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THE ROLE AND STATUS OF BIBLICAL VOCABULARY IN THE ENGLISH LEXICON

The relevance of the study lies in the interest of world philological science in the linguistic aspects of the analysis of the biblical text, which has become a rich source of catchphrases. Despite the large number of works devoted to the study of English and Ukrainian biblical idioms, the absence in modern Ukrainian scientific literature of a detailed linguistic description of these linguistic units and the features of their reproduction when translating from English into Ukrainian requires further study of these issues. Therefore, addressing the consideration of biblical idioms in the translation aspect is relevant. The object of the study was biblical idioms collected by the method of continuous sampling from monolingual and bilingual phraseological dictionaries of the compared languages. The aim of the article is to carry out a comparative linguistic analysis of biblical idioms in English and Ukrainian, to determine their stylistic functions and to explore ways of adequate translation. An attempt has been made to give a systematic characteristic of biblical idioms as a layer of Ukrainian and English phraseology, to carry out their comparative linguistic analysis, to determine their stylistic functions and features of translation. It has been concluded that despite the presence of a common source, parallel phraseologisms of biblical origin in English and Ukrainian languages have semantic, lexical and grammatical differences, which are both linguistic and extralinguistic in nature. Important extralinguistic factors include, for example, the time and conditions of the appearance of biblical translations in Ukraine and Great Britain, the history, customs, ideals and mentality of each of the peoples. Along with extralinguistic factors, linguistic ones also operate. Since Ukrainian and English languages belong to different language groups (Slavic and Germanic, respectively) and are characterized by a minimal number of phonetic, morphological and other correspondences. They also differ typologically: modern Ukrainian is a language of synthetic structure, modern English is analytical. This feature affects not only the general patterns of functioning of lexical and phraseological units, but also the different techniques of word and form formation.

Key words: *phraseology, biblicalism, contrastive linguistics, word formation, semantics.*

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РОЛЬ ТА СТАТУС БІБЛІЙНОЇ ЛЕКСИКИ В АНГЛІЙСЬКОМУ ЛЕКСИКОНІ

Актуальність дослідження зумовлена інтересом світової філологічної науки до лінгвістичних аспектів аналізу біблійного тексту, який став багатим джерелом крилатих висловів. Незважаючи на значну кількість праць, присвячених вивченню англійських та українських біблійних ідіом, відсутність у сучасній українській науковій літературі детального лінгвістичного опису цих мовних одиниць та особливостей їх відтворення при перекладі з англійської мови українською потребує подальшого вивчення цих питань. Відтак звернення до розгляду біблійних ідіом у перекладацькому аспекті є актуальним. Об'єктом дослідження слугували біблійні ідіоми, зібрані методом суцільної вибірки з одномовних та двомовних фразеологічних словників порівнюваних мов. Мета статті – провести зіставний лінгвістичний аналіз біблійних ідіом в англійській та українській мовах, визначити їхні стилістичні функції та дослідити шляхи адекватного перекладу. Здійснено спробу дати системну характеристику біблійних ідіом як пласту української та англійської фразеології, провести їх зіставний лінгвістичний аналіз, визначити їхні стилістичні функції та особливості перекладу. Зроблено висновок про те, що, незважаючи на наявність спільного джерела, паралельні фразеологізми біблійного походження в англійській та українській мовах мають семантичні, лексичні та граматичні відмінності, які мають як лінгвістичний, так і екстралінгвістичний характер. До важливих екстралінгвістичних чинників належать, наприклад, час та умови появи біблійних перекладів в Україні та Великій Британії, історія, звичаї, ідеали та ментальність кожного з народів. Поряд із екстралінгвістичними чинниками діють і лінгвістичні. Оскільки українська та англійська мови належать до різних мовних груп (слов'янської та германської відповідно) і характеризуються мінімальною кількістю фонетичних, морфологічних та інших відповідностей. Вони також відрізняються типологічно: сучасна українська мова є мовою синтетичної будови, сучасна англійська – аналітичної. Ця особливість впливає не лише на загальні закономірності функціонування лексичних і фразеологічних одиниць, а й на різні прийоми словотворення та формотворення.

