

English Phraseology and Phraseological Units

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates phraseological units in English in terms of their significance in the language together with the classification of them suggested by particular scholars. Furthermore, this article primarily emphasizes on the rules by which word-groups can express phraseological units and their semantic analysis for the usage.

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Introduction.

There is a raft of definitions of the term “phraseological unit”. According to A.V.Kunin, “a phraseological unit is a stable word-group with wholly or partially transferred meaning” [1, 103]. Phraseological units, unlike word combinations, are considered to be stable combinations that express a figurative meaning. Sh.Rahmatullayev defines this language unit with terms such as phraseologism, phraseological unit, and uses the term “phraseme” in relation to lexeme, morpheme terms, and emphasizes that a phraseme should consist of at least two lexemes which are semantically and syntactically connected [3, 420].

Phraseological units play a key role in demonstrating the interrelation between the language and the society. Moreover, they are considered to be one of the most important elements of culture. Thus, while learning a new language, the significance of being aware of its idioms is profound.

In terms of phraseological units, various classification methods have been applied by certain scholars. Professor A.I.Smirnitsky worked out structural classification of phraseological units, comparing them with words. He points out one-top units which he compares with derived words because derived words have only one root morpheme. He also points out two-top units which he compares with compound words because in compound words we usually have two root morphemes [1,103].

Among one-top units he points out three structural types:

a) units of the type “to give up” (verb + postposition type);

To give up-to stop trying, quit;

To put off-to delay or postpone.

b) units of the type “to be tired”. Some of these units remind the Passive Voice in their structure but they

have different prepositions with them, while in the Passive

Voice we can have only prepositions «by» or «with»:

To be interested in;

To be satisfied with.

There are also units in this type which remind free word-groups of the type “to be young”; *to be akin to*; *to be aware of*.

The difference between them is that the adjective “young” can be used as an attribute and as a predicative in a sentence, while the nominal component in such units can act only as a predicative. In these units the verb is the grammar centre and the second component is the semantic centre:

c) prepositional-nominal phraseological units:

On the boil – strong or active;

On the ball – to be alert.

These units are equivalents of unchangeable words: prepositions, conjunctions, adverbs, that is why they have no grammar centre, their semantic centre is the nominal part.

Phraseological units can be classified being regarded as parts of speech. This classification was suggested by I.V.Arnold. Here we have the following groups:

a) nominal phrases or noun phraseologisms denoting an object, a person or a living being:

Piece of cake=easy;

Rock bottom=lowest possible range.

b) verbal phrases or verb phraseologisms denoting an action, a state or a feeling:

To kill two birds with one stone=knocking out two tasks with a single action;

To walk on eggshells=to be very careful with your actions and words.

c) adjectival phrases or adjective phraseologisms denoting a quality:

As busy as a beaver=very busy;

As hungry as a bear=very hungry.

d) adverbial phrases or adverb phraseological units, such as:

First and foremost=before anything else;

Now and then=occasionally.

e) prepositional phrases or preposition phraseological units:

On the brink of=being about to experience a new and different situation;

In two minds=not decided or certain about something.

f) conjunctive phrases or conjunction phraseological units:

As soon as;

On the other hand.

g) interjectional phrases or interjection phraseological units:

What a miracle!;

What a pity!.

It is worth noting that the expressions presented above can be replaced with particular alternatives which can be equal to one word, phrase, or even a sentence.

In conclusion, through the classification of phraseological units the problems related to their usage during both oral and written communication can be prevented. Furthermore, as phraseological units have an irreplaceable role in the culture and also among society, without any shadow of doubt it is vital to learn about phraseology.

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