

Albanian phraseology in the broad sense, its basic unit and categories

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Abstract- Besides phraseology in the narrow sense there is also phraseology in the broad sense that we accept and which we propose for the Albanian language as well. Phraseology in the broad sense does not exclude phraseology in the narrow sense, but includes it as one of its main categories. By phraseology in the broad sense we mean phraseology that studies phrasemes up to the sentence level, such as proverbs and phraseological conversation formulae. As a basic term for Albanian phraseology in the broad sense we propose the term phraseme defined as a fixed multi-word combination (phrase or sentence) whose meaning is different from the sum of the literal meanings of the constituent words or which is characterized by a full or partial meaning transfer. We divide phrasemes of Albanian phraseology in the broad sense in eight separate phraseological categories, namely idioms, periphrases with a desemanticized verb, phraseotermes, phraseological irreversible binomials, grammatical set phrases, proverbs, phraseological conversation formulae and phraseological restricted collocations, grouped according to different criteria that are used for each of them and according to the priority of one criterion over other criteria.

Key words- *Phraseology in the broad sense, set word combination, sentence equivalence, phraseme, idiom, phraseological units.*

I. INTRODUCTION

It is only 100 year ago that phraseology began to study language fixed multi-word expressions and this is related to the name Charles Bally [1] gave them as phraseological set phrases (locutions phraséologiques, fr.). Bally is considered as the founder of phraseology and has widely inspired phraseological studies of other languages, among which Albanian phraseological studies as well.

In the 1930's, based on Bally's work, in Russian linguistics began to develop an independent research direction which, following the release of the first works by Vinogradov [2], marked a significant progress. The classification of phraseologisms into three categories proposed by Vinogradov had prevailed for a long period of time. Some of the most prominent representatives of the Russian school worked for non-Slavic languages, e.g. N. Amosova [3] and A. Kunin [4] who worked for English.

Different authors have put phraseology under other fields of study. Thus, the first theoretical reflections on phraseological set phrases were made in semantics. Bréal [5] states that "if those who are doing the history about the changing of meanings studied only the words, they would risk not including

part of the facts, or would risk explaining then in a wrong way. Language does not consist only of words: it consists of groups of words and sentences."

Bally includes phraseology into a stylistic approach to language. In his "Traité de stylistique" Bally [1] devotes a whole chapter to what he calls phraseological set phrases. As Saussure's student, Bally is the first to study the syntactic, lexical and semantic features of these set phrases. In these groups "known by usage" Bally distinguishes two subgroups of set phrases which he determines according to the degree of cohesion. "We will call series those in which cohesion is only relative, and unities those in which cohesion is absolute", writes the author.

Gläser [6] defines a phraseo-stylistic level within stylistics which itself is a separate discipline of linguistics.

For F. J. Hausmann [7] and G. Corpas Pastor [8], phraseology is derived from lexicology, because these units are included in the dictionary, are stored in the memory as simple vocabulary units.

II. ALBANIAN PHRASEOLOGY IN THE BROAD SENSE

The interest in these fixed multi-word units is not so late. In all the languages of the world, people have long been interested in these linguistic phenomena, very often unique, which it is difficult to understand and which are re-used by language speakers, and this interest has undergone a particular evolution.

Even in Albanian linguistics, "although phraseological content-word groups are evidenced from the earliest books, their presentation in the grammars of the Albanian language or in particular studies is very late" [9]. The phraseological theory of Albanian phraseology began after the second half of the 20th century. Since that period it has achieved significant theoretical and practical (lexicographic) results. The object that it studies is presented by different names, such as "expressions", "phrases", "phraseological units", etc. The first who studied it from the perspective of the phraseological discipline is Jani Thomai. In "Issues of the phraseology of the Albanian Language" (Çështje të frazeologjisë së gjuhës shqipe, alb.) [9], Thomai defines phraseology as "the totality of those set word combinations, which have been formed historically and which have been crystallized as an indivisible unit and which are equivalent to a single word according to their categorical meaning". Whereas in "The phraseological dictionary of the

Albanian Language” (Fjalor frazeologjik i gjuhës shqipe, alb.) [10], as far as phraseological units are concerned the author states that “in the field of the Albanian language we consider as general features of phraseological units the structure of the content-word group, semantic unit, stability, figurativeness, the neutralization of internal syntactic relations, word equivalence from the perspective of categorical meaning and function in discourse”. According to the features and criteria such as word equivalence, whole single meaning, figurativeness, stability, etc. that the author uses and according to the examples he offers, the type of phraseology the author deals with is phraseology in a narrow sense. By phraseology in the narrow sense Burger et al. [11] mean the study of the units “shorter than a sentence”. Based on Burger et al.’s definition, even Albanian phraseology represented by Thomai is phraseology in the narrow sense.

