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"Phraseological Units and Their Contextual Usage in Anglophone Literature"

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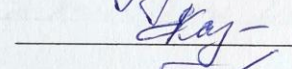
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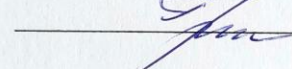
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Introduction

The study of the contextual use of phraseological units is one of the main areas of research in modern linguistics. *An author's original transformation of a PU, contextual transformation of a PU, occasional transformation of a PU, deformation of a PU* – these and various other terms are used by scholars both in Russia and abroad to describe different types of contextual transformations of phraseological units. Nowadays, more and more attention is being paid to the study of phraseological units not only at the systemic, linguistic level, but also in the discursive, speech aspect. In this regard, the broadening of the sphere of studying phraseological units and the consideration of texts of various styles are of great importance. A fictional text as a special linguistic environment is a rich source for the comprehensive study of linguistic phenomena, including the use of phraseological units.

The exploration of phraseological units as the most complex units of language in their formation and functioning is of great theoretical and practical importance; their occasional use and contextual transformations are also one of the most complex and ambiguously interpreted problems in modern linguistics. However, while various aspects of their functioning are actively researched, the role of phraseological units in Anglophone literature is still very much underestimated. This reveals **the relevance** and **motivation** for this paper.

The object of the study are phraseological units in Anglophone literature.

The subject of the study is contextual usage of phraseological units in Anglophone literature.

The aim of the study is to reveal structure-semantic, semantic and other contextual transformations of phraseological units in Anglophone literature.

In order to achieve this aim, the following **objectives** have been set:

1. to combine relevant theories and models in order to define and describe phraseology as an object of linguistic research;

2. to explore phraseological units, their features and classifications proposed by scholars both in Russia and abroad;
3. to differentiate between the usual and occasional use of phraseological units;
4. to establish structure-semantic transformations of phraseological units;
5. to examine semantic transformations of phraseological units in Anglophone literature;
6. to analyse occasional phraseological units as a means of revealing a writer's creative intention.

The following **research methods** have been chosen to meet the objectives: literature review, secondary data analysis, primary data retrieval, lexicographical analysis, qualitative and quantitative data collection using the artificial intelligence chatbot ChatGPT, comparison, synthesis.

The theoretical framework for the master's thesis is constructed by theories developed by Russian and foreign scholars: *phraseology as a linguistic discipline* (A. Kunin, E. Polivanov, V. Vinogradov, N. Shansky, Ch. Bally, R. Gläser, etc.), *phraseological unit* (O. Akhmanova, A. Chernikova, V. Vinogradov, H. Burger), *phraseological context* (N. Amosova, A. Kunin, V. Vinogradov, M. Brandes, E. Riesel and others).

The research source is the novel *What Alice Forgot* by an Australian author Liane Moriarty.

Research materials consist of ... phraseological units selected from the novel *What Alice Forgot* by Liane Moriarty.

The element of thesis novelty lies in the analysis of phraseological units and their contextual usage in Anglophone literature using the artificial intelligence chatbot ChatGPT.

The theoretical significance of the master's thesis is defined as follows: the results obtained expand the understanding of contextual transformations of phraseological units in Anglophone literature...

The practical significance of the paper is determined by the possibility of applying theoretical findings and practical outcomes of the study to university courses on phraseology theory, text linguistics, linguo-culturology, and ecolinguistics; to English language classes and those on Anglophone literature.

Thesis approbation. Some of the major ideas of the master's thesis were summarised in three articles, published in ...

— статья 1

— статья 2

— статья 3

The master's thesis consists of introduction, two chapters, conclusion, bibliography and appendix.

In the introduction, the topic is presented and contextualised. The object and subject of the study are determined, the aim and objectives are set and the scope of the paper is defined. In addition, a brief overview of the current state of research is given, citing the relevant literature.

Chapter 1 is intended to define and describe the nature of phraseology as a linguistic discipline. What is more, several definitions of the term *phraseological unit* are examined and compared in order to determine the one that captures best the essence of the phenomenon. In addition, usual and occasional use of phraseological units is addressed.

Chapter 2 describes and summarises examples of structure-semantic, semantic and other types of transformations of phraseological units, including those that are used as a means of revealing the author's creative intention.

Finally, the conclusion outlines the main results and identifies recommendations for further research.

Chapter 1. Theoretical Foundations for the Study of Phraseological Units

1.1. Phraseology as an Object of Linguistic Research

Phraseology as a study of fixed word combinations with completely or partially reinterpreted meanings is being intensively developed in modern linguistics. The phraseology of the Russian language was studied by V. Vinogradov, V. Arkhangel'sky, V. Telia, B. Larin; the foundations of English phraseology were laid by N. Amosova, A. Smirnitsky, A. Kunin and numerous modern researchers [1].

The continued scientific interest in the issues of phraseology is partly explained by the fact that this science has become independent relatively recently. The reasons for recognising phraseology as a distinct branch of linguistics as well as its early stages were outlined by E. Polivanov in the late 1920s and further elaborated by prominent linguists of the middle of the last century such as V. Vinogradov, B. Larin, A. Smirnitsky [1].

