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PHRASEOLOGICAL ABSTRACTION AS A PROCESS OF SIGN REDUNDANCY FORMATION OF PHRASEOLOGICAL INTENSIFIERS

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Abstract

The key role in the process of developing the system sign properties and functions of phraseological intensifiers belongs to phraseological abstraction. The main content is a description of the levels of phraseological abstraction of phraseological intensifiers based on the English language material. It is emphasized that studying phraseological intensifiers should be aimed at studying their inner side, which determines the relationship of the sign to the world, to the speaker, or the speaker to the sign and its setting. It is pointed out that stable combinations and various kinds of phraseological cohesion exist as special linguistic units, different from words, loose compiled word collocations and sentences; they have features of a special linguistic abstraction, different from that observed in words. As a result, phraseological intensifiers have the function of predication. The adaptability of phraseological intensifiers to the function of predication is also due to the presence in their semantic structure of evaluative and emotive modality. This modality pragmatically «loads» phraseological intensifiers, which leads to their expressiveness. At the same time, the main potential of intensity in the meaning of phraseological intensifiers is brought from the discourse, due to their greater sensitivity to the discourse than words. When comparing phraseological intensifiers with free collocations, it is revealed that they are characterized by the maximum degree of stability and reproducibility in speech in the finished form. It is concluded that it is more economical and efficient to use stable lexicon units than to create them every time during communication.

Keywords: Abstraction, intensifiers, phraseology, sign redundancy, semantic structure, semitological resources

1. Introduction

The problem of studying the sign functions and characteristics of phraseological intensifiers is one of the most urgent problems in modern linguistics. However, this problem relates to issues that are poorly studied.

To achieve our research objective, we set the task to study and describe the semantic characteristics of phraseological intensifiers based on the material of modern English and American authors and data from English thesauruses and phraseological dictionaries.

In our study, we used such linguistic research methods as phraseological analysis, the method of phraseological description, and the interpretative method.

The works of Russian and foreign linguists regarding the problem of the properties and functions of phraseological units, the formation process of sign redundancy of phraseological intensifiers are the theoretical basis of our research (Arkhangelsky, 1994; Baranov & Dobrovolsky, 1996; Bibikhin, 1977; Dobrovolsky, 1993; Grootendorst & Eemeren, 1992; Kaplunenko, 1992; Kunin, 1996; Melerovich, 2011; Searle & Vanderveken, 1986).

The practical value of this research is in the possibility to use its provisions in courses on phraseology, on the theory of interpretation, on the analysis of discourse, in supervising of course papers and theses, as well as in teaching English when training speech influence techniques.

2. Problem Statement

Developing even at the stage of potential phraseology, the system sign properties and functions of phraseological units create the necessary level of sign redundancy.

In this case, redundancy is an absolutely necessary property of the language sign (Bibikhin, 1977). In our study, we used a general semiotic approach to redundancy in idiomatic. This approach supposes to avoid the meaning of «excess», «unnecessary», which the word has in everyday speech and associates it with a concept of «repeatability and reproducibility». In this case, phraseological abstraction plays an important role. Having experienced its impact, phraseological intensifiers assume the necessary redundancy.

However, the research works that were previously carried out mainly studied the external side of phraseological intensifiers, rather than the internal one.

We consider the process of developing the system sign properties and functions of phraseological intensifiers from the point of view of a new cognitive paradigm, namely, through linguistic semantics to semiotics.

Arkhangelsky (1994), one of the first linguists, studying the nature of phraseological abstraction, came to the conclusion that the existing stable combinations and various kinds of phraseological cohesion were special linguistic units having special features of linguistic abstraction that distinguish them from words, freely organized word combinations and sentences.

In studying phraseolog the author used the variational method and phraseological abstraction was considered as a mechanism for diverting the meaning of a phraseological unit from the literal meanings of the components.

Further research in the field of phraseological abstraction theory paid more attention to the semantic side of phraseological units (Kostyushkina, 2017; Universalyuk, 2017).

