

## LEXICAL AND SEMANTIC FEATURES OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN THE UZBEK LANGUAGE

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**Abstract:** This study provides an in-depth analysis of the lexical-semantic and structural features of phraseological units in the Uzbek language. The research discusses the linguistic status of the phraseeme, its relation to the lexeme and morpheme, its degree of stability, and its functional role in speech. Unlike free word combinations, phraseological units possess a fixed semantic integrity and function as lexical entities within the language system. The paper examines different structural types of phraseemes, their equivalence to phrases or sentences, grammatical formation, and processes of semantic shift. The findings enrich the theoretical foundations of Uzbek phraseology and provide practical value for comparative typological and linguistic studies.

**Keywords:** phraseological unit, phraseeme, lexical-semantic features, fixed expression, free combination, sentence-like structure, syntactic construction, grammatical form, semantic integrity, Uzbek language, phraseology, speech units.

A phraseme is a secondary linguistic unit belonging to the lexical stage of language structure. It is formed through the semantic-syntactic combination of two or more lexemes, and therefore, it is called a composite (segmental) unit. Structurally, it corresponds to a phrase or a sentence pattern, and it usually performs nominative and significative functions. However, it differs from a lexeme not only in terms of its form of expression, but also in its meaning.

In linguistic literature, this language unit is referred to by terms such as phraseologism or phraseological unit. However, by analogy with the terms *lexeme* and *morpheme*, the term phraseme is considered more appropriate. The field that studies phrasemes is called phrasemics (although the term *phraseology* is more commonly used in literature).

As a linguistic unit, a phraseme exists in the language memory of the brain as a symbolic entity; during speech, a copy of this symbol is reproduced. In its linguistic form, a phraseme is a part of a whole; only after acquiring certain grammatical features and markers does it become a complete unit and is used in speech. In that case, it corresponds to a speech unit, known as the phraseme form.

A phraseme, as a linguistic unit, consists of the unity of two aspects — the form of expression and the content. The expressive aspect of a phraseme refers to the linguistic elements it is originally composed of. A phraseme arises when two or more lexemes combine semantically and syntactically, creating a generalized figurative meaning.

Within a phraseme, the structure of a phrase or sentence pattern serves as a permanent framework, filled with lexemes and morphemes.

For example, in the phraseme *ko'z(i)ni och-* (“to open one’s eyes” / “to realize”), the form is based on the dependent combination of *ko'z(i)ni* (“his/her eyes” – object form) and the verb *och-* (“to open”).

The expressive aspect of this phraseme includes the lexeme *ko 'z-* (“eye”), the accusative case suffix, and sometimes numeral or possessive indicators, which may vary depending on the context. Thus, the structure of this lexeme-form can be represented as:

$ko'z (S) + (N) ni$

The second component of this phraseme, *och-*, is a verb lexeme. When used in speech, the phraseme as a whole may take additional grammatical markers of affirmation/negation, mood, tense, and person-number.

Apart from the phraseme, a similar type of word combination can also be created and used in speech. Such combinations formed directly in speech are called free combinations, whereas the opposite type — the phraseme — is referred to as a fixed combination (or fixed collocation).

A fixed collocation is a broad concept and can be divided into two main types:

1. Literal fixed combinations, and
2. Figurative fixed combinations.

Among these, figurative fixed combinations are known as phrasemes.

Literal fixed combinations, on the other hand, include compound terms (for example, *olmoshlab ekish* “to plant alternately”) and repetitive structures built on a pattern (such as *kuchiga kuch qo 'shiladi* “strength is being added to strength”, *husniga husn qo 'shib turibdi* “adding beauty to beauty”, *kundan kunga* “day by day”).

In phrasemes, almost all types of syntactic connections found in modern Uzbek are reflected. Most phrasemes have a phrase-like structure. Just like in free combinations, the dependent element in such phrasemes is expressed by a lexeme-form, while the head element is expressed by a lexeme. A phraseme, as a whole, functions as a fixed phrase.

For example, the phraseme *ko 'z(i)ni och-* (“to open one’s eyes” / “to realize”) has the following lexical-grammatical structure and syntactic pattern:

$[ko'z+(S)+(N)+Kt]X[och-] \{ [ko'z + (S) + (N) + Kt] X [och-] \} [ko'z+(S)+(N)+Kt]X[och-]$ .

If this phraseme is to be used as an adverbial of time, it takes additional grammatical markers such as the perfect participle suffix (*-gan*), the possessive marker (*-lari*), and the postposition (*-dan keyin* “after”).

Thus, some phrase-like phrasemes function as parts (incomplete forms) of linguistic units, and only after acquiring certain grammatical markers do they become complete forms (or full phrase units) that can serve as syntactic elements in a sentence.

However, there are also phrase-like phrasemes that are complete linguistic units even without additional grammatical elements.

For example, the phraseme *katta ko 'cha* (“big street”) is originally structured in the ‘modifier +

modified' pattern, but it is used only in the singular, nominative case. This grammatical restriction is inherent to the phraseme itself as a linguistic unit, as in:

*Chidasang – shu, chidamasang – katta ko 'cha!* (Oybek)  
 (“If you can endure, fine; if not – there’s the big street!”)