The founder of the theory of phraseology is the Swiss linguist of French origin, Ch. Bally. The scholar included a chapter on phraseology in his books on stylistics, where he distinguished four groups of phrases according to their degree of persistence:

1. free word combinations (French: *les groupements libres*), i.e. combinations lacking stability that, once spoken, break up into separate semantic units almost immediately;
2. usual word combinations (French: *les groupements usuels*), i.e. word combinations with a relatively loose connection of their components which allow for some variation. For example: *une grave maladie* – a serious/severe illness; *une maladie dangereuse* – a dangerous/life-threatening illness);
3. phraseological series (French: *les series phraseologiques*), i.e. word groups in which two related concepts are practically merged into one. The persistence of these expressions is reinforced by the primary use of the word:

remporter une victoire – to win; *courir un danger* – to be in danger. These word combinations still allow for the regrouping of their components;

4. phraseological units (French: *les unites phraseologiques*), i.e. fixed expressions made up of elements that, once combined, no longer express their original meanings giving way to a single semantically indivisible entity. Such combinations do not “tolerate” any rearrangement or regrouping of their components [].

In his later work, *French Stylistics*, Ch. Bally treats usual combinations and phraseological series as intermediate types of collocations and distinguishes between only two main groups of combinations:

1. free word combinations;
2. phraseological units, i.e. word combinations the components of which, being constantly used the same way to express the same thought, have lost any meaning of their own [].

Since then, the study of phraseology has advanced far ahead. Due to the fruitful creative efforts of domestic and foreign scholars, phraseology has overcome the stage of juvenile development. What is more, by the mid-20th century it had already developed its object of study, its research methods, its main research questions and objectives. This was hugely facilitated by the contributions of the Russian linguist E. Polivanov.

E. Polivanov repeatedly revisited the question of phraseology as a separate linguistic discipline and argued that lexicology studies individual lexical meanings of words, morphology examines their formal meanings while syntax investigates the formal meanings of word combinations []. “And so the need arises for a special branch which would be comparable to syntax, but at the same time would be concerned not with general patterns, but with individual meanings of given individual word combinations, just as lexicology deals with individual (lexical) meanings of individual words. To this branch of linguistics, as well as to the totality of the phenomena studied in it, I give the name of phraseology,” E. Polivanov argued [].

B. Larin was the first scholar after E. Polivanov to again address the issue of phraseology as a linguistic discipline: “Phraseology as a linguistic discipline is still in a stage of 'hidden development' [...] It has not yet taken shape, has not yet matured [...] But we urgently need it to, for the amateurish helplessness, disorder and futility of random examinations of this material in lexicology, stylistics and syntax is clear to all” [].

The emergence of phraseology as a linguistic discipline in Russian science is inextricably linked to the name of V. Vinogradov. It was he who first gave a synchronic classification of phraseological units of the Russian language in terms of their semantic fusion and outlined the ways and aspects for further study of phraseological expressions []. After the publication of the works on phraseology by V. Vinogradov’s phraseological expressions became the subject of comprehensive study by all those interested in questions of Russian lexicology and the stylistics of fiction.

Subsequently, phraseological units began to be studied also in terms of their structure, grammatical characteristics and origins. A large number of works were devoted to the examination of specific phraseological contents, especially the phraseology of a particular writer []. However, despite the increased academic research, it took about a decade and a half for the new branch of linguistics established in the Soviet Union to enter the international arena and be recognised abroad. By the end of the 70s and the beginning of the 80s, Russian phraseology was being talked about in the West as a linguistic reality. Noting the undeniable success of the Russian school of phraseological analysis and its influence on world linguistics, one of the most prominent British lexicographers of our time and one of the authors of the famous *Oxford Dictionary of Modern English Idioms*, A. P. Cowie, emphasises: “Recognition of phraseology as an academic discipline within linguistics – the term itself, like the adjective ‘phraseological’, reflects Eastern European usage – is evident not only from vigorous and widespread research activity, but also from the publication of several specialized dictionaries reflecting one theoretical perspective or another... ‘Classical’ Russian theory, with its later

extensions and modifications, is probably the most pervasive influence at work in current phraseological studies and is unrivalled in its application to the design and compilation of dictionaries” [].

Nowadays, phraseology is a mature branch of linguistics, with an established theoretical base and its own distinct methodology. However, even having gained international recognition, it remains a science predominantly researched and developed by Russian scholars. This is pointed out by A. Kunin in his *A Course in Modern English Phraseology*. In A. Kunin’s opinion, in English and American linguistic literature “[...] fundamental questions concerning the criteria of phraseological selection, the ratio of phrases and words, the systematic nature of phraseology, phraseological variability, phrase formation, methods of studying phraseology, etc., are not raised. Nor do English and American scholars address the issue of phraseology as a linguistic discipline. This explains the lack of a name for the discipline in English” [].

