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SOME ASPECTS OF EUPHONIC PHRASEOLOGY FUNCTIONING IN MODERN BRITISH PROSE

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У статті досліджується евфонічна фразеологія сучасної англійської мови й аналізуються її функції у прозових творах сучасних британських письменників. Контекстний аналіз фразеологізмів-евфонімів дозволяє зробити висновок про їхню підвищену експресивність і оцінність, що сприяє глибшому розумінню провідної ідеї твору.

Ключові слова: алітерація, асонанс, звуконаслідування, фразеологічна одиниця, оцінність, експресивність.

В статье исследуется эвфоническая фразеология современного английского языка и анализируются ее функции в прозаических произведениях современных британских писателей. Контекстный анализ фразеологизмов-эвфонимов позволяет сделать вывод об их повышенной экспрессивности и оценочности, что способствует более глубокому пониманию авторского замысла.

Ключевые слова: аллитерация, ассонанс, звукоподражание, фразеологическая единица, оценочность, экспрессивность.

The article deals with euphonic phraseology in Modern English and analyzes its functions in prose works of modern British writers. The contextual analysis of euphonic phraseologisms leads to the conclusion that they possess increased expressiveness and evaluation, which helps to better understand the author's message.

Key words: alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, phraseological unit, evaluation, expressiveness.

In the stylistics of English an important place belongs to special stylistic devices, whose purpose is to produce a certain sound effect. It is natural that such a method is designed primarily for oral representation of written information. Sound organization of a statement is realized only in oral speech. The latter is a sound organization of speech that assumes special forms, which just give the desired sound special interpretation [1, p. 226; 4, p. 50; 14, p. 133].

According to I. R. Galperin, euphony (harmony) is a special technique of sound organization, which is designed for the desired rhythmic and melodic effect [2, p. 169]. Requirements for euphony in poetry and prose are different. They are somewhat opposed to each other. What is considered a violation of the principles of euphony in prose, is a law in poetry.

Notwithstanding the existence of numerous research works in the sphere of phraseology, the question of peculiarities of phraseological units with euphonic means still remains open. This article is a research in the field of phraseology and it is dedicated to the problem of peculiarities of euphonic phraseologisms in modern British fiction. It is obvious that phraseological units enrich our word stock and make it vivid and figurative. A lot of scholars from home and abroad explored phraseological units (Ph Us). The research of Ph Us was developed by I. V. Arnold [1], I. R. Galperin [2], V. V. Gurevich [3], T. A. Znamenskaya [4], I. G. Koshevaya [5], A. V. Kunin [6], V. A. Kukhareno [7], A. N. Morokhovskiy [8], U. M. Skrebnev [9], V. I. Shakhovskiy [10], O. A. Akhmanova [11] and many others. Many western scholars regarded phraseological units in the context of literary style and paid special attention to their influence on fiction. Among them there are such scholars as R. Jakobson [13], G. Leech [14], J. R. Martin [15], N. Fairclough [12] and others.

The topicality of this problem is explained by the fact that the use of phraseology for enriching works of fiction arouses a particular interest in modern linguistics. Special attention should be paid to various types of Ph Us as a means of enhancing the expressiveness of fiction. Our aim of our research is to single out the peculiarities of the

nominating euphonic phraseological units in modern British prose and analyse their functions.

The stock of **substantival** idioms in the works of British authors consists of fully and partially reinterpreted phraseological units with the structure of phrases and completely reinterpreted phraseological units with partially predicative structure. The main types of reinterpretation are metaphorical and metonymic reinterpretation.

Metaphorical idioms are based on different kinds of similarities, real or imaginary, and may designate only persons, non-persons or both. These turns of speech are usually evaluative. Evaluations can be both negative and positive. But there are also non-evaluative turns of speech. There are more negative assessments than positive ones. This can be seen from the following example: **An ugly duckling** *Cathy wrapped her scarf twice around her neck to keep her long wavy hair dry* [21, p. 3]. According to the plot of Sally Worboyes's book the main character Cathy is not ugly. But calling her an ugly duckling the author creates a stronger impression. That means that the reader forms his main impression basically on negative evaluation. Such evaluation is easily perceived by the reader [13, p. 322]. Moreover, the sound combination (alliteration) of consonants /gl/, /cl/ sounds unpleasant for the reader. Negative evaluation in the designation of persons can be based on similarity of age, behavior, status, features of appearance (as in the above-mentioned example).

There can also be positive evaluation in designation of persons. It can be based on similarity of strength, importance, etc. For example: *She was nothing but a golden girland now Sam knew what he really needed* [19, p. 28]. Originally the expression '**a golden girl**' [16, p. 442] means that *a person is very popular among other people* but in this very context Carol Grace means that the main character Claudia is very reliable and responsible and Sam finds a good friend in her. This expression emphasizes Claudia's personality characterizing her as a positive heroine.

