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THE NOTION AND CRITERIA FOR CLASSIFICATION OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

Abstract. The main purpose of the study is to describe the nature of the phraseological units and the criteria for their clasification. Concerning the goal, the following tasks are set and fulfilled: the terms such as phraseologism, idiom are studied and described, the criteria for the allocation of phraseological units are reviewed as well as the different criteria for the selection of phraseologisms. All this allows us to form a theoretical basis for further analysis. The article highlights the features of phraseological units, identifies the criteria and their classification. The difference between the terms "idiom" and "phraseologism" is shown. The structure of phraseologisms is characterized. Criteria of stable expressions are their idiomaticity, stability (morphological, syntactic, lexico-semantic and stability of use) and word equivalence. Phraseologisms occupy an intermediate position between words and free word groups. It is noted that, on the one hand, they have features of words, and on the other hand – features of free word groups. That's why they are sometimes difficult to distinguish. Additionally, it is stated these difficulties are exacerbated by the fact that the expressed properties of phraseologisms are expressed in various idioms in varying degrees. These difficulties are also manifested in various classifications of phraseological units, which were disassembled in this article. In our article were used such scientific methods as the method of vocabulary definitions, the descriptive method and the method of analysis in order to give the definitions of terms idiom and phraseology, to describe the criteria for classification of phraseological units and to analyze different thoughts on phraseology definition.

Keywords: phraseological unit; idiom; free word-group; set phrase; idiomaticity; stability; equivalency.

1. INTRODUCTION

Phraseologisms are linguistic units that make our language more expressive and indicate the specifics of the culture of this language. With the help of phraseology we can learn more about the culture of the speakers, their traditions and vision of the world.

The problem of phraseological units functioning in modern languages has been the subject of a special study in the works of foreign linguists, such as: Allerton, Nesselhauf, & Skandera (2004), Cowie, (1998), Granger, & Meunier (2008), Gelbrecht (2013), Naciscione (2010), and others.

Among contemporary Ukrainian linguists researching phraseology of the English language the following names should be mentioned: Belozerov (2002) (studying new phraseological formations in the sphere of economy), Cherednychenko (2005) (innovational phraseological verbalization), Oliynyk (2010) (evaluative phraseological units), Skrypnyk (2006) (somatic phraseological units with the meaning of interpersonal relations). And the scholars (Amosova, 1963; Kunin, 1970; 1996; Vinogradov, 1977; 1986; Arkhangelsky, 1968; 1996; Teliia, 1996, and others) who have offered the most well-known classifications of the English phraseology.

Nowadays, the issues of identifying and classifying phraseologisms as well as integrating them into theoretical research and their practical application has a much more profound influence on researchers and their agendas in many different sub-disciplines of linguistics as well as in language learning, acquisition, and teaching, natural language processing, etc. These facts testify to the topicality of our research that shows the difference between phraseological units and free word-groups.

The purpose of the article is to outline the nature of phraseological units and the criteria for their differentiation.

In accordance with the intended aim, the following **tasks** have been put forward:

1) to study and describe the terms concerning the present scholarly investigation: phraseology, phraseological unit, idiom;

2) to single out the criteria for differentiation of phraseological units;

3) to examine different classifications of phraseological units.

2. METHODS

The method of vocabulary definitions was used to search and describe the concepts of phraseology and idiom with the help of modern dictionaries of the English and Ukrainian languages. The descriptive method was used to describe the criteria for the differentiation of phraseologisms.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Phraseological unit is a fixed, stable combination of words, acting in the language as a single, indivisible and integral expression (Amosova, 1963; Kunin, 1970; 1996; Vinogradov, 1977; Cowie, 1998; Granger, & Meunier,2008). There also exists the term "idiom", which means a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words, e.g. *over the moon, see the light*, etc. (Amosova, 1963; Kunin, 1970; 1996; Vinogradov, 1977; 1986).

In languages there exist a lot of word combinations which are habitually termed phraseological units or idioms. Such lexical units make our speech expressive. Most of them are based on vivid metaphors, similes, contrasts. Many idioms are image-bearing; they reflect people's wisdom and wit, for example: *take the bull by the horns, a white elephant, smell a rat, to be on the rocks, beat about the bush, bright as a new pin, a big fish in a little pond* and many others. In Ukrainian and post Soviet Union countries' linguistic tradition they are termed phraseological units. British and American linguists prefer the term idioms.

