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PRAGMATIC POTENTIAL OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN THE DISCOURSE OF NEWSPAPER PUBLICATIONS

The article discusses pragmatic function of phraseological units in facilitating interaction between writers and readers in the newspaper discourse. Being a captivating field within linguistic investigation, pragmatics explores the relationship between language and the contextual factors of background characteristics. The theoretical base of the research is discussed with particular emphasis on the significant contributions made by scholars in the field of phraseological studies, pragmatics and newspaper discourse – M. Kopylenko, A. Kunin, Teun A. van Dijk, N. Fairclough, and others. The study aims to conduct a comprehensive analysis of newspaper articles published in the major American online editions of newspapers such as The New York Times, The Washington Post, and The Wall Street Journal, drawing on qualitative analysis to explore the contextual and functional aspects of phraseological units in newspaper discourse. To demonstrate the relevance of the information, articles from the last six months (September 2023 to March 2024) of newspapers were selected. K. Hyland's (2005) model of interactional meta-discourse was adopted for analyzing the pragmatic potential of phraseological units within newspaper discourse. The findings reveal that the pragmatic effectiveness and communicative impact of newspaper articles are significantly enhanced by these lexical elements – they boost the impact of the meaning conveyed, reinforce attitudes of the writer, encourage reader engagement by inviting them to reflect on the problem under discussion. The results can be useful in linguistics and journalistic practice to better utilize phraseological units to achieve specific communicative goals.

Key words: phraseological unit, newspaper discourse, pragmatics, idiom, phrasal verb, pragmatic potential, journalism.

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Газет басылымдарының дискурсындағы фразаологиялық бірліктердің прагматикалық әлеуеті

Мақалада фразеологиялық бірліктердің газет дискурсындағы авторлар мен оқырмандар арасындағы тиімді ақпараттық және өзара әрекеттестікті қалыптастырудағы прагматикалық рөлі зерттеледі. Прагматика – тіл мен бастапқы деректердің контекстуалдық сипаттамалары арасындағы байланысты қарастыратын қызықты лингвистикалық зерттеу саласы. Фразеология, прагматика және газет дискурсы саласындағы М. Копыленко, А. Кунин, Т. А. ван Дейк, Н. Фэрклау және басқа да ғалымдардың елеулі еңбектеріне ерекше назар аударылуы зерттеудің теориялық негізі ретінде есептеледі. Зерттеудің мақсатына The New York Times, The Washington Post және The Wall Street Journal сияқты ірі американдық онлайн басылымдарында жарияланған газет мақалаларына жан-жақты прагматикалық талдау жүргізу жатады. Ақпараттың өзектілігін көрсету үшін зерттеуде соңғы алты айда (2023 жылғы қыркүйек – 2024 жылғы наурыз) шыққан газет мақалалары іріктеліп алынды. Газет дискурсындағы фразеологиялық бірліктердің прагматикалық әлеуетін талдау үшін К. Хайландтың (2005) интерактивті метадикурс моделі қолданылды. Нәтижелерде көрсетілгендей, газет мақалаларының прагматикалық тиімділігі мен коммуникативтік әсері зерттелген лексикалық элементтердің қолданылуы арқылы едәуір артады. Олар берілген ақпараттың мағынасын күшейтеді, автордың көзқарасын қолдайды және оқырмандарды талқыланып жатқан мәселеге ой жүгіртуге ынталандырады. Нәтижелер лингвистика мен журналистикада фразеологиялық бірліктерді нақты коммуникативтік мақсаттарға қол жеткізу үшін тиімді пайдалануға пайдалы болуы мүмкін.

Түйін сөздер: фразеологизм, газеттік дискурс, идиома, фразалық етістік, прагматикалық әлеует, журналистика.

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Прагматический потенциал фразеологических единиц в дискурсе газетных публикаций

В статье проводится исследование прагматической роли фразеологических единиц в формировании эффективного информационного взаимодействия между авторами статей и читателями в газетном дискурсе. Прагматика, являясь увлекательной областью лингвистических исследований, изучает взаимосвязь между языком и контекстуальными характеристиками исходных данных. Теоретическая основа исследования уделяет особое внимание значительному вкладу в область фразеологии, прагматики и газетного дискурса таких ученых, как М. Копыленко, А. Кунин, Т. А. ван Дейк, Н. Ферклау и др. Цель исследования – провести всесторонний прагматический анализ газетных статей, опубликованных в крупнейших американских онлайн-изданиях, таких как The New York Times, The Washington Post и The Wall Street Journal. Для демонстрации актуальности информации в исследовании были отобраны статьи из газет за последние шесть месяцев (сентябрь 2023 г. – март 2024 г.). Для анализа прагматического потенциала фразеологических единиц в газетном дискурсе была использована модель интерактивного метадискурса К. Хайланда (2005). Результаты показывают, что прагматическая эффективность и коммуникативное воздействие газетных статей значительно усиливаются за счет использования исследуемых лексических элементов – они усиливают значение передаваемой информации, подкрепляют отношение автора и побуждают читателей к размышлению над обсуждаемой проблемой. Данные результаты могут быть полезны в лингвистике и в журналистской практике для более эффективного использования фразеологических единиц в достижении конкретных коммуникативных целей.

