
THE WORLD BEYOND THE WORDS: AN AXIOLOGICAL COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ZOONYMS OF RUSSIAN AND HINDI

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Mankind and the animal kingdom enjoyed a close and interwoven relationship ever since they appeared on earth. This camaraderie found its reflection in language too. That is why the words that name animals have a lot more in their undertones along with the explicit meanings. This article is an endeavor to peep into the world beyond the zoonyms of Russian and Hindi. The comparative study reveals various kinds of connotations that these zoonyms hold for us. These inferences are positive, semi positive and at times, even negative. Some are similar in both the languages, the others are contrasting. Animals are a vital part of Indian mythology. They serve as riders (*vahana*) to deities. Hence Indians have a respectful attitude towards them, even when they may not like a specific behavioral trait of a particular animal. The data for the analyses taken from dictionaries, fiction and spoken language. It was analysed through definitive, contextual, pragmatic, cognitive and linguocultural analyses.

Key words: animal, zoonym, connotation, idiom, mythology, Russian, Hindi.

1. INTRODUCTION

Man and animal have very strong bonds. In the process of civilization, after having evolved from animal, man continued to live in the company of their little brothers for quite a long time. Their gradual separation took place over the centuries. But faunae never stopped to be an integral part of human society. This prolonged association with wildlife, left a strong impression on the mindset of human beings. These strong impressions got deeply interwoven with words and are reflected in the form of various connotations. These connotations vary from people to people and nation to nation because they are the outcome of established sets of attitudes and settled feelings about our little brothers. This mindset is impacted by religion, ethics, aesthetics, culture and other social factors. So, it is quite natural that the lexical units naming animals (zoonyms) bear different religious and cultural undertones for different nationalities.

At the same time, it is observed that people along the world enjoy a lot of common features in their value system along with having a specific value system of one's own. Professor T. Larina analyses the reasons behind the similarities and uniqueness of different cultures and concludes her findings aptly in the following words: "Many of the values accumulated by mankind throughout its history, are universal. However, the significance of certain values and their hierarchy on the scale of value system is different in different cultures. This is what defines the originality and uniqueness of each culture. This inherent value system lies at the heart of every culture, which acts as the main life orientation and, ultimately, defines the culture of the society" [Ларина 2009:1].

This value system is preserved in the language. Hence, if one wants to know another people's culture, it is imperative to know one's language in depth. A profound knowledge of any foreign language / along with the knowledge of its grammar, vocabulary, syntax and other linguistic aspects / requires deep understanding of the undertones invoked by its flora and fauna.

It will be appropriate to mention that in the last few decades a tremendous interest in cross-cultural studies is seen throughout the world. In recent time, Cultural Semantics, a branch of cross cultural studies, has captured interests of linguists and become the prominent area of their research (А. Wierzbicka, А.А. Зализняк, И.Б. Левонтина, А.Д. Шмелев, Т.В. Ларина, А. Гладкова and many others). It is heartening to note that Russian linguists are doing a lot of research in the lingo-cultural field to reveal various connotations attached to nouns, and to zoonyms, in particular О.Н. Трубачев, Н.С. Шапошникова, Е.А. Гутман, Ф.А. Литвин, М.И. Черемисина, О.А. Рыжкина, Л.Ф. Миронюк, М.И. Сюсько, Ц.Ц. Огдонова. The Hindi zoonyms have not yet been studied from lingo-cultural point of view, but they were subjected to thorough study from religious and mythological points of view [44—49]. A number of comparative studies of Russian zoonyms with other languages, such as Chinese, German, English, Spanish languages are also appearing these days, although they are very small in number so far (Чэнь Сянхой, Л.Р. Сакаева, А.Г. Соколова, Л.Н. Гишкаева).

This article is an effort to study the ideas and feelings invoked by a zoonym in addition to its primary meaning. We will make an attempt to find out what undertones, hidden meanings, echoes and vibrations are borne by the zoonyms of Russian and Hindi. So, it will be an excursion into the internal world of a cluster of zoonyms of Russian and Hindi. It is very interesting to note that the most of the Hindi zoonyms are mythological figures also. They are closely associated with different deities. Sometimes they are used as transport, sometimes they remain in very close association with them. We had to restrict ourselves with the comparative study of only six nouns (cow, crow, owl, elephant, monkey and tortoise) for crunch of space. Our next study will include the result of our comparative study with more zoonyms of these East Indo-European Languages.

2. DATA ANALYSES

2.1. The Cow

The zoonym 'Cow' / 'корова' in Russian and 'गाय' in Hindi / denotes a large animal kept on farms to produce milk or beef [24].

As 'cow' is a relatively large and slow-moving animal, these physical traits of this quadruped generate negative associations with something unusually large, heavy, healthy but slow, especially with regard to a lady, in the minds of the Russians [Ожegov С.И. 1973: 33]. For example, looking at a fat and not very smart lady, a Russian may say: *Вот идет такая корова!* (Literal translation: *Here comes kind of a cow!* Semantic translation: *Here comes a fat and clumsy lady!*)

The Russian idiomatic phrases with the noun 'cow' also bear negative connotations, for example, for denoting awkward and unskillful actions, a Russian would say: *как корова на льду.* (Literal translation: *Like a cow on ice!* Semantic translation: *to speak of*

a slothful, unskilled person). Similarly, if something (especially dress) does not suit somebody, the other person's response can be expressed in a phraseological unit: *сидит / идет / как корове седло*. (Literal translation: *Sits like a saddle on a cow*. Semantic translation: *Does not suit at all/not dressed in the best of the bib.*), e.g.

