

*Natalya Sidenko, Kherson National Technical University,
Senior Lecturer, the chair of foreign languages*

Replacement of the component of a phraseological unit: specification of meaning (on the material of the English “yellow” press)

Abstract: The paper deals with research of the linguistic and extra-linguistic factors while choosing the language and speech correlates in the device of replacement of the component of a phraseological unit. The paper studies impact of the structural changes on the semantic ones in specifying the meaning of a phraseological unit on the material of the English “yellow” press.

Keywords: English “yellow” press, language and speech correlates, replacement of the component of a phraseological unit, specification of meaning, writer’s associations.

The English “yellow” press shows a great potential for manipulating the reader’s conscience. The phraseological units appear to be a powerful tool in speech manipulation. Their high level of anticipation is abruptly lowed by their deformation. Occasional transformations adapt means of phraseology to the strategies of the English “yellow” press. The most widespread device of phraseological deformation in this kind of press is replacement of the component of a phraseological unit (PU). This linguistic problem was investigated by S. P. Volosevich, Y. V. Dinova, O. V. Kunin, A. S. Naciscione, I. Y. Tretyakova, N. L. Shadrin and others.

Nevertheless, a detailed analysis of this phenomenon in terms of its applied character in the course of discourse approach facilitates the development of the general problem and, therefore, is a matter of current interest.

With replacement of the component of a PU the correlates can manifest relationships in language or those in speech. The latter are generated by the speaker's/writer's cognitive associations evoked by his/her intentions or a definite speech situation.

An association is a regular natural link between two contents of conscience, psychic phenomena existing in an individual's experience, if one actualized, another arises [1, p. 24]. Associations are based on similarity, contrast, contiguity in space and time, comprising the subclass of simple mechanistic ones. Another subclass encompasses logic associations that reflect cause-and-effect and genus-species relationships [2, p. 158]. Every human-being builds his/her own experience uniting it with social and universal or common to humanity. The associations resting on the human and social experience are likely to be more or less universal. Their conventional pattern implies relative objectivity. The subjective associations are difficult to be predicted as they are stipulated by an individual's world perception and life experience.

Any structural changes in composition of a PU lead to semantic ones. Changes in semantics of a PU can specify, explicate, intensify and literalize its meaning [3, p. 21 – 22]. Specification of meaning is known to be the leading function performed by semantic changes of PUs.

The aim of this paper is to investigate what types of the language changes in the composition of a PU function in specifying its meaning and how the associative mechanism works while choosing a speech correlate.

It should be stressed that the ties between the language correlates are defined as paradigmatic i.e. the correlates are synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms, paronyms, homonyms.

Due to synonymic replacement of the component of a PU it is possible to add new elements to its meaning:

Treat smb as/like mud/a dog/dirt/muck/the dirt beneath/under one's feet — to treat unfair, bad: "Despite being obsessed with Sarah, he treated

her like crap and cheated on her. “She’s treated the hired help like garbage for years” [4, p. 6].

Crap (=smth that is very bad or of bad quality) replaces *mud/muck* (=smth that is unpleasant and of bad quality), increasing the negative contents (comp.: *unpleasant* and *very bad*). Alternatively, *garbage* (=smth that is no longer needed and has been thrown away) brings new shades of meaning, namely uselessness, inappropriateness, some worn resource.

To have a roving eye — to always be looking for a chance to have romantic relationships: We’ve also detailed her battles with her husband, “the Voice” star Blake Shelton, over his wandering eye [5, p.7].

Synonyms “rove” (=travel from one place to another) and “wander” (=walk slowly without a clear direction or purpose) differ in purpose-oriented character of the action and speed of taking it. One of the meanings of *wander* (if the man’s hands wander he touches the body of a woman he is with, esp. where she doesn’t want him to) has the same of movement without a clear direction or purpose. Replacement of *roving* by *wandering* dispels the myth of a romantic relationship.

Keep one’s hands off — used to tell someone not to touch someone or smth: Michelle went gunning for Kerry Washington — and now she’s warned Gwyneth Paltrow to keep her mitts off her man [6, p. 26].

Worship the (very) ground smb threads/walks on — to admire or love someone so much that you cannot see their faults: But I know my husband isn’t a cheater. He cherishes the ground I walk on [7, p.60].

Hands is a neutral word and *mitts* belongs to informal style, though *worship* expresses a definite sacramental attitude compared to a more neutral *cherish* (=love someone or smth very much and take care of them well).

Substitution of any component of a PU for an antonym brings about the opposite meaning acquired by this PU thereby specifying its meaning:

On solid ground — confident because you are dealing with a subject you are sure about or because you are in a safe situation: *Deni, 52, and the Dead Sara drummer, 28, have been dating for nearly two years and as The ENQUIRER has reported, their relationship was already on shaky ground* [8, p. 4].

Because of limited morphological means available in English the antonymic replacement of prepositions in the composition of phraseological units is widespread:

Go/walk down the aisle — to get married: Conservative Party chairman Grant Shapps said; ‘Ed Milliband and the SNP have signed the pre-nup and are now half-way up the aisle’ [9, p.7].

