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COURSE PAPER

ENGLISH PHRASEOLOGY

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Introduction.

Idiom is a phrase or expression whose total meaning differs from the meaning of the individual words. For example, to blow one's top (get angry) and behind the eight ball (in trouble) are English- language idioms. Idioms come from language and generally cannot be translated literally (word for word). Foreign language speakers must learn them just as they would learn vocabulary words.

It is generally accepted that interpreters did not know much about the laws and rules of translation at the dawn of civilization. They did not have enough scientific knowledge, and some writers maintained later that translation was a problem which could never be solved (e.g., "All translation seems to me to be simply an attempt to solve an insoluble problem." W. von Humboldt).

Idioms come to be a very numerous part of English. Idioms cover a lot of drawbacks of the English language and it is one-third part of the colloquial speech.

Phraseology

1.1Phraseology as a subsystem of language

Phraseology means the branch of linguistics dealing with stable word-combinations characterized by certain transference of meaning.

Despite differences of opinion, most authors agree upon some points concerning the distinctive features of phraseological units, such as:

Integrity (or transference) of meaning means that none of the idiom components is separately associated with any referents of objective reality, and the meaning of the whole unit cannot be deduced from the meanings of its components;

Stability (lexical and grammatical) means that no lexical substitution is possible in an idiom in comparison with free or variable word-combinations (with an exception of some cases when such substitutions are made by the author intentionally). The experiments conducted in the 1990s showed that, the meaning of an idiom is not exactly identical to its literal paraphrase given in the dictionary entry. That is why we may speak about lexical flexibility of many units if they are used in a creative manner. Lexical stability is usually accompanied by grammatical stability which prohibits any grammatical changes;

Separability means that the structure of an idiom is not something indivisible, certain modifications are possible within certain boundaries. Here we meet with

the so-called **lexical and grammatical variants**¹. For examples: "as hungry as a wolf (as a hunter)", "as safe as a house (houses)" in English, «как (будто, словно, точно) вводуопущенный», «оседлатьсвоего (любимого) конька», «раскидыватьумом (мозгами) Раскинуть (пораскинуть) умом (мозгами)» in Russian.

Expressivity and emotiveness means that idioms are also characterized by stylistic colouring. In other words, they evoke emotions or add expressiveness.

On the whole phraseological units, even if they present a certain pattern, do not generate new phrases. They are unique.

Phraseology deals with a phraseological subsystem of language and not with isolated phraseological units. Phraseology is concerned with all types of set expressions.

Set expressions are divided into three classes: phraseological units (e.g. red tape, mare's nest, etc.), phraseomatic units (e.g. win a victory, launch a campaign, etc.) and borderline cases belonging to the mixed class. The main distinction between the first and the second classes is semantic: phraseological units have fully or partially transferred meanings while components of, phraseomatic units are used in their literal meanings.

Phraseological and phraseomatic units are not regarded as word- equivalents but some of them are treated as word correlates.

Phraseological and phraseomatic units are set expressions and their phraseological stability distinguishes them from free phrases and compound words.

Phraseological and phraseomatic units² are made up of words of different degree of wordness depending on the type of set expressions they are used in. (cf. e.g. small hours and red tape). Their structural separateness, an important factor of their stability, distinguishes them from compound words (E.g. comparing blackbird and black market).

Stability of use means that set expressions are reproduced ready-made and not created in speech. They are not elements of individual style of speech but language units.

¹Лексические и грамматические варианты(Collins V.«A BookofEnglishIdioms») 1981 с.43

²Фразеологические и фразеоматические разделы(Collins V.«A BookofEnglishIdioms») 1981 с.44

Lexical stability means that the components of set expressions are either irreplaceable (e.g. red tape, mare's nest) or partly replaceable within the bounds of phraseological or phraseomatic variance: lexical (e.g. a skeleton in the cupboard - a skeleton in the closet); grammatical (e.g. to be in deep water - to be in deep waters); positional (e.g. head over ears - over head and ears), quantitative (e.g. to lead somebody a dance- to lead somebody a pretty dance), mixed variants (e.g. raise (stir up) a hornets' nest about one's ears- arouse (stir up) the nest of hornets).

Semantic stability is based on the lexical stability of set expressions. Even when occasional changes are introduced the meaning of set expression is preserved. It may only be specified, made more precise, weakened or strengthened. In other words in spite of all occasional phraseological and phraseomatic units, as distinguished from free phrases, remain semantically invariant or are destroyed. For example, the substitution of the verbal component in the free phrase to raise a question by the verb to settle (to settle a question) changes the meaning of the phrase, no such change occurs in to raise (stir up) a hornets' nest about one's ears.

