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ETHNOCULTURAL VOCABULARY AS A SOURCE OF ETHNICAL INFORMATION IN BRITISH LITERATURE

Abstract. This article analyses S. Maugham's and N. Hornby's works, exploring how national values and ethno-culture are reflected in their writing. The study focuses on their works, one classic and the other modern, revealing the peculiarities of their styles, language. The article examines the role of phraseological units in creating character images in works of art, based on Hornby's modern English novel 'About a boy' and 'The Razor's Edge' by S. Maugham. Phraseology plays a crucial role in language as it helps to convey the author's true intentions. By updating the usual and occasional meanings in context, phraseological units allow readers to understand the depth and versatility of artistic images created by writers. The idiomatic and phraseological units employed by writers can be used to construct a cultural picture of nation and country. Therefore, studying the works of classic and modern writers is a significant objective in itself. The employed methods, namely comparative, cultural-historical and stylistic analysis of the collected data, contributed to the revelation of the principal approaches of the two writers in their representation of reality. The results of the study reflect the linguistic features of the prose of the two writers, including stylistic devices, fixed expressions and idioms. This enables a linguistic and literary analysis and interpretation of the British works, thus conferring practical significance upon the study. It is concluded that both writers use phrases related to their national mentality and historical periods.

Keywords: ethnos, ethnolinguistics, typology, phraseology, idiom.

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Британдық әдебиеттегі этномәдени лексика этникалық ақпарат көзі ретінде

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақалада С. Мюэм мен Н. Хорнби шығармаларына талдау жасалып, олардың еңбектерінде ұлттық құндылықтар мен этномәдениеттің қалай көрініс табатындығы зерттелген. Зерттеу олардың стильдерінің, тілінің ерекшеліктерін анықтай отырып, бірі классикалық, екіншісі заманауи шығармаларға бағытталған. Мақалада Хорнбидің заманауи «Менің балам» және С. Мюэмнің «Ұстараның қыры» романдары негізінде көркем шығармалардағы кейіпкерлердің бейнелерін берудегі фразеологиялық бірліктердің рөлі қарастырылады. Фразеологизмдер тілде шешуші рөл атқарады, өйткені ол автордың шынайы ниетін жеткізуге көмектеседі. Кәдімгі және окказионалды мағыналарды контексте жаңартып, фразеологиялық бірліктер жазушылар жасаған көркем бейнелердің тереңдігі мен жан-жақтылығын түсінуге мүмкіндік береді. Жазушылардың шығармаларында қолданылатын идиомалық және фразеологиялық бірліктер ұлт пен елдің мәдени бейнесін бере алады, сол себепті классикалық және заманауи жазушының көркем жауһарларын зерделеу маңызды мақсат болып табылады. Жиналған деректерді салыстырмалы, мәдени-тарихи және стилистикалық талдау секілді

әдістер екі жазушының шындықты бейнелеудегі негізгі амалдарын айқындауға ықпал етті. Олардың прозасының лингвистикалық ерекшеліктерін, оның ішінде стилистикалық құралдарды, тұрақты тіркестер мен идиомаларды көрсететін зерттеу нәтижелері Британдық шығармаларға лингвистикалық және әдеби талдау мен интерпретация жүргізуге мүмкіндік береді, бұл зерттеудің практикалық маңыздылығын сипаттайды. Екі жазушы да өздерінің ұлттық менталитетіне және тарихи кезеңдеріне байланысты сөз тіркестерін қолданады деген қорытынды жасалды.

Кілт сөздер: этнос, этнолингвистика, типология, фразеология, идиома.