This thought is further reinforced by the definitions of the word *phraseology* found in English-language dictionaries:

- “the choice or arrangement of words and phrases in the expression of ideas; manner or style of expression; the particular form of speech or diction which characterises a writer, literary production, language, etc.” [];
- “choice of words; wording” [];
- “manner of using and arranging words” [];
- “manner or style of verbal expression; characteristic language; expressions, phrases” [];
- “the manner in which words or phrases are used; a set of phrases used by a particular group of people; choice and pattern of words; way of speaking or writing; diction” [];
- the way in which language is used, especially in the choice of words and expressions [];

— a manner of organizing words and phrases into longer elements; style [].

The issues of phraseology in England and the USA are dealt with mainly in works on semantics and grammar, as well as in the prefaces to phraseological dictionaries. There is a number of articles dealing with the idiomaticity of word combinations. Phraseology is also widely represented in many explanatory dictionaries, e.g. the *Oxford Dictionary* series, the *Hornby Learner's Dictionary*, the American dictionary *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language* and others.

Still, Russia ranks first in the world in the study of phraseology of various languages. This is convincingly demonstrated by the thousands of works on phraseology (including monographs, doctoral and candidate theses, collections of articles, phraseological dictionaries, and bibliographical indexes) published in our country from 1918 to the present. Numerous conferences and meetings on phraseology are also worth mentioning [].

Thus, there is every reason to state the rapid growth of phraseological research both in our country and abroad. The main task of phraseology as a linguistic discipline is the comprehensive study of the phraseological fund of a particular language. To this end, phraseology addresses the following questions:

1. clarifying the object of phraseology as a linguistic science;
2. identifying and defining effective research methods of phraseological units of a given language system;
3. highlighting the grammatical and semantic features of phraseological units, which are distinguished from free word combinations;
4. determining the main types of phraseological units and the grounds on which they are distinguished from one another;
5. establishing the reasons for the creation and growth of the phraseological fund;
6. characterising phraseological units according to the language style they belong to [p. 16].

In addition to the tasks listed above, important research questions are: the stability of set phrases, the semantic structure of phraseological units, their origins and main functions []. A particularly challenging area of phraseology is the translation phraseological units, which requires considerable experience and a real understanding of a language []. Therefore, **the object** of phraseology as a linguistic discipline is the totality of all phraseological language units. In turn, **the subject** of phraseology consists in the study of the origins of phraseological units and their categorial features, as well as in revealing the regularities of the functioning of phraseological units in speech [].

Yet another issue on the phraseological agenda is purely terminological. The study of phraseological units is complicated by a number of terms that are often used interchangeably: phraseological units, phrasemes, idioms, fixed expressions, set phrases, stable word-groups, etc. Indeed, the complexity of the terminological composition of phraseology is one of the most difficult problems of this science. According to O. Akhmanova, the abundance of terms is due to the lack of development of the basic concepts of phraseology, of which many are synonyms and most have multiple meanings [2]. In addition, according to the scholar, many linguists engage in the development of new terms without a strong theoretical justification. As a result, in domestic and foreign sources we find the following interpretations:

- a phraseologism is a phraseological unit, idiom, fixed phrase [1];
- a phraseologism is an idiom, a fixed word combination with a unique semantic meaning. The term *phraseology* and its synonyms, e.g. idiomatic expression, idiom, loose word combination, phraseological unit, phraseogram, etc., are needed by linguists to show combinations of words in a language that constitute an inseparable entity functioning in speech on the same rights as an individual word [30];
- a phraseologism (idiom) is a word or stable phrase whose meaning cannot be deduced from the meanings of its constituent parts [12];

— a phraseologism is the same as phraseological unit; a phraseological unit is a lexically indivisible, stable in its composition and structure, integral in meaning word combination, which is reproduced in the form of a complete unit of speech” [27].

Thus, the most frequently used terms in encyclopaedias and dictionaries are “phraseological unit” and “phraseologism”, with other concepts defined as synonymous in the series. However, it should be noted that this synonymic row is not fully identical. For example, the notion of “idiom” cannot be treated as a synonym of “phraseological unit”, since, for example, according to E.G. Riesel, an idiom is a type of phraseological unit [50].

In addition, if we analyse the definitions of the term *phraseologism* given above, we can see that most of the time it is understood only as a stable word combination. Consequently, this term does not fully reflect the full multidimensionality of the phraseological unit, since not all linguists distinguish idiomatic sentences such as: proverbs, sayings, winged words, etc. Consequently, we can conclude that such an abundance of synonymic terms only complicates the consideration of key concepts and problems of phraseology, as they are for the most part not identical to each other, although they are in the same order in dictionaries and encyclopaedias.

It has been proven that the most commonly used term in phraseology is *phraseologism*. However, in our opinion, it cannot fully reflect the essence of this linguistic phenomenon. For this reason, it is reasonable to use the term *phraseological unit*, which was proposed by V. Vinogradov. This notion is interpreted much more broadly and includes all kinds of fixed turns (at the level of a phrase) and stable expressions (at the level of a sentence). Nevertheless, a single definition of this term has not been given to date, despite the sufficient development of the problems of phraseological units in domestic and foreign linguistics. Let us consider several definitions of phraseological units from the point of view of various linguists.