Besides phraseology in the narrow sense there is also phraseology in a broader sense which we accept and propose for the Albanian language as well. As far as the units of phraseology in the broad sense are concerned, Burger et al. [11] claim that “they have the characteristics of the sentence” and they include in them “collocations, proverbs and formulae”. Consequently, the distinguishing condition of phraseology in the broad sense from phraseology in the narrow sense is sentence equivalence, “a conception that most European phraseology researchers agree on today” [12]. As Burger et al. [11] point out “it can no longer be denied that proverbs possess important phraseological characteristics”. In conclusion, we can say that by phraseology in the broad sense we mean the phraseology that studies phrasemes¹ up to the sentence level, i.e. even the sentence units, such as proverbs and phraseological conversation formulae, e.g. *Peshku në det, tigani në zjarr!* (lit. *The fish in the sea, the frying pan at fire*, for *First catch the fish then fry it!*) *Ujë të fle, hasmi s’flet!* (lit. *Water sleeps, enemies don’t, for One has always to be vigilant against one’s enemies!*). *Ju lumshin këmbët!* (lit. *Bravo to your legs*, for *Welcome!*) *Edhe njëqind (vjeç)!* (lit. *Another hundred (years)*, for *Live to be a hundred!*), etc. and in which we include word equivalent phrasemes as well. This means that phraseology in the broad sense does not exclude phraseology in the narrow sense, but includes it as one of its main categories.

That distinction between the units below the sentence level or equivalent to a single word and the sentence equivalent units was first made by Russians. “One of the first Russian phraseologists to refer to this distinction was Chernuisheva [13], whose sentence-like units (called ‘phraseological expressions’) included sayings and familiar quotations.” [14].

As in any new field of study, in the field of phraseology too there are different views on the object of study itself. Our opinion about the object of study by phraseology goes even beyond the word-equivalence, but does not exceed the limits of the sentence as far as value and function are concerned (see [12]; cf. [9]), because, as we see in the case of studying

proverbs, before they (proverbs) are units of folklore, they are language sentence equivalent units.

Some postvinogradovian researchers think that proverbs must be studied together with phraseological expressions. Others, among whom J. Casares [15], N. N. Amosova [3], J. Thomai [9], etc., think that if the word units do not constitute part of the sentence it is wrong to include them in the system of the language, because they are independent units of communication. But the above distinction was recognized and followed by other specialists of the linguistic field, such as Cowie [16], Mel’čuk [17], Gläser [18] and Burger [19] and later by Granger & Paquot [20], etc.

Concerning phraseology in the broad sense, some linguists decide on the fate of the phraseological fixedness of some multi-word combinations through the language analysis based on the electronic text corpus. Thus, phraseology begins to be studied on the base of electronic text corpus by Halliday [21], has as its main representative Sinclair [22] and is followed by other linguists as well, such as Wray [23]. It is mentioned as a statistics- and frequency-based approach and uses the text corpus to identify lexical associations. This inductive approach offers a wide range of word combinations that do not fit our phraseological linguistic categories defined below. Representatives of this approach don’t deal with the distinction between categories and subcategories of word combinations. According to them phraseological expressions take priority over words. They think that even free word combinations have a place in phraseology. Sinclair’s [24] last slogan is: “The phrase, only the phrase, nothing but the phrase”. This very broad view is related to the treatment of phraseology according to the text corpus frequency which is not a condition for the formation of phraseological expressions or phrasemes. We agree with Gaatone [25] who criticizes Sinclair’s radical view and who warns that not everything can be considered phraseological.

Our non-approval of this comprehensive attitude is related to the purpose of studying phrasemes by phraseology, which doesn’t concern all set syntactic word combinations. If phrasemes were studied only for their special (set) syntactic relation, it would not be necessary for them to be studied by another branch, e.g. phraseology, but they would be studied by syntax itself, because, as Thomai [26] notes in relation with the phraseological units of the Albanian language, they are “content-word groups” “which have the same grammatical relations as free content-word groups (determinative, objective, circumstantial, etc.)”, although “in phraseological units syntactic relations are not always so clear as in free word combinations”. Phrasemes are studied by the special branch of phraseology because of the transferred (new) meaning of the whole set word combination or at least of one of the constituents of the set word combination, i.e. of a transferred (new) meaning conditioned by and limited within this set word combination. This is the reason why phrasemes were initially studied in the field of lexicology and specifically by Bréal [5] for their semantic aspect and by Bally [1] for their stylistic aspect. According to Bally [1], as quoted by Symeonidis (Συμεωνίδης, gr.), [27] “the essence of phraseologisms lies in their semantic nature”. This is also the reason why our phraseology in the broad sense doesn’t consider phraseological