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Этнокультурная лексика как источник этнической информации в британской литературе

Аннотация. В данной статье анализируются произведения С. Моэма и Н. Хорнби, рассматриваются, как национальные ценности и этнокультура отражаются в их творчестве. Исследование сосредоточено на их произведениях, одно из которых классическое, а другое современное, раскрываются особенности их стиля, языка. В статье рассматривается роль фразеологизмов в создании образов персонажей в художественных произведениях, особенно на современном английском романе Хорнби «Мой мальчик» и С. Моэма «Острие бритвы». Фразеология играет решающую роль в языке, поскольку помогает передать истинные намерения автора. Актуализируя обычные и окказиональные значения в контексте, фразеологизмы позволяют читателям понять глубину и многогранность художественных образов, созданных писателями. Поскольку идиоматические и фразеологические единицы, используемые в произведениях писателей, могут составить культурную картину народа и страны, актуальность изучения шедевров классических и современных писателей является важной целью, которую необходимо достичь. Используемые методы, такие как сравнительный, культурно-исторический и стилистический анализ собранных данных, позволили выявить основные подходы двух писателей к изображению действительности. Результаты исследования, отражающие языковые особенности их прозы, включая стилистические средства, устойчивые выражения и идиомы, позволяют провести лингвистический и литературоведческий анализ и интерпретацию произведений британцев, что придает исследованию практическую значимость. Сделан вывод, что оба писателя используют выражения, связанные с их национальным менталитетом и историческими периодами.

Ключевые слова: этнос, этнолингвистика, типология, фразеология, идиома.

1. Introduction

Language is an indicator of the continuously developing human mind. It is the language that forms and expresses this thought. Ethnolinguistics studies the relationship between language and culture, including people's mindsets, consciousness, spiritual and material culture, customs, and traditions. Ethnolinguistics is a branch of language science with a syncretic nature. Its scope of research has expanded over time and become more defined. The "identity of the Ethnos" is the national image, the historical personality of the Ethnos and the real truth about it... The phrase 'the essence of the ethnic group' is a mirror of the life of the ethnic group from childhood to adulthood, a rich spiritual and cultural treasure formed by its language, stored in memory and inherited from generation to generation" (Mankeyeva, 2008: 10). Regarding these conclusions, the concept of 'ethnic group identity'

defines the entire existence and image of the group, rather than individual issues. Every nation's language is a storehouse of its collective experience, encompassing its entire history and culture. The ethnoculture of a country is revealed using a variety of linguistic techniques. Ethnocultural vocabulary is the collection of words that best capture our people's culture, the unique aspects of their traditions and customs, national cultural semantics, historical details about the people and national information. An individual cannot exist and develop without society and language. According to J. Yang language can clearly and comprehensively document the process of cultural development. While vocabulary can serve as a record of culture, it is merely a symbol of language. Therefore, language is the most significant medium for transmitting culture (Yang, 2018).

A nation cannot exist without culture. Every language is a demonstration of the national mind and a collective product of society. It is a well-established fact that language is a means of expressing national culture. Z.K. Akhmetzhanova highlights the increased interest in the interaction of national culture and language, with the consideration of the cultural space of ethnos through the prism of language being the most important aspect of this issue. According to the author (Akhmetzhanova et.al, 2014: 3), language is a manifestation of culture and serves as a means of cultural presentation. The symbolic nature of culture is clarified through the semantics of language symbols. The continuity between the linguistic sign and the cultural sign is considered through the ethno-cultural content. Culture is transmitted through linguistic symbols, which express its content. The anthropospecific direction in modern language science has been revived to address this need. According to B. Kaliyev, the study of language from an anthropospecific perspective involves examining the connection between language and its owner, including their mind, reasoning, worldview, philosophical views, and national culture. This is because language not only reflects the world, but also leaves its mark on a person's cognition and knowledge, thereby creating a linguistic image of the world (Kaliyev, 2008: 6).

The scientific topicality of studying the ethnocultural vocabulary used in literary works lies in its capacity to address urgent cultural, social, and linguistic issues (Proklov, 2022). This investigation not only enhances the analytical rigour of literary studies but also illuminates the intricate dynamics of identity formation and cultural interaction in both historical and contemporary contexts. The immediate purpose for philologists is to ascertain the ethnocultural characteristics of society, in this case English, at different stages of its evolution in the literature. This is a crucial aspect that justifies the necessity for this study.

