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PRINCIPLES OF THE CONTRASTIVE DESCRIPTION OF APHORISTIC PAREMIOLOGY (in Belarusian and Russian languages)*

Before beginning the description of the results of research it is necessary to formulate a hypothesis of research:

(1) Structure and semantics of aphorisms in the (closely)cognate languages should have more differences than similarities despite the fact that aphoristic systems of these languages can have more genetic similarities than differences.

(2) The existing types of differences should have different qualitative indices and different significance for each of the languages. Similarities and differences should have similar specific gravity both in "paremiological minimum" (minimum of aphorisms, known to all native speakers) and "basic paremiological stock" (total aphorisms, constituting most commonly used aphoristic paremiology of the given language at all times). However, quantitative composition of the units of "paremiological minimum" and "basic paremiological stock" may have considerable differences in each language.

(3) It is supposed that specifics of structure and semantics of aphoristic paremiology in (closely)cognate languages are determined by their national and cultural peculiarities and do not depend on the degree of relationship. Specifics of structure and semantics of aphoristic paremiology in (closely)cognate languages is revealed first and foremost in different ways of expressing aphoristic meaning on the lexical, morphological and syntactic levels in the phrase, in different prototypes and/or ways of interpretation of general meaning or separate lexical and/or phraseological components of aphorisms as well as ways and selectiveness in revealing the "world" in aphoristic paremias.

Since contrastive analysis of aphoristic paremiology in (closely)cognate languages is done for the first time, the important question was a choice of such language units, sufficient for obtaining valuable results (compare very small by quantity of units the dictionary of Russian and Belarusian proverbs by Z. Sanko [see Санько 1991]). "Paremiological minimum" (minimum of aphorisms, known

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to all native speakers) and “basic paremiological stock” (total aphorisms, constituting most commonly used aphoristic paremiology of the given language) was used as such material to compare structure and semantics of aphorisms in (closely)cognate languages. These units represent all structural and semantic peculiarities of aphoristic paremiology in compared languages. This made possible to find out the number of structural and semantic similarities and differences in Belarusian and Russian aphorisms within “paremiological minimum” and “basic paremiological stock” and to range the revealed similarities and differences according to their significance for nearness vs. remoteness of the given languages and for evaluation of the specific gravity of national and cultural component in aphoristic paremiology of each language.

Thus we faced the necessity of determining the composition of “paremiological minimum” and “basic paremiological stock” in the Belarusian and Russian languages.

This problem was partially solved for Russian, “paremiological minimum” of which has been determined in the course of the “paremiological experiment” by G. Permyakov [see Пермяков 1986; Пермяков 1988, 143–169; Пермяков 1989]. Main shortcomings of the “paremiological experiment” by G. Permyakov are: (1) regional limitation (residents of Moscow and Moscow region); (2) inadequate age, social, and professional stratification of the informants; (3) accentuated character of the experiment (direct choice by the researcher of the texts that the informants should or should not know). In this connection, “paremiological minimum” of the Russian language was reevaluated.

Using only Belarusian and Russian “paremiological minimum” units as material for comparative analysis is obviously insufficient, since “paremiological minimum” can not reveal all possible structural and semantic types of aphorisms in each language, as it is limited by only recent language material and in many ways determined by extra-linguistic factors (social cataclysms, change of viewpoint paradigms, etc.). Thus, it seems necessary to turn to facts, stable in time, that are reflected in “basic paremiological stock” of the language. The latter, in opposition to G. Permyakov’s [see Пермяков 1988: 212–213] view should not coincide with the “paremiological minimum”.

For defining “paremiological minimum” of the Belarusian and Russian languages a special linguistic (paremiological) experiment was carried out.

Method of the “paremiological experiment” by G. Permyakov was used with the necessary changes.