Replacements by hyponyms involve variations in quantity, size, material type, food, clothes, body parts, temperature, color, natural phenomena etc. [10, p. 12]. Accordingly, such variations specify the meaning of a PU expanding it:

Fifth wheel — odd: Courteney’s been welcoming of Justin, but he’s realized she and Jen (Jennifer Aniston) share a stronger bond than he’ll ever have. Jen confides in Courteney, not Justin!’ He feels like the third wheel to Jen’s girlfriends when it comes to nailing down the wedding or anything else! [11, p.13];

Be in smb’s good books — used to say that someone is pleased with you or your work: It was quite simply the best entertainment of the year so far, with enough self-important, small-time, petty characters to keep Ricky Gervais in scripts for life [12, p. 21].

The character (Justin) is the last who has influence on his fiancée after her two girl-friends, but he doesn’t feel odd. The new component “*scripts*” specifies the professional sphere of a doer/agent of the action.

Replacements by homonyms and paronyms are crucial as means of specification of phraseological meaning as well, for example:

Free and easy — very informal and relaxed: Spree and easy [13, p.56];

To show/prove ones mettle — to be ready to try as hard as possible with courage and determination: I know the weather stinks at the moment, but everyone should show a bit of metal like they did in the IRON AGE [14, p.41].

Mettle is substituted for homophone “*meta*” with a view to adding new shades of meaning, in particular, endurance and tenacity; and *free* is replaced by *spree* so that to specify the informal manner of behavior.

It should be noted that the choice of a word in replacement of the component of a PU for the purpose of specification of its meaning can be made off the limits of the language rules and relationships. Consequently, it is grounded on the speaker’s/writer’s associations triggered by a speech situation.

The mankind has already established certain associative links between separate elements of the surrounding world where there is a space for a human-being. By way of illustration human life is associated with movement which in its turn is linked with a road by the contiguity in space:

Come to /roar into/splutter into life — to suddenly start working: But before that, the minute he became famous, Robin roared into the fast lane [15, p.38].

An associative link on the level of direct literal meaning of the words “*life*” and “*lane*” is transferred to that of their figurative ones (*fast lane = an exciting way of life that involves dangerous and expensive activities*). As a consequence, the occasional phraseological unit gains the meaning “to actively spend time in a way that involves dangerous and expensive activities” specifying the manner of the action.

However, the associations created on the basis of people’s social experience are known to be more complex for perception and interpretation. Substitutions made in a definite society, not necessarily nationally marked, can be unfamiliar to strangers:

To beat smb to the draw/punch — to do or to get smth before anyone else does: Ladbrokes spokeswoman Jessica Bridge said: “At odds of 1-5 it’s impossible to see Jim being beaten to the crown” [14, p.4].

Variants “draw” and “punch” are tied by the seme of gaining victory in a competition. By means of replacement *crown* is associated with casino “CrownPoker.” The fragment of the article deals with Jim Mullen who in 2013 — 2014 (the article dated from the 29th of January, 2013) was one of the claimants to the position of executive director of Ladbrokes — the British bookmaker’s company. The company’s secretary (Jessica Bridge) is convinced that it is Jim who will get this position before anyone else. Phraseological unit “*beat smb to the draw/punch*” has this meaning; furthermore, *crown* specifies the sphere of success — the gambling business. It should be stressed that Jim Mullen became the head of the company-giant in 2015.

If the subjective associations predominate in the relationship between two correlates then substitutions are difficult to predict but they can be recognized and understood:

Lock horns — to argue or fight with someone: On May10, the two were spotted locking lips at Nobu restaurant in Malibu [16, p.2].

The writer compares the pair’s kissing with fighting by similarity of the motor actions.

No matter what type of associations arises between the speech correlates, replacement of the component of a PU results in adding new semes to the semantic structure of a PU specifying its meaning:

Lead smb by the nose — to influence someone so much that you can completely control everything that they do: Most people give you cocaine when you are famous. It gives a certain control over you... You are being led around by your nostril [15, p.31].

Substitution in the example given above indicates drug addiction as the cause of influence.

Replacement of *do* by *diet* specifies the purpose of the action that lies in keeping the weight off:

Do or die — used to say that someone is determined to do smth very brave or dangerous even if they die attempting it (to win or to die): It's "diet or die' time for Hollywood HEAVY — weight Jonah Hill! [15, p.26].

Replacement of *make* by the verbs "waltz", "eat", "force" emphasizes the manner of the action, whereas the substitution by the verb "eat" demonstrates omission of the sense of successful promotion:

To make one's way — to go towards smth, especially when it is difficult or takes a lot time; to make a career: JON GOSSELIN wants to waltz his way back onto TV — and show up his ex-wife Kate in the process! [17, p.50];

Her friends are concerned that Star is eating her way into the hospital. They have previously told the ENQUIER she's a self-confessed foodaholic. Star's love to food had already contributed to her open heart surgery in 2010 [18, p.28];

Moyes knows United will have to play a lot better than this if they are to force their way into the top four — and Liverpool's emphatic win over Everton means they again failed to make in-roads into the six-point gap between them and their old foes [19, p.69].