2. Methods and materials

2.1 Methods

The object of study is the ethnos and its language, as a language cannot exist without an ethnic group and vice versa. To study the existence and life, knowledge of the world, and cultural and spiritual wealth of an ethnic group and its language from childhood to adulthood based on facts and data stored in the native language and apply them for the benefit of today is the aim of ethnolinguistics. The review also identified several issues related to the national material and spiritual culture. Identifying the origin of set expressions can provide valuable insight into the way of life, mentality, customs, and traditions of different nationalities and languages.

2.2 Material description

In the United States, ethnolinguistics is referred to as anthropological linguistics. Anthropological linguistics is a branch of linguistic research that is dedicated to the study of languages spoken mainly by illiterate peoples, both synchronously and diachronically (Badanbekqyzy, 2010: 126). The theory and methodology of modern linguists-anthropologists are not much different from those of other linguists. The primary distinction lies in the methodology.

The study employed several research methods, including comparative, cultural-historical and stylistic analysis. These methods were used to reveal the main aspects and approaches of two writers in their representation of reality. The comparative method was particularly useful in identifying similarities and differences in the worldview of the prose writers, as well as their system of aesthetic and spiritual values. Its use enables the identification of the general laws of creativity and the revelation of the characteristics of writers' being. The cultural and historical method reveals the influence of national cultures on writers' worldview, spiritual and aesthetic ideals, and values. The aim of stylistic analysis is to comprehend the linguistic features of the works of two writers and their writing styles.

In this study, the works of S. Maugham and N. Hornby were used as the primary sources. Our scientific judgments and conclusions, which were derived from the works created during the study, were supported by fictional texts.

3. Discussion

Somerset Maugham was a prolific author who wrote 21 novels, as well as short stories, plays, and critiques. He moved in the highest circles of London, New York, and Paris. Maugham's writing style was characterised by realism, drawing on the traditions of naturalism, modernism, and neo-romanticism. Although many books have been written about his life, Maugham preferred to write about others. While he occasionally made exceptions to this rule, he generally tried to distance himself from his characters.

Today, Somerset Maugham is still widely read as one of the most prominent British prose writers of the early twentieth century. As a writer, he is distinguished by his professional storytelling skills and his ability to observe from an outsider's perspective. His narrative style is truthful, polished, and built on the principles of euphony, clarity, and simplicity.

The writer's idiomatic style is influenced by realism, naturalism, neo-romanticism, and modernism. These elements are also present in 'The Razor's Edge'. Similar to Maugham's other works, this novel combines a sharp plot with psychologism. The severity and depth of conflict and the dramatization of actions permeate the entire structure of the work.

Classical literature employs a narrative style that differs greatly from everyday speech and scientific writing. Its aim is to create an emotional and artistic background. 'The Razor's Edge' is a work of English literature from the early 20th century that is characterized by irony and sarcasm. Maugham frequently ridicules the main characters in his works. However, his ironic attitude is so subtle and sharp that it provides a unique pleasure to readers. The novel's plot is not scorching; rather, it is ironic. However, this is not the only advantage of the work. The book has an attractive plot, Maugham's excellent style, and a light, elegant structure, like other works by the author. It is worth noting that Maugham carefully describes each scene in the book. The author introduces a variety of

characters, each with their own distinct personality, making the novel a moral guide. Many of the characters are recognizable to contemporary readers, which increases interest in Maugham's works.

Literary critics have noted Maugham paid attention to every word, line, and monologue. Maugham defined his writing style in 'The Summing Up' as striving for clarity, simplicity, and ease of understanding (Iriolova, 2012). The balance between meaning, sound, and appearance is maintained throughout the writing. His prose is expressive in its natural simplicity and lack of artful complexity. Maugham's tendency to combine seemingly disparate elements has led to criticism by literary scholars.

The distinctiveness of national culture is not only evident in the characteristics of national languages. When individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural communities interact, they tend to behave according to their own cultural norms and rely on their cultural knowledge. When learning about a foreign culture, it is important to search for differences between the compared images of foreign and one's own culture. This search should not hide or replace the image of the foreign culture, but rather stimulate the development of new knowledge that enriches a person's understanding during their acquaintance with the foreign culture (Zhubayeva, 2014: 19).

