

SCTCMG 2019

International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism»

TRANSFORMATIONS OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN POETICS

Dzhanetta Dreeva (a)*

*Corresponding author

(a) North Ossetian State University, 83-10, Kutuzov Str., Vladikavkaz, Russia
dshanetta@mail.ru

Abstract

The article is devoted to the problem of the functioning of phraseological units in poetic speech. The transformation of phraseological units in a poetic text is considered. Phraseological units that give different emotional and expressive coloring to a statement are widely used in poetic speech, since one of the tasks of the poetic text is to make an emotional impact on a reader. Phraseological transformations, which are understood as occasional transformations of set expressions of words that make changes in the form and meaning of the original phraseology, are analyzed based on German poetic discourse, represented by the poetic works of Heinrich Heine. The analysis is performed by the example of rhymed poems - poems “Germany. The Winter Tale” (1844) and “Atta Troll” (1841–1842, 1846), as well as the poems of both “North Sea” cycles (1825–1826) written in free rhythms. As a result of the analysis, the author concludes about reasons for the transformation of phraseological units in poetic speech. With the help of the transformation of the form of a set expression, the poet seeks, first, to actualize the internal image of the phraseological unit and thus, with the help of the “non-conventional” form, to revive the perception of the phraseological unit. Second, the inclusion of the modified phraseological unit in the syntactic whole of poetic strophe is explained by the desire of the poet to use the figurative content of the “revived” phraseologism to enhance the emotional and stylistic tonality of the poetic text.

© 2019 Published by Future Academy www.FutureAcademy.org.UK

Keywords: Poetic speech, phraseological units, structural transformations.



1. Introduction

Nowadays more and more attention is paid to the study of phraseology not only at the language level, but also in the discursive and speech aspect. Poetic discourse as a special speech element can be the richest source for a comprehensive study of this linguistic phenomenon. Phraseological units that have the ability to give different emotional and expressive coloring to a statement are widely used in poetic speech, since one of the tasks of the poetic text is to make an emotional impact on a reader.

It is known that phraseological units are stable combinations of words of various structural types with a single compatibility of components, the meaning of which arises as a result of a semantic transformation of a composition. The overwhelming majority of phraseological units are characterized by pronounced expressive coloring. The meaning of a phraseological unit is directly dependent on the understanding of the “figurative stem of the phrase”, the significance of the transfer of sense which constitutes the “internal form” (Vinogradov, 1977) or the figurative motivation of a phraseological unit.

The definition of a phraseological unit can be found in the works of Akhmanova (2004), Shanskii (1996), Chernysheva (1970), Fleischer (1982), Seiler (1985), Kunin (1972). Since the phraseological unit is characterized by complexity and multidimensionality, each linguist who explores the phenomenon of a set expression emphasizes, within his definition, the most important characteristics of this linguistic unit.

The following generalizing definition can be given on the basis of the variety of characteristics of a phraseological unit existing in science: a phraseological unit is a constant combination of words recorded in the language and reproduced in the speech of speakers, based on the internal dependence of the components. A phraseological unit has a single meaning, the degree of dependence on the meaning of the constituent elements may be different, because the general meaning is either completely independent of the lexical composition of an expression, or, being integral, motivated to some extent by the meanings of individual components of word combination, or it consists of equal meanings of the words that are combined.

The study of phraseology has a long tradition in foreign and national linguistics. However, the functioning of phraseological units in poetic discourse is under studied, in particular, on the material of German poetry. As it is known, many set expressions lose their original imagery over time, and obviously, therefore, idioms - as a rule, and not as an exception - are subject to various modifications in the flow of speech: they replace or omit components, vary word position and logical stress, clarifying words are introduced in them, from affirmative they turn into negative ones and vice versa, the parts of a phraseological unit can fall into different syntagmas and different sentences, they can be replaced by periphrases etc. (Dubinskii, 1957).

Phraseological transformations are understood as occasional transformations of set expressions, making changes in the form and meaning of the initial combination of units, but not violating their integrity and not interfering with the recognition of a phraseological unit (PU) (Efanova, 2005).

