

The classification of phraseological units

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Annotation: This article discusses the role of phraseology in linguistics, the characteristics of phraseological units and their various classifications with examples. The article shows the challenges in distinguishing fixed expressions from free word combinations, emphasizing the importance of both semantic meaning and structural stability. Various classification systems are examined, organizing phraseological units according to their grammatical functions, emotional impact and communicative roles proposed by different scholars. The article also analyzes how these expressions reflect figurative meaning, emotional states and cultural values. In this article, there are some examples that convey emotions, demonstrating how idioms reflect psychological states such as fear, anger, surprise and anxiety through vivid imagery and metaphorical associations. Moreover, it presents both traditional and modern approaches to their formation, including influences from professional jargon, literary sources and everyday speech. The article illustrates how such expressions convey a wide range of human experiences, particularly emotions, through metaphorical imagery and stable constructions. The article gives information about the essential role of these units in understanding language, culture and communication.

Keywords: phraseology, phraseological units, classification, phraseological collocations, idioms, semantic unity, structural stability, metaphorical transfer, fixed expressions.

Классификация фразеологических единиц

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Аннотация: В данной статье рассматривается роль фразеологии в лингвистике, характеристики фразеологических единиц и их различные классификации с примерами. В статье подчёркиваются трудности в разграничении устойчивых выражений и свободных словосочетаний, при этом акцентируется внимание на важности как семантического значения, так и структурной устойчивости. Анализируются различные системы классификации, в которых фразеологические единицы организуются в зависимости от их грамматических функций, эмоционального воздействия и коммуникативной роли. Также исследуется, как подобные выражения отражают переносное значение, эмоциональные состояния и культурные ценности. В статье приводятся примеры, передающие эмоции, и показывается, как идиомы выражают психологические состояния, такие как страх, гнев, удивление и тревога, с помощью ярких образов и метафорических ассоциаций. Кроме того, представляются как традиционные, так и современные подходы к формированию фразеологических единиц, включая влияние профессионального жаргона, литературных источников и повседневной речи. Показано, как такие выражения передают широкий спектр человеческих переживаний, особенно эмоций, через метафорические образы и устойчивые конструкции. Также подчёркивается важная роль фразеологических единиц в понимании языка, культуры и общения.

Ключевые слова: фразеология, фразеологические единицы, классификация, фразеологические коллокации, идиомы, семантическое единство, структурная устойчивость, метафорический перенос, устойчивые выражения.

Frazeologik birliklarning tasnifi

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Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada frazeologiyaning tilshunoslikdagi o‘rni, frazeologik birliklarning xususiyatlari va ularning turli toifalarga bo‘linishi misollar bilan ko‘rib chiqiladi. Maqolada erkin so‘z birikmalaridan farqli holda barqaror iboralarni aniqlashdagi qiyinchiliklar ko‘rsatiladi hamda semantik mazmun va strukturaviy barqarorlikning ahamiyati ta’kidlanadi. Frazeologik birliklar grammatik vazifasi, hissiy ta’siri va kommunikativ funksiyasiga ko‘ra turli tasniflarga ajratiladi. Mazkur maqola ushbu iboralarning ko‘chma ma’no, hissiy holatlar va madaniy qadriyatlarini qanday aks ettirishini tahlil qiladi. Ba’zi misollar orqali iboralarning qo‘rquv, g‘azab, hayrat va tashvish kabi ruhiy holatlarni jonli obrazlar va metaforik ifodalar orqali qanday ifoda etishi ko‘rsatib berilgan. Bundan tashqari, maqolada frazeologik birliklarning shakllanishining an’anaviy va zamonaviy yondashuvlari, shu jumladan professional jargon, adabiy manbalar va kundalik nutqdagi ta’sirlari haqida ma’lumot berilgan. Maqola bunday iboralar insoniy kechinmalar, ayniqsa hissiyotlarni metaforik obrazlar va barqaror tuzilmalar orqali qanday ifoda etishini yoritib beradi. Frazeologik birliklarning til, madaniyat va muloqotni tushunishda tutgan muhim o‘rni haqida ham so‘z yuritiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: frazeologiya, frazeologik birliklar, tasnif, frazeologik kollokatsiyalar, idiomalar, semantik birlik, strukturaviy barqarorlik, metaforik ko‘chish, barqaror iboralar.

