







The concept 'bread' in a multicultural field

Elena Markova ^{a,b 1} , Svetlana Kolesnikova ^b , Anastasiya Chibisova ^c ,
Alexei Lyzlov ^d 

^a Kosygin State University of Russia, Moscow, Russian Federation

^b University of Economics in Bratislava, Bratislava, Slovak Republic

^{b,c} Moscow State Pedagogical University, Moscow, Russian Federation

^d Russian Federation Armed Forces Army Air Defense Military Academy, Smolensk, Russian Federation

APA Citation:

Markova, E., Kolesnikova, S., Chibisova, A., & Lyzlov, A. (2022). The concept 'bread' in a multicultural field. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 18(Special Issue 2), 998-1006.

Submission Date: 17/09/2021

Acceptance Date: 22/11/2021

Abstract

The article focuses on universal concept 'bread' (khleb) in a multicultural field and the importance of cultural and linguistic concepts in teaching languages. These concepts serve as a tool of bringing up the right, respectful attitude to different cultures and nations, as well as a key element for understanding of language at high level. The comparing of separate data on the concept 'bread' (khleb) and analysing the cultural meaning of it is conducted in the article on the materials of Russian, English, Chinese, Czech. Tracing the semantic development of the lexeme 'bread' in the facts of the secondary nomination in related Slavic languages (on the material of Russian and Czech) and unrelated (on the material of Russian, English, and Chinese) languages, the authors substantiate the connection between vocabulary and phraseology, state the commonality of models of semantic development of ancient words and national specifics of their modern perception, which are implemented in phraseology.

Keywords: concept; cultural and national features; qualitative attributes; conceptual basis; semantic fundamentals

1. Introduction

Language is not only a way of expressing thoughts, a way of communication, but also an indicator of the level of culture development in society and a unique means of storage and transfer of cultural heritage, as well as the creation of new cultural values. The variety of languages in different cultures allows each nation to express not only its historical experience, but also universal human values and meanings in a unique way. Language is the most important sign system used by people that forms the basis of the people's culture.

Upon a culturological approach to the study of linguistic facts, the authors are interested in the availability of a particular lexeme in the linguistic consciousness of representatives of the national linguocultural community, the entire set of its semantic rethinks and cultural-historical build-ups, which is verbalised both in the figurative meanings of this unit, and in phraseology, in paremias. The "ordinary" meaning of the word is contrasted with its "mythological" or "symbolic" meaning. Thus,

¹ Corresponding author.

E-mail address: e-markova8494@uohk.com.cn

the vocabulary and phraseology are linked, and the “bridge” between them is the associative reinterpretation of the lexeme, its metaphorical approximation with another object or phenomenon of reality, which is embodied in the phraseological turnover. In this article, we will cover theoretical and practical issues related to concept ‘bread’ in Russian, English, Chinese and Czech.

The semantic structure of the word *khleb* contains the “product”, “food” semes (for singular); “plant”, “agent” (for plural): noun *khleb* (according to the Ushakov Dictionary (2021)): 1. (singular) food product in the specific form baked from flour dissolved in water (Chernyj *khleb*); 2. (plural – *khleby*) product of some specific shape (Kruglyj *khleb*); 3. (only singular) the grain from which this product is prepared (Polny ambary ogromnye *khleba* (Z. Hukovskij)); 4. (*khleba* – plural) a plant from whose grain flour and cereals are produced, cereal (Zagotovka *khleba*); 5. (plural – *khleba*), food; allowance, supplies (Chuzhoj *khleb* gorek – i ya ne umeyu perenosit’ sniskhoditel’nyh oskorblenij (Turgenev)); 6. (idiomatic, only singular) means of subsistence, income (Ya ot grekha tebya izbavlyu i chestnyj *khleb* tebe dostavlyu (Krylov)).

