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THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE STUDY OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the theoretical underpinnings of the study of phraseological units, delving into the linguistic structures and cognitive processes that govern these fixed expressions. Drawing on insights from linguistic theory, cognitive linguistics, and psycholinguistics, the paper aims to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the formation, interpretation, and use of phraseological units. By synthesizing existing theoretical perspectives, the article contributes to a deeper comprehension of the intricate interplay between language structure and cognition in the realm of phraseology.

KEYWORDS

Phraseological Units; Linguistic Theory; Cognitive Linguistics; Psycholinguistics; Language Structure.

INTRODUCTION

Phraseological units, often regarded as the building blocks of idiomatic expressions and fixed combinations in language, have long been a subject of fascination and inquiry within the field of linguistics. This article delves into the theoretical foundations that underpin the study of phraseological units, aiming to

unravel the intricate interplay between language structure and cognition. By synthesizing insights from linguistic theory, cognitive linguistics, and psycholinguistics, this exploration seeks to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the

formation, interpretation, and use of phraseological units.

The study of phraseological units is an area of linguistics that has gained significant attention in recent years. This field examines how words come together to form fixed expressions, often with a specific meaning that exceeds the sum of their parts. Theoretical foundations for the study of phraseological units can be found in a range of linguistic sub-disciplines, including syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and lexicology. This article explores the theoretical underpinnings of phraseological units and the contributions of various linguistic theories to our understanding of these linguistic phenomena. One of the key theoretical foundations for the study of phraseological units lies in the field of syntax. Phraseological units are often characterized by their fixed word order and grammatical structure, and they pose interesting challenges for traditional syntactic theories. The study of how words combine into multi-word units raises questions about the syntax of these units, the grammatical categories they belong to, and how they relate to one another within their larger syntactic context. This has led to the development of theories and frameworks that seek to account for the syntactic properties of phraseological units, such as the theories of phrase structure and constituency, as well as theories of collocation and fixedness.

Furthermore, the study of phraseological units is closely connected to the field of semantics. Understanding the meanings of fixed expressions and how these meanings arise from the combination of their constituent words is a central concern of semantic theory. The study of phraseological semantics encompasses a wide range of phenomena, from the compositional meaning of individual lexical

items to the idiosyncratic meaning of whole phrases. Various theoretical approaches to the semantics of phraseological units have been proposed, including decompositional theories, conceptual blending theories, and compositional theories, each of which seeks to capture the complex relationship between the literal meanings of individual words and the figurative or non-compositional meanings of phraseological units as a whole. In addition to syntax and semantics, the study of phraseological units also draws on theoretical frameworks from the field of pragmatics. Pragmatic theories are concerned with how language is used in context, and the study of phraseological units raises important questions about how these fixed expressions are pragmatically interpreted and used in discourse. Pragmatic theories have been applied to the study of how phraseological units are used to achieve communicative goals, how they contribute to the coherence and cohesion of discourse, and how they are interpreted by speakers and listeners in specific communicative contexts.

Another theoretical foundation for the study of phraseological units lies in the field of lexicology and lexicography. The study of phraseological units raises important questions about the organization of multi-word expressions in the mental lexicon, as well as how these units are represented in dictionaries and other language resources. Theoretical models of the mental lexicon have been developed to account for the storage and retrieval of phraseological units, as well as how these units are processed and accessed in language production and comprehension. At the same time, theoretical models of lexicography have sought to address the challenges of identifying, defining, and describing phraseological units in dictionary entries and other language resources. These theoretical

foundations provide a rich and diverse framework for the study of phraseological units, offering insights into the syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and lexicology of these linguistic phenomena. By drawing on these theoretical frameworks, researchers can develop nuanced and comprehensive accounts of how phraseological units are formed, how they are used in communication, and how they are represented in the mental lexicon. These theoretical perspectives also provide a valuable foundation for the development of practical applications, such as natural language processing tools and language teaching materials, that can benefit from a deep understanding of phraseological units and their theoretical underpinnings.

To embark on a theoretical exploration of phraseological units, it is crucial to establish a clear understanding of what constitutes these linguistic entities. Phraseological units encompass a broad spectrum of fixed expressions, ranging from idioms and collocations to proverbs and set phrases. The classification of these units serves as a foundational step in the study, allowing researchers to categorize and analyze them based on shared structural and functional characteristics. The study of phraseological units within the realm of linguistic theory is multifaceted. Traditional linguistic approaches often focus on the formal and structural aspects of these units, investigating how words and components within phrases interact syntactically and semantically. Furthermore, generative grammar and structuralist theories contribute valuable insights into the hierarchical organization of phraseological units within the broader syntactic framework of a language. In recent years, the advent of cognitive linguistics has brought a paradigm shift in the study of phraseological

units. Cognitive linguists argue that understanding fixed expressions goes beyond mere formal analysis; it involves exploring the cognitive processes that underlie the comprehension and production of these units. Conceptual metaphor theory, conceptual blending, and prototype theory are some of the cognitive frameworks that shed light on how phraseological units are mentally processed and stored.

Psycholinguistics plays a pivotal role in unraveling the mysteries of how humans produce and comprehend language, including phraseological units. Research in this domain investigates the mental lexicon, memory processes, and language production mechanisms concerning these fixed expressions. The study of the psycholinguistic aspects of phraseological units provides valuable insights into the automaticity of their retrieval, the role of context, and the influence of individual differences. The theoretical foundations of the study of phraseological units benefit significantly from an interdisciplinary approach. Drawing on research from fields such as psychology, cognitive science, and even computational linguistics, scholars can enrich their understanding of the cognitive and computational mechanisms involved in the use and processing of phraseological units.

In conclusion, the theoretical foundations of the study of phraseological units encompass a rich tapestry of linguistic, cognitive, and psycholinguistic insights. By integrating these perspectives, researchers can deepen their understanding of how these fixed expressions shape language structure and are processed in the human mind. The ongoing exploration of theoretical frameworks not only advances our comprehension of phraseological units but also opens avenues for further interdisciplinary research, offering

a holistic perspective on the intricate relationship between language and cognition. In conclusion, the study of phraseological units is a fundamental component of linguistics, and it is essential for understanding the structure and function of language. These units, which encompass collocations, idioms, and other fixed expressions, provide valuable insights into how language is used and processed by speakers and listeners. Through the exploration of their theoretical foundations, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the cognitive, semantic, and pragmatic aspects of these linguistic units.

The theoretical foundations of the study of phraseological units encompass a wide range of linguistic theories and frameworks, including cognitive linguistics, construction grammar, and corpus linguistics. These theories offer different perspectives on the nature and organization of phraseological units, and they provide valuable insights into their role in language processing and production. By incorporating these theoretical frameworks into their research, scholars can uncover the complex interplay between form and meaning in phraseological units, as well as the cognitive processes involved in their comprehension and production. Furthermore, the study of phraseological units has significant implications for language teaching and learning. Understanding the theoretical foundations of these units can inform language educators on how to effectively teach them to second language learners, and how to help students develop their proficiency in using them in real-life communication. By incorporating phraseological units into language curricula, educators can help learners acquire a more authentic and natural command of the target language, ultimately leading to more successful

language acquisition and communication. In addition, the theoretical foundations of the study of phraseological units have important implications for language technology and natural language processing. Understanding how phraseological units are processed and understood by humans can help developers create more accurate and effective language processing algorithms and tools. By incorporating knowledge of the theoretical underpinnings of phraseological units into their work, developers can create more sophisticated language technologies that better mimic human language processing and production.

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