CONNOTATIVE ASPECTS OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

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Abstract: *Phraseological units absorb values of the ages in which it lives. The problem of understanding the meaning of a phraseological unit is linked with a possibility of increasing our knowledge about the world diachronically. The authors underline the importance of phraseological studies as it demonstrates the interrelation between the language and the society. The role of phraseological units as specific structures in forming vocabulary and linguacultural competence of students is very significant because they encapsulate a national, country's cultural outlook. Usage-based theories of language learning suggest that phraseology must be studied as a part of vocabulary. Teaching phraseology is a part of cultural approach in foreign teaching methodology and arranging vocabulary studying though structure of component meaning is linguistic approach. This article begins by establishing a theoretical framework to help find the answer to the question: "what do the words in a phraseological unit mean?". From there, major phraseological concepts on the problem are reviewed. Complex methodology is applied: method of phraseological identification, semantic analysis. Finally, the article concludes with a discussion of four types of wordcomponents in phraseological units: real words; potential words; "former" words; "ghost-words and possible paths for future research.*

Keywords: *phraseology; word-components; phraseological unit; semantics; connotation.*

INTRODUCTION

One area that is a source of some confusion in second language acquisition is the field of phraseology that is defined as the study of word combinations and a phraseological unit is defined as being made up of at least two words.

It is rather difficult to define the meaning of a phraseological unit as it is connected with many lingual and extra lingual aspects – logical and psychological, historical and philosophical.

Lexis and syntax, or vocabulary (phraseology as a part of vocabulary) and grammar, have traditionally been viewed as discrete aspects of language in teaching (Hoey, 2005; Romer, 2009), but a growing number of scholars from a variety of theoretical camps within applied linguistics and second language acquisition argue that the two are in fact inseparable (e.g. cognitive linguists, constructionists, and corpus linguists).

The importance of phraseological studies is permanently discussed as it demonstrates the interrelation between the language and the society. The article is centered on the problem of meaning of word-components in a phraseological unit. Considering all possible points of view, the authors keep to the four types of word-components in phraseological units: real words– word-components with ad verbum meaning; potential words– word-components with weak meaning; "former" words – word-components with re-

comprehended meaning; "ghost-words"- with word-components that do not exist in the language.

1.1.Phraseology in Speech

The vocabulary of the English language consists of words and, so called, words equivalents which are not created by speakers but used as ready-made linguistic units. Such units are primarily characterized by the contradiction which exists between the semantic integrity of the whole and the formal independence of its parts. It is very difficult to establish a sharp boundary between free word-combinations which are generated by the speaker in the process of speech and phraseological units used as ready-made. As a rule, it can be shown that there are different degrees of 'setness', or different degree of restrictions. This is the subject of investigation of phraseology but some of these theoretical aspects are very important for foreign language teaching. In speech phraseological units have connotations related to emotions and appraisals. Connotation is determined only by social, ideological attitude of a speaker, therefore an appraisal component of such connotation has a subjective nature. Knowing English phraseological units, proverbs and sayings enriches students' vocabulary and helps them to realize figurative system of English, lambent English humour and broadens their lingua cultural competence.

1.2. Phraseological Studies

Phraseological studies contribute to relevance of this paper not only in a linguistic aspect, but also in a gnoseological one, as they obviously demonstrate the interrelation between the language and the society.

"But if we want to characterize the semantic usage properly which is accepted in any speech community and belongs to the described language, we should not only describe it. We can achieve the result only by applying collective estimations which are adopted in the community so we must take into consideration the public opinion. One and the same thing may have different descriptions in different civilizations. Such semantic definitions must have substantial consequences for the formal analysis of linguistic units." (Zerkina, 2011) An idea of interrelation between linguistic and extra linguistic meanings in the language and in particular in word semantics is not new. This issue was raised in very general terms in papers of classical linguists and philosophers and keeps attracting attention of modern scientists.

The study of a vocabulary of modern English performed by scientists from various branches shows that an extra linguistic reference of the word influences its linguistic features. However, forms of such influence are poorly known, and a range of problems of the research is not clearly narrowed from neighboring fields.

1.3. Phraseological Meaning

A phraseological value is a category which is interpreted in different ways depending on understanding of the nature of a phraseological unit, its components and volume of phraseology. A definition of a phraseological meaning originates from the essence of the phraseological unit. According to A.V. Kunin, the phraseological unit is a fixed combination of words which fully or partially change their meanings. It means that a character, which is above the word level, stability and changed meanings of words in the combination are

criteria of phraseological units together with other linguistic units, which define their special status in the language structure.

As you know, word combinations which are turned into phraseological units are included in complex semantic processes. Phraseologists have not yet reached a common opinion on a mechanism and regularities of changing a semantic essence of words-components of phraseological units. A formal semantic structure of the phraseological unit, i.e. the study of its plane of content and plane of expression, represents a special issue. In other words, the question is how elements of semantics of phraseological units are classified by their lexical components, i.e. a degree of a so-called semantic combination and semantic dividedness of the phraseological unit.

