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**SOME PECULIARITIES OF THE FUNCTIONING OF  
PHRASEOLOGISMS IN THE LITERARY TEXT**

***O.S. Zubkova***

*Doctor of Philology,  
Professor of Foreign Languages and Professional Communication Department  
e-mail: [olgaz4@rambler.ru](mailto:olgaz4@rambler.ru)*

*Kursk State University*

***A. Marabini***

*Teaching Assistant of the Department of German and French Languages  
e-mail: [marabini92@gmail.com](mailto:marabini92@gmail.com)*

*Belgorod State National Research University*

***A.V. Fahrutdinova***

*D.Ed., Associate Professor,  
Professor of Foreign Languages Department  
e-mail: [Anastasiya.Fahrutdinova@kpfu.ru](mailto:Anastasiya.Fahrutdinova@kpfu.ru)*

*Institute of International Relations,  
Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University*

***N.P. Soboleva***

*PhD (Candidate) in Philology,  
Associate Professor of Foreign Languages Department  
e-mail: [NPSoboleva@kpfu.ru](mailto:NPSoboleva@kpfu.ru)*

*Institute of International Relations,  
Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University*

*In the present article some peculiarities of the functioning of phraseologisms in the literary text are examined. The material used for the research has been the literary expressiveness of Ugo Foscolo's novel «The last letters of Jacopo Ortis», as one of the most prominent examples of the tradition of the Italian literature. The authors have noticed that the degree of figurativeness of the literary language, in which the work was written, permits to underline some universal aspects of formation and identification of phraseological units, including lexicalization, semantic complication, idiomatization, correlation with various parts of the speech and possibility of occasional transformations that influence the process of elaboration of idioms by an individual.*

***Key words:*** *phraseologism, trope, metaphorization, literary text, complex approach.*

The change of emphasis of the linguistic research in the modern scientific paradigm has led to the fact that «the consideration and description of linguistic units with a high figurative index, taking into account the results of

only introspective practices of the analysis, seems insufficient for a linguist-theorist. For example, metaphor, pun, phraseology are extremely complex and diverse phenomena, the unbiased study of which involves a comprehensive account of linguistic, cognitive and semiotic mechanisms, socio-cultural characteristics of the conditions and the participants of communication, which are an integral part of the process of communicative interaction, including verbal and non-verbal means of achieving communication goals» [Зубкова 2013]. It is well known that the phraseology of any language is the most valuable linguistic heritage, which reflects the vision of the world, the national culture, the customs and beliefs, the fantasy and the history of the people speaking it. As a result of the development of the philological science, phraseologisms, in many works are referred to as «stable phrases», «idiomatic expressions», etc., and have deservedly received the definition of «the most distinctive part of its nominative stock in the cultural-linguistic scheme» [Телия 1999: 13].

In the last years, significant results have been achieved in the field of phraseology; however, some phraseological phenomena, having an essential significance both for the theory of the language and for the lexicographical practice, still remain in the focus of attention of the modern linguists. Thus, nowadays in the domestic linguistics the study on the phraseologisms is assumed in three different directions: within the frameworks of traditional (structural) linguistics, of cognitive linguistics and of psycholinguistics. The research on the nature of the phraseologisms and on the categorical signs, as well as the identification of patterns of their functioning in the speech appears to be a matter of phraseology as a section of linguistics from the standpoint of the traditional approach [Ройзензон 1977]. Phraseology studies the specificity of the phraseologisms as signs of secondary formation, in particular as products of a special type of secondary indirect nomination, represented by various kinds of syntagmatic interactions of word components in the processes of rethinking and forming a new meaning of the original combination or of a separated word. Researchers working within the framework of this approach are also interested in the peculiarities and meanings of the sign function of the phraseological units, the structural and semantic specificity, which appear in the main features of the idiomaticity: stability and reproducibility. The nature of lexical components of the phraseologisms, their syntactic and morphological structure, the character of syntactic connections with other units of the language and the form of realization in the speech are also investigated.

The cognitive and psycholinguistic paradigms postulate that in the meaning of the phraseological units it is possible to isolate the basic concept that relates this unit to one or another area of the concepts sphere. The basic concept is highlighted with the help of a word identifier in the definition of stable lexical units. A complex approach to the study of linguistic phenomena, which has become widespread in the domestic philology in the recent years is of particular interest in our work. This approach is based on cognitive, psycholinguistic and

some linguistic positions, related to the study of internal linguistic correlations. The cognitive and psycholinguistic bases of the investigation of linguistic phenomena are closely interrelated and complement each other. Apart from this, we pay special attention to the analysis of the metaphorical nature of the formation of the phraseological units, since «the result of the process of metaphorization is, in our opinion, the verbal processing of the new knowledge by an individual about the world and himself» [Зубкова 2008: 128]. A complex approach provides a deeper and more natural description of the meaning of the words, it allows to reveal the general knowledge of the world that is stored in a language and all aspects of the knowledge, both theoretical and ordinary, of the everyday life, are activated and considered with the help of the language. It seems to us that taking into account this approach would be very useful in the process of studying the functioning of the phraseological units in a literary text.

