



The Concept *Stone* in English and Lithuanian Phraseology

Solveiga SUŠINSKIENĖ
Šiauliai University

Keywords: *phraseology, phraseologism, concept, stone, cultural connotation.*

Intensive development of phraseology over the last decades, related to reevaluation in the usage of language structures along with the changing reality, has put forward a number of different problems. On the one hand, the task of the phraseologist is to describe the phraseological resources of individual languages with a particular emphasis on their specific features; on the other hand, contrastive examination of phraseological systems of different languages is acquiring more significance.

The cultural specifics of a phraseological unit in a given language can be defined by comparison with another language. Contrastive phraseology is of importance for both the theory of phraseology and for applied phraseology – phraseography, phraseodidactics and translation of phraseology. This approach can be characterized as contrastive one. The pivot aim of contrastive studies in the field of vocabulary is defined as the identification of differences and commonalities. Thus in the present paper I started from the basic problem: defining the basis of comparison, i.e. *tertium comparationis*.

Many theoretical foundations of phraseology have been extensively recognized but the volume of this branch of linguistics is still a challenging question. There are quite a few reference works to name (C o w i e 1991, 1994; C r y s t a l 1998; G l ä s e r 1998; M c C a r t h y and O ' D e l l 2002; Č e r n i a u s k a i t ė 2005; J a s i ū n a i t ė 2007 and many others) which explore the etymology, synchronic analysis, comparative analysis of metaphorical and phraseological expressions, but nothing as yet which addresses comparative studies with the concepts *stone* and *akmuo* in English and Lithuanian with reference to cultural connotations. Thus the object of the present study is a comparative study of English and Lithuanian phraseological units with the components 'stone' in English and '*akmuo*' in Lithuanian. **The aim** of the present research is to compare English and Lithuanian phraseological units with the concept 'stone' on different semantic levels and to explicate their differences and similarities.

Phraseology is the sphere of language that selects facts in a clear way from the external world. It does not take into consideration all the aspects of a given thing or a phenomenon, but restricts itself to distinguishing only some of them. Language is one of the ways of concept formation and a way of investigating its fragments. The concept in the language is represented by lexemes, phraseological units, and free word combinations. Collocations containing some concrete facts selected by the language are passed on from one generation to another, preserving in their consciousness a simplified picture of the world. Considering language a means of expressing thoughts, the same categories of thinking could be treated the basis of all the world languages. Thus developing particular concepts in the process of thinking allows treating them as a contrastive juxtaposition basis for comparison of individual languages. In other words, the phases of the proceedings are: THOUGHT – CONCEPT – EXPRESSION (REFLECTION) in the language. For this reason the **method of conceptual analysis** is employed in the present study, i.e. the conceptual analysis of the components ‘stone’ and ‘*akmuo*’ in English and Lithuanian phraseological units was carried out. As noted by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the concept is a unit of thinking, i.e. it is all information about something that exists in the consciousness of people speaking the language. The object of conceptual analysis is meanings transferred by separate words and word combinations and their realization in utterances and texts. Through the concept the culture enters the human mental world: every object has an endless number of characteristics. These characteristics are defined as conceptual. Thus I distinguished two main levels on which conceptual characteristics of the words ‘stone’ and ‘*akmuo*’ are expressed. First, an attempt to analyze Lithuanian and English materials separately was made, followed by the comparison of the results.

In order to compare the application of phraseological units in different cultures, we need a corpus which demonstrates their use in each of these languages. The corpus citations are taken from the two largest general reference corpora available in the languages under study, namely, the British National Corpus (henceforth BNC) and DONELAITIS, compiled by the Computational Linguistics Centre in Kaunas Vytautas Magnus University (henceforth D) as well as from monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, phraseological dictionaries, dictionaries of proverbs and sayings.

The words ‘stone’ in English and ‘*akmuo*’ in Lithuanian belong to the group of culturally connotated words, thus my task is to reveal this cultural connotation. In both languages the cultural connotation of the words ‘stone’ and ‘*akmuo*’ is expressed “not in the subjective and logical part of their meaning but in the elements that are actualized in the act of communication and are determined by the cultural peculiarities of the communicators, of their attitude to each other, to the topic of conversation and so on” (A v e r j y a n o v a 1981, 10) (our translation). By cultural connotation is meant additional information, determined by national and cultural peculiarities of the speakers. Both languages encounter expressions with

the headword 'stone', which mostly allude to senses that lie well beyond the literal extensions of stone denotation.

