

THE DECORATIVE USE OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS WITH AN ANTHROPOMORPHIC ELEMENT OF ANTIQUÉ ORIGIN IN NEWSPAPERS

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Abstract: The language of the print media reacts quickly to changes in all spheres of society. Language units with a subject-logical ingredient become a very powerful tool here. The results of our research show that the integration of phraseological units with an anthroponymic element of antique origin into newspapers makes news interesting and meaningful thereby retaining the interest of the reader. These units also both serve to express the author's thoughts, and to convey his/her attitude as well as his/her assessment. This has a tremendous impact on the reader's perception.

Key words: *phraseologism, anthroponym, onym, onomastics, mythology*

Introduction

Print media in general and newspapers in particular are a strong tool that serves to reflect reality. All social, political and economic events, as well as progress in the information and communication sphere are represented therein with all the necessary lexical adjustments. To make articles in newspapers more striking and impressive, as well as pursuing their personal goals, journalists often use an abundance of phraseological units of various types. They decorate their speech and make an attempt to give it credibility. These units are the anchors of the article: they are involuntarily memorized and further on can help to recall its whole reasoning.

Phraseological units are reasonably believed to be a reflection of the national specificities of the language and its originality. Their use and further perception demand full awareness of the emotional, symbolic, evaluative, and cultural meaning of the expression (Azhniuk 2013: 7). All of these components of meaning are interrelated, though the question of the appropriateness and frequency of using a particular phrase depends on the purpose of the author. Symbolic and emotional meanings are additional features, usually based on the cultural characteristics and perceptions of the reader. Evaluative value is manifested in relation to the subject or situation, which can be both positive and negative. Therefore, the author, using a certain phraseologism, immediately actualizes a number of meanings and can predict its effect on the reader. It is the author who forms the perlocution, determines

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the degree of acceptability of such expressions, and influences the reader's assessment of the situation.

Methodology

The methodology of the given investigation is governed by modern tendencies in linguistics and by the object of the problem presented. The information achieved as the result of the analysis of a person's language is necessary in order to understand the nature of a human. In our case, the study of names of people of specific origin as elements of phraseological units in newspaper articles helps us comprehend the author's linguistic consciousness, cognitive abilities, text conception, purpose, etc. This is the area, where the anthropocentric orientation of the given investigation lies. The anthroponymic components of antique origin in phraseological units used in the newspaper articles are viewed from the point of view of communicative linguistics (with the prime emphasis on the communication between the author and the reader), hermeneutics (analysing their deep sense in the chosen media), and, in part, cognitive linguistics (reflecting elements of the language picture of the world of both the reader and the author). The principles of text linguistics are applied here, covering the peculiarities of the studied units' structure, semantics, communicative purpose, process of formation, and perception. The data collected show that the authors expect their readers to understand and interpret the messages encrypted in the proper names. The strength and the outcome of this symbiotic relationship between the author and the reader depends heavily on the type of language personality of the reader. This type of relationship does not necessarily have to be linear in its nature, as language personalities and language pictures of the world are not static and adapt to changes, taking place in different spheres (economy, technology, science, politics). Thereby, the decision to choose a phraseological unit with an anthroponymic component (of an antique origin in particular) does not solely reflect the author's inner world (camouflaged intentions, goals, hopes, fears, doubts, desires), but, to some extent, might help to understand the mood of the society at a certain point in time and the lingual tools used to influence it.

Literature Review

The meaning behind the phraseological unit and its overall semantics are determined by the nature of the interaction of its components in the creation of its figurative phraseological meaning. Phraseological means of speech as specific units are used in different functional styles and, accordingly, have their own characteristics, closely related to the functions performed (Todorova 2018: 4). Phraseologisms containing anthroponyms are considered to be one of the specific features of each language. O.Y.