Integrity is the main feature of a set expression, which is reflected in the indivisibility of the value of phraseological units. The peculiarities of the meaning of an idiom, which, according to F. de Saussure, determine the stability and reproducibility of phraseological units in speech, consist in its indivisibility (de Saussure, 2004). That is to say, it consists in the non-deduction of the meaning of the phraseological combination “from the meanings of the words constituting it” (Kuznetsova, 1982). The second essential

feature of set expressions is that the phraseological units “are reproduced in speech in usual stable correlation of the semantic content and a certain lexical and grammatical composition, which is assigned to them” (Telia, 1997, p. 478). Due to the conventional fixation of a certain combination of words of a fixed meaning that is not the sum of the lexical meanings of the language elements constituting the phraseological units, “any modification in the phraseological unit is understood by a speaker as a neologism that lies outside the boundaries of the language system just like lexical neologisms” (Shanskii, 1969, p. 112).

2. Problem Statement

The contextual actualization of the figurative basis of phraseological units, their structural and semantic modification is characteristic not only of poetic and - more broadly - literary, but also generally expressive speech. It is necessary to note that the methods of processing of set expressions are recognized as common speech facts. It is supposed that the individual is only “a predisposition to certain techniques, the frequency of their use, the nature of the achieved stylistic effects, semantic richness and semantic capacity of the transformed phraseological units <...>, etc. (Dubinskii, 1957). At the same time, the degree of contextual transformation of a phraseological expression can vary from a slight change in the grammatical form of the constituent elements of a phraseological unit to its extremely significant structural and semantic transformation (Dreeva, 2017).

3. Research Questions

In modern linguistics, contextual transformations of set expressions are studied from different points of view: as a technique for the individual authored modification of phraseological units in literary (including poetic) and journalistic discourses (Nekrasova & Bakina, 1982; Shanskii, 1996; Melerovich & Mokienco, 2014; Dreeva, 2017), from the point of view of the pragmatic orientation of transformed phraseological units, as well as in the context of literary translation (Fedorov, 1983; Rybushkina, 2000).

It is necessary to note that the study of modifications of phraseological units is currently considered a very productive area of linguistic research in the field of poetic discourse. At the same time, there is a tendency in stylistics and linguopoetics to consider the peculiarities of using phraseological units in a poetic text from the standpoint of a change in stylistic coloring and the associated degree of expressiveness of transformed phraseological units. This approach revealed two main ways of using phraseological units in literary text: the use of PU in their common form and meaning, on the one hand, and the use of modified phraseological units, on the other. In this case, the modifications of phraseological units are understood formal (structural and grammatical), semantic, and structural and semantic transformations of PU (Shanskii, 1996; Sannikov, 1999; Rybushkina, 2000).

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to study the authored transformations of set expressions in a poetic speech on the material of German poetic discourse. In other words, it analyzes two of the above mentioned methods for modifying phraseological units in a literary text, namely: structural-grammatical and structural-semantic transformations of phraseological units in poetic works of the greatest German lyric poet Heinrich

Heine (1797–1856). The transformations are traced through the example of rhymed poems – “Germany. Winter Tale” (1844) and “Atta Troll” (1841–1842, 1846), as well as poems of both cycles of the “North Sea”) (1825–1826), written in free rhythms.

5. Research Methods

The choice of a poetic text as an object of the research is explained by the fact that it is a poetic text with a characteristic law of “unity and narrowness of poetic series” (Y.N. Tynianov) is determined by increased emotionality and, therefore, represents fertile ground for the application of usual as well as modified phraseological units. In order to study the presented phenomenon, a complex methodology is applied, including elements of structural descriptive, linguopoetic and linguistic-stylistic analysis.

6. Findings

Firstly, the author considers the first of these methods of individual authored transformations of phraseological units, namely, structural and grammatical transformations. It is necessary to point out that the structural and grammatical change in the form of phraseological units does not usually affect its semantic potential and expressive content.

Structural and grammatical updates of phraseological units include grammatical changes of a component of a set expression, inversion or, as in the above mentioned example, a reduction in the composition of a phraseological unit.

