

PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS AS A STYLISTIC MEANS OF EXPRESSIVENESS AND EVALUATION IN THE TEXT

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Abstract. This article delves into the intricate role of phraseological units as a stylistic means of expressiveness and evaluation in English texts, emphasizing their contribution to enriching language, conveying subtle emotional nuances, and reflecting the speaker's or writer's subjective attitude. Phraseological units fixed, idiomatic expressions such as idioms, collocations, and proverbs form a significant part of the expressive potential of any language, particularly English, which boasts a vast and diverse phraseological inventory. The study explores how these units function as powerful stylistic devices that not only enhance the vividness and emotional tone of discourse but also serve as tools for evaluation, judgment, and characterization. Drawing on linguistic theories from phraseology and stylistics, the paper analyzes the semantic, pragmatic, and functional properties of phraseological units in both literary and non-literary texts.

Keywords: Phraseological units, stylistic devices, expressiveness, evaluation, figurative language, discourse analysis, semantic function, pragmatic meaning, emotional tone, cultural expression, metaphor, evaluative language, language and style.

Introduction. Language is not only a means of communication but also a powerful instrument of stylistic expression and evaluation. Among the various linguistic tools that contribute to the richness and diversity of language, phraseological units occupy a central place. These fixed, idiomatic combinations of words such as idioms, proverbs, phrasal verbs, and collocations are deeply embedded in the structure of the English language and are widely used in both spoken and written discourse. Their unique structure and figurative meaning allow speakers and writers to convey complex emotions, attitudes, and evaluations with brevity, color, and stylistic flair.

The study of phraseological units has attracted the attention of linguists, philologists, and stylisticians due to their multifunctional nature. They not only serve as markers of cultural identity and communicative competence but also play a crucial role in enhancing the expressive potential of a text. In particular, phraseological units function as stylistic devices that enrich language with vivid imagery, irony, humor, and connotative meaning. At the same time, they are often used to express evaluative judgments either explicitly or implicitly about people, events, and situations, thereby shaping the tone and perspective of the text.

This article explores the dual function of phraseological units in English texts: their role as a means of expressiveness and as a tool for evaluation. By examining their semantic, pragmatic, and stylistic characteristics, the study aims to demonstrate how these linguistic units contribute to the communicative and aesthetic effectiveness of discourse. Drawing on examples from literature, media, and everyday speech, the article investigates the ways in which phraseological expressions reflect the speaker's or writer's attitude, create emotional resonance, and guide the reader's interpretation.

Through this analysis, the article seeks to highlight the importance of phraseological units not only as a component of language structure but also as a key element of stylistic creativity and evaluative expression. By understanding their functions and effects, we can gain deeper insights into how language is used to influence, persuade, entertain, and connect with others.

Phraseological units, also known as set expressions, play an integral role in the stylistic and evaluative structure of the English language. They are more than just decorative linguistic elements; they serve as carriers of expressive meaning and evaluative judgment, contributing significantly to the stylistic richness and emotional depth of both spoken and written texts. This part of the article explores the structure, classification, semantic features, and stylistic functions of phraseological units, and provides examples of how they operate in various types of English discourse.

The nature and structure of phraseological units. Phraseological units are stable combinations of words whose meaning cannot always be deduced from the literal meanings of their individual components. In English, these include idioms (e.g., *kick the bucket*), proverbs (e.g., *a stitch in time saves nine*), fixed collocations (e.g., *strong tea, heavy rain*), phrasal verbs (*give up, look after*), and catchphrases. They are marked by fixedness, figurativeness, and reproducibility.

From a structural point of view, phraseological units can take the form of:
Nominal phrases (*a piece of cake, a storm in a teacup*);
Verbal phrases (*to spill the beans, to bite the bullet*);
Adjectival phrases (*as fit as a fiddle, full of beans*);
Adverbial phrases (*by and large, in a nutshell*);
Sentential phrases or proverbs (*the early bird catches the worm, when in Rome, do as the Romans do*).

These forms allow speakers to compress meaning into compact expressions that often carry emotional or attitudinal coloring, enriching the stylistic quality of the text.

Classification and stylistic types. Phraseological units can be classified by degree of idiomaticity and stylistic coloring:

Full idioms, whose meanings are completely non-compositional (*to let the cat out of the bag*);

Semi-idioms, where one component retains its literal meaning while the other is used idiomatically (*to lose one's head*);

Collocations, which are often semantically transparent but fixed (*pay attention, make a decision*).

Stylistically, phraseological units can be neutral, literary, or colloquial. Colloquial idioms (*shoot the breeze, pull someone's leg*) add an informal tone and familiarity, while literary or archaic expressions (*the powers that be, a thorn in the flesh*) lend a formal or historical flavor to the discourse. The stylistic function they perform depends largely on the context and the author's intent.

Expressive function of phraseological units. Phraseological units are often employed to make speech or writing more vivid, emotional, and figurative. Through metaphor, hyperbole, irony, and other stylistic devices embedded within them, they bring color, rhythm, and expressiveness to language. For example:

Break the ice used to express the act of initiating social interaction;

Cry over spilled milk used metaphorically to warn against dwelling on past mistakes.