Paremiological experiment aimed at determining the “paremiological minimum” of the Russian and Belarusian languages was carried out in 3 types – accentuated polling (3 stages), non-accentuated polling (2 stages), associative experiment (1 stage). Every stage of the paremiological experiment was done on

the same group of informants after a few days' break. Every stage of every type of the paremiological experiment was carried out on a separate day.

The method of accentuated polling was represented by a corrected and added variant of the paremiological experiment by G. Permyakov, conducted in two stages [see Пермяков 1971; Пермяков 1982; Пермяков 1988, 149–153]. During the first stage the informants were asked to find unknown expressions from a list of 1494 Russian paremias, which the author considers the most widely used today. The first stage yielded more than 300 answers. During the second stage of the experiment, another group of informants (about 100 people) was offered only 538 expressions, selected by the author of the experiment. About 90,0% of the expressions were chosen as the best known from the first stage of the experiment. However, this time the informants had to complete the second part of the paremia, of which only the beginning was offered (*Обещанного – ...? Сказано – ...? Тише едешь – ...?* etc). The initial paremiological material for the experiment was selected subjectively, because the main criterion for the selection was the language competence of the researcher but not the linguistic and extra-linguistic factors (including the second stage of the experiment, despite even the availability of the interim results, which were taken into account for 90,0% only). Besides, the scope of the experiment was limited (only Moscow and Moscow region) and the number of the informants was not balanced (more than 300 participant during the first stage and only 100 during the second) which influenced the results of the paremiological experiment. These serious violations in approach to the experiment do not allow to expand its results to all of the paremiological stock of the Russian language, because the proverbs and sayings included by G. Permyakov in his “paremiological minimum” are valid only for the language material of the experiment, only “for this region of Russia” [Крикман 1995, 340] and only for the group of the language speakers who were chosen as informants. This is easy to illustrate by the examples of really well known Russian proverbs and sayings, which were not included by G. Permyakov into Russian “paremiological minimum”. See: *В чужой монастырь со своим уставом не ходят; Пар костей не ломит; Хороша Маша, да не наша*, etc. At the same time there is a number of not so well known to every Russian speaking person proverbs and sayings, which were included into the “paremiological minimum”. See: *<Во всем> виноват стрелочник; Из искры – пламя; Нет розы без шипов (или: Розы без шипов не бывает); Шутка шуткой, а дело делом*, etc.

Accentuated polling was carried out in 3 stages. During the 1st stage the informants were asked to point to unknown to them proverbs and sayings from the list of 1000 paremias. This list included 500 units from the “paremiological minimum” by G. Permyakov [see Пермяков 1988, 154–169] and 500 units from the dictionary of the Russian proverbs and sayings by V. Zhukov [Жуков 1991],

which were not found in the G. Permyakov's minimum and are not dialectical or obsolete. During the 2nd stage (independent of the 1st) the informants were offered the initial parts of the same 1000 paremias and asked to complete the missing fragments of the proverb or saying. During the 3rd stage (independent of the 1st and the 2nd) the informants were offered only the meanings and situations in which the above 1000 paremias were used, and asked to name the corresponding proverb or saying.

Non-accentuated polling was carried out in 2 stages. During the 1st stage the informants were asked to name all known to them proverbs and sayings. During the 2nd stage the informants were offered to name the most widely used (from their point of view) paremias.

Associative experiment was carried out in 1 stage. The informants were offered a list of 1000 words of previously selected paremias and asked to name the proverb or saying, associated with this word.

Quantitative results in all stages of the paremiological experiments were computed independently of each other (in G. Permyakov's experiments every stage quantitatively and qualitatively depended on the previous one. Then the results of each stage of the paremiological experiment were compared with each other in order to find out the most well known and the least well known paremias.

Thus paremiological experiment to determine "paremiological minimum" of the Belarusian and Russian languages was carried out. It resulted in revealing 30 to 50 units of the most commonly used (most well-known) proverbs and sayings of the Russian language. The "paremiological minimum" of the Russian language was specified (about 200 proverbs and sayings, not registered by G. Permyakov, were discovered). The most commonly used (most well-known) proverbs and sayings of the Belarusian language was determined 80 to 100 units. The "paremiological minimum" of the Belarusian language was determined as 400–450 proverbs and sayings. For the first time "paremiological minimum" of the Belarussian language was determined.

