

UDC 811.111'37

DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/bsps-2024.4.14>

PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS WITH COMPONENT WORD “HORSE” IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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In the phraseological systems of almost all Indo-European languages, the associations related to the image and symbol of the horse are quite stable and no so diverse. This follows from the similar development conditions of the respective countries and, therefore, a similar perception of the horse in the minds of native speakers. Most of the words like this have vivid imagery, and therefore play an important role in the creation of idioms. We should bear in mind that the word ‘horse’ has acquired a symbolic meaning since ancient times, because then it had an exceptional importance in the everyday life of people (it becomes an irreplaceable multifunctional assistant, unlike other animals that could replace it only in certain situations). In addition, due to its external (beauty, grace, nobility) and internal (endurance, speed, strength) characteristics, the horse was used by representatives of different strata of the population, which contributed to the spread of its symbolization. The same function was performed by sacred texts, where the image of a horse was widely used (in times when religious institutions were the centre of people’s ideological life and the only source of gaining knowledge about the surrounding world, it deepened the symbolism of a horse even more). But the symbolic meaning can be acquired only in a stable context, therefore ‘horse’ becomes a component word of a large number of word combinations in different languages, and as a result these evolved to collocations or set expressions which later got an idiomatic nature. In a phraseological unit, where the lexical meaning of each word matters not, we perceive the whole expression as an indivisible integrity, where one or another component word motivates the meaning of the unit as a whole. Keeping it in mind, in the current study, we have singled out all phraseological units with the word ‘horse’ from the corpus of phraseology of the English language, and made an attempt to typologize them (by thematic groups, linguistic affiliation of the root word, and semantics). Special attention was paid to looking for the roots of certain symbolic meanings, which could be traced deep into history or just hypothesized.

Key words: vocabulary, phraseology, phraseological unit, concept, connotation, symbolic meaning, word-component ‘horse’.

ФРАЗЕОЛОГІЧНІ ОДИНИЦІ З КОМПОНЕНТОМ «КІНЬ» В АНГЛІЙСЬКІЙ МОВІ

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У фразеологічних системах майже всіх індоєвропейських мов асоціації, пов’язані з образом та символом коня, є досить сталими. Це впливає зі схожих умов розвитку відповідних країн, а отже, і подібного сприйняття коня у свідомості носіїв мови. Слова-символи (у тому числі й «кінь») мають яскраву образність, тому і відіграють важливу роль при творенні фразеологізмів. Слово

«кінь» набуло символічного значення із найдавніших часів, оскільки тоді ця тварина мала виняткову важливість у повсякденному житті людей (кінь стає незамінним багатофункціональним помічником, на відміну від інших тварин, що могли його замінити, але тільки в певних ситуаціях). Крім того, завдяки зовнішнім (краса, граційність, шляхетність) та внутрішнім (витривалість, швидкість, сила) характеристикам коня використовували представники найрізноманітніших верств населення, що сприяло поширенню його символізації. Подібну функцію виконували і священні тексти, де широко використовувався образ коня (у часи, коли релігійні установи були осередком ідеологічного життя людей і єдиним джерелом здобуття знань про навколишній світ, це ще більше поглиблювало його символізацію). Але символічне значення можливо реалізувати тільки в стійкому контексті, тому слово «кінь» стає словом-компонентом низки фразеологічних одиниць у різних мовах, тому стійкі словосполучення зі словом-компонентом «кінь» набувають фразеологічного значення. У свою чергу, фразеологічне значення – це синтез значень слів-компонентів, які можуть зберігати чи втрачати своє власне значення, тоді як лексичне значення – характеристика певного окремого слова поза контекстом і незалежно від інших слів, що стоять поруч. У фразеологічній одиниці ми не розглядаємо лексичне значення кожного окремого слова, а усвідомлюємо їх як неподільну єдність, де те чи інше слово-компонент мотивує значення фразеологізму в цілому. Отже, у даному дослідженні з корпусу фразеології англійської мови нами було виокремлено всі фразеологічні одиниці із самим словом «кінь» у різних варіантах і проведено спробу їхньої типологізації (за тематичними групами, частиномовною приналежністю стрижневого слова та семантикою).

Ключові слова: лексика, фразеологія, фразеологічна одиниця, концепт, конотація, символічне значення, слово-компонент «кінь».

Introduction (Постановка проблеми).