A free combination with the same structure (*katta ko 'cha*) can, by contrast, appear in various grammatical forms such as *katta ko 'chani* (“the big street”), *katta ko 'chalarga* (“to the big streets”), etc.

Similarly, phrasemes like *ana-mana deguncha, kampir shaftoli yeguncha* (“just as soon as...”, “until the old woman eats the peach”) also appear only in their fixed forms.

Hence, some phrase-like phrasemes have fixed external grammatical forms, which is what distinguishes them from free combinations.

A portion of phrasemes are sentence-like in structure, containing a subject. For example, in *bosh(i) shishdi* (“he/she got angry” / literally: “his/her head swelled”), the base form can be represented as:

[bosh+Sb+(N)+Kb]X[shish+(B)+(M/3)+TsIII]

This phraseme is considered sentence-like because it includes a subject element, and the final component agrees with the subject in person and number through conjugation.

Before the conjugation marker, additional grammatical markers of affirmation/negation, mood, and tense may be added depending on the context of speech.

Thus, in sentence-like phrasemes, the role of the conjugational marker differs significantly from that of the mood, tense, or negation markers — the sentence structure emerges only after these grammatical forms are added.

This means that a phraseme with sentence-like syntax originally exists as a partial structure, and becomes a complete one only after full grammatical formation.

Some phrasemes containing a subject are already fully grammatically formed linguistic units.

For example, the phraseme *tomdan tarasha tushganday* (“as if a log has fallen from the roof” – meaning “suddenly” or “unexpectedly”) is equivalent to a sentence pattern of the form [*adverbial of place*] X [*subject*] X [*predicate*], but it is used only in the *-gan-day* form.

This phraseme represents a transformative version of an originally sentence-like phraseme.

In certain phrasemes, a subordinate clause-like structure appears as part of the expression. Such phrasemes are still regarded as phrase-level units, since their main component corresponds to a lexeme, and they acquire grammatical markers (such as tense, mood, or person-number indicators) only at the speech level.

For example, in the phraseme *yer tagida ilon qimirlasa, bil* (“be alert if a snake stirs underground” — meaning “be aware of hidden danger”), the grammatical markers of affirmation/negation, mood, tense, and person-number are not inherent in the phraseme as a linguistic unit; they are added only during actual speech use.

A similar phenomenon can also be seen in phrasemes containing quoted parts. For instance, in “*Og‘zing qani?*” – *desa, qulog‘ini ko‘rsat* (“when asked ‘where’s your mouth?’, show your ear”), the structure includes a reported-speech clause equivalent to a sentence, yet as a whole, the phraseme functions as a phrase-like unit. The grammatical markers of affirmation/negation, mood, tense, and person-number are again added at the stage of speech realization.

Example from Sami Abduqahhor:

*Uning o‘zi hech baloda yo‘q, “Og‘zing qani?” – desa, qulog‘ini ko‘rsatadigan ushoqqina bir yigit edi.* (“He himself wasn’t in trouble at all — he was just a little guy who would point to his ear when asked, ‘where’s your mouth?’”)

In this case, the phraseme takes the adjectival form through the addition of the participle suffix *-digan*. Before this participle marker, a positive mood marker is added, and after it, according to Uzbek grammatical rules, the converb marker *-a* is used.

Some phrasemes include a first part equivalent to a phrase and a second part equivalent to a sentence. For example, in *qushbegi bilan shovla yemay(di), tirnog‘(i) kuyadi* (“if you don’t share food with the qushbegi, you’ll suffer” — a figurative saying about social consequences), the first part has a phrase-like structure, but it appears only in the negative form and with the *-a/-y* tense marker, while the finite verb (the conjugational form) is selected according to the subject’s person and number, typically the third person.

The second part of the phraseme has a sentence-like structure, using the *-di* marker (third-person past tense). Before this, a positive marker and *-a/-y* tense marker occur. The subject in this part appears in the singular nominative case, usually accompanied by a third-person possessive marker.

From this analysis, it becomes clear that the expressive side of a phraseme includes not only the lexemes but also the morphemes that serve as its permanent structural elements. These morphemes — including inflectional and derivational ones — form an integral part of the internal grammatical structure of the phraseme.

However, morphemes that are added during speech (i.e., context-specific grammatical markers) are not considered part of the phraseme’s expressive core.

## Conclusion

The findings of this research demonstrate that phraseological units in the Uzbek language constitute an important stratum of the language system. Their study holds significant value for understanding the internal structure of the language, its semantic potential, and the characteristics of national thought.

As linguistic units, phrasemes represent not only semantic-syntactic relationships between lexemes and morphemes, but also serve as symbolic expressions of collective mentality and worldview.

Through a systematic analysis of Uzbek phraseology, distinctions between sentence-like and phrase-like structures of phrasemes have been clarified, along with their functional possibilities in speech.

The results of this study provide a theoretical foundation for linguistic fields such as phraseology, lexicology, and grammatical semantics. Furthermore, a comparative-typological analysis of Uzbek phrasemes with those of other languages helps to identify national linguistic uniqueness and to reveal more deeply the cultural underpinnings of linguistic thought.

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