Ключевые слова: фразеологизм, газетный дискурс, идиома, фразовый глагол, прагматический потенциал, журналистика.

Introduction

Phraseological units play a significant role in shaping the language and communication strategies within various discursive contexts. Within the realm of media and journalism, newspapers stand as a prominent medium for circulating information and opinions. As noted by R. Park (1923: 274) a newspaper that is not read loses its power to impact the society. The pragmatic value of phraseological units in the discourse of newspaper publications is a multifaceted and intriguing area of linguistic study. This research seeks to explore the impact of these linguistic elements on the overall communicative effectiveness and persuasive strategies employed within the pages of newspapers. Studying the practical application of phraseological units in the discourse of newspaper publications is justified by its relevance to language use in journalism, its implications for communication effectiveness, its reflection of cultural and societal dynamics, its impact on audience reception, and its contribution to linguistic creativity and variation in newspaper discourse.

The significance of the paper lies in the exploration of the pragmatic implications of phraseological units within the domain of newspaper discourse. Given the multifaceted communicative goals of

newspapers – ranging from the dissemination of information to the persuasion and engagement of readers – a nuanced understanding of the pragmatic functions of phraseological units becomes imperative for both producers and consumers of newspaper content, which determines the relevance of the present study. The aim of the current research is to study how phraseological units contribute to the pragmatic effectiveness and communicative impact of newspaper discourse. Specifically, the paper seeks to identify the pragmatic functions served by phraseological units in newspaper discourse and explore the role of phraseological units in contributing to linguistic creativity and variation in newspaper discourse. To achieve these objectives, the study addresses the following research questions: (1) What pragmatic functions do phraseological units serve in the context of newspaper discourse across different genres? (2) How do phraseological units contribute to the communicative effect in newspaper articles? (3) In what ways do phraseological units enhance linguistic creativity and variation within newspaper discourse?

N. Fairclough emphasizes that the significance of media language should be acknowledged as a crucial component in research concerning contemporary phenomena of social and cultural transfor-

mation, a topic that is increasingly captivating the attention of scholars in the social sciences (Fairclough, 1995: 2). To add, phraseological units, such as idiomatic phrases, word combinations, and fixed expressions, are common in newspaper language because they can succinctly convey complex concepts. When such linguistic units appear in a text, they not only exhibit their typical characteristics but also reveal underlying aspects that become apparent when used in a peculiar context. This is particularly relevant in texts where originality plays a significant role, such as articles found in newspapers. Phraseological units are frequently used in newspapers, where authors strive to enhance the appeal and interest of their articles and stories to readers. Consequently, journalists often employ such language constructs as concise means of expressing opinions or evaluating discussed issues. Furthermore, due to the time constraints involved in writing newspaper articles, authors usually present language examples reflecting everyday usage without extensive refinement or sophistication.

Material and methods

In order to capture a broad spectrum of language use, a diverse corpus of newspaper publications across genres such as politics, culture and business has been analyzed. Six articles published in the last six months were (September 2023 to March 2024) were selected to highlight the relevance of the information. Thirty-five phraseological units were extracted from the online editions of the most influential and largest American newspapers, namely *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. These newspapers have been selected due to their esteemed reputation, widespread readership, and significant impact on both national and global public opinion. For example, in S. Vaughn's *Encyclopedia of American Journalism* (2008: 338), B.J. Evensen underscores the significant role of *The New York Times* stating that this newspaper shapes the news of the day and the news agenda of media outlets and newspaper reporters nationwide. By drawing on the concept of the significance of *The Washington Post*, W.E. Swanberg describes it as an "influential and respected publication", covering significant percentage of the mainstream American news content (Vaughn, 2008: 578). Along the same lines, R. Davidson argues that *The Wall Street Journal* stands as the sole true national business daily in the United States, marking the pioneering achievement of aspiring to and at-

taining a nationwide readership within the American newspaper landscape (Vaughn, 2008: 573).

The data in the research was systematically collected from the selected newspapers over the specified period, employing rigorous criteria to identify and extract phraseological units. In the paper, "phraseological units" are defined as multi-word stable expressions exhibiting a degree of lexical cohesion and semantic unity beyond the sum of their individual parts (Kozhakhmetova, 1988; Kopylenko, 2010; Avakova, 2013; McCarthy, 2017; Baker, 2018; Smagulova, 2020). Analysis involved categorizing phraseological units based on their pragmatic potential, such as their persuasive or argumentative functions within the discourse. In-depth qualitative analysis was conducted to explore the contextual and functional dimensions of phraseological structures in newspaper discourse. Close reading and discourse analysis techniques (K. Hyland's model of 'stance and engagement', 2005) were employed to discern the pragmatic strategies employed by journalists in utilizing these linguistic units to achieve communicative goals, engage readers, and construct persuasive arguments. A comparative analysis was conducted to contrast the pragmatic potential of phraseological units in different newspaper genres, examining variations in usage patterns and discursive conventions across publications. The data of available explanatory, encyclopedic, special lexicographic editions were also used for the analysis: J. Siefiring "Oxford dictionary of idioms" (2004), Yu. Dolgoplov "A dictionary of confusable phrases: more than 10,000 idiom and collocations" (2010), "Oxford phrasal verbs dictionary for learners of English" by Oxford University Press (2001), A. Farkas "The Oxford dictionary of catchphrases" (2003).

