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## EXTRA-LINGUISTIC REASONS FOR SEMANTIC VARIATION OF PHRASEOLOGISMS

**Abstract:** *The extralinguistic causes are determined by the social nature of the language: they are observed in changes of meaning resulting from the development of the notion expressed and the thing named and by the appearance of new notions and things. In other words, extralinguistic causes of semantic change are connected with the development of the human mind as it moulds reality to conform with its needs. The article dwells on the process of research of variativeness of phraseologic semantics out of a certain context and its usage in different conditions.*

**Key words:** *semantics, phraseological unit, pragmatics, occasional meaning, inner form, idiomaticity, semantic actualization.*

**Language:** English

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### Introduction

The process of research of semantic variation of phraseological units (PhU) consists in the study of stable combination on the strength of a certain context and its usage in different conditions (geographical position, customs and traditions, climate factors).

Elaboration of effective ways of considering stylistic peculiarities of phraseological units becomes more and more important both with positive and negative shades of meaning. Apprehension of phraseological unit on the pragmatic level is also directed to the factors that influence variativeness of PhU from semantic point of view.

Stability of combinations, consisting of two and more linked words in PhU is of great interest, first of all, in a modification plan of semantics of PhU in a wide context of usage, where understanding of every element of phraseological units leads to the frequency of its usage.

The following A.V. Koonin's quotation is rather fair: "Phraseologic semantics goes hand in hand with lexical one, however, it has a deal of characteristic peculiarities. The subject of consideration are: types of meanings in phraseologic sphere, phraseologic reconsideration, phraseologic abstraction, inner form

of phraseologisms, aspects of phraseological meaning". While analyzing the meaning of phraseologisms it is important to articulate semas as well as semantic elements that are less than any aspect of phraseological meaning.

No doubt, various researches in the sphere of actualization of separate words, show impossibility of the analysis of PhU by the same methods due to specifics of such basic features of PhU as:

- 1) reproduction of PhU in speech, i.e. their systematic repetition;
- 2) separate formation of PhU, i.e. their representation by two and more constitutes;
- 3) stability of PhU, i.e. solidness of meaning, impossibility of semantic division of PhU into separate constitutes;
- 4) idiomaticity of PhU, i.e. imput of semantics out of the meanings of its components.

In the case of actualization of PhU, the context of a minimal stretch is invalid for expression of semantic meaning. Its limited frames don't allow to reveal originality of modification of PhU. While studying conformity of interpretation of PhU with modern conditions, it is important to take into consideration not only the specifics of its

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interpretation, but individual characteristics of those who use PhU with all their shades of meaning as well. Such characteristic features as age, sex, social position, level of education influence the formation of semantic actualization of PhU in the process of its speech usage.

The following extra-linguistic factors play an important role as well:

1) time, when PhU is used in a certain situation. Later, PhU can acquire new meanings that leads to appearance of polysemy. As a result we get a rise in quantity of semantic variants.

The new meanings can so differ from original ones that give birth to a significant changes during their translation and comprehension in the context.

For example: “red letter day” – in the dictionary by Br. Lockett “The English language: yesterday, today and tomorrow” means some holiday or a day, associated with joy. The dictionary provides the information of pointing holy days by red color in church calendars.

On Friday I got a new job, passed my driving test and won a lottery. All in all a red letter day [B. Lockett. Set Expressions].

Electronic Urban Dictionary produces the meanings of this PhU with transaction from a general to a more concrete meaning:

1. Peculiar days noted by red letters in past.
2. Any day that has a personal significance.
3. A day that is made wonderful by you using different methods.

1. Oh look, it's the queen's birthday tomorrow. Better get ready for the red letter day!

2. Oh look, my girlfriend's birthday is coming up. Better get ready for the red letter day!

3. I went with my girlfriend shopping and bought her everything she wanted, then we had a candlelit dinner and finally, I sang her to sleep under the stars. All of this because it was her red letter day [UD].

As we see from the third meaning, PhU “red letter day” with days gone by, changed its general

meaning of “holiday” to “a peculiar day”, “especial day for another person”.

2) territory, where the act of communication takes place and influences the actualization of meanings of PhU. As a territory we can mean a separate country, city or more limited places as a street, etc.

The importance of extra-linguistic factors is testified by A.V. Koonin in “The course of phraseology of modern English”: “The problem is more complicated in the sphere of phraseology than in lexis due to the difficulty of semantic structure of PhU (simple and compound reconsideration), structural variety of phraseological prototypes, highly relative weight of inner form and connotation in the structure of phraseological meaning and complication of staff component of phraseologisms”. It's of great importance to take into account the character of phraseologic prototype as well as extra-linguistic factors preceding the appearance of PhU while analyzing reconsideration.

Variativeness of phraseologic semantics is also caused by poly-aspect character. Majority of phraseological units actualize their meaning due to not a single reason, but a totality of both linguistic and extra-linguistic factors.

For example: “Uncle Tom” in the dictionary of A.V. Koonin is used in old meaning of “submissive, suffering black-skinned slave”. The appearance of this phraseological unit is connected with the name of a main hero of a novel by H.B. Stow “Uncle Tom's cabin”. Another meaning of this phraseological unit has a scornful feature with interpretation “betrayers of his people, black skinned man too respectful to the whites”.

Concerning this article, we can conclude that culture, temporal and territorial factors totally influence the formation of the meaning of phraseological unit and its possible modifications. Semantics of phraseological units is also varied being caused by poly-aspect character.

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