CONCEPT OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS. FUNCTIONAL, STRUCTURAL AND SEMANTIC CLASSIFICATION OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

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ABSTRACT

Phraseology being an integral part of any language or culture is the branch of linguistics dealing with stable word-combinations characterized by a specific transference of meaning. The study of English phraseology has grown on a faster pace in last decades. The current article aims at crystallizing the certain classification of phraseological units according to their functional and semantic structure. Phraseological units as well in terms are called idiomatic word groups with a fixed lexical composition and grammatical structure however, their meaning, is ubiquitous for to native speakers of the target language, and is generally figurative and cannot be derived from the meanings of the phraseological units. The phraseology is the branch of linguistics dealing with stable word-combinations characterized by a specific transference of meaning from the component parts of the word. Some community of scientists regard phraseological units as lexical combinations, the meaning of which is defined by the whole expression. There are a number of basic concepts and definitions of phraseological units. Phraseological unit is a non-motivated word-group that cannot be freely made up in speech but is reproduced as a ready made unit. Reproducibility is regular use of phraseological units in speech as single unchangeable collocations. Idiomaticity is the quality of phraseological unit, when the meaning of the whole is not deducible from the sum of the meanings of the parts. Stability of a phraseological unit implies that it exists as a ready-made linguistic unit which does not allow of any variability of its lexical components of grammatical structure.

KEYWORDS

phraseological concretions, phraseological collocations, idiomatic expression, phraseology and idiomaticity, figurative and nonfigurative phraseological units, the problem of terminology, word-combinations and word-groups

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The types of phraseological units:
1) phraseological concretions - the literal and figurative meanings are unequivocally unrelated.
2) phraseological collocations - include a word or words with a meaning that is both literal and figurative.
3) idiomatic expression - a word group whose structure and meaning are fixed.

Other classifications of phraseological units according to type exist as well. They include classifications based on there restrictions in the selection of variable structural elements, those based on the fixed or variable composition of the word components, and those based on the degree to which the phraseological unit’s structure and components are fixed. The aggregate of phraseological units differing in terms of meaning and structure constitutes a language’s stock of idioms. The predominant characters which manifest the nature of phraseological units can be collaboratively expressed in a following way:
1) non-motivated word-groups
2) cannot be freely made up in speech
3) reproduced as ready-made units
4) structurally stable
5) possess stability of lexical components
6) reproduced as single unchangeable collocations

Lexical and grammatical stability of phraseological units is displayed in the fact that no substitution of any elements whatever is possible in the following stereotyped (unchangeable) set expressions, which differ in many other respects; all the world and his wife, red tape, calf love, heads or tails, first night, to gild the pill, to hope for the best, busy as a bee, fair and square, stuff and nonsense time and again.

In a free phrase the semantic correlative ties are fundamentally different. The information is additive and each element has a much greater semantic independence where each component may be substituted without affecting the meaning of the other: cut bread, cut cheese, eat bread. Information is additive in the sense that the amount of information we had on receiving the first signal, i.e. having heard or read the word cut, is increased, the listener obtains further details and learns what is cut. The reference of cut is unchanged. Every notional word can form additional syntactic ties with other words outside the expression.

The classification of phraseological units. In accordance with many linguists, phraseological units are word combinations, the meaning of which is defined according to the whole expression but not due to their components or language parts. With relation to notional component binding, phraseological units should be divided into figurative and nonfigurative. As aforehighlighted, nonfigurative phraseological units are called as phraseological collocations. Analysing these phraseological units, it should be taken into consideration that their language components express their meaning.

Figurative phraseological units are known as idioms. As it is obvious, idiom is a language expression, the meaning of which is not the sum of meanings constituting their components. It should be noted that phraseological units are frequently changing into cliches, phraseological units in the source text and the ability to find a corresponding equivalent during the translation process are the most tangible stages for the translator.

Phraseological units differ from free word-groups semantically and structurally:
1) they convey a single concept and their meaning is idiomatic, it is not a mere total of the meanings of their components
2) they are characterized by structural invariability (no word can be substituted for any component of a phraseological unit without destroying its sense (to have a bee in one's bonnet (not cap or hat)).
3) they are not created in speech but used as ready-made units. Unlike a word, a phraseological unit can be divided into separately structured elements and transformed syntactically

Phraseological units are classified based upon several criteria.

The classification system of phraseological units proffered by Professor A. V. Koonin is based on the combined structural-semantic principle and it also considers the quotient of stability of phraseological units. Prof. A. V. Koonin defines a phraseological unit as a stable word group with wholly or partially transferred meaning. In his classification phraseological units are subdivided into classes, subclasses and types. Classes are distinguished according to their function in communication determined by their structural-semantic characteristics.

Nominative phraseological units - are represented by word-groups, including the ones with one meaningful word, e.g. a bull in a china shop ‘a person who is careless, or who moves or acts in a rough or awkward way’. All units of this kind class denote objects, states, qualities and the like. The first class also includes word-groups with a predicative structure, such as as the crow flies ‘in a straight line’, and, also, partially predicative phrases of the type see how the land lies ‘to try to discover what the situation really is before you make a decision’, ships that pass in the night ‘chance acquaintances’.

Phraseological units of this class fall into the following subclasses:
- substantive: crocodile tears – ‘if someone sheds crocodile tears, they seem sad, sorry, or upset, but they do not really feel this way’; Pandora’s box – ‘a process that, if started, will cause many problems that cannot be solved’;
- adjectival: as good as gold – ‘(informal) behaving in a way that other people approve of’;
- adverbal: by & by ‘(old-fashioned) before long; soon’, to and fro ‘backwards and forwards’;
- verbal: to go to pot ‘(informal) to be spoiled because people are not working hard or taking care of things’.