For example, a phraseological unit “*ein Löwenherz haben*” – “to have a brave heart”, that is to be brave, courageous, used in the language usually only in the singular, but the poetic context can “provoke” the replacement of the singular by the plural, and along with this, as the following quatrain shows, the reduction of the verb component *haben* entails the reduction in the composition of phraseological unit:

Wie standen sie prächtig auf der Mensur!
Mit ihren Löwenherzen!
Es fielen so grade, so ehrlich gemeint,
Die Quartan und die Terzen. (Heine, 1987)

According to the illustration the above-cited fragment of the epic poem “Germany. Winter Tale” (“Deutschland. Ein Wintermärchen”), the phraseological unit undergoes another grammatical transformation in this context: the accusative case of the substantive component is changed by the author of the poem, resulting in the phrase “*mit*” appearing in the phraseological combination. The result of the contextual expansion of the considered phraseological unit is also the presence of a possessive plural pronoun of the 3rd person in its composition “*Ihr*” (in the text of the poem “*ihren*”). Such a morphological change in the original form of one of the components of a sustainable combination is a paradigmatic change and usually does not affect the meaning and emotional expressive coloring of a PU.

Various modifications of the verbal component practically do not affect the semantic content of a PU. For example, in the *vor Angst sterben* PU (“to be frightened to death”) in the following strophe, the verb stands in the subjunctive mood, which does not affect the semantic content of the phraseological unit:

*Und wollt mich beglücken dein gütiger Leib,
Wie andere Helden. Ich stürbe vor Angst –
Als Leichengöttin erscheinst du mir,
Venus Libitina!* (Heine, 1998)

There is an interesting example from the poem “The Sea Ghost” (“Seegespenst”) from the first cycle of the “North Sea” (“Die Nordsee”), illustrating the authored method of transforming the verbal component of the phraseological unit “die Arme ausbreiten” (“to spread arms”):

*Und nimmer will ich dich wieder verlassen
Und ich komme hinab zu dir,
Und mit ausgebreiteten Armen
Stürz ich hinab an dein Herz –...* (Heine, 1998)

As it can be seen, the indefinite form of the verb *ausbreiten* is transformed into Past Participle II (Partizip II) *ausgebreitet*, which acts as a definition for the noun *die Arme* (in the text of the poem *mit ausgebreiteten Armen*), which does not affect the semantic and emotional-expressive content of PU.

The following lines from the *Epilogue poem* (“Epilog”), which completes the second cycle of free rhythms of the “North Sea” (“Die Nordsee”) by Heinrich Heine, also illustrate the method of the reduction of a phraseological unit. However, in this case, the transformation of the phraseological phrase “*jemand schüttelte sein greises Haupt*” (“someone refused”, literally: “someone shook his gray head”) at the expense of removing the adjective “*greis*” from its composition leads to a partial change in the stylistic coloring: expressive-colored PU becomes stylistically neutral:

*Sogar der hablose Wanderer,
Der eu'r ergötzt und erquickt,
Schüttelt das Haupt,
Und nennt euch schönes Unkraut.* (Heine, 1980)

The omitted component is usually easily restored in context. By virtue of the succinctness of the poetic text, this technique helps to restore the associative parallels, and thus expand the semantic field of poetic PU. In some cases, the reduction of PU is explained by the need to preserve a rhyme or a certain number of syllables in a line. Thus, structural and grammatical modifications of usual phraseological units, without affecting in general the semantic potential of a set expression, actualize the internal image of the phraseological unit, which leads to the revival of the perception of PU within the framework of this poetic context.

To the second type of individual authored transformations the methods of updating phraseological units by means of structural and semantic modifications are referred. Such transformations not only revive blurred phraseological units, but also reinforce their semantics and expressive content. One of the methods of such an update of a PU is the contextual expansion of the boundaries of a phraseological unit:

*Verfluchter Quast! Der die ganze Nacht
Die liebe Ruhe mir raubte!
Er hing mir, wie des Damokles Schwert,
So drohend über dem Haupte!* (Heine, 1987)

In the above-cited quatrain, an expansion of the phraseological unit is observed: “*wie der Damokles Schwert über dem Haupte hängen*” (“hang like a sword of Damocles over a head”), which occurs due to the use of participle I in the context of the “*drohend*” - “threateningly”, thereby strengthening the expressive-emotional coloring of PU, i.e. the threatening condition is underlined.