Ключові слова: *фразеологія, біблеїзм, зіставна лінгвістика, словотвір, семантика.*

Statement of the problem. The Bible can undoubtedly be called one of the main culture-forming texts in the history of European and world civilization. The rich imagery, semantic and didactic content of the Holy Scriptures inspire numerous generations of artists, orators, and philosophers. The "Book of Books" has become a source of countless quotations, allusions, stable expressions, and symbolic designations. For many centuries, individual words, word combinations, and entire sentences have passed from the Bible into living speech, bringing a stream of freshness to it and contributing to the brevity and elasticity of description. Sometimes they lost their identity with the original, acquiring an expanded figurative meaning and filling gaps in the lexical system of the language, which cannot always fully provide the speech form of the existence known to man. In modern linguistics, such language units are usually designated by the term "biblisms". Their study is one of the most promising areas, because understanding the deep meaning of the biblical text is possible only if its symbolic language is decoded.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Many domestic and foreign linguists have devoted their works to the problem of studying biblicalisms. Having worked out and generalized the theoretical material concerning the functioning of biblicalisms in modern English and Ukrainian languages and the peculiarities of their translation, we have found

that biblicalisms constitute an important layer of the vocabulary of both English and Ukrainian languages, but their lexical, grammatical, semantic and stylistic features in a comparative aspect are still insufficiently studied and require further research. This is especially true of finding optimal ways of adequately translating biblicalisms from English into Ukrainian. The language of the Holy Scripture, due to its sacredness, symbolism and intertextuality, is increasingly becoming the object of various linguistic studies. Philological developments of the theory of biblicalisms in the works of Ukrainian and foreign researchers are mostly related to the study of the following aspects: etymology of individual biblical expressions, classification, functioning in works of fiction, linguistic issues of translation. Biblical idioms and allusions, commonly referred to as biblicisms, constitute a foundational pillar of the English lexicon, having profoundly shaped its stylistic nuance, figurative depth, and idiomatic framework. The systematic integration of biblical phrasing into the English language largely accelerated with early modern vernacular translations, most notably the King James Bible of 1611. Translators frequently employed verbatim renderings of Hebrew and Greek syntactical structures and figurative imagery, which subsequently entered everyday discourse. Over centuries of linguistic evolution, expressions such as "the salt of the earth", "a drop in the bucket", and "to see eye to eye" transitioned from sacred contextual usage to standardized, secularized English idioms. Consequently, biblicisms function as culturally ingrained metaphors that allow speakers to convey complex moral, social, and existential concepts with remarkable economy and emotional resonance.

From a sociolinguistic and literary perspective, the pervasive presence of biblicisms underscores the enduring intertextuality of English literature and public discourse. Academic discourse, political rhetoric, and classical literature routinely draw upon biblical archetypes and formulaic expressions to establish rhetorical authority and evoke shared cultural heritage. Phrases like "the writing on the wall" or "a wolf in sheep's clothing" operate as condensed narratives, instantly evoking broader allegorical frameworks without requiring explicit biblical contextualization. Even as contemporary society undergoes secularization, these linguistic units remain resilient, often retaining their semantic integrity while expanding into specialized domains such as jurisprudence, journalism, and modern political commentary. Thus, biblicisms represent not merely historical relics of translation, but active, generative components of contemporary English phraseology.However, despite such a large number of scientific works devoted to the study of biblicalisms, today there is no single generally accepted definition of them, the formulation of which is an important condition for the unification of these linguistic units and the creation of uniform criteria for their classification. For the same reason, science uses a number of metalinguistic designations of this layer of phraseology: "crony expressions of biblical origin", "phraseologisms of biblical origin", "biblical phraseologisms", "phraseological biblicalisms", "biblicalisms" (Гнєдкова, 2022: 82).

The purpose of the research is to analyze biblicalisms as an important layer of the lexical composition of the English and Ukrainian languages.

The main findings. In modern society, there is a tendency to return to the cultural values of the past, so it is the catchphrases from the Bible as clots of God's wisdom, a set of moral guidelines and rules of coexistence that have become one of the most popular sources of citation in various spheres of life. They give speech imagery, accuracy and expressiveness. Biblical expressions constitute the most vivid, vivid and original part of the lexical fund of many languages. These language units, the most diverse in meaning and structure, of a greater or lesser degree of phraseology, actively function both in oral and written forms of speech. Biblical catchphrases have taken over from their source a number of specific features, the main of which is the presence of a wide and complexly organized associative field. It is a set of certain associations that arise in the reader or listener in connection with various biblical expressions.

Studies of biblical expressions registered in dictionaries of European languages show that due to a common source, a large number of biblical expressions have equivalents or analogues and their meaning is understandable to the speakers of these languages. The frequency of their use in speech and speech can be considered a "litmus test" that shows the level of spirituality of society. Therefore, biblical expressions can be called a universal cultural heritage and a kind of key to knowledge of the world.

In our study, we will identify biblical expressions as individual words, word combinations and whole sentences, which, having broken away from the biblical text, are used as established (phraseological) units of language – in a generalized, figurative or figurative meaning and use the term "crowning expressions of biblical origin" in parallel to designate them (Fernando, 1981: 254).

