

AN ANALYTICAL OVERVIEW OF THE EXPRESSIVE FUNCTION OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S LITERARY WORKS

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Introduction

Phraseological units, or idiomatic expressions, play a crucial role in enriching the language of literary texts, serving both as stylistic embellishments and as tools for deeper character and theme development. In the realm of detective fiction, few authors have mastered the use of language with as much finesse as Arthur Conan Doyle. Best known for his Sherlock Holmes series, Doyle integrates a wide array of phraseological units to enhance narrative dynamism, develop memorable characters, and immerse readers in the socio-cultural atmosphere of Victorian and Edwardian England.

This article aims to provide an analytical overview of the expressive function of phraseological units in Conan Doyle's works, with particular attention to how these expressions contribute to tone, characterization, and contextual nuance. By exploring selected texts, the study seeks to highlight how idioms and fixed expressions serve not only as linguistic ornaments but also as functional components that reflect the author's style and the thematic complexity of his narratives.

Through this investigation, the paper also discusses the challenges that arise in translating these units into other languages, emphasizing the cultural specificity and metaphorical depth embedded in Doyle's language. Ultimately, the study reveals the indispensable role of phraseological richness in shaping the distinct voice and enduring appeal of Arthur Conan Doyle's literary legacy.

Arthur Conan Doyle's detective stories, particularly those featuring Sherlock Holmes, are replete with phraseological units that serve multiple expressive functions. These idiomatic expressions are not mere linguistic embellishments but integral to the narrative voice, character development, and the vivid recreation of historical and cultural settings.

1. Characterization through Phraseological Units

One of the most prominent uses of idiomatic expressions in Doyle's works is in character portrayal. Sherlock Holmes, with his sharp wit and analytical precision, often employs colloquial and metaphorical language that reflects both his intellectual acuity and his alignment with the speech patterns of the educated British elite of his time. For example, in *The Adventure of the Speckled Band*, Holmes remarks, "When a doctor does go wrong, he is the first of criminals." The expression encapsulates both irony and cultural observation, using a general truth to hint at the story's deeper moral complexity.

2. Enhancing Atmosphere and Realism

Doyle also uses idioms and phraseological units to root his stories in a realistic and believable world. Phrases such as "by Jove," "not a whit," or "a man of his word" reflect the common speech of late 19th-century England. These expressions help to convey the social and cultural milieu in which the characters operate. For instance, Dr. Watson's frequent use of idiomatic expressions reflects his narrative reliability and positions him as an everyman character who contrasts with Holmes's eccentric genius.

3. Building Suspense and Tone

In detective fiction, language plays a central role in sustaining suspense. Doyle strategically uses phraseological units to maintain a tone of mystery and urgency. In *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, expressions like “on tenterhooks” or “the game is afoot” signal to the reader a rising tension or a pivotal narrative turn. These idioms not only advance the plot but also engage the reader in the deductive process.

4 Cultural and Historical Insights

Doyle’s idioms often carry cultural significance, offering insights into the values and assumptions of Victorian society. For example, the frequent use of expressions tied to social class, such as “gentleman’s agreement” or “man of means” not only characterize individuals but also subtly reveal the class dynamics that underlie many of Doyle’s plots.

5. Challenges in Translation

The rich phraseological layer of Doyle’s language presents notable challenges in translation. Idioms often resist direct translation due to their cultural specificity and metaphorical nature. A literal rendering may result in a loss of meaning or stylistic nuance. For instance, translating “the game is afoot” into another language without an equivalent idiom may require creative adaptation to preserve its connotative force and narrative tension.

Conclusion

Arthur Conan Doyle’s masterful use of phraseological units in his detective fiction contributes significantly to the stylistic richness, character complexity, and immersive quality of his narratives. Through idiomatic expressions, Doyle not only reinforces the personalities of central figures like Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson but also anchors his stories in the linguistic and cultural reality of Victorian England. These phraseological choices enhance tone, set atmosphere, and subtly guide readers through moments of suspense, revelation, and social commentary.

Moreover, the study of these phraseological units sheds light on broader issues of literary translation. Preserving the expressive force and cultural depth of Doyle’s idioms

in other languages demands both linguistic sensitivity and creative adaptability. Translators must navigate between literal meaning and contextual impact, often prioritizing the functional role of the idiom over its direct lexical equivalent.

In summary, phraseological units in Conan Doyle's works are far more than decorative language; they are core elements of narrative strategy. A deeper understanding of their function enhances appreciation not only of Doyle's craft but also of the challenges and intricacies involved in rendering his unique voice across languages and cultures

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