Phraseological units can be characterized by certain specific features which distinguish them from free word combinations. Phraseological units proper have a fully or partially transferred meaning, a non-generated pattern and stability of meaning, components and structure. Phraseological units are language units, they are not created in speech but reproduced ready-made. Which aspects of life have been preserved in phraseology, and what is the 'perception' of reality by the language? The choice of the phrase in the process of speaking requires finding in the memory a proper association and semantic field. The general aim of contrastive studies in the field of vocabulary may be defined as the identification of differences and commonalities. Hence the field-theory is of especial significance for contrastive linguistics. Word-lexemes and phrasal lexemes constituting semantic fields are related in that they are used to designate entities or classes of entities that have certain semantic features in common. Thus semantic fields reflect certain fragments of the model of the world embodied in a given language. The comparison of these fragments serves to identify both universal regularities and the culturally conditioned differences between languages. Semantic fields are to be regarded as elements in models of the world inscribed into languages. These world models reflect the everyday experiences of language communities rather than being objective or 'scientific'. They are indeed sometimes referred to as 'naïve', anthropocentric models in contradistinction to the 'scientific' view of the world (W i e r z b i c k a 1988).

As the semantic field 'stone' is a macro-field made up of various micro-fields, the lack of space will naturally involve a restriction to selected its fragments. The largest part of the phraseologisms under investigation is related to the man's inner, outer and social world. Thus three main levels are distinguished on which conceptual characteristics of the words 'stone' and 'akmuo' are expressed. These are **physical** (here a man's physical features, abilities, work, etc. are meant), **mental** (inner world, character, mental abilities, etc.), and **social** (position in society, relationship with other people, etc.). After selecting phraseological units from the dictionaries, they were cited by the examples taken from the above mentioned corpora. It was observed that when used in speech they undergo some modifications: by means of many possible modification proceedings, a phraseological unit can be modified according to the context.

I Physical Level

English phraseological units

Stone-deaf (completely deaf):

1. *My old lady's nearly ninety, and stone-deaf, and her mind wanders now and then.* (BNC)

Stone-blind (completely blind):

2. *<...> when he was stone-blind, from glaucoma, to the locations of his favouri-*

te plants to photograph them with an auto-focus camera. (BNC)

To break stones (to do useless, unrewarding work):

3. <... >considered that a casual with a skilled trade may have his efficiency seriously impaired by being required to break stones <...>. (BNC)

To keep your nose to the grindstone (to work hard and seriously):

4. "I intend to keep your nose to the grindstone, Rob." (BNC)

To lay the corner-stone (to complete the most essential part of work):

5. The corner-stone of your strategy should be a pension plan. (BNC)

Stone-cold sober (not having drunk any alcohol):

6. Even if one accepts the figures, it is apparent that four out of five fatal accidents are caused by people who are stone-cold sober. (BNC)

Lithuanian phraseological units

Kaip akmuo (like a stone "fast asleep, tired, exhausted"):

7. *Atslūgo įtampa, ir nuovargis kaip sunkus akmuo užgulė išsekusį kūną.* (D)

8. *Krito kaip akmuo – bejausmė, viskam abejinga, įmigo kiečiausiai.* (D)

9. *Meilė nebūna bloga, mama, – šypsaisi griūdama į lovą ir grimzti iš karto kaip akmuo į vandenį - miego tamsa įtraukia tave kaip Ringys Viktoriją prieš keletą vasarų.* (D)

Ir akmuo kruta (even a stone is moving "everybody is working"):

10. *Lietuviškas darbymetis. Sakai: darbymečiu ir akmuo kruta.* (D)

In Lithuanian phraseological dictionaries, more units can be found which belong to the physical level. However, their discourse was not found in DONELAITIS. For example: *akmens nelieka ant akmens* (not a stone is left on a stone "everything is destroyed completely"), *kaip per akmenis* (as if going over the stones, with difficulty), *kirvį patrinti į akmenį* (to rub an axe over a stone, "to do very little").

