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Occasional phraseology: semantic and pragmatic aspects

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Abstract

The issue is devoted to the problems of comparative studying of transformations of the initial form of phraseological units. The semantic-cognitive mechanism of such transformations in the structure of phraseological units is under concern. In this connection various approaches of different scientists to such science as phraseology in Western and Russian linguistics are described. The paper provides a systematization of these approaches to the study of idioms and offers an integrated modeling method of phraseological transformations based on the identification of syntactic, logico-semantic, motivational, structural, derivational and nominative models of phraseological transforms. The actuality of the theme is determined by the insufficient development and understanding of the ambiguity of phraseological transformations, their causes, specificity, determined by the type of language and the lack of a comprehensive study and description of all the stages in the formation of phraseological transforms: occasionalisms and neologisms.

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Introduction

The dynamic state of the language is caused by the formation, functioning and interaction of commonly used language units together with occasional.

The modern paradigm of linguistics marks different word-formation activities at different stages of language development. It is assumed that the study of authors' variation of phraseological units in speech is very significant for understanding the patterns of word-formation as "new phraseological units are created on the same model like author's converted units" [1].

In the study of idioms, the majority of Western European and American linguists suggest a link with the "decoded aspect of axiomatic" as one of the main features of units of language. It is assumed that each coding is idiomatic. George W. Grace was the first not only to introduce the term 'idiomatology' but also to use it in the sense that coincides with our conviction that it shows principal features of a science; besides, Grace's 'idiomatology' can be considered synonymous, to a certain extent at least, with the generally accepted sense of 'idiomaticity'. Grace's idiomatology is scientific, namely in the sense that he preferred to avoid unnecessary confusion of social factors, taking care of pure linguistic description.

The famous scholar Sweet notes that "the meaning of each idiom is an isolated entity that cannot be inferred from the meaning of the words of which it is composed" [2]. More than half a century later scientists as Bar-Hillel [3], Cowan [4], Fries [5], Nida [6] and Pei [7] interpreted idiom as lexical group. Kenneth Pike (1967) called his phrasal unit a hypermorpheme and described it as a specific sequence of two or more specific morphemes [8]. Thus what we normally refer to as 'idiomatic expression' must be a subset of the hypermorpheme. Allan Healey (1968) excluded monomorphemic lexemes as idioms, yet both linguists understood idioms in the usual and generally accepted view, referring to an additional hypermorphemic (i.e. idiomatic) meaning which is not predictable from its constituent parts [9]. Adam Makkai's (1972) ideas and opinions follow his stratificational view, and therefore it is rather difficult to integrate them to non-stratificationalist discussions [10]. However, the data that he collected and most of his terminology on idiomaticity are a significant contribution.

Many linguists such as Bloomfield, Harris, Martinet, Chomsky, Lyons, and many others, did not care very much about idioms. Nonetheless, there appeared hundreds of valuable contributions that dealt with idioms and similar expressions. Jespersen [11] called them formulas to show that those tricky, exceptional expressions demanded a mental activity that was different from that required in free expressions. Many scholars then employed the term 'formula' in the same or similar sense.

Linguistic analysis of western works on phraseology shows that the approaches to the study of idioms are more structural, based on formal approach while semantics is what really matters Russian scientists.

The results of the study of existing works in phraseology suggest that there was not enough use of communicative and functional approach to the study of the phraseological material and the absence of the theory related to the phraseological transformations. The theory of this level can reveal the causes, assumptions and parameters of transformations as a process. The diachronic aspect of the research and analysis of the historical background of media and literature corpus can detect the direction of the dynamics of transformational theory related to the phraseological transform.

The interlanguage comparison of phraseological transformations in different languages facilitates the identification of the dynamics and evolution of the phraseological image.

The aim of this paper is to identify the similarities and differences in the syntactic, logico-semantic, motivational, structural, derivational and nominative models of phraseological transforms.

We used the method of semantic transformations, which is based on the fact that, the semantic identity and typological similarity of the internal form of a number of phraseological units belonging to different languages, indicate the formation of unified semantics for structural and semantic model.

The sources of phraseological fund replenishment in modern Russian and English are sports, show business, economic, political and state activity characterized by the active dynamics of divergent processes whose intentions are pragmatic phraseological transformations.

In the framework of the cognitive approach the phrase formation is a cognitive process, in which, with the help of mental operations on the basis of old knowledge we see the categorization of new knowledge and new units in speech, language, and the mental lexicon.

The basis of the linguistic approach to the phrase formation includes the following principles: (1) the principle of language representation of the human experience through the prism of human activities, with the most important feature is the ability to implicit linguistic representations: the cognitive structure of the new words can even reflect those elements of the denotative situations that do not have the explicit expression; (2) phrase formational structure of the new language unit (or occasionalism) may be related to the propositional structure motivating judgment and can be considered as a special type of knowledge representation; (3) the principle, based on the categorization of the prototypical nature of human experience, knowledge about the world and their language representation.

Considering the process of categorization as a process of inclusion in a particular category of knowledge of previous experience, it can be argued that in new derivative we observe a comparison of two conceptual structures, one of which categorizes, and the second identifies the object category.