1.2 Phraseological Units, Their Features and Classifications

The *Linguistic Encyclopaedic Dictionary* defines phraseological units as “stable word combinations characterised by a constant lexical composition and a complex semantics” [41]. According to A. Kunin, phraseological units are “stable combinations of lexemes with a completely or partially reinterpreted meaning” [20]. Y. Solodub writes that a phraseological unit is “a word combination in which semantic unity (integrity of nomination) dominates over the structural separation of the elements comprising it [31].

Phraseological units are interpreted by another Russian scholar N. Shansky to be turns of speech consisting of two or more words, with a reproducible, stable composition and structure, as well as a coherent meaning [40]. R. Gläser believes that a phraseological unit is “a lexicalised, reproducible billexemic or polylexemic word group in common use, which has relative syntactic and semantic stability, may be idiomatized, may carry connotations, and may have an emphatic or intensifying function in a text” [].

According to the definition listed in the *Free Dictionary*, a phraseological unit (also called *idiom*) is “a word group with a fixed lexical composition and grammatical structure; its meaning, which is familiar to native speakers of the given language, is generally figurative and cannot be derived from the meanings of the phraseological unit’s component parts” [].

R. Solano further suggests that *phraseological unit* is “an umbrella term that encompasses all multi-word units of the language whose meaning is not compositional, i.e. not retrieved or decoded as the addition of the meanings of each of their constituent parts” []. Finally, *The Cambridge Handbook of English Corpus* introduces phraseological units as “lexical phrases, formulas, routines, fixed expressions, lexical bundles are multi-word prefabricated expressions” [].

From that we can conclude that scholars emphasise the obligatory presence of reinterpretation of the meaning of the units included in a stable word combination, and also refer stable word combinations to phraseological units,

which are equivalent to the word in the semantic sense, and unities representing sentences in the semantic and structural sense, i.e. literally all units which are reproduced in the ready-made form.

Of great interest is the viewpoint of H. Burger, who believed that a phraseological unit firstly consists of more than one word; secondly, the words are not put together for that one time, but are combinations of words that are known to the speaker in that particular variation [44]. In doing so, H. Burger identified the following defining characteristics of phraseological units:

1. polylexicity suggests that a phraseological unit must consist of more than one word;
2. stability means that the phraseological unit must show relative invariability;
3. idiomaticity implies that the phraseological unit has a fully or partially figurative meaning [44].

A. Chernikova in her dissertation research also pays much attention to the definition of phraseological units, in particular, through their comparison with word combinations. The scholar has systematised the similarities and differences into a table []:

Table 1. Comparison of word combinations and phraseological units

Phraseological Unit	Word Combination
lexically indivisible combination of words	free, semantically divisible, combination of words, each word independent in its semantics
the meaning of the unit is not derived from the meaning of its components	the meaning of the combination comes down to the meaning of its constituent elements
is reproduced in speech as a pre-made unit	is created in the process of speaking
has a stable syntactic link between the components	each word plays a different syntactic role in the sentence
has a single lexical meaning or a system of meanings (polysemy)	has a single lexical meaning or a system of meanings (polysemy)

has synonyms, antonyms and homonyms	has synonyms, antonyms and homonyms
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Thus, the distinguishing characteristics of free word combinations and PU are based on the degree of cohesion, the merging of their constituents. A weak degree of cohesion of the components corresponds to free word combinations, while a higher degree of cohesion of the components indicates an idiomatic expression. PU have a meaning peculiar to them only, which is called phraseological meaning and arises when a free word combination acquires a degree of idiomaticity [1].

All of the above is closely linked to the problem of classifying phraseological units.

Earlier we already cited the perspective of Ch. Bally, one of the first scholars of phraseology, who systematised word combinations on the basis of the criterion of stability and singled out free word combinations (*les groupements libres*), usual word combinations (*les groupements usuels*), phraseological series (*les series phraseologiques*) and phraseological units (*les unites phraseologiques*) [1]. Some time later, another Russian linguist, I. Anichkov, attempted a detailed structural classification of the units which he called *idiomatics*. On the basis of the English language he distinguished various groups of these units, ranging from “verb + preposition combinations”, e.g. *to hint at*, *to laugh at*, all the way to proverbs such as *Look, before you leap*. I. Anichkov postulated the creation of *descriptive idiomatics* (the study of various idioms of one language), *comparative idiomatics* (examination of the idioms of two languages in a comparative aspect) and *historical idiomatics* (the analysis of idioms in diachrony) [1].

Nevertheless, the most recognised classification of phraseological units belongs to V. Vinogradov. The scholar divided PUs into three large groups: phraseological fusions, phraseological units and phraseological combinations [1].

Phraseological fusions are stable combinations whose meanings are in no way determined by the meaning of their constituents. For example: *to kick the*

bucket (to die); *to cut a dash* (be stylish or impressive in one's dress or behaviour). The meaning of these expressions is integral and unmotivated in modern English.

Phraseological units are word combinations that also have a coherent meaning, but this meaning is motivated. Let us look at some examples: *to stick to one's guns* (to refuse to compromise or change, despite criticism), *to wash one's dirty linen in public* (to expose private matters to public view, especially unsavoury secrets), *to show one's teeth* (to become hostile or threatening; exhibit anger). Here the connection between the meaning of the fixed expression and the literal meaning of these entities is quite transparent.