For example, Melerovich (2011) considered this problem from the point of view of semantics, emphasizing the inseparable connection of phraseological abstraction with the motivation of phraseological meaning.

This dependence, according to the scientist, is inversely proportional, since a certain type of motivation of phraseological meaning indicates the absence or partially corresponding type of phraseological abstraction, and vice versa – the more complete the phraseological abstraction, the weaker the motivation of the corresponding type.

This point of view is shared by Kunin (1996), who believes that the semantic structure of an idiom depends on the level of phraseological abstraction; the higher the level, the higher the degree of non-motivation. The scientist also identified four levels of phraseological abstraction: the highest, high, medium, and low; the first two levels include the full and incomplete degrees of abstraction.

3.   Research Questions

Arkhangelsky (1994), being one of the first linguists to study the nature of phraseological abstraction, came to the conclusion that the existing stable combinations and various kinds of phraseological cohesion are special linguistic units. Such units have special features of linguistic abstraction that distinguish them from words, freely organized phrases and sentences. Studying phraseology the author used the variational method, where the phraseological abstraction was considered as a mechanism for diverting the meaning of a phraseological unit from the literal meaning of the components. The following research works in the field of the phraseological abstraction theory were focused on the semantic side of phraseological units (Kostyushkina, 2017; Universalyuk, 2017).

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4.   Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the article is studying the development process of system sign properties and functions of phraseological intensifiers. This process is known to consist in creating a sufficient level of a sign redundancy, which is a necessary property of the language sign.

5. Research Methods

These tasks, as well as the linguistic specific feature of subject study, using the following linguistic research methods in the work, determine:

the method of phraseological analysis (it is used for analysing the phraseological abstraction of PHI);

the method of phraseological description (it used for analysing the phraseological meaning of PHI). This method is related to the conceptual modelling theory of the actual meaning of idioms, developed by Baranov and Dobrovolsky (1996, p. 58), as well as with the procedure for analysing the metaphorical meanings of Searle and Vanderveken (1986);

the interpretive method (it is used for understanding and interpreting the PHI in its entirety of its bonds and connections). The basis of the interpretive method is the concept of discursive analysis developed by Dijk (2015).

6. Findings

The conducted research has shown that phraseological intensification is characterized by the highest and high level of abstraction.

In general, the highest level of phraseological abstraction is found in most phraseological intensifiers. For instance: as the day is long, as they come, as they make them, fine and …, good and …, nice and …, rare and …, as anything, like anything, as old boots, like blazes, as hell, like nobody's business and others.

Already at the stage of their arising the meaning of the above-mentioned intensifiers abstracts completely from the literal meaning of their components.

Kaplunenko (1992) believes that phraseological abstraction is also associated with the configuration distracting of phraseological intensifiers' reproducing from the author's configuration.

The completed research works confirm that the phraseological abstraction degree of phraseological intensifiers increases with the distraction of the configuration of their reproduction from the contexts of their primary use (Bobrova, 2013; Kostyushkina, 2017).

Therefore, the variety of possibilities of phraseological units is realized due to their internal semiological resources.

We analyze the following phraseological intensifiers, such as the day is long.

Initially, the phraseological intensifier as the day is long is found in the works of W. Shakespeare in the content as merry as the day is long, a like wildfire as a part of the predicate to burn. E.g.

1.Beatrice: … he shows me where the bachelors sit and there live we as merry as the day is long. «… whose words like wildfire burnt the shining glory of rich-built Illion» (Kunin, 1984, p. 259).

Further, it turns out that these phraseological intensifiers are not used in their first meaning, but are reproduced in the content with different predicates. E.g.

1.They are quiet, peaceable, tractable, free from drunkenness, and they are industrious as the day is long (Kunin, 1984, p. 342).

2.«A real honest-to-god Albino?» Shaw asked. «As real as the day is long» (Kunin, 1984, p. 212)

3.Next day word went about the country like wildfire that Mr. Renny had beaten Jessica Brown within an inch of her life (Kunin, 1984, p. 244).

4.The report … spread like wildfire through the town.

