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Symmetry and asymmetry in phraseological units of Japanese and Korean languages with somatic component

Abstract

The article aims to compare phraseological units with somatic components in Korean and Japanese to reveal symmetric and asymmetric properties between the languages. We hypothesize that despite the presence of common for both languages phraseological units of Chinese origin, there are asymmetrical groups reflecting national cultural originality of Korean and Japanese. The material for the study was comprised of entries from phraseological dictionaries and electronic resources. The research was performed within the framework of the linguo-cultural approach using statistical analysis. The obtained results reveal the prevalence of symmetric properties both in lexical-semantic aspect and in quantitative correlations of somatic components of the phraseological units between Korean and Japanese. On the other hand, asymmetry was found in phraseological units representing the uniqueness of Korean and Japanese linguocultures. Japanese somatic phraseological units demonstrate such ethnocultural features as collectivism, unity, carefulness, fastidious attention to details, aestheticism. Korean phraseological units display the following features: loyalty to the homeland and family, aspirations toward unity and harmony with the society and the world around, irony about bad temper and appearance.

Keywords: symmetry, asymmetry, phraseological unit, somatic component, contrastive linguistics, Japanese language, Korean language

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