Karpenko, exploring the role of proper names in cognitive perception and information processing, notes that one of the most important roles of proper names is memorization and recollection (Karpenko 2004: 59). The function performed in the formation and formulation of thoughts, oral and written communication is also significant. According to the scientist, onyms are important in the perception and understanding of the text, serving as a kind of headline for large amounts of a variety of information, thereby contributing to its preservation and use. Phraseological units with such components are much more expressive than individual words and are distributed in certain structural and functional styles, showing their belonging to each of them, as well as to the sphere of oral or written speech. As a result, phraseological units of this type have a brighter expressive or emotional color.

According to N.M. Pasik, phraseological units with an anthroponym as a constituent part have a different mechanism of meaning formation (Pasik 2000: 4). The given peculiarity is considered to be predetermined by proper names involved in the formation of the expressive and emotional coloring of these units. Their nature in the given linguistic environment and specifics of functioning have been studied by A.F. Artemova, V.M. Kalinkin, V.D. Uzhchenko, T.V. Maliukh, Cs. Földes and many others.

E.F. Kudina and G. Starke distinguish the following four main types of phraseological units with an anthroponymic component (names of people): - phraseological units originating in the Bible and other religious writings; - phraseological units, which include proper names associated with antique mythology (mythonyms); - phraseological units with proper names, taken from literary sources, articles, public performances, films, and theatrical productions; - phraseological units, containing an anthroponym, which is associated with the names of real people of their time period (Kornieva *et al.* 2018: 322). The given typology was conducted on the basis of the etymology of the semantics of anthroponyms in the structure of English idioms.

Phraseological units, which include proper names associated with an antique mythology, are of particular value for the language, since they originate far in the past, in archaic cultures, conditioned by the mythological ideas of the people and by their striving to explain the surrounding reality, to spiritualize objects and phenomena. A prominent Ukrainian linguist B. Azhniuk (Azhniuk 2013: 9) believes that phraseological units combined with a proper name form a unique culturally labeled element. They reflect the specificities of a particular ethnos, being a valuable source for studying the language and the socio-cultural life of a people both in the past and at the present stage of its development. Phraseological units of this type have a high degree of semantic integrity, clear stylistic features, and unambiguity of meaning, since they have no analogues that motivate their meaning at the present stage of language development.

Results and Discussion

All around the world print media have been of great significance in presenting information to the public. Its basic purpose is to make people familiarized with recent events and trends in society. Authors of the printed news tend to have their tricks to make their articles seem more catchy, interesting and impressive for their readers. One of them is the use of phraseological units which serve to decorate speech. They are involuntarily memorized and create associations which can help to restore the author's entire reasoning. Phraseological units perform the function of ensuring brevity of speech, making it short, concise, and giving it a particularly energetic tone, which expresses the determination of the author's thoughts.

Use of idioms makes the news interesting and meaningful thereby retaining the interest of the reader. That is why, we consider phraseological units to be an obligatory stylistic component of the language of the newspaper, an important source of expressive-emotional richness, an essential means of realizing the structural and stylistic features of newspaper speech. They give the newspaper text a certain effect and force and therefore help to create specific figurativeness. They are able to express not only the corresponding thought more capaciously, but also to convey an attitude, an assessment. The reader first defines the denotative and then later the connotative meaning, which includes expressive, emotional, evaluative meaning and which can also be supplemented by symbolic and cultural components.

Moreover, phraseological units have cognitive-rhetorical functions in newspaper discourse which consist in their emphasizing role. This role is manifested in the accent on individual fragments of content due to the fact that readers make greater cognitive efforts in interpreting phraseological units than in processing regular lexical non-phraseological units. The cognitive-rhetorical study of phraseology is, on the one hand, establishing their functions at the stage of the verbalization of the content selected at the stage of phraseological unit's invention and then structured at the stage of its disposition, and on the other hand, identifying the effects created by the sensorimotor basis of the studied units (Selivanova 2004: 31).