У матери Николая тяжёлая фигура. Когда она ходит по улице, дети восклицая говорят: «Вон идет корова на льду!» (Literal translation: *Nikolay's mother is heavily-built. When she walks down the street, children yell, "Here comes a cow on ice!"* Semantic translation: *Nikolay's mother is heavily-built. When she walks down the street, children yell, "Here comes a cow on roller skates!"*);

Первые месяцы первой зимы в Университете дружбы народов я — иностранка, впервые в жизни увидевшая снег, ходила по московским скользким улицам как корова на льду. (Literal translation: *During my first months of the first winter at the Peoples' Friendship University, I — a foreigner, who saw snow for the first time in life, used to walk on the slippery streets of Moscow like a cow walking on ice!* Semantic translation: *During my first months of the first winter at the Peoples' Friendship University I — a foreigner, who saw snow for the first time in life, used to walk on the slippery streets of Moscow as if a cow was on roller skates!;*)

Ну друзья, как мне идет этот новый костюм? Надеюсь, не как корове седло! (Literal translation: *Well friends! How do I look in the new dress? Hope it is not like a saddle on a cow*. Semantic translation: *Well friends! How do I look in the new dress? I am afraid it does not suit me at all.*).

The picture is quite opposite in Hindi. Here the word *गाय* (cow) and the idiomatic phrases with this word are used to refer to a timid, shy and a fearful person. Examples:

गाय की तरह कांपना (Literal translation: *Tremble like a cow!* Semantic translation: *to be scared and nervous!*), *अल्ला की गाय* (Literal translation: *Allah's cow!* Semantic translation: *timid and meek*).

Illustration in sentences:

—*अरे! वह क्या करेगा बेचारा! वह तो एकदम गाय है!* (Literal translation: *Oh! What will this poor fellow do! He is absolutely like a cow!* Semantic translation: *He is too timid to do any wrong things!;*)

बस और कुछ मत कहो इस बेचारे को! देखो तो कैसे गाय की तरह कांप रहा है! (Literal translation: *Say nothing more to this poor fellow! Look, how he is trembling like a cow!* Semantic translation: *Say nothing more to this poor fellow! Look how scared and nervous he is!;*)

नहीं, शशि इस बच्चे को नहीं मार सकती है। वह तो एकदम अल्ला की गाय है! (Literal translation: *No, Shashi cannot beat this child. She is like the Allah's cow!* Semantic translation: *Shashi is too timid and gentle to beat this child.*).

In India the cow is thought to be a very innocent, naive and kind being. It enjoys a very high status in Hindu religion. It is the most revered, protected and sacred among all the animals in India. It has been accorded the stature of a mother, so the Hindus respectfully call it Mother Cow (*गौमाता*). It is considered to be very auspicious to have a cow at home (especially in villages).

The Hindus believe that before dying if one donates a cow (गोदान) to a Brahmin, it will absolve him of all the sins committed by him on earth and help him find a place in Heaven. The Hindus also believe that feeding a cow every day will also bring divine blessings to them. One of the most outstanding novels in Hindi written by the stalwart of Hindustani Literature Munshi Premchand is titled 'Godan' (the donation of a cow). The cow is also very much loved by Lord Krishna, one of the most popular deities of the Hindus.

As the Hindus revere and worship the cow, they can't bring themselves to either killing the holy cow or consuming her meat (beef).

Conclusion: The comparative study of the zoonym 'cow' reveals that the connotations invoked by this noun are of contrasting nature: in Russian they are negative, whereas in Hindi they are absolutely positive.

In the field of Cross Cultural Communication there is a very reputed theory put forward by the American linguists Kluckhohn, F.R. and Strodtbeck, F.L. in their book 'Variations in Value Orientations' [2] which explain the differences in the views of peoples belonging to different cultures on the basis of their attitudes to human-nature orientation, man — nature orientation, activity orientation, temporal orientation, relational orientation.

If we go by 'man — nature orientation' parameter of this theory, we find that the key to different attitude in Russia and India towards the cow lies in the fact that in this quadruped the Russians see only its physical traits (it being clumsy and heavy). Whereas, the attitude of the Indians towards this animal is defined on the basis of the millions of years of services provided by this mammal to the mankind: it has been providing us with milk (which is the basis for making butter, butter milk, curd, cheese, Indian sweets and a lot more other products.); its skin provided clothing to the ancient man; cow dung has been used as fuel in households and manure in agriculture; bullocks ploughed fields and dragged bullock-carts. In return, the Indians have nurtured a deep respect for the cow. They never laugh at it and never poke fun of it. In fact, they revere it.

2.2. The Owl

In dictionaries the 'owl' ('сова' in Russian and 'उल्लू' in Hindi) is defined as: 'a bird of prey (= a bird that kills other creatures for food) with large round eyes, that hunts at night. Owls are traditionally thought to be wise' [24]. An insight into its semantic translation displays a very interesting contrasting picture in Hindi and Russian. For a Russian the owl stands for 'sagacity and wisdom' whereas for a Hindi-speaking person the word 'owl' connotes 'stupidity and foolishness'.

Apart from this, the Russian word *сова* has a subtext of a person who is immensely active during late evening and at night. For example, *Мой сын явная сова: он может заниматься только по ночам.* (Literal translation: *My son is a perfect owl: he can study only at night.* Semantic translation: *My son enjoys working at night only.*)

Interestingly, the owl is revered as a symbol of wisdom and sagacity both by the Russians and other Europeans.