II Mental Level

English phraseological units

To have a heart of stone (to be unkind and cruel):

11. *It needs a heart of stone not to sympathize with a figure in this predicament; a figure on whom it may rest finally to decide whether South Africa lives in peace or at war.* (BNC)

12. *I am concerned that you have a heart of stone.* (BNC)

As cold as stone, stone-cold, be made of stone, a stony stare, stony-faced (very cold or unemotional, insensible, without feelings):

13. *His black eyes turned as cold as stone.* (BNC)

14. *He could tell nothing from their faces; they could have been made of stone.* (BNC)

15. *My remark that last time I had a bracelet like that put on I had a baby three hours later is greeted by a stony stare!* (BNC)

16. *He excelled at grumpy anti-social males, harassed mothers, and their stony-faced domestic servants.* (BNC)

To have a millstone round your neck (to have a problem that prevents you from doing what you want to do):

17. *The other key barrier was inflation: a millstone round the neck of British business.* (BNC)

Lithuanian phraseological units

Akmens širdis, akmens širdį turėti, akmenys pravirkto (to have a stone heart, a stone would cry “cruel, insensitive”):

18. *Liūdesys lyg juoda drobulė viską dengė, sunkiausias sielvarto akmuo slėgte slėgė širdį.* (D)

19. *Akmenys pakelėse pravirko, nepravirko tik tironai svetimi.* (D)

20. *Ką gi, ir mano širdis ne akmuo, atlėgo.* (D)

Akmuo nusirito nuo krūtinės (a stone off a heart, “relief”):

21. *Valandos, kai laukiau atsakymo atrodė tarsi košmaras, o vėliau nuo širdies lyg akmuo nukrito.* (D)

Akmuo slegia/ akmuo vargina (the stone presses, tires)

22. *Akmuo ant valstybės kaklo?* (D)

23. *Nenašus ir nekonkurencingas žemės ūkis, lyg girnų akmuo po kaklu, stabdo Lietuvos ekonominę pažangą, jos integravimąsi į Europą, nekalbant jau apie visuomenės supriešinimą, kaimynų, brolių bei seserų rate.* (D)

24. *Savūnei sunku tylėti – per didelis akmuo užgulęs širdį.* (D)

III Social level

English phraseological units

To kill two birds with one stone (to achieve two things at the same time):

25. *Since in your life and work you are going to do things anyway, you might as well kill two birds with one stone by doing and learning in parallel.* (BNC)

To leave/have no stone unturned (to look everywhere in order to find something, to try everything in order to achieve something):

26. *Harris was keen to leave no stone unturned so, splitting into several groups, we climbed a further nine peaks including the highest point, before turning for home.* (BNC)

To cast the first stone (to be the first person to quarrel with, accuse, or criticize somebody else. From the New Testament, John VIII.):

27. *Let he who is without sin cast the first stone, I may be hearing you say.* (BNC)

Set in stone/ also be carved, cast, written, etched in stone etc. (used in order to say that a plan, decision, idea, etc. is completely fixed and no part of it can be changed):

28. *Holyfield speaks in a deep bass voice which makes everything he says sound as though it's carved in stone.* (BNC)

Stone the crows! (something you say in order to show that you are very surprised):

29. *I'll slay them! "Stone the crows! You're not going out like that, are you?" said Otley.* (BNC)

To be stony-broke (to have no money):

30. *Friends of stony-broke Sir Charles Wolseley, 48, are giving him bags of supermarket food and joints of meat.*

Sticks and stones can/may break my bones but words can never hurt/harm me (used to say that it does not worry you if someone says things to you that are not nice):

31. *Those who throw sticks and stones which break bones can be better off in law than those who project hurtful words which leave no permanent mark.* (BNC)

A rolling stone gathers no moss (it means that an ambitious person is more successful than a person not trying to achieve anything):

32. *Because I mean there's plenty of epigrams like a rolling stone gathers no moss, but that's a subject not a verb, and it's actually saying something totally different, or every time Er about the situation and sort of used in a sense about somebody's situation.* (BNC)

People who live in glass houses should not throw stones (people should not criticize other people for faults that they have themselves):

33. *People who live in glass houses should avoid throwing stones.* (BNC)

To stonewall (to defend oneself with great caution in order to avoid mistakes and thus deny one's opponent any advantage. Originally, cricket slang for playing purely defensively, by blocking every ball and making no attempt to score):

34. *The Group of 77, as the developing countries called themselves, had already discovered the capacity of the opposing phalanx of rich, aid-giving industrialised countries either to stonewall their demands for more aid or for preferential trading arrangements, or to fob them off with empty, symbolic gestures.* (BNC)

Stone-walling (persistent refusal to discuss, act, etc.):

35. *As the women's movement became increasingly central to purity campaigns before the First War, Home Office officials developed a range of tactics to stifle feminist pressure, from diplomatic stone-walling to outright misogyny.* (BNC)

