

Functional - pragmatic aspects of phraseological intensifiers in modern English.

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Annotation: Problems of the category of intensity and various means of its expression in language have long attracted the attention of many researchers (Bally 1961, Bolinger 1972, Ubin 1974, Sapir 1985, Turansky 1990 and others). Today in linguistics there is no conceptual unity in the application of the term intensity. The starting point of most of the works on this problem published over the past decades is the correlation of the concept of intensity with the concept of quantity.

Keywords: linguistics, term intensity, phraseological intensifier, interpretation of intensity, linguistic method, phraseological unit.

Relevance of the topic: The relevance of this study is determined not only by the fact that at the previous stages of phraseological studies, phraseological intensifiers were not given enough attention. Simple observations convince us that the contexts of the phraseological intensifier, as a rule, represent the “moments of revelation” of the participants in communication, its emotional apogee.

Of course, the term “intensity” can be attributed to the characteristics of the number of objective features of objects in the surrounding world. We can talk about the intensity, for example, of such characteristics of real objects as height, weight, color, size.

Recognizing the unconditional legitimacy of the universal interpretation of the term “intensity”, I.I. Turansky, nevertheless, within the framework of his subject - expressive stylistics, interprets intensity as a measure of the amount of expressiveness: “Expressiveness is a sign of a text, its qualitative characteristic. Expressiveness always correlates with a neutral form of presentation; without this correlation, expression is unthinkable. Reinforced expressiveness, on the other hand, presupposes an act, a process of amplification, or intensification. Intensification as an indicator of the degree of intensification is a quantitative characteristic of the qualitative (expressive) side of speech, it is a quantitative reflection of how expressive rises above the subject-logical content of the statement” (Turansky 1990:15).

We find the interpretation of intensity in the context of expressivity in many works (Sergeeva 1967, Arnold 1975, Galkina-Fedoruk 1958, Malinovich 1989, Teliya 1996). Most researchers see between these concepts, if not synonymous, then inclusive relations.

Thus, E.N. Sergeeva proposes to understand expressivity as the ability to convey a certain degree of intensity (Sergeeva 1967). A similar position on this issue is taken by V.I. Bolotov, who interprets expressiveness as the ability of a linguistic sign to express the intensity of the subject-logical or stylistic interpretation of a linguistic sign (Bolotov 1981). E.M. Galkina-Fedoruk believes that “expression is an increase in expressiveness, figurativeness, an increase in the influencing power of what has been said” (Galkina-Fedoruk 1958:107). Let us compare the conclusion of V.N. Teliya “expressiveness is the enhancement of perception due to the emotional reaction caused by imagery” (Teliya 1996: 112) and the definition of I.V. with increased intensity” (Arnold 1975:15).

The ratio of expressiveness and intensity, as we see, is determined through the concept of “amplification”. The interpretation of intensity as a component of the category of expressiveness, according to I.I. Turansky, is primarily due to the fact that the expressiveness of our speech in most cases is accompanied by its intensification, expressive as something stylistically higher than neutral necessarily implies amplification (Turansky 1990). In addition, both categories are intralinguistic categories, in unity they create a pragmatic effect of expressiveness and figurativeness of speech, both perform the function of not just a message, but an enhanced impact on the addressee. The formal aspect of expressiveness and the formal aspect of intensity also coincide. Both categories are associated with the subjective choice of the addresser of expressive means and means of intensifying the utterance, both categories, as a rule, are accompanied by indicators of emotionality and evaluativeness.

Purpose of the study: The aim of the study is to establish and study the functional and pragmatic factors that determine the use of phraseological intensifiers in discourse. In our opinion, the study of the functional-pragmatic

conditionality of the use of phraseological intensifiers made it possible to present a complete, from the point of view of the anthropological approach, picture of the functioning of phraseological intensifiers in discourse.

In accordance with the goal, the following tasks are solved in the work:

- description of semiotic characteristics of phraseological intensifiers;
- study of cognitive aspects of the meaning of phraseological intensifiers
- analysis of pragmatic - communicative parameters of phraseological intensifiers in contextual - discursive conditions;
- study of text-forming functions of phraseological intensifiers.

The object of the study was the phraseological intensifier corpus, which includes 47 units that are actively functioning in modern English.

The subject of the study is the works of art by modern English and American authors, with a total volume of about 16,000 pages, data from English explanatory and phraseological dictionaries.