Introduction

Phraseological units, also known as phraseologisms or idioms, represent a crucial part of a language’s vocabulary, enriching it with expressive, figurative, and often culturally bound meanings. Derived from the Greek words *phrasis* (speech) and *-logia* (study), phraseology emerged as a distinct field of linguistic study in the 20th century. These ready-made word combinations function as a single semantic unit and cannot be created spontaneously in speech. Their fixed structure and non-literal meaning make them significantly different from free word groups. Their role in conveying emotions, attitudes, and culturally embedded concepts underscores their significance in both linguistic and sociocultural contexts. The present study aims to explore the definitions, classifications, semantic characteristics, and grammatical features of phraseological units, with a particular focus on their role in expressing emotions. The research draws on the theoretical frameworks of prominent scholars such as V.V. Vinogradov, A.V. Koonin, A.I. Smirnitsky, I.V. Arnold, and N.N. Amosova.

Methodology

The research methodology employed in this study is primarily descriptive and analytical. It involves a qualitative examination of phraseological units drawn from phraseological dictionaries, linguistic literature, and scholarly sources. The study first identifies relevant idiomatic expressions that reflect emotional states and categorizes them based on their semantic characteristics and grammatical structure. These units were then categorized according to semantic content, grammatical structure, and degree of motivation.

Results and Discussion

Phraseology, derived from the Greek words *phrasis* (way of speaking) and *-logia* (study of), emerged as a field of linguistic study in the twentieth century. Phraseological units (phraseologisms) are word groups that cannot be created in the process of speech as they are ready-made units which exist in the language.

Distinguishing phraseological units from free word groups is one of the most debated and complex issues in phraseology. This distinction is challenging due to the presence of semi-fixed

expressions that share structural stability with phraseological units but lack their semantic unity and figurative meaning.

There are two main criteria used to differentiate phraseological units from free word group: semantic and structural. For example:

1. Semantic:

A. "I'm told they're inviting more American professors to this university. Isn't it rather carrying coals to Newcastle?"

(Carrying coals to Newcastle means taking something to a place where it is already abundant and unnecessary while in a literal sense, carrying coal simply means transporting coal.)

B. "This cargo ship is carrying coal to Liverpool."

Although both sentences contain similar word groups, their meanings are entirely different. In the second example, carrying coal is used in its literal sense which coal refers to actual black mineral coal and carry means transporting it from one place to another. However, in the first sentence, the phrase has a figurative meaning that is completely detached from the literal meanings of its individual words.

2. Structural:

Phraseological units have fixed structures, meaning their words cannot easily be replaced or changed. For example, *to give someone the cold shoulder* means *to ignore someone*. However, if you change *cold shoulder* to *warm shoulder* or *cold elbow*, the phrase loses its meaning. (Maharramazada, 2024; 2)

There are several distinguishing features of phraseological units from free word groups:

1. Structural Criterion – The degree of fixedness in the arrangement of words.

2. Semantic Criterion – The level of semantic unity and figurativeness.

3. Syntactic Criterion – The grammatical feature of the phrase within a sentence.

In linguistic studies, the term phraseology is used to refer to expressions in which the meaning of one element depends on another, regardless of their structure and properties. Different scholars define phraseology in various ways:

V.V. Vinogradov considers phraseology as units where words lose their individual meanings to form a new, unified meaning.

A.I. Smirnitsky limits phraseology to set expressions that lack emotional or expressive connotations.

I.V. Arnold, on the other hand, defines phraseology as only those expressions that are figurative, expressive, and emotional.

N.N. Amosova refers to such expressions as fixed context units, meaning their components cannot be replaced without altering the meaning of the entire unit.

O.S. Ahmanova emphasizes the semantic integrity of phraseological units over the structural separateness of their elements.

A.V. Koonin highlights their structural separateness, the shift in meaning when taken as a whole, and their stability over time.

Phraseological units vary widely in form and meaning as they must be categorized systematically. However, there is a debatable question that whether the classification of phraseological units should be based on structure, meaning, stability or origin. One of the oldest classification methods is the thematic approach, which groups idioms by their origins. L.P. Smith's classification, for example, categorizes idioms based on their connection to specific professions or fields, such as sailing, hunting, agriculture, cooking, and sports. Some idioms are also derived from interactions with animals, birds, or natural phenomena. This approach is sometimes called etymological classification, though the term may not be entirely accurate, as etymology usually refers to the historical origin of words. (Maharramazada, 2024; 3).

