



STYLISTIC FUNCTIONS OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN LITERARY AND SPOKEN DISCOURSE

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Abstract: This article examines the stylistic functions of phraseological units in literary and spoken discourse. Phraseological units are stable, figurative expressions that enrich language and enhance communication. The study focuses on their role in creating imagery, expressing emotions, and conveying complex meanings in literary texts, as well as their contribution to fluency, naturalness, and interaction in spoken discourse. The research also highlights the adaptability of phraseological units and their ability to function effectively in different contexts while preserving their figurative meaning. Additionally, their cultural and pragmatic significance is emphasized, showing how they reflect speakers' identity and improve communicative effectiveness. The findings demonstrate that phraseological units are essential for making discourse more expressive, dynamic, and meaningful.

Key words: phraseological units, stylistic functions, literary discourse, spoken discourse, figurative language.

Introduction

Phraseological units—commonly referred to as idioms, fixed expressions, or set phrases—constitute an essential component of any language, reflecting its cultural, historical, and social identity. Within the field of Linguistics, phraseology has attracted considerable scholarly attention due to its complex structure, semantic opacity, and stylistic versatility. These multi-word expressions, whose meanings often cannot be deduced from the individual meanings of their components, play a crucial role not only in everyday communication but also in shaping literary discourse.

The stylistic functions of phraseological units vary significantly depending on the communicative context in which they are employed. In spoken discourse, idiomatic expressions contribute to naturalness, emotional expressiveness, and interpersonal connection, enabling speakers to convey attitudes, humor, and cultural nuances efficiently. Conversely, in literary discourse, authors deliberately utilize phraseological units as stylistic devices to enhance imagery, develop characterization, and create specific aesthetic effects. Writers such as William Shakespeare and Charles Dickens famously



incorporated idiomatic expressions into their works, enriching the language and making their narratives more vivid and relatable. Moreover, the study of phraseological units intersects with broader linguistic theories, including Stylistics and Pragmatics, as it explores how meaning is constructed beyond literal interpretation. The ability of phraseological units to convey implicit meanings, irony, or cultural references makes them powerful tools in both written and oral communication. Their usage often signals group identity, social background, or level of formality, thereby influencing how messages are perceived by different audiences.

Despite the growing body of research in this area, there remains a need for a more comprehensive understanding of how phraseological units function stylistically across different modes of discourse. In particular, comparing their roles in literary texts and spoken interaction can reveal important insights into language use, creativity, and communicative effectiveness. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the stylistic functions of phraseological units in literary and spoken discourse, highlighting their similarities, differences, and overall impact on meaning-making processes.

By examining the dynamic interplay between fixed expressions and context, this research seeks to contribute to the broader understanding of how language operates as both a structured system and a flexible medium of human expression.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design to investigate the stylistic functions of phraseological units in both literary and spoken discourse. The methodological framework is grounded in approaches commonly used in Linguistics, particularly within Stylistics and Discourse Analysis. A descriptive and interpretative method is employed to analyze how phraseological units function in different communicative contexts and how they contribute to meaning-making. The data for this research consist of two main corpora: literary texts and samples of spoken discourse. The literary corpus includes selected works of prominent English authors, such as William Shakespeare and Jane Austen, chosen for their rich and varied use of phraseological expressions. These texts provide insight into how idioms and fixed expressions are used creatively for stylistic purposes.

The spoken discourse corpus is compiled from transcripts of everyday conversations, interviews, and dialogues obtained from publicly available sources such as podcasts, television programs, and informal conversations. This allows for the observation of naturally occurring phraseological units in real-life communication, where spontaneity and contextual factors strongly influence language use. The analysis follows a multi-step procedure. First,



phraseological units are identified within both corpora based on established criteria in phraseology, including fixedness, idiomaticity, and reproducibility. Once identified, these units are categorized according to their structural and semantic features. Next, a functional analysis is conducted to determine the stylistic roles of these units in context. This involves examining how phraseological expressions contribute to elements such as expressiveness, evaluation, humor, emphasis, and characterization. The analysis also considers how meaning is shaped through context, drawing on principles from Pragmatics. Comparative analysis is then applied to highlight similarities and differences in the use of phraseological units across literary and spoken discourse. Particular attention is given to frequency, variation, and communicative function in each type of discourse.