Research methods. The tasks set, as well as the linguistic specificity of the object of study, led to the use of the following linguistic research methods in the work:

1) the method of phraseological analysis - to study the stability and establish an indicator of the stability of phraseological intensifiers, to delimit phraseological intensifiers from free combinations of words, individually - author's turns - quotations, to analyze the phraseological abstraction of phraseological intensifiers;

2) phraseological description method - for the analysis of the phraseological meaning of phraseological intensifiers. This method is associated with the theory of conceptual modeling of the actual meaning of idioms developed by A.N. Baranov and D.O. Dobrovolsky (Baranov, Dobrovolskij 1996), as well as with the procedure for analyzing the metaphorical meanings of J. Searle (Searle 1979);

3) interpretative method - for understanding and interpreting phraseological intensifiers in the fullness of its connections and relationships. The interpretative method is based on the concept of discursive analysis developed by T. van Dijk (van Dijk 1989, Dijk 1985). The interpretive method uses the theory of intentional states by J. Searle (Searle 1983), the provisions of the argumentation theory of F. van Eemeren and R. Grootendorst (Eemeren, Grootendorst 1996), as well as the procedure for calculating speech acts by J. Searle, D. Vanderveken (Searle, Vanderveken 1996). In the light of the above theoretical and methodological provisions, the phraseological intensifier is considered as a strategic tool that contributes to the implementation of the discursive strategy of increased impact on the participants in the discourse;

4) method of linguistic experiment - for experimental verification of the hypotheses put forward in the study, one of which is the connection between the category of intensity and intentionality, and the essence of the second is that the phraseological intensifier, being a phraseological means of representing the category of intensity in the language, is a means of enhanced expression of the intentionality of the participants in the discourse;

5) testing method - as part of a linguistic experiment for a written survey of informants.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in the fact that phraseological intensifiers are for the first time subjected to an analysis that differs both from the traditional etymological or diachronic description, and from the heuristic procedures adopted in studies of phraseological taxonomy. Combining the scientific understanding of the phraseological intensifier as a sign of expression with data on its discursive distribution, we get a research procedure that can answer many questions about the place of phraseological intensifiers in the language picture of the world and its discursive niche.

Theoretical significance of the study:

The theoretical significance of the study lies in the fact that, based on the analysis of discursive distributions, the sign specificity of phraseological intensifiers is revealed. In the system-linguistic description, phraseological intensifiers are usually presented as signs of secondary predication, but in discourse they behave like signs of illocution. The study contributes to further linguistic understanding of the discursive means of increased impact on the participants of the discourse. The application of the theory of speech acts, the theory of intentional states, the theory of discourse and a number of provisions of the theory of argumentation and the theory of metaphor to the study of phraseological intensifiers allows us to build a complex model of phraseological intensifiers as a means of expression and speech impact.

Practical significance of the study:

The practical value of the work is determined by the possibility of using its provisions in courses on phraseology, in special courses on the theory of interpretation, on discourse analysis, in managing term papers and theses. The material presented in the dissertation, the results of its analysis can be used in the practice of teaching English, in particular, in teaching the methods of speech influence.

The corpus of phraseological intensifiers can be conditionally divided into two groups. The first group, more numerous, includes phraseological intensifiers of the highest level of phraseological abstraction. These phraseological intensifiers have a break in the connection between the meaning of the idiom and the meaning of its components. Such phraseological intensifiers are obviously formed with the development of their classical sign

functions, achieving high mobility in terms of syntax. The second group consists of phraseological intensifiers with a lower level of phraseological abstraction. The literal meanings of the components are partially isomorphic to the figurative meanings. Cases of remotivation of phraseological intensifiers of this group show that their knowledge is connected with both worlds of experience - metaphorical and prototypical.

In the system-linguistic description, phraseological intensifiers are presented as signs of secondary predication, defining signs of matter, serving the names of events, facts, actions and states, that is, in those areas where properties, states, events are predicated, interpreted through the properties of a person.

Phraseological intensifiers are linguistic signs of a special kind and are endowed with a number of features that distinguish them from other linguistic signs, such as, for example, a word and free combinations of words (often an incomplete comparative turn). These features basically boil down to the following:

- phraseological intensifiers, in contrast to the lexical intensifier, are a complex, separate-formatted language formation;

- unlike a free verbal complex, phraseological intensifiers have the maximum degree of phraseological stability, the main indicators of which are: stability of use; the stability of the lexical composition, which allows the substitution of the components of phraseological intensifiers only within the limits of phraseological variation; morphological stability, manifested in the presence of components with a zero or incomplete paradigm in a phraseological intensifier;

- from free combinations of words phraseological intensifiers are distinguished by their reproducibility in finished form.

Phraseological intensifiers and their lexical synonyms express intensifying meaning in different ways. Lexical intensifiers are used in their literal meanings, while the components of phraseological intensifiers completely lose their literal meanings and acquire a holistic intensifying meaning as a result of expressive rethinking, which in a certain group of phraseological intensifiers proceeds as a process of metaphorizing the meaning of the prototype of phraseological intensifiers.