¹ Phraseme is the general term we use for any phraseological set word combination and it corresponds to the terms phraseological fixed expressions, phraseological unit, set phrases, etc., used by different researchers. See also below.

the word combinations based on the frequency of co-used words (Cf. Sinclair, [22]), as well as it doesn't consider phraseological all the fixed word combinations, such as *artesian well*, *the cat mews* (Cf. Mel'čuk, [17]), despite the fact that the associative unique combination of the word *artesian* with the word *well* is not different from the combination of the word *bucket* only used with the word *kick* in the idiom *kick the bucket*. It considers phraseological only the set word combinations that have a transferred (new) meaning.

III. BASIC UNIT OF ALBANIAN PHRASEOLOGY IN THE BROAD SENSE AND ITS DEFINITION

For the basic unit of the phraseology in the broad sense we propose the term phraseme. We propose the term phraseme by analogy with the other linguistic terms phoneme, moneme, morpheme, lexeme, etc. We also propose the term phraseme because it is used more often in international phraseological literature. It is spreading increasingly, although it is a relatively new term (see [11], [28], [12], [29]).

In addition, if we use the term phraseological unit for the basic unit of phraseology in the broad sense, there would be some confusion between the up to now object of study by phraseology and our (new) object, because phraseological units, as they are known so far in Albanian literature, are characterized mainly of their word equivalence by language researchers and are identified with figurativeness by the simple users of the language, features that do not necessarily characterize our phrasemes.

Finally we can say that the term phraseme is younger and with fewer deviations in use.

Based on the three necessary conditions that we accept for defining phrasemes and which are polylexicality, non-literal referentiality and lexical restriction [30], we can define phrasemes as fixed multi-word combinations (phrases or sentences) the meaning of which is different from the sum of the literal meanings of their constituent words or which are characterized by a full or partial meaning transfer.

The definition of phraseology in the broad sense we propose will be as follows:

- 1) Phraseology deals with the study of phrasemes, i.e. fixed multi-word combinations (phrases or sentences) [30] the meaning of which is different from the sum of the literal meanings of their constituent words or which are characterized by a full or partial meaning transfer.
- 2) Phraseology is the totality of phrasemes or the phraseological fixed expressions of the language.

We would also propose the same basic unit and the same definition for phraseology in the narrow sense as part of the phraseology in the broad sense.

IV. CLASSIFICATION OF PHRASEMES IN ALBANIAN PHRASEOLOGY IN THE BROAD SENSE

The classification of phrasemes means identifying linguistic units that represent common features, because phraseology is related to heterogeneous entities and researchers feel the need to divide them into smaller entities, in relatively homogeneous

subtypes. But classifying phrasemes is not a simple undertaking. Unlike linguistic elements of lower levels than phrasemes, such as phoneme, morpheme and lexeme, for which there are basic classifications recognized by the whole linguistic community, the group of phrasemes needs deep linguistic analyses.

Actually, phrasemes form a very complex and not very homogenous whole and it is this disparity that makes their classification problematic. In other words, the difficulty in classifying phrasemes is often viewed as an evidence of the complexity of their nature. Phrasemes are subject to numerous criteria, but not all criteria apply to all phrasemes and not all phrasemes present the same characteristics. Many criteria are the same for many categories, that's why in order to distinguish the different categories we take into account different dominant criteria and features.

Some classification problems can arise from the simple fact that certain given phrasemes can be classified and included in different categories. For example, the phraseme *shkel e shko* (lit. *step and go*, for *badly*, *not well*) structurally belongs to literal phraseological irreversible binomials, but in terms of its full figurativeness that is a distinctive criterion for most idioms, the sequence should be counted as an idiom. As Gabrovsek [31] also notes, most existing phraseological typologies recognize that there is partial overlapping between categories and there are few clearly distinct categories.

One of the most influential typologies of phraseology in the broad sense in English lexicology and lexicography is that of Cowie, which includes restricted collocations, figurative idioms, pure idioms, routine formulae and speech formulae.

Whereas Granger & Paquot's [21] typology includes the following phraseological categories: (lexical and grammatical) collocations, idioms, similes, irreversible bi- and trinomials, compounds, phrasal verbs, speech act formulae, attitudinal formulae, commonplaces, slogans, complex prepositions, complex conjunctions, linking adverbials and textual sentence stems.