An integral part of this approach is a method of phraseological identification which helps to single out set expressions in Modern English.

When as a result of a change in the semantic structure of a polysemantic word some of its meanings disappear and can be found only in certain collocations. The noun mind, e.g., once meant 'purpose' or 'intention' and this meaning survives in the phrases to have a mind to do something, to change one's mind, etc.

When a free word-group used in professional speech penetrates into general literary usage, it is often felt as non-motivated. To pull (the) strings (wires), e.g., was originally used as a free word-group in its direct meaning by professional actors in puppet shows. In Modern English, however, it has lost all connection with puppet-shows and therefore cannot also be observed in the phraseological unit to stick to one's guns, which can be traced back to military English, etc.

Sometimes extra-linguistic factors may account for the loss of motivation, to show the white feather - 'to act as a coward', e.g., can be traced back to the days when cock-fighting was popular.

When a word-group making up part of a proverb or saying begins to be used a self-contained unit it may gradually become non-motivated if its connection with the corresponding proverb or saying is not clearly perceived. A new broom, e.g., originates as a component of the saying new brooms sweep clean. New broom as a phraseological unit may be viewed as non-motivated because the meaning of the whole is not deducible from the meaning of the components. In Modern English,

however, it functions as a non-motivated self-contained phraseological unit and is also used to denote the T.V. set. Achilles heel - 'the weak spot in a man's circumstances or character' can be traced back to mythology, but it seems that in Modern English this word-group functions as a phraseological unit largely because most English speakers do not connect it with the myth from which it was extracted.

1.2 Phraseological units and their types

The vocabulary of a language is enriched not only by words but also by **phraseological units**. Phraseological units are word-groups that cannot be made in the process of speech, they exist in the language as ready-made units. They are compiled in special dictionaries. The same as words phraseological units express a single notion and are used in a sentence as one part of it. American and British lexicographers call such units «idioms». We can mention such dictionaries as: L.Smith «Words and Idioms» 1976, V.Collins «A Book of English Idioms» 1981 etc. In these dictionaries we can find words, peculiar in their semantics (idiomatic), side by side with word-groups and sentences. In these dictionaries they are arranged, as a rule, into different semantic groups. Phraseological units can be classified according to the ways they are formed, according to the degree of the motivation of their meaning, according to their structure and according to their part-of-speech meaning. **A.V. Koonin** classified phraseological units according to the way they are formed³. He pointed out primary and secondary ways of forming phraseological units. Primary ways of forming phraseological units are those when a unit is formed on the basis of a free word-group:

a) The most productive in Modern English is the formation of phraseological units by means of transferring the meaning of terminological word-groups, e.g. in cosmic technique we can point out the following phrases: «launching pad» in its terminological meaning is «стартовая площадка», in its transferred meaning - «отправной пункт», «to link up» - «стыковка космических кораблей, соединение», in its transformed meaning it means - «знакомиться»;

b) a large group of phraseological units was formed from free word groups by transforming their meaning, e.g. «granny farm» - «пансионат для старых людей», «Trojan horse» - «компьютерная программа, предварительно составленная для повреждения компьютера»

³Кунин А.В. Англо-русский фразеологический словарь, М., 1956

c) phraseological units can be formed by means of alliteration , e.g. «a sad sack» - «несчастнЫЙслучай», «culture vulture» - «человекиНтересующийсяИскусством», «fudge and nudge» - «уклончивость ».

d) they can be formed by means of expressiveness, especially it is characteristic for forming interjections, e.g. «My aunt!», « Hear, hear !» etc

e) they can be formed by means of distorting a word group, e.g. «odds and ends» was formed from «odd ends»,

f) they can be formed by using archaisms, e.g. «in brown study» means «in gloomy meditation» where both components preserve their archaic meanings,

g) they can be formed by using a sentence in a different sphere of life, e.g. «that cock won't fight» can be used as a free word-group when it is used in sports (cock fighting), it becomes a phraseological unit when it is used in everyday life, because it is used metaphorically,

h) they can be formed when we use some unreal image, e.g. «to have butterflies in the stomach» - «>», «to have green fingers испытыватьволнение» - «преуспевать,каксадовод-любитель» etc.

i) they can be formed by using expressions of writers or politicians in everyday life, e.g. «corridors of power» (Snow), «American dream» (Alby) «locust years» (Churchil), «the winds of change» (McMillan).

