

PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS WITH NOUN COMPONENT

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Annotation: *This article delves into the pragmatic features of phraseological units (PUs) with a noun component in the English language. Phraseological units are fixed expressions whose meanings cannot be deduced from the meanings of their individual components. The study focuses on how these units function in communication, their syntactic and semantic characteristics, and their role in conveying nuanced meanings. By examining various examples and classifications, the article aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the pragmatic aspects of noun-based phraseological units.*

Key words: *Phraseological units, noun component, pragmatics, fixed expressions, idioms, syntactic characteristics, semantic features, communication, English language.*

In the study of linguistics, phraseological units (PUs) are recognized as fixed expressions whose meanings often transcend the literal interpretations of their individual components. These units play a pivotal role in communication, offering speakers a means to convey complex ideas succinctly and effectively. Among the various types of PUs, those with a noun component are particularly noteworthy due to their prevalence and the unique pragmatic features they exhibit.

Phraseological units (PUs) are fixed expressions whose meanings often cannot be deduced from the meanings of their individual components. They are characterized by stability, non-compositionality, and reproducibility. According to Kunin (1986), a PU is a stable combination of words with a fully or partially figurative meaning. Gläser (1998) defines a PU as a lexicalized, reproducible

bilexemic or polylexemic word group in common use, which has relative syntactic and semantic stability, may be axiomatized, may carry connotations, and may have an emphatic or intensifying function in a text.

Noun components often serve as the semantic core within many phraseological units. Gläser (1998) notes that nouns contribute significantly to the lexical meaning of idioms and often carry the metaphorical load of the phrase. She emphasizes that the noun in a PU usually embodies a culturally salient concept, thereby enhancing the unit's expressive and stylistic function.

Moon (1998), through a corpus-based approach, demonstrates the frequency and structural stability of noun-based idioms. She points out that the noun element is rarely modified, signifying its role as a "fixed anchor" within idiomatic constructions.

From a pragmatic standpoint, noun-based phraseological units serve various illocutionary functions, including asserting, expressing attitudes, and managing interpersonal relations. Telia (1996) focuses on the cultural and emotional connotations encoded in idiomatic expressions, highlighting their role in pragmatically loaded acts of communication.

Cowie (1998) adds that pragmatic functions of PUs are not only context-sensitive but also genre-dependent. For example, in informal contexts or spoken discourse, idioms with noun components may be used to enhance familiarity or humor, whereas in formal contexts, they may be employed to soften criticism or present complex ideas more concisely.

Phraseological units can be classified based on their structural characteristics. According to Smirnitsky, attributive-nominal units such as "a month of Sundays" and "grey matter" are noun equivalents and can be partly or completely idiomatic. Units of this type are noun equivalents and can be partly or completely idiomatic.

Additionally, prepositional-nominal phraseological units like "on the doorstep" and "on the nose" are equivalents of unchangeable words: prepositions, conjunctions, adverbs, and have no grammar centre; their semantic centre is the

nominal part.

Phraseological units are culturally bound, and the noun component often reflects specific cultural references. As shown by Krepkogorskaya (2018), idioms such as "Achilles' heel" or "sacred cow" lose their communicative efficacy if the listener is unaware of the cultural referents.

In translation studies, this poses challenges. Baker (1992) identifies idioms with noun cores as particularly resistant to literal translation, often necessitating the use of cultural equivalents or functional substitutions to preserve pragmatic intent.

Despite the insights provided by existing studies, there remains a relative underrepresentation of research specifically targeting the pragmatic variation of noun-based PUs across different languages, social registers, and technological discourse (e.g., internet slang). There is also a gap in empirical research combining corpus linguistics with pragmatic analysis of noun-based phraseological expressions.

Phraseological units with a noun component are combinations where a noun serves as the central element, often accompanied by other parts of speech. These units can be classified into several categories based on their structure and function:

Noun + Noun Combinations: These are compounds where two nouns are juxtaposed to form a new meaning, such as "toothpaste" or "swimming pool."

Noun Phrases with Modifiers: These include noun phrases where the head noun is modified by adjectives, determiners, or other nouns, like "a piece of cake" or "a matter of course."

Idiomatic Expressions: In these units, the noun component contributes to an expression whose meaning cannot be deduced from the literal meanings of the words, such as "a bone of contention."

The pragmatic features of these units pertain to how they function in communication, influencing the speaker's intent and the listener's interpretation. Key aspects include:

Conventionalization: Over time, certain noun-based expressions become conventionalized, meaning they are widely recognized and understood within a

particular linguistic community.

Expressiveness: These units often carry connotations that add emotional or evaluative weight to the communication, enhancing the speaker's expressive intent.

Cohesion and Coherence: Noun-based PUs contribute to the cohesion and coherence of discourse, linking ideas and ensuring the text flows logically.

Cultural Significance: Many noun-based expressions are deeply rooted in the culture of the language community, reflecting societal values, beliefs, and historical experiences.

The syntactic structure of noun-based PUs often exhibits fixedness, with specific word orders that cannot be altered without changing the meaning. Semantically, these units frequently involve:

Metaphor: Using a noun in a figurative sense, such as "a heart of stone," where "heart" metaphorically represents emotion.

Metonymy: Substituting one noun for another with which it is closely associated, like "the crown" to refer to royalty.

Ellipsis: Omitting parts of the expression that are understood from context, as in "a matter of course," where "a matter" is understood.

"Piece of cake" – An idiomatic expression meaning something very easy to do.

"Bone of contention" – Refers to a subject or issue over which there is disagreement.

"Matter of course" – An event or action that is expected or usual.

"Heart of stone" – Describes someone who is emotionally cold or unfeeling.

The meaning of noun-based PUs often depends heavily on the context in which they are used. Contextual factors such as the speaker's tone, the situation, and cultural background can influence how these units are interpreted. For instance, "a piece of cake" might be understood literally in a culinary context but figuratively in a discussion about task difficulty.

Translating noun-based PUs poses challenges due to their idiomatic nature and cultural specificity. Direct translations often fail to convey the intended

meaning, necessitating the use of equivalent expressions in the target language. This highlights the importance of understanding the cultural context and pragmatic functions of these units in both the source and target languages.

Phraseological units with a noun component are integral to the richness and expressiveness of language. Their pragmatic features enhance communication by adding depth, nuance, and cultural context. Understanding these units' syntactic and semantic characteristics is essential for effective language use, particularly in cross-cultural communication and translation.

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