

## PHILOLOGY, LINGUISTICS

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### WRITER'S "INTRUSION" AS THE MAIN TECHNIQUE FOR ACTUALISATION OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

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#### Abstract

The present study is devoted to the investigation of phraseological units in contextual aspect. Occasional use of a writer's phraseological transformations is identified and analysed. The methods of implicit and explicit use of phraseological units in the literary discourse are defined as the most vivid and useful techniques being at a writer's disposal. These methods of lexical, structural and semantic processing of phraseological units are exemplified by the abstracts taken from the books of Julian Barnes as a representative of one of the most prominent and prolific prose-writers of contemporary England.

**Keywords:** implication, explication, writer's individual transformation, contextual transformation, occasional use of phraseological units, literary discourse.

### **Introduction**

The contextual aspect of investigation of phraseological units (PU) is becoming more and more popular nowadays. This assumes the study of contextual behaviour and the functional significance of PUs in different types of texts, in literary texts particularly. Various ways of their occasional use and their different contextual transformations are of paramount importance due to “the high emotive-expressive connotational value of such transformations” [1].

The methods of implicit and explicit use of phraseological units can be traced back to the investigation of fixed expressions (FE) and the analysis of their syntactical structure (L. Danilenko, I. Fillipovskaya, Z. Tarlanov, S. Varlakova etc.). The research of FE in the scientific works on phraseology was connected with the solving problems on the nature, semantic and structural peculiarities, linguistic status and sign character of these formations (N. Alefirenko, V. Arkhangelskiy, A. Kunin, A. Molotkov, V. Teliya, V. Zhukov, etc.).

V. Arkhangelskiy, the founder of the study on FE, considered the investigation of variance of FE as one of the most challenging tasks of Russian phraseology. Without appealing to the fixed and variable things, it is impossible to identify their true linguistic entity.

In spite of the fact that over the recent decades there has been conducted a number of research works devoted to the analysis of different aspects of phraseological and paremiological variation (O. Abakumova, G. Blagova, N. Fedorova, P. Grzybek, M. Melerovitch, W. Mieder, V. Mokienko, E. Seliverstova, G. White, etc.), some problems still remain unsolved, controversial, challenging, demanding further clarification. It is no wonder that the issue of writer’s transformation of component changes of PUs by their implicit and explicit use in literary discourse can be defined as one of them.

As T. Gridneva puts it, “implication and explication intensify the expressivity of phraseological units “by out of ordinary phraseological structure”, by failing to observe the prevailing manner of expression” [2].

According to A. Kunin, “the major share of implicit semantics in phraseology is connected with that extremely important role which implicitity plays within the evolution of the language, since language sign has no ability to express the whole variety of features of the denoted subject in an explicit way.” He underlines that “the tendency for non-actualized elements to increase is caused by

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language economy, i.e. by economical usage of language means while its functioning” [3].

Concerning the method of explication, V. Mokienko in his monograph “Slavic Phraseology” truly proved this process being one of the most active ways of phraseological word-formation. In this work he made a special reference to the fact that “undervaluation of the explication method is typical for analysing the correlations between proverbs and PU’s in particular” [4].

**Methodology**

The main methodological principle of the given article is the principle of functional cutoff. According to the term of V. Kartashev, it “directly connects ‘the systematic methods’ with the cognitive and practical needs of human beings and the way of their thinking” [5].

In this paper the nomo-ideographic approach, as it appears to us, may be considered as the scientific novelty and the paramount research strategy in terms of comprehension and interpretation of phraseological units. As acknowledged, inherently it contains incompatible and even irreconcilably controversial approaches as follows: (a) nomothetic (Greek *nomos* ‘law, regularity’) approach, focused on revealing common regularities, and (b) idiographic approach (Greek *idios* ‘peculiar, belonging to someone’) which is aimed at eliciting the originalities (uniqueness) of the object under study. Language cognitive mechanisms, one way or another, are connected with revealing somewhat systematic, common; language universals are defined as typical formations, too. However, while studying their speech representations, we are faced with the notions belonging to special ones. Following N. Alefirenko, language units, by way of stereotyping, turn out to be “the whole semantic evolution, “trajectory of cultural development” in paradoxical couples of universal and unique, subjective and objective world viewing” [6].