Secondary ways of forming phraseological units are those when a phraseological unit is formed on the basis of another phraseological unit; they are:

a) conversion, e.g. «to vote with one's feet» was converted into «vote with one's feet»;

changing the grammar form, e.g. «Make hay while the sun shines» is transferred into a verbal phrase - «to make hay while the sun shines»;

analogy, e.g. «Curiosity killed the cat» was transferred into «Care killed the cat»;

contrast, e.g. «cold surgery» - «a planned before operation» was formed by contrasting it with «acute surgery», «.thin cat» - «a poor person» was formed by contrasting it with «fat cat»;

shortening of proverbs or sayings e.g. from the proverb «You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear» by means of clipping the middle of it the phraseological unit «to make a sow's ear» was formed with the meaning «помиляться».

borrowing phraseological units from other languages, either as translation loans, e.g. « living space» (German), « to take the bull by the horns» (Latin) or by means of phonetic borrowings «meche blanche» (French), «corpse d'elite» (French), «sotto voce» (Italian) etc.

There are different combinations of words. Some of them are free, e.g. to read books (news papers, a letter, etc.) others are fixed, limited in their combinative power, e.g. to go to bed,, to make a report. The combinations of words which are fixed (set-expressions) are called **phraseological units**.

II Word and set-expression.

2.1 The difference between a word and a set-expression.

The point of difference between a word and a set expression is the divisibility of a phraseological unit into separately structured elements VS the structural integrity of words. A set expression can be resolved into words – words are resolved into morphemes.

In phraseological units it is possible to make syntactic transformations without destroying their meaning: *The chairman broke the ice // Ice was broken by the chairman.*

The most popular classifications of phraseological units belong to Russian linguists. A synchronic classification of Academician **V.V. Vinogradov**⁴ based on the views of the Swiss linguist Charles Bally takes into consideration the degree of motivation of the unit, i.e. the relationship existing between the meaning of the whole and the meaning of its component parts.

Phraseological fusions demonstrate the highest degree of idiomaticity: the meaning of components is completely absorbed by the meaning of the whole; it is impossible to find full equivalents to them in other languages.

To be sent to Coventry – подвергнуться бойкоту, изоляции. Coventry was a parliamentary stronghold in the Civil War, and troublesome royalist prisoners were sent there for safe keeping;

To kick the bucket – сыграть в ящик;

Cock-and-bull story – небылица, турсы на колесах;

The king's picture – фальшивая монета;

⁴Виноградов В.В. Лексикология и лексикография: Избр. Тр. - М.: Наука, 1986.

To be on tenterhooks – мучиться неизвестностью, быть как на иголках (крючки для натягивания полотна)

Phraseological unities are motivated through the image created by the whole construction; it is possible to sometimes replace them with synonyms:

To dot the i's and cross the t's – поставить все точки над i, to round the thing off, to complete;

To go through fire and water – пройти огонь и воду;

To flog a dead horse – зря тратить силу;

To skate on thin ice – рискнуть.

To take to drinking – выпить

Phraseological combinations are motivated, semantically transparent; one of their components is used in its direct meaning while the other can be used figuratively:

to get in touch with, to take effect, to take revenge, to hold office, to lose one's way.

II. In the classification suggested by a representative of the linguistic school of St. Petersburg's university prof. N.N. Amosova⁵ the accent is made on context.

Phraseological units are units of **fixed context**⁶ which is characterized by a specific and unchanging sequence of definite lexical components, and a peculiar semantic relationship between them.

Phrasemes (which are always binary) contain one component which is phraseologically bound, the second serves as the determining context:

green eye (ревнивый взгляд), *green years* (юные годы), *green wound* (незажившая рана), *green hand* (неопытный работник), *green finger* (садоводческое искусство), *green wood* (невыдержанная древесина).

Idioms possess the meaning which is created by the whole; individual meanings of the components may either be retained or lost: *to know the ropes* (владеть совершенством), *to pin one's heart on one's sleeve*

⁵Амосова Н. Н. Основы английской фразеологии Л. 1963.

⁶«Определенный контекст» – "Similarity and difference between a set-expression and a word" (www.studopedia.ru)

(нескрывать своих чувств). A knight in the “brave old days”, went into combat with his lady’s favour pinned to his sleeve.

To play the wrong card (сделать неверный шаг).