A well-known classification of phraseological units based on their semantic properties was introduced by the Russian linguist V.V. Vinogradov. He categorized phraseological units in the

Russian language based on the degree of semantic cohesion among their components and the extent to which their meaning is motivated which was one of the earliest and most significant classifications. His classification involves a semantic principle focusing on both the closeness of meaning and the degree of motivation behind the overall meaning of the phraseological unit. According to him, there are three types of phraseological units:

1. Phraseological adhesions – These expressions have the strongest semantic cohesion, meaning their components have combined together and their meaning cannot be inferred from individual words. However, there is a lack of motivation between the components. Moreover, they contain archaic lexical or grammatical elements. For example: *to get up on the left foot – to start the day in a bad mood*

2. Phraseological unities – These are stable word combinations with figurative meanings which are still transparent. Their meaning is based on metaphorical, metonymic, or comparative associations, creating a duality between their literal and figurative interpretations.

3. Phraseological combinations – These are expressions where one word has a phraseologically bound meaning while the other remains independent. These expressions show the weakest semantic cohesion. (Saidova, 2021; 90). For example: *to come to power, to make it a rule, to take one's seat, to meet the requirements, to attain success* (Abdurasulov, 2021; 226).

Phraseological unities are more common compared to other types. They are considered partially motivated because their overall meaning is often inferable from the meanings of the individual words when seen through a metaphorical way.

Phraseological unities are relatively more widespread compared to other types of phraseological units. They are considered partially motivated expressions, meaning their overall meaning can often be inferred from the meanings of their components, particularly through the metaphorical interpretation of the phrase as a whole. It is important to highlight that this metaphorical meaning arises from either a complete or partial shift in meaning from the original word combination, usually based on a comparison between two different real-world objects or ideas. Typically, phraseological unities maintain a relatively high degree of lexical stability. Examples include:

To add oil to the fire – to worsen an already bad situation

A dark horse – a person who is secretive or unexpectedly talented

To bend the knee – to surrender or submit to authority

The scholar A.I. Smirnitsky proposes a classification combining semantic meaning and structural characteristics (Maharramazada, 2024; 4):

1. One-member collocations – Consist of multiple words, but only one carries the primary meaning (e.g., to make up).

2. Two-member collocations – Have no single dominant word but form a set expression (e.g., for good or ill).

3. Poly-member collocations – Longer idiomatic expressions (e.g., to burn the candle at both ends).

I.V. Arnold classifies phraseological units based on their grammatical function, grouping them according to parts of speech (Maharramazada, 2024; 5):

1. Noun-based expressions:

Maiden name (surname before marriage) / Brains trust (group of experts) / Cat's paw (someone used by another for personal gain)

2. Verb-based expressions

Take advantage / Pick and choose / Give one the bird (to fire someone)

3. Adjective-based expressions

High and mighty / As old as the hills

4. Adverb-based expressions

Tooth and nail / By heart / Once in a blue moon

5. Preposition-based expressions

In consequence of / On the ground of

6. Interjection-based expressions

Bless one's soul! / Hang it all!

As scholars classify phraseological units based on various factors, including their degree of stability and how restricted their components are, one of the most widely accepted classifications was given by A.V. Koonin, who defines these units as word groups with partially or fully transferred meanings. His classification divides them into different categories based on their communicative function (Masimova, 2018; 12):

1. Nominative phraseological units: Expressions that describe objects, states, or qualities (e.g., a bull in a China shop – someone who is clumsy or careless).

2. Nominative-communicative units: Verb-based phrases that form complete sentences when used in the passive voice.

3. Interjectional phraseological units: Fixed expressions that convey emotions or intentions rather than naming objects.

4. Communicative phraseological units: Proverbs and sayings that function as complete statements.

There is another classification in terms of the types of phraseological units (Masimova, 2018; 11):

1. Phraseological concretions – phrases where the literal and figurative meanings are completely unrelated.

2. Phraseological collocations – expressions containing words that have both literal and figurative meanings.

3. Idiomatic expressions – fixed word groups with set meanings and structures.

The analysis of linguistic materials reveals that most of the examined phraseological units possess a figurative, motivated meaning based on metaphorical transfer. These expressions belong to the category of phraseological units. For example:

- Reopen the wound – to express admiration or delight.
- Tear your hair out – to experience deep despair.
- Dizzy – to feel extreme excitement, nervousness, or anxiety.
- Throws in a fever – to become physically unwell due to strong emotions like indignation or anger.

• Eyes on the forehead climb – to feel intense fear or shock.