The term "phraseology" originated in Russian studies which developed from the late 1940's to the 1970's (Amosova, 1963; Kunin, 1970). It is now currently exploited to refer either to the set of phraseological units in a language, or to the branch of linguistics studying them.

While the notion of phraseology is very widespread, just as with other linguistic concepts, different authors have defined it differently, sometimes not providing a clear-cut definition, or conflating several terms that many scholars prefer to distinguish. However, a closer comparative look at the vast majority of studies that exist allows us to identify a set of parameters that are typically implicated in phraseological research.

Researchers (Howarth, 1998; Gries, 2008) believe a rigorous definition of co-occurrence phenomenon in general, and phraseology in particular, needs to take a stand regarding at least the following six parameters:

1) the *nature* of the elements involved in a phraseologism;

2) the *number* of elements involved in a phraseologism;

3) the *number of times* an expression must be observed before it counts as a phraseologism;

4) the permissible *distance* between the elements involved in a phraseologism;

5) the degree of *lexical and syntactic flexibility* of the elements involved;

6) the role that *semantic unity* and semantic *non-compositionality/ non-predictability* play in the definition.

We stick to the definition of phraseology which is defined as a branch of lexicology, the subject matter of which is the study and systematic description of phraseological units (PhUs) (Ginzburg, 1979, p. 74). Phraseological unit is a non-motivated word-group that cannot be freely made up in speech but is reproduced as a ready-made unit.

In lexicology there is a great ambiguity of the terms phraseology and idioms. Opinions differ as to how phraseology should be defined, classified, described and analyzed. The word *phraseology* differs in interpretations of meanings in our country and in Great Britain or the United States. In linguistic literature the term is used for the expressions where the meaning of one element is dependent on the other, irrespective of the structure and properties of the unit (Howarth, 1998; Kunin, 1970); with other authors it denotes only such set expressions which do not possess expressiveness or emotional colouring (Smirnitsky, 1956, p. 189), and also vice versa: only those that are imaginative, expressive and emotional (Arnold, 1986, p. 176). Amosova names such expressions *fixed context units*, i.e. 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 (Amosova, 1963, p. 134). Akhmanova and other scholars (Arnold, 1986; Kunin, 1996) insist on the semantic integrity of such phrases prevailing over the structural separateness of their elements (Akhmanova, 1978, p. 99). We share the opinion of Kunin, who lays stress on the structural separateness of the elements in a phraseological unit, on the change of meaning in the whole as compared with its elements taken separately and on a certain minimum stability (Kunin, 1996, p. 24). Phraseology, in its turn, is considered to be mode of expression, as well as choice and arrangement of words and phrases typical of some author or some literary work (Cowie, 1998).

The difference in terminology ("set-phrases", "idioms", "word-equivalents") reflects certain differences in the main criteria used to distinguish types of phraseological units and free word-groups. The

term "set phrase" implies that the basic criterion of differentiation is stability of the lexical components and grammatical structure of word groups (Ginzburg, 1979, p. 75).

The term "idiom" generally implies that the essential feature of the linguistic units is idiomaticity or lack of motivation (Ginzburg, 1979, p. 76).

The term "word-equivalent" stresses not only semantic but also functional inseparability of certain word groups, their aptness to function in speech as single words (Ginzburg, 1979, p. 76).

Depending on what feature of a phraseological unit is taken as the basic criterion of differentiation the definition may vary:

− phraseological unit is a complex word-equivalent in which the globality of nomination reigns supreme over the formal separability of elements; it is reproduced in speech (Arkhangelskiy, 1968, p. 95);

− phraseological unit is a stable word combination characterized by fully or partially specialized meaning of their members (Ginzburg, 1979, p. 5);

− phraseological unit is a semantically and grammatically inseparable word-group functioning as a word-equivalent (Smirnitsky, 1956). Thus a semantic approach stresses the importance of idiomaticity, functional-syntactic inseparability, contextual stability of context combined with idiomaticity.