2.2 Prof. A.V. Koonin considers phraseology to be an independent linguistic science and bases his classification of phraseological units on the functions they fulfill in speech. He distinguishes:

1) Nominative phraseological units:

A grass widow (соломенная вдова), *Indian summer* (бабье лето), *maiden speech* (первая речь нового члена парламента), *pin-up girl* (фотография красотки), *sheet anchor* (последнее прибежище, единственная надежда).

2) Interjectional phraseological units:

By George! Come, come! Like hell! My foot! (черта с два). *Bless me! Draw it mild!* (не преувеличивай!)

3) Communicative phraseological units:

(Don't) teach your grandmother to suck eggs (не учи ученого! Яйца курицу не учат!)

That's all Hookey Walker! (все это вздор);

Walls have ears (и стены имеют уши);

You can't serve God and Mammon (Syrian “mamona” mean “riches”).

4) Nominative-communicative phraseological units:

To carry the day – взять верх, выйти победителем;

To put one's foot in the mouth – влипнуть, опростоволоситься;

To hand smb. a lemon – обмануть, обмануть кого-либо;

To set the Thames on fire – сделать что-либо необычное.

We should not confuse with phraseological units stable combinations of words that have their literal meaning, and are not of phraseological character: the back of the head, the blue sky, to read a book.

In these word-combinations we can change every element, any substitution is permitted. E.g. to go early – “go” may be preceded by any noun or followed by any

adverbial. In semi-fixed combinations we deal with certain limitations (to go to bed, to go to school, to give a smile).

2.3 If substitution is only partial and the elements are constant (fixed) we deal with a set expression.

In: “*as busy as a bee*”, “*time and again*”, “*green love*” we see the extreme of restrictions. Here no substitution is possible because it can destroy the integral meaning of the whole, to say nothing of stylistic and emotional colouring. The expression “*a square head*”, for example, is a derogatory name, for a Scandinavian. Thus, “*to cut bread*” and “*to cut a poor figure*” are entirely different: the substitution of “cut” and “figure” are impossible. Only “poor” may be substituted for “miserable”, “grand”, “ridiculous”.

A peculiar classification of phraseological units in the English language belongs to **A.I. Smirnitsky**⁷. He classifies phraseological units from the point of view of semantic relationship between the components, from the point of view of their structure into one-summit and many-summit phraseological units. One-summit phraseological units are composed of a notional and a form word, as in “*in the soup*” – в затруднительном положении, “*in the pink*” – в расцвете, “*on the rocks*” – в финансовом крахе.

Many-summit phraseological units are composed of two or more notional words; “*to take the bull by the horns*”, “*to wear one’s heart on one’s sleeve*”, “*to know which side one’s bread is buttered*”.

A.I. Smirnitsky classifies phraseological units into traditional phraseological units (фразеологические единицы) and idioms. Phraseological units (“*to fall in love*”, “*to take to drinking*”) are stylistically neutral and devoid of metaphorical expressiveness when compared to idioms (“*to take the bull by the horns*” («*взять быка за рога*»), “*to pay through the nose*” («*платить втридорога*»), “*to be born on the wrong side of the blanket*” («*родиться в рубашке*»).

The traditional and oldest principle for classifying phraseological units is thematic.

It is widely used in numerous English and American guides to idiom, phrasebooks, collections of “unusual” word-combinations. Thus, L.P. Smith gives in his classification groups of idioms used by sailors, fisherman, soldiers, hunters, etc.

⁷Смирницкий А.И. Лексикология английского языка. М., 1956.

In some cases the origin of these units is given though the general principle and is not etymological. This principle of classification deserves attention but it does not take into consideration the linguistic characteristics of these units.

2.4 Proverbs, sayings, quotations

They are excluded from phraseology by J. Casares and N.N. Amosova because they are independent communicative units and not fragments of other sentences and because the meaning of component parts does not show any changes when compared to the meaning of the same words in free combinations.