On the contrary, the picture is quite different in Hindi. In this oriental language a number of idiomatic phrases expressing foolishness and idiocy are associated with this nocturnal bird. For instance,

उल्लू का पट्टा (Literal translation: *One who belongs to the genetic family of owls.* Semantic translation: *An utterly foolish guy.*) Illustration in sentence: इस गर्मी में दक्षिण भारत घूमने की तो कोई उल्लू का पट्टा ही सोच सकता है। (Literal translation: *Only an owl can think of touring South India in such a hot summer.* Semantic translation: *An utterly foolish guy only can think of touring South India in such a hot summer.*);

उल्लू बनाना (Literal translation: *To make an owl.* Semantic translation: *To fool.*) Illustration in sentence: हमारे देश के नेता आम जनता को उल्लू ही बनाते रहते हैं। (Literal translation: *The leaders of our country are doing nothing but making an owl out of us.* Semantic translation: *The leaders of our country are doing nothing but befooling us.*);

उल्लू बनना (Literal translation: *To become an owl.* Semantic translation: *To be fooled / to make an ass of oneself*). Illustration in sentence: आज तो मैं बहुत अच्छे से उल्लू बन गई: सुबह काम पर चली गई फिर सन्नाटा देखकर तुरंत समझ गई कि आज तो रविवार का दिन है और आज छुट्टी है। (Literal translation: *Today I became an owl: I went to work in the morning, where the deserted look made me realize that it was Sunday — a routine holiday.* Semantic translation: *Today I made an ass of myself in the morning as I went to work only to discover that it was Sunday — a routine holiday.*);

काठ का उल्लू (Literal translation: *A lumber owl.* Semantic translation: *A consummate idiot.*) Illustration in sentence: हमारा माली तो एकदम काठ का उल्लू है, इसीलिये बगीचे का सारा काम मेरे पति को ही करना पड़ता है। (Literal translation: *Our gardener is a lumber owl that is why my husband has to do all the gardening himself.* Semantic translation: *Our gardener is such a consummate idiot that my husband has to look after the garden himself.*).

The connotation of *folly* attached with this bird is so strong that even the word *owl*, in isolation, also denotes that a person referred to, is utterly lacking in any kind of skills (simply worthless). For example,

यह बच्चा एकदम उल्लू है। (Literal translation: *This child is a perfect owl.* Semantic translation: *This child is a perfect idiot /absolutely useless !.*)

While dealing with Hindi zoonyms, one needs to mention their correlation with different deities of Hindu mythology as almost all the Gods have their own rider — animals (*vahana*) on which they are often seen mounted in the icons. The Owl is one of the *vahanas* of Goddess Laxmi (Goddess of wealth). Hence, one is believed to be very lucky and blessed if one happens to sight an owl during the night of the festival of Deepawali when this deity is worshipped all over India.

Conclusion: The comparative study of the zoonym 'owl' reveals that the connotations invoked by this noun are of contrasting nature: in Russian they are positive, whereas in Hindi they are negative in day-to-day use. However, when the owl is associated with religious connotations in Hindi, it, surprisingly, acquires a distinct positive dimension.

The reason, why an owl stands as a symbol of foolishness for Indians, is unknown to us. But, the reasons why an owl has connotation of sagacity for Russians and Europeans lie in the following facts: Owls are supposed to be one of the oldest birds. They have very specific body structure that allow them to capture the prey very smartly: they have very large eyes in a relatively small skull, their neck and head can rotate up to 270 degree (this enables owls to see behind their back), their feathers are designed by nature in such a way that they do not make any noises when they fly (this enables an owl to reach its prey silently), owl's ears are placed asymmetrically on their skull (this allows them to pinpoint the location of its prey) [Wikipedia: 36].

These features testify that nature has crafted this unique bird in such a way as to symbolize wisdom and sagacity. The negative attitude for the owl in Hindi-speaking Indians is compensated by their positive mythological attitude, but it might change in future.

2.3. The Crow

The zoonym *crow* ('ворона' in Russian and 'कौआ' in Hindi) has the following explanation in dictionaries: a large bird, completely or mostly black, with a rough, unpleasant cry [24].

The image of a crow in Russian is that of a foolish creature. This impression got further backing in I.A. Krylov's fable "The crow and the fox" [25]. The fable goes like this: a crow got a piece of cheese from somewhere. It was holding it in its beak and was about to eat it. At that very moment a fox passed by and scented the cheese. Knowing that she could not get a share of it by asking or by forcing the crow to give it to her, she played a trick. The fox started praising the crow and coaxed it into singing. Yielding to flattery the crow cawed. As a result the cheese fell out. The fox grabbed it and ran away with it.

On the contrary, Hindi-speakers consider crows to be defiant, clever and cunning. This bird is capable of finding solution to every problematic situation. In the moral stories of "Panchatantra" (A collection of moral stories.) there is a story of 'The owls and the crows' where crows thanks to their tricky nature ultimately win over owls.

The story of a thirsty crow from folklore is deeply set in the minds of the Indians. It is a story about how a thirsty crow succeeds in raising the water level from the bottom of a deep pitcher by dropping pebbles into it and quenches its thirst in the hot Indian summer.