The specified meaning of the word *khleb* is refined and specified in other dictionaries. The conceptual basis of this concept is reflected in the “Russian Semantic Dictionary” (Ushakov Dictionary, 2021): the concept of ‘bread’ (plural *khleby* – *khleba*) in the 5th meaning “Field sown with cereals” (Idti *khlebami*) is considered in the theme group “Gardens. Parks. Plants. Places and structures for special plant breeding” (a subgroup of “Land under cultivation”, lexical class “Areas, territories associated with cultivation, land strips”), which complements the semantic content presented in the Dictionary of Russian language (Ushakov Dictionary, 2021), other meanings basically coincide with the data of the explanatory dictionary, cf.: *khleb* (plural *khleba*) in the 6th meaning (idiomatic) “Livelihood” (Zarabatyvat’ sebe na *khleb*) in the thematic group “Food and consumer products: Clothing (subgroup “Food, drinks”), additional: *Khleb* nasushchnyj (= “what is necessary for existence”); Byt’ na *khlebah* u kogo-nibud’ (= “to live with others material help” (obsolete and simple)); Gorek chuzhoj *khleb*, i tyazhely stupeni chuzhogo kryl’ca (aphorism); S remeslom i uvechnyj *khleba* dobudet (obsolete). Ne *khlebom* edinyim zhiv chelovek (book.); Na darovyh *khlebah* (obsolete and simple) = “without paying for food”); *Khleba* ne prosit ((coll.) = “do not ask much”); *khleb* in the 1st and 2nd meaning “Food product baked from ground grain, flour” (1 meaning – *chernyj*) *khleb*; *pshenichnyj* (*belyj*) *khleb*) and “baked product from flour” in special form” (2 meaning – *Kruglyj*, *vysokij*, *pyshnyj* *khleb*; *Svezhiy*, *cherstvyj* *khleb*; *Buhanka*, *baton*, *karavaj* *khleba*...; *Stavit’* *khleby* v *pech’*. *Obedat’* s *khlebom*...; *Khleb* s *maslom*; *Bez soli*, *bez khleba* *hudaya* *beseda* (proverb); *Khleb* za *bryuhom* ne *hodit* (proverb, obsolete); *Edesh’* na *den’*, a *khleba* *beri* na *nedelyu* (proverb, obsolete); *Khleb* da *sol’* (coll.) – “have a nice meal!”); *Khlebom* ne *kormi*... , *tol’ko* ... ((razg.) – “About someone who desperately wants to do something”); *Obrazovaniya* – *khlebushko* (obsolete); *khlebushek*, *khlebec*, *khlebnij*; in the 7th meaning “Livelihood, earnings” (*Ehta* *rabota* – *vernyj* *khleb*) is included in the thematic group “Payment. Money. Expenses. Financials (subgroup “Benefits (Salary) Payments for work).

Family of words – *khleb* – >*khlebec*, *khlebushek*, *khlebushko*, *khlebnij*, *nakhlebnik* (*nakhlebnica*), *khlebobulochnyj*, *khlebozavod* (*khlebozavodskoj*), *khlebopekarnya*, *khlebopechen’e*, *khleboprodukt*, *khleborez*, *khlebouborka* (*khlebouborochnyj*), *khlebohranilishche* (Potebnia, 1989) – characterised by a positive connotation (*khleb* – *khlebushek*, *khlebnij*), it conveys the national idea of the main grain and food product, and also expresses hospitality and friendship, cf.: *khleb* da *sol’* (coll.) = “1. Food offered to the guest”; 2. “Hospitality”; *khleb-sol’* *vodit’* = “to be friends with somebody”.

All high-profile events of a person’s life are surely accompanied by ‘bread’ - weddings, celebrating; even the level of the economy is determined by ‘bread’ (*khleb*) (the question: How much does bread cost?). A word is a language signal for a person. Anyone who knows the language well and

skillfully uses it, certainly feels and perceives the “cultural meaning” of the word, it is impossible to penetrate into the meaning of the text without revealing the cultural meaning. The process of “cultural adaptation” of linguistic units leads the students in the direction of meaning, “guessing” leads to knowledge and inclusion of the sign-object in the associative range of cultural meanings of different nations.

1.1. Literature Review

A word (model: sign-value) as a linguistic unit in its structure makes up the linguistic culture (model: sign-value-concept-object); the sphere of the first is limited by language, the sphere of the second extends to the objective world. According to A.A. Potebnia (1989), the inner form of the word expresses the national specifics of the word and reflects the realities of culture: “This is the center of the image, one of its features, prevailing over the others. The inner form, besides the actual unity of the image, gives knowledge of this unity; it is not an image of an object, but an image of an image, a representation (Kolesnikova & Chibisova, 2017).