We divide the basic units of Albanian phraseology in the broad sense, i.e. phrasemes, into eight separate phraseological categories, namely idioms, periphrases with a desemanticized verb, phraseoterminals, phraseological irreversible binomials, grammatical set phrases, proverbs, phraseological conversation formulae, phraseological restricted collocations, grouped according to different criteria that are used for each of them and according to the priority of one criterion over other criteria.

Idioms are fixed multi-word combinations with a figurative meaning and morpho-syntactic restrictions, the meaning of which is different from the sum of the literal meanings of their constituent words or phrasemes with a figurative meaning and morpho-syntactic restrictions, e.g. *i kthej krahët* (lit. *turn ones back to sb*, for *abandon sb*), *i fërkoj krahët* (lit. *to rub sb's back*, for *to flatter sb*) *vret miza* (lit. *he/she kills flies*, for *he/she does nothing*), *s'e mbyll gojën* (lit. *he/she doesn't shut up his/her mouth*, for *he/she doesn't stop speaking*), *s'lë dy gurë bashkë* (lit. *he/she doesn't leave two stones together*, for *he/she is mischievous*), etc. As we see from the definition and the examples, what we call phraseological category of idioms is

almost the category of phraseological units in the narrow sense that we know for Albanian, with the exception of some cases, such as *rreth e rrotull* (lit. *round and around, for from all sides*), *fund e krye* (lit. *bottom and top for everywhere over the whole body*), *ditë për ditë* (day by day, continuously), etc., that we include in another phraseological category, the phraseological irreversible binomials, or *bëj durim* (lit. *to make patience, for to be patient*), *jap shpresë* (give hope), etc., that we include in the periphrases with a desemanticized verb in which the nouns are used in their literal meaning and which are not characterized by the degree of morpho-syntactic restriction that characterizes idioms, whereas the verbs are almost denuded of their meaning and can not contribute semantically to the content of the structure, but may have some functional roles, such as converting the nouns into verbal expressions. As a consequence, their structure is not characterized by figurativeness which characterizes idioms.

We propose the term idiom instead of the term phraseological unit for the following reasons too:

- The term idiom is a synonymous alternative in Albanian dictionaries and in the dictionaries of other languages.
- The term idiom is used even in Albanian phraseology, because one of the subgroups of the phraseological units of the Albanian language, namely the unmotivated phraseological units, are also called idioms. But this can not detain us from calling idioms all phraseological units.
- We propose the term idiom for the unification of terminology, because the term idiom is used in Anglo-American phraseology, and, therefore, thanks to the English language, it is spreading increasingly worldwide.
- The term idiom is also used in almost every translation of phraseological material from other languages into English.
- The term idiom is more known than phraseological unit thanks to English as a foreign language for the English-speaking Albanians, because idioms are very spread in English and are encountered since the first steps of English learning. A lot of Albanian speakers know the term idiom from the learning of English, even before knowing the term phraseological unit.
- In addition, the term idiom would be a preferred term, because it is shorter.

Nevertheless, the phraseological volume that idioms cover and the phraseological volume that phraseological units cover is the same in most part and this is one of the reasons that sometimes in the course of our study we make no distinction between them and use the terms idiom or phraseological unit.

We call periphrases with a desemanticized verb the fixed multi-word combinations consisting of a desemanticized verb and an abstract noun with a literal meaning, the meaning of which is different from the sum of the literal meanings of their constituent words or phraseme consisting of a desemanticized

verb and an abstract noun with a literal meaning, e.g. *bëj durim* (lit. *to make patience, for to be patient*), *jap shpresë* (give hope), *kam uri* (lit. *I have hunger, for I am hungry*), etc.

We call phraseoterminals the nominal fixed multi-word combinations with a nominative function and syntactic restrictions, the meaning of which is different from the sum of the literal meanings of their constituent words and which are used only to nominate new object or phenomena or to re-nominate some existing ones, e.g. *sy magjik* (lit. *magic eye, for peephole*), *çelës anglez* (lit. *English key, for adjustable wrench*), etc.

We call phraseological irreversible binomials the phraseological fixed multi-word phrasemes consisting of two words that are semantically related, that belong to the same part of speech, that are at the same level of the syntactic hierarchy, that are connected with connection means and that have an irreversible order, e.g. *urtë e butë* (lit. *quietly and gently, for without being noticed*), *mirë e bukur* (lit. *well and beautifully, for fully, completely*), *rreth e rrotull* (lit. *round and around, for from all sides*), *natë e ditë* (night and day, continuously), etc.