Proverbs express national wisdom, they are instructive and didactic sentences with a traditional and mostly figurative meaning:

The proof of the pudding is in the eating;

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush;

People who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

They have much in common with phraseological units due to the stability of their components and ready-made reproduction in speech. I.V. Arnold, A.V. Koonin, V.V. Vinogradov think that proverbs must be studied together with phraseological units. **Set expressions** are very often built on their bases:

A drowning man will clutch at a straw;

To clutch at a straw (ухватиться за соломинку)

Words of wide meaning as **to take**⁸ form many phraseological units, e.g.

to take an examination (пересдавать экзамен)

to take a trip (путешествовать)

to take a chance (рисковать)

to take interest (интересоваться)

to take in a reef (уменьшить расходы) syn: **to tie the belt**

to take a bath (принимать ванну)

to take a decision (принять решение)

⁸Выражения глаголом to take (from dictionary ABBYY Lingvo 12)

totakeintoaccount (принимать во внимание)

totakeadare (принять вызов)

totakeadive - (попадаться, проиграть бой кому-то)

totakeafall (AmE)- (попадаться, проиграть бой кому-то)

totakeaflier- (перелететь через что-то, упасть)

totakeagoodturn (принимать хороший оборот)

totakealine (придерживаться курса)

totakealongview (проявить предусмотрительность)

totakeapoorviewof (рассматривать с плохой стороны)

totakeapowder (исчезнуть, ускользнуть (амер.))

totakeareading (снять показание)

to take a risk (рисковать)

to take a side (присоединиться)

to take a start (начать)

totakeaction (действовать)

totakeadvantage (воспользоваться чем-либо)

totakeafter (быть похожим во внешности)

to take alarm (встревожиться)

to take an initiative (брать инициативу)

to take an instruction (выбирать команду)

totakeanoffer (принять предложение)

totakeapart (разбирать, взять по отдельности)

to take an order (принять заказ)

to take comfort (успокаивать себя)

to take an option on (делать выбор)

to take exercise (делать зарядку)
to take charge (of) (возглавлять)
to take delivery (принимать заказ)
to take force (взять силой, насильно)
to take home (доставлять на дом)
to take leave (позволить себе)

2.5 Phrasal verbs and idioms:

Take something for granted: accept it as true, certain to happen

We take so many things for granted – like pure water to drink and good food to eat.

Take after somebody: resemble in looks

The baby takes after its father. (= The baby resembles its father.)

Take something down: write down notes etc.

The teacher asked the students to take down the notes.
Did you take down that number?

Take somebody down: lower his pride

Take somebody in: receive him / her as a guest

The hospital staff said that they won't be able to take in any more patients.

Take somebody in: get the better of somebody by a trick

I can't believe I am taken in by him. (= I can't believe that I have been tricked.)

Take something in: understand

I couldn't take in what she was saying.

Take somebody for: consider to be, especially wrongly suppose to be

He was taken for an Englishman.

Take off: start a flight; ridicule by imitation

Take over: succeed to the management or ownership of

When does the new manager take over?

Take to: adopt as a habit or practice

He took to gardening on retirement.

Take to: conceive a liking for

I took to the old man at once.

Take to one's heels: run; try to escape

Traditional combinations often have synonymous expressions, e.g. to take interest-interest, to take notice-attend, to take part-to participate. Phraseological combinations are not equivalents of words. Though the components of phraseological combinations are limited in their combinative power, that is, they can be combined only with certain words and cannot be combined with any other words, they preserve not only their meaning, but all their structural forms, e.g. nice distinction is a phraseological combinations and it is possible to say nice distinctions, nicer distinction, etc., or to clench one's fist. (clenched his fists, was clenching his fists, etc.).

In Prof. A. Smirnitsky's A.Смирницкий «Лексикология английского языка» М.,1996 стр.23 **opinion traditional combinations are not phraseological units**⁹, as he considers only those word combinations to be phraseological units which are equivalents of words.

There are some types of verbs + preposition which form a new phraseological units of the type «to take up» (verb + postposition up), e.g. to take apart, to take in (вбирать) , to take after (ухаживать), to take out (вынимать), to take back (забрать) etc.;

There are also some units which 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», e.g. to be tired of, to be interested in, to be surprised at etc. There are also units in this type which remind free word-groups of the type «to be young», e.g. to be akin to, to be aware of etc. 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;

⁹А.Смирницкий «Лексикология английского языка» М.,1996 стр.23

c) prepositional - nominal phraseological units. 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, e.g. on the doorstep (quite near), on the nose (exactly), in the course of on the stroke of, in time, on the point of etc. In the course of time such units can become words, e.g. tomorrow, instead etc.