Nick Hornby is a British writer who frequently explores modern folk culture in his works. His protagonists are often aimless young people. Some of his works, such as 'Fever Pitch', 'High Fidelity', and 'About a boy', have been adapted into films. This paper will examine the phraseological units in 'About a boy', a work by the renowned contemporary English writer Nick Hornby. The author's books explore modern popular culture, focusing on ordinary people and their relationships, problems, and emotional experiences. The choice of this work is since contextual transformations of phraseological units in it play one of the main roles and are also involved in the formation of the image of the main character – the young, charming bachelor Will and the images of the minor characters of the book.

The selected literary works were examined individually from the perspectives of linguistic and literary studies. However, the comparative analysis of classic and modern representatives of literature, based on the fundamental objective of the study, is a significant aspect that merits particular attention.

4. Results

The language of an artistic work comprises the linguistic tools used in a specific literary piece. It depends on various factors such as the author's personality, chosen genre, era, and set goals. The language of each work differs in its characteristics, including the author's originality, subtext, emotionality, imagery, and artistry, as well as the principle of depicting life in the work.

The use of idioms is intended to create an artistic and emotional impact on the reader. Maugham does not avoid paradox. Maugham frequently employed idiomatic phraseology in his literary works, which can be seen as a reflection of the language and culture of his time. The etymology of phraseological units is closely linked to the background knowledge, practical experience, and cultural traditions of the language speakers.

It is frequently impossible to translate idiomatic phrases literally, as the meaning may be lost in a word-for-word translation. In Maugham's novel 'Razor's Edge', there are several

examples of idiomatic phrases, such as *'cheek by jowl'* (meaning *'close together'*), *'by leaps and bounds'* (quickly), *'in full swing'* (at the highest level of activity), *'fed up to the teeth'* (extremely annoyed), *'make a mess of something'* (to spoil or fail), and *'give somebody the cold shoulder'* (to act unfriendly or show disinterest). Therefore, S. Maugham's prose contains various idiomatic expressions that demonstrate the clear linguistic and cultural specificity of many English idioms, which have certain cultural and national components that shape people's mentality. Maugham extensively employs idioms in his novels to effectively create national characters. The author himself believed that these stylistic features optimally reflect the positive and negative emotions of the main characters. According to L.B. Boyko (1996), it is challenging to comprehend classical literary works due to the difficulty in perceiving and translating the original text of the speaker in a different language and culture. The study of the contrast between the translation and the original work of art can help reveal the essence of this problem.

The challenge of translating the verbal reality of a language is closely related to linguistic polysemantics. Idioms serve as a tool for creating a literary image and a cohesive work. For instance, in the novel *'The Razor's Edge'*, the author portrays the Great Stagnation of the early 1930s not as a catastrophic event, but as a barrier that hindered daily life and political affairs in the United States. States and many European countries are expressed in English idioms as: *a wild-cat scheme – a dubious enterprise; to keep nose to the grind stone – work without days off; to turn someone down flat – categorically refuse someone; not to turn a hair- remain apparently unmoved or unaffected; fell a twinge of envy – a sudden slight feeling of envy; airs and graces – a pretentious manner*. In his novel, S. Maugham demonstrates his skill as a subtle psychologist, exploring the aesthetic problems of his characters and delving into the hidden thoughts of the human mind. Through this exploration, the hero is able to find a way out of difficult situations. Using the material from Maugham's novel *'The Razor's Edge'*, we will examine how idioms are used to reveal the characters' personalities and attitudes towards others and the events that unfold. The use of idioms is often based on metaphor, which can make them difficult to understand. For example, in the sentence *'You know I never had much authority over Larry,'* he said. Even as a boy he went his own way', the phrase *'went his own way'* is used figuratively.

