

THE SEMANTIC NATURE OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

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Abstract: In this article, the phraseological units in the Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language and their semantic and grammatical structure are analyzed

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Phraseology (from the Greek phrasis — expression, logos — teaching) is a branch of linguistics that studies linguistic units consisting of several independent lexemes combined together to form figurative meanings. Phraseology emerged as an independent field within linguistics, branching from lexicology in the 1950s.

The formation and establishment of phraseology as a separate linguistic discipline owes much to V. V. Vinogradov, who made significant contributions to the field. During the Soviet era, the study of phraseology in the languages of colonized nations developed largely based on his theories.

Other notable scholars such as A. Shakhmatov, A. Yefimov, and N. Shanskiy also contributed to the field. In Uzbek linguistics, distinguished scholars such as Sh. Rakhmatullayev, Y. Pinkhasov, M. Husainov, I. Qo'chqortoyev, and B. Yo'ldoshev played an important role in the development of national phraseological studies.

The systematic and scientific study of Uzbek phraseology is closely associated with Shavkat Rakhmatullayev, whose numerous works laid the foundation of modern Uzbek phraseology. Among his most important works are:

“Explanatory Phraseological Dictionary of the Uzbek Language” (Tashkent, 1978)

“A Brief Phraseological Dictionary of the Uzbek Language” (Tashkent, 1964)

“Some Issues of Uzbek Phraseology” (Tashkent, 1966)

“Modern Uzbek Language” (Tashkent, 1957)

“Main Semantic Types of Phraseological Units” (Tashkent, 1955)

A phraseme or phraseological unit consists of two or more words that form a figurative meaning when used together. In a sentence, such expressions act as a single syntactic unit—stable in structure, ready for use, and rich in imagery. The proper use of phraseological units enhances the expressiveness and aesthetic value of speech. In context, phraseological expressions typically answer a single question and function as one syntactic element.

Phraseological Homonymy

Phraseological homonymy refers to expressions that share the same structure but express different meanings. Although homonymous words are common in language, homonymous idioms occur less frequently.

Examples include:

Boshiga ko‘tarmoq I – “to make noise”: Uyni boshiga ko‘targan bolalar tinchib qolishdi.

Boshiga ko‘tarmoq II – “to honor”: Har doim sizni boshiga ko‘taradi.

Similarly:

Og‘ziga olmoq I – “to drink”

Og‘ziga olmoq II – “to mention, to talk about”

Ko‘z yummoq I – “to die”

Ko‘z yummoq II – “to ignore, to give up”

Phraseological Synonymy

Synonymy, or similarity of meaning, is also characteristic of phraseological units. Different idioms that convey similar meanings are considered phraseological synonyms.

Examples include:

Kayfi buzuq – moody person.

Phraseological synonyms may also correspond to single words:

Tomdan tarasha tushganday – suddenly;

Og‘zi qulog‘ida – happy;

Joni chiqmoq – to get angry;

Ta‘bi xira – unhappy.

Synonymy is one of the micro-semantic systems within language, observed not only among lexemes and morphemes but also among idioms. Two idioms can be called synonymous only if they share the same meaning, though they may differ slightly in emotional or stylistic nuance.

For instance:

Yer bilan yakson bo‘lmoq – kuli ko‘kka sovrmoq both mean “to destroy completely”, but the second conveys a stronger sense of intensity.

Similarly, **ko‘ngli bo‘sh** and **ko‘ngli yumshoq** are synonymous, both meaning “kind-hearted, soft-hearted”, though the first emphasizes sentimentality, while the second emphasizes compassion.

Thus, phraseological synonymy often involves slight differences in imagery or emotional coloring, reflecting the richness of expression within a language.

Phraseological Antonymy

Phraseological antonymy refers to idiomatic expressions that convey opposite meanings.

Examples include: Ko‘kka ko‘tarmoq – yerga urmoq; yuzi yorug‘ – yuzi shuvut; ko‘ngli joyiga tushmoq – yuragiga g‘ulg‘ula tushmoq.

Idioms are widely used in both spoken and literary styles. They often function as equivalents of single words or simple word combinations, such as:

Qo‘li uzun – smart;

O‘pkasi yo‘q – hurried;

Tarvuzi qo‘ltig‘idan tushdi – become depressed, etc.

The phenomenon of idioms in language is based on figurative meaning, often describing actions or situations in non-literal, imaginative ways.

Examples of Uzbek Phraseological Units

Adabini berdi – punished him according to his deeds;

Avzoyi buzilmoq – to get angry;



In conclusion, phraseological expressions reflect the national spirit, cultural thinking, and historical experience of every nation. They are stable units of speech that often differ in meaning from the literal sense of their components and serve as a vivid system of figurative expression. Phraseological units enhance the semantic richness and stylistic diversity of language, adding imagery and emotional depth to speech. Semantically, a phraseological unit functions as a single whole, where individual words, although grammatically independent, contribute to a unified meaning.

Studying the semantic and grammatical structure of phraseological units is crucial in linguistics, as it allows for deeper understanding of national mentality, speech culture, and linguistic identity. Phraseology thus represents one of the most complex yet fascinating layers of the lexical system—an inseparable part of both national culture and linguistic wealth

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