

## PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN FOLKLORE STUDIES: A LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

This article examines phraseological units in folkloristics as an important intersection of language, culture, and collective memory. Phraseological units, including idioms, proverbs, and other fixed expressions, are analyzed as stable and reproducible linguistic forms whose meanings often extend beyond the literal meanings of their components. Special attention is given to their role in folklore genres such as proverbs, riddles, tales, songs, and oral poetry, where they function as carriers of cultural values, historical experience, and social norms. The study highlights key characteristics of phraseological units in folklore, including stability, figurativeness, non-compositionality, and expressive power. It also explores their origins in myths, religious beliefs, historical events, and everyday practices, emphasizing their value for historical and etymological research. Furthermore, the article discusses the linguopoetic and cognitive functions of phraseological expressions, showing how they shape the phraseological picture of the world and reflect the worldview of a speech community. The findings demonstrate that phraseological units in folklore are not only linguistic phenomena but also cultural artifacts that preserve national identity and traditional wisdom across generations.

### Key words:

phraseological units, folkloristics, idioms, proverbs, folklore, collective memory, cultural identity, linguopoetics, worldview, oral tradition

Phraseology, as a branch of linguistics, deals with fixed expressions such as idioms, proverbs, and other multi-word units whose meanings are not fully predictable from their individual components. These units, often referred to as phraseological units or phrasemes, play a crucial role in reflecting the cultural and cognitive worldview of a speech community. In folkloristics, phraseological units are of particular interest because they are deeply embedded in oral traditions, collective memory, and cultural heritage.

Folklore, which includes oral genres such as proverbs, riddles, tales, and songs, serves as a rich repository of phraseological expressions. Phraseological units in folklore are not merely linguistic constructs; they are carriers of cultural values, historical experience, and social norms. Scholars emphasize that such units reflect the “national-cultural outlook” of a people and preserve their worldview across generations. Therefore, the study of phraseological units within folklore requires an interdisciplinary approach combining linguistics, ethnography, and cultural studies.

One of the central characteristics of phraseological units in folklore is their stability and reproducibility. These expressions are transmitted orally from generation to generation in a relatively fixed form. Unlike free word combinations, they are stored in the collective memory of speakers and used as ready-made units in communication. This stability ensures the preservation of traditional meanings and cultural symbolism. At the same time, phraseological units often exhibit figurative meaning, which enhances their expressive and aesthetic function in folklore texts.

Proverbs are among the most prominent types of phraseological units studied in folkloristics. They are complete sentences that convey moral lessons, practical wisdom, and social norms. Unlike idioms, which function as parts of sentences, proverbs typically express a complete thought and are often didactic in nature. Research shows that proverbs maintain their semantic transparency to a certain extent, while idioms tend to be more figurative and less compositional. This distinction is important for understanding their different roles in folklore discourse.

Another important aspect of phraseological units in folklore is their origin and sources. Many idioms and fixed expressions originate from historical events, myths, religious beliefs, and everyday practices. Some are native to a particular language and culture, while others are borrowed from different languages through cultural contact. For instance, English idioms may derive from literature, historical events, or even geographical references, demonstrating the diverse sources of phraseological formation. In folklore, such origins are often preserved in narrative contexts, making phraseological units valuable for historical and etymological analysis.

From a semantic perspective, phraseological units in folklore are characterized by non-compositionality, meaning that their overall meaning cannot be deduced from the meanings of individual words. This property makes them a subject of interest not only in linguistics but also in cognitive science, as researchers investigate how such expressions are processed and stored in the human mind. In folklore texts, non-compositional meanings contribute to symbolic and metaphorical interpretations, enriching the narrative and aesthetic quality of oral traditions.

The linguopoetic function of phraseological units is particularly evident in folk poetry and oral performances. Studies of folk genres such as aitys (oral poetic contests) show that phraseological expressions are used to create vivid imagery, emotional intensity, and rhetorical effect. These units enhance the artistic value of folklore by providing culturally familiar and stylistically powerful expressions.

Moreover, phraseological units serve as a bridge between language and culture. They encode culturally specific concepts, values, and stereotypes, forming what researchers call a “phraseological picture of the world.” This concept refers to the way language users perceive and interpret reality through fixed expressions. Such a picture is especially prominent in folklore, where collective knowledge and cultural identity are articulated through traditional forms of speech.

In conclusion, the study of phraseological units in folkloristics reveals the deep interconnection between language, culture, and collective memory. These units are not only linguistic phenomena but also cultural artifacts that preserve the wisdom, beliefs, and values of a people. Their analysis contributes to a better understanding of both linguistic structure and cultural identity. As an interdisciplinary field, folkloristic phraseology continues to offer valuable insights into the dynamics of language and tradition.

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