

## THE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH METAPHORICAL TERMS AND THEIR LITHUANIAN AND RUSSIAN EQUIVALENTS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF LINGUISTIC RELATIVITY

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### **Abstract**

The paper presents a comparative analysis of English metaphorical terms based on the names of the parts of the human body, plants, animals, materials, garments, etc. and their Lithuanian and Russian equivalents. The analysis is aimed at identifying their common and differing features and spotting the specific patterns of English terms presenting difficulties for speakers of Lithuanian and Russian in their comprehension, translation and usage. The analysis was made within the framework of the theory of linguistic relativity. Different approaches of the English, Lithuanian and Russian languages to classifying the objects of reality are also considered.

KEY WORDS: metaphorical terms, comparative analysis, linguistic relativity, specific characteristics, similar and different patterns.

### **Anotacija**

Straipsnyje nagrinėjami anglų kalbos metaforiniai technikos terminai ir jų atitikmenys lietuvių bei rusų kalboje, siekiant nustatyti jų bendrus ir skirtingus semantinius bruožus. Nagrinėjami terminai sudaryti remiantis žmogaus kūno dalių, gyvūnų, augalų, buities daiktų ir drabužių pavadinimais. Šis žodžių darybos metodas taikomas visose minėtose kalbose, bet anglų kalboje yra populiariesnis. Skiriasi ne tik bendrų modelių sudaromų terminų skaičius, bet ir semantika. Anglų terminai dažnai negali būti verčiami pažodžiui. Tai apsunkina jų supratimą ir naudojimą lietuvių ir rusų kalbose. Lingvistinė reliatyvumo analizė gali palengvinti šią problemą. Taip pat parodyta, kad realybės objektai dažnai skirtingai klasifikuojami anglų, lietuvių ir rusų kalbose.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: metaforiniai terminai, lyginamoji analizė, kalbų reliatyvumas, apibūdinimai, panašūs ir skirtingi modeliai.

### **Introduction**

In modern knowledge and information society, the role of terminology has grown considerably. Terminology today is a source of information, a tool for acquiring special knowledge as well as carrying out research and developing new technologies.

A comparative analysis of English, Lithuanian and Russian technical terms is relevant for linguistic studies as well as for practical application, such as teaching, translation and professional activities. Mechanical, civil engineering, transport and logistics terms make an important area of terminology investigation both from theoretical and practical perspectives.

The main goal of the present research is the analysis of metaphorical English technical terms and their Lithuanian and Russian equivalents aimed to identify their common and differing features as well as spotting the specific patterns of English terms presenting difficulties for speakers of Lithuanian and Russian in their comprehension, translation and usage.

Metaphor has been extensively investigated both from theoretical and pragmatic perspectives (Kuhn, 1993; Lakoff, 1993; Sweetser, 1990). The more interesting and important it is to compare metaphorical English terms with their Russian and Lithuanian equivalents because these languages do not directly contact (due to the geographical location of the respective states).

The material for investigation was taken from texts and special and general dictionaries (Piesarskas, 2002; Кузнецов, 1980). The semantic analysis of the terms was made and the main patterns of their formation were determined.

## 1. Theoretical background

The comparative analysis of English, Lithuanian and Russian technical terms is based on the theory of linguistic relativity. This theory is focused on conceptual rather than formal differences between words and expressions of various languages showing their nationally-specific and international patterns. The former present difficulties for comprehension and usage by the speakers of other languages.

The specific features considered are referred to conceptual differences because they are associated with specific characteristics or attributes of an object chosen by the speakers of a particular language to form a concept of this object and to name it. Every language denoting the objects depends on reality. However, this dependence may be expressed either in the same or in a different way compared to other languages. In this process many extralinguistic factors play an important role. They include differences in culture, lifestyle, history, traditions, views of the world, etc. All these social differences are reflected in languages as different patterns of forming common words and technical terms. Terms in different languages may be based on different characteristics of the same objects of reality. It is said that different nations view the same 'pieces of reality' from different angles and this often makes it difficult for the speakers of one language to understand terms of another language.

The analysis and identification of such cases may facilitate their understanding as well as reveal general principles of word (and term) formation.