Newspapers covering global current events have a great effect on recipients, causing a specific selection of language tools for the implementation of the plan, as well as combination of message and influence functions. The functioning of the phraseological units in newspaper articles is subject to the composition of the text. This means that its construction is always in accord with certain rules and models, consistent with the pragmatic attitudes of journalists and the limited space on the page. The interaction between the structural components of the text is based on their semantic integrity and coherence.

The functioning of phraseological units in newspaper messages is associated with rhetorical ways of influencing the addressees. These are the well-known: logos, ethos and pathos (Cacciari et al. 2014: 137). Ethos is aimed at the self-representation of the author and at connecting with the audience; logos presupposes the persuasion of the recipients through an appeal to reason, that is, through the search for arguments; pathos is called to arouse the emotional reaction of the audience. Among the above-mentioned methods of influence, which have been slightly reconsidered in modern linguistic theories, phraseological units are mostly associated with pathos, that is the emotions and thoughts that the author wants to evoke in the audience.

Phraseology as an integral, important part of any language, constitutes its originality and expressiveness, formed from a variety of sources, one of which is antique mythology, literature, culture, and history. The concept of “antiquity” incorporates an extraordinary complex multitude of notions and aspects of life. Phraseologisms containing anthroponymic elements of, predominantly, Greek-Latin origin (those unrelated to the Christian sacred sphere), have become widespread in American contemporary newspapers, and this has happened for a reason. Some of them have completely lost their obvious connection to the source, whereas others are easily recognizable by a specific component that is inherent in the ancient Greek and Latin texts.

Many phraseological units of this type are associated with the facts of long-forgotten days, the motivation of the proper name (and the entire phraseological unit) has been erased and can only be restored by its etymological analysis (Kalinkin 1999: 98). In synchronous terms, most of these phraseological units have lost their motivation. Phraseological parallels are often explained by their origin from one common source, although one language can borrow them from another. Here we have some examples of phraseological units with an anthroponymic element taken from mythology: the lack of familiarity with the myths’ specific conditions of occurrence leads to the fact that the meaning of phraseological units with a proper name of antique origin may be understood incorrectly. For proper understanding and use, it is necessary to know the specific conditions of their appearance, i.e., their etymology, therefore, it is of crucial importance to provide this mythical context while conducting the analysis (Zorivchak 1989: 81).

Phraseologisms with ancient proper names have become part of modern languages and sometimes can be marked by national identity. The development of different meanings for the common onym in the phraseology of different languages indicates differences in the perception of ancient images by each nation (Khamitova *et al.* 2016: 49). In the composition of ancient phraseology both male (Procrustes’ bed) and female (Cassandra warnings) names are common, and a significant number of these phraseological units are characterized by possessive forms of an

anthroponymic element: Procrustes' bed, Achilles' heel, and the suchlike. Greek variants of names prevail with a few examples of an anthroponymic component borrowed from Roman mythology, for example: Cupid's arrow. Proper names from ancient mythology that are a part of phraseological units do not undergo significant modifications. Some variants that appear in artistic and journalistic works do not go beyond books.

Another remarkable fact is that ancient names developed figurative meanings on the basis of encyclopedic information about the denotation of the name even before the process of phraseologization. Related to the data, based on mythological notions and endowed with a certain expression, anthroponyms have become a part of phraseology and in many cases its semantic centers. As a constituent element of phraseology, proper names begin to perform an additional function, which over time becomes the primary one: they lose their nomination of a specific personality of ancient mythology, history, literature, and serve as carriers of expressive nuances, developing a variety of cultural and historical connotations (Debus 2003: 6). These connotations are defined as cultural and historical, due to the fact that ancient mythology and history represent one of the oldest stages in the development of world culture and history. At the same time, they acquire an evaluative character owing to the specific mythological, literary plots, and historical events they refer to. Thus, in the phraseological context, ancient names are carriers of positive or negative evaluation semantics.

