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TYPOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

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Phraseology is one of the sources that enlarges and enriches vocabulary. It is the most colourful part of vocabulary system, and it represents the peculiar vision of the world by this speaking community. It reflects the history of the nation, the customs and traditions of the people speaking the language. Phraseology forms a special subsystem in the vocabulary system which units are called differently by different linguists. There can be met such terms as phraseological units, phraseologisms, set expressions, idioms. Thus these terms can be used interchangeably. It should be noted that when we speak about phraseological units we mean a word group consisting of two or more words, e.g. *Black Death, to show one's teeth*. It is necessary to differentiate between free word groups and phraseologisms. By using semantic approach, we see that the meaning of a free word group is the sum of literal meanings of words this free word group consists of. Thus, phraseological units can be defined as stable word groups with a specialized meaning of the whole.¹ The following features can be singled out from this definition:

- **Stability.** The usage of a phraseological unit is not subject to free variations, and grammatical structure of phraseological units is also stable to a certain extent, e.g. *red tape* NOT *red tapes*. Stability makes phraseological units more similar to words, rather than free word combinations.
- **Idiomaticity.** The meaning of the whole is not deducible from the sum of the meanings of the parts.
- **Reproducibility.** Phraseological units are used in speech as single unchangeable / ready-made collocations.

In lexicology there are different opinions on phraseology: how it should be defined, classified, described, and analyzed. The word “phraseology” has very different meanings in Russia and in Great Britain or the United States.

Phraseology as a branch of linguistics has thoroughly been worked out by Russian linguists. V.V.

¹ Vrbinc, A., & Vrbinc, M. (2014). Phraseological units with onomastic components: The case of English and Slovene. *Revista de lingüística teórica y aplicada*, 52(1), 133-153.

Vinogradov defined phraseological units as expressions where the meaning of one element is dependent on the other, irrespective of the structure and properties of the unit. A.I. Smirnitsky regarded them as set expressions which do not possess expressiveness or emotional coloring.² The opposite approach was expressed by I.V. Arnold considering phraseologisms as imaginative, expressive and emotional units of the language. N.N. Amosova calls such expressions fixed context units, i.e. units in which it is impossible to substitute any of the elements without changing the meaning not only of the whole unit, but also of the elements that remain intact. While in English and American linguistics no special branch of study exists, and the term “phraseology” has mainly a stylistic meaning. According to Webster's dictionary phraseology is “mode of expression, peculiarities of diction, i.e. choice and arrangement of words and phrases characteristic of some author or some literary work”. As far as semantic motivation is concerned phraseological units are extremely varied from motivated, e.g. *black dress*, to partially motivated, e.g. *to have broad shoulders* or to demotivated like *tit for tat*, *red tape*. (Lexical and grammatical stability of phraseological units is displayed by the fact that no substitution of any elements is possible in the stereotyped 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 non sense*, *time and again*, *to and fro*).³

Russian academician V.V. Vinogradov developed his original classification in the field of Russian phraseology. The classification is based upon the motivation of the unit, i.e. the relationship existing between the meaning of the whole and the meaning of its component parts. Phraseological units can be classified into three principle groups according to the degree of motivation: phraseological combinations, phraseological unities, and phraseological fusions.⁴

- 1) **Phraseological combinations** are partially motivated; they contain one component used in its direct meaning while the other is used figuratively: *break a rule*, *break a law*, *break a promise*. In this group of phraseological units some substitutions are possible which do not destroy the meaning of metaphoric element. In these expressions the words *rule*, *law*, *promise* are used in their direct meanings, while the meaning of the verb *break* is kept intact and used metaphorically, i.e. partially motivated.
- 2) **Phraseological unities** are much more numerous in the English language. They are also partially non-motivated. The meaning of phraseological unities can usually be understood through the metaphoric meaning of the whole phraseologisms, e.g. *to stick (to stand) to one's guns* – “to refuse to change one's statements or opinions in the face of opposition, implying courage and integrity”, *a hard nut to crack* – “a person or thing that is difficult to understand or influence”.
- 3) **Phraseological fusions** are completely non-motivated word groups representing the highest degree of blending together, e.g. *tit for tat*. The meaning of components is completely absorbed by the meaning of the whole, by its expressiveness and emotional properties. Phraseological fusions are specific for every language and do not lend themselves to literal translation into other languages, e.g. *white elephant* – “expensive but useless thing”. Phraseological fusions can not be understood and always require using a dictionary.