While determining the "basic paremiological stock" of the Russian and Belarusian languages, the quality method (in finding out the most frequently used proverbs and sayings) and transformation method (in describing structural modifications of the same paremia in the different historic periods of the language development) were used.

The main indication of "basic paremiological stock" units should be their stability in time. Thus, the main criteria for inclusion of paremias into "basic paremiological stock" is their location in both early and modern paremiological dictionaries. The absence there of a given paremia at present can testify to it becoming obsolete or to it leaving the paremiological stock of the active units of the language. In this respect the "basic paremiological stock" of a language can

be seen as a structure which has its nucleus and periphery. The main sources in determining the nucleus of the paremiological fund of a given language can be only those paremiological sources which are the most representative in terms of their quantity, selection principles and truthfully reveal the state of the language in different periods of its history.

In order to determine the “basic paremiological stock” of the Belarussian language the following paremiological sources were studied: books of proverbs and sayings by S. Rysinski [Rysinski 1618], M. Federovski [Federowski 1935], I. Nosovich [Носовичъ 1874], E. Romanov [Романовъ 1886: 290–316], E. Lyatski [Ляцкій 1898], F. Yankovski [Янкоўскі [1957] 1992], E. Rapanovich [Рапановіч 1974], M. Grinblat [Грынблат 1976]; dictionaries of proverbs and sayings by I. Shkraba and R. Shkraba [Шкраба, Шкраба 1987], I. Lepeshev and M. Yakoltsevich [Лепешаў, Яколцэвіч 2002], A. Aksamitov [Аксамітаў 2002] and others.

As a result a computer data bank was created with more than 30.000 Belarussian proverbs and sayings. It was found out that book of proverbs and sayings by S. Rysinski [Rysinski 1618] and book of proverbs and sayings by M. Federovski [Federowski 1935] have 240 corresponding proverbs and sayings, which should be used to determine the “basic paremiological stock” of the modern Belarussian language and tendencies, which characterize historic changes in its units. As a result the “basic paremiological stock” of the Belarussian language was determined as 450 units and their variants. For the first time “basic paremiological stock” of the Belarussian language was determined.

In order to determine the “basic paremiological stock” of the Russian language the following paremiological sources were studied: books of proverbs and sayings by I. Snegirov [Снегирев 1995], V. Dal [Даль 1984], P. Simoni [Симони 1899], M. Rybnikova [Рыбникова 1961], A. Sobolev [Соболев 1961]; dictionaries of proverbs and sayings by V. Zhukov [Жуков 1991], V. Felitsina and Y. Prokhorov [Фелицына, Прохоров 1988], V. Zimin and A. Spirin [Зимин, Спириин 1996], V. Mokienko [Мокиенко и др. 2002] and others.

It was found out that first Russian hand-written collection of proverbs and sayings of the XVII century [see Симони 1899, 73–162] and The Dictionary of Russian proverbs and sayings by V. Zhukov [Жуков 1991] have 220 corresponding proverbs and sayings, which should be used to determine the “basic paremiological stock” of the modern Russian language and tendencies, which characterize historic changes in its units. As a result the “basic paremiological stock” of the Russian language was determined as 630 units and their variants. For the first time “basic paremiological stock” of the Russian language was determined.

Structural modifications in time of the same aphoristic paremia were qualified as diachronic paradigm, determined by the immutability of the meaning throughout all the period of the language development. External form may insignificantly

vary but to a limit until the meaning of aphorism begins to change either in expression or content (both diachronically and synchronically). The concept of “diachronic paradigm” was offered for the first time.