Phraseological combinations have one word used in its literal sense and the other in its figurative sense. What is more, the meaning is intrinsic to the word only in one phrase or in a limited number of phrases. For example, the expression *a blind date* – a romantic social meeting between two people who have never met each other – is composed of the noun *date* used literally and the adjective *blind* used figuratively to describe a meeting with a person *one has never met before*. Yet, this reimagined connotation is restricted to this particular context and cannot be used freely in other circumstances (e.g. there is no such thing as *blind friendship*) [].

In the framework of our study, it is interesting to examine yet another perspective, that of N. Amosova, who considers phraseological units from the viewpoint of the theory of context. Thus, free word combinations are units of variable context. We can say *white wall*, *brick wall*, *white dress*, *brick house*. In these word combinations, the context in which each word is used can be changed easily and with no restrictions. The meanings of these words in free word combinations remain unchanged [].

Phraseological units, on the other hand, are elements of regular context. The meaning of the words in the phrase is related to the context of the phrase. For example, *white* can mean *sleepless* only in the PU *white night*. You cannot say *white hours*. Nor can the constituents of the phraseological unit *to rise up against a brick wall* – to be unable to make more progress with a plan or discussion because

someone is stopping you – be replaced with similar alternatives (e.g. *brick* with *concrete*).

Consequently, N. Amosova differentiates between two types of phraseological units, namely phrasemes and idioms.

Phrasemes are found in regular contexts where one of their components is phraseologically reimagined. For example, *a prick of conscience* (a feeling of guilt), *cold weapon* (a weapon that does not involve fire or explosions), *dog's life* (an unhappy life), *to knit one's brows* (to move the eyebrows together in a way that shows that one is thinking about something or is worried, angry, etc.), *to grind one's teeth* (to be very angry or frustrated about something, but feel that you cannot say or do anything about it). That said, the element used literally (conscience, weapon, life, etc.) is referred to as the indicator or the indicative minimum while the figurative component it is put next to is known as the core (e.g. *prick*, *cold*, *dog's*...) [].

Idioms are also units of regular context, but they cannot have a core and an indicator as they are completely reinterpreted. For example, *to take the bull by the horns* (to deal decisively with a difficult or dangerous situation), *to fall by the wayside* (to fail to persist in an endeavour or undertaking), *cut and dried* (completely settled) [].

In addition to phrases and idioms, N. Amosova identifies phraseoloids on the periphery of the phraseological fund. These are formations in which one of the components has a phraseologically bound meaning and limited compatibility. Compare: *to pay respects to somebody* (to visit someone, or send them greeting; go to someone's funeral.), *to pay tribute to somebody* (to show your admiration and respect for someone) but not *to pay mournings*, *to pay condolences*, *to pay commemorations* [].

When it comes to English phraseology, we find another classification, based on the semantic characteristics of phraseological units, proposed by A. Kunin. The scholar notes that his approach is based on V. Vinogradov's classification and is intended to supplement it, since it is impossible to fit English phraseology into the

three classes allocated by his predecessor. A. Kunin's classification is based on the parameters of the relationship between the meaning and the inner form of the phraseological unit [21]:

1. Idioms are fixed expressions with that have been completely or partially reimagined: *to get into hot water* = *to get into trouble*; *to get up somebody's nose* = *to annoy somebody*.

2. Phraseomatisms are fixed word combinations with a compound meaning. For example, *brown paper* means *wrapping paper*. Here the meaning is not derived directly from the meanings of the constituents. The word combination, therefore, has implicit semantics. It also has reproducibility in speech, just like the first type. However, it lacks reinterpretation. The attribute *brown* is an actual characteristic of the named object.

3. Idiophraseomatisms are set phrases that have phraseological and idiomatic variants of meaning. For example, *running fire* and *hail of criticism*. In the first case, the phrase combination is a phraseomatism, as it has implicit senses, is reproduced but has no reinterpretation. In the second one, it is an idiom, a fully reinterpreted unit.

Another domestic scholar, E. Riesel, distinguishes two types of phraseological units:

1. functionally differentiated phraseological combinations that have no semantic-expressive stylistic colouring;

2. phraseological combinations with different semantic-expressive stylistic colouring – fixed word combinations of expressive phraseology [50].

M. Brandes draws heavily on the views of E. Riesel in compiling his classification of phraseological units. However, this professor's classification is somewhat broader and more versatile. According to M. Brandes, a phraseological unit is a stable and reproducible, separately formed, at the same time semantically integral combination of words, the meaning of which is partially or completely reinterpreted. The phraseological structure of language is represented by idioms,

proverbs, nominative word combinations, literary quotations, winged words and expressions, etc. [3]

As secondary entities, phraseological units are created with the aim of specifying and, mainly, figuratively and emotionally assessing, stylistically colouring phenomena and objects, which are already named in the language. According to M. Brandes, phraseological units have different degrees of expressiveness: neutral, close to terms or nominal names.