The formation of the internal form in phraseological units is not necessarily based on a dominant feature. It is more stable than the internal form of a word, which is explained by the structure (separate spelling) and the nature (metaphoric change) of the phraseological meaning. It is closely intertwined with the imagery that appears as a result of the juxtaposition of free word combinations (prototypes of phraseological units) and reinterpreted word complexes (set expressions of various kinds). The meanings of free conjunctions motivate (in the most general terms) the semantics of phraseological units, show how a person imagines their own, “phraseological” concepts.

Indeed, the peculiarity of phraseological units is that they do not act as signs of primary nomination, i.e. direct naming of objects and phenomena, but secondarily nominate reality, reinterpreting it. Therefore, their analysis from the point of view of national and cultural specificity makes it possible to deepen and expand the semantic aspect of the study of the phrasemes (idioms) in any language. As for the specific analysis of individual thematically related groups of phraseological units, it will make it possible, in our opinion, to identify the very sphere of linguistic reflection in which the national originality of phraseology is most clearly manifested. If we apply the induction method to our search (directly from idioms in the phraseological dictionaries to a more general classification

or typology), the study and analysis of such components is prone to become even more interesting for a linguist in the beginning of the 21st century.

It is worth noting that phraseology as a science began to take shape relatively recently (at the beginning of the 1900s). Its development is traditionally associated with the name of a Swiss linguist Charles Bally (1865–1947) with the following outbreak in the Eastern European linguistics schools. The study of English phraseology dates back to the middle (U. Weinreich, I. Arnold) and the end (L. Lipka, W. Welte) of the XX century. There are numerous works which systematize and generalize the acquisitions of English Phraseology as a Linguistic discipline [see: 4, p. 7], and yet the researchers' utmost interest for this problem has not disappeared, and scientists of different generations are still engaged in its development. This is explained primarily by the great functional, semantic, and structural diversity of those units perceived as idioms, or Phraseological Units (PU). The interest European and North American academics pay these days to the phraseological studies has found its reflection in the multipage bibliography published by Cowie & Hovarth [3]. Various aspects of phraseology are still of interest to modern scientists, in particular their cataloguing by meaning-making components, among which zoosemic phraseological units (that is, idioms with the names of animals) occupy a prominent place. As noted by V. I. Rusnak, “The figura-

tive meanings of the names of animals and stable phrases that include these names are a wide layer of actively used units that make up a significant part of the phraseological corpus of any language” [2, p. 330]. In our opinion, it could be challenging to continue such an investigation, the **aim** of which would be the research of phraseological units with the meaning creating concept denoting an animal in the modern English language. In accordance with the research aim, we single out all phraseological units with the concept “horse” in the English language. A link to a similar work can be found in the article by V. I. Rusnak about Hutman & Cheremysin research (1976), who classified phraseological units «associated with the image of «cheval» (horse) in Russian and French» [2, p. 332]. But our primary **objectives** hereafter are: 1) to trace the same component word in the English language; 2) after identifying all the examples, to divide them into thematic groups; 3) for each group, to separate phraseological units that name an object or phenomenon, characterize them, describe them, carry the meaning of an action or its signs. Thus, phraseological units will be categorized into noun, adjective, verb or adverbial phrases (according to the parts of speech the root word belongs to) with taking the semantics of the whole unit into account, as well. Thus, the **object** of the research is the whole corpus of English phraseology, while its **subject** includes all the phraseological units with the word component “horse” in the English language.

The Body (Виклад основного матеріалу дослідження). Phraseology is a substantial part of vocabulary in any language as well as its most expressional component. These lexical units, also known as phrasemes, are stable, lexically indivisible and integral phrases (sentences) that are equal in meaning to one word. Therefore, the phraseological structure of the language makes it difficult to master when learning another language. The use of phraseology requires knowledge of language situations and the very form of the idiomatic collocation (PU). This difficulty is sometimes explained by the fact that the learner does not know how a certain phraseology acquired its modern form. However, along with the difficulties of assimilation, phraseological units reflect the peculiarities and originality of the grammatical and semantic structure of the combinations themselves,

which, together with other linguistic means, make up the lexical wealth and spiritual heritage of the people. Diversity of concept words in PU of the English language is impressive, but it is the concept word “horse” that represents a particular interest for us in the current study.

Since times immemorial (especially in Western Europe), the horse was the only publicly available means of transportation (including for postal service), and as such it became associated with a reliable source of information. So, in the English phraseological system we find the PU “(straight) from the horses mouth”, which means ‘from a reliable source, from the primary source’ (including the assessment of the situation). The thematic group «descriptive characteristics» includes the PU “a dead horse” – i.e., to cope with easy work faster and synonymous to it “a short horse is soon curried” (characteristic of the situation). The presence of the concept “horse” in phraseological units is due to the understanding of this animal as a labour force. The same perception of the horse is associated with the phraseological units of the “working” thematic group: “the willing horse never needs the spur” – a good worker does not need to be spurred on; a good horse should be rarely spurred. And hence – the simple use of the descriptive phrase “a willing horse” to denote a person who likes to work a lot. All the above mentioned units, as we can see, are characteristics of the worker. It was the horse’s ability to work that contributed to its equal understanding in the minds of English speakers.