The expansion of the composition, involving the inclusion of one or more components, is aimed, as a rule, at enhancing expressiveness and figurativeness. For example, in the following example, the phraseological unit “*jn ergreift Heimweh*” is enriched with the adjective “*tief*”, which reinforces the impression that it produces:

*Und meine Brust schwoll auf wie das Meer,
Und sehnd **ergriff mich ein tiefes Heimweh**
Nach dir, du holdes Bild,
Das überall mich umschwebt.* (Heine, 1998)

Any addition of a new word to the traditional lexical composition of a set expression to a certain extent changes it. For example, the PU “*das Herz verblüet*” - “*the heart bleeds*” has the meaning of mental anguish experienced by a person. However, in the context of the poem, it is perceived as something positive, since its semantic boundaries expand, firstly, due to the adverb “*angenehm*”, which changes the connotation of a PU from negative to positive. Secondly, the particle “*recht*” is introduced into the composition of the usual PU, which introduces confidence to this semantic potential, as a result of which there is no doubt about the positive effect of spiritual torment experienced and expressed by this language unit:

*Und als ich die deutsche Sprache vernahm,
Da ward mir seltsam zumute;
Ich meinte nicht anders, als ob **das Herz**
Recht angenehm verblüete.* (Heine, 1987)

However, despite the fact that the added word organically merges into the phraseological unit, enhancing the expressiveness of its sound and “refreshing” the figurativeness lost over time, the expansion of the component composition of the PU usually does not go beyond the context in which the “updated” PU used and, as a rule, does not affect the component composition of general language phraseological units included in the phraseological system of a language.

For example, in the phraseological unit “*sich (D) ein Bäuchlein anmästen*” (colloquially) - “*to grow a belly*”, H. Heine adds the adjective *rund* (round), which is dictated, perhaps, not only by the desire of the poet to modify the phraseological unit, but also metric and rhythmic considerations, thus the “extended” idiom organically merges into the matter of the poem:

*Hab mir schon ein rundes Bäuchlein
Angemäset. Aus dem Hemde
Schaut's hervor, wie'n schwarzer Mond,
Der aus weißen Wolken tritt.* (Heine, 1981)

Thus the expansion of the volume of the PU usually follows the path of including various kinds of definitions related to the substantive component of the PU, or additions and circumstances relating to the

verbal component, as in the following fragment of the poem “Sea ghost” (“Seegespenst”) included in the first cycle of free rhythms of the North Sea:

*Schreiten, über den wimmelnden Marktplatz,
Nach dem treppenhohen Rathaus,
Wo steinerne Kaiserbilder
Wacht halten mit Zepter und Schwert. (Heine, 1980)*

As it can be seen, the scope of the PU *Wacht halten* (“to be on guard, to guard”) is expanded due to the circumstance of the mode of action, expressed by the substantive combination with the preposition *mit* and related to the verbal component of the PU.

Clarifying expansion of a set expression is most often caused by the desire of the poet to revive the PU in a poetic text. The updated form of the PU sharpens the attention of a reader to the above-cited set expression and thereby emphasizes its content. Thus, for example, the contextual expansion of the boundaries of the PU “*eine schöne Seele besitzen*” - “*to have a beautiful soul*” occurs due to the inclusion of the adverb “*gewiss*” - “*undoubtedly*”, which brings persuasion to the context:

*Sie blickte mich an so bedeutungsvoll,
So innig, so treu, so wehe!
Besaß eine schöne Seele gewiss,
Doch war das Fleisch sehr zähe. (Heine, 1987)*

The use of clarifying words to one of the components of a PU not only emphasizes or enhances the emotional coloring characteristic of the original PU, but sometimes reduces or even completely levels it. A similar effect is observed in the following lines of the poem “Sunset” (“*Untergang der Sonne*”) from the second cycle of free rhythms of the “North Sea” (“*Die Nordsee*”):

*Nach solcher Gardinenpredigt,
Versteht sich! **Bricht dann aus in Tränen**
Die stolze Sonne und klagt ihr Elend,
Und klagt so jammerlang, daß der Meergott
Plötzlich verzweiflungsvoll aus dem Bett springt,
Und schnell nach der Meeresfläche heraufschwimmt,
Um **Luft und Besinnung zu schöpfen.** (Heine, 1998)*

The introduction into the PU of “*in Tränen ausbrechen*” (“let loose tears, burst into tears”) of the circumstances of the time expressed by the *dann* adverb, reduces the emotional and expressive charge of the original PU and gives the whole utterance an ironic tone that is enhanced by a similar method of expanding another PU used in the above lines, namely: (*frische*) *Luft schöpfen* (colloquially *schnappen*) “*breathe fresh air*”, this time is reasoned by the addition expressed by the noun “*Besinnung*” .