In addition, M. Brandes identifies a group of expressive-emotional phraseological units, which include proverbs, winged words and expressions, idioms, sayings, etc. This type of phraseology is widely used in publicist and fiction literature, as well as in everyday colloquial speech [].

According to the application field, professor M. Brandes distinguishes functionally coloured phraseology, namely, phraseological units of scientific, formal and journalistic styles, as well as metaphorical fixed word combinations of high and low stylistic tone.

Emotionally-expressive phrases are often used in oral and written speech, in all functional styles of language. However, it should be noted that the prohibition of the use of colloquial vocabulary and phraseology in scientific and professional spheres of communication is particularly strict. The possibility of their occasional stylistic use in fiction and journalism, which is associated with various transformations, figurative “playing around” with phraseological units, is possible because of the separation of phraseological units. Their occasional stylistic use can be carried out:

- 1) based on structural transformation, which implies the transformation of the structural or component composition of phraseological units. Such a transformation is characterised by a change in the meaning of the whole phraseological unit;

- 2) on the basis of contextual transposition, i.e. the complete or partial reinterpretation of the meaning of a phraseological unit without changing its structure and composition [4].

1.3. Usual and Occasional Use of Phraseological Units

The analysis of the implementation of phraseological units in speech, both usual and occasional, is based on the theory of text linguistics. G. Paul first introduced the concepts of usual and occasional meanings into the linguistic literature: “[...] we shall understand by the usual meaning the totality of ideas that constitute the content of a given word for a given linguistic community, and by the occasional meaning – those ideas which the speaker associates with the word at the moment of its utterance and which he expects the listener to associate in their turn with the given word” []. As for the usual and occasional meaning of phraseological units, this issue has been studied in detail by the Russian scholar A. Kunin whose findings are going to be cited in this section of the paper more than once.

Phraseological units may be used both in oral and written speech in a usual (normative) way and in an occasional way. When phraseological units are used usually, their literal meaning in relation to denoting a person, object, process, phenomenon, situation, etc. is realised, which can be found in the dictionary []. Occasional meaning is the meaning that a phraseological expression acquires in some context, accompanied by a digression from the usual and generally accepted one. “The actual word lives not in the dictionary or grammar, where it is preserved as a pre-made concoction, but in speech” [Potebnya, 1958, p. 58]. The same is true of PU.

The possibility of occasional transformations of phraseological units is due to a number of factors, which can be both linguistic and extra-linguistic in nature. These include structural and semantic stability of the constituents of PUs, their separation as well as their contextual reinterpretation []. In addition, the author’s pragmatic intention, i.e. the communicative intent of the utterance, and the nature

of the text in which the PUs are used, are also of great importance []. Let us characterise the most complex of the listed indicators of phraseology.

Semantic and structural stability in phraseological units, which is manifested in complete or partial reinterpretation, is established by overlaying the meaning of the phraseological unit on the literal meaning of its components. For example, the PU *to sit on the fence* is defined as *not to make any clear choice or decision between two possibilities or opposing groups of people; not to take sides*. Neither the word *sit* nor the word *fence* feature in the definition of this phrase, which convincingly proves the complete reinterpretation of the phrase in question [].

However, when the meaning of the PU is not reinterpreted but partially, a component conveying the literal meaning may find its way into the definition: e.g. *to make a fool of oneself* is defined as *to behave like a fool*; *to lose face* means *to lose a respect or good opinion* [].

Separation is another one of the core indicators of phraseology that make occasional transformations possible. The term *separation* refers to “the distinguishing feature of syntactic unity in that its constituent units are separate words” []. It is opposed to integrity – a trait characteristic of compound words all the elements of which share the same grammatical form [].

The terms “separation” and “integrity” were proposed by A. Smirnitsky who wrote: “Phraseological units differ from “classical”, i.e. idiomatic, compound words in that, unlike the latter, they are separately formed: otherwise they would not be classified as a special group of compound formations at all” []. Unfortunately, the scholar did not elaborate on any criteria that could be used to account for the separation of PUs; the linguist formulated only the most general principles which he applied to the Russian language. Fortunately, his ideas were picked up and further developed by A. Kunin who differentiated between usual and occasional indicators of separation of phraseological units.

Usual indicators can be either morphological, morphological-syntactic or structural-semantic.

1. The morphological indicators include a change in the word form within phraseological units. Such a grammatical change transforms a given component rather than the whole phraseological form, as it has no grammatical pattern, unlike a modifiable simple or compound word.

— verb modification

to **show** the white feather (to act in a cowardly manner): She **showed** the white feather when faced with a big problem [].

— noun modification

Not every noun modification opposes a PU to a compound word. The most clearly contrasted with a compound word are those PUs in which the first component is the modifiable one.

happy as a **king** (extremely happy)

The world is so full of a number of things; I am sure we should all be as happy as **kings** [].

— adjective modification

Many adjectives in comparative forms are found in both the positive and comparative degrees. This kind of occasional formation, which can be found in 19th-century literature, became widespread in the 20th century and is becoming a norm.

as **poor** as a church mouse

I have come back **poorer** than a church mouse [].