The following thematic group «being persistent» is very closely related to the characteristic of working capacity. It includes: “to work like a horse” (“to work dead horse”) – very hard work; “to go before one’s horse to market” – to hurry, be impatient, run ahead, prematurely count profits; “you can take a horse to the water, but you cannot make him drink” – not everything can be won by force (evaluation as a statement); “to ask (a horse) the question” – to encourage work. In our opinion, here the meaning “to act jointly, together” is quite closely intertwined with the previous group of phraseological units, because, remembering the passion for horse racing characteristic of the inhabitants of the British Isles, the unity of the rider and the horse, understanding them as a single whole could not help but be reflected at the lexical level, first among professional riders, and then more

broadly: in the phraseological system of the language. Here we have the classic “*to put a horse to a fence*” – to force a horse to overcome a barrier, and the completely idiomatic “*a willing horse wouldn't drag*” – “you can't pull away from something or get anything from someone” (assessment of the situation, form of action); “*to put up one's horses together*” (“*to hitch horses together*”) – act together, jointly, in a group; to be friends, to get along: metaphorically – to marry – a form of action. Therefore, certain idioms related to this meaning appear, such as “*to spur (flog) a willing horse*” – to push a conscientious employee (characteristic of the employer) and to be excessively persistent (characteristic of the worker). Within the meaning paradigm related to work (as in a job or activity), we also single out the thematic group «give freedom to act» with the central phraseology “*to give a horse the bridle*” (“allow (give) a free hand”) – to give someone freedom of action, to give freedom, to untie one's hands.

The thematic group “evaluative characteristics” is quite numerous. It includes such phraseological units as “*a horse sense*” – common sense; “*a horse play*” – a crude farce, a crude joke; “*a horse laugh*” – a loud, rough laugh, giggle etc. The PU mentioned contain an assessment of the phenomenon, which is based on the identification of the horse's qualities and the rudeness of the simple worker who uses it (although at the same time certain elements of onomatopoeia are possible). Other examples of evaluative characteristics: “*a horse stumbles that has four legs*” (exists in several variants, such as: “*it is a good horse that never stumbles*”, “*homer sometimes sleeps*”) – there is no man without a flaw; “*(that's) a horse of another colour*” – it is quite another matter; “*a good horse cannot be a bad colour*» similar in meaning to “*you can see a bird not in flight*”, in which it is clear from the conversation what kind of person is in front of us, as well as “individual flaws do not reduce positive qualities”; “*it is strictly horse stuff*” meaning pure nonsense, complete nonsense; “*enough to make a horse laugh*” (also “*enough to make a saint swear*”) – something very funny, amusing; “*flies go to the lean horse*” – “where disaster strikes, there the grass withers”. The listed phraseological units of this group contain an assessment of the situation and are also associated with the identification of a horse with certain human traits.

Evaluation as a statement of a fact is present in a number of idioms, such as “*look gift horse in the mouth*” and its negative counterpart with an antonymic meaning (“*don't look a gift horse in the mouth*”); “*better lose the saddle than the horse*” – you should choose the lesser of two evils; “*agues come on horseback but go away on foot*” – calamity or trouble is usually delayed for a long time; “*every man has his hobby-horse*” – everyone has their own passions, whims. It is in these PU that the perception of the horse as a constant friend and companion is reflected, moreover, the loss of it brings the matter to nothing.

The thematic group “means of transportation and movement”, the main meaning of which is the identification of a horse with a fast and convenient “vehicle”, despite its historical longevity, is not prevailing in the phraseological system of the English language. Here, it is worth highlighting a few phraseological units. Those include “*horse and horse*” – head to head next to each other (about riders or jockeys, which acquires a metaphoric meaning for achieving the goal; in an equal position, not lagging behind); “*on horse of ten toes*” – on foot; “*hold your horses*” – don't worry, be quieter; take your time, take it easy. It is logical to add to the perception of a horse as the embodiment of speed and strength also the meaning of effortless movement, which can be provided by the combination of these two traits in an animal: “*to go round like a horse in a mill*” – all the time to follow the beaten path, avoid innovations – an image of action. The origin of the PU is connected with a historical fact (the mill often worked with the help of horse power). A separate subgroup here consists of phraseological units united by adverbial meaning of the form of action “to act with the use of force”: “*horse and foot*” – with all the spirit, with all the strength. A possible explanation for the emergence of such an idiom is the traditional awareness of the horse as the closest assistant in English culture and history, the help of which doubles (multiplies) a person's strength: “A chasm to leap into, like Curtius, horse and foot” (W. Thackeray) [1, p. 506]. Although the use of a horse on the battlefield should not be excluded, including as an instrument of murder (a horse's hooves could become a formidable weapon for cavalry against infantry), and therefore an involuntary assistant in enslavement. Let's recall the textbook image