The study of the linguistic parameters of the phenomenon of phraseological transformation implies the vision to this process as a cognitive process, aimed at the conceptualization of new facts in the matrix existing in the phraseological corpus of language, the result of which are new phraseological transforms.

The paper is written as part of a broad approach to the scope of phraseology, on the basis of which phraseological unit (PU) is interpreted as a linguistic unit, characterized by the following properties: the asymmetry of the expression and the content of the plan, i.e. the semantic complications of the separate formation, reproducibility, stability of structure and use, as well as the low degree of regularity.

An idiom is a realization of cultural knowledge, cognitive "memory" which keeps the cultural traditions of folk mentality that determine the functioning and reproduction of phraseology as a constant view of the world.

In the modern theory of phraseology the position on the ability of PU to be a powerful means of compression, through which they pass in compressed form comparable to the amount of text information (objective and subjective) of the knowable object does not raise objections. In this regard, a high informative capacity of conciseness and expressiveness of the phraseological unit makes it indispensable, where it is necessary to give precise, succinct and expressive characteristics of the subject, a person or action. According to the observations of phraseologists, the farther away the initial situation from the reality, the brighter and more original image generated by it.

Based on the experience of socialization in a particular culture and knowledge of the world language a person has the ability to relate phraseological image as an element of "phraseology" picture of the world with the signified referent.

Each language has its own way of conceptualizing the world and linguistic personality is obliged to organize the content of an utterance, in accordance with a kind of collective philosophy, which is imposed as a mandatory for all native speakers.

The specific characteristics of the national language including a unique socio-historical experience of certain national community create a characteristic color of the world for a native speaker, due to the national significance of objects, phenomena, processes, selective attitude towards them, which is generated from a specific activity, lifestyle and national culture of people. After all, the language keeps "a fascinating story of the thousands of years of human efforts to understand and explain the world and ourselves in it, it is more closely connected with the national culture: it grows into it, developing it, and expresses it" [12].

However there are significant differences between language and culture. Their mutual substitution is not assumed. The relationship between language and culture can be seen as a relationship of part to whole. The language can be seen as a component of culture and as an instrument of culture. However, the language at the same time self-contained with respect to the culture at large, and it can be regarded as an independent, autonomous semiotic system.

A comparative culture description through the language makes it possible to discover all relevant aspects of national linguistic identity. In turn, the results of this research can be not only material for cognition of related and non-related languages themselves, but also give information about cultural, psychological, spiritual, material levels of different peoples and become an indicator of identity, mentality, feelings and ideas of every nation.

Linguistic identity is understood by us as a social way of owning the rules of language and speech activity, characterized by the national aspect of people, with a certain set of core values and concepts of culture.

An individual thing in a linguistic identity is formed through the inner relation to the language, through the establishment of personal meanings of language, but it should not be forgotten that the language personality influences the formation of linguistic traditions.

Within a conceptual approach, a linguistic identity is a person that owns the language experience of the mankind, the specific linguistic expertise of its people and personal experiences. The cognitive approach includes lexemes to a number of concepts, the values of which form the content of the national linguistic consciousness and form a naive view of the world of native speakers. The set of concepts, concentrating a basis of the culture of the nation, forms a concept sphere of the language. The concepts according to this approach can be any lexical item the value of which can be seen in the form of semantic representation of culture and knowledge about the world.

At present we observe a tendency of a fairly coherent theory in terms of occasional diversions in phraseology, being developed by a number of such Russian scholars as Melerovich, Kryukov, Kolobov, Tretyakova and others.

Occasional phraseology is considered as a set of phraseological speech of new formations that have a characteristic of occasional units like accessory speech, no reproducibility, author affiliation, derivatives, non-normativity, functional disposability, contextual conditioning, increased expressiveness, synchronic and diachronic diffuseness.

Modern linguistic paradigm proves that PU has different abilities to change their composition i.e. a different range of variability transformative potential. A number of characteristics of each PU determine the degree of activity of the conversion processes. Units with an active transformative potential are usually composed of three or more components formed by standard models of phrases and sentences that have an isomorphic form and meaning. The absence of any one or more of these features reduces the activity of the transformation processes.

T. Malinsky points out three conditions for distinguishing phraseological neologisms from the occasional uses of the PU: "there is a triple fixation of neologism by various written sources, checking of the knowledge of the neologism by native speakers and the lack of phraseological units' fixation in monolingual dictionaries" [13].

The formation of occasional variants of PU is performed in the models that exist in the language: "the frequency of transformations has rather definite modeling properties of the main types, its variation with colloquial words..." [14].

The formation of occasional PU can occur on the basis of idioms and proverbs based on when we single out any part of the proverb or saying that is divided into two or more turns. For example, "the more the merrier" comes from the proverb: "the more the merrier the fewer the better cheer".

It is believed that the formation of occasional PU is changing the properties of language PU. Depending on the formation of occasional idiom, the integrity of the component structure breaks and word qualities change.

Obviously, one of the main extra-factors causing occasional transformation of language idioms is mainly author's intentions. Occasional transformations of language idioms are made with the aim to make new, additional meanings by changing the valuation and stylistic markedness, increasing its expressiveness. Changes in the semantics of idiom are motivated by the desire of the authors to concretize the explication, intensify the meaning of PU.

