

PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF PLANT-RELATED PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN THE UZBEK LANGUAGE

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Abstract: This article examines the pragmatic functions of phraseological units containing plant names in the Uzbek language. The study focuses on the evaluative, emotive-expressive, persuasive, and ironic functions of such units in discourse. Using qualitative and contextual analysis, the research demonstrates that plant-related phraseological units function as effective pragmatic tools for expressing the speaker's attitude and influencing the listener. The findings reveal that these phraseological units reflect national cultural values and collective worldview, highlighting the close relationship between language, culture, and pragmatic meaning (Maslova, 2001; Vorobyov, 1997). The study contributes to phraseological and linguocultural research by emphasizing the pragmatic potential of plant imagery in Uzbek linguistic consciousness.

Keywords: phraseological units, pragmatics, plant imagery, Uzbek language, linguoculturology, discourse.

1. Introduction

Phraseological units occupy a significant place in the lexical system of a language due to their semantic stability, imagery, and expressive potential (Kunin, 1996; Telia, 1996). In modern linguistics, increasing attention is paid not only to the semantic structure of phraseological units but also to their pragmatic functions in discourse (Levinson, 1983; Mey, 2001). From this perspective, phraseological units are viewed as important communicative tools that serve specific speaker intentions in concrete speech situations (Yule, 1996).

In the Uzbek language, a considerable number of phraseological units are formed on the basis of plant names, such as to take root (Rahmatullayev, 1992), to bear fruit (Rahmatullayev, 1992), to sow seeds (Telia, 1996), and to become a dry branch (Kunin, 1996). These expressions reflect the close connection between language, traditional agricultural culture, and national worldview. However, the pragmatic aspects of plant-related phraseological units in Uzbek have not yet been sufficiently explored (Maslova, 2001). This study aims to analyze their pragmatic functions in discourse from a linguocultural perspective.

2. Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Phraseological studies traditionally focus on the semantic and structural properties of fixed expressions (Kunin, 1996; Telia, 1996). From a pragmatic standpoint, phraseological units are examined as discourse elements that convey evaluative meaning, emotional attitude, and communicative intention (Yule, 1996; Mey, 2001). According to Levinson (1983), pragmatic meaning arises from the interaction between linguistic units and contextual factors, which is especially relevant for phraseological expressions.

Linguocultural studies emphasize that phraseological units encode cultural values and collective experience (Maslova, 2001; Vorobyov, 1997). Plant imagery, in particular, is associated with concepts such as growth, continuity, productivity, and decline. Therefore, the pragmatic interpretation of plant-related phraseological units requires an integrated approach combining pragmatics and linguoculturology (Maslova, 2001).

3. Methodology

The study employs qualitative research methods, including descriptive analysis, semantic-pragmatic analysis, and contextual analysis (Mey, 2001). A corpus of more than 30 plant-related phraseological units was collected from Uzbek phraseological dictionaries, literary texts, and journalistic discourse (Rahmatullayev, 1992; Telia, 1996). Each unit was analyzed in context to determine its dominant pragmatic function and communicative role (Yule, 1996).

4. Pragmatic Functions of Plant-Related Phraseological Units

4.1 Evaluative Function

One of the primary pragmatic functions of plant-related phraseological units is evaluation. Such expressions allow speakers to convey positive or negative judgments in a concise and expressive manner (Rahmatullayev, 1992; Kunin, 1996). For instance, the phraseological unit to bear fruit is used to evaluate actions or efforts as successful and productive (Rahmatullayev, 1992). Conversely, expressions such as to wither at the root or to remain like a dry branch convey negative evaluation, indicating failure or decline (Kunin, 1996).

These units function as powerful evaluative tools, enabling speakers to express attitudes indirectly and metaphorically (Mey, 2001).

4.2 Emotive-Expressive Function

Plant-related phraseological units also possess strong emotive-expressive potential (Bally, 1952). Expressions such as to bloom like a flower convey joy, emotional uplift, and positive psychological states (Telia, 1996). In contrast, units like to tremble like a leaf express fear or anxiety (Rahmatullayev, 1992), while to harden like a dry tree denotes emotional coldness or indifference (Kunin, 1996).

Through vivid imagery, these phraseological units intensify emotional expression and enhance the pragmatic impact of discourse (Yule, 1996).

4.3 Persuasive Function

From a pragmatic perspective, phraseological units often serve persuasive purposes by strengthening arguments and influencing the listener's perception (Levinson, 1983; Mey, 2001). Plant-related expressions such as to sow seeds imply long-term strategic action and future outcomes (Telia, 1996), while a deeply rooted problem emphasizes the seriousness and persistence of an issue (Kunin, 1996).

By employing such imagery, speakers increase the credibility and rhetorical effectiveness of their statements (Maslova, 2001).

4.4 Ironic and Critical Function

Certain plant-related phraseological units function as means of irony and implicit criticism (Galperin, 1981). Expressions such as a hollow fruit or a leafless tree are used to criticize individuals or situations that appear substantial but lack real value (Telia, 1996). These units allow speakers to express negative judgments in an indirect and culturally acceptable manner, thereby enhancing pragmatic subtlety (Maslova, 2001).

5. Plant Imagery and National Worldview

From a linguocultural perspective, plant imagery in Uzbek phraseology reflects traditional values associated with agriculture, labor, and continuity of life (Maslova, 2001; Vorobyov, 1997). Concepts such as root, seed, tree, and fruit symbolize ancestry, growth, effort, and achievement. As a result, plant-related phraseological units serve not only pragmatic functions but also act as carriers of cultural meaning and collective memory (Telia, 1996; Rahmatullayev, 1992).

6. Conclusion

The analysis demonstrates that plant-related phraseological units in the Uzbek language perform a wide range of pragmatic functions, including evaluative, emotive-expressive, persuasive, and ironic functions (Kunin, 1996; Yule, 1996). These units enhance communicative effectiveness by allowing speakers to express attitudes and intentions in a culturally grounded and metaphorically rich manner. The findings confirm that plant imagery plays a significant role in shaping pragmatic meaning and reflects the close interrelation between language, culture, and discourse. This study contributes to further research on phraseology by highlighting the pragmatic and linguocultural potential of plant-based expressions in Uzbek.

(Maslova, 2001; Vorobyov, 1997).

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