**Main Part**

In the present article under the method of implication we understand the process of reducing language signs of phraseological character. A. Potebnya was one of the first scientists, who paid due attention to it and assumed the process of “thought thickness” as the base of such a movement [7]. The method of explication presupposes unfolding of a PU, adding one or more distributor – components to the intraphraseological context. It is stated that these two processes have both common and unique peculiarities from the point of view of PUs’ functioning in the literary discourse.

The base for implication is founded on the ability of a PU to the inner seme rearrangement alongside with which “the semantics of fading component is absorbed by the meanings of the rest ones”

[4]. The ability of PU's components to annex "extra" elements serves as base structure for the method of explication. As a rule, these "extra" elements actualize the connotative seme of a PU.

While the method of implication is used, occasional actualization is carried out due to the support of the outer context. These contextual conditions allow not to reproduce the PU as a whole but they easily recall the omitted elements in the recipient-reader's memory. When the method of explication is applied, the writer's individual usage of PUs and their functioning as a result is possible thanks to the support of inner phraseological context. The latter may specify the meaning of a singular definite element or the meaning of a PU as a whole.

As we see it, the method of implication define two kinds of correlation between formal changes of PU and its semantics: (1) "deformation" of PU's composition or ellipsis alongside with the semantics of a phraseologism being remained as it is, and (2) changes in the form of the PU and its semantics, extension and modification of the PU's meaning.

Here comes a literary example as a proof of the first statement mentioned:

"Larry goes native – a joke, and a cynical one at that. Congratulations.' *When in Rome ...*' 'No, what I'm talking about is why we, as non-fascist, non-nutters, believe what we believe [8]."

In this abstract we come across with the reduction of components' number in a well-known proverb *When in Rome, do as the Romans do.* – 'When abroad or in an unfamiliar environment you should adopt the customs or behaviour of those around you [9]. The English-Russian Phraseological Dictionary edited by A. Kunin defines this PU as '*who keeps company with the wolf shall learn how to howl*' [10]. However, despite the ellipsis suggested in the example, its semantic load is retained, and due to the writer's usage of another PU *go native* '*adopt culture, customs, or way of life of the country or region one is living*' in the outer context, the reader-recipient perceives colourful associations, which entirely reveal the semantics of the contracted components [9]. According to the cognitivist view, a conceptual structure or 'conceptual domain' – and we can call it a metaphorical conceptual structure if more than one domain is involved – can generate countless linguistic expressions, which in turn can be systematically related to one another on the basis of this conceptual link and attest to its existence" [11].

It is necessary to note that the example given above appears to be an elliptical variant of a PU with the intonation of incompleteness. As it is generally known such an ellipsis is specific with writer's preterition, his being uncertain. Graphically it is

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expressed by dots. As we can see from the given example, the distinguishing feature of such elliptical variants is the obligatory preservation of the initial phrase fragment. “It is a sign of the model’s vitality and flexibility that this incorporation can take place, while the basic conceptual structure remains quite stable” [12].

The second statement can be exemplified by the following passage:

“What a shambles it must have been that December night in Vienna. 1808, *if memory served*. Bloody hopeless patrons, under-rehearsed players, a dim and shivering audience” [13].

Analysing such a PU as *if memory served* (*from if my memory serves me right*) – ‘*if my memory does not fail me*’ [10], it occurs to us, that it is not remarkably intruded by the writer, *but* we can conclude that even a slight reduction of components of the given PU has its own writer’s substantiation. As we see it, its contextual actualization within the framework of the given literary passage and writer’s contribution to morphological changes presuppose that the subjective seme of this transformation is expressed not by the memory of a single person’s mind, but it is represented by the national consciousness, by the memory of the whole nation, which had to witness those tragic events of those past times. The intentional writer’s omitting of the personal pronoun *my* can truly prove this fact.

The process of explication, in its turn intensifying the pragmatic effect on the semantics of a PU, causes considerable impact on the semantics of a PU. Compared to the method of implication, it leads to the other semantic results. As a rule, while using this method, semantic changes are of generalizing character. Here are some statements and proving examples to them:

1) The intensification of the meaning, the formation of superfluity of the meaning of a PU.

