

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF PHRASEOLOGICAL DERIVATES

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Abstract

This paper examines theoretical approaches to phraseological derivation, treating phraseology as a micro-system within the overall linguistic system that encapsulates national worldview and cultural memory. Drawing on classical and contemporary scholarship (V.V. Vinogradov, A.V. Kunin, N.N. Amosova, E. Kurilovich), the study synthesizes conceptualizations of phraseological units, their systemic status, derivational mechanisms, and sociocultural functions. Using a comparative literature-analysis method, the paper identifies core properties of phraseological derivatives: their role in semantic condensation, mechanisms of formation (morphological, syntactic, semantic), and their dynamic interaction with social and cultural factors.

Keywords

Phraseological units, phraseological derivation, theoretical approaches, literature-analytic approach, national worldview, sociocultural functions.

Introduction. Phraseology constitutes a distinct micro-system of a language, integrating collective experience transmitted across generations and reflecting a community's history and cultural worldview. As such, phraseological units provide access not only to lexical conventions but also to cultural-historical layers of meaning. The phraseological system is understood not merely as a collection of fixed expressions, but as an organized set that includes formation patterns, the internal properties and relations of components, inter-unit interactions, and links with other levels of linguistic organization. Phraseological units are linguistic universals: no language functions without idiomatic or set expressions. Their expressive and evaluative potential enables condensation of complex narratives, emotions, and socio-cultural evaluations into compact linguistic forms.

Material and Methods. This study employs a qualitative, literature-analytic approach. Sources include primary theoretical works and descriptive studies by leading scholars in Russian and comparative phraseology (notably V.V.

Vinogradov, A.V. Kunin, N.N. Amosova, and E. Kurilovich). The method consists of:

a) Comparative conceptual analysis: extracting and comparing key definitions and theoretical moves concerning phraseological units and derivation from the selected literature.

b) Thematic synthesis: organizing findings into theoretical themes (systemic status, mechanisms of formation, semantic condensation, social and cultural dimensions).

c) Interpretive integration: situating scholars' contributions within a unified account of how derivation operates at the phraseological subsystem level.

Results. Phraseological units are presented as components of a coherent micro-system within the language system: not merely lexical items, but patterned formations with internal regularities and inter-unit relations that interact with other linguistic levels. The system includes productive molds (patterns) that govern formation and enable predictable derivational processes. V.V. Vinogradov characterizes certain phraseological formations as “third-level nomination markers,” indicating a stratified view of lexical and phraseological nomination where derivatives perform an additional nominative function. He stresses that phraseological units can incorporate newly formed lexical items (neologisms), homonyms, compound words, and derived phraseological expressions. A.V. Kunin adopts and operationalizes the derivation concept in his lexicographic and theoretical work, analyzing derivational outcomes in English and Russian phraseology. He frames phraseological derivation as a system-level phenomenon shaped by morphological, syntactic, and semantic processes. Kunin emphasizes that derivation not only creates new lexicalized expressions but also expands the semantic load of existing phraseological units. N.N. Amosova focuses on the dynamics and sociocultural determinants of phraseological derivation. She foregrounds the social and cultural motivations for derivation and interprets derivatives as linguistic signs that reflect communicative needs, cultural states, and psychological attitudes of language users. Amosova further analyzes how systemic change and interlingual contacts influence derivational processes. E. Kurilovich's and later Kunin's usage helped establish and disseminate the term “phraseological derivation” in the field; Kunin's bilingual phraseological lexicography provided empirical illustration of derivational patterns originating from English phraseological material.

Phraseological derivatives emerge through morphological affixation, compounding, syntactic recombination, semantic extension, and pragmatic reanalysis. Affixal processes are highlighted by Kunin as productive channels for

deriving phraseological variants. Derivation operates across multiple linguistic strata—morphology, syntax, semantics—and frequently produces novel semantic configurations that are culturally and contextually grounded.

Discussion. Phraseological units serve as devices for semantic condensation: they compress narratives, evaluations, and historical or cultural contexts into compact formulas. This is aligned with A.A. Potebnya’s notion of “condensation of thought” (уплотнение мысли), whereby a single idiom encapsulates broader textual meaning. Derivates add expressive, evaluative, and pragmatic nuance. They serve interpersonal and emotive functions (expressing joy, irony, contempt, etc.) and can substitute for longer, less precise paraphrases to convey complex characterizations succinctly.

Derivational processes reflect changes in worldview, social transformations, and cultural-historical events. New phraseological formations index collective experience, shifts in communicative practices, and contact with other languages and cultures. Some researchers note that the term “derivation” has been variably applied (sometimes extended beyond prototypical phraseologized items to occasional or nonce formations), indicating terminological and methodological heterogeneity in the field. The surveyed literature converges on several core points: phraseological units are systematic and productive; derivation is a multi-level process; and derivates perform both semantic and sociocultural work. Vinogradov provides an early classificatory and nominative frame; Kunin moves the concept into lexicographic and structural analyses; Amosova situates derivation within socio-cultural dynamics; and Kurilovich’s earlier terminological influence helped establish the wider use of “phraseological derivation” in modern scholarship.

Conceptual clarity: Scholars should converge on refined definitions that distinguish prototypical phraseological derivation (systematic, recurrent processes yielding entrenched expressions) from occasional, ad hoc phraseological modifications. **Clearer typologies** will aid empirical research and cross-linguistic comparison. **Methodological integration:** Future work should combine theoretical synthesis with corpus-based and experimental methods to quantify productivity, track diachronic emergence, and map socio-pragmatic conditions favoring derivation. **Sociolinguistic perspective:** Amosova’s emphasis on social drivers suggests that phraseological derivation is as much a cultural-linguistic process as a structural one. Empirical research should correlate derivational patterns with sociocultural variables and language-contact scenarios.

Conclusion. Phraseological derivation is a theoretically rich phenomenon that expands the expressive and nominative scope of the phraseological subsystem. It involves morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic mechanisms and

reflects broader social and cultural processes. Synthesizing the work of Vinogradov, Kunin, Amosova, and others highlights the need for precise typologies and integrated empirical methods to advance understanding. Future research should operationalize derivation in corpora, examine cross-linguistic patterns, and explore the interaction between derivational productivity and sociocultural change.

Corpus-based studies to quantify derivational productivity and establish frequency profiles of derivates across registers and genres. Diachronic research tracing the life cycle of phraseological derivates from coinage to obsolescence or entrenchment. Psycholinguistic experiments investigating processing and comprehension differences between canonical phraseological units and their derivates. Sociolinguistic case studies linking derivational innovation to social groups, cultural events, and language-contact contexts.

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