

Phraseological Units with a Numeral Component in English and Ukrainian: A Comparative Aspect

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Abstract

It has been proven that phraseology is a linguistic science of phraseological units, which are stable, differently shaped units of language with a fixed meaning, constant composition, and indecomposable structure. Phraseology covers both a set of expressive means of language that are equivalent to words and a special language level whose units are not equivalent to words but only correlate with them. This understanding of a phraseological unit allows us to include in phraseology many clichés inherent in different literary styles, as well as literary quotations, catchphrases, folk proverbs, and sayings. However, such a definition of phraseology is not rigid enough, since it does not consider the structural and semantic differences between all types of phraseological units. It has been proven that phraseological units with numerals as secondary units represent deviations from the traditional structure and semantics of the original word combinations. The study of surface and deep structures is relevant, given the current importance of cognitive research and the explication of the nature of the human factor. Recognition of cognitive significance is quite relevant for their adequate reproduction in the target languages. They are characterized by linguistic stability and formal and semantic integrity. These units belong to linguistic constructions with the appropriate structure, semantics, and pragmatics. In contrast to variable phrases, these polysemous units are marked by bipolarity - open processes of convergence and divergence.

Keywords: phraseology, phrasemes, comparativism, comparative linguistics, numeral, numerological component

1. Introduction

Phraseology is one of the most actively researched branches of linguistics, which studies special kinds of language units. Linguistics has established the definition of phraseological units as stable combinations of words with a fully or partially redefined meaning. Phraseological units play an important role in creating a linguistic picture of the world. They vividly reveal the national and cultural characteristics of a people. Moreover, the phraseology of each language makes a crucial contribution to the formation of a figurative picture of the world. There are many classifications of phraseological units, including those based on lexical-grammatical and lexical-semantic levels. The so-called numerical phraseological units occupy the most important place in the lexical and semantic system of any natural language. No language can exist without numbers. The ability to express thoughts in phraseological units with a numerical component is a great achievement for people. Phraseological units include various clichés, phraseological clichés, catchphrases, folk proverbs, and sayings, as well as quotations from literary works, which may also contain a numerological component. The numerological component is often found in paremia, which includes proverbs and sayings. Proverbs and sayings are comprehensively stable phrases that reflect the laws of reality, express the generalized experience of the people, and have a deep meaning. Proverbs usually contain generalizations that can be applied to different situations, although they can also have private meanings. They are an integral part of the cultural heritage of the people and are passed down from generation to generation. Thus, proverbs represent the generalized experience of the people's lives and their ethnic worldview, and most of them are verbally expressed stereotypes of the people's consciousness.

Phraseological units are widely used in language and fiction. The use of phraseological units in language makes it more vivid, expressive, and rich. Thus, we can see that the numerical cultural code, along with the anthropic, zoonotic, natural, and religious codes, is widely used in categorizing and conceptualizing the world around us.

The study aims to identify the role of the numerical component in the phrase formation of phraseological units in Ukrainian and English. By a component of a phraseology, we mean a word with a meaning that preserves the external, formal separateness of the word. Numerical components are words that contain an explicit or implicit reference to a number. Being an abstract indicator of the number of homogeneous objects, numerical nouns belong to the category of quantitative words. Having become components of phraseological units, they lose their

lexical meaning as a system of hierarchically related semes.

2. Literature Review

In the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been changes in everything, emergency distance education was carried out in Ukrainian universities (Bakhov, I., Opolska, N., Bogus, M., Anishchenko, V. & Biryukova, Y., 2021), as well as a tangible impact on the emotional intelligence of organizational leadership within the educational institution (Semenets-Orlova, I., Klochko, A., Shkoda, T., Marusina, O. & Tepluk, M., 2021). The anthropocentric principle in modern comparative linguistics also applies to vocabulary. The quantitative characteristics of the objective world are cognized through calculation and measurement, which play a major role in people's practical activities. The category of quantity, which expresses external, formal relationships between objects or their parts, as well as properties and connections, is most specifically expressed in numerals. Their functioning is based on a certain cultural and historical experience of a person. In light of the anthropological paradigm, the vocabulary used to denote quantity became the subject of attention of linguists in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Comparative studies of linguistic phenomena in the field of phraseology are relevant for modern linguists, since knowledge of stable expressions of language allows for a deeper understanding of the mentality of the native-speaker nation (Shvachko, 1981, 2002, 2003, 2007), (Uzhchenko, 1990), (Selivanova, 2006), (Petrova, 2013), (Kunin, 2004, 2005).