Run into a stone wall (encounter an insurmountable barrier to progress):

36. *Part of the strategy was unveiled this week when the Democratic national Committee released a fact sheet titled 'Mr. Bush, Tear Down That Stone Wall.'* (BNC)

Kiss the Blarney Stone (have the ability or intention to flatter, persuade or deceive people with one's talk (from an inscribed stone in the castle wall of Blarney, near Cork in Ireland, kissing which is supposed to give one such powers of persuasion)):

37. *"And didn't we all know you for a darling girl?" he whispered in her ear as his fingers continued to blaze fire across her exposed nape. "And didn't we all*

know you kissed the Blarney stone?” she whispered back. (BNC)

Lithuanian phraseological units

Kertinis akmuo (a corner stone, basics of something, an essential part):

38. *Šeima – kertinis akmuo taikiame ateities pasaulyje. (D)*

Akmuo mestas į kieno daržą (to throw a stone into someone’s garden, “to criticize or accuse somebody”):

39. *Didžiausias akmuo turėtų kristi į žemės ūkio ministerijos daržą. (D)*

40. *Ten metamas akmuo, kad ratilai sklistų į visas puses, tarptautiškai. (D)*

Akmuo po kaklu (a stone round one’s neck):

41. *Sovietmečio stambioji industrija, neturinti vietoje nei žaliavų, nei rinkų, pakibo kaip girnų akmuo, tempiantis į dangų. (D)*

Akmenį nešiotis užantyje (to carry a stone in one’s bosom, “to have a grudge against somebody”):

42. *Mes manėme, kad tu mūsų žmogus, o pasirodo, tebenešioji užantyje akmenį, –baksnodamas plunksnakočiu į stalą piktai ir pagiežingai šypsosi storulis, atkreipdamas jaunėlio gražuolio dėmesį. (D)*

Akmens neliko ant akmens (no stone left on a stone “destroyed completely”):

43. *O planai, planai, iš kurių gyvenimas nepalieka akmens ant akmens! (D)*

Dievas mėtys akmenimis (God will throw stones at you):

44. *Tu buvai aklas. Apakintas. Dievas tave mėtė, mėtė ir mėtys. (D)*

Kaip kirvis su akmeniu (Like an axe against a stone. Hostility to each other):

45. *Juk jie abu vieno charakterio ir abu kaip kirvis su akmeniu. (D)*

After the analysis of the concept *stone*, the conclusion could be drawn that conceptual characteristics of the words ‘stone’ in English and ‘*akmuo*’ in Lithuanian are found on three generally accepted levels: physical, mental and social. The concept *stone* is characterized by a variety of images and illustrated by the facts which are from extra-linguistic reality. The comparison of the two phraseological corpora shows some disparity of both language structures and phraseological images.

To sum up, phraseological units have no absolute equivalent correspondences in other languages. In most cases, the reason for it, however, is not grounded in their ‘cultural’ or ‘national’ specifics, but in the fact that different languages go different ways in semantic re-interpretation, i.e. in creating figurative meanings on the basis of literal ones. The analysis shows that the concept *stone* has different cultural connotations in the two languages under analysis. On the other hand, to cite Telija (1996, 214–215), “Instead of looking for methods that would enable us to decide which phraseological units are culture-specific and which are not, the theory of phraseology often proclaimed all phraseological units to be the bearers of national culture”. It would be interesting to continue this comparison by using the materials of other neighbouring languages, such as German, Russian, Polish, etc.

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me of them. Phraseologisms are passed on from one generation to another, preserving in their consciousness a simplified picture of the world. Thus phraseological units interpret the world rather than reflect it.

In the present paper, I started from a basic problem: defining the basis of comparison, i.e. *tertium comparationis*. The aim of the present research is to compare English and Lithuanian phraseological units with the concept 'stone' on different semantic levels and to explicate their differences and similarities.

If we want to compare the application of phraseological units in different cultures, we need a corpus which demonstrates their use in each of these languages. The corpus citations are taken from the two largest general reference corpora available in the languages under study, namely the British National Corpus and DONELAITIS compiled by the Computational Linguistics Centre in Kaunas Vytautas Magnus University as well as from monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, phraseological dictionaries, dictionaries of proverbs and sayings.