"Elliott could not make head or tail of it. "When he answered her question by saying Ruysbroek was just a guy he hadn't known in college he evidently meant to throw her off the scent. "I was introduced to a stoutish, tall man with a red face who looked somewhat ill at ease in evening clothes" (Skorodenko, 1987: 249). The use of the term *'juggling'* has become a common literary device among English authors, creating a favourable environment for literary practice. To achieve the author's artistic intention, writers organise the context to fully reveal the semantic content of the phrase. The authors successfully capture their readers' attention through the ironic and sarcastic style of their characters, providing a unique aesthetic experience. The characters exchange words and remarks. An idiom is a unit of language that cannot be divided and whose meaning is independent of the meanings of its individual components, e.g.: *to be a good sport – to be helpful and amiable; to sow one's wild oats – behave foolishly, immoderately or promiscuously when young; to make oneself scarce – to become difficult to find; to tear somebody into pieces – to*

strongly criticize someone; not to turn a hair – remain apparently unmoved or unaffected; to keep nose to the grindstone – work without days off; to take under one's wing – take care of; the worm sometimes turns – the situation changes; harum-scarum devil – reckless. In describing the national-cultural features of phraseological units, it is important to use materials from various groups of phraseological units and regular phrases in the English language. For example, *'for one's sake'* means *'for someone's benefit'*, *'to cost a great deal'* means *'to require a lot of work'*, and *'to give eye-teeth'* means *'to give anything'*. To comprehend the components of a phraseological unit, it is necessary to interpret them figuratively. For instance, the meaning of a clichéd phrase may only become apparent when it is viewed as a whole unit, such as in the case of *'the worm turns into a butterfly'*, which implies the context of *'explosion of patience'*. Modern language considers phraseological units as a single entity. These units possess the features like bright expressiveness, preserving the meaning of individual components, inconsistency of replacing some words with other words, emotional and figurative expressiveness, ability to form synonym groups with individual words or other phraseological units.

Maugham's speech contains collocations, which are phrases consisting of two or more words that form a syntactically and semantically unified unit. The choice of one component depends on the meaning of the other. This is in addition to the use of idioms. The literary works of S. Maugham frequently contain idioms related to the sea, water, ships, and other marine themes. Presented below are some examples of such idioms: *I'm a philosopher and I know there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out* (Maugham, 2003: 56). Now and then Philip with one of the more experienced clerks went out to audit the accounts of some firm...he came to know which of the clients must be treated with respect and which, were in low water (Maugham, 2003: 94).

It is common for phraseological units to lack an absolute equivalent in other languages due to both the national-cultural component and the inconsistency of the technique of secondary nomination. The presence of certain restrictions suggests that the content plan of some phraseological units, particularly idioms and proverbs, contains national-cultural components. Here is given the use of a phraseological expression: *It may be that like most of us he wanted to eat his cake and have it* (Maugham, 2003: 19).

In order to elucidate the inner character of the novel, it is essential to highlight the phraseological units employed by Maugham in 'The Razor's Edge'. These units can be classified into three categories: idioms, metaphors and proverbs. The title of the novel, "The Razor's Edge," symbolizes the tenuous line between success and failure, or sanity and madness, which characterizes the condition of individuals living during the period depicted in the novel. Furthermore, the expression is still frequently employed by individuals in the context of critiquing the cultural ethos of the early 20th century, particularly in relation to the concept of the "American Dream". Phrases such as "burning the candle at both ends" and "living on the edge" exemplify the hectic lifestyles of expatriates, underscoring their unrelenting pursuit of pleasure and material gain. Maugham's rich, descriptive language captures the contrast between superficial wealth and deeper existential inquiries, which is a characteristic feature of his writing.

The deployment of idiomatic expressions pertaining to the expatriate experience, such as "café society" and "the lost generation," offers a nuanced examination of cultural

identity in "The Razor's Edge." These phrases encapsulate the vibrant yet superficial interactions among expatriates in Europe, reflecting the tensions between their American origins and European influences. Maugham's characters grapple with their identities in a way that reveals the complexities of belonging and displacement, thereby underscoring the historical significance of the post-World War I era. By employing these linguocultural units, Maugham not only depicts the nuances of individual identity but also illuminates the cultural transformations occurring in a world still recovering from the repercussions of war. Maugham employs a variety of metaphors and proverbs, including "what goes around comes around" and "a double-edged sword," to examine the nexus of spirituality and materialism. These expressions serve to illustrate the moral quandaries faced by the characters as they attempt to reconcile their aspirations for material success with a yearning for a more profound sense of purpose. As we know proverbs play an important role in enhancing language by demonstrating people's ability to imagine, generalize, and conceptualise. These tools are not only related to language but also to the surrounding world, including nature, climate, and lifestyle. The connection between the objective conditions of life, its social and moral aspects, is undoubtedly reflected in language, particularly in phraseology.