In the foreign philological paradigm the main focus of the scientific research is the analysis of the phraseologisms as a set of idioms, typical for a language or for a specific discourse and also as a reasoned set of these expressions [Garzanti linguistica 2014], typical of a certain language or a certain sphere of the lexis, which refers to a specific activity of the individual (in the sense of idiomatic locutions or characteristic expressions) [Treccani vocabolario della lingua italiana 2017]. Researches in phraseology are actively developing and they consider the ways of construction of sentence with the phraseological locutions, characteristic of a particular language or writer. In the Western philological tradition, the origins of such a scientific search have a long history. For example, in the Italian linguistic tradition, the study of figurative expressions appears to be ancient. Giambattista Vico, a philosopher, the founder of the philosophy of history and ethnic psychology, attributed the metaphorical ability to the original language, which opportunely related to the «heroic» style of expressions as «mi bolle il sangue nel cuore», «my blood boils in my heart», in contrast to the neutral style «mi adiro» «I get angry». Also Manzoni, a romantic writer, wrote about this; he saw in the metaphor the natural structure of a language [Alfieri 1997: 27].

Idioms were mainly Tuscans and are found in the tradition of letters and in the scientific style. Galileo himself used idiomatic phrases in his scientific discourse, because, on the one hand, he recognised the prestige of the Tuscan language and, on the other hand, through them he controversially contrasted the fixed style of that time. Then from the texts of the Tuscan literature some proverbs penetrated in the nowadays speech: for example, from the fairy tale Pinocchio, the Tuscan proverb «*la bugia corre giù pel naso*» – «*the lie runs down the nose*» became widespread in the context of jokes «*ti si allunga il naso*» – «*your nose becomes longer*» addressed to those who are suspected of lying.

The Piedmontese purist author Botta listed concrete contexts of use of these expressions and added that, for example, it is better to use the proverbs in

the lower style of the speech and sometimes even in the middle style. For example: *legarsela al dito* – *bear a grudge*, with the meaning of revenge or *rompere le uova nel paniere* – *to upset someone's plan*, with the meaning of spoiling a plan.

Expressive phenomena, which had already penetrated in the communicative usage, belong to the literary period of Edmondo de Amicis, writer, poet and journalist: *orientarsi e polarizzarsi su una questione* (*to orientate and polarize on a question*), *senza soluzione di continuità* (*seamless*), *forza centripeta e centrifuga* (*centripetal and centrifugal force*). In addition, metaphorical expressions in the judicial, military and financial sphere, such as *circostanza attenuante* (*attenuating circumstance*), *i fatti depongono a favore o a danno di* (*things come out in favour or against*), *mossa strategica* (*strategic move*), *fare il bilancio* (*make the balance*).

Some years later in his essay «Fra il nuovo e l'antico» (between the new and the ancient), Raffaello Fornaciari, a grammarian open to newness, built the «metaphoric emporium», in which each figure was kept in accordance with its sphere of origin. Following this, Franco Fochi, an obstinate linguist of the 1960s, was concerned about the spoken and written Italian that should be a really «revolutionary language» and censored the most various uses of the Italian language, starting from literature to telecommunication.

In addition, in the foreign linguistics it is possible to note the emergence of a new approach for the classification of the phraseological expressions. They began to be considered mainly as 1) phrases of syntagmatic structure of the type *avere ragione* (*to be right*); 2) idiomatic sentences with stable and unchanging elements (*è rosso come un peperone / un pomodoro* – *he is red like a pepper / a tomato*); 3) proverbial sentences with a whole phrasal structure, both with a verb and in the form of a nominal sentence: *è facile come bere un bicchiere d'acqua* – *it is as easy as drinking a glass of water*, *meglio tardi che mai* – *better late than never*. Among the types of texts that admit figurative expressions, the literary text stands out separately.

Despite the significant number of works concerning the topic of the study of the phraseologisms in literary texts, the present work seems to be actual, since it relies on a complex approach to the investigation of the problems of the functioning of the phraseologisms on the basis of the source material, translated into languages with different structures, which, on the one hand, presents rich material for the analysis of the texts in Russian, Italian and English languages, on the other hand, it witnesses the reliability of the obtained data, result of the study. The conducted analysis allows to reveal some patterns of the functioning of the phraseologisms in the literary text and helps to get closer to the solution of the question on cultural lacunarity in the natural language.

As material for our analysis, we use the original text of Ugo Foscolo's novel «Le ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis», one of the most vivid examples of the Italian literature tradition. The degree of figurativeness of the literary language,

that uses a great number of phraseologisms and other tropes existing nowadays in the Italian language, is of particular value for our research.