Literature review

Phraseology holds substantial importance in language, acting as a medium for expressing cultural nuances and serving as a reflection of national identity. Idiomatic expressions allow for precise communication of ideas and concepts. Every language possesses a wealth of idiomatic phrases, which are deeply rooted in the social context, traditions, and customs of its speakers, and reflect the historical and cultural heritage of the language (Aushenova, 2022: 195). Phraseological units, as integral components of language, play a significant role in shaping discourse across various mediums, including newspapers. The analysis of literary works aims to explore the pragmatic potential of phraseological

units within the context of newspaper publications. By examining existing research, the review seeks to elucidate how phraseological units contribute to the construction of meaning and persuasion in newspaper discourse. To comprehend the pragmatic potential of phraseological units, it is crucial to define and classify them.

Almost every paper that has been written on phraseological units includes a section relating to their definition. As J. Miller (2020) emphasizes, one significant cause for ambiguity in phraseological study is the lack of consensus over terms. Phraseological units encompass a broad spectrum of ready-made units that are characterized by stability of meaning, composition and structure (Shansky, 2012). These units are characterized by their semantic cohesion and serve as building blocks in communication. Clear understanding of the concept of phraseological unit is essential for the purpose of analysis of this phenomenon. According to A.V. Kunin, “a phraseological unit is a stable combination of words with a fully or partially figurative meaning” (Kunin, 1970: 210). Following A.V. Kunin’s definition, such linguistic constructs possess two inherent characteristics: stability and figurative connotations, setting them apart from set expressions that are stable yet devoid of figurative significance, as well as from free word combinations. Along the same lines, A.P. Cowie subsequently argued that phraseological unit is “a lexicalized, reproducible billexemic or polylexemic word group in common use, which has relative syntactic and semantic stability, may be idiomatized, may carry connotations, and may have an emphatic or intensifying function in a text.” (Cowie, 1998: 124). He points out the two types of phraseological units such as idioms and phrasemes that can constitute both “word-like” and “sentence-like set expressions” (Cowie, 1998: 126). The former comprise idioms and non-idioms (or set expressions) (e.g., *a dog in a manger*, *to bark up the wrong tree*), the latter embrace proverbs (e.g., *One swallow does not make a summer.*), commonplaces (e.g., *It’s a small world*), routine formulae (e.g., *Many happy returns of the day*), commandments and maxims (e.g., *Do it yourself*), quotations and winged words (e.g., *Catch 22*). In the same vein in her analysis of idioms used in academic speech and writing, J. Miller mentions that Grant and Bauer (2004) distinguish between core idioms and figurative expressions, considering a core idiom as a multi-word, opaque, and non-figurative expression (Miller, 2020: 3). Such idioms stand separately and do not include phrasal verbs and fixed expres-

sions. Another study on the study of “phraseological unit” is N.F. Alefrienko and N.N. Semenenko’s work where the term was described as a fixed word combination having several names – phraseological unit, idiom, fixed expression, phraseme, and stable combination (2009: 17). The latter authors make the point that such combinations possess one notable characteristic – stability in their lexical components, grammatical structure, and figurative meaning.

By exploring and combining the above-mentioned features and characteristics of phraseological units, the present paper interprets these language constructs as stable combinations of words, reflecting the stability of form and content, for example, *to raise one’s eyebrows* (to show surprise by moving one’s eyebrows upwards); *on the horizon* (likely to happen); *stand on your own two feet* (to be able to provide all of the things you need for living without help from anyone else). Given the limited scope of this study and considering the aim of this work, in the following pages of the paper the authors will concentrate on idioms, phrasal verbs, and fixed expressions to narrow the focus of research in the essay.

Drawing on the concept of idiomatic language in journalism, F. O’Dell and M. McCarthy (2017: 82) assert the prevalence of phraseological units within the English language, particularly evident in journalistic discourse. These units, characterized by their distinctiveness and frequent usage in journalism while remaining relatively rare in other contexts, play a crucial role in conveying nuanced meanings and fostering reader’s engagement. Phraseological units in journalism often encapsulate complex ideas succinctly, lending color and immediacy to news reporting. For instance, phrases like “*breaking news*”, “*war-torn country*”, “*plunged into chaos*”, “*bloody confrontations*”, and “*uneasy peace*” are commonplace in journalistic writing, yet their specific meanings may not be readily apparent to those unfamiliar with the conventions of news reporting.