In the work 'The Razor's Edge', the writer explores the tension between personal desires and societal expectations through the lives of the characters. Additionally, the author delves into philosophical inquiries regarding the impact and potential danger of the word 'hope' on an individual's fate. These searches revealed the name of Maugham to the world, and his work was sampled by every book-loving reader.

The next work we will study is N. Hornby's 'About a boy'. The phraseological units that are used in the novel can convey the real picture of the people and country through the life of one young man. The metaphor given in the title of the novel "The boy" represents not just characters but the concept of innocence and the need for connection.

Hornby makes use of idiomatic expressions such as "cut to the chase" and proverbs like "what goes around comes around" in order to reflect contemporary cultural attitudes towards relationships and individualism. Initially self-centred and detached, Will undergoes a transformative journey that highlights the significance of authentic connection. The proverb "a friend in need is a friend indeed" encapsulates the evolving definition of friendship, emphasising loyalty and emotional support. This reflects a cultural shift in post-1990s Britain, whereby issues pertaining to mental health and the importance of community ties have come to the fore. The use of metaphorical language, such as the idea of "growing up," effectively demonstrates the characters' progression and evolution. The maturation of Will is evidenced by his gradual acceptance of responsibility, while the metaphorical cracks in the façade serve to reveal the hidden vulnerabilities within the characters. This metaphorical language captures the pressures of modern life, suggesting that societal expectations often mask deeper issues, which can be seen to be at the root of the metaphor the cracks in the façade. The tension between the values associated with youth and those associated with maturity serves to highlight a historical moment in which many individuals were attempting to come to terms with the realities of adulthood in a context of shifting values.

As the novel is a modern one, the changes in the language used by the characters are to be expected. Hornby's playful adaptations of traditional expressions, such as "if at first you don't succeed, redefine success," exemplify the evolution of language in contemporary literature. Such transformed expressions reflect a cultural context that questions and redefines conventional wisdom. To illustrate, the statement "money can't buy you love, but it can buy you a comfortable couch" offers a humorous critique of materialism, demonstrating a duality in contemporary attitudes towards wealth and relationships. This flexibility in language reflects the characters' struggles against the prevailing norms and expectations of society.

The linguistic expressions employed in "About a Boy" are integrated in a coherent manner, effectively portraying a cultural milieu in a state of transition. They encapsulate the intricate nuances of contemporary existence, where interpersonal relationships, identity formation, and personal growth are persistently negotiated. Hornby's characters exemplify a generation grappling with existential dilemmas, and the interweaving of idioms, metaphors, proverbs, and transformed expressions offers a reflection on the evolving character of society.

An example will illustrate this situation. The displacement of the lexical component can be found in the phraseological unit *'to take the bull by the horns'* that means to take complex task (Abdullina, 2017). The author, however, uses the more emotionally charged verb *'to grasp'* instead of the semantically neutral *'to take'*, which emphasizes the hero's fear of confronting his ex-girlfriends, his indecision, and cowardice. Will easily makes new acquaintances, but does not want a long-term, serious relationship, for him it is just entertainment, so another break is a big problem for a young man - it is unpleasant for him to listen to reprimands. In this case, replacing the lexical component strengthens the meaning of the original phrase and increases its emotional and expressive content. It also clarifies and supplements its usual meaning, allowing for a better understanding in the analyzed context. Will found endings difficult: he had never quite managed to grasp the bull by the horns (Hornby, 2010: 25).

Added to the phraseology *'to be out of touch' - lagging from life* (Abdullina, 2017) adverb that introduces additional emotional connotations into the meaning of the idiom and the whole sentence, and this shows Will's inner resentment, his unwillingness to admit his helplessness in matters related to adolescents' musical tastes. The main character considers himself a specialist in the field of literature, music, and cinema. The realization that he is *'so far behind the times'* leads him to despair. *'I would have read about it. I'm not that out of touch'* (Hornby, 2010: 48).

