one's talents in the earth*, *barren fig tree*, *the lady of Babylon*, *to bear one's cross*, *a lost sheep*, *shake the dust off feet*, *to wash one's hands*, *massacre of the innocents*, etc.;
3. *mixed phraseological combinations*, including words with free and phraseologically related meanings: *outer darkness*, *to contribute one's mite*, *to separate the sheep from the goats*, *daily bread*, *cornerstone*, *stumbling stone*, *deadly sin*, etc.
4. phraseological phrases or *phraseological expressions* that are stable in their composition and use, which entirely consist of words with a free nominative meaning and semantically segments, later entered the vocabulary stock and became a phraseological saying: *all they*

that take the sword shall perish with the sword, *whoever shall offend one of these little ones*, *let this cup pass from me*, *to reap where one has not sown*, *What good can come out of Nazareth?* etc.

As we have mentioned above, a great number of phraseological phrases, different in meaning and structure, go back to the Bible. Among them, two groups, which are functionally and stylistically different, can be distinguished in terms of lexical composition and grammar. They are *colloquial*, stylistically neutral and *bookish*, archaic, of rare use.

The first group comprises phraseological units that do not contain traces of outdated grammatical patterns: *to cast a stone*, *the root of evil*, *the salt of the earth*, *not to move a finger* (*not to stir a finger*), etc. The second group consists of phraseological phrases, which contain either a verbal or a grammatical construction in the form of archaic words, morphological forms or proper biblical names: *let this cup pass from me*, *Job the long-suffering Job*, *byword*, *render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's*, *a voice in the wilderness*, *judge not*, *that ye be not judged*.

It is worth mentioning that each language has a peculiar relationship between phraseology and the text of the Bible. In the work of Gak (1997), “The Features of Biblical Phraseological Units”, the relationship between phraseological units and the text of the Bible is considered. As a result, the researcher identifies several oppositions.

In terms of correlation with the text of the Bible, biblicisms are divided into two groups: *quotation (contextual)* and *situational*. In the first case, a phraseological unit represents an element of the text, sometimes slightly modified; for example, the expression “*stumbling block*” occurs twice in the Bible. In the second case, there is no expression in the appropriate form in the Bible, but it represents a specific situation, the description of which in the Holy Scriptures may even take several chapters. The expression “*Noah's Ark*” does not appear in the Old Testament; it summarizes the situation described in the sixth and seventh chapters.

The inclusion of biblicism (including those dating back to the Bible) in a literary text, as a rule, is associated with different semantic or structural changes or, in other words, transformations. Among structural transformations of biblical phraseological units traced in a literary text discourse, we distinguish:

- a) contextual expansion of the boundaries of biblicism;
- b) replacement of one or two components of a phraseological unit with general linguistic or contextual synonyms;
- c) replacement of a phraseological unit component, complicated by the expansion of its composition;
- d) expanding the lexical and syntactic combinability of stable combinations and phraseologically related words;
- e) replacement of a component of a stable combination, leading to changes in its meaning.

Among semantic transformations within biblicisms functioning in the literary discourse, we point out the following:

- a) the literal use of combinations that are perceived as biblical phraseological units out of context;
- b) a collision in one context of phraseologically related and free combinations;
- c) the use of “fragments” of biblical phraseological units in the literary discourse: the introduction into the text, not the whole phraseological unit, but only some of its components.

However, a much more considerable number of the analyzed language units are biblicisms that appear in a sentence as one of its members, which entirely depends on their relevance to a particular part of speech, that is, on the lexical and grammatical meaning. From the point of view of equivalence of one or another part of speech, biblicisms can be divided into the following lexico-grammatical groups:

- a) verbal: *to cast a stone, to contribute one's mite, to bear one's cross, to cast pearls before swine, to build one's house on sand, to separate the sheep from the goats, to serve Mammon, etc.*

- b) substantive: *they which do hunger and thirst, Alpha and Omega, lady of Babylon, prodigal son, the powers that be, cornerstone, stumbling stone, Judah's kiss, servant of two masters, deadly sin, outer darkness, a lost sheep, etc.*
- c) adverbial: *by divine mercy, in flesh and blood, with one's full heart, without respect of persons, etc..*
- d) adjective: *not of this world, poor in spirit, sealed with seven seals, etc.*
- e) interjection: *let this cup pass from me!; Crucify him!; for Christ's sake.*

It can be noted that most biblicisms belong to the first three presented above lexico-grammatical groups. This fact confirms the general trend since verbal, adverbial and substantive groups are the most productive and structurally more or less the same type in the phraseological system as a whole.