Our research also made it possible to distinguish a group of phraseological intensifiers in the corpus of phraseological intensification. It should be emphasized that these phraseological intensifiers are characterized by a high level of phraseological abstraction, e.g. like the devil, as the devil, like a shot, like lightning, like mad, like crazy, like a house afire and others.

The highest level of abstraction demonstrates the duality of phraseological meaning due to the lack of connection between the meaning of phraseological intensification and the meaning of its prototype, while the highest degree has such a connection. From this, it follows that being at the stage of potential phraseology, the mentioned above phraseological intensifiers, do not have stability. They depend entirely on the semiotic connections in the context. Kunina emphasizes that a phraseology law is that phraseological units go compulsory through the stage of potential phraseology. It is this stage, as Kunina considers, is characterized by forming of such features as stylistic colouring and metaphoricity in phraseological intensifiers (Kunin, 1996). Thus, the phraseological intensifiers, to have been necessarily included in the stage of potential phraseology, are part of statements representing metaphorical comparison or metaphorical assimilation (Bobrova, 2017; Melgunova & Kitova, 2020).

One can observe the context of arising of the phraseological intensifier like one o'clock in the examples below:

1.«Mr. Guppy and Mr. Jobling repair to the rag and bottle shop, where they find Krook still sleeping like one o'clock; that is to say, breathing stertorously with his chin upon his breast, and quite insensible to any external sounds, or even to gentle shaking (Dickens, 1993, p. 238).

This example demonstrates a phraseological intensifier with a very high level of in formativeness, i.e. for its understanding it requires compensation by means of context (Rogoznaya & Zamanstachuk, 2014).

Therefore, this meaning is repeated by the part of the context to the right of the phraseological intensifier.

At this stage, the mechanism of phraseological abstraction actively begins to act and provides translation of combinations of words having a potentially holistic meaning. This mechanism also provides an abstraction of reproducing configuration from the author's configuration.

As a result, the phraseological intensifier like one o'clock is no longer perceived as some new utterance having an increased informative content and does not require repetition in these contexts. The sign redundancy of the phraseological intensifier due to its internal semiological resources is of sufficient importance for reproduction. For example:

1.He saw, too, that the journal opened by his plate was of a financial nature. «Anything about the meeting, sir? Your speech must read like one o'clock» (Galsworthy, 1976, p. 261).

2.But a devout admirer had entertained the preacher at luncheon that day in the hotel in which I was staying. … The preacher tucked in to the arroz like one o'clock. (Maugham, 1952, p. 68)

The examples given above allow us to make one conclusion that the action of phraseological abstraction in the field of semantics of phraseological intensifiers is the semantic context integration. It

should be emphasized that the most common way of integration is semantic duplication. An important point of semantic context integration is the stage of preparing the semantic integration of the idiom.

The process of duplicating the components of a phraseological configuration is due to the phraseological abstraction. It aims to increase the redundancy of the meaning of phraseological intensification, by regulating and translating it into a language sign with a predictable meaning.

This is the process of semantic integration developing of phraseological intensification. It is characterized by universal knowledge of the meaning of phraseological intensification as a sign of the language system.

7. Conclusion

The corpus of phraseological intensifiers can be relatively divided into two groups. The first group, consisting of   phraseological intensifiers of the highest level of phraseological abstraction, is much more numerous. These phraseological intensifiers are characterized by breaking the connection between the meaning of the idiom and the meaning of its components.

The second group represents the phraseological intensifiers with a lower level of phraseological abstraction. The literal meanings of the phraseological intensifiers' components are partially isomorphic to the figurative ones.

Phraseological abstraction is the process of forming the sign redundancy of phraseological intensifiers as far as it transforms the context-related redundancy of phraseological intensifiers into their proper phraseological one.

It is the phraseological redundancy forms the pragmatic, semantic and syntactic parameters of phraseological intensifiers and determines their sign system-language characteristics. It follows that the phraseological abstraction is also the result, since, the phraseological intensifier, reaching a certain level of phraseological redundancy, becomes a unit of language.

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