As to their structure PhUs are characterized by structural separateness, because they are combinations of at least two lexemes. It is important to point out the criteria of selection of PhUs because they have certain features in common with free word-groups and compound words.

The criteria offered by linguists (Kunin, 1996) are as follows: idiomaticity, stability, and word-equivalency.

Structural separateness or divisibility of PhUs into separately structured elements (words or lexemes). Structural separateness helps distinguish PhUs from compound words. In PhUs contrary to compound words each constituent can acquire grammatical forms of its own, e.g. a PhU *a hard (tough) nut to crack* − "a problem difficult to find an answer to" can be used in the following forms: *They are hard nuts to crack, it is a harder nut to crack, the toughest nut to crack*.

The next important criterion of PhUs is stability. Kunin distinguishes several aspects of stability (Kunin, 1996, p. 25):

a) stability of use means that PhUs are introduced into speech ready-made and not created each time anew like free word-groups. Stability of use proves that a PhU like a word is a language unit. PhUs come into being as individual creations and later they become common property. For example, due to the great role Shakespeare's writings play in the life of English-speaking communities, many PhUs, first being Shakespeare's individual creations, became world's value and joined the stock of PhUs of the English language, such as: *hoist with one's own petard, cakes and ale, give the devil his due, neither rhyme nor reason, to one's heart's content*, etc.;

b) lexico-semantic stability means that components of PhUs are either irreplaceable or can be partly replaced in some cases (variants). There might be some slight occasional changes in meaning but the meaning of the PhU is preserved throughout its variability. For example, one cannot change the noun constituent in the PhU *to give the sack* − "to dismiss from work" without destroying its phraseological meaning. In the following examples one of the components can be replaced by a synonymous lexeme: *to tread / walk on air* − "to be delighted", a *skeleton in the cupboard / closet* − "a family secret", *not to lift / raise/stir a finger* – "not to help". Semantic stability is retained in such cases;

c) morphological stability presupposes that the components of PhUs are restricted as to the usage of morphological forms. Noun constituents in PhUs are used either only in the singular (*chase the wild goose* − "to strive for the impossible", *play a lone hand* − "to act alone") or in the plural (*small potatoes* – "trifles"). Although variability is possible: *to be in deep water (s); as happy as a king (kings)*. The change of an article is impossible as it results in destruction of a PhU as in the above mentioned example: *to give the sack*, change of the article will destroy the phraseological meaning;

d) syntactic stability is stability of the order of the components of a PhU. Changing of the order of the constituents in the following PhUs: *cakes and ale* − "material comforts", *bread and butter* – "simple and wholesome", *bread and circuses* – "the necessities of life and the provision of amusements" results in the destruction of the PhUs. But there might be variations within syntactic stability, i.e. grammatical and stylistic inversion. "To grammatical inversion belongs transformation of passivization, i.e. conversion of a verbal PhU from active into passive voice: *break the ice* – "do or say sth. to remove or reduce social awkwardness or tension" − *the ice is broken*; to stylistic inversion − the change of the word order for the sake of expressivity: *bear one's cross* – "suffer, or cope with irksome responsibility as a condition of life or for a period" − *What a cross he has to bear!*

Idiomaticity, or lack of motivation characterizes the meaning of the hole of a PhU which is transferred or figurative unlike the meaning of a free word-group. PhUs are partially motivated or non-motivated word-

groups, i.e. idiomatic, as idiomaticity is lack of motivation. All the above-mentioned examples are idiomatic. To partially motivated PhU belong examples like *a dog in the manger* because we can deduce their meanings through metaphoric transferences of meanings of component lexemes: "a person who selfishly prevents others from using or enjoying sth. which he keeps for himself, though he cannot use or enjoy it" and a great number of others. The PhU *kick the bucket* infml. "die" is non-motivated. The lack of motivation can be explained by the fact that in the course of time the association between each particular meaning of the component lexemes and the meaning of the whole word combination was faded and lost.