Russia is a multicultural state where people of different nationalities live. From the childhood we come across universal concepts of home, family, ‘bread’. If the first two are much alike in a multicultural interpretation, the khleb (‘bread’) concept in Russian has its own specifics. The teaching of the Russian language must take into account the linguocultural specifics of the linguistic units.

The study of the phraseological units of the language seems rather complicated in relation with some factors: the transfer of these expressions raises the question of the equivalence of not only the form but also the deep meaning, as well as the national specifics behind the idioms. As V.M. Shaklein points out, for the correct perception of linguoculture, the foreign addressee is not sufficient only for her vocabulary interpretation, it is necessary to correlate it with the spiritual and material experience of the person (Shaklein, 1997).

Bread is the most sacred type of food, a symbol of prosperity, abundance and material well-being. It is interpreted as a gift from God and at the same time as an independent living being and even the image of the deity itself; therefore, it commands a special respect (Tolstaya et al., 2002). No wonder the church altar bread – a symbol of communion with God – is a small round loaf. Among the Eastern and Western Slavs, it was customary for a loaf of bread to constantly lie on the table in the red corner. It is not for nothing that the Russian people say: bread is the staff of life. The bread on the table symbolised the wealth of the home, the readiness to receive a guest, was a sign of divine protection and a talisman against hostile forces (Shaklein, 1997).

2. Materials and Methods

The goal of teaching any language is the ability of communication, and the final point of any communication, including multicultural communication, is not the understanding of the language itself, but the assimilation of extralinguistic information (including cultural). We will compare separate data on the concept ‘bread’ to analyse the cultural meaning. Thus, for a person living in Russia, especially for veterans of the Great Patriotic War suffered hunger, bread, in the meaning “a product made of dough”, is a symbol of the great work invested in the cultivation and production of bread, and a symbol of a prosperous life (cf.: *Khleb – vsemu golova... Khleb – millionov rabotnikov trud. Khleb beregite, kak zhizn’ beregut; Khleb da sol’!*). The greatest in this meaning is the Russian custom of meeting dear guests with bread and salt.

The semantic field of ‘bread’, marked by linguocultural specifics, is of particular interest in modern Russian language – most of the events in human life are accompanied by bread. The attitude to bread

in Russian culture is special: it is a food product that can be found in our country in any family and any home, regardless of social status and geographical location. Over time, a new meaning acquired – “livelihood”, cf. *na khleb hvataet, moj khleb, otnimat’ khleb*. The presence of a large number of proverbs and sayings, including the concept ‘bread’, reflects its special status in the national culture. Conditionally they can be divided into several groups (Table 1)

Table 1. Examples of semantic field of ‘bread’ in Russian language

Meaning	Transliteration
Proverbs and sayings, where <i>khleb</i> stands literally for a food product. Such expressions are more often used by older people, which is due to historical factors – for Russian veterans of the Great Patriotic War and their families, bread was a symbol of well-being, peaceful life, and its shortage was a reminder of war years.	cf. <i>Bez deneg prozhivu, a bez khleba ne prozhivu. Khleb da voda – zdorovaya eda. Khleb vezde horosh – i u nas, i za morem. Gorek obed bez khleba. Bez khleba zhivot nikogda ne zhiwet. Bez soli ne vkusno, bez khleba – ne sytno. Ne v poru i obed, koli khleba net. Bez khleba i u vody hudo zhit’. Bez khleba – polovina obeda.</i>
Proverbs and sayings related to work, where <i>khleb</i> is the measurement of labor. Similar expressions, their presence in the language and the fact that they do not use the words money, coins, etc., which designates material goods for the person – all of these show the special status of this concept as a symbol of prosperity, which manifests itself in one of the meanings.	cf. <i>Balovstvom khleba ne dobudesh’. Khleb pospevaet – kolhoznik ne gulyaet. Khleb – kormilec. Khleb brosat’ – trud ne uvazhat’. Pot po spine – tak i khleb na stole. Khlebom lyudi ne shutyat.</i>
<i>Khleb</i> as prosperity. Historically, the prosperity in the peasant’s house was determined by the amount of stored bread, hence the proverbs where bread is an indicator of well-being, and its absence is an indicator of poverty.	cf. <i>Nam khlebushka podaj, a razzhuem my sami. Khleb na stol – i stop prestol, a khleba ni kuska – i stol doska. Khleba ni kuska, tak i v gorle toska. Khleba ni kuska – i v gornice toska.</i>