Phraseological units have no absolute equivalent correspondences in other languages. In most cases, the reason for it, however, is not grounded in their 'cultural' or 'national' specifics, but in the fact that different languages go different ways in semantic re-interpretation, i.e. in creating figurative meanings on the basis of literal ones. The words 'stone' in English and 'akmuo' in Lithuanian belong to the group of culturally connotated words. Both languages encounter stone-word expressions which mostly allude to senses that lie well beyond the literal extensions of the denotation of the stone.

The largest part of the phraseologisms under investigation is related to human's inner, outer and social world. Thus three main levels are distinguished on which conceptual characteristics of the words 'stone' and 'akmuo' are expressed. These are physical (here a man's physical features, abilities, work, etc. are meant), mental (inner world, character, mental abilities, etc.), and social (position in society, relationship with other people, etc.). The analysis shows that the concept *stone* has different cultural connotations in the two languages.

Konceptas *akmuo* anglų ir lietuvių frazeologijoje

S a n t r a u k a

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: *frazeologija, frazeologizmas, konceptas, akmuo, kultūrinė konotacija.*

Frazeologijos tyrinėjimai vis intensyvėja, nes aktualizuojama frazeologizmų svarba kalbos sistemoje. Tai kelia daug naujų problemų. Gretinamieji frazeologinių sistemų tyrinėjimai tampa dar reikšmingesni. Frazeologija yra ta kalbos sritis, kuri atsirenka vien jai reikalingus išorinio pasaulio fragmentus. Ji neapžvelgia visų tam tikro daikto ar reiškinių aspektų, apsiriboja tik kai kuriais iš jų. Frazeologizmai yra perduodami iš vienos kartos į kitą, taip pasąmonėje išlaikomas supaprastintas pasaulio vaizdas. Galima teigti, kad frazeologiniai vienetai pasaulį labiau interpretuoja nei jį atspindi. Pasirenkant frazeologinį vieneta šnekos proceso metu reikia pirmiausia pasirinkti tinkamą asociaciją ir semantinį lauką.

Tyrimas pradėtas nuo gretinamojo pagrindo (*tertium comparationis*) apibrėžimo. Darbo tikslas yra palyginti angliškus ir lietuviškus frazeologinius vienetus, kuriuose minimas

akmuo (angl. *stone*), apibrėžti jų skirtumus ir panašumus. Renkant minėtus frazeologinius vienetus remtasi vienakalbiais ir dvikalbiais aiškinamaisiais žodynais, frazeologizmų žodynais. Norint patikrinti frazeologinių vienetų vartojimą, paplitimą, populiarumą skirtingose kultūrose, reikalingi tekstynai, kurie parodytų frazeologizmų situaciją gretinamose kalbose. Nagrinėjami frazeologiniai vienetai buvo iliustruojami pavyzdžiais, rinktais iš Britų nacionalinio tekstyno ir Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos tekstyno, sudaryto Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto Kompiuterinės lingvistikos centre.

Labai retai frazeologiniai junginiai turi absoliučius ekvivalentus kitose kalbose. Tai nepriklauso nuo frazeologizmų kultūrinės ir tautinės specifikos. Kalbos turi nueiti skirtingus semantinės reinterpretacijos kelius, t. y. pasiremamos tiesioginėmis reikšmėmis savaip sukurti perkeltines.

Frazeologizmai paprastai susiję su kultūrine konotacija. Kultūrinė konotacija suvokiama kaip papildoma informacija, kuri priklauso nuo tautinių ir kultūrinių kalbėtojų savytumų. Išnagrinėjus pavyzdžius paaiškėjo, kad esama trijų pagrindinių lygmenų, kuriuose gali būti atspindėti aptariamų konceptų požymiai. Tai fizinis (žmogaus fiziniai sugebėjimai, galimybės, darbas ir t. t.), mentalinis (žmogaus dvasinis pasaulis, jo problemos, išgyvenimai ir t. t.) ir socialinis (žmogaus padėtis visuomenėje, jo ryšiai su kitais žmonėmis ir pan.) lygmenys. Paaiškėjo, kad frazeologizmai, priklausantys šiems lygmenims, anglų ir lietuvių kalbose skiriasi. Vadinasi, galima teigti, kad žodžiai *stone* ir *akmuo* priklauso kultūrinės konotacijos paveiktų kalbos vienetų grupei.

Solveiga SUŠINSKIENĖ
Anglų filologijos katedra
Šiaulių universitetas
P. Višinskio g. 38,
LT-76352 Šiauliai
[Solveiga@gmail.com]