

SEMANTIC ACTUALIZATION OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN MASS MEDIA TEXTS**Kenjayeva Mumtozbegin Alibek kizi**Master's student in Linguistics: English language,
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Abstract: Phraseological units, such as idioms and fixed expressions, are an essential part of language, providing expressiveness, stylistic richness, and emotional appeal. In mass media texts, these units often undergo semantic actualization, where their meaning is adapted to specific contexts, either literally or figuratively. This article explores the role and mechanisms of semantic actualization in media discourse. Using examples from newspapers, online news portals, and editorials, it demonstrates how phraseological units contribute to information condensation, emotional impact, and stylistic enhancement. The study highlights the interplay between linguistic creativity and contextual adaptation in shaping readers' understanding and engagement.

Keywords: Phraseological units, idioms, semantic actualization, mass media, stylistics, figurative language, discourse analysis

Introduction. Phraseological units are fixed expressions or idioms that often carry metaphorical or figurative meanings. They enrich language by conveying complex ideas succinctly, adding emotional depth, and creating stylistic variation. In mass media texts, phraseological units are particularly significant because they make content more engaging and persuasive. Journalists use idioms and fixed expressions to attract attention, summarize events effectively, and influence readers' perceptions.

Semantic actualization refers to the process by which a phraseological unit is applied in a specific context to express either its literal or figurative meaning. In media texts, this process is crucial, as it shapes how readers interpret information and respond emotionally. Analyzing semantic actualization in media discourse offers insights into the dynamic interaction between language, context, and audience reception.

Functions of Phraseological Units in Mass Media

Phraseological units in media texts serve multiple interrelated functions, which can be broadly categorized as informational, expressive, evaluative, stylistic, and cultural. Each function contributes to how the audience perceives and interacts with the text.

A) Informational Function One of the primary roles of phraseological units in media is condensing information. Complex ideas, social phenomena, or events can often be expressed briefly and efficiently through idiomatic expressions. For example, the phrase "red flag" in headlines such as "Red Flags Raised Over New Economic Policy" (The Guardian, 2022) instantly conveys a warning or danger without requiring lengthy elaboration. Similarly, "breaking news" not only informs readers about the immediacy of an event but also signals its importance. In this way, phraseological units function as linguistic shortcuts, allowing journalists to communicate efficiently while maintaining clarity.

B) Expressive Function Phraseological units are highly effective in evoking emotions and creating impact. Media texts aim not only to inform but also to engage readers emotionally. Idioms such as "storm in a teacup" or "hit the headlines" convey humor, irony, urgency, or drama depending on the context. For instance, a political article describing a minor disagreement as a "storm in a teacup" highlights the exaggeration of public perception, subtly guiding the audience's evaluation of the event. In sports journalism, phrases like "on the ball" or "drop the ball" convey performance quality while also engaging readers through familiar, lively language.



C) Evaluative Function Media texts often contain opinions and judgments, and phraseological units serve as tools for evaluation. Journalists can implicitly express approval, criticism, or skepticism using idioms. For example, describing a company's risky investment as "playing with fire" signals disapproval and warns the audience about potential consequences. Similarly, an editorial headline like "Politicians Skating on Thin Ice" (BBC News, 2023) evaluates the precariousness of political actions, implying potential failure or danger. Phraseological units allow such evaluations to be conveyed succinctly, making the text persuasive and rhetorically effective.

D) Stylistic Function Phraseological units enrich the stylistic texture of media texts. Literal language alone can appear monotonous or flat, but idioms introduce metaphor, imagery, and rhetorical appeal. Headlines, editorials, feature stories, and social media posts often rely on idiomatic language to make content more vivid and memorable. For example, in environmental reporting, expressions like "tipping point" or "a drop in the ocean" are used metaphorically to create a dramatic effect while succinctly summarizing complex ecological situations. The stylistic function is particularly important in competitive media environments, where attracting and retaining reader attention is crucial.

E) Cultural and Intertextual Function Phraseological units often carry cultural connotations or reference shared social knowledge. Their use in media texts can evoke collective experiences, historical events, or popular culture. For instance, idioms like "Achilles' heel" or "David versus Goliath" are immediately recognizable and culturally loaded, allowing journalists to draw on shared cultural knowledge to enhance meaning. This function also facilitates intertextuality, as media texts can reference literature, history, or public discourse through idiomatic expressions, creating connections between new content and existing knowledge frameworks.

F) Persuasive and Rhetorical Function

In addition to their descriptive and stylistic roles, phraseological units often serve persuasive purposes. In editorials, opinion pieces, and social media commentary, idioms can frame events, issues, or individuals in a particular light, influencing readers' attitudes. For example, a headline such as "Government Walking a Tightrope Amid Economic Crisis" employs the idiom "walking a tightrope" to highlight the precariousness of political decisions, subtly persuading the audience of the seriousness of the situation.

Semantic Actualization in Media Contexts

Semantic actualization occurs when a phraseological unit is deployed to convey meaning in a specific context. This can happen in two main ways. Literal actualization refers to the use of an idiom in accordance with its conventional meaning. For example, in a report on diplomatic negotiations, the phrase "break the ice" can describe initiating friendly dialogue between parties. Figurative or contextual actualization involves adapting the idiom to a new context, often for rhetorical or creative effect. A common example is the headline "Economy on Thin Ice" (BBC News, 2023). Here, the idiom "on thin ice" is used metaphorically to describe economic instability rather than its literal meaning of walking on unsafe ice. Such figurative usage captures readers' attention and conveys complex ideas efficiently. The choice between literal and figurative actualization depends on several factors. Text genre plays a key role: news reports typically favor literal usage for clarity, whereas editorials, feature articles, and social media posts frequently employ figurative meanings to create emphasis or stylistic appeal. Audience familiarity with idioms is also important; culturally recognized expressions are more likely to be used figuratively, while less familiar idioms require careful adaptation. Additionally, current events often trigger creative uses of phraseological units, making them timely and contextually relevant.

Conclusion. Phraseological units play a crucial role in mass media texts, serving as versatile tools that enrich communication on multiple levels. Through semantic actualization, these units



allow journalists to convey complex information succinctly, evoke emotions, provide evaluative commentary, and enhance stylistic appeal. Both literal and figurative uses of idioms contribute to the interpretive depth of media discourse, shaping how readers perceive, understand, and respond to events. Moreover, phraseological units carry cultural and intertextual significance, enabling media texts to resonate with audiences through shared knowledge and familiar references. By examining the functions and mechanisms of semantic actualization, it becomes clear that idioms and fixed expressions are not merely ornamental language devices; they are integral to the effectiveness, persuasiveness, and expressiveness of contemporary media communication.

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