We can also observe non-evaluative turns of speech from which the reader can guess the status of the main character based on similarity of importance. The designation of non-persons here can also be based on positive, negative and non-evaluative scale: *Cathy was so downhearted. How could it all happen? Her beloved Johnny was imprisoned. She should be calm. The boot is on the wrong foot. They will find a solicitor* [21, p. 269]. The above-mentioned expression is based on the similarity of action and designates negative assessment. An innocent person was arrested and the author emphasizes it in an emotional way.

Even without knowing the meaning of a phraseological unit the reader can guess it from the context. Such metaphorical units have inner implication and are connected with some images of the real world. Very often the reader observes very subjective complex metaphoric units. The character of such units is based on complete reconsideration of the included words: *Did she really need that flat now? Even desperate Molly was against it... But she had a bee in her bonnet* [21, p. 276]. This characteristic of Cathy is very temporary and subjective and is connected with some worries and troubles. The sound 'b' in this phrase is very 'prickly' and it emphasizes the general idea of the person being *stubborn*.

Metonymic transfers are based on different types of adjacency. Among the most common substantival phraseological units there are the following types of metonymic reconsideration: an organ is used instead of a real or imaginary function performed by it, the names of certain persons are used instead of what is connected with them.

Many euphonic phraseological units are motivated turns of speech. This is due to the fact that there is a semantic connection: 1) between a phraseological unit and its variable prototype, which is intermediate between the phraseological unit and its real situation (**sheep without shepherd**); 2) the prototype is absent between the unreal situation and phraseological unit (**a storm in a teacup**); 3) the absence of the prototype between both real and unreal components (**the lungs of London**); 4) connection between a derivative of a phraseological unit and the unit itself (**the last straw**).

They're called the ships of the desert for that very reason, they sway and pitch like a ship [19, p. 187]. In the given expression the prototype between the phraseological unit and the unreal situation is absent.

Substantival phraseological units show the diversity of life: people with a variety of properties, their feelings, clothes, food and drink, natural phenomena, the life of animals.

According to some grammatical peculiarities, the most typical type of a substantival structural phraseological unit is a prepositional-nominal formation, that is the combination of a noun with a noun preceded by determiners having prepositional subordinating connection. The following prepositions are used here: *about, among, at, before, behind, between, for, from, in, of, on, out of, to, with, within and without*. *At sixty-nine she was good for her age: she didn't lose her **bloom of the plum*** [21, p. 4]. The author admits that Molly still remains very beautiful and chooses here the phraseological unit with a rhyme to emphasize her charm as if she was a character of a play of one of the greatest playwrights. The usage of rhyme in this utterance gives the reader some freshness and originality leaving him impressed.

*He was the best boss in the world for her anyway. Probably, it's **bred in the bone**. His father was the same...* [19, p. 23]. In this context this phrase is used directly and has the meaning that *a person has inherited some good habits or characteristics* to rule the company. This phraseological unit is based on alliteration. The nominative element is *bone* and the preposition is *in*.

We can come across substantival euphonic phraseological units with subordinating structure used only in the negative form:

*'You are responsible for her. Don't **harm a hair of her head!***' [20, p. 290]. This expression means *watching somebody carefully without hurting*.

Nominal elements here are *hair* and *head*, we feel a negative meaning in this phrase and its components are connected with the preposition *of*. The alliteration of the sound /h/ produces a husky effect on the reader. It signals an unexpected threat.

Non-comparative **adjectival** Ph Us in modern British prose can be both with subordinative and coordinative structure. As regards non-comparative adjectival Ph Us with subordinative structure, there are not so many of them in fiction. The phraseological units of this type in the vast majority refer to people. Non-comparative adjectival phraseological units with coordinative structure are binomial turns of speech: *Finally she got home, tired but **safe and sound*** [20, p. 134]. In this context the meaning is *to be healthy*. The expression consists of two elements and has coordinative structure. Some adjectival Ph Us with coordinative structure denote non-persons, for example, **dead and buried (dead and gone)**.

Adjectival phraseological units with coordinative structure can also refer to individuals and to non-persons [27, p. 123]. The following example can illustrate it: *The customers were **fast and furious*** [19, p. 145]. Here the author mentions that the main heroine Claudia is impressed by the variety of goods and number of customers, her speech is emotional. The sound /f / here creates some effect of continuation and a long stream of something.

Rhymed consonances are observed rarely, they are used more often alongside alliteration: *'Seeing is believing, and I 'ope I shan't be around should it repeat itself. I'd sooner be **dead and buried***' [21, p. 18]. Here the main heroines talk about modern London and old Molly cannot understand new demands of modern society. She is very emotional while making a speech and the accumulation of sounds emphasizes it. They create an effect of something threatening and dangerous which is going to happen.

We can also observe pairs of alliterated synonyms: *He was a real gambler **born and bred*** [32, p. 134]. This expression is used with the hint of some irony because the original meaning of the phrase is positive but here the author disapproves of Adam because of his passion to gambling.