The scope of the problem studied is uncovering the journalists' reasons for choosing the phraseological units with an anthroponymic element of antique origin in their articles, or, to be more precise, proving that the choice of such phraseological units always has some peculiar purpose and aims at gaining a positive or negative evaluation. We worked with a corpus of phraseological units with an anthroponymic component selected from a sample of the British and American newspapers *The Independent* and *The Guardian*, issued in recent years (circa 8800 examples). Merriam Webster Dictionary served as the source for the meanings of the phraseological units of the given type. The effects of the phraseological units have been analysed through the application of contextual procedure.

The prime aim of the research in question has been to find answers to the questions: if the basic purpose of the print media is to make people familiarized with the latest events in society and public moods and if phraseological units aim at making the speech short and concise why use highly figurative, complex structures with names of fictitious characters known to a limited part of this society? If such lexical units are to express the determination of the author's thoughts, is it only brevity of speech that makes journalists use such phraseological units? In the course of our study, we have made an attempt to refute the idea that the frequent usage of phraseological

units with an anthroponymic component of antique origin is purely for the sake of gaining expressiveness.

Table 1. Frequency of Phraseological Units with an Anthroponymic Component of Antique Origin in the Newspapers “The Guardian” and “The Independent” (2005-2020)

		Achilles' heel (3917)	To open Pandora's box (3091)	Sword of Damocles (705)	Cassandra warnings (464)	Sisyphean task (326)	Between Scylla and Charybdis (215)	Procrustes' bed (52)	Struck by Cupid's arrow (49)
The Guardian	Usages	2568	1367	178	398	56	97	42	12
	Period	2005-2020	2005-2020	2005-2019	2006-2019	2005-2020	2005-2020	2005-2018	2005-2019
The Independent	Usages	1349	1724	527	66	270	118	10	37
	Period	2005-2020	2005-2020	2005-2020	2006-2020	2005-2020	2005-2020	2005-2020	2005-2020

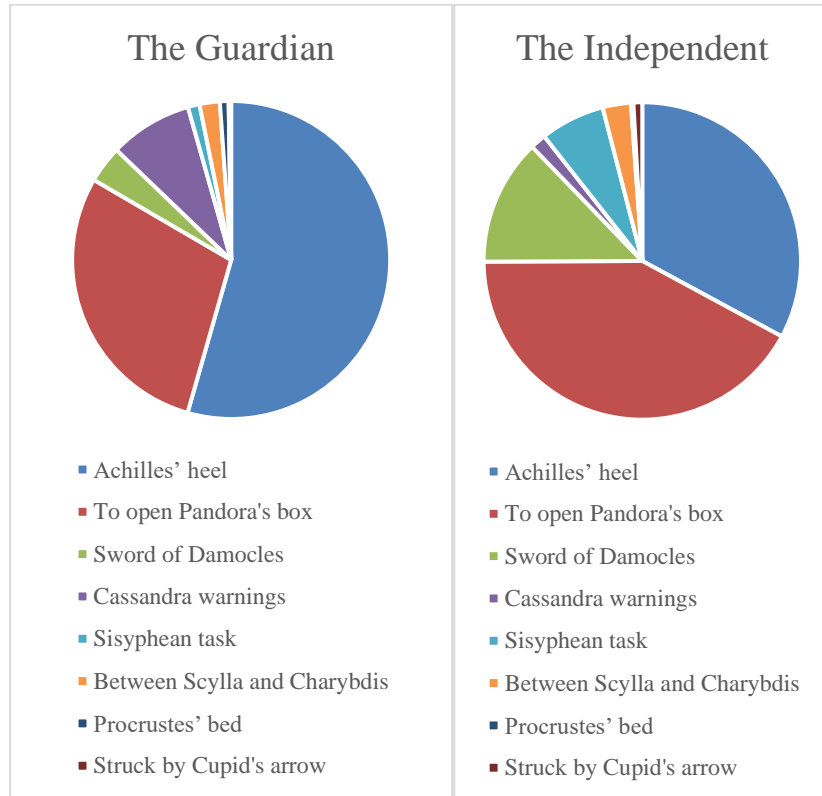
Table 1 illustrates the frequency of usage of the phraseological units chosen as material for the research in question. The analysis conducted and the data collected have shown that in the period in question (2005-2020) the articles of *The Guardian* contained 4718 examples (53,5%) in contrast to examples in *The Independent* - 4101 times (46,5%). As it can be seen in Table 1, the dominant idiom in *The Guardian* is *Achilles' heel*, whereas it is *to open Pandora's box* in *The Independent*. All of the most common phraseological units with an anthroponymic component of antique origin selected from the newspapers chosen for the analysis have been characterized in accordance with their frequency of usage (ranging from the most to the least frequently used).