Consequently, as it can be seen, the author used the same method of transformation of a phraseological unit twice in the framework of the given fragment (namely: the expansion of the volume of the usual phraseological unit in the first case is due to the circumstance, in the second case it is due to the addition, related in both cases to the verbal component corresponding phraseological unit) significantly reduces the expressive-emotional coloring of set expressions and expresses the ironic attitude of the poet to the described events.

7. Conclusion

Thus, according to the results of the analysis, H. Heine willingly used in his poetic works structural modifications of the usual phraseological units. The main reason for the use of set expressions in a poetic text is the emotional and stylistic coloring of phraseological units, which contributes to the creation of a certain emotional and stylistic tonality of a poetic text, as well as the imagery, which supports the imagery of the entire text of the poetic work.

As for the individual authored transformations of phraseological units within the framework of the poetic context, they were explained, firstly, by the desire of the poet to actualize the internal image of the phraseological unit and thus revive the perception of phraseological unity of its “unconventional” form and / or, secondly, the inclusion of the phraseological units in syntactic whole of the strophe of the poem.

To conclude with, it is necessary to note that the use of modified phraseological units - with some transformations, but with the perceptibility of the initial form - requires a high level of poetic word as it is evident from the analysis of the empirical material presented in this research.

References

- Akhmanova, O. S. (2004). *Dictionary of linguistic terms*. Moscow: Editorial URSS.
- Chernysheva, I. I. (1970). *Phraseology of the modern German language*. Moscow: High School.
- Dreeva, Dzh. M. (2017). Individual author's transformations of phraseological units in poetic discourse. In *Germanistika in modern scientific space* (pp. 86–93). Krasnodar: KubSU.
- Dubinskii, I. V. (1957). Issue of the order of words in stable combinations. *Uch. zap Azerbaijan State ped. Institute of Foreign Languages*, 5(2), 94–95.
- Efanova, L. G. (2005). *Phraseological transformations in speech and text*. TSPU, 3, 120–132.
- Fedorov, A. V. (1983). *Fundamentals of the general theory of translation (linguistic problems)*. Moscow: High School.
- Fleischer, W. (1982). *Phraseologie der deutschen Gegenwartssprache*. Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut.
- Heine, H. (1980). *Die Nordsee. Das Glück auf Erden. Ausgewählte Gedichte*. Moscow: Progress.
- Heine, H. (1981). *Atta Troll. Heines Werke in fünf Bänden. 2. Band*. Berlin; Weimar.
- Heine, H. (1987). *Deutschland. Ein Wintermärchen. Ein Lesebuch für unsere Zeit*. Berlin; Weimar.
- Heine, H. (1998). *Die Nordsee. Gesammelte Gedichte. Lieder – Balladen – Sonette – Epigramme – Elegien – Xenien*. Limassol: Lechner Publishing Ltd.
- Kunin, A. V. (1972). *Phraseology of the modern German language*. Moscow: IMO.
- Kuznetsova, E. V. (1982). *Lexicology of the Russian language*. Moscow: High School.
- Melerovich, A. M., & Mokienko, V. M. (2014). Occasional transformations of phraseological units. *Bulletin of the Chelyabinsk State Pedagogical University*, 8, 234–250.
- Nekrasova, E. A., & Bakina, M. A. (1982). *Language processes in modern Russian poetry*. Moscow: Science.
- Rybushkina, S. V. (2000). Transformation of phraseological units and methods of its translation based on the work of J.K. Jerome “Three men in a boat (to say not of the dog)” and his translations. In *Russian language in the modern cultural space* (pp. 80–85). Tomsk.
- Sannikov, V. Z. (1999). *Russian language in the mirror of a language game*. Moscow: Languages of Russian culture.
- Saussure, F. (2004). *The course of general linguistics*. Moscow: Editorial URSS.
- Seiler, F. (1985). *Deutsche Sprichwörterkunde. Lesestoffe zur deutschen Phraseologie*. Moscow, Prosveshchenie.
- Shanskii, N. M. (1996). *Phraseology of the modern Russian language*. St. Petersburg: Special literature.
- Telia, V.N. (1997). *Idiom. Phraseology. Russian language: Encyclopedia*. Moscow: Great Russian Encyclopedia; Drofa.
- Vinogradov, V.V. (1977). *Main types of phraseological units in the Russian language. Selected Works. Lexicology and lexicography*. Moscow: Science.