To illustrate biblicisms functioning in the literary text, the works of English writers of the first half of the 20th century (Cronin, Maugham, Galsworthy, Wodehouse) were analyzed. Using the continuous sampling method from 17 sources, 81 examples of biblical phraseological units were pointed out. After analyzing these phraseological units, we obtained the following results:

- 1) from the point of view of grammar, they represent the main parts of speech.
 - a) substantive phraseological units:

daily bread – a piece of bread, try to survive.

The salt of the earth – a very good and honest person or group of people.
 - b) verbal: *to separate the sheep from the goats* – *to separate the harmful from the useful, the bad from the good.*
 - c) adverbial: *out of him root and branch* – thoroughly, radically, radically completely, completely.
 - d) adjective: *safe and sound* – safe and sound, alive and well.
- 2) from the stylistic point of view, among these biblicisms we distinguish the following stylis-

tically coloured lexical groups:

- a) colloquial, stylistically neutral: hands – “*clean hands*”, spotless reputation, honesty.

golden rule – a wise rule that always helps everyone.

- b) bookish, rare use:

The handwriting/writing on the wall – an ominous omen.

- 3) In terms of correlation with the text of the Bible, these examples include:

- a) cited: *where one has not sown* – to reap where you did not sow; reap where one has not sown.

- b) situational: *forbidden fruit* – an immoral or illegal pleasure

In literary texts of modern English authors, all the types of biblicisms identified are widely represented according to the stylistic, semantic and structural features.

As biblicisms are widely used in modern literary texts, they are firmly entrenched in the minds of modern people. This fact allows us to assume that they are widely used in everyday speech, the colloquial speech of the British. It was found that a native speaker usually uses at least ten biblical expressions during the day. Of course, among the entire volume of biblical phraseological units (404 units of English were identified), there are units used most often by representatives of all population segments and biblicisms used quite rarely. It is worth mentioning that educated and well-read people usually use biblicisms. Such language units mainly belong to the bookish or the official (official) functional styles.

In the process of applying the informant method, native speakers were asked to comment on the collected biblicisms according to the following parameters: whether a unit is familiar, whether its etymological basis is known; whether this unit is used in colloquial speech; whether it is used in everyday conversations or in conversations on religious topics only; give an example of a linguistic situation in which this unit can be used.

During the analysis of the materials received, the following facts were revealed. A certain group of biblicisms is widely used by native speakers, regardless of their religious awareness. However, people who have no idea about biblical texts cannot always explain the etymological basis of a particular biblical expression. As the experiment showed, the British and Americans are more knowledgeable in this area. This can be explained by the fact that religion in England and America has a wide sphere of influence. Interestingly, the level of religious awareness among English and American schoolchildren and students is roughly the same as that of adults. In English colloquial speech, such biblicisms that fully retained their original form and meaning were found. The number of such units, and especially those that have an archaic form, is small. In the speech of the British and Americans, such units are practically absent. However, the following examples can be cited: “*to build something on the sand*” – to create something fragile, short-lived in speech can be used when talking about plans that are not destined to come true or about a business doomed to failure in advance.

There are a large number of examples when biblicisms are used in colloquial speech in a modified form. The meaning of the phraseological unit, its emotional colouring, as well as the external form (lexical and grammatical) can be changed. Cases of the individual use of phraseological units in colloquial speech and the main types of individual author’s transformations of biblicisms were identified by Melerovich and Mokienko (2001). Among them, they distinguished: 1) semantic and 2) structural transformations. Since biblical phraseological units are normatively included in the structure of phraseology of the English language, such a division, in our opinion, is also true for biblicisms.

Semantic transformations. Transformations of this type include semantic and stylistic transformations that do not affect the lexical and grammatical structure of phraseological units. The main types of semantic transformations are acquisitions of an additional semantic connotation

by a phraseological unit. Various shades of meaning often arise with the individual author's use of phraseological units.