The fact that languages differ in something more than phonetics, grammar or lexis has already been known to linguists for many years now, hence the remarks about a specific 'spirit' of language (A. Gumboldt) and the 'internal form' of the word (A. Potiebnia). However, a comprehensive study of this problem was conducted only by the American scientists F. Boas (1966), E. Sapir (1964) and B. L. Whorf (1979), who developed a consistent theory of linguistic relativity in the first half of the 20-th century (cited here from later editions). It deals with the relations between language, thought and culture giving the priority to language. According to them, each language segments the reality in its own way, providing people with a particular view of the world and even affecting their behaviour, traditions and culture. The problem of the priority or interconnection of language, thought and culture or experience is not discussed here. The focus of the present study is on the ways of expressing the same concepts in English, Lithuanian and Russian with the aim of determining distinct and

similar patterns and on different classification of reality by these languages. Major principles used in the present study are formulated as follows:

- a given experience is differently rendered and classified in various languages;
- every language is a vast pattern – system, different from other.

These ideas are still popular in the West being considered in modern papers (Lucy, 1992). The theory of linguistic relativity gave a strong impetus to the development of psycholinguistics and contrastive analysis (James, 1999) continuing the study of similarities and differences between languages at different levels and from various perspectives. More recent developments may be found in the works of L. Boroditsky (2001), M. Saxton and J. N. Towse (1998), S. Pourcel (2002), I. B. Bahar (2001), etc.

Technical terms based on metaphorical transfer of meaning were analyzed because metaphor is widely used as a means of expressing scientific and technical concepts in various languages, though usually such terms have no connotation. They are mainly perceived as neutral words avoid of any emotional colouring.

The names of the parts of the human body, plants, animals, materials, clothes, utensils, etc. may also denote technical mechanisms, devices and their parts, etc. because they have one or more similar features (e.g. form or function). In other words, metaphorical terms are based on associations which depend on different views and traditions of the speakers of particular languages. This, in turn, results in different patterns of terms denoting the same objects in different languages. The more unusual is the association underlying a particular term of a foreign language, the more difficult it is to understand the meaning of this term. The analysis of such cases may help not only better understand terminology of a foreign language, but can also reveal new approaches to reality and show the alternative ways of naming things, thereby developing more flexible thinking habits and the linguistic guess.

## **2. Case study**

The metaphorical English terms based on the names of the parts of the human body, plants, animals, utensils, etc. were taken for the analysis. They were compared with their Lithuanian and Russian translation equivalents to identify common and distinct patterns. English terms based on the parts of the human body and their Lithuanian and Russian equivalents are given in Table 1. Terms based on the names of animals are presented in Table 2. Terms based on the names of household articles and garments are given in Table 3. Terms based on the names of plants are presented in Table 4.

As can be seen from the above examples, the names of the parts of the human body, animals, plants, household articles and garments are more rarely used for denoting technical devices and their parts in Lithuanian and Russian than in English. Most metaphorical English terms based on these names are expressed in these languages by other words. However, in Russian, parallel patterns are found more often than in Lithuanian. It may be stated that, as far as metaphorical terms are concerned, the tradition of the Lithuanian language differs considerably from that observed in English. In

Lithuanian, only few commonly used words of the above types can represent technical terms. They are: *galvutė, nosis, kakliukas, auselė, alkūnė, kumštelis, pirštas* (terms from group 1) and *vikšras, gervė, meška* (terms from group 2). Words from group 3, 4 are rarely used as technical terms in Lithuanian (the examples are: *šakutė, raktas*). In Russian, such metaphorical terms as *ушко, глазок, головка, шейка, зуб, собачка, рукав, плечо, кулачок, шляпка, петля, башимак, гнездо, ножка* are often used. However, they do not always match the respective English terms. For instance, *плечо* may correspond to leg, cheek and jaw; *ушко* to eye; *колено* to elbow; *горловина* to mouth; *кулачок, губка, щека, ножка* to jaw; *головка (домкрата)* to nose; *юбка (изолятора)* to cup, etc.