of William the Conqueror riding a powerful horse that still stands in Falaise, France, not to mention the numerous similar images on medieval tapestries in England and France, where Norman horses literally crush the Anglo-Saxon army at the Battle of Hastings).

On the other hand, if we trace the reflection of the horse's symbolism in folklore mythopoeics, we find an idea of it as a friend and companion of man, which is connected with the concept of justice and punishment for injustice. Such a meaning is very common and makes it possible to distinguish several thematic groups, in particular:

1. "to find justice": "*to lay the saddle on the right horse*" – to find the real criminal, to accuse the right person.

2. "to be unjust": "*to lay the saddle on the wrong horse*" – to blame the wrong person, to blame the innocent; "*on man may steal a horse while another may not look over a hedge*" – one can do everything, while the other one – nothing; "*all lay load on the willing horse*" – a reliable person is always given more work; "*to back the wrong horse*" – to make a bad choice, to make a mistake, to turn in the wrong direction, to falsely accuse a person, to miscalculate.

3. "to be punished": "*to ride a wooden horse*" – to serve punishment on a wooden horse, which in this case reflects a certain historical fact (this is how soldiers were once punished).

Phraseological units of three groups above reflect the attitude to certain phenomena (assessment as a statement or characteristic of a person). Such an associative chain, connected with the horse, is reflected as widely as possible in the minds of Western Europeans, where the horse has had positive symbolism since the time of medieval chivalry. But it is not exclusive.

Thus, the thematic group «cunning, insidious» includes phraseological units: "*a horse of another color*", "*a dark horse*" – a little-known person who might have a hidden agenda. In general, the occurrence of the PU may be associated with the horse as a constant companion of a person, but it emphasizes the negative symbolism of the black (dark) color, which is woven into the semantics of the unit, giving it a negative connotation; "*a stalking horse*" is an excuse to divert attention, to wink at the eyes, a false person, where the image of a horse metonymically replaces the image of its owner – a person. However, central to this thematic group is the phraseology "*a Trojan horse*": – an international

phraseological unit rooted in the consciousness of Europeans since the time of the ancient Greek Homeric epic poem 'The Iliad' as the personification of cunning and treacherous action, which in a certain way characterizes a person or phenomenon. Closely related to the symbolism of the Trojan horse is the thematic group "deceive someone, treat someone rudely", in which a certain phenomenon is evaluated through the image of the action. The group includes an English idiom "*to play horse*" with the meaning "to make a fool of somebody", deceive, make fun of someone, treat someone with contempt.

The constant presence of the horse in the everyday life of the village dweller is reflected at the level of the phraseological system of the English language in a number of units characteristic of the conversational style. Thus, we highlight the thematic group "to miscalculate, to do something in vain", where the word-component "horse" is the key. The group includes: "*to lock the barn door after the horse is stolen*" – it is too late to take precautionary measures; "*to beat a dead horse*" ("*to flog a dead horse*") – engage in a useless business; "*to be on the wrong horse*" – to make a mistake, assume a mistake; "*golden bit does not make the horse any better*" – expensive clothes or other luxuries do not make a person more beautiful or generally better; "*to change horses in the midstream*" – to make significant changes untimely, at the wrong time; "*to pay for a dead horse*" – to pay for something that has already lost its value; "*to put one's money on a scratched horse*" ("*to back the wrong horse*") – miscalculate, make a mistake in calculations, make a wrong choice; "*horse back opinion*" – a thoughtless, hasty, derisively expressed opinion; "*a maiden horse*" – a horse that has never won, more widely – someone useless; "*A man may lead a horse to the water, but he cannot make him drink*" – not everything can be done by force. The listed phraseological units are an assessment as a statement, quite often the concept of the form of action is layered.

To the thematic group "to eat a lot", where the semantics of the activity image is combined with the assessment of the situation, we have the phraseology "*to eat like a horse*" – to eat a lot, have a good appetite. The thematic group «redundant» includes such phrases as "*good as a shoulder of mutton to sick horse*" – completely unnecessary (a characteristic of a person or object). As you can see, both groups are not numerous.