Phraseological level with the concept *khleb* is also represented: a respectful attitude towards this product has led to the appearance of such expressions as *khleбноe mesto* (profitable position), *khleb nasushchnyj* (from the Bible, “what is necessary for life” (Bible, 2021)), *ne khlebom edinyim* (from “Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God,” the Gospel of Matthew, “not only material goods are important” (Shaklein, 1997)), *khlebom ne kormi* (about your favorite business), *khleb-sol’* (greetings to guests, hence “hospitable person “–*khlebosol’nyj*), *na khlebe i vode* (low life or as a punishment), etc.

3. Results and Discussion

To analyse this phenomenon, let us turn to the English and Chinese languages and analyse how the concept ‘bread’ is expressed in these languages and what is important. In English there are enough expressions with the “food product” component, cf. *Cream of the crop, To be a shrimp, After meat mustard, cool as a cucumber* etc. Idiomatic expressions with “bakery product” components are presented among them, cf. *Bread and butter, Bread and water, To earn one’s bread, To eat somebody’s bread, Half a loaf is better than none, best thing since sliced bread, To know which side bread is buttered on*, etc. However, in English among such idioms and proverbs we can also identify expressions where one of the components is a bakery product, but not bread, cf. *as warm as toast, have your cake and eat it too, as easy as (apple) pie, Icing on the cake, pie in the sky, a piece of cake*. In the English national worldview, the concept ‘bread’ is represented by different lexemes, which shows the variability of these components. There is an expression *khleb vsemu golova* – bread is the staff of life in English, you can also find the expression *Russian bread is everything head*, which indicates the etymology of this expression. Professor of Political Science Lars Lich published the book “Bread and

Authority in Russia, 1914-1921” (Lih, 1990) in 1990, where he described the policy of supplying food in Russia from 1914 to 1921, using the word concept ‘bread’ in the title as generic term; the cover poster depicts a skinny finger pointing to a loaf of bread. From all of the above, it can be concluded that the concept ‘bread’ is not foreign to the native speakers of the English language, while it is also recognised by them as part of the Russian worldview.

At the same time, the Chinese national picture almost does not proceed from the concept ‘bread’ (khleb) in terms of geographical and other peculiar properties: more than 7 thousand years ago, people began to cultivate rice 大米 in the territory of modern China as a food crop, it is considered to be a national product of the Chinese and bread in Chinese tradition is replaced by rice. Although it cannot be said that the Chinese do not eat bread, since in their traditional kitchen there is a mantou 馒头 - wheat dumplings made of water, yeast and wheat flour; they taste unleavened and it is more like an addition to main food, but not an independent product. The history of the origin of this word, which comes from a homophone literally denoting the “head of a barbarian”, dates back to the era of the Three Kingdoms (220-280 AD), there was the commander Zhu Galyan, known for his mercy, who did not give to kill a person on the altar to propitiate the river spirit- he came round and brought the heads made of dough.

Phraseological units in Chinese with the components of rice 大米 and mantou 馒头, are represented quite widely, cf. 巧妇难为无米之炊 (even a good housewife cannot cook anything without rice), 米珠薪桂 (rice is more expensive than pearls, brushwood is more expensive than a cinnamon tree), 米已成炊 (the “rice is already cooked”, there is no longer a chance to change smth), 等米下锅 (to live in need (translating AB)), 生米煮成熟饭 (porridge is already cooked from raw rice, you cannot turn around what is done), 柴米油盐 (firewood, rice, oil and salt “, necessities); there are also verbal expressions where the component of the rice has lost its direct meaning and is used in the collective, cf. 讨米 (ask “rice”, pray for food). It should be noted that the word rice is represented in Chinese as 大米 dà mǐ, or 米, and also has the independent word “rice as porridge” 大米饭 dà mǐ fàn, or 饭, which has lost its independent meaning in the modern Chinese language and is used in such words as 吃饭 (“eat rice”, eat, eat), 早饭 (morning rice, breakfast), 午饭 (day rice, lunch), 晚饭 (evening rice dinner, dinner), 饭盒 (rice box box, lunchbox).

