

FREE WORD GROUPS AND FRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

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Abstract: This article is devoted to the phraseological units and free word groups, and some criteria of finding the difference between them.

Key words: phraseological unit, free-word groups, speech, dictionary, collocations, metaphorical, components.

Member-words of phraseological units are often repeated as single unchangeable collocations, unlike components of free word-groups, which can differ depending on communication needs. For example, the adjective red may be replaced by another adjective denoting color in a red flower (a free phrase), and the word-group would maintain the meaning: «the flower of a certain color». No such substitution is possible in the phraseological unit red tape (bureaucratic methods), since changing the adjective would completely alter the context of the group: it would then mean "tape of a specific color." As a result, the phraseological unit red tape is semantically non-motivated, in the sense that its essence cannot be deduced from the meanings of its constituents, and it functions as a separate entity. Grammatical structure of phraseological units is to a certain degree also stable:

red tape – a phraseological unit;

red tapes – a free word-group;

to go to bed – a phraseological unit;

to go to the bed – a free word-group.

Still the basic criterion is comparative lack of motivation, or idiomaticity of the phraseological units. Semantic motivation is based on the coexistence of direct and figurative meaning. Taking into consideration mainly the degree of idiomaticity

phraseological units may be classified into three big groups. This classification was first suggested by Acad. V.V. Vinogradov. Phraseological fusions are word-groups that are totally unmotivated. The meanings of the components have no synchronic relationship with the meaning of the entire community. Idiomaticity is combined with the lexical components' full stability and the fusion's grammatical structure. Phraseological unities are partially non-motivated word classes whose meaning can typically be deduced from their context. The lexical components and grammatical structure of phraseological unities are typically characterized by a high degree of stability. Free phrases with homonymous meanings can be found in phraseological unities. to play the first role in the theatre – to play the first role (to dominate). There must be not less than two notional words in metaphorical meanings. Phraseological collocations are partly inspired, but they are composed of terms with a unique lexical valency, which is characterized by a degree of consistency in certain word classes. The variability of components in phraseological collocations is strictly restricted. They vary from phraseological unities in that one of the components is used in the direct sense of the phrase. the other – in a figurative sense, where the meaning of the entire party takes precedence over the meaning of its constituents. Since figurativeness is only reflected in one part of the word, it is barely perceptible. The structure V + N is the largest group of phraseological collocations. Phraseological units are special word categories that act as word equivalents; they are analogous to specific classes of terms. Regardless of the part-of-speech meaning of component words, the part-of-speech meaning of phraseological units is felt as belonging to the wordgroup as a whole. When a free word-group, such as a long day, is compared to a phraseological unit, e.g. “In the long run”, we can see that the noun day and the adjective long retain the part-of-speech sense that these words have when used alone in the free word category. The entire group is divided into two distinct units (A + N). In the phraseological unit in the long run the part-of-speech meaning belongs to the group as a single whole. In the long run is grammatically equivalent to single adverbs, e.g. finally, firstly, etc. So, phraseological units are included into

the system of parts of speech. Free word groups are used to make phraseological units. However, certain words – constituents of phraseological units – can fade from the language over time; the context in which the phraseological unit was created may be forgotten, motivation lost, and these phrases become phraseological fusions. A language's vocabulary is expanded not only by words but also by phraseological units. Phraseological units are word classes that cannot be formed during speech but exist as ready-made units in the language. They're held in specialized dictionaries. Phraseological units, like words, convey a single idea and are used as one part of a sentence. Such units are referred to as «idioms» by lexicographers in the United States and the United Kingdom. We may use dictionaries like L. Smith's "Words and Idioms," V. Collins' "A Book of English Idioms," and so on. We may find words with unusual semantics (idiomatic) alongside word-groups and sentences in these dictionaries. They are usually organized into various semantic classes in these dictionaries. Phraseological units can be categorized according to how they are created, the degree of motivation of their meaning, their structure, and their meaning motivation. A.V. Koonin classified phraseological units according to the way they are formed. He pointed out primary and secondary ways of forming phraseological units. Among two-top units A.I. Smirnitsky points out the following structural types: a) a month of Sundays, gray matter, a millstone around one's neck, and several others are examples of attributive-nominals. This form of unit is a noun equivalent that can be partially or fully idiomatic. In partly idiomatic units (phrasisms), the first component is idiomatic in some instances, such as high path, and the second component is idiomatic in others, such as first night. Both components are often idiomatic, e.g. red tape, blind alley, bed of nail, shot in the arm and many others. b) to read between the lines, talk BBC, sweep under the carpet, and so on are verb-nominal phraseological units. The verb is the grammar center of such units, while the nominal aspect is the semantic center in many cases, for example, to fall in love. The verb is both the grammar and the semantic core of certain units, such as not knowing the ropes. These units may also be completely idiomatic, such as

