ANALYSIS OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN THE WORKS OF JOHN GREEN

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Abstract

Phraseological units represent an essential component of linguistic expression in literary discourse. They contribute to stylistic richness, emotional intensity, and the authenticity of communication in fictional narratives. The works of the contemporary American novelist John Green are notable for their expressive language and realistic dialogue, especially in novels aimed at young adult audiences. This article investigates the use of phraseological units in selected works by John Green, including The Fault in Our Stars, Looking for Alaska, and Paper Towns. The study examines the semantic, stylistic, and communicative roles of phraseological expressions in these texts. The results demonstrate that idiomatic expressions, metaphorical phraseological units, and colloquial fixed combinations are frequently used to enhance narrative realism and emotional expressiveness.

Keywords: phraseology, idioms, phraseological units, stylistics, literary language, John Green, English linguistics

Introduction

Phraseology is an important field of linguistics that studies stable word combinations characterized by semantic unity and structural stability. Phraseological units include idioms, proverbs, fixed expressions, and collocations that possess figurative meanings and function as integral parts of language systems.

In literary discourse, phraseological units perform multiple functions. They enrich the expressive potential of language, convey cultural values, and help portray characters more vividly. Many writers rely on idiomatic language to create authentic dialogue and realistic narrative styles.

Modern English literature, particularly young adult fiction, often incorporates conversational and idiomatic expressions to reflect everyday communication. One of the authors who effectively uses phraseological units is John Green. His novels are known for exploring themes such as adolescence, identity formation, friendship, love, and existential questions. Because his characters are primarily teenagers and young adults, the language used in the narratives often mirrors natural speech patterns.

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The novels The Fault in Our Stars, Looking for Alaska, and Paper Towns contain numerous phraseological expressions that contribute to stylistic richness and emotional depth. These works provide valuable material for analyzing the use of phraseological units in contemporary literature.

The objective of this study is to analyze phraseological units used in selected works of John Green and determine their linguistic characteristics, classification, and stylistic functions within the literary context.

Literature Review

Phraseology has been extensively studied by linguists who emphasize the importance of idiomatic expressions in language systems. Scholars such as Fernando (1996) and Cowie (1999) highlight that phraseological units are characterized by semantic integrity, structural stability, and reproducibility in speech.

According to Moon (1998), phraseological units play a significant role in discourse because they convey meanings that often cannot be interpreted from the individual meanings of the component words. These expressions frequently appear in both spoken and written communication.

In literary studies, phraseological analysis helps researchers understand how authors employ figurative language to create stylistic effects. Idioms and fixed expressions can reveal cultural contexts, emotional states of characters, and communicative strategies within narratives.

Recent research has shown that contemporary fiction writers often rely on colloquial phraseological expressions to reflect natural speech. This tendency is especially noticeable in young adult literature, where dialogue plays a central role in storytelling.

Despite the popularity of John Green's works in modern literature, relatively few linguistic studies have focused on phraseological analysis of his novels. Therefore, analyzing phraseological units in his works contributes to both linguistic and literary research.

Materials and Methods

Research Materials

The research material consists of three novels written by John Green:

- The Fault in Our Stars (2012)
- Looking for Alaska (2005)
- Paper Towns (2008)

These novels were selected because they contain rich conversational dialogue and diverse phraseological expressions.

Research Methods

Several linguistic methods were used in the study:

Descriptive method

This method was applied to identify phraseological units in the texts.

Contextual analysis

Contextual analysis helped determine the meanings and functions of phraseological expressions within the narrative.

Semantic analysis

Phraseological units were classified according to their semantic features and figurative meanings.

Comparative method

The usage of phraseological units was compared across different novels to identify stylistic patterns.

Results and Discussion

Types of Phraseological Units Found in John Green's Works

The analysis revealed several categories of phraseological units commonly used in the novels.

Idioms

Idioms are expressions whose meanings cannot be deduced directly from the meanings of their individual components. They represent one of the most common types of phraseological units in English.

Examples found in the novels include:

- **break the ice** – to start a conversation in an awkward situation
- **a piece of cake** – something very easy
- **hit the road** – to leave or depart

These idioms frequently appear in dialogues between characters and contribute to conversational authenticity.

Metaphorical Phraseological Expressions

Metaphorical expressions play a significant role in describing emotional states and psychological experiences.

Examples include:

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- **fall apart** – to lose emotional control
- **carry the weight of the world** – to feel overwhelmed by responsibilities
- **a roller coaster of emotions** – describing rapid emotional changes

Such expressions intensify the emotional atmosphere of the narrative and make descriptions more vivid.

Colloquial Fixed Expressions

Colloquial phraseological expressions are widely used to reflect informal communication among teenagers.

Examples include:

- **get over it**
- **figure it out**
- **kind of a big deal**

These expressions are typical of everyday spoken English and help create realistic dialogue.

Hyperbolic Phraseological Units

Hyperbolic expressions exaggerate situations or emotions to emphasize intensity.

Examples include:

- **literally dying of embarrassment**
- **the best day ever**

These expressions highlight emotional experiences and contribute to the dramatic tone of certain scenes.

Stylistic Functions of Phraseological Units

Phraseological units in John Green's novels serve several stylistic purposes.

Characterization

The use of idioms and colloquial expressions helps portray characters more realistically. Teenagers often use informal language, which is reflected in the dialogue.

Emotional Expression

Phraseological expressions enable authors to communicate complex emotional states in a concise and expressive way.

Narrative Authenticity

Idiomatic language enhances the realism of the narrative by reflecting natural speech patterns.

Cultural Representation

Many phraseological expressions reflect cultural aspects of American society and everyday communication.

Phraseological Units in Dialogue

Dialogue is one of the most important elements in John Green's novels. Phraseological units frequently appear in conversations between characters, making interactions sound spontaneous and natural.

For example, characters often use idioms when discussing personal problems, relationships, or life challenges. These expressions create emotional closeness between characters and readers.

Semantic Features of Phraseological Units

Phraseological units in the analyzed texts exhibit several semantic characteristics:

1. **Figurative meaning** – meanings differ from literal interpretations.
2. **Stability** – expressions are reproduced in fixed forms.
3. **Expressiveness** – they convey emotions and attitudes effectively.
4. **Contextual dependency** – meanings become clearer within specific narrative contexts.

Conclusion

The analysis of phraseological units in the works of John Green demonstrates that idiomatic expressions play an essential role in shaping the stylistic and communicative features of his novels. Phraseological units enhance narrative expressiveness, contribute to character development, and create authentic dialogue.

The frequent use of idioms, metaphorical expressions, and colloquial fixed combinations reflects the conversational style typical of young adult literature. These linguistic features help convey emotional depth and make the narrative more engaging for readers.

Future studies may examine translation strategies for rendering phraseological units from English into other languages or compare phraseological usage across different contemporary authors.

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