To date, researchers attempted to evaluate the impact of pragmatic potential of phraseological units across various types of discourse (Naciscione, 2010; Kalybayeva et.al., 2020; Cowie, 1998). According to Ch.W. Morris (1971: 43), pragmatics can be defined as the study of how signs relate to those who interpret them. He stressed the view that “interpretation becomes significantly complex with both individual and societal consequences becoming especially important, particularly when considering linguistic signs.” From a pragmatic perspective, language serves as a social system facilitating

the interactions among members of a community and their environment. As noted by A. Naciscione (2010: 121), it is essential to analyze the interaction of phraseological units with other linguistic elements across the text in order to elucidate intricate fabric of semantic and pragmatic interrelationship in discourse. When discussing phraseological units within discourse, A. Naciscione draws on J. Lyons (1981) who describes discourse as a vast and intricate network, comprising interconnected expressions that convey nuanced meanings through their relationships with one another (*ibid.*). Along the same line, J. Cutting (2002) describes pragmatics and discourse analysis as approaches to investigating the correlation between language and contextual background characteristics. J. Cutting's comprehensive review identified that both pragmatics and discourse analysis study the meaning of words in context; focus on how interactors convey additional information beyond the words spoken; and emphasize how stretchers of language acquire meaningfulness (Cutting, 2002: 2). She additionally underscores that discourse analysis delineates the attribute of meaningful and unified coherence, whereas pragmatics labels it as relevance (*ibid.*). Furthermore, the researcher acknowledges three key aspects for examination when delving into the context of writing: situational context, cultural and interpersonal context, and discourse communities. This is consistent with the research of A. Naciscione (2010: 121) who claims that phraseological units in the text work like a "cohesive framework".

The presence of phraseological cohesion plays a central role in the interpretation of a segment of discourse. In contemporary linguistic studies discourse is viewed as a set of "appeals to concepts" and as "a concept existing in the minds of native speakers" through which language users organize and communicate ideas, with each piece of discourse referring to broader notions, beliefs, and culturally embedded meanings (Aitkulova et al., 2023: 94). T.A. van Dijk (1985, 1997, 2008) claims that the discourse studies that emerged during the 1960s introduced significant and innovative concepts to the exploration of language and communication. T.A. Van Dijk (2008: 20) suggests that within discourse, pragmatics centers on the suitability of employing expressions in the present communicative context. Revisiting T.A. Van Dijk's concepts, it is pertinent to acknowledge that the choice of phraseological units is predominantly shaped by the meanings or underlying event models of the article writers, who deliberately select appropriate multi-word units that accurately

convey the specific information encapsulated within these event models.

A number of studies have shown that the newspaper discourse has long been the focus of attention for researchers. However, questions regarding linguistic strategies and tactics of manipulating consciousness in the English-language media space, which journalists inevitably resort to in their efforts to persuade readers and gain their support, have not yet received comprehensive scholarly attention. M.V. Larionova outlines the construction of the concept of newspaper discourse by considering various factors. These include the nature of the communicative-linguistic phenomenon and the unique interaction among communicators, which is reflected in textual expressions across different genres and themes in periodical publications. She also highlights the conceptual framework that shapes the mental landscape of newspaper discourse. Additionally, the linguistic practices evident in newspaper language, such as the role of influence, are examined. Finally, Larionova emphasizes the application of suitable communicative strategies aligned with the communicators' intended purposes (2015: 38). By drawing on the concept of the production of discourse in newswriting, T.A. Van Dijk provides us with a number of context models such as "the current setting; relevant current communicative and social identities; new knowledge about a newsworthy international event; contextual knowledge about the sociocultural knowledge of the readers; professional ideologies as a journalist; purpose to inform the readers of newspaper X; emotions about the reported event, etc." (2008: 104). At the same time, the journalist is required to adhere to various professional norms, principles and values that determine the significance of different aspects of events, ranging from topic selection and headline formulation to the structuring of foregrounded and backgrounded information, as well as style (Van Dijk, 2008: 104). Further, the scholar asserts that the general pragmatic rule of informative discourse genres is that "we only need to tell what we have reason to believe others do not know already" (Van Dijk, 2008: 105).

In view of all that has been mentioned so far, one may suppose that in the narrating a news story, facts are arranged not in chronological sequence but according to criteria of relevance or newsworthiness. Namely, the most informative details are presented first, and the determination of relevance is contingent upon the contextual information about the type of newspaper the editor intends to publish or the preferences of the readership. Beyond ideological

predispositions, it is primarily the stylistic organization of the newspaper that shapes the ultimate choice of words deemed suitable for news reports. A similar study is that of N. Fairclough (1995), which discussed ideology as ‘meaning in the service of power’ and highlighted that analysts should consistently inquire about the ideological function and mechanism of any text. Describing the language of political reports in newspapers, A. Tosi (2001) explains that journalists incorporate the replacement of descriptive language with figurative expressions, aiding in transforming written news into a visual portrayal of political events and the responses of politicians. This can be illustrated briefly by the following examples: *tuona di fronte ai giornalisti* meaning ‘thunders at the journalists’ was published in *Corriere della Sera* on 12 January 1995; *e giù con un'altra bordata* meaning ‘and lets off another load of abuse’ was published in *Corriere della Sera* on 12 January 1995 (Tosi, 2001: 149).