As a result of research it was determined, that the most commonly encountered type of diachronic transformation of aphoristic paremias is (1) substitution, represented at lexical, lexical-grammatical and grammatical (including syntactic) levels. Supraword substitution is encountered mostly at syntagma borders and is not always double-sided (or sequential) (only one lexeme can be substituted by a supraword construction and vice versa). Supraword substitution on the level of predicative parts of the phrase is very seldom encountered. Lexical substitution is represented by substitution of non-synonymous lexemes of the same part of speech (verbs or more seldom nouns and pronouns from basic part of speech and coordinating conjunctions from syntactic parts of speech). Substitution of synonymous lexemes is limited only by contextual synonymy, which is determined in many cases by the contrast of perfective vs. non-perfective aspect at the level of verbal lexemes. Lexical-grammatical substitution is represented most of all by the substitution of different grammar forms of the same autonomous lexemes (including pronominal) – case and number forms for nouns and attributes and tense forms for verbs. The second most commonly encountered (2) transformations are represented only on the lexical level. Their bulk are pronominal inclusions and inclusions of syntactic parts of speech. Pronominal inclusions are determined by the necessity to formally point at the object or action, evaluated in the second predicative part of the phrase. Pronominal inclusions into functions of syntactic lexemes are determined by the transformation of the paratactical construction of the phrase into hypotactical. The inclusions of syntactic lexemes are represented mostly by coordinating conjunctions, which specify sense relationships of the predicative parts of the phrase. Only in some cases the inclusion of syntactic lexemes is determined by hypotaxis. Inclusions of autonomous non-pronominal lexemes are very seldom encountered. Among these are inclusions of the verb *to have* when it is transformed from passive into active form. Other types of transformations are even less frequent. (3) Inversions are encountered only in exceptional cases at word modifying level (within syntagmas) most often is the predicative group of the phrase. (4) Elimination is also encountered in exceptional cases and is accompanied by the different forms of substitution and inversion. (5) Augment of the phrase by compositional and structural parts was encountered only a few times. (6) Parcellation is represented only by very few cases of its neutralization [see Иванов 2003].

Thus it was proved that (1) the “basic paremiological stock” of the language is as real as the “paremiological minimum”, that (2) they do not coincide neither in quantity nor in quality and (3) it is the “basic paremiological stock” that can

and must (contrary to G. Permyakov) include “basic stock of all the paremiological fund of a given language” due to the objectivity of its existence.

And at last, it is very important in comparative researches to determine a technique of the research.

In comparing the paremiological systems of any two languages, at least two important problems have to be solved. First, it is vital to determine which paremiological units in these languages could be compared. Second, it is important to find out the extent to which the compared paremias coincide in lexical and grammar sphere and in meaning.

As a result of research it was determined, that in viewing the paremiological systems of any two languages in terms of lexical and grammar sphere and in meaning of proverbs and sayings, there are only 9 types of similarities and differences, based on full or partial similarity or difference in semantics and lexical and grammar structure of the paremias [see Iwanou 2000]. In particular, the paremiological units of any two languages can:

(1 type) fully coincide in semantics and be different in lexical and grammar structure, compare Belarusian *Пакуль жаніцца – загаіцца* and Russian *До свадьбы заживет,*

(2 type) fully coincide in semantics and be partially different in lexical and grammar structure, compare Belarusian *Спроба не хараба* and Russian, *Попытка не пытка,*

(3 type) fully coincide both in semantics and lexical and grammar structure, compare Belarusian *Язык без касцей* and Russian *Язык без костей,*

(4 type) partially coincide in semantics and be different in lexical and grammar structure, compare Belarusian *Хто каго любіць, той таго і чубіць* and Russian *Милые бранятся, только тешатся,*

(5 type) partially coincide both in semantics and in lexical and grammar structure, compare Belarusian *Ліха перамелецца – добро будзе* and Russian *Перемелется – мука будет,*