Table 1

**English terms based on the human body and their Lithuanian and Russian equivalents**

No	Term	Common meaning		Technical meaning	
		Lithuanian	Russian	Lithuanian	Russian
1	head	galva	голова	galvutė, hidrostatinis slėgis, prielaja	головка, шляпка (гвоздя), гидростатическое давление, ригель, капитель, подпор, обух
	head lamp	–	–	automobilio žibintas	фара автомобиля
2	neck	kaklas, sprandas	шея	kakliukas, žiotys, krano sija, žiedinis griovelis, literos galvutė	шейка, цапфа, крановая балка, канавка, патрубок, наконечник, ворот
	shaft neck	–	–	veleno kakliukas	шейка вала
3	leg	koja	нога	atrama, stulpas, trikampio kraštinė, (el.) fazė, alkūnė, kampanis	опора, стойка, колено, плечо, угольник, катет
4	lip	lūpa	губа	lūpa	губа, режущая кромка, козырёк, нос (литейного ковша)
	lip of tyre	–	–	ratlankio briauna	закрайина шины
5	knee	kelis	колено	(jungiamoji) alkūnė, lenktas spyris/ramstis, krica	колено (соединительное), угольник, кронштейн
	knee brake	–	–	alkūninis stabdys	коленчатый тормоз
6	nose	nosis	нос	(laivo, lėktuvo, mašinos) nosis, priekis, fasadas	нос (корабля, самолёта и т.д.), нос, фланец, край
	nosepiece	–	–	antgalis, tūta, purkštas	передняя часть, выступ
7	hand	ranka	рука	(laikrodžio) rodyklė	стрелка (прибора)
	handset	–	–	mikrotelefonas	микротелефон
8	face	veidas	лицо	briauna, ciferblatas, paviršius, nuožula,	фасад, торец, вид спереди, головка зуба,
	face grinding	–	–	plokščias šlifavimas	торцевое шлифование

9	thumb thumb button thumbscrew	nykštis –	большой палец –	– valdymo mygtukas sparnuotoji veržlė	– кнопка управления крыльчатая гайка
10	backbone	stuburas	позво- ночник	karkasas, pagrindas, magistralė	каркас, опора, магистраль
11	finger	pirštas	палец	(laikrodžio ir pan.) rodyklė, šerdesas	штифт, указатель, стрелка
12	eye fork eye	akis –	глаз –	akis, auselė šakutės auselė	петля, ушко, глазок ушко вилки
13	elbow elbow joint	alkūnė –	локоть	kampainis, alkūnė alkūninis sujungimas	колено (трубы), угольник коленчатое соединение
14	shoulder	petys	плечо	kelkraštis, briaunelė, juostelė	закраина, уступ, выступ
15	ear	ausis	ухо	ąsa, auselė, kilpa	ушко, петля, гнездо, зажим
16	mouth	burna	рот	žiotys, anga, išleidžia- masis/įleidžiamasis atvamzdis	зев, горловина, выпускное/входное отверстие
17	cheek	skruostas, žandas	щека	šonas, šoninė plokštuma, žiauna	бок, боковая стенка, башмак, плечо
18	jaw	žandas, smakras	челюсть	spaustuvus, griebtuvus, žiauna, žiotys	кулачок, губка, щека, ножка, плечо (скобы)

It should also be noted that English terms based on the names of the parts of the human body or the names of animals and the respective Lithuanian terms do not always match either. For example: horse (Engl.) – *ožys* (Lith.), eye (Engl.) – *auselė* (Lith.), monkey (Engl.) – *meška* (Lith.), dog (Engl.) – *kumštelis* (Lith.), etc. Moreover, in one case, a Lithuanian term based on a metaphorical word was found to have an English equivalent as a neutral, unmotivated term (e.g. *dantratis* (Lith.) – gear (Engl.)).

Therefore, it may be stated that metaphorical terms based on the names of plants, animals, the parts of the human body are rarely used in Lithuanian and not so often used in Russian as a basis for technical term formation as it is common in the English language. When this method is used in Lithuanian and Russian, the particular patterns of the terms differ from those of the English language, implying that the words belonging to the same semantic groups (e.g. the parts of the human body) are not equivalent in their concrete meaning (e.g. eye – *auselė* – ушко, leg – *alkūnė* – плечо, колено, etc.). The words of the semantic group used in the English terms may be represented by the words from another semantic group in the respective terms of Russian and Lithuanian (e.g. dog – *kumštelis* – кулачок). The names of plants and their parts are most rarely used for making technical terms in Russian and Lithuanian. Completely matching patterns are also rare, being mostly represented by words from group 1 (e.g. head – *galvutė* – головка, neck – *kakliukas* – шейка, eye – *akis* – глазок, etc.). This means that in term formation the speakers of English, Lithuanian and Russian are guided by different associations, viewing the same objects from different perspectives.