Together these studies provide important insights into the pragmatic potential of phraseological units within the discourse of newspaper publications. Through a synthesis of scholarly investigations, it has been demonstrated that these linguistic entities constitute a pivotal means for conveying nuanced meaning and fostering reader engagement. Furthermore, this literature review examined various perspectives regarding the definition of the term “phraseological unit”. Phraseological units, represent fixed combinations of words that hold significant sway in conveying meaning, captivating readers’ interest, and cultivating a unique journalistic tone. The scientific works discussed so far shed light on discourse studies, which emerged in the 1960s and introduced innovative concepts to the exploration of language and communication. To add, the choice of phraseological units is shaped by the meanings or event models of article writers, who deliberately select appropriate multi-word units to accurately convey specific information. Additionally, the review outlines the concept of newspaper discourse, considering factors such as the unique relationship between the communicators, linguistic patterns found in newspaper language, the role of influence in shaping discourse, and using of suitable communicative strategies that support the communicators’ intended purposes.

The literature review reveals significant gaps in the study of phraseological units within newspaper discourse. The definitions, classifications, and basic pragmatic roles of phraseological units have been established by earlier research (e.g., Kunin, 1970;

Cowie, 1998), but their use in modern journalism has not received enough attention. The majority of research focus on theoretical frameworks or more general linguistic settings without offering a systematic analysis of how phraseological units function pragmatically across various genres in newspaper discourse. Furthermore, previous publications frequently overlook the contribution of phraseological units to linguistic originality and stylistic diversity in journalism, as well as their significance in influencing writer stance and reader engagement. Analyzing real-time data that reflects current socio-political and cultural dynamics has also received less attention, especially when it comes to high-impact media like *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times*.

The research addresses these gaps by introducing several ideas that distinguish it from previous studies. First, it focuses on recent data by examining newspaper articles from the previous six months, ensuring its findings are topical and relevant. Second, it examines writer stance and reader engagement (two crucial components in comprehending the communicative influence of phraseological units), applying K. Hyland’s (2005) interactional meta-discourse framework – a novel approach in this field. Third, in order to identify genre-specific trends and pragmatic variations in the use of phraseological units, the study performs a comparative analysis across a number of genres, including politics, business, and culture. Fourth, it highlights stylistic enrichment and language originality offered by phraseological units, such as the manner in which idioms, fixed expressions and phrasal verbs improve persuasive and communicative techniques employed by journalists.

These distinguishing characteristics make the study an important contribution to the corpus of existing research, offering the way for more investigation on phraseological units in evolving discursive contexts.

Results and discussion

Given the space limitation, the current study focuses on a detailed analysis of thirteen phraseological units (of the thirty-five retrieved phraseological units, including idioms, phrasal verbs, and fixed expressions) that best represent the purpose of this research and can be classified according to their pragmatic capacity, such as ability to persuade or present arguments within the discourse. It is based on a qualitative approach that identifies contextual and functional dimensions of these linguistic units.

The analysis was carried in two stages: in the first stage, the selected samples of newspaper articles were examined in detail through manual search. The second stage involved a comparative examination to analyze the pragmatic effectiveness of phraseological units in various newspaper genres, to explore differences in the way they are used across different publications.

The study adopts the interactional meta-discourse paradigm developed by K. Hyland (2005), which provides a valuable framework for analyzing the pragmatic potential of phraseological units within newspaper discourse. This framework concentrates on the linguistic tools employed by writers to involve readers and navigate the interactive aspects of written texts. By employing this framework to analyze phraseological units in newspaper discourse, researchers can discern how these units aid in constructing meaning and fostering communicative connections between journalists and readers. As K. Hyland explains (2005: 176), writers need to present interpretations in a manner that convinces readers, in other words, they must present these to express their viewpoints and captivate their audiences. In his theory, linguistic resources can be examined from the point of view of stance and engagement. *Stance* “includes features which refer to the ways writers present themselves and convey their judgements, opinions, and commitments.” (ibid.). *Engagement* is “an alignment dimension where writers acknowledge and connect to others, recognizing the presence of their readers, pulling them along with their argument, focusing their attention, acknowledging their uncertainties, including them as discourse participants, and guiding them to interpretations.” (ibid.). These types of interactive meta-discourse can be described through various textual elements: stance is established through the employment of “*hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mentions*”; whereas engagement involves the use of “*reader pronouns, questions, directives, shared knowledge, and personal asides*” (Hyland, 2005: 177). When it comes to analyzing pragmatic potential of phraseological units in newspaper discourse, both stance and engagement are considered as extremely crucial. Through the deliberate use of idiomatic expressions and figurative language, journalists can express thoughts, elicit feelings from readers, and engage them into discussion.

The writer stance and reader engagement, as well as their subdivisions, are thoroughly researched in the discussion. The authors of the paper present and analyze a number of examples of the discoursal

use of phraseological units exemplifying the above-mentioned variations and patterns. At first, Hyland’s model of interactional meta-discourse is applied to analyze the pragmatic potential of phraseological units used in the articles of political genre.

In the following fragment, the phrasal verb *to shell out money* – ‘to pay or give money for something, usually unwillingly’ – conveys a particular stance towards the actions of political candidates, suggesting a critical perspective on their spending habits. The phrase ‘shelled out’ acts as a booster, highlighting a casual or careless attitude towards the expenditure, while ‘donors’ money’ indicates a sense of accountability and responsibility. It reinforces the criticism of the candidates’ actions by portraying them as extravagant or wasteful through the use of expressive language.

