



## Pragmatic functions of modern english phraseology

Feruza ALIMOVA<sup>1</sup>

Uzbekistan State World Languages University

### ARTICLE INFO

#### *Article history:*

Received March 2021

Received in revised form

20 March 2021

Accepted 15 April 2021

Available online

20 May 2021

#### *Keywords:*

phraseological concept of  
A.V. Kunin,  
phraseology,  
phraseological  
identification,  
branch of linguistics.

### ABSTRACT

Phraseological units – there is one of the most controversial problems in modern phraseology. This article presents the results of studying the main pragmatic functions of phraseological units in modern English. The relevance of the research lies in the urgent need to differentiate regular pragmatic functions in English phraseology. The aim of the work is to analyze the functions of phraseological units based on the British National Corpus (BNC) and assess their quantitative ratios. The theoretical basis of the research is the phraseological concept of A.V. Kunin.

2181-1415/© 2021 in Science LLC.

This is an open access article under the Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.ru>)

## Zamonaviy ingliz frazeologiyasining pragmatik vazifalari

### ANNOTATSIYA

#### *Kalit so'zlar:*

A.V. Kuninning frazeologik  
tushunchasi,  
frazeologiya,  
frazeologik identifikatsiya,  
tilshunoslik sohasi.

Frazeologik birliklar – zamonaviy frazeologizmida eng munozarali muammolardan biri hisoblanadi. Ushbu maqolada zamonaviy ingliz tilidagi frazeologik birliklarning asosiy pragmatik funktsiyalarini o'rganish natijalari keltirilgan. Tadqiqotning dolzarbligi ingliz frazeologiyasidagi muntazam pragmatik funktsiyalarni farqlash zarurati bilan bog'liq. Ishning maqsadi – British National Corpus (BNC) asosidagi frazeologik birliklarning funktsiyalarini tahlil qilish va ularning miqdoriy nisbatlarini baholash. Tadqiqotning nazariy asosini A.V. Kunin-ning frazeologik tushunchalari tashkil etadi.

<sup>1</sup> Lecturer, Uzbekistan State World Languages University, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

## Прагматические функции современной английской фразеологии

### АННОТАЦИЯ

#### **Ключевые слова:**

фразеологическая  
концепция А.В. Кунина,  
фразеология,  
фразеологическая  
идентификация,  
отрасли лингвистики.

Фразеологизмы – одна из самых спорных проблем в современной фразеологии. В данной статье излагаются результаты изучения основных прагматических функций фразеологизмов в современном английском языке. Актуальность исследования состоит в насущной потребности дифференцирования регулярных прагматических функций в английской фразеологии. Целью работы является анализ функций ФЕ на основе Британского национального корпуса (BNC) и оценка их количественных соотношений. Теоретическая база исследования – фразеологическая концепция А.В. Кунина.

The research was carried out on linguistic material extracted from modern lexicographic sources. The main method of sampling phraseological units from the linguistic continuum and their semantic analysis is the method of phraseological identification, which was proposed by the founder of English phraseology as a branch of linguistics and as an independent scientific discipline, Professor A.V. Kunin. The point is that the problem of functioning of phraseological units is considered to be one of the most discussed problems in modern phraseology. The problem is of great importance for any language, and it is especially urgent for English as phraseological units present one of the intensive means of the development of the nominative system in that language, as having turned into an analytical one. The research is carried out on the language material extracted from modern lexicographic sources and from the British National Corpus. The main method of extraction of phraseological units out of the language continuum and their semantic analysis is the method of phraseological identification that was introduced by professor A.V. Kunin (1970: 38), an outstanding Soviet linguist, founder of the English phraseology as a branch of linguistic and as a self-contained linguistic discipline. A set of non-paradigmatic methods and techniques of linguistics is employed as additional methods of the research, including a descriptive method with its procedures, methods of the definitional, phraseological and contextual analysis (Komarova, 2018: 564). In modern linguistic studies, the pragmatic function of any language sign (idioms and phraseologisms inclusive) is considered to be the basic one. It generally implies an intended sway, bringing about a change in another's actions or thoughts. Practically, any text is characterized by its inborn pragmatic function, which, in its turn, has an irresistible impact on the phraseology employed by the author. On the other hand, phraseological units themselves are characterized by their powerful inborn influential value which cannot but intensify the pragmatic force of the text and of the context as part of the text. Bearing that in mind, one may formulate a hypothesis: the varieties of the PU pragmatic function, belonging to regular functions (Kunin, 1996: 115), may be classified into stylistic, cumulative, directive, evaluative, summarizing, text-building functions and their sub-types.