Therefore, the statement of the theory of linguistic relativity that the reality is differently segmented and expressed in different languages and there are common and nationally-specific linguistic patterns, depending on views and associations of the speakers of particular languages is confirmed.

Table 2

**Terms based on the names of animals and parts of their body**

No	Term	Common meaning		Technical meaning	
		Lithuanian	Russian	Lithuanian	Russian
1	dog dog clutch dog screw	šuo – –	собака	savara, kumštelis, viniatraukis alkūninė mova fiksuojantis sraigtas	собачка, поводок, палец, зуб коленчатая муфта фиксирующий болт
2	horse	arklys, žirgas	конь, лошадь	stovas, ožys	козлы, подмости, рама, зажим
3	tail tail cup dovetail	uodega – balandžio uodega	хвост – хвост голубя	uodega uodeginis kūgis kregždės uodega	хвостовик хвостовой конус ласточкин хвост
4	donkey  donkey engine	asilas  –	осёл, ишак  –	pagalbinis mechanizmas, nedidelė pagalbinė pompa nedidelis pagalbinis variklis	вспомогательный механизм, небольшой поршневой насос небольшой стационарный двигатель
5	cat catwalk	katinas podiumas	кот подиум	atšvaistė, atošvaita siauras tiltelis, klojinys	отблеск, ответ узкий мостик
6	gooseneck  flexible gooseneck	žąsies kaklas, siaura vieta  –	узкое место  –	S-formos vamzdis  lanksti mova	S-образная труба  гибкая муфта
7	frog	varlė	лягушка	iešmo kryžma	крестовина (стрелочного перевода)
8	crab	krabas	краб	suktuvas (gervė), krano vežimėlis, keltuvai	лебёдка, ворот, кошка
9	monkey	beždžionė	обезьяна	poliakalės tvoklė, meška	баба для забивки свай, тележка
10	ram hydraulic ram	avinas –	баран –	tvoklė, šliaužiklis, plunžeris hidraulinis taranas	ползун, баба (молота), гидравлический таран
11	caterpillar caterpillar tractor	vikšras –	гусеница –	vikšras vikšrinis traktorius	гусеница гусеничный трактор

## Terms based on the names of household articles and garments

No	Term	Common meaning		Technical meaning	
		Lithuanian	Russian	Lithuanian	Russian
1	button	saga	пуговица	mygtukas	кнопка
2	key	raktas	ключ	klavišas	клавиша, ключ (гаечный), чека, шпонка
3	sleeve	rankovė	рукав	įvorė, mova	втулка, гильза, муфта
4	coat	paltas	пальто	danga, sluoksniš	покрытие, слой, обшивка, облицовка
5	cup valve cup	puodukas –	чашка –	kūgis vožtuvo antgalis	чаша, манжета, конус, опора, юбка изолятора, наконечник клапана
6	table	stalas	стол	tekinimo skydas, ritininiš konvejeris	доска, планшайба, таблица
7	shoe pole shoe	batas –	ботинок	(stabdžių) trinkelė, šliūžė poliaus antgalis	колодка, ползун, башмак полюсный наконечник
8	seat	sėdynė	сиденье	(vožtuvo) lizdas, atraminis paviršius	седло (клапана), гнездо, зеркало (золотника)
9	bed	lova	кровать	(pamatų) pagrindas, stovas	станина, рама, основание, полотно (дороги)
10	desk	rašomasis stalas	письменный стол	pultas	пульт, панель
11	spoon	šaukštas	ложка	semtuvinis gražtas	черпак, желонка
12	pin	segtukas	булавка	pirštas, varžtas, šerdė, ašis, (rakto) galvutė, barzdelė	палец, штифт, шплинт, цапфа, шкворень, ось, штырь

When the patterns of word formation do not match, some difficulties arise in comprehension and usage of words based on them because word-for-word translation is not possible. The linguistic analysis revealing the above conceptual differences and various approaches to nomination reflected in various languages can help to solve these problems.