Political candidates in 2023 shelled out donors’ money for a variety of unusual expenses, including gift cards, hairstyling and frozen treats, new filings revealed.

The New York Times / February 6, 2024 / Trucker Hats and Ice Cream: The Most Surprising Ways Candidates Spent Cash / By Rebecca Davis O’Brien and Rachel Shorey. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/06/us/politics/2024-candidates-spending-expenses.html>)

The idiom *tilt at windmills*, which means ‘to fight enemies who do not really exist,’ is used as a literary allusion to Miguel de Cervantes’ “*Don Quixote*”, in which the protagonist famously tilts at windmills, mistaking them for giants. This is illustrated by the selection of linguistic tools below. By employing this expression, the author of the article boosts the sentence’s impact and imagery, making it more memorable and captivating for the reader. The word *proverbial* is used to soften the impact of the statement, suggesting that the windmills are symbolic rather than real-world barriers. This hedging weakens the claim by implying that the idea of struggle may not be really accurate but rather a perceived difficulty. Furthermore, this example demonstrates the use of attitude markers. More specifically, Haley’s supporters’ attitude or viewpoint is shown in the choice of the phraseological unit ‘tilting at windmills.’ It conveys a feeling of helplessness or despair with their attempts to “*persuade state Republicans to move on from Trump*”. This attitude is further reinforced by the phrase “*in recent weeks*”, which implies a sustained and ongoing struggle, contributing to a sense of exasperation. The idiom creates a clear, realistic picture that helps readers

understand the challenge and apparent despair of the situation. It conveys a critical yet sympathetic tone that aids in the audience's comprehension of the political dilemma while discretely emphasizing state Republicans' persistent support of Trump.

Haley's allies say they feel like they have been tilting at proverbial windmills in recent weeks, trying to convince state Republicans to move on from Trump because he is not in the party's best interest.

The Washington Post / February 24, 2024 / 'He has been almost invincible': Why Trump is likely to dominate South Carolina / By Josh Dawsey. (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/02/24/trump-haley-south-carolina-republican-primary/>)

The next example uses the fixed expression *uphill battle*, which means 'a very difficult struggle'. The phraseological unit is used as an attitude marker to represent difficulty and challenge. The expression *uphill battle* implies that Haley has a difficult fight ahead. This phrase suggests that it takes a lot of work and persistence to oppose hate with more inspiring messages, like optimism and hope. It presents a realistic evaluation of the challenges encountered by those who support positive change in a society where unfavorable opinions could prevail. The pragmatic potential of the phrase *uphill battle* lies in its ability to convey the difficulty, determination, and emotional depth of Haley's challenge.

"I'm real proud of what Nikki Haley has done," said Katon Dawson, a top Haley adviser in South Carolina, when asked whether she had a chance. "Donald Trump knows how to bottle anger and sell it. Nikki Haley knows how to bottle optimism and hope. It's easier to sell hate so it's an uphill battle."

The Washington Post / February 24, 2024 / 'He has been almost invincible': Why Trump is likely to dominate South Carolina / By Josh Dawsey. (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/02/24/trump-haley-south-carolina-republican-primary/>)

Another newspaper genre considered for the further examination of pragmatic potential of phraseological units is business. The articles under discussion have been published in The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal.

The use of the phrasal verb *fall behind* – 'to fail to do something fast enough or on time' – boosts the impact of the statement by suggesting a significant risk or disadvantage if action is not taken

promptly. This encourages reader engagement by prompting them to consider the implications of falling behind in the race for clean energy development. At the same time, this phrasal verb can serve as an attitude marker that helps to reflect a concerned attitude toward the potential outcomes and underscore the importance of addressing the issue of clean energy. The boosting expressions 'fall behind' grabs the reader's attention and underscores the importance of the issue, compelling them to contemplate the potential consequences of inaction.

There is a growing sense that both the European Union and Norway, which is not an official member but follows many of the European Union's policies, could fall behind in the sprint for clean energy.

The New York Times / February 13, 2024 / This Arctic Circle Town Expected a Green Energy Boom. Then Came Bidenomics / By Jeanna Smialek and Ana Swanson. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/13/business/economy/norway-inflation-reduction-act.html>)

The following sentence demonstrates the way journalists employ boosting techniques to allow them to present the information in a balanced and persuasive manner, encouraging reader engagement and prompting reflection on the implications of government policies on economic stability and market dynamics. To start with, phrasal verb *touch off* – 'to make something begin, especially a difficult or violent situation' – clearly describes the complexity of the issue and the potential negative consequences in case of initiating a subsidy war. Another phrasal verb *end up* – 'to find yourself in a place or situation at the end of a process or period of time' – adds to the impact of this expression by suggesting an inevitable progression toward the described outcome. The phrasal verb *prop up* – 'to give support to something, especially a country or organization, so that it can continue to exist in a difficult situation' – evokes the idea of artificial support, while the idiom *cannot stand on their own two feet* – 'to be not able to provide all of the things you need for living without help from anyone else' – highlights the dependency of these companies on external assistance. By presenting the outcome as a likely result rather than a certainty, the writer encourages readers to reflect on the implications of such a scenario. This approach stimulates thought and discussion about the risks of government intervention in the market and the importance of prudent policymaking.