The analysis of the origin of phraseological units may contribute to a better understanding of meaning of a phraseological unit. According to the origin all phraseological units fall into two groups: native and borrowed. The main sources of **native** phraseological units are:⁵

² Gafarli, Z. (2024). Teaching Some Types of Phraseological Units in English Lessons. *Вестник КазНУ. Серия филологическая*, 193(1), 173-180.

³ Nikulina, E. (2015). English phraseology: integration with terminology science. *Journal of language and education*, 1(2), 41-45.

⁴ Shtoltzel, Y. Y. (2018). The notion and criteria for classification of phraseological units. *Advanced Linguistics*, (2), 9-13.

⁵ Munat, J. (2003). When is a noun string a phraseological unit?. *Recherches anglaises et nord-américaines*, 36(2), 31-47.

- terminological and professional units of the language, e.g. navigation:
- *to cut the painter* – “to become independent”, *to lower one's colours* – “to give in”;
- British literature, e.g. *the green-eyed monster* – “jealousy” (W. Shakespeare);
- British traditions and customs, e.g. *baker's dozen* – “a group of thirteen”. In the past British merchants of bread received from bakers 13 loaves of bread instead of 12. The 13th loaf was merchant's profit;
- legends and superstitions, e.g. *a black sheep* – “a less successful or more immoral person in a family or in a group”. People believed that a black sheep was marked by the devil;
- historical facts and events, personalities, e.g. *to do a Thatcher* – “to stay in power as prime minister for three consecutive terms”, *to carry coals to Newcastle* – “to take something to a place where there is plenty of it available”. Newcastle is known as a city in Northern England where a lot of coal was produced.
- phenomena and facts of everyday life concerning different spheres such as sport, environment, food, etc., e.g. *to get a head start* – “start before all others” from horse racing (sport), *to eat one's words* – “to admit that something you said was wrong”.

The main sources of **borrowed** phraseological units are as follows:

- the Holy Script, e.g. *the kiss of Judas* – “any display of affection whose purpose is to conceal any act of treachery”;
- ancient legends and myths belonging to different religious or cultural traditions, e.g. *Achilles' heel* – “a weak part of something, especially of someone's character, which is easy for other people to attack”;
- facts and events of the world history, e.g. *to meet one's Waterloo* – “to be faced with, esp. after previous success, a final defeat, a difficulty or an obstacle one cannot overcome” (from the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815);
- variants of the English language, e.g. *a hole card* – “a secret advantage that is ready to use when you need it” (American);
- other languages (classical and modern), e.g. *the fair sex* – “women”, from French: *le beau sex*; *let the cat out of the bag* – “reveal a secret carelessly or by mistake”, from German: *die Katze aus dem Sack lassen*.

Phraseological transference is a complete or partial change of meaning of an initial word group as a result of which the word group acquires a new meaning and turns into a phraseological unit. Phraseological transference is mainly based on metaphor, metonymy, simile, etc.:⁶

1. Transference based on **metaphor** is a likening of one object (phenomenon, action) of reality to another, which is associated with it on the basis of real or imaginable resemblance, e.g. *to join the majority* – “to die”, *fat cat* – “a wealthy and powerful person, especially a businessman or politician”.
2. Transference based on **metonymy** is based on contiguity of properties, relations, etc. of two objects. The transfer of name is conditioned by close connections between two objects; the idea about one object is integrally linked with the idea about the other object, e.g. *a silk stocking* – “a rich, well-dressed man”. Here we see the replacement of the genuine object (a man) by the article of clothing which was very fashionable and popular among the men in the past.
3. Transference based on **simile** is the intensification of some feature of an object (phenomenon,

⁶ Naciscione, A. (2010). Stylistic use of phraseological units in discourse. John Benjamins Publishing Company. 43 p.

thing) denoted by a phraseological unit by comparing it with another object (phenomenon, thing) belonging to an entirely different class in order to show resemblance, e.g. *as like as two peas, as old as the hills*.

So, a word group is lexically motivated phraseological units are also modeled according to patterns existing in the language, but the meaning of a phraseological unit is not just a sum of literal meanings of the components. Such a word group is lexically non-motivated. The degree of motivation can vary from non-motivated to partial and complete. Completely motivated word groups are not in the focus of attention of phraseology. Partially motivated and completely non-motivated word groups are considered to be phraseological units or idioms.

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