Language phraseological unit is a model for the processes of occasional modeling. For the implementation of the occasional modeling the features of basic PU are revealed which activate the processes of transformation and define author's intentions, using the methods of occasional conversion of PU.

Currently, linguistics studies several major researching methods of the occasional phraseology: (1) "the method of nesting" presented by Khalikova N. which shows the analysis of all occasionalisms of one phraseological unit [15]; (2) classificational method studies the similarities and differences in the use of different phraseological occasionalisms, in which the analysis of the same model is defined as different PU and there is a well-established classification of phraseological occasionalisms on formal aspects of the transformation of component composition.

Obviously, each method has certain advantages. The method of nesting helps to determine the direction of rethinking of semantic components of PU and set the degree of semantic fusion. While classificational method sets the number of typical modifications that have similar motivation and performance variation.

If we compare two or more phraseological units, we see a monotype formula of the logico-semiotic transformation of the original semantic meanings to the final result. In this respect, we speak of a general data model units of the semantic transformation, the unity of their iso-semantic model.

The method of occasional modeling of idioms, developed by Tretyakova I. allows to create a language-based PU of various types of phraseological transforms and make the occasional paradigm of the language PU, thereby identifying transformative possibilities of language idioms.

The algorithm of the method of occasional PU modeling involves the following procedures: 1. the characteristic features of invariant in the language are the following: grammar model, categorical value, the presence of isomorphism meaning and form, motivation, imagery, connotation, the definition of "private" features of PU (presence of archaic elements in the semantics and structure, antonyms, synonymic components, the presence in the idiom components characters, case names, etc.); 2. among the techniques of occasional transformations of idioms are conversion, expansion of composition components, idiomatic ellipsis, replacement of components, contamination, segmentation, modification of the syntactic model, double-actualization and literalization. When using the methods of expansion and replacement of components different concretisators, explicators, expressive intensifiers are met in the component structure of PU; 3. drawing up the individual occasional phrase-forming paradigm [16].

Occasional idioms are based on phrase forming base, phraseological model, language idiom or an invariant.

A complex method of phraseological transformations' modeling involves an obligatory detection of syntax, logical-semantic, motivational, structural and semantic, derivational and nominative models of phraseological transforms. Modeling of these aspects includes the identification of the following:

- the structural organization of idiomatic transformation as a combination of words (syntax model);
- logico-semantic organization of idiomatic transformer (logico-semantic / iso-semantic model);
- the internal form of idiomatic transformer (motivational model);
- the value of the component of idiomatic transformation implemented in a number of phraseological transforms based on their structural and linguistic parameters (structural and semantic model);
- PU-prototype (derivative model);
- a referential area of the idiomatic transform (nominating model) [17].

This objectively reflects the proposed algorithm which is the application of an integrated modeling approach of the phraseological transformation that has a different compatibility of certain lexemes and their equivalents in different languages leading to the fact that the same images get different phraseological reflection.

Thus, it can be confirmed that phraseological transformations in one language will always have different structural organization of idiomatic transform.

Phraseological transforms are the variants of linguistic phraseological expressions that function in speech, which are not recorded in standard dictionaries formed by native speakers with certain communicative goals by transforming the language PU. They generally do not go beyond semantic similarity with a phrase invariant, but are characterized by contextual semantic increments and /or partial change in the component composition.

Occasional idioms are units operating in speech which are not units of the national vocabulary, they are not recorded in the standard dictionaries and formed by individual native speakers with certain communicative goals by transforming of language PU. Such PU are significantly different from a phraseological invariant in the semantics and /or structure.

Thus, changes may affect any of the elements of the semantics of PU in the process of occasional transformations such as denotative, connotative, categorical and imaginative aspect. Created transform may differ significantly from PU in structural and semantic forms, in grammatical terms but the inner form, however, has the link with basic phraseological invariant.

Semasiological analysis shows that the semantics of the majority of occasional phraseologisms are not only defined by lexico-semantic potential of forming components, but also to a certain extent can be predictable.

In all cases, the cognition of certain conditions, objects and situations is not spontaneous but carries out according to the stereotypical models of linguistic culture.

The range of phraseological images in the content of phraseological occasionalisms is established by comparing one type of representation (occasional) to another (common usage). Occasional phraseology has reproducible shaped constants which are objective in a wide range of specific images representing the referential situation, space and object to including the common usage of PU.

The analysis of phraseological transforms in Russian and English has revealed some new trends in their development: the presence of function-stylistically marked units, shift of individual units in the status of common used PU followed by removal of some pragmatic constraints of the use.

The results are significant for predicting the dynamics of idiomatic character and functioning of phraseology and its pragmatic properties.

The study of publications devoted to the comparison of PU in Germanic, Slavic, Roman languages shows that significant similarities are found in the phraseology of the English and Russian languages.

The paper considers the systematization of accumulated material, the analysis of mechanisms of phraseological transformations in terms of pragmatics and cognitive science and the development of an integrated modeling method of phrase formation.

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