But the idiomatic phrase 'सयाना कौआ' ('shrewd crow') is used for a selfish and cunning person. Hindi speakers understand that the crow uses its sharp brain only for itself. It does not do any good to others. For example,

तुम तो बहुत भोले हो, पर तुम्हारा मित्र एकदम सयाना कौआ है। बचकर रहना। (Literal translation: *You are very naïve but your friend is a clever crow. Beware of him.* Semantic translation: *You are too naive for your cunning friend. Beware of him.*)

In Hinduism the crow enjoys special treatment during *Shradda period* (In Hinduism *Shraddha* is a solemn ceremony performed on the day exact *tithi* (date as per Hindu calendar) of the death one left this world. It is believed that on this day one's parents and forefathers come from heaven and visit their homes. The day is marked by very touchy gestures: children pay homage and express their sincere gratitude to their ancestors. In their turn parents and grandparents shower blessings on their off springs.). In Hinduism crows are considered to be one's ancestors. It is believed that (in the cycle of death and rebirth) after death the first rebirth of man is in the form of a crow. That is why feeding of crows is equal to the feeding of ancestors.

On the other hand, the Russian noun *ворон* acquired a new negative meaning during Stalin regime. The word *черный ворон* along with *черная маруся* symbolizes the black closed lorry carrying the intellectuals. In Anna Akhmatova's poem 'The Requiem' we read:

*Звезды смерти стояли над нами,
И безвинная корчилась Русь
Под кровавыми сапогами
И под шинами черных марусь* [26].

English translation:

*Dead stars hung above us,
And blameless Russia writhed
Under boots stained with blood,
And the Black Marias' tyres* [27].

One more example of the use of the word «*черный ворон*»:

Наша семья состояла из семи человек: отец, мать, пятеро детей. Отец, Бачук Иосиф Михайлович, работал на Харьковском паровозном заводе мастером цеха. В ноябре 1937 года отец в четыре часа утра был увезен машиной «черный ворон» [28].

English translation:

Our family had seven members: the father, the mother and five children. The father, Bachuk Iosif Mikhailovich, was a foreman at the Kharkov Locomotive factory. In November 1937, at four o'clock my father was taken away by the car "Black crow".

Conclusion: The comparative study of the zoonym 'crow' reveals that the connotations invoked by this noun are of contrasting nature: in Russian they are negative, whereas in Hindi they are semi positive in day-to-day use. However, when the crow is associated with religious connotations in Hindi, it acquires a positive dimension.

According to Wikipedia, crows and ravens often score very highly on intelligence tests. Recent research has found some crow species capable of not only using tools but also constructing tools. Crows are now considered to be among the world's most intelligent animals with an encephalization quotient approaching that of some apes. Crows have demonstrated the ability to distinguish individual humans by recognizing facial features [Wikipedia: 37].

It is likely that the findings of science might change our negative views regarding this representative of the animal kingdom.

2.4. The Elephant

Explicit meaning of ‘elephant’ (‘слон’ in Russian and ‘हाथी’ in Hindi): a very large animal with thick grey skin, large ears, two curved outer teeth called tusks and a long nose called a trunk [24].

In Russian the zoonym “elephant” has the connotation of an inelegant, clumsy, awkward, weighty /cumbersome/ person. For example,

Вчера мы с Ниной были на показе моделей одежды. Девушки, которые принимали участие в этом дефиле, очень красиво и грациозно, спокойно и непринужденно двигались по подиуму. Посмотрев на их красивые нежные фигуры, мы с Ниной чувствовали себя как слоны. (Literal translation: Neena and I were at the fashion show yesterday. The models who were taking part in this show were walking very beautifully and gracefully, in a calm and relaxed manner on the ramp. Looking at their beautiful and delicate figures, Neena and I felt like elephants. Semantic translation: Neena and I were at the fashion show yesterday. The models who were taking part in this show were walking very beautifully and gracefully, in a calm and relaxed manner on the ramp. Looking at their beautiful and delicate figures, Neena and I felt very awkward.)

Apart from this we find a number of Russian idiomatic phrases emphasizing the huge figure of this representative of the animal kingdom: *слона то и не приметить, слон в посудной лавке, слон и Моска, как слону дробина, делать из мухи слона*. The saying ‘слона то и не приметить’ takes its origin from Ivan Krylov’s fable “Любопытный” /‘Curious’/ and it means that among the trifles we miss to notice the most important things (as among small animals we miss to see an elephant.). This saying is used humorously. For example,

Ну что же ты дружок! просидел весь день на лекции и не заметил слона, не знаешь, кто был лектором! (Literal translation: Well, my friend! After spending the whole day at the lectures, you did not notice an elephant; you do not know who the speaker was! Semantic translation: Well, my friend! I am amazed: After listening to lectures the whole day, you do not know the speaker’s name!)

The idiom ‘слон в посудной лавке’ denotes a playful remark about a clumsy person who has been caught in a tight situation among delicate objects. It refers to a person who behaves awkwardly (like an elephant in a small crockery shop), he breaks something, drops something, smashes something. For example,

Моя соседка очень грубо обращается с деликатными вещами. Пока не было случая, чтобы она приходила к нам и не ломала что-нибудь. Мы шутя говорим ей, «Ты у нас ведешь себя как слон в посудной лавке.» (Literal translation: My neighbor handles delicate things very roughly. So far there has been no case that she came to us and did not break anything. We jokingly say to her, “You are acting like an elephant in a small crockery shop”. Semantic translation: My neighbor handles delicate things very roughly. So far there has been no case that she came to us and did not break anything. We jokingly say to her, “You are acting like a bull in a china shop.”)

