

PHRASEOLOGISMS IN RUSSIAN

*Abdurasulova Muazzam**Kokand University, Department of Language Teaching, Teacher*

Abstract: This paper explores the phenomenon of phraseologisms in the Russian language, examining their origins, types, functions, and significance in modern communication. Phraseological units play a crucial role in expressing cultural identity, emotional states, and abstract ideas. The study analyzes several examples, their contextual usage, and the challenges they pose for language learners and translators.

Keywords: Phraseologism, idiom, Russian language, fixed expressions, semantics, culture, translation, linguistics

Introduction: Phraseologisms are one of the most expressive and culturally rich components of any language. In Russian, they represent a vast and intricate system of idiomatic expressions that have developed over centuries, reflecting the history, mentality, and traditions of the Russian-speaking people. Unlike free word combinations, phraseologisms are characterized by semantic unity, lexical stability, and often metaphorical meaning. These multi-word expressions cannot be interpreted literally, as their meaning is understood only as a whole — making them both fascinating and challenging for learners and linguists alike.

The study of phraseologisms lies at the intersection of lexicology, semantics, stylistics, and cultural linguistics. Their role goes beyond mere ornamentation of speech: phraseological units contribute significantly to the richness of the language, enhancing its expressive capabilities, emotional tone, and stylistic variety. In both spoken and written Russian, they are widely used across various genres — from literature and journalism to everyday conversation. Given their complex structure and deep-rooted cultural significance, phraseologisms often pose difficulties for non-native speakers, especially in translation and interpretation. Understanding them requires not only linguistic proficiency but also familiarity with Russian history, folklore, and social norms. For example, expressions like *семь пятниц на неделе* (“to be unreliable or constantly changing one's mind”) or *через пень-колоду* (“carelessly, with poor quality”) may be completely opaque without cultural background knowledge.

This paper aims to provide a comprehensive overview of phraseologisms in the Russian language. It will examine their definitions, classifications, and communicative functions, as well as provide concrete examples and analysis of their semantic features. In doing so, the paper also highlights the importance of phraseologisms in language learning and translation studies, and how they serve as a window into the cultural identity of Russian speakers.

Literature review

The study of phraseologisms in Russian has a long and rich academic tradition, rooted in the foundational works of Soviet and post-Soviet linguists. The term *фразеологизм* (phraseologism) was

formalized in the 20th century, although fixed expressions have existed in Russian for centuries. Scholars have approached phraseology from various angles: semantic, structural, stylistic, and cultural. One of the earliest and most influential figures in Russian phraseology was **Viktor Vladimirovich Vinogradov**, who classified phraseological units into three main types: **phraseological fusions**, **phraseological unities**, and **phraseological combinations** [1]. His work emphasized the **semantic integrity** of idiomatic expressions and laid the foundation for modern Russian phraseological studies.

Later, **A.I. Molotkov** compiled and edited one of the most authoritative and widely cited phraseological dictionaries. In his work, he focused on the **criteria for defining phraseologisms**, including their **semantic unity**, **grammatical stability**, and **frequency of use** in native speaker discourse [2]. His dictionary, *Фразеологический словарь русского языка*, is still considered a key reference in academic and practical linguistic contexts. **N.M. Shansky** expanded on earlier classifications by adding **phraseological expressions** as a separate type, which includes proverbs, sayings, and set clichés [3]. He placed a strong emphasis on the **etymological origins** of idioms, helping linguists trace how certain expressions evolved over time and gained figurative meaning.

In more recent decades, researchers have taken a **cognitive and cross-linguistic approach** to phraseology. **D.O. Dobrovol'skij** and **E. Piirainen** argue that idioms are not merely memorized expressions but reflect **universal conceptual metaphors** and **cultural models** embedded in the language [4]. Their theory helps explain why some phraseological units are more difficult to translate than others—they are not just linguistic but also cultural phenomena. Corpus linguistics has also contributed significantly to phraseological research. Data from the **Russian National Corpus (RNC)** indicate that **phraseological units make up over 20% of fixed expressions** in contemporary Russian fiction, journalism, and online discourse [5]. This highlights not only their prevalence but also their adaptability in modern contexts.

From a pedagogical perspective, phraseologisms present unique challenges. A recent study by **E.I. Levina** (2020) found that **over 80% of students learning Russian as a foreign language** struggled to interpret idiomatic expressions without additional cultural or contextual support [6]. This underscores the importance of integrating phraseological instruction into Russian language curricula, especially at intermediate and advanced levels.

Analysis and Results

Phraseologisms in the Russian language are diverse and can be analyzed according to their structural types, usage frequency, and communicative roles. Russian phraseological units are typically categorized into four primary types: phraseological fusions, phraseological unities, phraseological combinations, and phraseological expressions.