American and English dictionaries of unconventional English, slang and idioms and other highly valuable reference books contain a wealth of proverbs, saying, various lexical units of all kinds, but as a rule do not seek to lay down a reliable criterion to distinguish between variable word-groups and phraseological units. Paradoxical as it may seem the first dictionary in which theoretical principles for the selection of English phraseological units were elaborated was published in our country. It should be recalled that the first attempt to place the study of various word-groups on a scientific basis was made by the outstanding Russian linguist A.A.Schachmatov in his world-famous book Syntax. Schachmatov's work was continued by Academician V.V. Vinogradov whose approach to phraseology is discussed below. Investigation of English phraseology was initiated in our country by pro.: A.V. Kunin (A.B. Кунин. Англо-русский фразеологический словарь. М., 1956)

Attempts have been made to approach the problem of phraseology in different ways. Up till now, however, there is a certain divergence of opinion as to the essential feature of phraseological units as distinguished from other word-groups and the nature of phrases that can be properly termed phraseological units.

The complexity of the problem may be largely accounted for by the fact that the border-line between free or variable word-groups and phraseological units is not clearly defined. The so-called free word-groups are only relatively free as collocability of their member-words is fundamentally delimited by their lexical and grammatical valency which makes at least some of them very close to set-phrases. Phraseological units are comparatively stable and semantically inseparable. Between the extremes of complete motivation and variability of member-words on the one hand and lack of motivation combined with complete stability of the lexical components and grammatical structure on the other hand there are innumerable border-line cases.

However, the existing terms, **А.В.Кунин**¹⁰ Англо-русский фразеологический словарь, М., 1956. e.g. set-phrases, idioms, word-

¹⁰Кунин А.В. Англо-русский фразеологический словарь, М., 1956.

equivalents, reflect to a certain extent the main debatable issues of phraseology which centre on the divergent views concerning the nature and essential features of phraseological units as distinguished from the so-called free word-groups. The term set-phrase implies that the basic criterion of differentiation is stability of the lexical components and grammatical structure of word-groups. The term idioms generally imply that the essential feature of the linguistic units under consideration is idiomaticity or lack of motivation. The term habitually used by English and American linguists is very often treated as synonymous with the term phraseological unit universally accepted in our country. for a different interpretation of the term idiom see: А.И. Смирницкий. ЛексикологияанглийскогоязыкаМ 1956. The term word-equivalent stresses not only the semantic but also the functional inseparability of certain word-groups and their aptness to function in speech as single words.

Thus differences in terminology reflect certain differences in the main criteria used to distinguish between free word-groups and a specific type of linguistic units generally known as phraseology.

III The translation of phraseological units

3.1 Idioms and their classification

The English language is full of idioms (over 15000). Native speakers of English use idioms all the time, often without realizing that they are doing so.

This means that communication with native speakers English can be quite a confusing experience .

An idiom is a group of words which when used together, has a different meaning from the one which the individual words have.

For example:

How do you know about John's illness?

Oh," I heard it on thegrapevine!"

Of course, the second speaker doesn't mean he heard the news about John by putting his ear to a grapevine! He is conveying the idea of information spreading around a widespread network usually similar to a grapevine.

Some collocations of the delexical verb + noun + preposition type come close to idiomaticity, since not only is part - for - part substitution impossible but a special passive transformation shows the verb and two following elements to form a close idiomatic unit:

They took (good) care of the children.

They children were taken (good) care of.

Despite the efficacy of such tests the most familiar approach to the definition of idioms and one that linguistics as well as lexicographers have helped to popularize, focuses on the difficulty of understanding idioms in terms of the meaning of their constituents. The following definition (from the Collins English dictionary, second edition, 1986) represents this tendency:.... a group words whose meaning of the constituent words as for example (it was raining) cats and dogs.

But this formulation (and definition could be called from a range of dictionaries now in print) is open to serious challenge.

Semantically idioms are divided into three classes:

Pure idioms

Semi idioms

Literal idioms

Pure idioms are those which can't be translated word by word, they are non-literal. For example: "spill the beans" – разболтать has nothing to do with real beans.

Semi-idioms have one or more literal constituents and at least one with a non-literal subsense, usually special to that co-occurrence relation no other:

Catch has the meaning at their constituents. For example: "on foot Merry Christmas and happy New Year". Besides idioms can undergo substitution for their parts the near synonyms. And the idioms which are flexible to some degree to such substitution are called idioms of restricted variance. For example: happy (merry) Christmas. The idioms which are inflexible to such change at all are called invariant and fixed idioms. For example: on the contrary; Happy New Year. If we connect these two classifications we shall get the following tasks:

Pure - idioms - invariant, non-literal:

Devil-may-care, backlash ching wag red herring make of with, pick and span, smell a rat, the coast is clear, etc.