It is evident that when identifying the phraseological units in a literary text, it is necessary to pay attention to the grammatical (syntactic) structure, to the type of connection among the constituents, to the meaning as a result of the mutual influence of the structure and of the semantic transformations, since the idiomaticity can be full (from the meaning of the word components it is not possible to guess the meaning of the phraseologism) and partial (the meaning of the phraseologism becomes clear on the basis of rethinking processes).

For example, in the letters to his friend Lorenzo Alderani, Jacopo Ortis mourns the tragic fate of his homeland and of the young generation of Italians, for whom there is no future in their home country: «Il sacrificio della nostra patria è consumato: tutto è perduto; e la vita, seppure ne verrà concessa, **non ci resterà che piangere** le nostre sciagure, e la nostra infamia» «The sacrifice of our homeland is consumed: everything is lost; and life, even if it will be given, **we will only have to mourn** our misfortunes and our infamy» [Foscolo 2018: 7].

The following examples vividly illustrate the partial idiomatization of the phraseologism, based on the semantic fusion of the components: «Or dovrò io abbandonare anche questa mia solitudine antica, dove, senza **perdere dagli occhi** il mio sciagurato paese, posso ancora **sperare qualche giorno di pace?** Tu mi fai raccapricciare, Lorenzo; questi sono dunque gli sventurati? E noi, purtroppo, noi stessi italiani **ci laviamo le mani nel sangue degl'italiani**» «Now I will have to abandon also this ancient solitude of mine, where, without **losing sight** of my unfortunate country, can I still **hope for some days of peace?** You scare me, Lorenzo; are these therefore the unlucky people? And we, unfortunately, we Italians ourselves **wash our hands in Italians' blood**» [Foscolo 2018: 7]. «Il mio cadavere almeno non **cadrà tra le braccia straniere**; il mio nome sarà sommessamente compianto da' pochi uomini, compagni delle nostre miserie; e le mie ossa **poseranno su la terra de' miei padri**» «My dead body at least will not **fall into foreign arms**; my name will be meekly mourned by a few men, companions of our miseries; and my bones **will rest on my fathers' land**» [Foscolo 2018: 8].

We can notice that, being fixed combinations, the phraseologisms are stable. They can exist in a language for many centuries. The stability (fixity) of phraseologisms is due to the non-commutability of their components and to the unity of their meaning. For instance: «Se m'è dato lo sperare mai **pace, l'ho trovata**, o Lorenzo» «If I ever hoped for **peace, I found it**, Lorenzo» [Foscolo 2018: 10]. «Domenica mi s'erano affollati intorno tutti i contadini che, quantunque non comprendessero affatto, stavano **ascoltandomi a bocca aperta**. Credo che **il desiderio** di sapere e ridire la storia de' tempi andati **sia figlio** del nostro **amor proprio**» «On Sunday all the peasants crowded around me and, even if they did not understand anything at all, they **were listening to me with**

**their mouths open.** I believe that the desire to know and repeat the history of the past periods **represents our self-respect**» [Foscolo 2018: 10]. The used phraseological units actively function in the modern Italian language and maintain the denotative core of the meaning.

Separately, it is worth to dwell on the question about the connection of the phraseological units with the history of the nation. The Italian phraseological units have been existing in the language for many centuries, they can reveal various folk traditions, stereotypes and images that have been studying for a long time and which often reduce the probability of replacing an image with a more familiar one to the native speaker of another culture. For example: «Frattanto ho preso a educare la sorellina di Teresa: le insegno a leggere e a scrivere. Quand'io sto con lei, la mia fisionomia si va rasserenando, il mio cuore è più gajo che mai, ed **io fo mille ragazzate**» «Meanwhile, I started educating Teresa's little sister: I teach her to read and write. When I am with her, my physiognomy cheers up, my heart is cheerful than ever and **I make a lot of childish jokes**» [Foscolo 2018: 14]. This phraseological locution preserves the possibility of occasional transformations in the Italian modern literary language.

In one of the letters, Jacopo tells about his trip with Teresa, Odoardo and Teresa's family to Petrarca's house in Arquà. The letter indicates the beginning of a new stage of the relationship between Jacopo and Teresa. The young girl starts to trust him and talk about her unhappiness: «Più volte incominciai questa lettera: ma la **faccenda andava assai per le lunghe**» «Several times I started this letter: but **things were misdirecting me**» [Foscolo 2018: 16]. «Mio padre **fiero e assoluto nelle sue risoluzioni non vuole sentirsela nominare**; egli mi va tuttavia replicando, che la è la sua e la mia peggiore nemica» «My father, **proud and absolute in his decisions**, does not want to hear her mentioned; however, he replies to me that she is his and my worst enemy» [Foscolo 2018: 19]. It is evident the stress put on the correlation of the phraseologism with the various other parts of the speech.

