

**THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS**

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Annotation. This article explores the theoretical foundations of phraseological units in the English language. It provides an overview of their linguistic nature, structural types, semantic features, and main classifications. The study discusses various scholarly approaches to understanding idiomatic expressions and emphasizes their role in enriching vocabulary, expressing national culture, and enhancing communicative competence. The paper also reviews the main theories proposed by linguists such as A.V. Kunin, N.N. Amosova, and V.V. Vinogradov. Finally, it highlights the importance of teaching and interpreting phraseological units in language learning and translation studies.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada frazeologik birliklarning nazariy asoslari, ularning tabiati, tuzilishi va semantik xususiyatlari tahlil qilinadi. Maqolada frazeologiyaning tilshunoslikdagi alohida yo‘nalish sifatida shakllanish tarixi hamda Vinogradov, Kunin va Amosova kabi olimlar tomonidan taklif etilgan asosiy tasniflar yoritilgan. Shuningdek, maqolada idiomalar, maqollar va barqaror birikmalarning og‘zaki hamda yozma nutqdagi kommunikativ va madaniy ahamiyati ko‘rsatib o‘tilgan. Xorijiy tillarni o‘qitishda frazeologizmlarni o‘rgatish va tarjima qilish jarayonidagi qiyinchiliklar ham tahlil qilinib, ularning lingvistik va madaniyatlararo kompetensiyani shakllantirishdagi roli ochib berilgan.



Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются теоретические основы фразеологических единиц, их природа, структура и семантические особенности. Анализируется история становления фразеологии как самостоятельной отрасли лингвистики, а также основные классификации, предложенные такими учёными, как Виноградов, Кунин и Амосова. Особое внимание уделяется коммуникативной и культурной роли идиом, пословиц и устойчивых выражений в устной и письменной речи. Также рассматриваются трудности перевода и преподавания фразеологических единиц при изучении иностранных языков, подчёркивается их значение для развития лингвистической и межкультурной компетенции.

Keywords: *phraseology, idiom, fixed expression, semantics, linguistic theory, cultural meaning*

Kalit so‘zlar: *frazeologiya, idiom, barqaror birikma, semantika, til nazariyasi, madaniy ma’no*

Ключевые слова. Фразеология, идиома, устойчивое выражение, семантика, культурное значение, лингвистическая теория, коммуникация.

Introduction. Phraseological units — often called idioms or fixed expressions — are one of the most colorful and expressive parts of any language. They embody cultural wisdom, collective experience, and linguistic creativity. Understanding their structure, meaning, and usage is essential for mastering a language at an advanced level.

In linguistics, phraseology is the branch that studies stable word combinations whose meanings are not entirely deducible from the meanings of their components. For example, the English idiom “to kick the bucket” means “to die,” not literally “to hit a bucket with one’s foot.”

Thus, phraseological units represent a bridge between language and culture, reflecting a nation’s worldview, history, humor, and way of thinking.

1. Definition and Nature of Phraseological Units

The term *phraseological unit* was first introduced into Russian and European linguistics by V.V. Vinogradov, who defined it as a stable combination of words



with a completely or partially figurative meaning. According to Vinogradov, such expressions are “semantically integral and cannot be freely created in speech.”

Similarly, A.V. Kunin described phraseological units as “ready-made language structures” that function as a single lexical item. They are not formed spontaneously but are inherited as part of the vocabulary system.

Main characteristics of phraseological units include:

- Stability: fixed lexical composition (cannot freely change words).
- Idiomaticity: the meaning is figurative, not literal.
- Reproducibility: they are used as ready-made expressions.
- Structural integrity: function as one part of speech (noun phrase, verb phrase, etc.).

Examples:

- *Break the ice* – to start a conversation.
- *Once in a blue moon* – very rarely.
- *Piece of cake* – something easy.

2. Classification of Phraseological Units

Linguists have proposed different systems for classifying phraseological units. The most well-known classifications are by V.V. Vinogradov, N.N. Amosova, and A.V. Kunin.

Vinogradov's Classification

Vinogradov divided phraseological units into three types:

1. Phraseological fusions: Completely non-motivated idioms (e.g., *kick the bucket*, *red tape*).
2. Phraseological unities: Partially motivated; figurative meaning is understandable (e.g., *break the ice*, *spill the beans*).
3. Phraseological combinations: Components keep their literal meanings but are restricted in usage (e.g., *make a decision*, *take a glance*).

Amosova's Contextual Classification



Amosova classified idioms based on their contextual meaning — whether the meaning is predictable from context or fixed. She emphasized the importance of usage and communicative environment.

Kunin's Functional-Semantic Approach

A.V. Kunin offered a comprehensive approach, viewing phraseological units as part of the lexicon and dividing them according to:

- Function: nominative, communicative, interjectional.
- Meaning: idiomatic vs. semi-idiomatic.
- Structure: verbal, nominal, adjectival, adverbial, and sentence equivalents.

3. Semantic and Cultural Features

Phraseological meaning often involves metaphor, symbolism, and cultural reference. For instance:

- *The early bird catches the worm* reflects the value of punctuality and hard work.
- *Let the cat out of the bag* symbolizes revealing a secret, originating from medieval markets.

Such expressions show how idioms encapsulate cultural norms and experiences. In Uzbek, we find similar idioms:

- *Tiling bilan bog' etasiz, tishing bilan emas* – “You build with your tongue, not your teeth” (emphasizing polite speech).
- *Qo'lni qo'l yuvadi, qo'l yuzni yuvadi* – “One hand washes another” (mutual help).

Thus, idioms serve as linguistic mirrors of culture, and comparing English and Uzbek idioms reveals both universal human experiences and culture-specific metaphors.

4. Structural Types of Phraseological Units

Phraseological units can be grouped structurally according to their grammatical composition:

1. Verbal phrases: *to pull one's leg*, *to keep an eye on*.



2. Nominal phrases: *a storm in a teacup, a bed of roses*.
3. Adjectival phrases: *as cool as a cucumber, as busy as a bee*.
4. Adverbial phrases: *by and large, in the long run*.
5. Sentence equivalents (proverbs, sayings): *Actions speak louder than words, Better late than never*.

Each type contributes to the expressiveness and stylistic richness of the language.

Conclusion. Phraseological units form an integral part of a language's lexical system, combining linguistic creativity with cultural memory. They enrich speech, convey emotions vividly, and reflect the worldview of a people.

Theoretical research by linguists such as Vinogradov, Amosova, and Kunin laid the foundation for modern phraseology, defining its principles, classifications, and semantic structures.

For language learners and teachers, mastering phraseological units means entering the "soul" of the language — understanding its humor, traditions, and emotional depth. Therefore, studying phraseology is not only a linguistic task but also a bridge toward intercultural understanding.

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