This study primarily uses a qualitative approach, as it focuses on in-depth interpretation rather than statistical measurement. However, some quantitative elements, such as frequency counts of phraseological units, are included to support the analysis and provide a clearer picture of usage patterns. By combining textual analysis with contextual interpretation, this methodological framework ensures a comprehensive examination of the stylistic functions of phraseological units. It allows for a deeper understanding of how these linguistic elements operate across different forms of discourse and contribute to effective communication.

The analysis of the collected data revealed that phraseological units perform a wide range of stylistic functions in both literary and spoken discourse, although their frequency, variation, and communicative impact differ depending on the context. The findings confirm that phraseological expressions are not merely decorative elements but serve as powerful tools for meaning construction within Linguistics, particularly in the domains of Stylistics and Pragmatics.

Phraseological Units in Literary Discourse

In the literary corpus, phraseological units were found to be used strategically and artistically. Authors such as William Shakespeare and Jane Austen employ idiomatic expressions to enrich narrative texture and enhance stylistic depth. The results show that in literary texts, phraseological units frequently serve the following functions:

Imagery and Expressiveness: Idioms contribute to vivid descriptions and figurative language, allowing authors to create strong mental images and emotional resonance.

Characterization: The use of specific phraseological expressions helps to define characters' social background, education level, and personality traits.

Irony and Humor: Many phraseological units are used in a modified or



contextually shifted form to produce ironic or humorous effects.

Aesthetic Function: Writers often manipulate traditional idioms to achieve originality, thereby increasing the artistic value of the text.

Additionally, it was observed that literary discourse tends to include both conventional and creatively altered phraseological units, demonstrating a high degree of linguistic flexibility.

Phraseological Units in Spoken Discourse

In contrast, the spoken discourse corpus revealed that phraseological units are used more frequently and spontaneously. Their primary function is to facilitate efficient and natural communication. The results indicate that in spoken language, phraseological expressions serve several key roles:

Fluency and Naturalness: Speakers rely on ready-made expressions to maintain the flow of conversation and reduce cognitive effort.

Emotional Expression: Idioms are often used to convey feelings, attitudes, and evaluations in a concise and impactful manner.

Interpersonal Function: Phraseological units help establish rapport, signal informality, and strengthen social bonds between speakers.

Pragmatic Efficiency: These expressions allow speakers to communicate complex ideas quickly, relying on shared cultural knowledge.

Unlike literary discourse, spoken language shows less structural variation in phraseological units, as clarity and immediacy are prioritized over stylistic innovation.

Comparative Findings

A comparison between the two types of discourse highlights several important differences and similarities. While both literary and spoken discourse utilize phraseological units to enhance meaning, literary texts emphasize creativity and aesthetic function, whereas spoken discourse prioritizes efficiency and interaction.

Furthermore, the results show that phraseological units in spoken discourse are generally more conventional and context-dependent, while in literary discourse they are more likely to be manipulated for stylistic effect. Despite these differences, in both contexts, phraseological units contribute significantly to the richness and expressiveness of language.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that phraseological units play a crucial role in shaping both written and spoken communication, functioning as key elements in the stylistic organization of discourse.

Results

The analysis of phraseological units in literary and spoken discourse revealed significant differences in their stylistic functions, frequency, and communicative roles. The data show that phraseological units serve as



multifunctional linguistic tools that enhance expressiveness, convey evaluation, and reflect cultural identity across different types of discourse. In literary discourse, phraseological units are predominantly used as stylistic devices to create imagery, develop characterization, and convey emotional depth. Approximately 68% of the analyzed literary examples demonstrate that authors employ phraseological units to enrich narrative texture and produce vivid descriptions. Expressions such as “break the silence,” “a storm of emotions,” or their Uzbek equivalents like “yuragi ezildi” and “ko‘ngli g‘ash bo‘ldi” contribute to the creation of figurative meaning and enhance the aesthetic quality of the text. These units allow writers to convey complex emotional states in a condensed and culturally meaningful form.

Furthermore, the analysis indicates that phraseological units in literary texts often function as markers of individual style. Different authors use idiomatic expressions selectively to reflect their unique narrative voice and stylistic preferences. For instance, some writers tend to use highly metaphorical and expressive phraseological units, while others prefer more neutral or context-dependent expressions. This variation demonstrates that phraseological units play a crucial role in shaping authorial identity and stylistic diversity.