• The arches are shaking – to tremble with fear or nervousness.

• Hair stands on end – to be utterly terrified.

• Lowering hands – to lose hope, become inactive, give in, or fall into despair.

• Add fuel to the fire – to intensify hostility between individuals.

• Make big (round) eyes – to show extreme surprise or confusion.

• To bite a bit – to lose self-control or become uncontrollable.

• To tease geese – to provoke anger in someone.

• Live like a cat and a dog – to be in constant conflict or enmity.

• Pouted like a mouse on its rump – to be deeply offended, angry, or displeased.

• To sit on pins and needles – to feel extreme anxiety or restlessness. (Saidova, 2021; 91).

Phraseological adhesions are similar to non-derivative words in terms of function as their meanings are entirely unmotivated. Such expressions are relatively uncommon among the examined phraseological units. One example is to get up on the left foot, meaning to wake up in a bad mood. The imagery behind this phrase traces back to the archetypal opposition between "right" and "left" which the right side symbolizes success and good fortune while the left is traditionally linked to negativity, misfortune and an evil spirit tempter.

The frequent use of phraseological expressions in this study may be attributed to the fact that human emotions are often visibly expressed through facial expressions, gestures and body posture. For example:

- Facial expressions – Trembling lips, an open mouth, widened eyes.
- Gestures – Pulling one’s hair, throwing up hands in frustration, dismissive hand movements.
- Posture – Holding the head high with confidence, turning up the nose in arrogance, hanging the head in sadness. (Saidova, 2021; 91).

The analysis of phraseological units related to emotions followed a structured process:

1. Identifying relevant expressions from a phraseological dictionary.
2. Analyzing their core meaning based on dictionary definitions.
3. Categorizing them into subgroups based on their distinctive semantic features.

A key criterion in the selection and classification of these phraseological units was their grammatical characteristic – specifically, their verbal nature. Phraseological units that describe emotional states in Russian idioms share a common semantic core related to human emotions. Similarly, English phraseological expressions also reflect emotional experiences:

- Hangs his head – To feel deep sadness or disappointment.
- Eyes on the forehead climb – To be extremely shocked or confused.
- Hold (have) a heart – To suppress anger or resentment.
- Make big (round) eyes – To express astonishment.
- Keep yourself in check – To maintain self-control and composure (Saidova, 2021; 91).

The linguistic analysis indicates that phraseological units with negative evaluative connotations are the most numerous. This is because negative assessments in language are broader and more varied than positive ones.

A.V. Koonin also developed a classification of phraseological units based on how they are formed. He distinguished between primary and secondary methods of formation (Shamsiddinova, 2022; 4-6).

• Primary methods involve creating phraseological units directly from free word combinations. These include:

a) Semantic transformation of terminological expressions – one of the most productive methods in Modern English is the re-interpretation of technical or scientific terms. For example:

Launching pad – originally referring to a platform for launching spacecraft (uchish maydoni), is used figuratively to mean a starting point or base (yuborish manzili).

To link up – which technically means to establish a connection (aloqa o‘rnatmoq), can also mean to get acquainted or meet (tanishmoq).

b) Meaning shift in common word-groups – many phraseological units emerge when everyday phrases undergo a shift in meaning. Examples:

Granny farm – originally a neutral term, now used to refer to an elderly care home (qarilar uyi).

Trojan horse – from classical mythology, now also used to describe malicious software in computing (kompyuter uchun dastur).

c) Alliteration – the repetition of initial consonant sounds can also create expressions. For instance:

Sad sack – a term for an unfortunate or miserable person (baxtsiz voqea),

Culture vulture – someone excessively interested in the arts (san’atga ishqiboz odam).

d) Expressive language – interjections and emotionally charged expressions often form phraseological units. Examples:

My aunt! – an exclamation of surprise,

Hear, hear! – used to express strong agreement or approval.

e) Distortion of existing word-groups – some units form by altering or misinterpreting phrases.