The syntactic organization of phraseological units remains the subject of scientific consideration by scholars (Anokhina, 2006), (Baran, 2008), (Vynohrad, 2001), (Zabiyaka, 2012), etc. However, there are not enough special studies devoted to the description of the component composition of phraseological units with a numerical component in Ukrainian and English in the scientific literature. The constructive characteristics of phraseological units have been described by many scholars (Wierzbicka, 2001), (Melchuk, 1995), (Galperin, 1977). The semantics of numerals in multi-structural languages is the subject of dissertation research by linguists (Zhaivoronok, 2006, 2007), (Korunets, 2003), (Kocherhan, 1999, 2006), (Kunin, 2004, 2005), (Zatsnyi, 2007), (Zhuikova, 2007), (Havrylova, 2004), (Verba, 2008), etc.

3. Method

When working on the material, such general scientific methods as descriptive, continuous sampling, contextual, and component analysis were applied. The main research methods employed in the work are the method of analyzing dictionary definitions and contextual analysis, which helped to identify the peculiarities of the functioning of phraseological units in the text. Besides, other research methods were involved, namely, analysis and synthesis, generalization and systematization, descriptive method, and analytical method.

4. Results and Discussion

English phraseological units with a numerical component include from two to six components. The most productive is the group of four-component phraseological units: *be at one's worst*, *one for the road*, and *be like 2 peas*.

According to our observations, quantitative numerals (70%) have the greatest phrase-forming potential in the Ukrainian language, including units with the component "one" (look at least with one eye, in one voice, live in one house), with the component two (in two words, in two steps, two pair of boots), with the component seven (seven heels on the forehead, seven Fridays in a week). These phraseological units are translated directly to save the numerical component.

The material has shown that the most productive in Ukrainian and English phraseology is the numerical component "one", which actualizes something separate and emphasizes the intrinsic value of the existing, given in its unity. In the Ukrainian phraseological picture of the world, a person is important as a part of the whole, so the numerical component "one" symbolizes the loneliness of a person: "one as a finger".

In the English language culture, people tend to be individualistic, want to have their opinion about everything, and not depend on others: number one - "their person"; one and the only - "the only one, unique"; look after (take care of) number one - "take care of yourself, your interests, do not forget yourself".

In English phraseology, the numerical component "one" actualizes "quantity" if the phraseological unit reflects the idea of simplicity and accuracy of arithmetic operations (as plain as two and two make four) or the idiom contains a specific concept of a real or existing phenomenon:

- the 39 articles - a set of dogmas of the Anglican Church;
- get to (reach) - to take the first steps in any business;
- first night – premiere, first performance.

The numerical component "one" in English idioms actualizes the semes *beginning*, *limit*, and *advantage*: hot one, a quick one, one over eight, as one o'clock, one for the road, one could hear a pin drop.

The contradiction between content and form, the structural integrity of components, and the semantic globality is characteristic of all phraseological units and determines the special nature of their functioning in the language.

The numerical component "one" actualizes the seme "very small amount": one man no man; the seme "same", "one": be all one to somebody; one bone one flesh. In the equivalent phrase "with one stroke of the pen", the numerical component "one" indicates a quick, sudden action.

Thus, the numerical component in English phraseology balances between two poles of denotative relation: on the one hand, it is a connection with specific objects of account, which ensures its specificity and unambiguity; on the other hand, symbolic meanings that allow us to perceive the number as a qualitatively loaded sign, not tied to a specific quantitative value. We see this as a reflection of the general

language tendency to overcome unambiguity.