So, for example, in the phraseology of the English language according to the Bible (*King James Bible*, 1769/2017), the myth of Gog and Magog is reflected. The Old Testament speaks of Gog, the king of the land of Magog, who, according to the prophecy, was to invade Israel and the judgment of God over Gog, all of whose army would be destroyed with him (*King James Bible*, 1769/2017, Ezekiel 38:1-6). In the Apocalypse, these two names symbolize the pagan nations, which at the end of time, will oppose Christ on the side of Satan (*King James Bible*, 1769/2017, Ezekiel 38-39). The original meaning of the English phraseological unit Gog and Magog is "something terrible, foreshadowing great wars and disasters". However, the further evolution of the expression is associated with the English legend about two giants – the surviving descendants of Gog and Magog, who were brought to London in chains and put on guard at the royal palace.

The rethinking of a phraseological unit. Reconsideration is understood as a radical transformation of the "semantic core" (the terms of Melerovich & Mokienko, 2001), a complete change of its semantic content. Among the phraseological units of the English language, we find the following examples: *to cast a stone at somebody* – "*to cast a stone*" in the Bible is used in the literal meaning – "to throw a stone" and goes back to the legend of how the scribes and Pharisees, tempting Jesus, brought to him a woman convicted of adultery, and He said them: "*He that is without sin among you, let him throw the first stone at her.*" In Judea, there was an execution – stoning. Then, as a result of rethinking, the expression takes on the meaning of "condemn someone".

Change in the connotative meaning of phraseological units. Connotation is viewed as an emotive, evaluative, expressive and stylistic change of the meaning components. Quite often, in works of fiction, the initial emotional compo-

nent of the meaning of a phraseological unit changes.

let not thy left hand know what one right hand doeth – "*let your left hand not know what your right hand is doing.*" The Bible uses this phrase in a positive sense. In modern language, it is rethought with a negative assessment:

"You are so careless, even your right hand does not seem to know what the left hand does." *You are so absent-minded, even your right hand does not seem to know what the left is doing!*

Structural and semantic transformations. The second group of transformations includes structural-semantic transformations, which, according to our observations, are somewhat more common among biblical phraseological units than semantic transformations. They represent semantic transformations associated with lexical or grammatical form changes of phraseological units.

Melerovich and Mokienko (2001) distinguish between two main types of structural-semantic transformations: 1) transformations that do not lead to violation of the identity of phraseological units; 2) transformations resulting in occasional (individual author's) phraseological units or words.

As a result of structural and semantic transformations of the first type, various instances of individual use of phraseological units are created, concretizing and developing semantic content, enhancing expressiveness, and modifying the emotive and evaluative plan within the identity of phraseological units. The first-type transformations include 1. change (expansion and reduction) of the component composition of a phraseological unit; 2. replacement of a phraseological unit component; 3. changes in the arrangement of the components; 4. the transition of affirmative forms to negative ones and vice versa; 5. complete deformation.

As a result of replacing a phraseological unit component, occasional biblical expressions are formed. This group includes most of the individual author's phraseological units. In most cases, speakers form a new unit based on an existing

one and put a slightly different, new meaning into it in the particular biblical phraseological unit.

The expression *a sealed book* – “*a book with seven seals*” originally had a literal meaning. This refers to the official publication “The Book of Common Prayer”, published in 1662 with the large state seal. This book was ordered to be kept in cathedrals, and any version of it was called *A Sealed Book*. Later, in the style of fiction, this expression acquired the meaning of “something incomprehensible, inaccessible to understanding”:

At present, in spoken language, this expression has acquired another meaning “it’s all over, everything is decided, this is not a subject for discussion”.

Let’s take the following situation as an example: a girl and a young man broke up. To all the young man’s requests to meet again and discuss everything again, the girl replies: “*We’ve got nothing to speak about. It’s a sealed book for me*”. (We have nothing more to talk about. It’s all over.) (Mendelson, 2001).

During the study, a certain group of biblical phraseological units was identified that are used in speech only by people related to religion or in conversations on religious topics. First of all, this can be explained by the fact that among similar phraseological units, there are often those in which vocabulary based on knowledge of certain biblical characters and images are subject to rethinking.

Thanks to the Bible, many phraseological expressions in the English language can be considered metaphorical symbols. It is reasonable to assume that these expressions are used by those who have an idea of the prototypes of these expressions and, therefore, understand their meaning. Such phraseological units should include, for example, such biblicisms as David and Jonathan in the meaning “inseparable friends”. To grasp the meaning of this expression, one should know the biblical legend about two inseparable friends, David and Jonathan, who more than once saved each other life. Another example – as poor as

Job – is based on the legend of the old man Job, from whom God took away all his wealth and his family and friends as a test.