(6 type) partially coincide in semantics and fully in lexical and grammar structure, compare Belarusian *Бодлівай карове бог рог не дае* and Russian *Бодливой корове бог рог не дает,*

(7 type) be different both in semantics and lexical and grammar structure, compare Belarusian *Воўк сабакі не баіцца, але звягі не любіць* and Russian *В чужой монастырь со своим уставом не ходят,*

(8 type) be different in semantics and partially coincide in lexical and grammar structure, compare Belarusian *Не шукаючы, не знойдзеш* and Russian *Кто ищет, тот найдет,*

(9 type) be different in semantics but fully coincide in lexical and grammar structure, compare Belarusian *Не лезь раней бацькі ў пекла* and Russian *Не лезь вперед (наперед, поперед) батьки в пекло.*

It was proved, that the object of comparison are paremiological units of all types except those proverbs and sayings, which are different both in semantics and lexical and grammar structure. However, only those units, which are fully or partially similar in semantics, irrespectful of similarity or difference in lexical and grammar structure, could be viewed as equivalent, i.e. able to function in similar contexts and thus be the subject of confrontative or contrastive analysis of the paremiological systems of two languages, irrespectful of the genetic nearness of the two languages. Possible interlingual coincidences in lexical and grammar sphere of proverbs and sayings, which are not similar in semantics could be only the object of comparative study, as they are determined either by common origin of these languages or are consequences of word borrowing.

One more methodological hypothesis has appeared and was substantiated during the research – that the most important types of interlinguistic correspondence in comparative description of paremias are those, which (3 type) fully coincide in semantics and lexical and grammar structure, (2 type) fully coincide in semantics and are partially different in lexical and grammar structure, (1 type) fully coincide in semantics and are different in lexical and grammar structure, and also (4 type) partially coincide in semantics and are different in lexical and grammar structure.

In this connection 700 widely used Russian paremias and more than 9000 Belarusian proverbs and sayings were compared [compare Иванов и др. 2000]. For example:

Russian proverb:

БЕДА <НИКОГДА> НЕ (при-)ХОДИТ ОДНА or БЕДА ОДНА НЕ (при-)ХОДИТ or ОДНА БЕДА НЕ (при-)ХОДИТ.

The same, as: БЕДА БЕДУ РОДИТ; <ОДНА> БЕДА ИДЕТ, ДРУГУЮ <ЗА СОБОЙ(-ою)> ВЕДЕТ and also ПОЙДЕТ (придет, пришла) БЕДА, ОТВОРЯЙ (открывай, растворяй) ВОРОТА.

'If there was one misfortune it will be followed by the second. It is said, when misfortunes follow one another and also when it seems, that there will be no end to someone's troubles'.

Belarusian proverbs:

(3 type) *Адна бяда не ходзіць or Бяда адна не ходзіць.*

(2 type) *Адна бяда не ходзіць, другую за сабой(-ою) водзіць or Бяда адна не ходзіць, другую за сабой(-ою) водзіць or Бяда адна не ходзіць, за сабой(-ою) другую водзіць.*

(1 type) *<Адна> бяда ідзе, <i> другую за руку (за ручку, за сабой(-ою)) вядзе. <Адна> бяда ідзе, за руку (за ручку, за сабой(-ою)) другую вядзе. Адна бяда не ідзе, другую за ручку (за сабой(-ою)) вядзе or Адна бяда не ідзе, за*

