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THE FORMATION OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS INVOLVING MODERN PROPER NOUNS

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Abstract. The formation of phraseological units involving modern proper nouns represents a dynamic process in contemporary language development. Under the influence of digital communication, globalization, popular culture, and social media, proper nouns associated with celebrities, public figures, fictional characters, brands, and technological innovations increasingly participate in figurative expressions. Through metaphorization, semantic generalization, allusion, and pragmatic reinterpretation, these names may acquire meanings that extend beyond their original identifying functions. This article investigates the principal linguistic mechanisms underlying the formation of phraseological units involving modern proper nouns, with particular attention to their semantic, structural, and sociocultural characteristics.

Keywords: phraseological units, proper nouns, modern language, phraseological innovation, onomastics, semantic change, metaphorization, digital communication, youth language, linguoculturology.

Introduction. Language is a constantly developing system that responds to social, cultural, technological, and communicative changes. New words and expressions emerge as speakers adapt existing linguistic resources to describe new experiences, evaluate social phenomena, and communicate within changing cultural environments. One of the noticeable aspects of this development is the participation of proper nouns in the formation of figurative and phraseological expressions.

Proper nouns traditionally serve to identify particular individuals, geographical locations, organizations, fictional characters, and other unique entities. However, their linguistic functions may change when they become associated with recognizable characteristics, cultural values, social roles, or particular events. In such cases, a proper noun may acquire additional semantic and pragmatic meanings and become a component of an expression used to describe people, actions, situations, and attitudes.

The development of digital communication has created favorable conditions for this process. Social networking platforms, online communities, popular films, music, sports, and celebrity culture enable proper names to circulate rapidly across linguistic and geographical boundaries. A name associated with a well-known public figure or fictional character may become a cultural reference that speakers use to communicate a complex idea in a concise and expressive way.

For example, a Sherlock Holmes can describe a person who demonstrates exceptional powers of observation, while a Scrooge may refer to someone who is excessively reluctant to spend money.

Although these expressions are established examples rather than newly emerging units, they demonstrate the semantic mechanism through which a proper noun develops a generalized figurative meaning.

Modern communication also produces more temporary expressions based on contemporary celebrities, internet personalities, and fictional characters. Some remain restricted to a particular online community, whereas others may become widely recognized and gradually conventionalized.

The relevance of this study lies in the need to examine the linguistic mechanisms through which modern proper nouns participate in phraseological innovation and to identify the cultural and communicative factors influencing this process.

The aim of the article is to investigate the formation of phraseological units involving modern proper nouns and to describe their principal semantic, structural, and sociocultural characteristics.

The objectives are:

- to clarify the relationship between proper nouns and phraseological meaning;
- to identify the main mechanisms involved in the formation of proper-name expressions;
- to examine the influence of popular culture and digital communication;
- to distinguish established phraseological units from emerging figurative expressions;
- to consider the role of cultural knowledge in interpreting and translating these units.

Literature Review. The formation and interpretation of phraseological units have been investigated within phraseology, lexical semantics, cognitive linguistics, and corpus linguistics. These approaches provide a theoretical foundation for examining how proper nouns become components of figurative expressions.

Rosamund Moon, in Fixed Expressions and Idioms in English: A Corpus-Based Approach (1998), examines the diversity of fixed expressions and idioms, highlighting the importance of conventionality, structural patterns, and actual language usage. Her work provides a useful framework for distinguishing established phraseological units from combinations that are created freely in particular contexts.

John Sinclair's Corpus, Concordance, Collocation (1991) emphasizes the significance of recurring linguistic patterns and authentic textual evidence. This perspective is relevant to the investigation of modern proper-name expressions because repetition and contextual distribution can help establish whether an expression has become conventionalized.

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980), in Metaphors We Live By, demonstrate that metaphor is a fundamental mechanism through which people conceptualize and communicate experience. Their approach helps explain how the characteristics associated with a particular person or character can be transferred to another individual or situation.

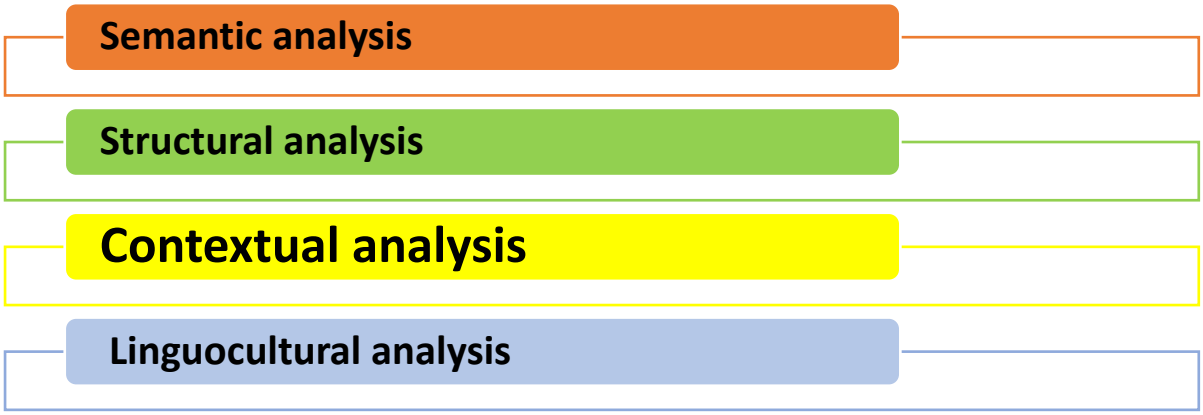
Raymond W. Gibbs Jr. (1994) investigates the cognitive foundations of figurative language and emphasizes the relationship between figurative expressions and conceptual knowledge. This perspective supports the interpretation of proper nouns as cultural references that activate shared associations.