The saying ‘Слон и Моска’ comes from Ivan Krylov’s fable of the same title. It expresses the willingness of a person to stand out in society and bask in the glory of others, in the same way as the little Dog Moska barks at the gigantic elephant just to

stand out in the society of dogs and create a false impression of being cocky and strong before a mighty elephant (The fable concludes with this sentence: *Пускай же говорят собаки: «Ай, Моська! зная она сильна, Что лает на Слона!»* [25] (*Let the dogs say: Oh, Moska! How strong you are, you bark at the elephant!*))

The Russian phraseological unit ‘*как слону дробина*’ denotes with irony that the referred amount (quantity) is too little and not sufficient. For example,

Эта государственная компенсация крестьянам, пострадавшим от цунами, как слону дробина. (Literal translation: *The compensation given by the state to the Tsunami affected farmers is like a granule to an elephant.* Semantic translation: *The compensation given by the state to the Tsunami affected farmers is as little as giving the elephant a pellet.*)

The idiomatic expression ‘*делать из мухи слона*’ means exaggeration or turning an insignificant fact into a big event. For example,

Наш приятель любит делать из мухи слона, поэтому из его рассказов я всегда выбрасываю 80% и верю только 20 процентам содержания, и то с большим сомнением. (Literal translation: *Our friend loves to make an elephant out of a fly, so I discard 80% and believe only 20% of the content and that too with great suspicion.* Semantic translation: *Our friend loves to make a mountain of a molehill, so I discard 80% of his stories and believe only 20% of the content and that too with a pinch of salt.*)

The Russian verb ‘*слоняться*’ and the phrase ‘*слоны слонять*’ have close meaning: ‘*слоняться*’ refers to people, who, like elephants, mindlessly, leisurely and delightfully walk through the streets to the delight of the crowd [29]; ‘*слоны слонять*’ is used to denote someone who loves to loiter, wander, dawdle around.

For example,

Маша очень беспокоится о своем сыне. Он ничего толком не делает, только с друзьями слоняется без дел. (Literal translation: *Masha is very worried about her son. He does not really do any right thing. He only moves like an elephant the whole day.* Semantic translation: *Masha is very worried about her son. He does not really do any right thing. He only hangs out with his friends the whole day.*);

Сын Николая тоже мучит его. Он попал в плохую компанию и теперь он только слоны слоняет. (Literal translation: *Nikolay's son is giving him a lot of trouble. He has fallen in a bad company, and now loiters like an elephant the whole day.* Semantic translation: *Nikolay's son is giving him a lot of trouble. He has fallen in a bad company and now loiters aimlessly the whole day.*)

It is not very tough to notice that the Russian judgment of this exotic animal is based on its physical appearance (it being extra-ordinarily heavy), walking mode (its clumsiness) and simpleton character.

Contrarily, in India an elephant is a symbol of gracefulness and gratification. In the past, the Indian kings used to ride beautifully decorated elephants. Even today the children, who are the recipients of Bravery Awards, move on elephants in the Republic Day parade on the Rajpath. Presence of an elephant at any religious function is supposed to be very auspicious. It gratifies the ceremony.

As per the Hindu mythology Lord Ganesha (Hindu elephant-deity of kindness, generosity, success, destroyer of obstacles and evils) was given an elephant's mouth. So Hindus associate this mighty animal with Lord Ganesha and thus follow him as an object of reverence.

The connotation of grace and dignity finds its way into idiomatic phrases related to this animal also. For example, हाथी निकले बज़ार, कुत्ते भौंके हज़ार (*When an elephant walks along the street, thousands of dogs bark.*). This idiom refers to the dignified behavior of a person, i.e. a person should not pay attention to petty things (petty things should not come in the way of a dignified person.) in the same way as the barking of dogs does not deviate the elephant from its way.

It is very interesting to note that we come across a similar situation in the Russian fable 'Слон и Моська' ('*The elephant and Moska*'). But we find completely different approaches to this situation by Russians and Indians: In Russian when the elephant walks through the road, the little Dog Moska barks at the gigantic elephant. The whole purpose of this exercise is just to stand out in the society of dogs and create a false impression of being cocky and strong before the mighty elephant. Here the whole concentration is on the behavior of the dog and not that of the elephant. On the contrary, in the Hindi saying हाथी निकले बज़ार, कुत्ते भौंके हज़ार (*When an elephant walks along the street, thousands of dogs bark.*), the emphasis is laid on the graceful behavior of the elephant, who completely disregards the dogs' barking and moves on with dignity.

The other phraseological expressions of Hindi with the zoonym हाथी (elephant) are: हाथी के साथ गन्ने खाना, हाथी के दांत खाने के और दिखाने के और, हाथी के पाँव में सबका पाँव समाय, हाथी निकल गया, दुम रह गई।

हाथी के साथ गन्ने खाना (Literal translation: *eating sugarcane with an elephant.*

Semantic translation: *it is foolish to fight with a strong person.*), for instance, इन मंत्रियों से झगड़ने का मतलब है, हाथी के साथ गन्ने खाना। (Literal translation: *Fighting with these ministers means eating sugarcane with an elephant.* Semantic translation: *It is foolish to fight with these ministers.*);

हाथी के दांत खाने के और दिखाने के और (Literal translation: *the elephant has one kind of teeth for showing and another kind for eating.* Semantic translation: *refers to a person whose words do not match with his deeds.*), e.g.;

क्या तूम इस राजनीतिज्ञ के भाषण पर विश्वास करती हो? अरे इस बिरादरी में खाने के और दिखाने के दांत अलग होते हैं! (Literal translation: *Do you believe in the speech of this politician? Hey! In this community they have one kind of teeth for showing and another kind for eating!* Semantic translation: *Do you consider this politician's speech to be honest? Hey! This community is marked by hypocrisy and double standard!*);