Table 4

**Terms based on the names of plants and their parts**

No	Term	Common meaning		Technical meaning	
		Lithuanian	Russian	Lithuanian	Russian
1.	tree	medis	дерево	statramstis, velenas, ašis	стойка, подпорка, вал, ось
2.	leaf	lapas	лист	metalo lakštas, [durų, vartų] sąvara	пластина, створка, зуб, крыло
3.	branch	šaka	ветвь	atvamzdis	отвод, рукав, тройник, фаза, цепь
4.	cone	kankorėžis	шишка	kūgis	конус, колбочка
5.	nut	riešutas	орех	veržlė, mova	гайка, муфта, мелкий уголь 'орешек'
6.	spike	varpa	шип	smaigtis, vinis	пик, всплеск, гвоздь, выступ, клин
7.	bush	krūmas	куст	įdėklas, įvorė	втулка, вкладыш, гильза

**3. Classification of objects of reality in English, Lithuanian and Russian**

An attempt to identify the main principles underpinning the classification of objects of reality in English, Lithuanian and Russian has been made by analyzing technical terms belonging to the same semantic groups in these languages. In making technical translation, one is often faced with the problem of choosing the proper English equivalent of a particular Lithuanian or Russian term because several alternatives can be found in a dictionary. The analysis shows that, in many cases, multiple English words correspond to one Lithuanian or Russian term because the object named has different functions, shapes, areas of application, etc. For example, a Lithuanian term 'mova' and Russian 'муфта' have 19 equivalents in English (Table 5).

The same refers to the economic terms 'mokestis', 'kaina', 'налог', 'цена (плата)'. The authors of "Marketing" E. N. Berkowitz, R. A. Kerin and W. Rudelius (1989, p. 12) characterize English expressions used to denote this concept in the following way: 'In the service industries, *price* is often referred to in various ways. Hospitals refer to *charges*; consultants, lawyers, physicians and accountants to *fees*; airlines to *fares*; and hotels to *rates*.' Thus, it may be stated that, in this case, a more detailed approach to giving names to objects is characteristic of the English language. When some details differ, a different name is given, while in Lithuanian and Russian this aspect is not taken into consideration. Therefore, the second statement of the theory of linguistic relativity concerning different approaches to the classification of 'pieces of reality' is confirmed by the analysis of English, Lithuanian and Russian technical terms. This analysis may help to make the proper choice of the English term for the speakers of Lithuanian and Russian in difficult cases.



An example of linguistic classification of technical items

Lithuanian	Russian	English
movą	мyфта	coupling clutch sleeve box swivel union head, pothead connector muff joint, connection adapter driver coupler conduit elbow socket, ball socket nut ferrule thimble union bushing

### Conclusions

1. The analysis of English metaphorical terms and their Lithuanian and Russian equivalents referring to various fields of science and technology has shown that everyday words denoting parts of the human body, animals, household articles, clothes, etc. are used by these languages for making technical terms. However, this method is more extensively used in the English language. Thus, the words denoting home appliances and garments are rarely represented by technical terms in Lithuanian and Russian. When such terms are formed in these languages, the particular patterns often differ, not allowing for word-for-word translation.
2. The data obtained in the present analysis confirm the main principle of linguistic relativity stating that in various languages the same objects of reality may be denoted based on their different features which reveals the specific nature of every language. The comparative analysis of English metaphorical terms and their Lithuanian and Russian equivalents demonstrates the alternative approaches to nomination based on viewing the same things from various perspectives. These differences are also determined by the rules governing a particular language as a system. Thus, neutral unemotional terms seem to be more rational as well as appropriate for Russians and, especially, for Lithuanians than emotional metaphorical structures. Therefore, this may be considered to be a specific feature of these languages.