Onomastics, the study of proper names, also contributes to the analysis of phraseological innovation. A proper noun may retain its connection with a particular referent while acquiring generalized meanings through repeated figurative use. Such developments demonstrate the interaction between naming, semantic change, and cultural interpretation.

Contemporary digital communication provides an additional context for this process. Memes, hashtags, online discussions, and fan communities facilitate the rapid circulation of expressions and encourage the modification of existing linguistic patterns. Nevertheless, the popularity of an expression on a particular platform does not automatically establish its status as a phraseological unit.

Research Methodology. The study employs a qualitative descriptive methodology to examine the formation of phraseological units involving modern proper nouns in English. The research uses illustrative examples of established expressions and productive figurative constructions associated with public figures, literary characters, and popular culture. The examples are intended to demonstrate linguistic mechanisms rather than represent the findings of a statistically verified social media corpus.

Four methods are applied.



Semantic analysis examines the development of figurative meanings and the relationship between the original referent of a proper noun and its extended interpretation.

Structural analysis identifies the grammatical patterns through which proper nouns participate in multiword expressions, including noun phrases, possessive constructions, comparisons, and derived adjectives.

Contextual analysis considers how the meaning of an expression depends on its linguistic environment, communicative purpose, and intended audience.

Linguocultural analysis investigates the cultural knowledge and social associations that contribute to the interpretation and circulation of proper-name expressions. The analysis focuses on four major aspects: mechanisms of formation, semantic transformation, sociocultural motivation, and the degree of conventionalization. A distinction is maintained between established idioms, productive figurative constructions, and emerging slang. This distinction is essential because a creative expression involving a proper noun does not necessarily constitute a phraseological unit in the strict linguistic sense.

Analysis and discussion. Proper nouns can become components of phraseological expressions when the individuals or entities they identify acquire recognizable cultural associations. These associations may relate to intelligence, artistic ability, personality, behavior, professional achievement, or public reputation [3; 148].

The formation process often begins when a particular person or character becomes associated with a distinctive characteristic. Through repeated figurative use, the name may come to represent that characteristic more generally. For example, the expression a Sherlock Holmes refers to someone who

is particularly observant or skilled at solving problems. The name of the fictional detective functions as a semantic model for investigative ability. Similarly, a Scrooge describes a person who is unwilling to spend money or demonstrate generosity. The name has developed an evaluative meaning associated with a recognizable behavioral pattern.

These examples demonstrate that proper nouns can move from individual reference toward generalized characterization. However, the degree of conventionalization differs between expressions. Some are established in the language, while others remain creative comparisons dependent on context.

In contemporary language, the same process may involve the names of popular musicians, actors, athletes, influencers, or fictional characters. Their public images can provide the semantic material for emerging expressions, although the stability and distribution of these expressions require empirical investigation.

Proper noun in an emerging cultural expression. A contemporary name may occur in a recurring expression within a particular online community. Whether the expression becomes a stable phraseological unit depends on the extent to which its form and meaning become conventionalized [2; 632].

These patterns demonstrate that proper nouns participate in phraseological innovation through different grammatical structures. Their semantic contribution depends on both the form of the expression and the cultural associations of the name. For example, a Scrooge has an established figurative meaning, whereas an expression based on a recently popular internet personality may remain restricted to a particular online community. The latter should be described as an emerging or context-dependent expression unless broader evidence demonstrates its conventionalization.

Linguocultural Significance. Proper-name phraseology reflects the relationship between language and collective cultural knowledge. Names associated with literature, entertainment, sports, and public life can become symbolic references through which speakers communicate shared experiences and social evaluations.

The interpretation of these expressions is culturally dependent. A name familiar to one generation or online community may be unfamiliar to another. Likewise, an expression may carry positive associations in one context and negative or ironic associations in another.

This variation is particularly important in multilingual communication. When proper-name expressions are transferred between languages, their literal form may be retained while their figurative meaning remains unclear.

For instance, a Sherlock Holmes can be translated into Uzbek as juda sinchkov va topqir inson, depending on the context. Such an explanatory translation communicates the intended meaning when the cultural reference is unfamiliar to the target audience.

The study of proper-name phraseology therefore contributes to translation studies, intercultural communication, and foreign-language education. It encourages learners to consider not only the lexical meaning of an expression but also its cultural background and pragmatic function.

Conclusion. The formation of phraseological units involving modern proper nouns is a dynamic linguistic process influenced by cultural recognition, semantic transformation, social interaction, and digital communication.

The analysis identifies metaphorization, semantic generalization, allusion, derivation, and contextual reinterpretation as important mechanisms through which proper nouns develop figurative meanings.

Further research should investigate contemporary proper-name expressions through corpus-based methods, with particular attention to their frequency, semantic development, and distribution across age groups and digital communities. Comparative research involving English and Uzbek would also help reveal similarities and differences in the formation of phraseological units across languages. In conclusion, modern proper nouns represent a productive source of figurative and phraseological innovation. Their study provides insights into the changing relationship between language, culture, and social communication.

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