Biblical words are individual words of generalized metaphorical use, word-symbols that have entered everyday speech from the text of the Bible without losing their original semantics or acquiring an

additional symbolic meaning associated with the context of the original source.

The largest and most interesting group of biblical idioms are phraseological units of biblical origin. In the dictionary of linguistic terms we find the following definition of the term "phraseological unit": a lexical-grammatical unity of two or more differently formed components, grammatically organized according to the model of a phrase or sentence, but lexically indivisible, stable in its composition and structure, which, having a holistic meaning, is reproduced in speech (Скаб, 2012: 233). Along with this definition, there are many others. One group of scientists understands the following under phraseological units: "A phraseological unit is a stable lexical-semantic unity that outwardly resembles a phrase or sentence, has reproducibility, a holistic, usually figurative meaning and performs, as a rule, a figurative-evaluative function" (Сюта, 2013 : 82). Others define a phraseology as a semantically related combination of words, which, unlike syntactic structures (phrases or sentences) similar to it in form, is not created in the process of speech in accordance with the general grammatical and semantic regularities of combining words, but is reproduced as a fixed construction with its own lexical composition and meaning (Mieder, 2008 : 355).

One of the most important semantic features of phraseology is that they all represent specific secondary nominations that arise as a result of rethinking the primary meanings of the components that make up their composition. Phraseology forms a specific system of units, uniting in its composition according to several typological features, which include, first of all, semantic integrity, reproducibility in communicative processes (oral and written speech), and a disjointed (supra-verbal) structure.

Semantic integrity is understood to mean that the meaning of a phraseological unit cannot be interpreted, interpreted on the basis of the meanings of its components. A feature of the reproducibility of phraseological units is that they are not created in speech like free word combinations, the use of which is motivated each time by specific communicative needs, but are reproduced with a constant composition of components, as a rule, positionally fixed in a certain sequence. A mandatory condition for the functioning of any phraseological unit is a multi-component composition, a disjointed structure. While maintaining the sign of disjointness, the phenomenon of phraseologically determined functioning of words is very common: individual lexical units appear only as part of phraseological units, although they are distinguished in dictionaries as independent register words. Like words, phraseology combines aspects of nomination and evaluation, and in fact all of them are characterized by imagery, emphasized expressiveness. Biblical phraseology, on the one hand, is part of the phraseological system, and, therefore, biblical phraseology acquires all the differential features of a phraseological unit, and on the other hand, biblicalisms have a number of specific features due to their origin and special semantics, as well as stylistic characteristics and certain functions in the language. The specific features of biblicalisms should include, first of all, their content structure, in which moral-didactic, moral-ethical components are clearly traced, as well as linguostylistic features that are manifested in the connotativeness of their semantics. Biblicalisms can be presented in speech by direct quotation, interspersing of individual elements, verbal blocks or included allusively, illustrating a parable, creating contexts of various stylistic coloring.

The special imagery of any biblicalism is the constant original associations that arise in connection with verbal images-symbols, which are the result of the reinterpretation of objects and phenomena – a complete or partial figurative transformation of the meaning of the prototype. The most common types of reinterpretation are comparison, metaphor and metonymy. The image acquires symbolic features when it begins to perform defining functions in the life of an individual, nation, humanity. Since symbols of biblical origin express moral and spiritual guidelines that are defining for most people, they are universal. That is, catchphrases of biblical origin can be considered universal human realities, which in the process of functioning absorb and preserve historical experience, elements of culture and mentality of individual nations, passing them on to subsequent generations (Zolfaghari, 2012: 13)

Modern linguistic studies present various structural-semantic and semantic-etymological classifications of phraseologisms of biblical origin. It can be seen that the majority of phraseological units of biblical origin belong to the first three groups. This fact confirms the general trend, since the verb, adverbial and substantive groups are productive and structurally more or less similar in the phraseological system as a whole (Palmer, 1981: 22).

The semantic structure of English biblicisms is characterized by a high degree of complexity, often operating on multiple interpretive levels through processual semantic shifts over time. While a subset of these expressions retains a primary, literal denotation directly tied to their scriptural contexts, the vast majority undergo metaphorical extension, metonymic broadening, or contextual weakening as they integrate into general usage. As a result, many biblicisms exhibit polysemy,

where their original sacred meaning functions as an underlying conceptual core that generates secondary, secular connotations – for instance, transitioning from concrete physical descriptors to abstract moral, socio-political, or emotional categories. Furthermore, the semantic transparency of biblical idioms varies significantly across contemporary discourse; while some retain clear allegorical associations with their source narratives, others have undergone complete lexicalization, operating as fully idiomatic units whose pragmatic force no longer requires active awareness of their biblical origin.