Restricted variance, non-literal; pitter-patter (pit-a-pat), take/have forty winks, seize/grasp the nettle, get/have cold feet, etc.

Semi-literal idioms, invariant; drop names, catch fire, hitch the kin, foot the bill, fat change you've got, etc. restricted variance: chequered career/history, blue film/story/joke/comedian, good morning/ day etc.

Literal idioms - in variant; on foot, one day, in sum, in the meantime, on the contrary arm in arm, very important person (VIP), potato chips: tall, dark and handsome; waste not, want not, happy New Year, etc. and set down.

Form irregular, meaning unclear, as in be at large, go great guns, be at daggers drawn.

Functional types of idioms:

Idioms - ideational. Ideational idioms are convey impressionistic representation of the physical, social and emotional words of a language community. They either signify message content, experiential phenomena including the sensory the effective, and the evaluative or they characterize the nature of message. Message content actions: tear down mess about with, twist somebody's arm.

Events: turning point, the straw that breaks the camel's back, out of the mouth of babies. Situations: be in Queer street, be in a pickle. People and things; a - back - seat driver, a man about town, a scarlet woman.

Attributes: cut and dried, matter of fact, lily - white, as green as grass.

Evolution: turn back the clock, it is a pity, as a matter of fact.

Emotions: green with envy, heart in one's mouth, a lump in one's characterizing the message. Specific information; to be exact/precise.

3.2 Phraseological problems of translation

Translating a phraseological unit is not an easy matter as it depends on several factors: different combinability of words, homonymy, synonymy, polysemy of phraseological units and presence of falsely identical units, which makes it necessary to take into account of the context. Besides, a large number of phraseological units have a stylistic-expressive component in meaning, which usually has a specific national feature. The afore-cited determines the necessity to get acquainted with the main principles of the general theory of phraseology.

The following types of phraseological units may be observed: phrasemes and idioms. A unit of constant context consisting of a dependent and a constant indicators may be called a phraseme. An idiom is a unit of constant context which is characterized by an integral meaning of the whole and by weakened meanings of the components, and in which the dependant and the indicating elements are identical and equal to the whole lexical structure of the phrase.

Any type of phraseological units can be presented as a definite micro-system. In the process of translating phraseological units functional linguistic are selected by comparing two specific linguistic principles. These principles reveal elements of likeness and distinction. Certain parts of these systems may correspond in form and content (completely or partially) or have no adequacy.

The main types of phraseological conformities are as follows:

Complete conformities.

Partial conformities.

Absence of conformities.

Complete conformities. Complete coincidence of form and content in phraseological units are rarely met with.

“Black frost” сильный мороз

“To bring oil to fire” - подлить масло в огонь.

“To lose one's head” - потерять голову.

Partial conformities of phraseological units in two languages assume lexical grammatical and lexico-grammatical different with identity of meaning and style i.e. their figuratively close, but differ in lexical composition morphological number and syntactic arrangement of the order words. One may find:

Partial lexic conformities by lexic parameters “lexical composition”.

To get out of bed on the wrong foot (idiom) - встать с левой ноги.

To have one's heart in one's boots. (idiom) - душа в пятки ушла.

To lose one's temper - выйти из себя, потерять терпение.

To dance to somebody's pipe. (idiom) - плясать под чью-то дудку.

Partial conformities by the grammatical parameters

Differing as to morphological arrangement (number).

To fish in troubled waters.(idiom) - ловить рыбу в мутной воде .

From head to foot (idiom) -с головы до ног.

To agree like cats and dogs (phraseme) - жить как кошка с собакой .

To keep one's head (idiom) - сохранять спокойствие духа

Differing as to syntactical arrangement

Strike while the iron is hot - куй железо, пока горячо.

Egyptian darkness - тьма крошечная.

Armed to teeth - вооруженные до зубов

All not gold that glitters - Не все золото, что блестит

Absence of conformities. Many English phraseological units have no phraseological conformities in Russian. In the first instance this concerns phraseological units based reality. When translating units of this kind it is advisable to us the following types of translation:

A verbatim word for word-translation

Translation by analogy

Descriptive translation,

A verbatim translation is possible when way of thinking (in the phraseological unit) does not bear a specific national feature.

To call things by their true names (idiom) - называть все вещи своими именами

The arms race (phraseme) - гонка вооружений

Cold war (idiom) - холодная война

To pull somebody's leg (idiom) - одурачить кого-либо.