The numerical component "two" in Ukrainian and English phraseology is also characterized by being polysemantic. The numerical component "two" actualizes the seme "duality" in the English phraseology (between two fires, fall (sit) between two stools), "indications of similarity, the resemblance of objects or people" (like two peas in a pod). The phraseological unit "kill two birds with one stone" has the same meaning in Ukrainian.

A single phraseological turn of phrase can have two numerical components - "one" and "two". The numerical component "two" expresses a certain plurality, and the numerical component "one" indicates the absence of a plurality: "two dogs over one bone seldom agree". The phenomenon of secondary semantization of numerical components in the composition of phraseological units in Ukrainian and English reflects a mixture of a logical and mathematical and naive understanding of the counting procedure. The mathematical approach implies unambiguity and accuracy of the enumeration result. For the sphere of folk culture, enumeration appears as a comprehension of the irrational properties of an object.

The analysis has shown that in Ukrainian phraseology, unlike in English phraseology, the numerical component "seven" is productive: seven heels on the forehead, seven deadly sins, seven devils and one witch, seven Fridays in a week.

In English phraseology, the third position in terms of productivity is occupied by the numerical component "nine". As part of the phraseological unit, it actualizes the semes "beyond measure", "perfect", "ultimate", and "infinite" (be a nine days' wonder, dressed up to the nines, to have nine lives); the semes "indefinitely large number" (to have nine lives like a cat), "moderate amount": a wonder lasts but nine days.

Thus, the phenomenon of secondary semantization of numerical components in the composition of phraseological units of the Ukrainian and English languages reflects the mixing of a logical and mathematical, and naive understanding of the counting procedure. The blurring of the specific quantitative semantics of numerical components in the composition of phraseological units of the Ukrainian and English languages reflects the tendency to overcome unambiguity. Not all numerical components are included in the composition of phraseological units in Ukrainian and English. This allows us to talk about gaps in the *na ve* linguistic number series compared to the generally accepted mathematical one. The productive numerical components of Ukrainian and English phraseology are the components "one" and "two". For the Ukrainian language consciousness, the productive numerical component is "seven", and for the English language consciousness, the component is "nine". Each of these numbers has its symbolic motivation.

Modern research in the field of phraseology on the material of different languages proves that phraseological meaning is a multi-component structure. Meanwhile, the components of lexical meaning and the components of phraseological meaning are virtually identical. This means that the obligatory components of the phraseological meaning are the signifying, denotative, and structural components, while the ethnocultural component is optional.

We will demonstrate these points based on our comparative study of English and Ukrainian phraseological units with a numerical component. It is worth noting that when compared concerning the degree of structural and typological closeness, the phraseological units we analyze may have identical phraseological images or at least very close semantic similarity. The closeness, but not the identity of these images is reflected in certain lexical discrepancies between the prototypes of comparable multilingual phraseological units, which are the main linguistic indicators of the absence of such identity. In some phraseological units, one can observe completely different images, but in the presence of a common phraseological model. Examples of phraseological units characterized by a common phraseological model and built on a vivid metaphor are such a turn of phrase in Ukrainian and English as "kill two birds with one stone" ("убити двох зайців"). It allegorically expresses the desire to accomplish two different things or achieve two different goals at the same time. The figurative nature of the phraseology is supported by the obvious paradoxical, hyperbolic nature of the internal relationship of the lexical components of the prototypes, i.e. the obvious impossibility of killing two birds with one stone. A characteristic feature of phraseological units based on fantastic images is that they denote very real denotations. The real is denoted through the unreal, fantastic images are generated by reality. The numerical component "two" complements the generalized figurative semantics of turns with the symbolic meaning of these numerals - duality, lack of unity.

The phraseological unit "like two peas in a pod" ("як дві краплі води"), based on the comparison, is also characterized in both languages by close but not identical images. The identical meanings of these turns of phrase are "completely, very much like someone, something, or similar to something, anyone". The similarity of objects in the Ukrainian language is emphasized by comparing them to water drops, in English - to peas, which, in turn, creates linguistic conditions for enhancing the emotional evaluation and expressiveness of phraseological units.