The next example shows how the characteristic is given to the doer of the action in terms of replacement of *life* by *money*:

To run/flee for one's life — to run as quickly as possible as if to save one's life: Bolton boss Dougie Freedman said: "I'm very proud. We gave a top side a run for their money [19, p.66].

The team coach boasts that they have made the opponents run a lot and work off money to be paid. Thus, they play for the sake of earning money not of presenting a game.

Substitutes can specify the object of the action:

To mend the matters — to manage the things, make the things or situation better: She just wants to talk face to face and mend their broken friendship [17, p.13];

After all they have been through, having the baby would be a perfect reason for them to unite and mend their marriage” [4, p. 37].

Sometimes the writer directly states the sense of a situation without using any associations:

Lost/ rapt/ shrouded/wrapped in mystery— unknown, undefined: His death was shrouded in controversy as Travolta subsequently accused an ambulance driver and a Bahamian politician of a \$25 million extortion plot [20, p.5].

Replacement of *mystery* by *controversy* stresses the writer's awareness of the father's serious accusations related to his son's death unaccepted by the officials to unravel the mystery of this case.

In conclusion it is worth pointing out that the function of occasional specification of the meaning of a PU while replacing its component is performed equally by the language and speech correlates. The language correlates are linked by synonymic, antonymic, paronymic, hyponymic, homonymic relationships. The choice of the speech correlates depends on the situation that triggers the definite speech associations based on the universal, social and individual experience.

The results of this investigation are of great value to researchers in studying the device of replacement of the component of a PU as a means of the speech manipulation in the English “yellow” press.

References:

1. Краткий психологический словарь / Сост. Л. А. Карпенко; Под общ. ред. А. В. Петровского, М. Г. Яроневского, — М.: Политиздат, 1985. — 431 с.
2. Столяренко Л. Д. Основы психологии. 15-е изд.: [Учебное пособие] / Л. Д. Столяренко. — Ростов н/Д: Феникс, 2006. — 672 с.

3. Третьякова И. Ю. Окказиональная фразеология: структурно-семантический и коммуникативно-прагматический аспекты: Автореф. дис. на соискание н. ст. докт. филол. наук: 10.02.01 / И. Ю. Третьякова. — Ярославль, 2011. — 23 с.
4. OK! [Electronic Resource]. — October 13, 2014. — Mode of Access: <http://www.pdfmagazines.org/tags/OK>
5. The National Enquirer [Electronic Resource]. — April 7, 2014. — Mode of Access: <http://www.pdfmagazines.org/tags/National+Enquirer>
6. The National Enquirer [Electronic Resource]. — October 27, 2014. — Mode of Access: <http://www.pdfmagazines.org/tags/National+Enquirer>
7. OK! [Electronic Resource]. — July 21, 2014. — Mode of Access: <http://www.pdfmagazines.org/tags/OK>
8. The National Enquirer [Electronic Resource]. — March 16, 2015. — Mode of Access: <http://www.pdfmagazines.org/tags/National+Enquirer>
9. The Daily Mail [Electronic Resource]. — March 7, 2015. — Mode of Access: <http://www.pdfmagazines.org/tags/Daily+Mail>
10. Динова Я. В. Окказиональные модификации фразеологических единиц при помощи замены компонентов (на материале английского и русского языков): Автореферат дис. на соискание н. ст. канд. филол. наук: 10.02.10 — сравнительно-историческое, типологическое и сопоставительное языкознание / Я. В. Динова. — Москва, 2013. — 23 с.
11. The National Enquirer [Electronic Resource]. — January 26, 2015. — Mode of Access: <http://www.pdfmagazines.org/tags/National+Enquirer>
12. The Daily Mirror [Electronic Resource]. — February 28, 2015. — Mode of Access: <http://www.pdfmagazines.org/tags/DM/>
13. The Daily Star [Electronic Resource]. — April 24, 2014. — Mode of Access: <http://www.pdfmagazines.org/tags/DS>
14. The Daily Star [Electronic Resource]. — January 29, 2013. — Mode of Access: <http://www.pdfmagazines.org/tags/DS>

15. The National Enquirer [Electronic Resource]. — September 1, 2014. — Mode of Access: <http://www.pdfmagazines.org/tags/National+Enquirer>
16. The National Enquirer [Electronic Resource]. — June 2, 2014. — Mode of Access: <http://www.pdfmagazines.org/tags/National+Enquirer>
17. The National Enquirer [Electronic Resource]. — July 15, 2014. — Mode of Access: <http://www.pdfmagazines.org/tags/National+Enquirer>
18. The National Enquirer [Electronic Resource]. — February 9, 2015. — Mode of Access: <http://www.pdfmagazines.org/tags/National+Enquirer>
19. The Daily Express [Electronic Resource]. — January 29, 2013. — Mode of Access: <http://www.pdfmagazines.org/tags/DE>
20. The National Enquirer [Electronic Resource]. — September 15, 2014. — Mode of Access: <http://www.pdfmagazines.org/tags/National+Enquirer>