The horse as a constant companion of a knight, respectively, a noble, proud and honorable person, who is aware of his worth and quite often overestimates his own person, forms the historical prerequisites for the appearance of three thematic groups of PUs at once: “to behave arrogantly”, “to be superior, to behave in a superior manner» and its opposite “to stop being superior”.

Accordingly, the first thematic group (name or characteristic of a person or phenomenon, assessment of the situation) includes: “*to be on one’s high horse*” – to be proud, to look respectable, to pick one’s nose. The origin of the expression can be connected with the financial situation of the owner of the horse (respectively, the richer, more arrogant owner had a better – bigger, stronger, taller – horse); “*a high horse*” – arrogance (the motivation is similar to the previous one); “*beggar on horseback*” – an upstart, similar to “*a crow in peacock feathers*”. The PU formed by contrasting emphasizes the arrogance of a person who has drastically changed his material (social) status (very poor people could not afford to have a horse in the household).

The second thematic group has only one PU “*to play the hobby-horse*” – fly, jump, fool around (action) – and is associated with the emergence of the word “hobby” in English from the common nickname of the horse Hobbin. Antonymous to it is the PU from the third thematic group “*to come off the high horse*” – to stop suffering, to get off (assessment of the situation, form of action), also related to the socio-property characteristics of the owner of the horse.

The biblical tale of the Apocalypse four horsemen gives the image of the horse’s chthonic symbolism. According to the Revelation of John, the Death rides on a pale horse. Therefore, we highlight the thematic group «death». Central to it is actually the idiom “*a pale horse*” or “*last sleep*” (a certain euphemism for death itself). In addition to it, we single out “*to ride a horse that was foaled of an acorn*” (“*dance on nothing*”) – to end life on the gallows, to be hanged (assessment of the situation), which reflects a specific historical fact (execution by hanging).

Separately, we highlight the thematic group “fixed names”. The presence of the concept word “horse” in its idioms can be traced only at a deep etymological level. Most of them were formed by metaphorical or metonymic transfer of meaning.

Within this group, certain subgroups of phraseological units can be distinguished. These are natural phenomena: “*white horses*” (caps) – white tops of waves (metaphorical transfer of meaning by external similarity) and “*horse latitudes*” – northern latitudes from 30 to 35 – the quiet strip of the Atlantic Ocean (transfer by sign – the speed of a horse and wind); objects – “*the iron horse*”, “*steel horse*” (in English – a steam locomotive, as the embodiment of progress, which replaced the horse); food – “*devil’s on horse back*” – croutons with oysters, baked in bacon (according to the external similarity to human ideas about the corresponding phenomenon), “*a salt horse*” – slang word for corned beef (synecdoche, metonymic transference – a part from the whole); the name of the inhabitants – “*half horse and half alligator*” – the nickname of the inhabitants of Kentucky woods in the USA, the formation of a similar phraseology according to the principle of oxymoron – a combination of the incompatible; the name of the person – “*the man on horse back*” – military dictator – is historically explained by the fact that in ancient times the commander (and any person who seized power) was always on horseback; and the genre of the cinema – “*a horse opera*” – a cowboy movie (the presence of horses in such a film is mandatory).

The Conclusions and Perspectives of further research (Висновки і перспективи подальших розробок). As we can see, the very concept of “horse” and the words semantically related to it quite often become the main words in English phraseological units, because the horse has always played an important role in people’s perception of their lives. However, the connotation of all the listed phraseological units is different – from purely positive to exclusively negative, which is not surprising. After all, despite the similarity of use and even perception of certain life phenomena, they can differ in impressions, from which the names of objects originally come, because the relation of thought to consciousness is not the same. Even people in a separate group perceive and understand similar things in different ways. All the more vividly, such differentiations reflect on the collective consciousness of the entire nation or ethnos. Thus, it can be emphasized that the main thing in the perception of the horse in the English-speaking tradition is not only connected to its value as a helper on the farm, sometimes just as a labour

force. More typical is the vision of a faithful friend or even a patron, a totem animal or the embodiment of God's punishment in a horse. In addition, idioms of ancient Greek origin, former social phenomena and some specific historical facts are reflected to a large extent even on modern phraseological systems. Moreover, in

English the vocabulary of which is still developing actively, new phraseological units with interesting meanings appear. And this gives space for further delving into the phraseological and idiomatic system of the English language, even if it is considered a field thoroughly researched and scanned by numerous linguists.

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