2. Morphological-syntactic separation of PUs

The morphological-syntactic indicator of the separation of phraseological units is the ability of their verbal components to be used both in the active and passive voice. The difference in the functioning in speech of a verb in the passive voice and a phraseological unit with a verb in the passive voice is that the verb is part of a variable sentence, but cannot itself be a sentence, while in speech a phraseological unit with a verb in the passive voice can be a sentence.

The use of the verb in the passive voice is one of the indicators of the separation of phraseological units, as it proves its “wordiness”, which is expressed

both in changes to the verb itself and in the accompanying structural changes that are not characteristic of words, both simple and compound [].

3. Structural-semantic separation of PUs

Structural-semantic separation is characteristic, for instance, of sentence-phraseological units. Many phraseological units of other structural types have the same indicators, e.g., interjective phraseological units *Good Heavens!* (an expression used to express surprise or to emphasise that you agree or disagree with someone); expressions such as *to break the ice* (the ice is broken); *somebody's better half* (someone's wife, husband, or partner.), etc. []

That being said, the most relevant factor that causes occasional transformations of PUs is arguably that of their contextual use. The use of context and dictionary definitions helps to indicate whether the meaning of a PU has been reinterpreted []. The role of context in a language depends on the degree of “autonomy” of the word in that language due to its grammatical structure and vocabulary []. As for English, the importance of context is much higher than for many other languages, for a number of reasons.

As an analytical language, English has a very limited range of morphological formations. This has led to an abundance of homoforms and lexical-grammatical homonyms. In addition, lexical polysemy and homonymy, i.e. the combination of two or more lexical meanings in one sound or letter complex within the same lexico-grammatical category, are very common. This is why, when analysing English language units, researchers are often forced to refer to the context they are used in [].

According to N. Amosova, context is “the combination of a semantically realisable word (i.e. a word whose meaning is being realised in that context) with an indicative minimum (i.e. an element of the speech chain that carries the required semantic indication)” []. A. Kunin argues that context is “a passage of text isolated and united by a linguistic unit or a speech unit that can pass into a linguistic unit, which are determined by the actualiser in a usual or occasional use” []. A phraseological actualiser is a word, phrase, sentence or group of sentences

semantically related to the phrases used in a given context, introducing them into speech in a usual or occasional sense.

Phraseological context has three types:

— within-phrase phraseological context: a phraseological unit and its actualiser, expressed by a word or phrase combination within a simple or complex sentence;

— a phrasal phraseological context is a phraseological unit and its actualiser, expressed in a sentence, simple or compound;

— a super-phrase phraseological context: a phraseological unit and its actualiser, expressed in two or more simple or complex sentences [].

The distribution of language units is one of the ways in which they are contextualised []. A distinction should be made between five main types of distribution, i.e. external relations of phraseological units:

1. Compatibility. In terms of positional opposition, a distinction is made between direct and remote compatibility.

a) Direct compatibility is the adjacency of a semantically realisable phraseological unit to a word or phrase combination that is its actualiser in both postposition and preposition.

through and through: completely and to the greatest extent possible

*He was peculiar but she **knew him** through and through [].*

b) Remote compatibility is the position in which a phraseological unit and its actualiser are separated by a word, a phrase combination or a punctuation mark.

as like as two peas – exactly alike

*White-collar workers and factory hands live in adjoining blocks in **houses** built on the same pattern and as like as two peas [].*

2. Relatedness is the direct or remote position in which a phraseological phrase is realised depending on the message of the situation. Only interjective PUs and non-injective ones with a modal meaning can be found in this position.

by George – an exclamation used to express astonishment, approval, etc.

By George, I think we've finally blown the case wide open! [].

3. Linking is the conjunctive linking of sentences, including sentence-like phraseological units like proverbs and sayings.

one's heart is broken – a feeling of great sadness, especially when someone you love dies or does not love you

I am alone now, quite alone, and my heart is broken [].

4. Conjunction is a subordinate relation of sentences, including sentence-like phraseological units, within a compound sentence.

birds of a feather flock together – said to mean that people from the same group or with the same interests like to be with each other

Birds of a feather flock together. Basically, people seek out neighbourhoods that are most congenial to them [].

5. The joining of sentences without a conjunction, i.e. the joining of two or more sentences without a conjunctive or subordinate conjunction.

it's a long lane that has no turning – an assertion that an unfavourable situation will eventually change for the better

You have been sick for a while, but things will get better – It is a long lane that has no turning, after all [].

All of the previous examples illustrated the so-called context of functioning, which reproduces the meaning of a phrase or its occasional meaning. Alongside this, linguists also recognise the context of production. In fact, the production of PUs and their new meanings is an important function of the phraseological context. Only through the use of occasionalisms in a generating context could they subsequently become phraseological units [].

In other words, the creation of new phraseological units is facilitated by the social need for them and their use in a wide variety of contexts. For instance, the use of the PU *as the day is long* – unceasingly, very, thoroughly, to a very high degree – was originally reserved to the Shakespearism *as merry as the day is long*. Gradually the adverbial part of the clause was combined with a wide variety of adjectives (handsome, harmless, industrious, real, etc.) Therefore, the

disintegration of the unique unit combinability led to the formation of an adverbial PU as a result of rearranged compatibility [].