руку (за ручку, за сабой(-ою)) другую вядзе. Адна бяда міне, другая будзе. Адна бяда не ходзіць, адно ліха не бывае. Бяда бяду вядзе (вязе) <, а трэцяя паганяе>. Бяда бяду гоніць. Бяда за бядой(-ою), як рыба (рыбка) за вадой(-ою). Бяда за бядою ходзіць з калядою. Бяда заўсёды ў пары ходзіць. Бяда ідзе і бяду вядзе. Бяда на бядзе едзе <і (ды) бядою паганяе>. Бяда на бядзе, як на шчэпачцы (на шчэпцы), едзе. Бяда на бяду лезе. Бяда не бывае адна: калі яна ходзіць, з сабою ўсю радню сваю водзіць. Бяда не ходзіць адна, а двойкамі. Бяда па бядзе, як па нітцы (па нітачцы) ідзе. Бяды не перабудзею адна міне, другая будзе. Гора адно не ідзе, а за сабою сем вядзе. Заўсёды бяда бяду вядзе. Кадук бяду перабудзе – адна міне, дзесяць будзе. Калі адна бяда ідзе, то й другую за ручку вядзе. Калі бяда ходзіць, з сабою ўсю радню сваю водзіць. Ліха ідзе і бяду за сабою вядзе. Ліха адно не бывае – бяду за руку трымае. Ліха адной бядзе прыйсці, то бяда бяду родзіць. Па бядзе дзве бяды. Хто бяду перабудзе – адна міне, дзесяць будзе. Чалавек адну бяду перабудзе, а дзесяць іх прыбудзе. Чорт адну бяду перабудзе, адна міне, дзесяць будзе. Як пойдзе ліха з рання – аж да змяркання. Як прыйшла бяда, адчыняй варата.

(4 type) Адна бяда – не бяда <, адно гора – не гора>. Адна бяда – не бяда, але калі іх нападзе цэлая капа, тады – бяда. Адна бяда – то яшчэ не бяда. Адна бяда не бяда, дзве бяды – поўбяды, калі трэцюю надываеш, вот тады бяду спазнаеш. Адна бяда не бяда, а калі дзве, тры разам – то бяда. Адна бяда не дакучыць. Аднае бяды замала, трэба дзесяць. Адной бяды заўсёды мала. Бяда ды хвароба як дзве птушкі-язюлькі: накукуешся ўдоваль, пакуль яны вытаўкуцца. Гора з бядою ў абдымку ходзяць. Едзе скоры – услед гора, едзе цыха – услед ліха. То не бяда, калі адна, але дзве, або тры. То не гора, што адно гора, а то гора, што два горы.

In order to verify the results, 200 Polish proverbs and 1800 Belarusian proverbs and sayings were compared [see Іваноў 2000; Іваноў 2001].

The research revealed that differences in Russian and Belarusian aphoristic proverbs at lexical and grammar levels are:

(1 subtype 2, 5 and 8 types) differences in phonetic-phonological composition of the compared components, compare Belarusian *Жыццё пражыць – не поле перайсці* and Russian *Жизнь прожить – не поле перейти*,

(2 subtype 2, 5 and 8 types) differences in accentuation of the compared components, compare Belarusian *Сям'я аднаго не чакаюць* and Russian *Семья одного не ждут*,

(3 subtype 2, 5 and 8 types) differences in the morphemic structure of the compared components, compare Belarusian *Рыба з галавы загніваецца* and Russian *Рыба с головы гниет*,

(4 subtype 2, 5 and 8 types) differences in lexical (component) composition (from difference in one component to difference in all components but one), compare Belarusian *Катку жарты – мышцы смерць* and Russian *Кошке и грушки, мышке слезки*,

(5 subtype 2, 5 and 8 types) differences in grammar characteristics (meanings) of the compared components, compare Belarusian *Любіў катаца, любі санкі вазіць* and Russian *Люби (-ишь) кататься, люби и саночки возить*,

(6 subtype 2, 5 and 8 types) differences in syntactic word correlation, compare Belarusian *Хто старое спамяне, таму асцук у вока* and Russian *Кто старое помянет, тому глаз вон*,

(7 subtype 2, 5 and 8 types) differences in syntactic organization of the sentence, compare Belarusian *На жывых касцях мяса парасце* and Russian *Были бы кости, а мясо будет*.