3. The lack of parallel patterns and complicated semantic relationships between technical terms of the investigated languages present difficulties for English language learners, but the analysis of particular cases from the perspective of linguistic relativity may facilitate the comprehension and usage of specific foreign words. Moreover, it gives the insight into a foreign language and helps better understand the specific features of the native language and develop more flexible thinking habits.
4. The main principles underlying the classification of reality in the English, Lithuanian and Russian languages have also been studied on the basis of technical terms and within the framework of the theory of linguistic relativity. It has been found that, in many cases, multiple words are used in English to denote an object expressed by a single Lithuanian or Russian word. This confirms another idea of the theory of linguistic relativity that, in many cases, the principles of classification of the objects of reality found in various languages do not by any means agree, and a set of experiences are differently grouped by different languages.

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## ANGLŲ KALBOS METAFORINIŲ TERMINŲ, JŲ ATITIKMENŲ LIETUVIŲ IR RUSŲ KALBOSE ANALIZĖ KALBŲ RELIATYVUMO KONTEKSTE

**Valerija Marina**

### Santrauka

Straipsnyje nagrinėjami anglų kalbos metaforiniai technikos terminai ir jų atitikmenys lietuvių bei rusų kalbose, siekiant nustatyti bendrus ir savitus semantinius bruožus. Atliekant techninių terminų analizę taikomas naujas metodas, kuris remiasi kalbų reliatyvumo teorija. Pateikiama trumpa šios teorijos apžvalga. Lyginamoji anglų, lietuvių ir rusų kalbų analizė atskleidė alternatyvius nominacijos principus, kurie grindžiami skirtingais požiūriais į tuos pačius objektus, kai kiekvienoje kalboje išrenkami skirtingi objekto bruožai suteikiant jam pavadinimą. Šie skirtumai taip pat priklauso nuo socialinių ir kultūrinių veiksnių bei vidinių kalbos dėsnų.

Semantiniai ryšiai tarp nagrinėjamų kalbų terminų yra gana sudėtingi. Visiškai sutampančių modelių pasitaiko retai ir daugiausia tarp pirmos grupės terminų. Metaforiniai rusų ir lietuvių kalbų terminai, anglų kalbos terminų atitikmenys, gali priklausyti tai pačiai semantinei grupei, bet konkretūs metaforiniai pavadinimai, kuriais jie remiasi, yra skirtingi. Taip pat pastebėta atvejų, kai anglų kalbos terminai, priklausantys pirmai grupei, turi atitikmenų lietuvių arba rusų kalbose, kurie atstovauja antrai leksinei-semantinei grupei, ir atvirkščiai. Metaforiniai anglų terminai, priklausantys trečiai ir ketvirtai grupėms, dažniausiai neturi atitinkamų metaforinių terminų rusų ir lietuvių kalbose, todėl nusakomi kitais būdais.

Taigi neutralūs nemetaforiniai pavadinimai atrodo racionalesni ir labiau tinka terminams sudaryti rusų ir ypač lietuvių kalbose, negu emociškos metaforinės konstrukcijos, naudojamos anglų kalboje. Tai galima traktuoti kaip savitą šių kalbų bruožą. Techninių terminų modelių nesutapimas ir sudėtingi semantiniai jų ryšiai kelia sunkumų studijuojantiems anglų kalbą. Siūloma terminų analizė, remiantis kalbų reliatyvumo teorija, gali palengvinti specialių terminų supratimą ir vartojimą. Be to, ji leidžia besimokantiems geriau suprasti ne tik užsienio, bet ir gimtosios kalbos ypatumus.

Techniniai terminai nagrinėjami ir kitų kalbų reliatyvumo teorijos aspektu. Analizė parodė, kad realūs objektai ne tik vadinami pagal skirtingus požymius įvairiose kalbose, bet yra ir skirtingai klasifikuojami. Pavyzdžiui, kelis anglų kalbos terminus, kurie reiškia vieną objektą, pagal skirtingas funkcijas ar požymius dažnai atitinka tik vienas lietuvių ar rusų kalbos terminas. Taigi skiriasi objektų klasifikacijos principai, anglų kalboje objektų klasifikacija yra detalesnė negu lietuvių ir rusų kalbose. Be abejo, būtų galima rasti ir priešingų atvejų, bet tam būtini išsamesni tyrimai.

Siūloma metodika gali būti taikoma dėstant anglų kalbą (specialiąją), taip pat vertinant įvairius techninius tekstus.