Nominative-communicative phraseological units include verbal word-groups which are transformed into a sentence when the verb is used in the Passive Voice.
Interjectional phraseological units include interjectional word-groups and some interjections with predicative structure. These phraseological units which express feelings and intentions. They are neither nominative nor communicative but stable lingual units by nature. Communicative phraseological units are represented by proverbs and sayings.

These four classes are divided into sub-groups according to the type of structure of phraseological units, whether it is unchangeable (“closed”) or changeable (“open”), that is whether the components of a phraseological unit are variable or invariable.

Vis-a-vis the structural criteria A. V. Koonin introduces a semantic one – presence of full or partial transference of phraseological meaning which contributes to idiomaticity. Phraseological units with partial transference of meaning preserve their literal meaning with one of their components, e.g. close (shut) one’s eyes to smth. ‘to ignore something or pretend that you do not know it is happening’, as sober as a judge ‘completely sober’, dormant (sleeping) partner ‘a person who has put money into a business company but who is not actually involved in running it’, fit smb. like a glove ‘fit very well’.

Thus, classification by A. V. Koonin is of a comprehensive character.

There are phraseological units, expressing statement, that have the form of a complete sentence. A. V. Koonin calls them communicative. Among communicative phraseological units two groups of expressions are distinguished: proverbs and sayings.

Prof. Smirnitsky classifies phraseological units according to the functional principle. Two groups are distinguished:

1) phraseological units
2) idioms.

Phraseological units are neutral, non-metaphorical when compared to idioms: get up, fall asleep, to take to drinking. Idioms are metaphoric, stylistically coloured: to take the bull by the horns, to beat about the bush, to bark up the wrong tree.

Structurally prof. Smirnitsky distinguishes one-summit (one-member) and many-summit (two-member, three-member, etc.) phraseological units, depending on the number of notional words: against the grain, to carry the day, to have all one’s eggs in one basket.

The problem between phraseology and idiomaticity. Idiomaticity and possibilities to transform phraseological units. In the research paper the major concept of idiomaticity aspect was to compare the degree of it in single idiomatic words and in phraseological units, while in discussing transformation possibilities the purpose was to show how phraseological units can be changed in grammatical and lexical terms. Phraseological units or “idioms” as a school of scientists prioritize and the figurative meanings that they carry on have drawn the attention of many linguists. Phraseological units make up an important part of the English lexicon for they exist in both: literary and everyday languages. They also play a great role in language for they make it more vivid and more “colourful”. As idiomaticity is regarded to be a problematic issue, it would be contrasted with compositionality in order to emphasize the difference between the two terms. The present paper sheds light upon taking into consideration the concept of idiomaticity and transformation of phraseological units in the English language. As English possesses two terms to denote the phrases with figurative meaning, it should be stated that British, American, and Western Europe linguists mainly use the term “idiom”. Following this further, in modern linguistic works the two terms are often treated as synonyms. Phrasal verbs can be treated as phraseological units if the stated fact can be taken into account that they consist of two lexical items – a verb and a preposition, and this construction has a different meaning than the meanings of each constituent taken separately.

The problem of terminology. Before analyzing phraseological units, a clear definition of the terms ‘idiom’ and ‘phraseological unit’ should be given. The most significant matter at this point is whether the terms ‘phraseological unit’ and ‘idiom’ can be treated as synonyms. In the linguistic literature both terms are used and the reader can sometimes encounter problems in understanding them. In this division the problem of the usage of terminology will be analyzed. An idiom, as it becomes clear from the given definition, is a phrase, which means that it must consist of at least two words. The majority of linguists agrees with this idea and treats an idiom as a multiword expression. The term ‘phraseological unit’ was introduced by Russian linguists and is mainly used in Russia and Eastern Europe. One more important challenge, which is to put forward sufficiently, is idiomaticity. This term also requires clarification. Idiomaticity is the mechanism that enables phrases to take on meanings that go beyond the meaning of their parts. The term idiomaticity could be applied not only for certain phrases but also for single words. Though single words can in no way be accepted as phraseological units, they can be idiomatic to the certain extent. The term “idiomatic” means that a word can to the certain extent be understood figuratively, but is not accepted as a separate
phraseological unit. Idiomatic word can be defined only as a part of a certain phraseological unit. Speaking about idiomaticity, one more term should be introduced: compositionality. Compositionality, is the property that the meaning of the phrase is derived from the meaning of the words in the phrase and the grammatical relation that joins them. To put it plainly, compositionality is the antonym of the term idiomaticity.

The majority of the reach an agreement that a phraseological unit is a sequence of words, or in other words a phrase and a single word could not be treated as a phraseological unit. What is more, if every morpheme was a phraseological unit or at least a part of it, the linguists would not be able to explain the behaviour of the language, for all the words would carry an idiomatic meaning and should be understood figuratively. Some scientists consider that phraseological units to be fixed context units, in which it is impossible to substitute any of the components without changing the meaning not only of the whole unit, but also of the elements that remain intact. This idea is supported by A. V. Koonin (1970), who also claims phraseological units to be stable.

**Resume.** In the cutting edge universe, phraseological units are vexed issue topical for the majority of scientists nowadays. According to many outstanding specialists, phraseological units are lexical combinations, the meaning of which is defined by the whole expression. The most distinctive feature of phraseological unit is its emotional expressiveness and conciseness of thought expression. To explain it plainly, phraseological units are functioning in the newspaper style. It should be noted that phraseological units are very often transformed into “stock phrases”. Defining phraseological units in the text and the ability to find an equivalent to it during the translation process is the most important stage for the translator. In order to translate a phraseological unit, the translator should use phraseological dictionaries and context plays an important role during the translation process. In the termination, it should be deduced that phraseological units reflect culture and a national mentality of a definite nation.

**REFERENCES**