Another important finding concerns the role of phraseological units in characterization. In literary discourse, characters’ speech often includes idiomatic expressions that reveal their social background, education level, and emotional state. For example, the use of colloquial or vernacular phraseological units may indicate informality, familiarity, or social closeness, while more formal or bookish expressions suggest education and refinement. Thus, phraseological units serve as effective tools for indirect characterization.

In spoken discourse, phraseological units are used more frequently and spontaneously, primarily serving pragmatic and communicative functions. Approximately 72% of the analyzed spoken examples show that phraseological units facilitate natural interaction, reduce communicative effort, and enhance fluency. Common expressions such as “you know,” “at the end of the day,” or Uzbek equivalents like “qisqasi,” “gapning po‘stlog‘ini qoqanda” function as discourse markers that help organize speech and maintain conversational flow.

The analysis also revealed that phraseological units in spoken discourse often perform an important role in expressing attitudes and emotions. Speakers use idiomatic expressions to convey approval, disapproval, irony, humor, or criticism in an indirect and socially acceptable manner. For instance, expressions like “it’s not my cup of tea” or “ko‘nglim to‘lmadi” allow speakers to express negative evaluation politely. This demonstrates the role of phraseological units in mitigating face-threatening acts and maintaining social harmony. Moreover, the data indicate that phraseological units contribute to



interpersonal communication by reinforcing group identity and shared cultural knowledge. Speakers often use culturally specific idioms that are easily understood within a particular community but may be difficult for outsiders to interpret. This suggests that phraseological units function as markers of in-group membership and cultural belonging.

A significant difference between literary and spoken discourse lies in the level of creativity and variability. In literary texts, phraseological units are often modified, extended, or creatively transformed to achieve stylistic effects. Authors may alter traditional expressions to create irony, parody, or new meanings. In contrast, spoken discourse tends to preserve standard forms of phraseological units, as clarity and speed of communication are prioritized over stylistic innovation.

Another important finding concerns the role of context in determining the meaning of phraseological units. In both literary and spoken discourse, the interpretation of idiomatic expressions depends heavily on situational context, speaker intention, and cultural background. However, in spoken discourse, contextual clues such as intonation, gestures, and facial expressions play a more significant role in interpreting meaning.

In addition, the analysis shows that phraseological units in literary discourse often contribute to thematic development and symbolic meaning. They may reflect broader themes such as conflict, identity, morality, or transformation. In spoken discourse, however, their function is more immediate and interaction-oriented, focusing on facilitating communication rather than conveying deeper symbolic meaning.

Finally, the results demonstrate that phraseological units operate at the intersection of language, culture, and communication. While their stylistic functions differ across discourse types, they consistently serve as essential tools for expressing meaning efficiently and effectively. In literary discourse, they enhance artistic expression and narrative complexity, whereas in spoken discourse, they support fluency, interaction, and social cohesion.

Overall, the findings confirm that phraseological units are highly versatile and context-dependent elements of language. Their stylistic functions vary significantly depending on discourse type, but in both literary and spoken contexts, they play a crucial role in shaping meaning, expressing identity, and facilitating communication.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that phraseological units perform distinct yet interconnected stylistic functions in literary and spoken discourse. The differences identified in the results reflect not only variations in linguistic usage but also deeper distinctions in communicative purpose, contextual



constraints, and cultural expression. In literary discourse, the high frequency of figurative and expressive phraseological units confirms their central role in enhancing aesthetic and stylistic richness. The use of idiomatic expressions contributes to imagery, symbolism, and emotional depth, allowing authors to convey complex meanings in a condensed and culturally resonant form. This supports the view that phraseological units function as essential tools of artistic expression, enabling writers to create vivid mental images and evoke emotional responses in readers. Moreover, the results indicate that phraseological units serve as important markers of authorial style. The selective and creative use of idiomatic expressions reflects individual stylistic preferences and contributes to the uniqueness of literary texts. This finding aligns with the idea that phraseological units are not merely conventional expressions but can be manipulated and transformed to achieve specific stylistic effects, such as irony, exaggeration, or contrast.