The expression in Chinese, equivalent to Russian “khleb – vsemu golova”, is not found, but in the dictionaries some Russian proverbs and their literal translations into Chinese are presented (Tolstoy, 2009) (Table 2)

Table 2. Comparison of semantic field of ‘bread’ in Russian and Chinese languages

Transliteration	Chinese translation
cf. spasibo na khleb ne namazhesh’	谢谢又不能当饭吃
khleb nasushchnyj	非有不可的一碗饭
dobyvat’ khleb	谋生
lyogkij khleb	不用费力的谋生
otnimat’ khleb u kogo-to	绝了... 的谋生之路

Analysis of Internet sources allowed establishing the following qualitative attributes of bread: bread of high culture, wonderful appetite, the finest batch, unusual taste.

The trendsetter of high grain culture is France: ordinary Parisian does not imagine a life without a bakery in the next house, where he goes down every morning for fresh croissants, and the best chefs in most of the world’s top hotels are French. They organise their own festivals, museums, projects and

contests for the best baguette in the city. They have their patron Saint Honoré. The main distinguishing feature of the French bread business is love of this business.

A wonderful appetite creates bread of Italy, where this product was always the basis of the cuisine. From Tuscany to Sicily, it had several types: focaccia, bruschetta, miketta, rosetta, banana, biowe, bovolot, ciabatta, chiriola, manin ferrarese, pane barrels. Each carries its own legend. For example, the famous Tuscan bread without salt was invented when the pope raised the salt tax and the Tuscan bakers decided to boycott this product. However, bread without salt is baked nowadays.

The finest batch is a feature of German bread. They say: “You hurt your shoulder while carrying it home” The Germans love that everything should be substantial, including bread. There are hundreds of varieties in Germany. But you have to love black bread from wholegrain flour. Germany is also called a country of high bread culture.

Bread of Ireland is famous all over the world for its unusual taste: the most popular soda bread is cooked without yeast (therefore very quickly) and based on buttermilk (it turns sourish); sometimes it is baked with raisins, currants or other fruit additives. All Irish bread is simple enough to cook.

One of the most authentic grain traditions exists in Mexico, where they use corn flour. Mexicans bake their daily tortillas from corn flour on a hot clay plate. Bread in Mexico is a sacred topic. For example, on the day of the Dead, there is the bread of the dead on the tables: this spicy, elegant, sweet bread with orange (it necessarily includes nutmeg and Sambuca liqueur) is decorated with baked “antecedents’ bones”, covered with glaze and served with thick hot Mexican chocolate.

However, bread is an obligatory attribute of religious holidays for Christians too. Bread symbolises the body of Christ. Thus, in the main prayer we read: “Give us this day our daily bread...” In addition, in many countries the tradition of Easter cakes is preserved – there are fine Easter breads and cakes in Greece and Italy.

The eastern culture of bread is more ancient than the European one. Almost everywhere – from Turkey and Iran, from the Caucasus mountains and Central Asian sands to the jungles of South India and the coral coasts of Thailand – the bread looks like a flat cake. These flat cakes are different: Lenten, yeast, sweet, baked, fried. But they always have something in common: they do not use a knife to cut it with – use only hands. Otherwise, not just the taste is lost, but traditions are offended.

Obviously, the thesis “Bread is the staff of life” will always be relevant. It is also actual to bring up the right, respectful attitude to it from the childhood: Russian say “Khleb millionov rabotnikov trud. Khleb beregite, kak zhizn’ beregut”. We give a grounding of moral foundations in childhood and in primary school. This education is assigned, first of all, to teachers. Knowledge of the traditions of different nations promotes national identity and cultural tolerance. The history of education and upbringing has a great example A.S. Makarenko, a well-known schoolmaster, organised the First Hay harvest Festival in the children’s colony in Russia.

Sum up, it may be said It is necessary to take into account the linguistic and cultural specifics of the language units in the process of teaching the Russian language: the semantic structure of the word ‘bread’ – khleb includes the main concept-forming semes “product”, “food” (for singular); “plant”. Modern lexicographic sources supplement the semantic content of the concept ‘bread’ – khleb consideration with the “field”, “areas”. The usage of this khleb concept is rather wide in the Russian language due to its historical and national specific features; the English language contains a number of expressions with ‘bread’, denoting not the product but the figurative meanings. Chinese does not use the ‘bread’ concept, but there are rice and mantou concepts instead.