Like any language sign, a phraseological intensifier necessarily reflects certain aspects of the conceptual picture of the world, or knowledge about the world, which, in turn, are structured in the mind of a native speaker in the form of prototypes and frames. The designation of a certain fragment of reality occurs in the phraseological intensifier by establishing similarity and similarity between the new content and the properties of the prototype of the phraseological intensifier or between the new content and that typified situation fixed in the linguistic picture of the world, which is expressed by the internal form of the phraseological intensifier in the form of a frame. Consequently, the process of formation of an intensifying meaning is a conceptualization and verbalization of the surrounding reality, and phraseological intensifiers are signs for the everyday naive picture of the world, which reflect the knowledge and experience of the people.

Phraseological intensifiers do not describe the world, but interpret it and are created in order to express the subjective and, as a rule, emotionally charged attitude of the speaker to the world. Thus, we can assume that phraseological intensifiers are anthropometric signs.

Being primarily signs of expression, phraseological intensifiers are subject to expressive rethinking, and in most cases their components completely lose their literal meanings. As a result, phraseological units acquire a holistic intensifying meaning, for example: *like a shot, like lightning, like one o'clock* – very quickly, instantaneously, *as anything, as blazes, as hell, as all get out* – hellishly, devilishly, damn, *as they come, as they make them* – extremely, exclusively. It was the semantic coherence of the phraseological intensifier that made it difficult to study them during the period of dominance of structural-semantic methods.

Most phraseological intensifiers of this type are unimodal phrases (that is, phrases consisting of one significant, one functional and two or three auxiliary lexemes). Intensifiers have syntactic coherence, as they are attached to certain parts of speech, and can be considered as a kind of semi-comparative turns. A.V. Kunin divides them into two types: intensifiers of adjectives and adverbs and intensifiers of verbs (Kunin 1996: 290). He refers to the first type such phraseological intensifiers as: *as anything, as blazes, as hell, as the devil, as old boots, as all get-out* – hellishly, devilishly, damn. The second type, according to A.V. Kunin, is the most numerous group of phraseological intensifiers and includes the following units: *like one o'clock* – accurate, punctual; *like billy-o, like blazes* – strong, extremely, terrible; *like fun* – energetically, swiftly, very quickly; *like hell, like mad, like the devil* – like damn, damn, devilish; *like a bat out of hell* – to the fullest; *like nobody's business* – endlessly, damn cleverly; *like old boots* – with all his might and others.

In modern English, there are several intensifiers with a more complex structure, which are based on completely rethought combinations of words with the structure of a subordinate clause: *as they come, as you please* – extremely, exclusively; *as they make them, as the day is long* – extraordinarily, exceptionally, terribly, damn. Full expressive rethinking overcomes the partially predicative structure of these turns and their meaning is holistic, intensifying (Kunin 1996).

So, it can be confidently asserted that the area of the category of intensity in phraseology was reduced to the structural and semantic specificity of a phraseological unit focused on strengthening the meaning, comparative phraseological units with the meaning of amplification and the phraseological intensifier itself, the categorical properties of which the phraseologists tried to analyze within the framework of the structuralist paradigm. It is the sign function of the phraseological intensifier that turned out to be the least studied in this paradigm. At the same time, A.M. Kaplunenko, who conducted the study of idioms in the historical and functional aspect, came to the conclusion that of all the categories of idioms, these phraseological units are the closest to the classical semiotic concept of a sign (Kaplunenko 1992). Therefore, the study of sign functions and properties of a phraseological intensifier is one of the urgent problems in phraseology.

However, phraseological abstraction is associated not only with the abstraction of the meaning of the phraseological intensifier from the literal meanings of its components, but also with the abstraction of the configuration of the reproduction of the phraseological intensifier from the author's configuration. The conducted studies have shown that the degree of phraseological abstraction of the phraseological intensifier increases as the configuration of their reproduction is diverted from the contexts of their first use. "The higher the degree of phraseological abstraction from the original context, the more significant and diverse the possibilities of a phraseological unit due to the realization of their internal semiological resources" (Kaplunenko 1992:167).

Consider the phraseological intensifier *as the day is long* – terrible, damn, extremely, extremely, and the phraseological intensifier *like wildfire* – swiftly, instantly. Initially, the phraseological intensifier *as the day is long* was used only as part of Shakespearean *as merry as the day is long*, and the phraseological intensifier *like wildfire* was first used by W. Shakespeare in combination with the predicate to burn. For example:

1. Beatrice: ... he shows me where the bachelors sit and there live we as merry as the day is long (W.Shakespeare "Much Ado about Nothing").