Biblical phrases with the structure of a phrase or sentence are called phraseological units of biblical origin or winged expressions from the Bible. They constitute the largest layer of the above groups of biblical phrases. In modern linguistics, there is no single classification of phraseological units, and accordingly, biblical winged expressions that are part of the phraseological system. Instead, different distribution schemes are used depending on the features that underlie it: etymological, structural-grammatical, functional-stylistic.

The most widespread classification is based on the degree of fusion of components. We believe that such a division can also be applied to phraseological units of biblical origin:

• phraseological fusions (idioms) – absolutely indivisible, indecomposable stable combinations, the general meaning of which does not depend on the meaning of their components. They are included in grammatical categories as a syntactic whole, as peculiar complex lexical units: *the salt of the earth.*

• phraseological units – stable combinations of words in which, in the presence of a common figurative meaning, the signs of semantic separation of components are clearly preserved: *bury one's talents in the earth*.

• phraseological combinations – established expressions that include words with both free and phraseologically related meanings. In expressions of this type, syntactic connections are not always formed as free ones, determined by the communicative-situational combination of words, but are reproduced by ready-made expressions that are fixed in use: *outer darkness.*

Scientists distinguish another type – phraseological expressions, which unites stable speech turns, which consist of words with a free nominative meaning and are semantically divisible: A*ll they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.*

According to the degree of identity/variability of interpretations in different reference editions, biblical terms can be combined into the following groups:

1) with an identical interpretation of their meaning in all dictionaries;

2) biblical terms, the differences in interpretation of which in reference books are not fundamental: the common meaning remains unchanged, only the shades of meaning differ;

3) biblical terms, the interpretations of which are either completely or significantly different in different dictionaries.

In English discourse, biblicisms fulfill a wide spectrum of stylistic and rhetorical functions, serving as potent tools for persuasion, emotional elevation, and narrative compression. By leveraging the historical authority and cultural resonance of scriptural prose, speakers and writers employ biblical allusions to bestow a sense of solemnity, moral gravity, or poetic loftiness upon secular topics, particularly within political oratory and academic commentary. Beyond high-style registers, these expressions frequently function as condensed allegorical shorthand, enabling the swift invocation of complex ethical dilemmas, archetypal motives, or universal human conditions with minimal textual expansion. Furthermore, contemporary literary and public discourse often utilizes biblicisms ironical or subversively; by recontextualizing sacred phrasing within mundane or critical frameworks, authors generate stylistic tension, satire, or subtle humor. Thus, biblical idiom operates dynamically across stylistic registers, ranging from formal elevation and authoritative argumentation to figurative nuance and critical subversion.

Results. For many centuries, the Holy Scriptures have been an integral part of English-speaking and Ukrainian-speaking cultures. Therefore, biblical expressions have reliably entered both languages. They can often be seen in newspaper columns, heard in the speeches of state and political figures, in the lyrics of songs by famous artists. They are actively used in everyday speech, in fiction, and in journalism. Biblicalisms, like any other figurative expressions, convey the main idea in a concentrated form and thus become key elements of the statement. Winged sayings of biblical origin with their bright image system and deep moral meaning have taken a prominent place in the phraseological fund of modern English and Ukrainian languages and are the source of countless metaphors, similes, symbolic designations and allusions. Biblicisms are characterized by such system-forming features as the stability of the lexical composition, figurative meaning, expressiveness, evaluability, reproducibility. Having carried out a comparative analysis of the functioning of biblicalisms in the modern English and Ukrainian languages, we found that both cultures assimilated both the same and unique, winged sayings of biblical origin.

In addition, the parallel studied units in both languages have some semantic, lexical, grammatical and stylistic differences caused by belonging to different language groups and different language systems.

In conclusion, the study of biblicisms in the English language demonstrates their profound and enduring impact on the historical development, structural richness, and stylistic versatility of the lexicon. Originating primarily from early modern vernacular translations, most notably the King James Bible, these expressions have successfully transcended their initial religious contexts to become integral components of secular English phraseology. The seamless integration of Hebrew and Greek idiomatic structures into English has not only expanded its metaphorical capacity but has also established a unified conceptual framework that continues to facilitate expressive, evocative, and economical communication across various registers.

Furthermore, the persistent utilization of biblical idioms in contemporary literature, political rhetoric, jurisprudence, and daily discourse highlights the extraordinary resilience of these linguistic units in an increasingly secularized world. Operating as condensed allegorical narratives, biblicisms maintain their semantic potency and continue to function as powerful rhetorical devices that bridge historical legacy with modern communication. Ultimately, biblical phraseology represents far more than a set of archaic translation relics; it remains a dynamic, generative force within the English language, reflecting the deep intertextual nature of Western culture and continuing to shape the cognitive and stylistic dimensions of global English today.

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