The meanings of the phraseological units *'to lose face' - to become less respected* (Abdullina, 2017: 258); *'beyond a shadow of a doubt' - without a doubt*, are filled with new contextual content by inserting lexemes *'all'* (Abdullina, 2017) in the first example and *'any'* in the second one. He hadn't lost all face yet; there was still a tiny patch left about a size of a small scab, and he wanted to keep it. *Will knew then, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that Marcus would be OK* (Hornby, 2010: 275). It is evident that adding extra components to phraseological units enhances the emotional impact of both the aforementioned sentences and the entire narrative.

Will, who accidentally enters into a relationship with Marcus, an eccentric teenager he met at a picnic. The presence of phraseological units in the structure of the text is the reason for its name. The reader can infer from additional information that the main character of the work undergoes a significant transformation. Influenced by Marcus's views on life, the protagonist undergoes a transformation from a self-centred and self-confident young man to a caring and compassionate individual.

The phrase *'time hangs heavy on one's hands'* is inverted to *'to kill time'* (Kunin, 1984: 766), with the first lexeme 'heavy' in an ironic position, creating a humorous effect. Attention is paid to the problem of the main character - he has a lot of free time because he doesn't want to work hard, but he doesn't know how to «kill» (use) it. The inclusion of the modal verb could in the idiom structure shows the young man's lack of responsibility for his actions. He is satisfied with his life and is not ready for any radical changes

After all Will was a sports fan and a pop music fan, and he of all people knew how heavy time could hang on one's hands (Hornby, 2010). In the following dialogue, ellipsis and distortion of the stylistic distribution are used in the phraseological unit *'to burn the candle at both ends'* the meaning of which is destroying life, wasting energy, harming health (Kunin, 1984: 123).

'How are you, anyway, Chris?'

'Oh, you know. A bit washed out.'

'Been burning the candle at both ends?'

'No. Just had a baby' (Hornby, 2010: 7).

The phrase *'to burn the candle at both ends'* is used elliptically to reflect the long-standing friendship between the main character and the young woman. However, this disrupts the stylistic distribution due to the negative evaluation semantics of the phraseology.

The phrase *'No Just had a baby'* creates a dissonance with the candle burning at both ends, which is semantically incompatible and leads to the appearance of irony. This emphasizes the character's irritation with their current situation. Will's attitude towards children and family values appears insignificant, mocking, and negative in this dialogue. The young man seems to anticipate a negative outcome, as he talks about going to the house of his old friends.

The effective utilisation of linguocultural vocabulary by both writers serves as a conduit through which the reality of the narrative is conveyed with remarkable dexterity. The comparative analysis based on the content of the phraseological units applied in the works leads to the compilation of the following table containing some examples illustrating the aforementioned devices as they appear in the novels:

Table 1. The examples of linguocultural vocabulary used by the classic and modern writers

<i>Analyzed novels</i>	<i>Idioms</i>	<i>Metaphors</i>	<i>Proverbs</i>	<i>Features of the work</i>
'The razor's edge' by S. Maugham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face the music • Burning bridges • Out of the frying pan and into the fire • Caught in the crossfire • A double-edged sword 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The search for truth • The butterfly • The desert • The mirror • A heavy burden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • «A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.» • «All that glitters is not gold.» • «You can't have your cake and eat it too.» • «The early bird catches the worm.» • «What goes around comes around.» 	S. Maugham's work often depicts individuals engaged in a process of self-discovery and the pursuit of understanding their place in the world. His characters grapple with inner conflicts and the search for meaning, navigating the tensions between personal freedom and societal expectations.
'About a boy' by N. Hornby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing it by ear • Caught between a rock and a hard place • Bite the bullet» «In over one's head • The grass is always greener on the other side 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The boy • The safety net • Growing up • A two-way street • The cracks in the façade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "What goes around comes around." • "A friend in need is a friend indeed." • "You can't judge a book by its cover." • «Time heals all wounds.» • «Better late than never.» 	The linguistic units employed by N. Hornby serve to illustrate the prevailing culture and its historical foundations. They elucidate the values and interpersonal dynamics that shape society, while simultaneously reflecting the ongoing evolution of language and thought.