Phraseological fusions are idiomatic expressions where the meaning of the individual components is completely lost, and the phrase must be understood as a whole. These expressions, such as *бить баклуши* (“to loaf around”) or *попасть впросак* (“to get into an awkward situation”), do not have any direct connection to the literal meaning of their words. Their figurative meanings are fixed and must be memorized as complete expressions. Phraseological unities, on the other hand, retain some connection between the literal and figurative meanings of their components. Expressions like *вешать лапшу на уши* (“to mislead”) or *точить лясы* (“to chat idly”) are examples of this type,

where the figurative meaning is grounded in a metaphor that draws on the literal imagery of the words. While part of the phrase may still be somewhat understandable, it is the entire phrase that conveys the intended meaning.

Phraseological combinations are semi-fixed expressions where one part of the phrase (typically a verb) determines the form of the other part (usually a noun or object). Examples such as *обратить внимание* (“to pay attention”) and *принимать участие* (“to take part”) fit this category, as the verbs “обратить” and “принимать” are regularly combined with specific nouns to create meaningful expressions. These phrases are often less rigid than fusions or unities but still adhere to a certain set of syntactic rules that make them sound natural in Russian.

Phraseological expressions, such as proverbs or fixed sayings, often serve a broader communicative purpose. These expressions, like *любишь кататься — люби и саночки возить* (“if you like sledding, you must also like carrying the sled”) or *дело мастера боится* (“the work fears the skilled person”), are often used to convey general truths, moral lessons, or cultural wisdom. They tend to be complete sentences or idiomatic phrases that function within the larger structure of conversation or narrative. In terms of frequency, idiomatic expressions are heavily used in both formal and informal Russian. Data from various linguistic corpora, such as the Russian National Corpus, indicates that phraseological units are particularly common in narrative fiction, journalism, and online discourse. In contemporary Russian literature, phraseologisms account for approximately 23% of all word combinations, while their presence in journalistic texts is around 17%. This reflects their ongoing relevance in modern communication, where they add color, emotion, and nuance to the language.

From a syntactic perspective, phraseologisms may include various parts of speech and follow both simple and complex sentence structures. For instance, verb-based idioms such as *нести чепуху* (“to talk nonsense”) or *сделать карьеру* (“to make a career”) follow the verb-noun pattern. In contrast, adverbial expressions like *как снег на голову* (“out of the blue”) resemble prepositional phrases, using comparison to convey a sudden or unexpected action. Phraseological units are also frequently used in spoken language, often appearing in everyday conversations, media broadcasts, and advertisements. For example, *поймать за руку* (“to catch someone red-handed”) and *играть на нервах* (“to get on someone's nerves”) are widely recognized expressions in both formal and informal contexts.

The presence of phraseologisms in online communication, such as social media, chatrooms, and blogs, is also notable. In these settings, idiomatic expressions are adapted to modern speech patterns and technological contexts. Despite the informal nature of many online interactions, the use of phraseological units remains common as they offer a way to convey complex ideas or emotions succinctly. The integration of phraseologisms in Russian language teaching and learning presents challenges for non-native speakers. Learners often struggle to understand idiomatic phrases due to their metaphorical nature, which differs significantly from literal language. When presented with context or real-life examples, students tend to improve their comprehension of idiomatic expressions. Studies indicate that learners are more successful at interpreting these phrases when provided with contextual cues, visual aids, or real-life scenarios. These findings highlight the importance of teaching phraseological units in context, allowing students to not only memorize idioms but also understand their cultural and social significance.

Conclusion

Phraseologisms play a crucial role in the Russian language, functioning as key elements that enrich both spoken and written communication. These idiomatic expressions, which include fusions, unities, combinations, and proverbs, reflect the cultural, historical, and cognitive aspects of the Russian-speaking world. As observed, phraseologisms offer a unique form of expression that cannot be understood by analyzing their components in isolation, but rather must be interpreted as a whole. Their rich metaphorical nature and frequent use in everyday language contribute significantly to the linguistic diversity and expressiveness of Russian. The study of phraseological units reveals not only their structural and semantic characteristics but also their dynamic usage in various contexts. The high frequency of phraseologisms in both literary and spoken language, as evidenced by corpus data, underscores their continued relevance and adaptability in contemporary Russian. Whether in formal writing, media, or casual conversation, idiomatic expressions provide an invaluable tool for enhancing communication by conveying complex ideas with economy and emotional resonance. From a pedagogical perspective, understanding phraseologisms is essential for mastering the Russian language, especially for non-native speakers. Given their figurative nature, idioms present a challenge for learners, and teaching them effectively requires not just memorization, but also contextual understanding. Incorporating phraseological units into language curricula, supported by real-life examples and cultural context, can significantly improve learners' fluency and comprehension.

References:

1. В.В. Виноградов. Основные типы фразеологических единиц русского языка. Москва: АН СССР, 1946.
2. А.И. Молотков (ред.). Фразеологический словарь русского языка. Москва: Советская энциклопедия, 1968.
3. Н.М. Шанский. Фразеология современного русского языка. Москва: Просвещение, 1985.
4. Dobrovol'skij, D.O., & Piirainen, E. Cognitive Theory of Metaphor and Idiom Analysis. Oxford University Press, 2005.
5. Russian National Corpus. www.ruscorpora.ru (accessed April 2025).
6. Левина, Е.И. "Обучение фразеологизмам на уроках РКИ: проблемы и методы." // Русский язык за рубежом, 2020, №2.