Even when comparing closely related languages, such as the Russian and Czech languages under study, with their common perception of the world, due to their common origin, their cultural-

connotative asymmetry is observed. With the secondary use of a linguistic sign as a nominee, it is often endowed with culturological information that objectifies the specific features of perception of the surrounding world by a certain ethnic group. As a result, secondary nominations become representatives of ethnocultural specificity, which is associated with a certain image common for different cultures. Below, the authors of this study consider this using the example of the most ancient names for food of the Slavs – ‘khleb’ (bread) and ‘kasha’ (porridge).

Food for the Slavs has long been presented as gifts coming from God. Grain – the basis of the first Slavic food – is sanctified: grain was perceived as “capable of resurrecting”, which rejoices at its “funeral” because it is a way of renewing and enriching it. The main idea of the Slavs about fertility, about the victory over death and about the eternal triumph of life was associated with grain, and accordingly with all products made from it. Many of the ideas about food of the ancient Slavs formed the basis of the conceptual perception of basic food products.

Therefore, it is not customary to throw away the remains of bread, and even crumbs are to be fed to birds. The so-called ‘khleb-sol’ (bread and salt) also has tremendous symbolism – a generalised name for food, symbolising a greeting and an expression of hospitality addressed to guests. This is reflected in the semantics of the Russian word composition ‘klebosolstvo’ (hospitality), which means the generosity with which guests are greeted by Russians, as well as in the recently derived verb ‘khlebosit’ (to greet hospitably). The Czechs also have a custom to greet with bread and salt, which is reflected in the expression *uvítat ckhlebem a solí*.

In both languages, the word ‘bread’ is also perceived as the essence of life, something vital, which can be traced in the expressions for ‘khleb nasuschnyi’ (daily bread) (Czech *denní chléb, každodenní chléb, chléb vezdejší*), in Czech phrase *bylo chlébem jejího života* (“It was the most vital thing in his life”), as well as in modern Russian expression ‘*nie khlebom yedinyim*’ (not by bread alone) – “not only wealth, material prosperity”. As early as ancient times, the lexeme for bread meant not only “leavened food prepared by baking from flour”, “grain, flour”, “grain in the head or in the bud”, but also “everything necessary for a comfortable existence” (Srezn.). The connection between the meanings “food” and “prosperity, property” is also evidenced by the semantics of Czech. *strava*, which in ancient times had not only the meaning “food” (as in modern Czech language), but also “cargo”, “money spent on food”, as well as “everything necessary for life” (SČS) (Gudkov, 2004; Markova, 2013).

In the Old Czech language, *ckhleba* also meant not only “food item”, but also subsistence in general (for example, in the expression *z ckhleba slúžiti* “to serve for food”, in modern Czech *pracovat z ckhleba* “to work for money, without interest”, whence *ckhlebařina* (SNČ) “work only for money, part-time work”, *ckhlebař* (SNČ) “the one who works only for money”, *ckhlebodárce* “employer”). The ancient Czech expression *jeden chléb*, meaning “to have a common joint fortune, property” (SČS), also testifies to the meaning “prosperity” and “wealth” in the word ‘bread’. Russian phraseological unit “*byt na chyikh-libo khlebakh*” (to be on someone else’s bread), meaning “to live at someone else’s expense” and the Czech phrase *ujídat chléb* “to eat someone off”, Czech proverb *čí ckhleba jíš, toho píseň zpívej* meaning “sing songs of those whose bread you eat” and Russian proverb “*chei khleb kushayu, togo i slushayu*” meaning “I listen to the one whose bread I eat” enter into antonymic relations with the Russian expression “*na svoikh khlebakh*” (on their bread), with the Czech *na svém ckhlebě* (on one’s own subsistence), thanks to the same secondary meaning of the lexeme ‘bread’.