1.4. View Points on Phraseological Components: History and Contemporaneity Researchers in the field of phraseology agree on the point that a lively discussion of semantic properties of phraseological unit components has resulted in two initially extreme points of view:

1. Phraseological components do not have anything semantic in common with words, being included in phraseological units not as independent meaning units, but just having distinctive characteristics.

2. Phraseological components do not have significant semantic differences from words: both are bearers of separate semes, phraseologically bound meanings.

According to A.V. Zhukov, a common drawback of the above views is "absolutization of different properties of components which are, in fact, common to not all components, revealed to a different degree or have a potential nature" (Zhukov, 1984).

A word character of components is not supported by V.P. Zhukov, A.I. Molotkov, A.L.Oniani, E.Kh. Rott, V.N. Teliya and other scientists on the ground that components of phraseological units loose a correlation to the object, including a lexical meaning and a nominative function which were formerly present.

V.P. Zhukov, supporting his opinion, writes that components of a fixed phrase have no proper semantic markers of words, although different types of fixed phrases show different degrees of getting closer to (or further from) words (Zhukov, 1978).

A.I. Molotkov adheres to the most extreme positions on the issue under consideration, denying the word character of phraseological unit components not only from a plane of content, but also from a plane of expression: "components of fixed phrases are not an essence of words not only due to their failure to have a lexical meaning, but also in terms of a form,...components of a fixed unit lost various grammatical categories which were characteristic of their genetic source – a word...the component keeps only a sound picture of the word, its sound appearance" (Molotkov, 1977).

A.L. Oniani also adheres to the first point of view and believes that as components of phraseological units fall together with words for the plane of expression only, components of a fixed unit cannot be united in a concept of the word. The author states categorically that components of phraseological units are not to be deemed not only as ordinary words, but also as having a specific use (Oniani, 1970).

E.Kh. Rott defines phraseological units as "former words" and calls them "a moneme", because they lose their character, word nature and are transformed into an exclusively structural component. E.Kh. Rott states that "components are included in idioms as solely structural elements, "shaking off" their own sememe" and is confident that "components of idioms acting as monemes represent elements which lost their "word character", it means that they are former words" (Rott, 1972).

The word character of components of phraseological units is also denied in early papers of V.N. Teliya, who believes that components of fixed phrases-idioms may be called words only conventionally, as the very components were deprived of a reference and system correlation and "suffered the same process of deetymologi-zation as morphemes in words pillow, taste (sense of measure)" (Teliya, 1966).

A common feature of all theories of equivalence of phraseological units to words is a one-sided approach to the analysis of phraseological units lying in the fact that semantics of phraseological units and words get too closely on the ground that they allegedly have a lexical meaning, or because their single characteristic is deemed to be the semantic monolithic nature. N. N. Amosova for the first time put into question the theory of equivalence of phraseological units to words (Amosova, 2013). In recent years this theory finds less and less support.

Theoretical concepts of the majority of linguists are built on an acknowledgment of the word character of phraseological unit components. The word nature of components and, consequently, the study of phraseological units as a combination of words are assumed by such prominent Russian linguists as V.V. Vinogradov, A.I. Smirnitsky, N.N. Amosova, A.V. Kunin, A.D. Raikhshtein, Yu.A. Gvozdarev and others in their landmark papers. Warning against narrowing of the issue on "the phrase" entirely to a problem of a word, V.V. Vinogradov wrote that "correlative and interrelated components of a complex phraseological unit acting in speech as a special semantic category are elements which are combined in a living word unity in a new categorical synthesis" (Vinogradov, 1977).

Stating a semantic integrity of phraseological locutions based on an idiomatic character, A.I.Smirnitsky wrote that they have "a structure of a free, proper grammatical combination of words", it means that components of phraseological units are deemed as words; a good reason for this fact was a compliance of phraseological unit components with words included in free word combinations, at least in terms of their appearance (Smirnitsky, 1956).

A.D. Raikhshtein defines three main types of a semantic value of separate components in phraseological units having a well-rounded image: negative, indirect and direct (Raikhshtein, 1980).

Yu.A. Gvozdarev believes that it is words that serve as components of fixed phrases and notes on this issue that "components keep a definite value, without which phraseological units would inevitably lose their inner form, imagery" (Gvozdarev, 1977). Phraseological semantic series in the language, which contain the same component in different phraseological locutions, do show hidden or, in the terminology of Yu.A. Gvozdarev, implicit values of phraseological unit components.

A thesis on a failure to derive a common ("global") value of phraseological units from semantics of their components does not satisfy Yu.Yu. Avaliani, A.M. Emirova either (Avaliani, 1971).

Judging by linguistic research and individual language experience, they come to a conclusion that a prevailing part of phraseological units has rather a transparent, i.e. derivable inner form, which is sufficient to state that a significant part of fixed phrases is determined by lexical meanings of their components.