Differences on the semantic level are:

(1 subtype 4 – 8 types) differences in primary and transferred motivation of both compared components and general meaning, compare Belarusian *Гавары, ды не ўсё дагары* and Russian *Говори, да не заговаривайся*,

(2 subtype 4 – 8 types) differences in prototypes of figurative semantics of both compared components and general meaning, compare Belarusian *Вялікаму каню – вялікі хамут* and Russian *Большому кораблю – большое плавание*,

(3 subtype 4 – 8 types) differences in degree and character of generalization of reality, compare Belarusian *Маленькі сабачка заўсёды ічання* and Russian *Маленькая собачка до старости щенков*.

Differences in semantics and lexical and grammar structure of proverbs and sayings in Russian and Belarusian languages were differentiated and classified in comparing the units of “paremiological minimums” and “basic paremiological stocks” of both languages. This has allowed to achieve maximum objectivity and representation of the discovered similarities and differences, even one time cases, which in such case have typological character.

Thus it was proved, (1) that structure and semantics of aphorisms in (closely) cognate languages have more differences than similarities despite the fact that aphoristic systems of these languages have more genetic similarities than differences, (2) that similarities and differences have similar specific gravity both in “paremiological minimum” and “basic paremiological stock”, (3) that specifics of structure and semantics of aphoristic paremiology in (closely) cognate languages are determined by their national and cultural peculiarities (in ways and selectiveness in revealing the “world” in aphoristic paremias) and do not depend on the degree of relationship.

One of the problems of the modern linguistics is determining those units of the language which reveal the national picture of the world. At present there are no linguistically objective methods of determining national and cultural component of the language. This leads to many mistakes [see Мокиенко 1999]. For example famous regional geographic dictionary of Russian paremias by V. Felitsina and Y. Prokhorov [Фелицына, Прохоров 1988] includes many foreign borrowings (very often international in character). Compare Russian *Слово – серебро, <а> молчание – золото* and Polish *Mowa jest srebrem, a milczenie zlotem* and English *Speech is silvern, silence is golden* and French *La parole est d'argent, le silence est d'or* and German *Reden ist Silber, Schweigen ist Gold* etc.

Objectively, there are no universal criteria to determine composition of the national and cultural component. For every language this component must be determined separately, which is especially important when two languages are (closely) related.

It was proved that national and cultural component of the Belarusian language includes, besides Belarusian in origin and area of usage, aphorisms which are commonly used in Belarusian, Russian (and other languages), and in some cases was borrowed. Such units acquired in the modern Belarusian literary language a status of its national and cultural component in their meaning and/or lexical and grammar composition. Compare Belarusian *На языку мядок, а на сэрцы лядок* and Russian *На языке мед, а под языком лёд* (and also Ukrainian *На языці мід, а під язюком лід* and Polish *Na języku miód, a pod językiem lód* and Czech *V ústech med, a w srdci jed* etc); compare also Belarusian *Вольнаму – воля <, а шалёнаму – поле>* and Russian *Вольному воля <, спасенному рай>* (and also Polish *Wolnemu wola, zbawionemu raj* or *Wolnemu wolna jego wola* etc); compare also Belarusian *Не лезь у пекла раней за бацьку* (or *Паперад (раней) бацькі ў пекла не сунься*) and Russian *Прежде отца (прежде батьки) в петлю не суйся (не лезь)* etc. [see Иванова, Иваноў 1997, 52–53, 99, 102–104].

Belonging of such units to the national and cultural component of the Belarusian language can be also substantiated by the fact that common usage of the nominative units of the language depends on their topicality in social and cultural life of the people. This means that they are part of the communicative “minimum” of the nominative units (for aphorisms – corresponding part of the “paremiological minimum” of the language), which reflects basic conditions of national existence. It is a specific microcosm of realities, which determines peculiarities of the ethnic and/or national culture.

Thus it is the comparative (contrastive) analysis, that must become major empiric criterion, which permits to determine unmistakably common and specific features both in internal structure of every (closely)cognate language and in relationship to their national and cultural specifics.

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