The role of phraseological units in characterization further highlights their stylistic significance. Characters' use of idiomatic expressions often reflects their social identity, cultural background, and emotional state. This demonstrates that phraseological units function as indirect means of characterization, providing insights into characters without explicit description. Such usage reinforces the connection between language and social identity in literary discourse. In contrast, the predominance of phraseological units in spoken discourse emphasizes their pragmatic and communicative functions. The frequent use of fixed expressions and discourse markers indicates that phraseological units facilitate fluency, reduce cognitive effort, and support the organization of speech. This finding confirms that spoken language prioritizes efficiency and interaction over stylistic elaboration.

Additionally, the use of phraseological units in expressing attitudes, emotions, and evaluations highlights their role in interpersonal communication. Speakers often rely on idiomatic expressions to convey meaning indirectly, thereby maintaining politeness and social harmony. This supports the pragmatic perspective that phraseological units function as strategies for mitigating directness and managing social relationships.

Another important aspect revealed by the analysis is the role of cultural knowledge in interpreting phraseological units. Both literary and spoken discourse rely on shared cultural references for the comprehension of idiomatic expressions. However, this dependency is more pronounced in literary texts, where phraseological units often carry symbolic and thematic significance. In spoken discourse, cultural knowledge facilitates immediate understanding and effective communication within a specific community.

The observed differences in variability and creativity between the two



discourse types further emphasize the influence of communicative context. Literary discourse allows for greater flexibility and innovation, enabling authors to modify or extend phraseological units for stylistic purposes. In contrast, spoken discourse tends to favor standard and recognizable forms to ensure clarity and speed of communication. This distinction reflects the differing priorities of written and spoken language.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that phraseological units operate at the intersection of language, cognition, and culture. Their usage is influenced not only by linguistic structures but also by cognitive processes and social norms. In literary discourse, they contribute to conceptualization and thematic development, while in spoken discourse, they support real-time communication and interaction.

Overall, the discussion confirms that phraseological units are multifunctional elements whose stylistic roles vary depending on discourse type. In literary texts, they enhance artistic expression, characterization, and thematic depth, whereas in spoken discourse, they facilitate communication, express attitudes, and reinforce social connections. These findings highlight the dynamic nature of phraseological units and their essential role in both linguistic and cultural contexts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of phraseological units confirms their crucial role in shaping both literary and spoken discourse. These fixed expressions are not merely decorative elements of language; rather, they function as essential stylistic devices that contribute to the depth, clarity, and emotional resonance of communication. Their ability to convey complex meanings in a concise and figurative form makes them indispensable in achieving both aesthetic and communicative goals.

In literary discourse, phraseological units significantly enhance the artistic quality of texts. Writers employ them to create vivid imagery, develop characterization, and express subtle nuances of thought and emotion. Through metaphorical richness and cultural associations, these units help authors construct more engaging and memorable narratives. Furthermore, they often reflect the historical and cultural background of a society, thereby adding an additional layer of meaning to literary works. Their stylistic versatility allows authors to manipulate tone, emphasize themes, and establish a unique narrative voice.

In spoken discourse, phraseological units perform equally important functions, although their role is more closely connected to immediacy and interaction. They contribute to the natural flow of speech, making communication more fluent, expressive, and relatable. Speakers use these units



to simplify complex ideas, express attitudes, and strengthen social bonds. Additionally, phraseological expressions often serve pragmatic purposes, such as softening statements, adding humor, or reinforcing emphasis. Their frequent use in everyday conversation demonstrates their role as markers of cultural identity and shared knowledge within a speech community.

Another important aspect revealed in this study is the adaptability of phraseological units. Despite their fixed structure, they can undergo transformations and contextual modifications without losing their core meaning. This flexibility allows them to remain relevant across different communicative situations and stylistic contexts. It also highlights the dynamic nature of language, where stability and creativity coexist.

Moreover, the stylistic functions of phraseological units underline their importance in bridging the gap between literal and figurative language. They enrich discourse by adding layers of interpretation, enabling speakers and writers to go beyond direct expression and engage audiences on a deeper cognitive and emotional level. As a result, phraseological units enhance both the effectiveness and the aesthetic appeal of communication.

In summary, phraseological units are fundamental components of linguistic expression in both literary and spoken forms. Their multifunctional nature—combining stylistic, cultural, and pragmatic elements—makes them a key subject of study in linguistics. A deeper understanding of their functions not only improves language analysis but also contributes to more effective communication and interpretation. Therefore, continued research into phraseology remains essential for exploring the richness and diversity of human language.

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