The authors state that a new, global value is never surprising, no matter how paradoxical it might seem to be from a range of semantics of its components and their possibilities which usually acts in a communicative and speech environment.

Regarding the issue on a role of components in semantics of phraseological units, L.I.Stepanova fairly states, "when analyzing semantics of a component from a position of diachrony, it is necessary to define functions of words-components in building phrases, the role which they played in general semantics of phraseological units" (Stepanova , 1996).

V.M. Savitsky acknowledges powerful arguments offered by both parties, which make us suppose that the raised issue cannot be solved uniquely. He adheres to the point that lexical components of phraseological units have a dual nature. In his opinion, "the point is that they have both word and non-word properties" (Savitsky, 1993).

But then the author partially denies the validity of this problem and writes that "the issue on whether lexical components of phraseological units are words cannot be put "in general", i.e. in relation to all phraseological units. It is necessary to stipulate, firstly, what structural and semantic class of phraseological units is discussed, and, secondly, what semiotic level is meant" (Savitsky, 1993).

The author, supporting his views on a status of lexical components of phraseological units, writes that in the process of building a phrase a changeable combination of lexemes is transformed into a new quality – a phraseological unit. Lexemes, entering into qualitative new relations, bonds and acquiring new properties, implicitly keep some old relations, bonds and properties. Functions of phraseological units in speech reveal both old (word) properties related to figurative and expressive functions of phraseological units and new (specific) properties related to a nominative function. Thus, the author explains a dual character of lexical components, clarifying that at the first semiotic level (in the plane of expression) lexical components have independent meanings. At the second semiotic level (in a plane of content) a word and (in a semiological aspect) sign status of lexical components depends on a structural and semantic class of the phraseological unit, whether it is analytic or synthetic (Savitsky. 1993).

Defining a component as "a non-one-dimensional, but multidimensional phenomenon", A.V. Zhukov believes that "a complex and contradictory nature of the component requires a complex and all-round approach" (Zhukov, 1996).

A.V. Zhukov suggests a classification based on semantic markers of components, "it is a sort of projection of a meaning structure of a source word on a meaning structure of a fixed phrase determining to what degree its genetic properties will be kept" (Zhukov, 1996).

Among classified types of components' markers (connotative, archaic and relict, prepositive, particular and others) a special interest is given to an issue on symbolically marked components. Although the author states that "there are not quite clear criteria, in accordance with which some words, before they become components, are acknowledged as symbols, and others are not", but an original symbolic meaning of the component is at least partially kept in semantics of the fixed phrase and quite regularly reproduced in many phraseological units. Moreover, even if a symbolically meaning word is updated in the language, it can vary its semantics to a rather broad extent (Zhukov,1996).

A.V. Kunin also believes that it is necessary to take an integrated approach to this issue, which provides a possibility to determine a system of regular differences and common features. In his opinion, the semantic structure of the fixed phrase and the semantic structure of the word are by no means exhausted by their meanings only. Important elements of the semantic structure, in addition to the meaning, are structures of a total formation in general, its grammatical appearance and system language bonds (Kunin, 2005).

Analyzing papers of V.P. Zhukov, A.I. Smirnitsky, E.I., N.N. Amosova, he suggests the following classification of types of words in phraseological units depending on a character of their meaning (Kunin, 2005).

3. Real words, namely lexemes having a literal meaning of components.

4. Potential words, namely lexemes having a weakened lexical meaning and weakened syntax functions. Potential words are found as part of fully or partially re-comprehended motivated phraseological units with a living inner form. A literal meaning of components is "shown through" their re-comprehended meaning. Components of similar phraseological units are rich in terms of semantics as compared to similar words in their free usage.

5. "Former" words, namely re-comprehended components of phraseological fusions.

6. Ghost-words like muttons in the locution return to one's muttons. The word muttons does not exist in English, but represents a calque from the French moutons and is found in this phraseological unit only. Ghost-words are an extremely rare phenomenon.

At a current stage of development of phraseology, from positions of cognitive linguistics, this problem is interpreted as follows: "A meaning content of the phraseme represents a result of interaction between its linguistic meaning (a semantic amalgam formed by re-comprehended meanings of lexical components of the phraseme and their phraseme-forming combinatorial analysis) and contextual, situational and encyclopedic information" (Alefirenko, 2008).

The above review of different opinions on a character of components of phraseological units shows once again that a linguistic status of the word, the component in the phraseological unit is complex and has many aspects, and it is necessary to determine basic positions of any research, as it influences the progress and results of such research.

2. Conclusion

All possible points of view are discussed and four types of words in phraseological units are defined: real words, potential words, "former" words, ghost-words. The process of phraseological units forming is complicated and continuous theoretically and practically

that is connected with the development of civilization and teaching phraseology should consider both linguistic and extra linguistic aspects.

Successful foreign language teaching presupposes knowing both the methodology of teaching and the theory of the language. Teaching phraseology is a part of cultural approach to foreign teaching and organizing vocabulary, phraseology according to structure of components is a linguistic approach in English teaching vocabulary.

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