As it is presented in Chart 1, the most common phraseological units with an anthroponymic element of antique origin in the sources chosen are *to open Pandora's Box* (3091) and *Achilles' heel* (3917). Merriam Webster dictionary defines the idiom *Achilles' heel* as “a vulnerable point” (Merriam Webster Dictionary). In Greek mythology, when the hero Achilles was an infant, his sea-nymph mother dipped him into the river Styx to make him immortal. But since she held him by one heel, this spot did not touch the water and so it remained vulnerable, and it was here that Achilles was eventually mortally wounded. To analyze its contemporary usage, this phraseological unit was found in the articles related to the sphere of politics (77%):

“Trump shouldn't forget Iran's big Achilles' heel: Its economy.”

(Khalilzad 2018)

Chart 1. The Comparison of Frequency of Phraseological Units with an Anthropomorphic Component of Antique Origin in the Newspapers “The Guardian” and “The Independent” (2005-2020)



“Finally, we have to accept that foreign powers seize upon these divisions because they are real — because racism remains the United States’ Achilles’ heel.”

(Ifill 2013)

“We can’t figure out why we struggle on the road but that’s kind of been our Achilles’ heel,” Bradley Beal said following the Wizards’ loss in Indiana this week, but his sentiment could have been expressed at almost any point this season.”

(Wallace 2019)

At the first sight the authors’ implementation of the given phraseological unit into the sentence adds to its figurativeness and makes the ideas expressed catchier. Therewith, it vividly expresses the determination of the author's thoughts, conveys his/her attitude, and presents a negative evaluation of the situation.

Similar features of the functioning and mode of presentation can be observed with the idiomatic expression *Pandora's box*. Originating in Greek mythology it describes a box that Zeus gave to Pandora with instructions not to open it. Nevertheless, she could not resist the temptation and all the miseries together with all the evils flew out to afflict mankind. Interpreting its contextual use, if someone or something opens Pandora's box, they do something that causes numerous problems that did not exist or were not known about before.

“Britain would face a “Pandora’s box of economic consequences” if it crashed out of the European Union without a new trade deal in place, according to the president of the Confederation of British Industry.”

(Chu 2017)

“In endorsing this doctrine, we risk introducing the principle of constant instability and uncertainty. Do not let us open a Pandora's box.”

(The Independent 2005)

“Critics say it would open a “Pandora’s box” in the Balkans, with ethnically divided Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia potential flash points.”

(MacDowall 2018)

The data presented illustrate another set of examples taken from political and financial contexts, another set of strong, emphasized, and threatening opinions. If one tries to predict what the reaction of the recipient to the described situation is, it will be not merely negative, but rather radically negative.

The motives for using the phraseological unit *sword of Damocles* go hand in hand with the ones displayed in the usage of the previous idiom. It has come to symbolize imminent danger and is widely used in the analysed print media (705 examples).

“But a source close to Kim has revealed that the estranged half-brother of the secretive North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un, felt he had a “sword of Damocles” hanging over him, and lived in fear of being targeted by the regime.”

(Holmes 2017)

“James Purnell, the BBC’s strategy director, has said the “sword of Damocles” is hanging over BBC funding with cuts to one of its biggest shows, EastEnders, reversed after viewers began to notice a dip in quality.”

(Plunkett 2014)

By and large, the given phraseological unit performs its prime function of being concise and expressive. Nonetheless, its excessive imagery and the author's punctuation projects the reader's attention onto the author's negative evaluation of the character described.