हाथी के पाँव में सबका पाँव समाय (Literal translation: *everybody's feet can be accommodated under the feet of the elephant.* Semantic translation: *weak people seek shelter with strong people.*), for example,

रवि दादा को पशु-पक्षियों से असीम प्रेम है। कल बच्चों को सड़क पर एक दर्द से तड़पता हुआ घायल पक्षी मिला। वे, यह सोचकर कि हाथी के पाँव में सबका पाँव समाया, उस पक्षी को तुरंत रवि दादा के पास ले गये। (Literal translation: *Ravi Dada has boundless love for animals and birds. Yesterday the kids found a wounded bird in pain on the road. They immediately took it to Ravi Dada thinking that everybody's feet can be accommodated under the feet of elephant.* Semantic translation: *Ravi Dada is known for his immense and selfless love for animals and birds. Yesterday the kids found a wounded bird in pain on the road. They immediately took it to Ravi Dada thinking that it will definitely find a shelter at his place and get a proper treatment.*);

हाथी निकल गया, दुम रह गई। (Literal translation: *The elephant got out but the tail got stuck.* Semantic translation: *it is said, when the lion's share of the work has been done and only a little remains to be finished off.*) For instance,

मकान तो पूरा बन चुका है, अब केवल रंगाई — प्लाई ही शेष बचे हैं, इसे ही कहते हैं: हाथी निकल गया, दुम रह गई। (Literal translation: *The house has been constructed completely, only coloring and painting are yet to be done. This is what we say: the elephant got out but the tail got stuck.* Semantic translation: *The house has been constructed completely; only coloring and painting are yet to be done. This is what we say: eaten a horse and the tail hangs out.*)

It is interesting to note that the chess figure 'bishop' is translated as 'слон' /'elephant'/ in Russian and 'ऊँट' /'camel'/ in Hindi; while the chess figure 'rook' is translated as 'ладья' /'castle'/ in Russian and 'हाथी' /'elephant'/ in Hindi.

Conclusion: The comparative study of the zoonym 'elephant' reveals that the connotations invoked by this noun are of contrasting nature: in Russian they are negative, whereas in Hindi they are distinctly positive.

The reason for the different attitude of the Russians and the Indians lies in the following fact: Elephants are mainly found only in Africa and Asia. Europeans (Russians also) see this animal either in zoos, in circuses or in art galleries. That is why they do not have close associations with this animal. They relate elephant with its huge body and physical strength only. On the contrary, Asians (Indian also) share strong bondage with this animal right since their childhood. Elephants feature in cartoon films, fairy tales, folklore, literature, mythology, religion.

2.5. The Monkey

The primary meaning of 'monkey' ('обезьяна' in Russian and 'बंदर' in Hindi) is: an animal with a long tail that climbs trees and lives in hot countries. There are several types of monkey and they are related to apes and humans [24].

With the zoonym 'monkey' to our mind comes up an image of a being, which is very energetic, restless, jumping from one tree to the other.

According to D.N. Ushakov [30] in Russian the word 'monkey' is associated with:

- a person prone to imitate others;
- a person who makes faces /grimaces/;
- a person who is not so good looking.

For instance,

Ну! Чего ты как обезьяна подражаешь всем! Сам от себя ничего не можешь делать, что ли! (Literal translation: *Hey! Why do you imitate everyone like a monkey! Can't you do things on your own!* Semantic translation: *Hey! Why do you imitate everyone! Can't you do things on your own!*);

Ну что же ты все время гримасничаешь как обезьяна! Не можешь сидеть спокойно! (Literal translation: *Hey! Why do you make faces all the time like a monkey! Can't you sit quietly!* Semantic translation: *Hey! Why do you make faces all the time! Can't you sit quietly!*)

Ее брат совсем не красивый. Выглядит как обезьяна. (Literal translation: *Her brother is not handsome. He looks like a monkey.* Semantic translation: *Her brother is not handsome. He looks ugly.*)

It is obvious that in Russian the zoonym *monkey* is used as an expression of contempt or disapproval. It is of pejorative and expletive nature; sometimes it may even acquire abusive tone.

Since this creature is not found commonly in Russia, we get few associations with the noun 'monkey'.

In Hindi there are fables depicting the monkey as a clever (with quick presence of mind), cunning and smart creature. The fable 'The Monkey and The Crocodile' narrates how a monkey who used to live on a tree beside a river befriended a crocodile. With this friend daily he shared amazingly tasty blackberries (*jamun*). The crocodile took home some of the blackberries and gave them to his wife. She immediately thought that the monkey's heart, which fed on these divinely tasty fruit, must be very delicious. So she should eat his heart. She persuaded her husband to play a trick and invite his land-dwelling friend home. As monkey does not swim, the crocodile carried him on his back. When they were in the middle of the river the crocodile disclosed the secret behind this invitation to his friend. On listening to the shocking news, the monkey said that his heart had been kept safely in the tree and they had to go back to the bank to fetch it. As soon as they reached the coast, the monkey jumped off the back of the crocodile and climbed the tree and bade goodbye to the crocodile and their friendship.

The fable 'The cats and the monkey' reveals the cunning 'judgment' of the monkey who ultimately eats off the entire bread (cheese/cake) of the quarreling cats in the name of fair distribution. Ultimately the cats were left repenting, with no bread left.

