

SEMANTIC FEATURES OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS AND
THEIR PLACE IN THE LANGUAGE SYSTEM

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Abstract: Phraseological units represent one of the most expressive and culturally significant components of a language. This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the semantic features of phraseological units, focusing on semantic integrity, idiomacticity, figurative meaning, and structural stability. Special attention is paid to the emotional-expressive and stylistic potential of phraseological units, as well as their functional role in speech. The study also examines the place of phraseological units within the language system, their relationship with lexical units, and their contribution to linguistic and cultural continuity. The article is based on established linguistic theories and aims to clarify the semantic and systemic nature of phraseological units in modern linguistics.

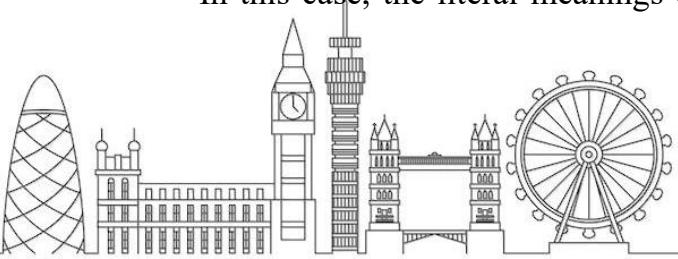
Keywords: phraseological unit, phraseologism, semantics, semantic integrity, idiomacticity, figurative meaning, stability, emotional-expressiveness, stylistic function, language system.

Introduction

In modern linguistics, phraseology occupies a special position as an independent field of research. Phraseological units are not merely combinations of words; rather, they are stable expressions that convey figurative, culturally loaded, and emotionally expressive meanings. Their study is essential for understanding how language reflects national mentality, historical experience, and cultural values.

The relevance of studying phraseological units lies in their active use in everyday speech, fiction, journalism, and educational discourse. Unlike free word combinations, phraseological units function as ready-made linguistic units and play a crucial role in ensuring the expressiveness and conciseness of communication. This article aims to analyze the semantic features of phraseological units and determine their place in the language system from a theoretical and functional perspective.

One of the most important semantic characteristics of phraseological units is semantic integrity. This means that the overall meaning of a phraseological unit cannot be deduced directly from the meanings of its individual components. The components lose their independent semantic value and function only within the unified structure of the expression. For example, in Uzbek, the phrase “Og‘zi qulog‘ida” literally consists of the words mouth and ear, but semantically it expresses the meaning “to be extremely happy.” In this case, the literal meanings of the components are neutralized, and the expression



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functions as a single semantic whole. This feature distinguishes phraseological units from free word combinations, where each word retains its lexical meaning. Semantic integrity ensures the stability and reproducibility of phraseological units in speech and makes them an important part of the lexical system of a language. Another defining feature of phraseological units is *idiomaticity*, which is closely connected with figurative meaning. Phraseological units do not express meaning directly; instead, they rely on imagery, metaphor, and cultural associations. As a result, their meanings often cannot be translated word-for-word into another language without losing semantic nuance.

Idiomatic expressions increase the emotional and expressive power of speech. For instance, expressions such as “Asabimga tegma” (“Don’t get on my nerves”) convey not only information but also the speaker’s emotional state. Figurative meaning allows speakers to express attitudes, evaluations, and emotions more vividly and effectively than neutral lexical units.

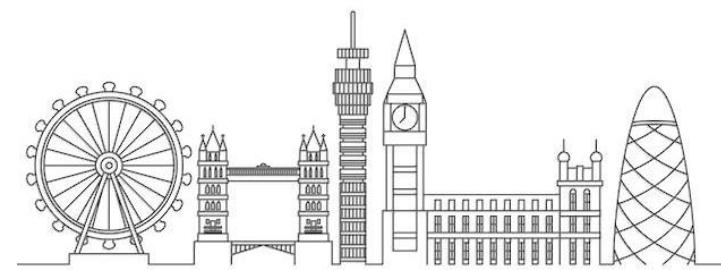
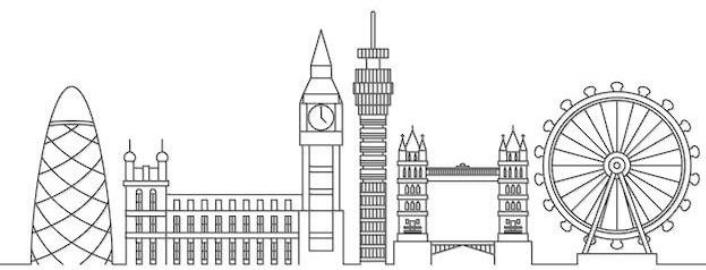
Idiomaticity also presents challenges in language learning and translation, which further emphasizes the importance of phraseological research in applied linguistics.

Phraseological units are characterized by semantic and structural stability. Their lexical composition and grammatical structure are fixed or subject to very limited variation. This stability differentiates phraseological units from free word combinations, which allow greater flexibility in word choice and order.

For example, altering the components of a phraseological unit often leads to the loss of its idiomatic meaning or makes the expression unacceptable in the language system. This fixedness ensures the recognizability and conventionality of phraseological units and allows them to function as ready-made units in speech.

Semantic stability also contributes to the preservation of cultural and historical meanings embedded in phraseological units, making them carriers of collective linguistic memory. Phraseological units demonstrate a wide range of stylistic variation. Depending on their origin and usage, they may belong to colloquial, literary, folkloric, or neutral styles. Phraseological units typical of folk speech reflect oral traditions and collective creativity. Colloquial phraseological units are widely used in everyday communication and express spontaneity and emotional involvement. Literary phraseological units enrich artistic texts by adding imagery, symbolism, and aesthetic value. For instance, the expression “Ko’ngil ko’zi bilan ko’rmoq” (“to see with the eyes of the heart”) is frequently used in literary contexts to convey deep emotional or spiritual perception. Such stylistic diversity enhances the expressive resources of the language.

Phraseological units often carry a strong emotional-expressive component. They allow speakers to convey feelings such as joy, anger, irony, approval, or disapproval in a compact and vivid form. Through phraseological expressions, subjective attitudes become an integral part of communication.





In many cases, phraseological units perform an evaluative function, reflecting the speaker's perspective on events, people, or situations. This makes them especially important in oral speech, fiction, and journalistic writing, where emotional impact is essential. Within the language system, phraseological units occupy an intermediate position between vocabulary and syntax. They are closely related to lexical units but differ from individual words in their multi-component structure and idiomatic meaning.

Phraseological units enrich the lexical stock of a language and expand its expressive potential. They function as stable, reproducible units and contribute to the economy of linguistic expression by conveying complex meanings concisely. Moreover, phraseological units play a significant role in preserving cultural identity. They reflect national traditions, values, historical experiences, and worldview, thereby strengthening cultural continuity and linguistic stability. Phraseological units are an essential component of the language system, characterized by semantic integrity, idiomaticity, figurative meaning, stability, and emotional-expressive potential. Their study provides valuable insights into the interaction between language, culture, and cognition. Analyzing phraseological units from semantic and systemic perspectives remains a relevant task in modern linguistics, particularly in the context of language teaching, translation studies, and intercultural communication.

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