‘Khleb’ also means “earnings”, “work that brings good income”. In this regard, it is appropriate to recall the Russian expression *khlebnoe mesto* (bread place) – “lucrative position”, in the Czech language the expression *dobývání chléb*, meaning “to achieve a good position”, is used in a similar semantic meaning. The meaning “to lose earnings, livelihood” is expressed by analogous phrasemes

připravít o chléb – lishit kuska khleba, meaning “to take someone’s livelihood away”, přijít o chléb – lishitsia kuska khleba, meaning “to lose work, earnings”, je bez ckhleba – ostatsia bez kuska khleba, meaning “to be left without work, without a livelihood”. A Czech proverb with the ‘bread’ component speaks of the difficulties of earning money and food: všude ckhleba o dvou kůrkách (literally: “bread everywhere is with two crusts”, the Russian equivalent: bez truda ne vytashish i rybku iz pruda (you cannot easily pull a fish out of a pond)). At the same time, sometimes what one does not desire and does not need comes easily and without difficulty, which is verbalised in a Czech proverb with the ‘bread’ component: od říkaného ckhleba největší kus/krajíc, which literally means “a big piece of an unwanted bread”, and the corresponding to the Russian expression chto ne khochesh, to i poluchish (what you do not want is what you get).

The lexeme ‘pirog’ (pie), which is thematically and linguoculturally related to ‘khleb’, is also significant for the Russian consciousness, the meaning of which is fully expressed by the proverb “ne krasna izba uglami, a krasna pirogami” (literally “the hut is not beautiful because of its corners, but because of pies”). With regard to something complicated and unpleasant, Russians usually summarise as follows: “vot takie pirogi” (these are the pies), meaning “and that’s how it goes”.

4. Conclusions

The attitude of the Slavs towards porridge as the basis of nutrition, life, and strength is also traditional, which finds expression in Russian phraseology and paremiology (for example, expressions “shchi da kasha – pishcha nasha” (cabbage soup and porridge – our food) and “malo kashy yel” (ate little porridge) describe a physically weak person”). The plurality of cooked grains initially gave this dish the symbolism of wealth, fertility, and increased prosperity.

Evidently, not only modern Slavic languages that emerged from the same parent language, but also distantly related (Russian and English) and unrelated (Russian and Chinese) languages preserve general ideas about the vital phenomena of life, while developing ethnospecific associations as demonstrated by the research on the concept ‘khleb’. National specificity is verbalised in the reinterpretation of lexical units, achieved by the facts of secondary nomination, including phraseological one.

References

- Bible. Retrieved on Oct 20, 2021 from: <https://www.biblica.com/bible/>.
- Gospel of Matthew. Retrieved on Oct 20, 2021 from: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+1&version=NIV>
- Gudkov, D.B. (2004). Units of culture codes: problems of semantics. *Language, Consciousness, Communication: Collection of Articles*, 26, 39-51.
- Kolesnikova, S.M., & Chibisova, A.V. (2017). Macro concept ‘bread’ in a multicultural space. *Culture and Civilisation*, 7(6A), 71-80.
- Lih, L.T. (1990). *Bread and Authority in Russia, 1914-1921*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Markova, E.M. (2013). General conceptual and ethnospecific in the semantic development of the ancient names of food of the Slavs. *Problems of Conceptualisation of Reality and Modeling of the Linguistic Picture of the World*, 6, 45-49.
- Potebnia, A.A. (1989). *Thought and language*. Moscow: Nauka.

Shaklein, V.M. (1997). *Linguocultural situation and text research*. Moscow: RUDN University Publishing House.

Tolstaya, S.M., Agapkina, T.A., Belova, O.V., Vinogradova, L.N., & Petrukhin, V.Ya. (Eds.). (2002). *Slavic mythology. Encyclopedic Dictionary*. Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya.

Tolstoy, N.I. (Ed.). (2009). *Slavic antiquities. Ethnolinguistic Dictionary*. Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya.

Ushakov Dictionary. (2021). <http://feb-web.ru/feb/ushakov/ush-abc/default.asp>.

AUTHOR BIODATA

Elena Markova is a Full Doctor in Philology, Professor, Department of Russian as a Foreign Language, Kosygin State University of Russia, Moscow, Russian Federation; Faculty of Applied Languages, University of Economics in Bratislava, Bratislava, Slovak Republic.

Svetlana Kolesnikova is a Full Doctor in Philology, Professor, Department of Russian Language, Moscow State Pedagogical University, Moscow, Russian Federation.

Anastasiya Chibisova is an Assistant, Department of Russian Language, Moscow State Pedagogical University, Moscow, Russian Federation.

Alexei Lyzlov is a Full Doctor in Philology, Lecturer, Department of Foreign Languages, Russian Federation Armed Forces Army Air Defense Military Academy, Smolensk, Russian Federation.