burn one's boats, to vote with one's feet, to take to the cleaners' etc. Very close to such units are word-groups of the type to have a glance, to have a smoke. These units are not idiomatic and are treated in grammar as a special syntactical combination, a kind of aspect. c) phraseological repetitions, such as: now or never, part and parcel, country and western etc. Such units can be built on antonyms, e.g. ups and downs, back and forth; often they are formed by means of alliteration, e.g. cakes and ale, as busy as a bee. Components in repetitions are joined by means of conjunctions. These units are equivalents of adverbs or adjectives and have no grammar centre. They can also be partly or perfectly idiomatic, e.g. cool as a cucumber (partly), bread and butter (perfectly). d) Adverb phraseological units, such as: "with a bump", "in the soup", "like a dream", "like a dog with two tails". e) preposition phraseological units, e.g. in the course of, on the stroke of, f) interjection phraseological units e.g. "catch me", "well, I never" etc. There are also sentence equivalents, proverbs, sayings, and quotes in I.V. Arnold's classification, such as "the sky is the limit," "what makes him tick," "I'm easy." Proverbs are typically metaphorical, such as "Too many cooks spoil the broth," while sayings are usually nonmetaphorical, such as "where there is a will, there is a way." If we come across the phraseological units and free word groups, we must find them truly according to some criteria. Words put together to form lexical units make phrases or word-groups. The largest twofacet lexical unit comprising more than one word is the word-group observed on the syntagmatic level of analysis. The degree of structural and semantic cohesion of word-groups may vary. Functionally and semantically inseparable word-groups like at least, point of view, by means of, take place are phraseological units. Semantically and structurally more independent word-groups a week ago, man of wisdom, take lessons, kind to people are defined as free or variable word-groups or phrases. The two main linguistic factors to be considered in uniting words into word-groups are: 1) the lexical valency of words 2) the syntactic valency of words. Words are used in certain lexical contexts, i.e. in combination with other words. The noun question is often combined with such adjectives as vital, pressing, urgent, disputable, delicate, etc. This noun is a

component of a number of other word-groups, e.g. to raise a question, a question of great importance, a question of the agenda, a question of the day, and many others. Lexical valency is the possibility of lexical-semantic connections of a word with other words. Lexical collocability is the realisation in speech of the potential connections of a word with other words. Lexical valency acquires special importance in case of polysemy as through the lexical valency different meanings of a polysemantic word can be distinguished, e.g.

1. heavy weight (safe, table, etc.),

2. heavy snow (storm, rain, etc.),

3. heavy drinker (eater, etc.),

4. heavy sleep (disappointment, sorrow, etc.),

5. heavy industry (tanks, etc.), and so on. These word-groups are called collocations or such combinations of words which condition the realization of a certain meaning. Syntactic valency - the aptness of a word to appear in different syntactic structures. The minimal syntactic context in which words are used when brought together to form wordgroups is described as the pattern of the word-groups. E.g., the verb to offer can be followed by the infinitive (to offer to do smth) and the noun (to offer a cup of tea). Semantically all word-groups may be classified into motivated and non-motivated. Non-motivated word-groups are usually described as phraseological units. Word-groups may be classified according to their headwords into: The head is not necessarily the component that occurs first in the word-group: very great bravery, bravery in the struggle the noun bravery is the head whether followed or preceded by other words. So, we can distinguish them from their structure, and these linguistic units adorn our speech, when we utilize them unrelentingly.

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