There is reason for the hesitance. Countries do not want to touch off a wasteful subsidy war, one where they end up proping up companies that cannot stand on their own two feet.

The New York Times / February 13, 2024 / This Arctic Circle Town Expected a Green Energy Boom. Then Came Bidenomics / By Jeanna Smialek and Ana Swanson. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/13/business/economy/norway-inflation-reduction-act.html>)

The below extract illustrates the use of the phraseological unit *embark on* – ‘to start something new or important’ – in the phrase “embarking on an ambitious plan” that employs a boosting element to highlight the significance of the CEO’s vision for the company. This choice of language aims to capture the reader’s attention and emphasize the magnitude of the CEO’s aspirations for the company. The phrasal verb *take over* – ‘to begin to have control of something’ – engages readers by prompting them to consider the implications of Bernard Looney assuming leadership of the London-based oil giant. It stimulates curiosity about Looney’s background, qualifications, and potential impact on the company’s operations and strategic direction. By describing Looney’s leadership in terms of both its promise and its early end, these phraseological elements collectively strengthen the sentence’s communicative power and influence readers’ opinions of the event’s significance for a company and its future.

CEO Bernard Looney resigned abruptly Tuesday over past relationships with colleagues, the company said, less than four years after taking over the London-based oil giant and embarking on an ambitious plan to position it at the vanguard of the global transition to renewable energy.

The Wall Street Journal / September 12, 2023 / BP CEO Bernard Looney Resigns Over Past Relationships With Colleagues / By Jenny Strasburg. (<https://www.wsj.com/business/energy-oil/bp-ceo-bernard-looney-resigns-e3fb4dc1>)

The next example shows, how the writer stance and reader engagement can be achieved in the same article through description of events by means of a colourful idiom *riding a wave of sth.* – ‘to be helped by being connected to something attractive or interesting’ – in the phrase “*before riding a wave of resurgent profits last year*”, which suggests effortless success, while “resurgent profits” underscores the magnitude of the financial turnaround. This choice of language aims to capture the reader’s attention and highlight the significant improvement

in BP’s financial performance. This idiom encourages reader engagement by inviting them to reflect on the complexities of corporate leadership and the dynamics shaping BP’s performance in the marketplace.

Looney had become the recognized face of BP, having quickly put his mark on the company as he steered it through the brutal first year of the pandemic. Amid steep losses and job cuts, BP sharply cut its dividend in 2020, before riding a wave of resurgent profits last year on high energy prices fueled by the global economic recovery and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

The Wall Street Journal / September 12, 2023 / BP CEO Bernard Looney Resigns Over Past Relationships With Colleagues / By Jenny Strasburg. (<https://www.wsj.com/business/energy-oil/bp-ceo-bernard-looney-resigns-e3fb4dc1>)

An instance of the influence of the writer stance on the reader is shown in another example, which demonstrates the pragmatic potential of phraseological units in the articles on cultural issues. In the following newspaper extract, the phrasal verb *drag on and on* – ‘to go on for too long’ – suggests the scale and duration of the project. Using the attitude indicator strategy, the phraseological unit *dragged on and on* expresses the author’s assessment of the delayed reconstruction project. The phrase *on and on* highlights how tiresome and seemingly endless the delays are, conveying a sense of annoyance and discontent. It also functions as a subtly critical assessment of the unresolved problem. Furthermore, the expression emotionally connects with readers, bringing them into line with the author’s opinion and enhancing the narrative’s effect.

The school has its share of problems, of course – an ambitious reconstruction project that has dragged on and on, intermittent discipline issues, and the continuing effort to overcome setbacks from a year of subpar “distance learning” and a few more months of on-and-off in-person learning during the pandemic.

The Washington Post / September 11, 2023 / Most teachers are too busy to be culture warriors / By Jim Geraghty. (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/09/11/teachers-too-busy-for-culture-war/>)

The following sample of the discursive use of the phraseological unit shows how the writer can spark curiosity and interest among readers. Thus, the idiom *on the road* – ‘traveling to different places’ – is a good tool for boosting, as it evokes imagery of travel and exploration. It suggests a sense of

adventure and novelty associated with getting one's hair cut in different locations while traveling. This phrase may resonate with readers who enjoy traveling or have experienced similar situations of getting services while away from home.

Sometime over the past few years, I came to a realization: I was getting my hair cut while on the road more often than while close to home.

The Washington Post / October 27, 2023 / For true cultural immersion, get a haircut on your next trip / By Chris Dong. (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/travel/tips/haircut-barber-abroad/>)

Table 1 summarizes the analysis of thirteen phraseological units from the online editions of major American newspapers, including *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times*. It provides an overview of the phraseological units examined, classifying them according to the tactics they use (such as markers, hedges, or boosters), and their pragmatic potential within the context of the articles. By organizing these elements, the table provides a clear and concise comprehension of how phraseological units shape tone, reader engagement, and the communicative impact of the discourse.