Such phraseological units are not widely used in English literary speech. However, the analysis of the collected material shows that biblicisms, which arose on the basis of those biblical legends that are familiar to most people, are found in everyday speech much more often. It should be noted that knowledge of certain parables and legends does not always lead to knowledge of the Bible itself. Many biblical stories are reflected in literature, paintings and sculptures. A large number of them became known through the cinema.

Based on the observations, the most famous biblical stories and, accordingly, associated with them phraseological units are Egyptian captivity and a journey in the desert: *Egyptian execution*, *Egyptian slavery*, *10 Egyptian executions*, *Egyptian darkness*; *heavenly manna*; life and death of Jesus Christ *to bear one’s cross* – *carry your cross*, *crown of thorns*, *drink the cup of suffering to the bottom*; the life of the apostles *doubting Thomas*, *sell for thirty pieces of silver*, Judas – *the kiss of Judas*, etc.

A number of biblicisms were also identified that do not contain common vocabulary, but are used by native speakers only in conversations on religious topics. These units include phraseological units *to bear one’s cross*, despite the fact that in a literary speech, this unit is used quite freely in situations that have nothing to do with religion and has a rethought meaning “to endure trials to the end, to submit to fate.”

In addition, this group also includes *deep calling to deep*, *to entrain an angel unawares* – to accept a famous person without knowing who he is, *faith without work is dead*. These expressions are not used in everyday speech. However, those native speakers who are versed in religion and religious rituals can explain that the expression *dust and ashes* is used in the prayer at a burial and *to cast in one’s lot with someone* – to link their fate with someone and *what God had put together no man shall put asunder* – at the wedding (Mendelson, 2001).

The cases of the occasional use of biblical phraseological units and individual authors' expressions formed on their basis are innumerable in everyday speech. A thorough study of the formation methods of such units and their semantic transformations can become the subject of a separate scientific study.

Conclusion

The substantive basis of religion consists of vital for a man and society in general meanings, which are the key notions of society. Written works based on "sacred knowledge" are gradually becoming the semantic core of derived texts and "meanings", filling certain gaps in culture. As for the Bible, in the Christian world, the formation of cultural concepts is carried out mainly at the level of the "original" text of Scripture, i.e. with a minimal element of reinterpretation. Translations of the Bible and liturgy in different languages contributed to the assertion of the authority of Scripture on the one hand, and its large-scale embodiment in the context of national languages, on the other, led to the intensive development of new languages - allegorical, abstract-philosophical, expressive-metaphorical in literature, science, politics, and even advertising. The study is based on the thesis that any text consists of lower-level language units - words, phrases, sentences - which, when used properly, can enhance the "cultural signal". Such are phraseologized units, a stable metaphor, a certain word-symbol, endowed with powerful cumulative potential, is a concise formulation of ideas that appear in human consciousness in the form of certain cultural concepts. The notion of "biblicism" was adopted as such a connotative unit. In the study, biblicism is interpreted from the standpoint of combining three semiotic systems: language, which gives this unit form; religion, which fills it with "cherished meanings", and national culture, which brings specifically biblical meanings and is understood as a stable linguistic sign reproduced in speech, which has a consistent meaning that arose based on the text

of the Bible. While functioning in a language, biblicisms can change their semantics and grammatical form. Like other phraseological units, phraseological units of biblical origin can be classified according to their semantic and structural features. Stylistic differentiation makes it possible to classify biblicisms on the basis of their connection with the primary source, thus highlighting primary and secondary phraseological units of biblical origin. The first one directly reflects the biblical text, while the second one is related to it only indirectly. In different languages, biblical phraseology is represented by unequal phraseological units. However, even parallel phraseological units of biblical origin differ in semantic characteristics and/ or their grammatical structure. This is due to both linguistic (different linguistic structures) and extralinguistic (interfaith and intercultural differences) reasons. Biblicisms are not specific to any functional style or sphere of public life. Their use is not limited to the framework of fiction, and they are actively used in colloquial speech, which allows them to preserve their novelty and not go into the passive vocabulary of the English language.

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