The Hindi Proverbs with the zoonym '*monkey*' reveal negative traits of its character, like selfishness, hollowness, unstableness, unreliability, cunningness:

बंदर क्या जाने अदरक का स्वाद (Literal translation: *What does a monkey know about the taste of ginger!* Semantic translation: *one is too crude for the sophisticated taste / English equivalent: Caviar to the general*), e.g.;

आजकल के बच्चे जिस गति से अच्छे साहित्य से दूर होते जा रहे हैं, शीघ्र ही उनके लिये हमें बंदर क्या जाने अदरक का स्वाद मुहावरे का उपयोग करना पड़ सकता है। (Literal

translation: *The speed at which children nowadays are moving away from good literature, very soon we will need to use the proverb 'what does a monkey know about the taste of ginger' for them.* Semantic translation: *The speed at which children nowadays are moving away from good literature, very soon we will need to use the proverb 'Caviar to the general' for them.);*

बंदर की दोस्ती / बंदर की क्या आशनाई (Literal translation: *friendship with a monkey / there is no point having liaison with a monkey.* Semantic translation: *do not make friends with those, who cannot be trusted.*), e.g.;

हमारे पड़ोसी बहुत हल्के इंसान हैं, उनकी दोस्ती बंदर की दोस्ती जैसी है। (Literal translation: *Our neighbor is a shallow person. Their friendship is like a friendship with a monkey.* Semantic translation: *Our neighbor is a shallow person. One cannot rely upon him.*);

बंदर घुड़की / बंदर भभकी (Literal translation: *the threat from a monkey.* Semantic translation: *does not pose a real threat*), e.g.;

तुम उसकी बातों से मत डरो, वह तो बंदर घुड़की देता ही रहता है। (Literal translation: *Do not be afraid of his talks; it is like a threat from a monkey.* Semantic translation: *Do not be afraid of his talks; they do not pose a real threat.*);

बंदर बांट (Literal translation: *distribution by monkey.* Semantic translation: *violation of law in the distribution of property*), e.g.;

आजकल सरकारी खज़ानों में बंदर बांट मची हुई है। (Literal translation: *Monkey divide is prevailing these days in the state treasury.* Semantic translation: *Rampant corruption so prevalent in all the departments of the government these days.*)

In Hindu Mythology a monkey is called 'vanara' (वानर). Vanaras are forest — dwelling human beings with some traits of the monkey. They are gifted with some supernatural abilities. In the epic 'Ramayana' the *vanara army* significantly helped Lord Rama in his battle against the demon Ravana. The notable representatives of *vanara army* are: Hanuman, Sugriv, Vali, Angad, Makardhwaj, Nal, Nila. "As described in the epic, the characteristics of the *Vanara* include being amusing, childish, mildly irritating, badgering, hyperactive, adventurous, bluntly honest, loyal, courageous, and kind" [31].

It is interesting to note that the English word 'monkey' is derived from the Sanskrit word "markata", which denominates non-primate apes. In most Germanic languages monkeys are called "meercat" [Wikipedia: 39].

Conclusion: The comparative study of the zoonym 'monkey' reveals that the connotations invoked by this noun are of negative nature in Russian as well as in Hindi. However, when the monkey is associated with religious connotations in Hindi, it invariably acquires a positive dimension.

Monkeys can be seen anywhere in India. They are very popular among Indian children. They are prevalent in cartoon films, children literature, feature films. So, Indian people have sympathy and share positive emotional bondage with this tree-dwelling

creature. Nevertheless, in Hindi idiomatic phrases only the cunningness of the monkey is emphasized. Whereas, in Russia one does not see this animal so frequently. So the relationship of the Russians with it is not that warm and practically absent in their linguistic expressions.

2.6. The Tortoise

The dictionary meaning of 'tortoise' ('черепаха' in Russian and 'कछुआ' in Hindi) is that of a reptile with a hard round shell, which lives on land and moves very slowly. It can pull its head and legs into its shell [1].

In the dictionary of symbols [9] 'tortoise' is an embodiment of water, the moon, Mother Earth, the beginning of creation, time, immortality, fertility, renewal of nature. The turtle (In America the word 'turtle' is used to denote both the 'tortoise' /it lives on earth/ and the 'turtle' /it lives in sea/) is often portrayed as a supporter of peace. The creation of the world is associated with it.

The tortoise is reputed to be an absolutely harmless, calm and peace-loving creature. No news report has ever mentioned an aggressive tortoise. In world literature too we have not come across any account or story where a tortoise is seen having an angry argument with any being. It enjoys being alone. It has a long life. Its long association with our world has given it the virtues of good judgment and understanding. For this reason sagacity, wisdom and respect are the emotional associations that surround this zoonym.

The whole world is well acquainted with the fable about the race between a fast-running hare and a slow-moving tortoise. During the race, utterly confident of winning, the hare stops on the way for a while and takes a nap, while the tortoise keeps walking without a break and ultimately reaches the final point and wins the race, teaching us the lesson that in order to attain success one should be slow and steady rather than quick and careless.

In Russian and Hindi there is a single idiomatic phrase with the noun 'tortoise' that refers to a slow person:

Тащиться как черепаха (Literal translation: *to drag like a tortoise*. Semantic translation: *to walk/work very slowly*), for instance, — *Сынок, давай быстрее! Что же ты, тащишься как черепаха. С такой скоростью мы до вечера не успеем закончить уборку дома!* (Literal translation: *Son, be quick! Hey! You are dragging like a tortoise! At this rate we will not be able to finish the cleaning of our house till evening*. Semantic translation: *Son, be quick! Hey! You are trudging like a turtle! At this rate we will not be able to finish the cleaning of our house till evening*.)