Table 1 – Pragmatic potential of phraseological units in contemporary newspaper genres

| Phraseological Unit | Strategy | Pragmatic Potential |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| To shell out money | <i>Booster</i> | Highlights casual or careless spending, reinforcing criticism of the candidates' actions. |
| Tilting at windmills | <i>Booster; Hedge, Attitude marker</i> | Enhances imagery, making the text vivid and memorable. Conveys critical tone, aiding readers' understanding of the despair of the situation. |
| Uphill battle | <i>Attitude marker</i> | Reflects the difficulty and determination required to promote positive messages in a politically charged environment. |
| Fall behind | <i>Booster, Attitude marker</i> | Boosts urgency by highlighting significant risks of inaction; reflects concern over the implications of failing in the clean energy race. |
| Touch off | <i>Booster</i> | Clearly describes the complexity and potential negative consequences of initiating a subsidy war. |
| End up | <i>Booster</i> | Highlights an inevitable or foreseeable negative outcome, compelling readers to reflect on the consequences of poor decision-making or policy choices. |
| Prop up | <i>Booster</i> | Suggests artificial support, adding a critical tone to the description of companies' dependence on subsidies. |
| Cannot stand on their own two feet | <i>Attitude marker</i> | Critiques dependency, emphasizing unsustainability and appealing to shared values of independence and self-reliance. |
| Embark on | <i>Booster</i> | Highlights the significance of the CEO's ambitious vision. |
| Take over | <i>Booster</i> | Engages readers by prompting curiosity about the implications of the CEO's leadership and its abrupt end. |
| Riding a wave of resurgent profits | <i>Booster</i> | Suggests effortless success, highlighting BP's financial turnaround, and invites readers to consider the dynamics of corporate leadership. |
| Drag on and on | <i>Attitude marker</i> | Expresses frustration with prolonged delays, evoking a sense of annoyance and discontent while subtly critiquing inefficiency. |
| On the road | <i>Booster</i> | Evokes imagery of adventure and exploration, resonating with readers who value travel and cultural immersion. |

The analysis of the pragmatic potential of phraseological units examined across newspaper genres – politics, business, and culture – reveals that each genre has unique patterns in how these units are used and intended to achieve its communication objectives. In political articles, phraseological units are purposefully used to emphasize authority, persuasiveness, and clarity. They have a crucial role

in shaping political discourse and influencing public opinion. For example, phrases like “shell out money” criticize the financial choices made by political candidates, while “uphill battle” describes the determination of political leaders in reaching their objectives. Such linguistic means seek to establish political narratives as approachable and powerful. Phraseological units in business articles concentrate

on describing market dynamics, corporate strategies, and financial trends. They give readers precise information about economic dangers, company operations, and prospects. For instance, the phrasal verb “prop up” criticizes excessive financial support, “fall behind” stresses the need to remain competitive in fast-paced markets, and “ride a wave” indicates easy financial success that depends on external factors. Phraseological units in cultural articles provide a strong emphasis on individuality and cultural diversity. They aim to promote understanding of cultural peculiarities and reflection of personal experiences or social patterns. For instance, the idiom “on the road” brings forth images of travel and adventure. Expressions used in such articles are frequently shaped by the author’s cultural background, encourage discussion and personal involvement by emotionally connecting readers to cultural issues.

Conclusion

Phraseological units are essential elements for enhancing pragmatic efficiency of newspaper discourse. Based on the findings of the research, we can conclude that these linguistic structures, combined with other language techniques, significantly improve the communicative impact of newspaper articles. By purposefully employing phraseological units, journalists can shape reader perceptions, highlight significant themes, and approach challenging topics in an engaging and intriguing manner.

The analysis of phraseological units within newspaper discourse, conducted through the lens of K. Hyland’s model of interactional meta-discourse,

underscores their considerable pragmatic potential in shaping reader engagement and conveying writer stance. This study has shown that attitude indicators, hedges, and boosters are essential to the deliberate use of phraseological units, enabling journalists to strike a balance between persuasion, inclusivity, and authority. For example, attitude indicators like “up-hill battle” create empathy and feeling of solidarity, boosters like “fall behind” highlight urgency, and hedges like “tilting at proverbial windmills” reduce critical remarks. These results demonstrate how phraseological units can serve as expressive tools that improve the dynamic exchange between authors and readers, going beyond their literal meanings.

Additionally, the study has emphasized that phraseological units change their roles according to the type of newspaper article – politics, business, or culture – reflecting the distinct communication objectives of each field. Business articles concentrate on communicating market trends, political news frequently place a higher priority on authority and persuasion, and cultural articles highlight diversity and creativity.

Although this study has provided valuable insights, it also highlighted the need for further research of the usage of phraseological elements in various types of newspaper articles. Additionally, a comprehensive experimental investigation on reader engagement and interpretation of information presented in the newspaper edition is required. Finally, although linguistic studies exploring pragmatic possibilities of phraseological units in the newspaper discourse are relatively few, this is still an interesting field for future research.

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Date of receipt of the article: April 18, 2024.

Accepted: November 30, 2024.