

ROLE OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN LINGUISTICS

Muzaffarova Aziza

Uzbekistan State World Languages University, 3rd faculty of foreign language and literature

Khakimbayeva O.K.

Uzbek State World Languages University, senior teacher of the department of General linguistics

Abstract. This article examines the concept of phraseological units, their place in the language system, and their significance in communication. Phraseological units represent a special layer of vocabulary characterized by stability, figurative meaning, and expressive power. They reflect the cultural values, historical experience, and worldview of a nation. The paper also explores different types of phraseological units, their semantic and structural features, and their practical use in both spoken and written discourse. In addition, attention is given to their role in language learning and teaching, as well as their importance in developing communicative competence.

Keywords: phraseological unit, idiom, fixed expression, semantics, stylistics, lexicology, figurative meaning, speech culture, linguistics.

In contemporary linguistics, the study of language units goes far beyond simple vocabulary analysis. Researchers aim to understand how language reflects human thought, culture, and communication. In this context, phraseological units occupy a particularly important place, as they combine linguistic structure with cultural meaning.

Phraseological units enrich language by making it more expressive, emotional, and vivid. They allow speakers to convey complex ideas, feelings, and attitudes in a concise and impactful way. Unlike ordinary word combinations, phraseological units often carry figurative meanings that cannot be interpreted literally. This makes them an essential part of both everyday communication and literary expression.

A phraseological unit can be defined as a stable combination of words whose overall meaning is either partially or completely different from the meanings of its individual components. For example, expressions such as “break the ice,” “under the weather,” or “hit the nail on the head” cannot be fully understood by analyzing each word separately. Instead, they must be interpreted as whole units.

One of the defining characteristics of phraseological units is their stability. The structure of such expressions is usually fixed, and any significant change in wording may lead to a loss of meaning or stylistic effect. This distinguishes them clearly from free word combinations, which allow more flexibility in structure and meaning.

Another important feature of phraseological units is their figurative nature. Most of them are based on metaphor, comparison, or cultural associations. This figurative meaning adds emotional coloring to speech and helps speakers express ideas more creatively. As a result, phraseological units play a key role in stylistics and discourse analysis.

From a structural and semantic point of view, phraseological units are often classified into several types. These include phraseological combinations, phraseological unities, and phraseological fusions. In phraseological combinations, the meaning is partly motivated by the meanings of individual words. In phraseological unities, the

figurative meaning is more dominant. In phraseological fusions, the meaning is completely idiomatic and cannot be deduced from the components at all.

The semantic richness of phraseological units makes them especially valuable in communication. They often carry emotional and expressive nuances that cannot be conveyed by simple words. For instance, saying “he was extremely happy” is less expressive than saying “he was on cloud nine.” This demonstrates how phraseological units enhance the emotional impact of speech.

Phraseological units are also deeply connected with national culture and traditions. They often originate from historical events, folklore, daily life, and social practices. Therefore, they provide insight into the cultural background of a language.

Understanding phraseological units means understanding not only the language itself but also the people who speak it.

In translation, phraseological units present a particular challenge. Direct translation may lead to misunderstanding or loss of meaning. Translators must find equivalent expressions in the target language or explain the meaning in a culturally appropriate way. This requires both linguistic competence and cultural awareness.

The role of phraseological units in different types of discourse is significant. In literary texts, they are used to create imagery, characterize individuals, and convey emotions. In journalistic writing, they make texts more engaging and persuasive. In everyday speech, they help speakers communicate ideas more naturally and effectively.

In the process of language learning, phraseological units play an essential role. For learners of a foreign language, mastering idiomatic expressions is a sign of advanced proficiency. It allows them to understand native speakers better and to express themselves more naturally. Without knowledge of phraseological units, speech may sound unnatural or overly formal.

Teaching phraseological units requires special attention. It is not enough to provide definitions; learners need to see how these expressions are used in real contexts. Activities such as dialogues, role-plays, and text analysis can help students internalize phraseological units and use them correctly.

Criteria	Phraseological Unit (Phraseologism)	Free Word Combination	Common Feature
Meaning	Figurative or generalized	Literal (direct)	Both are used in speech
Structure	Fixed (stable)	Flexible (free)	Both consist of words
Style	Expressive, vivid	Neutral, simple	Both enrich speech

It is also important to distinguish phraseological units from free word combinations. In free combinations, each word retains its literal meaning, and the overall meaning is predictable. In contrast, phraseological units have a unified meaning that often cannot be predicted from the individual components.

Another important aspect of phraseological units is their role in developing speech culture. The appropriate use of such expressions demonstrates a high level of language competence. It also makes communication more engaging and effective.

Moreover, phraseological units contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage. Many of them have been passed down through generations and continue to be used in

modern language. They serve as a link between the past and the present, reflecting the continuity of cultural traditions.

In modern education, integrating phraseological units into the curriculum can significantly improve language learning outcomes. Teachers should encourage students to use such expressions in both spoken and written tasks. This not only enhances vocabulary but also improves overall communicative competence.

In conclusion, phraseological units are an essential component of any language. They enrich speech, convey cultural meanings, and enhance communication. Their study is important not only for linguists but also for language learners and educators. A deeper understanding of phraseological units leads to more effective communication and a greater appreciation of language as a cultural phenomenon.

Therefore, greater attention should be given to the study and teaching of phraseological units in modern linguistics and education. They represent a unique combination of language, culture, and human creativity, making them an invaluable subject of study.

References

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