As the table illustrates, the characteristics of writers from different historical periods can be discerned. In addition to the issues addressed in their works that were pertinent at the time of their creation, the use of linguistic units can facilitate the clear comprehension of the ideas conveyed to the readers. The tone employed by each author is markedly distinct. Maugham's language evinces a more formal and philosophical tone, reflective of early 20th-century literature, while Hornby's casual and humorous style aligns with late 20th-century and early 21st-century sensibilities, demonstrating a shift in narrative voice and approach to character introspection. Furthermore, the usage of phraseological units in the selected works can demonstrate the divergence in the characters. For instance, in *The Razor's Edge*, Larry is associated with profound stylistic devices, whereas Will's life journey is conveyed through transformed expressions, thereby highlighting the fact that the main hero underwent a transformation. This is evident in Hornby's use of idiomatic expressions that frequently convey a light-hearted and humorous tone, which suggests a more playful engagement with the challenges of life. In contrast, Maugham's language can be more serious and reflective, inviting readers to consider more profound existential questions. The contrasts in linguistic style mirror broader shifts in narrative approach, from

Maugham's introspective and philosophically oriented prose to Hornby's conversational and accessible style. This marks a transition in literary trends over the decades.

5. Conclusion

The works of S. Maugham and N. Hornby, which explore topics such as simplicity, good and bad, happiness, principles, and problems in the world, are likely to shape the reader's own thoughts. The prose of S. Maugham also contains ethnocultural-specific phraseological units. The text presents a theoretical and practical study of phraseological units as a means of creating a national linguistic and cultural image of the world. It also describes phraseological units as a collector and storer of cultural information. The national-cultural specificity of the semantics of phraseological units in S. Maugham's prose has been determined. The employment of numerous metaphors and proverbs in the work serves to exemplify Maugham's proficiency and the prevailing necessity of the era, which was characterised by ambiguity and uncertainty. Modernity, on the other hand, is depicted in various ways in Hornby's novels. Politics is an area of interest to many residents of Great Britain, a topic that Nick Hornby often explores in his novels. Decades ago, M. Bradbury discussed the impact of mass communication on shaping our understanding of the modern world, stating that we live in an age of news and knowledge. The impact of global events has never been greater. Events occur twice: first when they happen and then when they are reported, shown on screens, or published in the press. Nick Hornby's novels depict a world that is saturated with information and governed by certain rules, which impose popular models and stereotypes of behavior and attitudes towards life. The characters are forced to search for opportunities to adapt to reality. Hornby conveys the essence of this world through the use of phraseological units.

To sum up, the writers presented thoughtful and unique ideas in their works. They conveyed the message that the world is full of unpredictable situations, contrary to human expectations. The authors also expressed their personal stance on social and timeless issues in a clear and objective manner. The comparative analysis of the literary works of different historical periods enables the tracing of changes and features in the literature and language of the British people. This approach facilitates a deeper understanding of individual novels and the broader shifts in literature and society over time. The analysis of literary works from different historical periods revealed not only changes in style and theme but also in the language used by characters, their values and their lifestyle. The transformation of some phraseological units in the work of modern writer Hornby is the evidence of the dynamics occurring in the English language.

While the findings of this study are significant and it is the first attempt of comparing the considered writers and their works, they are not without limitations. The study focused on the utilisation of metaphors, idioms and proverbs, and on a single representative of each historical period of British literature. This may limit the ability to generalise the findings to broader contexts. The aforementioned devices represent only a portion of the comprehensive approach, which may result in the omission of pivotal details within the writings of various historical periods. Furthermore, the analysis of the selected phraseological units was primarily based on comparative and stylistic approaches, without the incorporation of additional linguistic and literary methods. This may have potentially

influenced the precision and impartiality of the evaluation of certain parameters. In light of the aforementioned limitations, it would be advisable to conduct further studies on a greater number of writers' works in order to ascertain the accuracy and consistency of the results obtained in the research.

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