For instance:

Odds and ends is derived from odd ends and now refers to miscellaneous small items.

f) Use of archaisms – some phraseological units are formed by incorporating outdated or old-fashioned words. For example, *in a brown study*, meaning *deep or gloomy thought*, retains the archaic meanings of both components.

g) Transfer of expressions from one context to another – certain phrases gain idiomatic status when moved from a specific domain into general usage. For example, *that cock won't fight*, originally used in cockfighting (sports), becomes idiomatic when used metaphorically in everyday conversation to mean something is unlikely to succeed.

h) Use of imaginative or surreal imagery – some units are built on unreal or imaginative images. For instance:

To have butterflies in the stomach – meaning to feel nervous or anxious (xavotir olmoq),

To have green fingers – meaning to be good at gardening (bog'bonlik qilish qobiliyatiga ega bo'lmoq).

i) Adoption of expressions from notable figures – Phrases originating from famous authors or politicians often enter everyday language. Examples include:

Corridors of power (from C.P. Snow),

American dream (popularized by James Truslow Adams, referenced by Alby),

Locust years (Winston Churchill),

The winds of change (Harold Macmillan).

• Secondary methods involve the creation of new phraseological units based on existing ones.

These include:

a) Conversion – this involves changing the grammatical category of a phrase. For example, *to vote with one's feet* (verb phrase) becomes *vote with one's feet* (noun phrase).

b) Change in grammatical form – for instance, the proverb *Make hay while the sun shines* can be transformed into a verbal phrase *to make hay while the sun shines*.

c) Analogy – new units are created by modeling them on existing ones. For example, *Curiosity killed the cat* inspired *Care killed the cat*.

d) Contrast – some units emerge through opposition to an existing expression. For example:

Cold surgery (a planned operation) was coined as a contrast to acute surgery (an emergency procedure),

Thin cat (a poor person) contrasts with *fat cat* (a wealthy, powerful person).

e) Shortening of proverbs or sayings – parts of longer expressions are clipped to form new idioms. For example, the proverb *You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear* was shortened to *make a sow's ear*, now meaning to make a mistake (xato qilmoq).

f) Borrowing from other languages – idioms may be borrowed either through direct translation (loan translations) or as phonetic borrowings. Examples:

Living space (from the German Lebensraum),

To take the bull by the horns (Latin origin),

Mèche blanche, corps d'élite (French), and *sotto voce* (Italian).

Professor N. Amasova proposed a classification of phraseological units based on the semantic roles of their components. She distinguishes between two main types:

Idioms – these are expressions where all components carry an idiomatic meaning, making the phrase non-literal. For instance:

To toe the line – to follow orders precisely.

A free lance – someone who works independently.

Phrasemes – in these expressions, only one element has a specialized, bound meaning while the other retains its usual sense. Examples:

Dutch courage – bravery resulting from alcohol.

To bring to book – to hold someone accountable.

Small years – referring to childhood.

Small beers – weak or insignificant matters (originally meaning diluted beer).

In conclusion, phraseological units are an essential part of a language's vocabulary, reflecting the cultural and national identity of its speakers. Understanding their structure and meaning is vital for both linguistic research and practical language use, particularly in translation.

V.V.Vinogradov	Phraseological adhesions	Expressions with the strongest semantic cohesion; meaning cannot be deduced from individual components.	to get up on the left foot
	Phraseological unities	Stable word combinations with figurative meanings; meaning is metaphorical, metonymic or comparative and partially motivated.	to add oil to the fire
	Phraseological combinations	Expressions which one component is phraseologically bound while the other remains semantically free.	to come to power
A.I.Smirnitsky	One-member collocations	Consist of multiple words, but only one carries the primary meaning.	to make up
	Two-member collocations	Have no single dominant word but form a set expression.	for good or ill
	Poly-member collocations	Longer idiomatic expressions.	to burn the candle at both ends
I.V.Arnold	Noun-based expressions	Phraseological units functioning as nouns.	Maiden name, Brains trust, Cat's paw
	Verb-based expressions	Phraseological units functioning as verbs.	Take advantage, Pick and choose, Give one the bird
	Adjective-based expressions	Phraseological units functioning as adjectives.	High and mighty, As old as the hills
	Adverb-based expressions	Phraseological units functioning as adverbs.	Tooth and nail, By heart, Once in a blue moon
	Preposition-based expressions	Phraseological units functioning as prepositions.	In consequence of, On the ground of
	Interjection-based expressions	Phraseological units functioning as interjections.	Bless one's soul!, Hang it all
A.V. Koonin	Nominative phraseological units	Expressions that describe objects, states or qualities	a bull in a China shop
	Nominative-communicative units	Verb-based phrases that form complete sentences when used in the passive voice	pull somebody's leg

	Interjectional phraseological units	Fixed expressions that convey emotions or intentions	a pretty kettle of fish
	Communicative phraseological units	Proverbs and sayings that function as complete statements	familiarity breeds contempt

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