Domestic and Western linguists agree with the opinion that the phraseologisms are created on the basis of a unified meaning of all components. However, many linguists point out that, in this case, the meaning of the phraseologism with regards the metaphoricity presents itself as something not new, that is not the sum of the meanings of the components. By metaphoricity usually we understand the allegory, the figurativeness, the rethinking, the imagery. In our opinion, metaphoricity as a sign appears to be central for the creation of the phraseologism, since the metaphorization as a cognitive process extrapolates the products of the mental operations into the individuals' language consciousness and encourages their subsequent formulation in language. Through the only interpretation of a phraseological unit it is not possible to «abstract the product of a meaning from the cognitive bases, explicated in cognitive, ethnological, sociocultural and constitutive experience» [Зубкова 2014: 237], where the cognitive bases are explicated in the

frameworks of the metaphorization. For example: «Io tornavo a casa **col cuore in festa**. – Che? Lo spettacolo della bellezza basta forse ad addormentare in noi tristi mortali tutti i dolori? Vedi per me una **sorgente di vita**: unica certo, e chi sa!» «I came back home **with a joyful heart**. – What? Is the sight of the beauty enough to put to sleep all the pains in us sad mortals? You see, for me a **source of life**: of course, the only one, who knows!» [Foscolo 2018: 12]. Modern psycholinguistic investigations witness that people understand many phraseological units thanks to their basic knowledge of metaphors (permanent metaphorical knowledge). P. Gibbs' experimental research has allowed to come to the conclusion that individuals are aware of the figurative meaning of idioms without a prior understanding of their literal meanings [Gibbs 1994: 427–428]. On the basis of this, a proposal, that later received the name of hypothesis of direct choice or of direct interpretation (Direct Access or Direct Interpretation Hypothesis) was advanced. In accordance with this hypothesis, the process of identification of the figurative meaning of the phraseological unit does not occur in parallel with the construction of its literary meaning, but precedes it and takes place only when the proper figurative meaning of the expression does not fit the given context.

The Dutch linguist V. Levelt [Levelt 1993: 187] adheres to the opinion that idiomatic expressions are included in the number of unities of the mental lexicon, i.e. in his model of speech production, a special module, in which the idioms would be represented, is not highlighted. The individual can also start trying to carefully select the idiomatic interpretation (this is the model for elaborating the idioms [Gibbs 1980]), but it is not always successful. This conclusion is also true for literary texts, containing phraseologisms. For example: «Se nondimeno non vi fosse quello sposo, perché davvero – io non odio persona del mondo, ma vi sono cert'uomini ch'io ho bisogno di **vedere soltanto da lontano**. – Suo suocero me n'andava **tessendo jer sera un lungo elogio** in forma di commendatizia» «If nevertheless, there was that bridegroom, because I really do not hate any person of the world, but there are certain people, whom I need to **see only from afar**. – Yesterday evening his father-in-law was **giving me a long eulogy** in commendation form» [Foscolo 2018: 13]. It is evident that, when translating, the preservation of a similar metaphorical image is possible only through the addition of explanatory information or with the help of a paraphrase.

Considering the functioning of the phraseologisms in the literary text it is significant to emphasize the importance of lexicalization. In the linguistic literature, by lexicalization it is traditionally understood the transformation of word combinations in fixed phraseological units. Formed through the process of lexicalization, the phraseologisms are able to function in the literary discourse as elements of separate words. Lexicalization is a powerful mechanism, able to complete the lexical composition of the literary language. For example: «Quantunque io viva fuggiasco, mi vengono tutti d'intorno quasi volessero

mansuefare una fiera generosa e selvatica. Per ora io **lascio correre**. Veramente non ho avuto tanto bene dagli uomini da **fidarmene così alle prime**: ma quel **menare la vita** del tiranno che freme e trema d'essere scannato a ogni minuto mi pare un **agonizzare in un morte lenta**, obbrobriosa» «Although I live as a fugitive, they all come around me as if they wanted to dominate a big and wild beast. For now **I let it go**. Actually, I have never had so much good from the people **to trust them at first**: but **living your life** like a tyrant, who shudders and trembles from being slaughtered at every minute, it seems to me to be agonising in a slow, opprobrious death» [Foscolo 2018: 10].

Thus, the peculiarities of the functioning of the phraseological units in a literary text are determined by their semantic parameters (the level of rethinking of the phraseological meaning, the type of internal form, the specificity of the phraseological figurativeness), by the stability of the lexicalization, by the individual possibilities of identification and correlation with the phraseological units of the native language and also by the conditions of presentation (in isolation or in context). The variability of the interpretation of the foreign phraseologisms, which is conditioned to the nature of the phraseological meaning with an associative basis, deserves particular attention.

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