**The Cumulative Function** The cumulative function presents one of the main instances and mechanisms in the economy of language means [1-3]. And that function appears to be one of the leading functions that are inherent in such communicative phraseological units as proverbs, because they generalize the life and cultural memory of people: Art is long, life is short; Life is not all beer and skittles; Evil communications corrupt good manners; Distance lends enchantment to the view; A stitch in time saves nine,

etc., e.g.: (a) My aunt said I'd be wanting to go to the coal merchant's next, and my uncle said: 'Evil communications corrupt good manners'. (W.S. Maugham, *Cakes and Ale*) (b) Tis distance lends enchantment to the view, And robes the mountain in its azure hue (Th. Campbell, *The Pleasures of Hope*). (c) Even with fees added on, the final bill would still be 500,000 less than anticipated. Plans to install new mortar in inside walls and to alter air conditioning equipment had to be abandoned but the move would save taxpayers' money. But Conservative Coun. Peter Jones said the bill would have only been a fraction of that if the controlling Labour group had taken action when defects in the building were detailed in reports in 1985 and 1986. 'A stitch in time saves nine', he said. (BNC: [Northern Echo]. World affairs material, 1998: 5-43.). The Directive Function One more function is closely connected with the cumulative function: "directly managing, directing, influencing, and, in a certain way, bringing up, forming a person. We named it directive" (Vereshchagin, Kostomarov, 1990: 98). The following proverbs can serve as an illustration of the directive function: Kill not the goose that lays the golden eggs; Don't take your harp to the party; You must lose a fly to catch a trout; Don't make a rod for your own back; Let the cobbler stick to his last; Let bygones be bygones; Strike while the iron is hot; Never say die; Get off your high horse; cf.: (a) 'Peggy? Adam here. Level Five. I need to see Franklin D. When can he fit me in?' 'That could be difficult. He has a tight schedule.'. Damn! Adam had a date with a promising Finnish brunette for that evening. He was confident he'd brought her to the stage where he could lay her. Strike while the iron is hot'. He asked me to check data on a recent employee. I've checked. He wants me to take action [4]. There are queries before I can do that'. 'Which employee?' Peggy's American voice was a whiplash. (BNC: Whirlpool. Forbes, Colin. London: Pan Books Ltd, 1991: 1-120.). (b) <...> Nuffin' wrong with poofters. Monica's got one at home and he's brilliant'. I smiled weakly at the line of eyes fixed on me and Jan. Miracle of miracles, a bus hove in sight. 'Give us a kiss then, Monica. And you and Basil come up my place one day'. Jan Indian-striped my cheek with lipstick and hopped on to the platform, turning to shout: 'They'll think I'm one too, Monica! Never say die, eh?' I took the long cut home. (BNC: I believe in angels. Cooper, Fiona. London: Serpent's Tail, 1993: 1-128.). (c) ...that this may have been one small way in which I had a slight advantage over Gittel. But that was long after the moment when my pathetic attempt to enlist the so-called forces of darkness on my behalf had backfired [5]. 'I'm getting vexed'. 'You watch your mouth out there, Apostate!' 'Why don't you just climb back into your tree?' 'Rainbow speaks up'. 'Could you both stop squabbling?' 'That... ghouls out there has no right to impugn my professional abilities. Get off your high horse, Kokos'. (BNC: The dyke & the dybbuk. Galford, Ellen. London: Virago Press Ltd, 1993: 98-245.). The Evaluative Function The pragmatic character of phraseology is also seen in the evaluative function of phraseological units which may be positive or negative, intellectual or connotative. Phraseological units having a positive evaluative function are as follows: on top of the world – elated by one's own success (Cowie, 2000: 183), be as gentle as a dove – to behave in a peace-loving, tender manner (Gulland, 1994: 67), keep oneself unspotted from the world – keep oneself morally and spiritually uncorrupted by worldly practices and pleasures (Cowie, 2000: 332), beat one's sword into a ploughshare – to turn from war to peaceful pursuits (Gulland, 1994: 208), bear/ carry the palm – to signal one's triumph (Gulland, 1994: 50), go with a swing – be very successful (Longman, 1997: 326), be born with a silver spoon in the mouth – to have wealthy parents (Longman, 1997: 310), etc. Cf.: (a) However, his new design was arranged so that it could be retained. He then said: as to cheerfulness of character, I really think that any unprejudiced person would come to the

conclusion that, if compared with the Post-office, the Museum, the Palace, or even the Board of Trade or Whitehall Chapel, my design would carry the palm in this respect. He asked MPs for fair in riotous living. (BNC: Black sheep of the family: seminar (Edu/inf). Rec. on 2 Feb 1994.). For further details on evaluative function of phraseological units, see also S. Bashiyeva (1995), T. Fedulenkova (2014, 37-43) et al [6].