An interesting accent is given to the idiom *Cassandra warnings* (464). It is a phraseological unit which stands for warnings which were neglected, but which came true. This is a case of a persuasive, vividly expressed critical assessment and of a subjective modality in the author's message. He/she does not use some modern counterpart, what is more, prefers to use the idiom, creating a special aesthetic, or rather a scary mystery in the utterance.

“There can't be many who aren't aware of the Cassandra warnings of impending recession ever since the tiger economies of the Far East turned out to be as papier maché as our own, and of course that may have something to do with it.”

(The Guardian 1999)

“As the nation breaks down estate agents' and mortgage lenders' doors with pent-up demand for home ownership they cannot afford, my Cassandra warning will no doubt fall on deaf ears. But warn I must.”

(Hillel 2013)

The choice of the phraseological units *Sisyphean task* (an endless and ineffective task, 326 cases of usage), *between Scylla and Charybdis* (to be caught between two equally unpleasant alternatives, 215), *Procrustes' bed* (a measure to which the phenomena which are not suitable for it are adjusted, 52) is always apposite and accurate, they are always functionally loaded and effortlessly serve as complements to the author's initial goal, i.e., to persuade the readers into sharing his views.

“Don't attempt the Sisyphean task of unsubscribing from it all at once – just do a few at a time.”

(Reid 2018)

“The Conservatives have attempted to make the vote solely about “getting Brexit done” (a Sisyphean task, regardless of the outcome) while Labour has tried to focus on healthcare and a grand policy proposal.”

(Dean 2019)

“Downing Street must steer a perilous course between a political Scylla and Charybdis: neglecting the pressing financial needs of the NHS on the one hand, and the need for structural change on the other.”

(The Independent 2000)

“Clearly, this conference sought not only to acknowledge but also to define art's place in the cultural life of the nation; at the same time, the government sought to marginalise those works which did not fit into the Procrustean bed of its social vision.”

(Wilkinson 2009) A remarkable fact is that the least frequently used idiom of this type is *struck by Cupid's arrow* (used 49 times). It is the only phraseological unit with an anthroponym containing a name from Roman mythology, and what is noteworthy, the only one with a positive connotation, i.e., *to fall in love at first sight* (Merriam Webster Dictionary). Having analyzed its context we may assume that it is one of the highlights of the author's intended figurativeness and is used to support the aesthetics and theme of the article.

“This busy restaurant scene features a string of couples enjoying each other's company on Valentine's Day – but which ones will be struck by Cupid's arrow?”

(Peat 2018)

“A poll of 2,000 adults revealed it takes a string of romantic outings before couples start to feel certain Cupid's arrow has struck.”

(Bailey 2018)

The selected phraseological units with an anthroponymic component of antique origin chosen for the given research in printed material have proven to perform a cognitive-rhetorical function: to create a special assessment, critical coloring, and accent. The author's intention is not only to use expressive units but to imply pathos and influence the readers' opinion have been revealed to be true to a great extent in the research in question.

Conclusions

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the construction of reality in printed and electronic versions of newspapers is carried out by taking into account the target audience, grouped by age, gender and national and socio-professional affiliation. These factors determine the subject, style and even afterthought of messages, depending on the needs and interests of the recipients. It is the author who knows or predicts who his potential recipient is and how he/she will react to these messages. It is the journalist who informs us about and evaluates the described phenomenon, situation, event, adding his own subjective comment, emphasizing his attitude to the problem, crafting the expression and emotional saturation of the utterance.

The results of the research conducted on the material in the popular British and American print media have shown that the integration of

phraseological units with an anthroponymic element of antique origin into the newspaper article makes news interesting and meaningful thereby retaining the interest of the reader. The units not only serve to express the author's thoughts, but also to convey his/her attitude as well as assessment, and, consequently, have a tremendous impact on the reader's perception, which overall is negative.

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