Descriptive translation.

Descriptive translation i.e. translating phraseological units by a free combination of words is possible when the phraseological unit has a particular national feature and has no analogue in the language it is to be translated into.

To enter the house (phraseme) - стать членом парламента

2.To cross the floor of the house. (idiom) - перейти с одной партии в другую

Let's regard some translations of the **idioms** with the verb **"to take"**¹¹:

To take hold of something-to take in one's hand-крепко взять что-то в руки

Ex: I burned my hand when I took hold of that hot frying pan

Я обжег свою руку когда я крепко взял в руки горячую сковородку.

To take one's hat off to someone-восхищаться, гордиться

Ex: You have to take your hat off to him. He has started a small business and now it's very successful.

Тебе нужно гордиться им. Он открыл такой маленький бизнес, и теперь он очень процветает.

Take it easy-неволноваться

Ex: Take it easy with John. He's in a bad mood.-Не волнуйтесь по поводу Джона. У него плохое настроение.

Take it or leave it- прими то, что есть или забудь

Ex: This is my last suggestion. Take it or leave it.-Это мое последнее предложение. Прими его или забудь.

Take something at face value- принять что-либо за чистую монету

Ex: She took his words at face value and that was a mistake.-Она приняла его слова за чистую монету, и это было ошибкой.

Take steps to prevent something- предпринять шаги (для того чтобы предотвратить что-либо)

Ex: She took steps to prevent this happening again.- Она предприняла шаги чтобы это никогда не повторилось.

Take (somebody) out- приглашать кого-либо на свидание или куда-либо.

Ex: Robin often takes his girl-friend out on a date.-Робин часто приглашает свою девушку куда-нибудь на свидание.

¹¹Идиомы с глаголом to take (from method book of idioms for II,III,IV courses)

Idioms with TAKE¹²:

Take after - to resemble a parent (or older relative)

Take back - to return something

Take care - to be careful

Take down - to write what you are hearing

Take for - to consider or suppose to be

Take in - to include something

Take off - to remove

Take on - to hire

Take out - to extract

Take over - to start doing something that another person did or had responsibility for before

Take up - to start doing something

Conclusion

We have considered English phraseological units as a part of vocabulary. They can be defined as a reproduced and non-motivated word unit built up according to the model of word-groups of the English language. They are different from free word-group under semantic criterion, because the actual meaning of idioms is figurative (transferred) and is opposed to the literal meaning of a word-combination from which they are derived.

Phraseological units can be classified according to the degree of motivation of their meaning: fusion, unities and collocations. Smirnitsky worked out a detailed structural classification of phraseological units, he points out two tops units which he compared with affixed words and compounds words Arnold suggested classification according to the part-of-speech. He distinguishes the following groups: noun phraseologisms denoting an object, a person living being; verb phraseologisms denoting an action, a feeling, a state; adjective phraseologisms denoting a quality; adverb, preposition and interjection phraseological units.

According to their origin idioms can be divided into native and borrowed. The main sources of borrowing are: terminological and professional basis, British literature, British traditions and customs, superstitions and legends, historical facts and events, phenomena and facts of everyday life.

¹²Idioms and phrasal verbs “TO TAKE” (English Practice)

Mostly idioms were borrowed from Latin and French languages. This can be explained by historical events and relationship of English and Latin, and by territorial nearness of Britain and France.

Phraseological units are word-groups that cannot be made in the process of speech; they exist in the language as ready-made units. They are compiled in special dictionaries. The same as words phraseological units express a single notion and are used in a sentence as one part of it. We can mention such dictionaries as: The Penguin Dictionary of English Idioms, L.Smith "Words and Idioms", W. Freeman "A coincide dictionary of English idioms", V.Collins «A Book of English Idioms» etc. In these dictionaries we can find words, peculiar in their semantics (idiomatic), side by side with word-groups and sentences. In these dictionaries they are arranged, as a rule, into different semantic groups.

The present day English can't be considered full of value without idiomatic usage, as the use of idioms is the first sign of a certain language's developing. Idiomatic sentences enrich a language and the knowledge of idioms signal that the speaker knows the language on the level of a native speaker. The belles-lettres investigated by us revealed a great number of idiomatic sentences used by prominent writers in their works to make their language more expressive and colorful. And we concluded that even languages belonging to different families may have similar or hemi similar idioms and those which differ dramatically can be guessed within the context. So idioms are integral part of language which makes our speech more colorful and authentically native.

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