**The Summarizing Function** The summarizing function of an idiom and any other phraseological unit may be interpreted as the ability of that language sign to fulfil the role of a brisk resultative description, a kind of an outline or a digest of the statement going before, e.g.: That's that with the meaning of "it is permanently settled and need not to be dealt with again" (Spears, 1991: 327); That's the ticket with the meaning of "that is exactly what is needed" (Ibid.); That ain't hay with the meaning of "that is not a small amount of money" (Ibid.); The fat is in the fire meaning "serious trouble has broken out" (Ibid.); The coast is clear meaning "there is no visible danger" (Ibid.); for instance: <...> try and persuade him. Good luck with the new arrival. See you all'. The two men left. Sarah looked at her sons' faces and smiled. 'It's a girl!' All the boys grinned at her. 'A daughter for me old age'. She hugged the child to her. 'I'm going to call her Maura. Maura Ryan. I like that. 'Shall I go and get Mickey, Mum? I saved him some chips'. 'Yeah, Geoff. Tell him the coast is clear'. The doctor stopped packing away his instruments and looked at Sarah sternly. (BNC: Dangerous lady. Cole, Martina. 1992. Headline Books: 3-123.). Many proverbial phraseological units proved to realize their summarizing function in the context: Keep it for a rainy day; Don't tell tales out of school; Put the saddle on the right horse; Two blacks do not make a white; You cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs; cf.: (a) Jack often travels on the train without a ticket, so why shouldn't I? 'Just because he does it, that's no reason why you should. Two blacks don't make a white. (Ridout, Witting, 2009: 166). (b) 'We shall be much more comfortable in our new house, but I'm afraid it's not going to be so cheap to run as this one'. 'You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs'. (Ridout, Witting, 2009: 182). That summarizing effect is evidently felt even when the context turns the proverb into a verbal, i.e. a nominal-communicative phraseological unit: Keep it for a rainy day > to keep it for a rainy day; Don't tell tales out of school > not to tell tales out of school, Put the saddle on the right horse > to put the saddle on the right horse; cf.: (c) And obviously we would want to take money out of reserves, our original amendment took one point three million pounds out of reserves and it's interesting to see now that you're suggesting almost that figure again and yet for years you've been telling us you can't take this money out of the reserves, <...> you know we had to keep it for a rainy day. (BNC: St. Lukes School Council meeting (Pub/instit). 5 parts). (d) Fowler-Troon had the grace to look embarrassed. 'I must admit I have an ulterior motive. Not that one was necessary, of course. Always a pleasure to entertain a charming young lady'. He fiddled with the handle of his cup. 'Oh dear. I don't quite know how to put this'. Celia took pity on him. 'Is it something to do with Ivor Newley?' 'You guessed?' Fowler-Troon dabbed his mouth with his napkin. 'It's all rather delicate [7]. I don't want to tell tales out of school. (Freelance death. Taylor, Andrew. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1993: 52-175.). (e) An author's new book had been reviewed unfavourably in a literary weekly. He said to an acquaintance: 'I'll concede that a critic has a right to give an honest opinion but I think John Cartright went a bit too far this time'. 'How do you know it was Cartright? The article wasn't signed'. 'I'd recognize his style anywhere, confound him!' 'You are putting the saddle on the right horse, old man. John Cartright didn't right that review. I did'. (Ridout, Witting, 2009: 143).

**REFERENCES:**

1. Kunin A.V. Accompanying words and context // Phraseology and context: interuniversity. Sat. scientific. tr. Kuibyshev, 1982.
2. Kunin A.B. Phraseological units and context // Foreign languages at school. 1971.
3. Kunin A.B. Foreword. Introduction to the English-Russian phraseological dictionary / lit. ed. M.D. Litvinov. 4th ed., Rev. and add. M.: Rus. yaz., 1984.
4. A.V. Kunin A course of phraseology of modern English. M.: Higher. shk., 1996.
5. A.V. Kunin English phraseology: Theoretical course. M.: Higher. shk., 1970.
6. Kunin A.V. Basic concepts of English phraseology as a linguistic discipline and the creation of the English-Russian phraseological dictionary: dis ... dr. Philol. sciences. M., 1964.
7. Amanova N. (2019). Genre and stylistic features of the structure and dynamics of the development of modern Uzbek pop music. Eurasian music science journal, 1(1). – PP. 121–137.