PhUs acquired their specific type of meaning − phraseological meaning. Individual lexical meanings of component lexemes are faded and subdued; they are subordinate to the general meaning of the PhU. There exist close semantic links between component lexemes of a PhU which constitute its phraseological meaning. Phraseological meaning comes to the fore if we compare a PhU with a homonymous free word-group. For example: *a rough diamond* − 1) "a diamond which was not polished" is a free word-group and 2) "an uncultured, uncouth person who has good and useful qualities" is a PhU.

There is another criterion of PhUs, which is the criterion of function. Idiomaticity and stability of PhUs bring them closer to words. Smirnitsky considered PhUs to be word equivalents because PhUs like words are introduced into speech ready-made and function in speech as single words (Smirnitsky, 1956, p. 189).

PhUs and words have identical syntactic functions and they are interchangeable in certain contexts. For example, *throw one's hat in the air* − "rejoice", *the eye of the day* − "the sun". PhUs like words have synonyms. For instance, the following phraseological synonyms convey the meaning: "to have not enough money for one's needs": *be in low waters, be on the rocks, be on one's beam ends, be as poor as a church mouse, be hard up, be on one's uppers*. Antonyms: *a good mixer* vs. *a bad mixer*, *bad (foul) language*, *unparliamentary language* vs, *parliamentary language*. PhUs like words though in a much smaller degree are characterized by polysemy and homonymy, e.g. *get under sb's skin* infml. − 1) to annoy, to get on sb's nerves; 2) to produce a great impression on sb.

Although words and PhUs have much in common, they are different language units, the main difference between them is structural, i. e. PhUs are characterized by structural separateness, while words are marked by structural integrity.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Thus, PhUs occupy an intermediate position between words and free word-groups. Being intermediate units, they have features of words, on the one hand, and free word-groups, on the other. That is why it is difficult to distinguish between them. Moreover, these difficulties are enhanced by the fact that salient properties of PhUs (idiomaticity, stability, and word-equivalency) are expressed in different PhUs in different degree. These difficulties are also revealed in various classifications of PhUs.

Making a conclusion, the main purpose of the study was to describe the nature of the phraseological units and the criteria for their selection. Concerning the goal, the following tasks were set and fulfilled: the terms such as phraseologism, idiom were studied and described; the criteria for the allocation of phraseological units were characterized, such as stability (lexico-semantic, morphological, stability of use, syntactic stability), idiomaticity and word-equivalency; as well as different criteria for the selection of phraseologisms were investigated.

All the above mentioned allows us to form a theoretical basis for further analysis in this sphere.

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Ю. Ю. Штолцел. Сутність фразеологічних одиниць та критерії їх класифікації. Основна мета дослідження полягає у висвітленні ключових характеристик фразеологічних одиниць як семантично цілісних і синтаксично неподільних мовних знаків та критеріїв їх класифікації. Дослідження у сфері фразеології беруть свій початок зі спостережень дослідників-лексикологів, які звернули увагу на існування в мові стійких сполучень слів. Фразеологізми найчастіше з'являються у мові у результаті переосмислення вільного поєднання слів. Характерною особливістю фразеологізмів виступає їхня здатність символічно виражати певний зміст. З-поміж характерних ознак фразеологізмів такі: семантична єдність, здатність заміняти окремі слова, цілісність значення, ідіоматичність. На основі праць, у яких започатковано вчення щодо фразеологізмів, проаналізовано такі поняття: фразеологія, ідіома; розглянуто критерії розподілу фразеологічних одиниць, а також різні класифікації фразеологізмів. Окреслено різницю між термінами «ідіома» та «фразеологізм». Схарактеризовано структуру фразеологічних одиниць. Зазначено, що критеріями сталих виразів є їхня ідіоматичність, стабільність та словесна еквівалентність. Вказано, що фразеологізми займають проміжне положення між словами та вільними групами слів. Тобто, з одного боку вони мають риси слів, а з іншого – вільних словосполучень. Наголошено, що саме з цієї причини їх деколи важко розрізнити. Крім того, ці труднощі посилюються тим, що виражені властивості фразеологізмів виражаються у різних ідіомах в різній мірі. Це також виявляється у різних класифікаціях фразеологічних одиниць, що подано у статті.

Ключові слова: фразеологічна одиниця; ідіома; вільне словосполучення; сталий вираз; ідіоматичність; еквівалент.