2. "... whose words like wildfire burnt the shining glory of rich-built Illion" (W.Shakespeare "The Rape of Lucrece", p.185).

Gradually, the data of the phraseological intensifier are abstracted from the contexts of their first use, that is, from compatibility with the predicates *merry* and *to burn*, the disintegration of single compatibility has led to the possibility of the phraseological intensifier to be reproduced in combinations with a wide variety of predicates. For example:

1. They are quiet, peaceable, tractable, free from drunkenness, and they are industrious as the day is long (M.Twain).

2. "A real honest-to-god Albino?" Shaw asked. "As real as the day is long" (E.Caldwell).

3. Next day word went about the country like wildfire that Mr. Renny had beaten Jessica Brown within an inch of her life (R.L.Stevenson).

4. The report ... spread like wildfire through the town (OED, vol.XII, p.125)

In the corpus of the phraseological intensifier, a group of phraseological intensifiers is distinguished, which are characterized by a high level of phraseological abstraction. Such phraseological intensifiers include the following phraseological units: *like the devil*, *as the devil*, *like a shot*, *like lightning*, *like mad*, *like crazy*, *like a house afire*, *like one o'clock* and others. If at the highest level of abstraction there is no two-dimensionality of the phraseological meaning due to a break in the connection between the meaning of the phraseological intensifier and the meaning of its prototype, then with a high degree of abstraction such a connection is always observed. The meaning of the prototype, as it were, shines through the meaning of the phraseological intensifier.

The absolute majority of phraseological intensifiers have restrictions on the formation of variants or the stability of the lexical composition. Variants were identified only for some phraseological intensifiers, for example: *like a clock* – *like one o'clock* or *like clockwork* – willingly, precisely, punctually, very quickly; *I'll eat my hat* or *I'll eat my boots* – I give my head for cutting off, how to give a drink ...; *like a house on fire* or *like a house afire* – very fast. For example:

1. The Harlan girl was talking like a house afire, and I think she was telling me the truth (E.Gardner).

2. And I'll bet you'll learn Italian like a house on fire (W.S.Maugham, "The Bread – Winner", p.164).

3. "Toads are valuable animals", answers Jane. "They eat the snails like one o'clock" (M.Brandon).

4. He would have tortured my poor toes ... and made them move like clockwork in musical obedience (OED, vol. II, p.511).

5. That date was written with a fountain pen or I'll eat my boots (A. Christie "The Murder at the Vicarage").

6. If it wasn't your brother who stole it, I'll eat my hat (DEI).

Phraseological intensifiers are limited not only in the formation of variants, but also in their paradigm (morphological stability according to A.V. Kunin). Any phraseological intensifier is morphologically limited in comparison with its components, taken as separate modified words. So, for the nominal components of a phraseological intensifier, prohibitions on the regular formation of a number are typical. The semiotic conditions of

the initial situation, fixed in the internal form, and, consequently, in the meaning of these phraseological intensifiers, do not allow multiple interpretation. The absence of a plural (*I'll eat my hats, like hells, like lightnings or like shots*) is a consequence of the semantic stability of the phraseological intensifier data.

Free phrases allow for various syntactic transformations that modify their syntactic form or environment. Such transformations include, for example, the introduction of a definition to a noun, the introduction of negation into a verb phrase, the formation of a definitive clause referring to one of the components of the phrase, the formation of a passive. Phraseological intensifiers turn out to be opaque for these transformations. The phraseological intensifier is characterized by a high degree of syntactic stability, which manifests itself in a stable order of the components of the phraseological intensifier. However, when analyzing the examples, cases of distant location of the components of the phraseological intensifier were identified. In such examples, such cases are limited only by occasional wedgings, which, in turn, are the main indicator of the separate design of the phraseological intensifier.

Conclusion.

In this work, an attempt was made to comprehensively study the functional and pragmatic aspects of phraseological intensifiers on the material of the modern English language. The assumption that these phraseological units are the closest to the classical semiotic concept of a sign out of all categories of idiomatics was fully confirmed in the course of the study. As a result of the analysis of categorical and semiotic characteristics, as well as pragmatic and communicative parameters of a phraseological intensifier, it was found that phraseological intensifiers acquire full significance both in the language system and in discourse.

As the empirical material shows, the majority of phraseological intensifiers are deliberately formed with the predominant development of their classical sign functions that can be reproduced through internal semiological processes. However, among the phraseological intensifiers, a group stands out, the development of systemic sign properties of which occurs even at the stage of potential phraseology and consists in creating the necessary level of sign redundancy. A large role in this process is given to phraseological abstraction, which contributes to the systemic and linguistic significance of the phraseological intensifier and their translation into signs of linguistic nomination.

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