Such expressions allow authors to avoid monotony and provide stylistic variation. They are especially common in literary texts, journalism, and public speeches, where rhetorical effect is important. Writers and speakers rely on them to attract attention, create imagery, and convey complex ideas succinctly and memorably.

Furthermore, phraseological units often serve an emotive function, helping to reflect the emotional state of the speaker or evoke emotions in the reader. For instance, *walking on air* conveys elation, while *down in the dumps* expresses sadness or depression. These emotive phraseologisms enrich the text with psychological depth and personal involvement.

Evaluative function of phraseological units. Evaluation in language is the expression of value judgments, attitudes, or opinions about people, actions, or situations. Phraseological units are often used as subtle evaluative tools. Because many idioms and proverbs are culturally bound, they carry implicit moral or social judgments.

For example:

He's not the sharpest tool in the shed conveys a negative evaluation of someone's intelligence.

Actions speak louder than words suggests a preference for deeds over promises, often used to express approval or criticism indirectly.

Phraseological units are particularly useful in indirect evaluation, allowing speakers to convey judgment without direct or confrontational language. This is especially valuable in political, journalistic, and literary texts, where tone and subtext are important. They also contribute to irony and sarcasm, as in:

What a bright idea! (said sarcastically when the idea is actually foolish).

Moreover, phraseological units reflect cultural stereotypes and values, thereby reinforcing collective attitudes and social norms. For instance, idioms related to hard work (*burning the midnight oil, putting your nose to the*

grindstone) positively evaluate diligence, while others may criticize laziness or incompetence (*a couch potato, not pulling one's weight*).

Contextual use and stylistic flexibility. The meaning and stylistic effect of a phraseological unit often depend on its contextual use. Writers may manipulate the form of an idiom for stylistic or humorous effect this is called phraseological variation or creative phraseologism.

For example:

Standard idiom: *The straw that broke the camel's back.*

Variation: *The tweet that broke the camel's back* (modern, ironic twist).

Such creativity enhances the text's expressiveness and engages the reader with familiar patterns presented in new, often witty, forms. Phraseological units can also be subject to semantic shifts based on context, emphasizing their flexibility as stylistic tools.

Examples from English texts. In literature, authors like Charles Dickens, William Shakespeare, and George Orwell have skillfully used phraseological units to create memorable characters and convey social commentary. For example, in *Hamlet*, the phrase "*to be or not to be*" has transcended its original context and become an idiomatic reflection of existential doubt.

In journalism, phraseological units are frequently used in headlines and editorials to grab attention and convey opinion succinctly, such as:

"Government turns a blind eye to corruption"

"Tech giant's new policy opens a can of worms"

Such usage shows how idiomatic language contributes to both expressiveness and implicit evaluation in persuasive writing.

In everyday conversation, the use of phraseological units indicates fluency and idiomatic competence, allowing speakers to convey attitudes and emotions efficiently. For example, instead of saying "I'm very happy," one might say "I'm over the moon," which is more expressive and emotionally charged.

Phraseological units in English serve as powerful tools of stylistic expressiveness and evaluation. They enrich texts by adding imagery, emotional depth, cultural resonance, and implicit judgment. Whether used in literature, media, or everyday communication, these fixed expressions provide a compact and often figurative way to express complex ideas and attitudes. Their ability to function on both stylistic and evaluative levels makes them indispensable to effective language use, particularly in contexts where nuance, creativity, and persuasion are key.

Phraseological units, with their idiomatic richness and expressive versatility, play a crucial role in shaping the stylistic and evaluative fabric of the English language. As this article has demonstrated, they serve not merely as fixed combinations of words but as dynamic linguistic instruments that convey emotional nuance, cultural identity, and evaluative stance. Their structural diversity and semantic complexity allow for varied and impactful usage in literary texts, media discourse, and everyday communication. Through their metaphorical and often vivid imagery, phraseological units enhance the

expressiveness of a text, enabling authors and speakers to communicate ideas with creativity, subtlety, and rhetorical force. Equally important is their evaluative function: phraseological expressions often carry implicit judgments, opinions, or attitudes, allowing language users to express approval, criticism, irony, or sarcasm in nuanced and culturally resonant ways. Moreover, the contextual flexibility and creative adaptability of these units make them essential tools for stylistic experimentation and innovation. Writers and speakers frequently manipulate traditional idioms for humorous, ironic, or dramatic effect, demonstrating the evolving nature of phraseology in response to contemporary linguistic and cultural contexts.

In conclusion, phraseological units are integral to the expressive and evaluative capabilities of English. Their study not only deepens our understanding of language as a system of communication but also reveals the intricate ways in which meaning, style, and culture are interwoven. As both stylistic enhancers and evaluative markers, phraseological units deserve continued attention in linguistic, literary, and pedagogical research, particularly for their role in fostering linguistic fluency and enriching communicative competence.

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