कछुए की चाल (Literal translation: *with the pace of a tortoise*. Semantic translation: *to walk/work very slowly*), for instance, *हमारे देश में सरकारी काम इस गति से होते हैं कि कछुआ भी उनकी चाल पर शर्मा जाय!* (Literal translation: *The official work in our country moves at such a slow speed that even a tortoise must feel ashamed of its pace*. Semantic translation: *The official work in our country trudges even slower than the pace of a turtle*.)

As we see in Russian and Hindi the qualities of the tortoise are expressed in a similar manner.

In Hindu Mythology this representative of reptile class was given further honour. The tortoise ‘kachchhap / koorma’ (कच्छप/कूर्म) is believed to be the second (of ten) ‘*avtaar*’ (incarnation e. g. deliberate advent of deities on earth) of Lord Vishnu. The female tortoise ‘kachchhapee’ (कच्छपी) is the name of Saraswati’s (the Goddess of knowledge) instrument ‘*Veena*’. Hence the presence of tortoise at home is believed to be very auspicious.

In today’s globalized world, Chinese ‘Feng Shui’ has become quite popular. In China the turtle is supposed to be one of the four celestial animals. It is a symbol of longevity and fortune, which brings health, wealth and harmony. So it is considered auspicious to keep a metallic turtle at home and people all over the world are doing so.

Conclusion: The comparative study of the zoonym ‘*tortoise*’ reveals that the connotations invoked by this noun are more or less positive both in Russian and Hindi. Only the slowness of this amphibian creates a little apprehension in both the languages.

3. GENERAL CONCLUSION

The comparative study of the portrayal of some of the representatives of the animal kingdom — *the cow, the crow, the owl, the elephant, the monkey and the tortoise* in Russian and Hindi showed some interesting traits. Although the number is too small to reach any overall conclusion, we, nevertheless, found the zoonym like *the tortoise* having similar connotations in both the languages; the zoonym like *the monkey* displayed partially similar connotations; some zonyms like *the owl, the cow, and the elephant* showed contrasting connotations. It is pertinent to mention that in the light of the overbearing impact of religion on native speakers of Hindi, the animals studied here do not have an entirely negative semantic impact.

One of the observations needs special mention: the more developed the society is, the farther it is from flora and fauna. The economic development drifts man and animal apart. Materialistic progress deprives man of the warmth of his little brothers.

India is economically less developed a state in comparison to Europe and Russia. Here, man and animal coexist in comparatively closer relationship. The Indians still do not have to visit zoos to see the monkey, the crow, the cow, the elephant, the tortoise, the owl. (Possibly, after some generations the Indian kids would visit zoos to get an idea of a particular animal.) But at present the situation is different. The Indians do see their little brothers in day-to-day life and are emotionally attached to them irrespective of the fact — how they are depicted in idioms and proverbs.

Secondly, animals being intellectually less developed than human being, direct all their energy and efforts to finding food and shelter. Different animals do this job differently in accordance with their intelligence and physical abilities. It is we, human beings, that observe animals from the prism of our developed brain, pass judgment regarding their mode of activities and relate them with us. Animals are not aware of our assessment. Our connotations with animals are the outcome of our observations and thoughts about their activities.

Further, human beings and animals share the same landmass, but the latter have almost four and half times extra space in the form of oceans, seas and other water bodies. Obviously, men and animals should have developed a unique relationship of interdependence, but, unfortunately, at times the relationship became hostile, specially, due to man's economic, geophysical, social and other activities. Man would have never been able to survive, create civilizations, progress economically, socially, culturally, religiously and spiritually without deep and healthy interaction with nature and animal. Since flora and fauna have been man's constant companions throughout his life, it's quite but natural, that they enjoy a hugely-complex but extremely interesting and useful relationship. Animals, over the centuries, became man's main object of observation and penetrated human language — the most distinctive feature that separates man from animals. In fact, animals automatically became an integral part of human activities in day-to-day life (e.g. bullocks and horses in agriculture, dogs in shepherding cattle, watching houses and later as companions, camels, donkeys and elephants as means of transportation; and it's a well-known fact that many of the animals and birds have been provider of meat and milk). But, unfortunately, man, knowingly or unknowingly, started harming nature and animals in pursuit of a better life. Ignorance, greed, unbridled urbanization and lack of foresightedness led to man's constant hunt for supremacy over nature (over exploitation of natural resources, poaching and a host of other human activities caused the extinction of a large number of animals and birds.)

Of late, with the advancement of science and technology, rapid globalization and cross-cultural relationship amongst the nations of the world created a new kind of awareness in man — TO PROTECT NATURE AT ANY COST. Today man clearly understands that he should not even think of establishing supremacy over nature — Man and Nature must coexist, mutually benefitting each other.

Our endeavor is a small step to alert man of the impending danger, the sound of footsteps of which many of us have already heard. Man must respect, love, protect and conserve the animal kingdom in order to survive and to save global culture. The focus must be on ecology, 'procuring food from forest, apart from agriculture' [From the Report by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, titled, 'Forest, Trees and Landscapes for Food Security and Nutrition: A Global Assessment' Source: Sunday Hindustan Times. May 17 2015: 50] and reducing conflict between man and nature. The positive impact of Man-Animal bonding as enunciated by zoonyms prevailing in different languages of the world must not get lost. A healthy and respectful approach to animals must be inculcated in our children.

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