Adjectival comparisons, as well as comparisons of other types, imply that one element is compared to another. This structure of meaning distinguishes it as phraseological meaning of a special kind, namely comparative. The first component of adjectival comparisons is commonly used in its literal sense. The function of the second component is always an intensifier to it, since it is the degree of the character of the first component. The first component is called a basis of comparison, and the second is an object of comparison. The conjunction *as* is a connector: ***As busy as a bee**, she could always find time for her nan* [21, p. 211]. The given expression characterizes a person as *a very busy one having no time for anything*. The second element is an intensifier for the first one [12, p. 201].

The evaluation of the comparison depends on the positive or negative meaning. *She was downright plain but Zahara was **pretty as a picture*** [19, p. 12]. That means

that the girl is very beautiful and is compared to the masterpiece of a painter. *Leaving her **dry-as-dust** company she had been filled with mixed emotions...* [21, p. 3]. This expression means *rude attitude to a person* and it is used in the function of a phrase epithet.

The nature of the evaluation depends on the semantics of the first component. In some cases the semantics of the second component plays a crucial role: *She should think it over. Maybe Molly was right. He was **as green as grass*** [21, p. 162]. In this expression the second element is more important than the first one because it contains the kernel of comparison. The expression means that *the person described is very young and inexperienced*.

Adverbial euphonic Ph Us in modern British prose, depending on their semantic features, can be divided into two classes: qualitative and circumstantial. Qualitative adverbial Ph Us denote a process, that is they characterize it from the qualitative point of view. They are subdivided into those of action, measure and degree.

1. Adverbial phraseological units of action. An example of these units is, for example, ***hot and heavy** – full of strength: Johnny got it **hot and heavy** when his wife had learned about his mistake* [21, p. 231].

Very often adverbial phraseological units express the intensity of action. ***By hook or by crook** she had to protect the children. But Doyal wouldn't leave her* [20, p. 133]. The highlighted expression means *to do something despite any obstacles*. Adverbial phraseological units can express incompleteness, completeness, singularity or recurrence of the action: ***Day by day** her life seemed to be more difficult...* [19, p. 112]. The above-mentioned expression denotes *recurrence or incompleteness of action* and signals that the life of the heroine got worse every day.

2. Adverbial phraseological units which denote measure and degree. Here belong such units as ***neck and crop** which means very quickly: Grout bowled **neck and crop**, and Simpson lasted but six minutes at the crease* [17, p. 30].

Circumstantial adverbial Ph Us do not characterize the action from the qualitative point of view but indicate the circumstances, the conditions in which the action takes place, something external to the action. *She wasn't ready to return **at the back of beyond** just to lose him, no, never!* [19, p. 236]. The highlighted phrase has the meaning *very far*. Here it is used with the preposition *at*.

Besides adverbial units with subordinate structure, beginning with a preposition, in modern British fiction we can observe adverbial phraseological units with subordinate structure in which the preposition takes a middle position: ***all in the day's work** – well, in the order of things; **straight from the stable** – from the reliable source*, etc. There is also a small number of units with adverbial subordinate structure, which are used only in negative phrases: ***without a shot in the locker** – no money*.

The conjunctions can be *as* and *like*: *No one could understand why he was running **like a bat out of hell*** [20, p. 278]. The marked expression means *very quickly* and it begins with the conjunction *like*. Such units may include synonyms, antonyms, tautological meanings. For example: *up and down, high and low (everywhere)* [18, p. 30].

As regards the other euphonic means in adverbial phraseological units, they are rarely used in narration. The most widespread ones are alliteration and rhyme: *She was the last nanny to run away **with bag and baggage**. Adam was desperate...* [20, p. 15]. Here the reader can see alliteration in the marked phraseological unit. The meaning of it is *with all things and luggage*. We have also found some units with assonance: *You are my **all in all*** [19, p. 250]. The highlighted expression means that a person means *everything for another person*.

Substantival euphonic phraseologisms are widely represented in Sally Worboyes' 'Room for a Lodger'. They include nearly 70 items and about half of them is analysed. Such a number indicates the interest of the author of the book in making the narration lively and the fact is explained by the quotation of Barbara Windsor 'She brings the East End to life'. In her novel Sally Worboyes characterizes the life of the city inhabitants as it is, and, moreover, she reveals the strong and weak points of her characters and, of course, she needs the evaluative power of substantival phraseologisms for that. She shows internal experience of her characters, and the fact that the author herself was born in the East End, which has a special cockney dialect, helps to understand her style of writing.

Carol Grace, on the contrary, gives about 30 examples of euphonic phraseologisms on the whole and adjectival units are widely observed here. That is explained by the fact that her heroine travels much and explores a new world and undiscovered things in her life. The main character is very moody and it can best be described by using adjectival euphonic phraseologisms.

Arlene James gives us about 5–7 examples of euphonic Ph Us. We put it down to the fact that her novel is more connected not with love experience but with a peculiar combination of crime, love and social problems. Here the narration is concentrated on facts but not on some worries, so the author does not pay much attention to human emotions.

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