

NEW PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS CONTAINING PROPER NOUNS, AS USED IN THE LANGUAGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

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Abstract. The language of young people is characterized by continuous lexical and phraseological development, particularly under the influence of social media, digital communication, popular culture, and globalization. One noticeable tendency is the emergence and transformation of phraseological units containing proper nouns, including personal names, geographical names, fictional character names, and names associated with celebrities or digital platforms. Such expressions often acquire figurative meanings that differ from their original references and serve as tools for evaluation, humor, identity construction, and interpersonal communication. The article also highlights the importance of distinguishing established phraseological units from emerging slang expressions and temporary internet trends.

Keywords: phraseological units, proper nouns, youth language, phraseology, slang, digital communication, linguoculturology, semantic transformation, intertextuality, pragmatics.

Introduction. Language is a dynamic social phenomenon that constantly changes in response to cultural, technological, and communicative developments. These changes are particularly visible in the language of young people, who actively adopt, modify, and create linguistic expressions to reflect their experiences, values, emotions, and social identities. Youth language is characterized by creativity, informality, expressiveness, and a tendency to develop new meanings from existing linguistic resources.

One important aspect of this process is the emergence of phraseological units containing proper nouns. Proper nouns traditionally identify particular individuals, places, fictional characters, organizations, or cultural phenomena. However, when they become components of figurative expressions, their meanings may extend beyond direct identification. A personal name can represent a particular personality trait, a geographical name can evoke a recognizable lifestyle, and the name of a fictional character can symbolize a specific behavioral pattern.

In contemporary youth communication, especially on social networking platforms, similar processes occur rapidly. Names of celebrities, fictional characters, influencers, and popular cultural figures may become references for describing someone's appearance, behavior, emotional state, or social position. These expressions can spread within particular online communities and later enter everyday spoken communication.

Literature Review. Phraseology has traditionally focused on fixed or relatively stable combinations of words whose meanings cannot always be understood through the literal interpretation of their individual components. Researchers have examined the structural, semantic, and functional properties of idioms, collocations, proverbs, and other multiword expressions.

Rosamund Moon's research on fixed expressions and idioms emphasizes the diversity of multiword units and the importance of considering their conventionality, variation, and contextual use. This perspective is particularly relevant to youth language, where established expressions may undergo modification and new combinations may develop into recognizable phraseological patterns.

John Sinclair's work on phraseology and corpus linguistics demonstrates the importance of studying recurring linguistic patterns in authentic contexts. From this perspective, an expression should not

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automatically be classified as a phraseological unit simply because it is figurative or memorable. Its recurrence, conventionality, and contextual distribution must also be considered.

Raymond W. Gibbs Jr. has contributed significantly to the cognitive study of idioms and figurative language. His work supports the view that figurative expressions are connected with conceptual structures and cultural knowledge rather than being merely decorative elements of communication. This approach helps explain why a proper noun can evoke a network of associations that extends beyond its literal referent.

Nevertheless, a distinction must be made between established idioms, newly emerging phraseological units, and temporary slang references. For instance, “Achilles' heel” is a conventional idiom, whereas calling someone “the next Sherlock Holmes” is a productive comparison that may be created spontaneously. A celebrity's name used as a humorous adjective may also remain a context-dependent innovation rather than becoming an established phraseological unit.

Research Methodology. The study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to investigate the formation and use of phraseological expressions containing proper nouns in English-language youth communication.

The research is organized around three principal analytical dimensions: semantic structure, cultural motivation, and pragmatic function. The examples discussed in the article are illustrative English-language expressions selected to demonstrate relevant linguistic mechanisms. They are not presented as the results of a systematic corpus survey or a statistically representative collection of current youth slang. Expressions such as “a Sherlock Holmes” and “an Achilles' heel” are established examples, while combinations involving contemporary celebrities or fictional characters may be context-dependent and require empirical verification.

For a more comprehensive investigation, future research could use a dated corpus of public social media posts, online discussions, youth-oriented publications, and recorded informal conversations. Such a corpus would make it possible to establish frequency, distribution, variation, and the extent to which emerging expressions have become conventionalized.

Results and Discussion. Proper nouns generally function as identifiers. However, their participation in figurative language allows them to develop additional semantic characteristics. A name may gradually become associated with a specific personality trait, action, social role, or recognizable situation.

Consider the following examples: **1. A Sherlock Holmes**

This expression refers to a person who is particularly observant, analytical, or skilled at solving mysteries. The figurative meaning derives from the literary character Sherlock Holmes, who is widely associated with logical reasoning and detective work. Example: *You must be a Sherlock Holmes to notice such a small detail.* In this sentence, the proper noun does not identify the fictional detective directly. Instead, it describes a person's ability to recognize information that others might overlook [1; 433].

2. A Scrooge. The name Scrooge, associated with Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, is commonly used to describe a person who is unwilling to spend money or is excessively concerned with saving it. Example: *Don't be such a Scrooge; let's enjoy our holiday.* The name acquires a negative evaluative meaning and functions as a concise way of criticizing someone's attitude toward spending.

3. An Achilles' heel. This established expression refers to a weak point in an otherwise strong person, system, or argument. Its cultural background comes from the Greek mythological tradition. Example: *Time management is his Achilles' heel.* The expression demonstrates how a proper name can

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become part of a stable idiom whose figurative meaning is widely understood beyond its original mythological context.

These examples show that proper nouns can undergo semantic generalization. Instead of referring exclusively to a particular individual or character, they represent a set of characteristics that speakers associate with that figure. Nevertheless, the spread of an expression online does not automatically establish its status as a phraseological unit. Popularity may be temporary, and the meaning may remain restricted to a specific community. Therefore, the study of digital phraseology requires attention to context, time, audience, and repeated usage.

Conclusion. Phraseological expressions containing proper nouns represent an important area of linguistic creativity in contemporary youth language. Through metaphorization, metonymy, allusion, and semantic generalization, names associated with real people, literary characters, mythological figures, and popular culture can develop figurative meanings that extend beyond their original referents.

In conclusion, the study of proper-name phraseology provides valuable insights into the interaction of language, culture, identity, and digital communication. It also offers practical opportunities for foreign-language teaching by helping learners understand figurative meaning and the cultural knowledge underlying everyday expressions.

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