We call grammatical set phrases the phrasemes with a weak meaning of their constituents, with full morpho-syntactic restrictions and with a grammatical value, e.g. *në lidhje me* (in relation with), *në përputhje me* (in accordance with), *në qoftë se* (lit. *in be that, for if*), *po qe se* (lit. *if was that, for if*), *në vend të* (lit. *in place of, for instead of*), etc.

Proverbs are fixed multi-word combinations equivalent to a sentence, generally metaphoric, which express a general truth and which contain an advice or a lesson of the folk wisdom in the form of a moral, the meaning of which is different from the sum of the literal meanings of their constituent words.

Phraseological conversation formulae are the phrasemes or the phraseological fixed multi-word combinations that are used regularly and alike in a particular situation of communication, such as in congratulations, in wishes, in greetings, etc., e.g., *Të lumtë goja!*, a way of congratulation used for someone who sings beautifully, *Edhe njëqind (vjet/vjeç)!*, a way of wish used at someone's birthday, *Mirë se erdhe!* a way of greeting when people meet, or *Ditën e mirë!* a way of greeting when people leave each-other, or *Zoti na ruaj!* as an interjection to express surprise.

We call phraseological restricted collocations the phrasemes or the phraseological fixed multi-word combinations one constituent of which has a figurative meaning and is used depending on the other word which is used literally and independently, e.g. *korr fitore* (lit. *harvest victories, for to win victories*), *vras kohën* (to kill the time), *mjalt i ëmbël* (lit. *honey sweet, for very sweet*), *pendë i lehtë* (lit. *feather light, for very light*), etc.

V. THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING ALBANIAN PHRASEOLOGY IN THE BROAD SENSE

The importance of studying phraseology in the broad sense lies in a theoretical level as well as in a practical level.

The study of phraseology in the broad sense in the theoretical level is important because:

It helps to revise phraseology according to more comprehensive criteria such as sentence equivalence and non-literal referentiality.

It helps to determine the limits between what is phraseological and what is non-phraseological.

It may help to better know the nature of phrasemes, the nature of the figurative language, and the nature of the language itself.

The study of phraseology in the broad sense in the practical level is important because:

It helps to determine the phraseological volume, because there are a lot of multi-word units that have not found the place they belong to in Albanian phraseology. It is about including in phraseology proverbs and phraseological conversation formulae, e.g. *Peshku në det, tigani në zjarr! Ujët fle, hasmi s'fle!* and also the proper phraseological collocations, e.g. *korr fitore, pendë i lehtë*, or other phrasemes with a collocational structure, e.g. *jetë qeni (dog's life), çelës anglez (lit. English key, for adjustable wrench)*. As a consequence, phraseology in the broad sense "is an adequate and realistic description of phraseological extent" [32].

It serves the systemizing of phrasemes in lexicographical works.

It helps to compile special dictionaries and to create special computer programmes.

It serve the translation from Albanian into a foreign language and vice versa and mainly the computer models of automatic translation.

It serves the teaching practice about the compilation of texts for the teaching of Albanian as a foreign language in which phrasemes should be included as part of metaphorical and cultural learning. The accurate acquisition of phrasemes helps the students to appear as language native speakers.

It serves the teaching of phrasemes not only to foreign students who learn Albanian, but also to those who have Albanian as their mother tongue. This means that phrasemes are important even during the use by the speakers of the Albanian language themselves as far as its semantic and morpho-semantic particularities are concerned.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Phraseology in the broad sense should be accepted for the Albanian language as well, because it helps to set the limits between what is phraseological and what is non-phraseological. Phraseology in the broad sense should deal with the study of phrasemes, i.e. fixed multi-word combinations (phrases or sentences) whose meaning is different from the sum of the literal meanings of their constituent words or which are characterized by a full or partial meaning transfer. It should not exclude phraseology in the narrow sense, but should include it as one of its main categories.

The phraseological categories recognized in the Albanian phraseology in the broad sense should be idioms, periphrases with a desemanticized verb, phraseotems, phraseological irreversible binomials, grammatical set phrases, proverbs,

phraseological conversation formulae and phraseological restricted collocations.

Phraseology in the broad sense is an adequate and realistic description of phraseological extent, because it studies Albanian phraseology according to more comprehensive criteria, such as sentence equivalence and non-literal referentiality, and because it helps to better determine the Albanian phraseological volume where there are a lot of multi-word units that have not found the place they belong to in Albanian phraseology.

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