The phraseological image of the turn of phrase "be (all) skin and bone(s)" ("шкіра та кістки") in both languages is complicated by metonymy: a person = nothing but skin and bones. Thus, in both languages, a very thin person is spoken of. This example demonstrates the identity of the images. The numerical component "one" in the Ukrainian turn of phrase and the component "all" in the English version, similar in their semantic role, enhance the expressive character of both phraseological units.

In the phraseological composition of languages, there is a rather large layer of phraseological units that have lost, for one reason or another, both the linguistic and extra-linguistic character of their figurative motivation.

Here are examples of phraseological units with a numerical component in the languages we are comparing that have lost the figurative

motivation of their meaning due to the etymological obscuration of one of the lexical components in the prototype: from the first tong (or by the first tong) - from the very beginning, immediately; two and a plack - trifle, a small amount of money. The word plack is an etymologically obscured element in this phraseological unit. The question arises as to the role of the connotative component in this phraseological relation.

Analyzing such turns of phrase, it is worth noting that the eclipse or complete loss of a phraseological image weakens the connotative possibilities of a particular phraseological turn of phrase, increasing the role of the signifying and denotative components in the structure of its meaning. Nevertheless, the influence of some linguistic factors contributes to the preservation of the significant role of the connotative component.

Components that do not lend themselves to linguistic interpretation and create an ugly effect of perception of phraseology can simultaneously create the effect of a hidden image, mystery, and enigma. This linguistic factor, which enhances the connotative possibilities of this type of phraseology, is based on a linguistic paradox: the component that contributed to the loss of the figurative nature of the phraseological unit simultaneously acts as a disactualizer and intensifier of the connotative component in the structure of the phraseology.

The loss of the figurative motivation of the holistic meaning can also be related to extra-linguistic factors, such as forgotten life situations that contributed to the transformation of the meaning of phrases, such as "head two ears" ("голова два вуха") (meaning "a short-sighted, clueless person") and "allure three crosses" (meaning "very fast"). Not to mention the fact that three tailors from Tooley Street petitioned the Parliament with the words "We the people of England" gave rise to the phrase "the three tailors of Tooley Street", which has acquired the generalized figurative meaning "a small group of people who consider themselves representatives of the whole nation". Phraseological units of this type remain linguistic units that have an expressively marked stylistic character of the use. They are recognized by native speakers as units of special stylistic spheres of use, and their inclusion in the act of communication enhances the emotional and evaluative capabilities of the statement.

Thus, in the multi-component structure of phraseological meaning, the connotative component always plays an essential role, even if its main component, the figurative component, is absent.

5. Conclusion

The study suggests some general conclusions. The numerals one, two, and three are perceived as the first elements of a number series and have rich associative characteristics in both languages. Moreover, the semantics of number plays a crucial role in the development of their polysemy. From the functional point of view, all these numerical phraseological units are characterized by multifunctionality. A number is not only an abstract structure, not only a potential dialectic of different categories within one entity, it is a multidimensional concept that can realize its basic properties through language. In this article, the numerals one, two, and three act as lexical units that are used as part of phraseological units. The phraseological units themselves reflect a unique segment of the cultural and conceptual system in each linguistic culture, reflecting the peculiarities of the mental phraseological picture of the world. To ensure adequacy and overcome contextual inconsistencies in translation, it is important to use permutation techniques. Phraseological units with a numerical component are not used in this kind of text, which is natural, since they are figurative means to enhance the beauty of a literary text and its impact on the reader. But this is not the case in a scientific text. To translate scientific and technical texts competently, a translator needs to have knowledge of the scientific style, be able to correctly identify and use the translation techniques necessary to translate certain lexical units, and have extensive background knowledge in the field of activity in which the translated material will function. As secondary units, phraseological units with a numeral represent a deviation from the traditional structure and semantics of the source phrases. The study of surface and deep structures is relevant, given the current importance of cognitive research and the explication of the nature of the human factor. Recognition of cognitive significance is quite relevant for their adequate reproduction in the target languages. They are characterized by linguistic stability and formal and semantic integrity. These units belong to linguistic constructions with the appropriate structure, semantics, and pragmatics.

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