“No, no! This was not the way to think. Not little Jacky Pitman, not Jolly Jack, not Sir Jack, not the future Lord Pitman of wherever he chose. No, he must keep moving, he must act, he must not wait for time, *he must seize time by the throat*. On, on” [13].

The present abstract reveals the case of increasing the intensification of the function of such PU as *catch by the throat* ‘*to force, to persuade somebody to do something*’ due to the writer’s usage of lexical substitution. The stylistically neutral verb *to catch* is replaced by the verb *to seize* characterized more vividly and emotionally. The pragmatic impact on the reader-recipient is crowned by the author’s usage of syntactical parallel constructions and lexical repetition of the modal verb *must* with strong obligation.

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2) The intensification of PU's evaluation, the specification of a meaning of the substantive component are discovered in the literary passage given beneath:

“And the smugness meant he wouldn't notice as she separated herself from hid reality. If he noticed any absence on her part, he would cockily presume it was his doing, that *he was translating her to a further plane of pleasure, to seventh, eighth, ninth heaven*” [13].

The writer's structural and semantic changes and the derivational bonds with such PUs as *seventh heaven, in the seventh heaven, on cloud nine all of them meaning 'in a state of complete happiness'* are traced and distinguished in this PU transformation. [9]. The usage of attributive components *seventh* and *eighth* with the substantive element *heaven* as well as implementing the seme of pleasure “*plane of pleasure*” significantly intensifies the ironical writer's attitude towards the complacent personage, extremely overestimating himself and paying attention to no one but his own personality.

3) The changes in stylistic colouring of PU, creation of superfluity of the PU's meaning. Here follows an example:

“And then there was another little difficulty. *By some unhappy chance*, our species had managed to smuggle seven members on board” [14].

The given passage illustrates the addition of determinate words *some* and *unhappy* to the component *chance*. The writer's “intrusion” shares the ironical shade with the PU *by chance 'accidentally'* [10], changes its stylistic colouring, creates semantic superfluity.

4) Specification of the literal meanings in both components of the PU and changes in PU's evaluation, as one more method of explicit use of PU, can be tracked down in the passage below:

“It has to be said that Noah, *rain or shine*, wasn't much of a sailor. He was picked for his piety rather than his navigational skills. He wasn't any good in a storm, and he wasn't much better when the seas were calm” [14].

The PU *rain or shine 'whatever the weather; under any circumstances'* explicits Noah's mediocre skills as a leader of the Ark [10]. The literal usage of the notional components is traced through the light of explicit semes *in a storm* and *when the seas were calm* characterizing the extremes of weather conditions and demanding the respective navigational skills from Noah's part. But as it is clearly seen from the context, the personage does not possess such skills. He wants to have some in no way. Exactly the latter factor proves the writer's usage of double actualization of the PU's

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components that indicates the author's ironic and lenient attitude towards the main character of the book.

**Conclusion**

The methods of implication and explication of phraseological units are processed on lexical, structural and semantic levels. But only in case of intentional transformation these units may lead to controversially structured semantic results. The implicit use of a PU makes it more compact, laconic that intensifies its generality, promotes to the extension of its meaning.

The method of explication brings the abstract image of a PU closer to a specific one. Besides, it helps to reveal and clarify the direct meanings of the components of a PU.

**Summary**

Having analysed the PUs of Julian Barnes, we came to the conclusion that the most currently occurred techniques while applying the method of implication are: (1) "deformation" of PU's composition or ellipsis alongside with the semantics of a phraseologism being remained as it is, and (2) changes in the form of the PU and its semantics, extension and modification of the PU's meaning

As for the method of explication, it shows its worth in the following cases: (1) intensification of a meaning of the PU, the formation of superfluity of its meaning, (2) intensification of PU's evaluation, specification of a meaning of the substantive component, (3) changes in stylistic colouring of a PU, creation of superfluity of the PU's meaning, and (4) specification of the literal meanings in both components of PU (double actualization) and changes in PU's evaluation.

Thus, the methods of implication and explication in literary discourse are of great importance for implementing the author's creative transformational phraseological units.

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