Another way of contextual realisation of phraseological units are occasional changes in the internal connections of phraseological units: insertion and rupture. In context, such internal relations of phraseological units can interact with the external ones.

1. Insertion is the inclusion of words, variable word combinations or other phraseological units into the PU in question in a given speech act. Occasionally inserted elements expand the structure of a PU and its lexical composition. Insertion is the most important syntactic indicator of the separation of phraseological units, as it confirms the ability of some of their components to enter into syntactic relations with various variable elements. In addition, the insertion convincingly demonstrates that the components of a PU are words and that they have not lost their lexical meanings. These meanings are actualised in speech by combining them with the variable elements:

— a turn with the internal article: *at a loss* (uncertain what to do; bewildered) – *at a complete loss*;

— a turn with the internal preposition: *a bag of bones* (someone who is extremely thin) – *a bag of vigorous bones*;

— a turn with the internal conjunction: *give and take* (willingness to accept suggestions from another person and give up some of your own) – *take and no give*.

2. Rupture. A ruptured PU is defined as a phrase that is split off by a variable word, word combination or graphic means in order to create a new stylistic effect while its component composition remains unchanged. In the case of a ruptured PU, the separating elements are not included in the structure of the PU and do not fit into the image behind it. Rupture is much less common than insertion.

— *to skate on thin ice* (to do something that is dangerous or involves risks): *It is **thin ice** that he's **skating over*** [].

The phraseological unit and its actualiser form the so-called phraseological configuration. Four types of phraseological configurations can be distinguished in terms of the usual and occasional use of a phraseological unit: first-degree usual configuration, second-degree usual configuration, first-degree occasional configuration and second-degree occasional configuration.

1. First-degree usual configuration. In this configuration, PUs with their traditional vocabulary stylistic colouring are implemented without any deviations from the usage – ironic, affectionate, disparaging, solemn, humorous, euphemistic, etc. The phrases included in the usual phraseological configuration retain their traditional structure and component composition.

a fat lot (slang) – little or not at all

A fat lot they care about anyone else's troubles! []

2. Second-degree usual configuration. In this configuration, PUs are used without any transformation of their meaning, structure or component composition. This brings the use of phraseological units in the usual configuration of the second degree closer to that of the first degree, but there is a significant difference. In the first-degree usual configuration, the phrases are implemented with their traditional stylistic colouring, while in the second-degree usual configuration, the stylistic effect they create is strengthened, usually within the same stylistic range. The enhancement of expressiveness is achieved both by purely positional stylistic techniques (independent use of PUs with the structure of a word combination, separation, escalation) and by stylistic techniques of other types, for example, phraseological selection, i.e. using two or more PUs within the same configuration.

(as) still as a mouse – silent, without noise

Still as a mouse, she had turned and turned the thought. Did I take him in? []

Bringing the comparison to the first place gives additional expressive power to the utterance.

3. First-degree occasional configuration. In this configuration, PUs are transformed occasionally. As a result, not only may the expressive nature of the phrases be strengthened, but they may also be used in a different stylistic sense.

Their meaning may also change due to the emergence of a situational meaning. Some changes are possible in the structure of the phrases. This is achieved by using numerous stylistic devices (insertion, addition, double actualisation, replacement of components, rupture, ellipsis, etc.)

bread and butter – a means of support or subsistence; livelihood

One manages to earn one's bread and butter ... and a little piece of cake [].

The addition of the variable phrase *and a small piece of cake* literalises the phrase *bread and butter* and gives the phrase a humorous character. The phrase is a double actualisation technique, i.e. the simultaneous use of the meaning of a PU and the literal meaning of its components.

4. Second-degree occasional configuration. This configuration is formed by complex stylistic means or convergence. In the case of complex stylistic devices, as opposed to convergence, the leading device is highlighted.

hell is paved with good intentions – said to emphasise that you must not simply intend to behave well but you must act according to your intentions, because you will have problems or be punished if you do not

*“**Resolutions** are all very well,” said Phyl, with a touch of primness. “**Hell’s paved with them**”* [].

In this example, a particular expressive effect is achieved by distancing and replacing the word combination *with good intentions* with the word *resolutions*, and by replacing the word *resolutions* with the pronoun *them*. The double substitution is the leading stylistic device.

In case the actualiser included in a particular configuration does not provide sufficient information on the nature of the stylistic use of the phraseological unit, data contained in a text that is retrospective or prospective to that configuration, i.e. in a text that precedes or follows it, should be used.

To sum up, the usual use of phraseological units expands the communicative possibilities of the language both to denote extra-linguistic objects and to characterise them stylistically. Occasional transformations of phraseological units, based on their usual application, are a powerful means of enriching communication

resources, as they provide an opportunity to express what cannot be conveyed by a word or phraseological unit when it is used conventionally.

Occasional changes of phraseological units are extremely characteristic of modern English. Occasional indicators of separation show the life of phrases in the language and their comprehension by speakers of a given language, as can be seen from the above examples.

Chapter 1: Summary

Nowadays, phraseology is a mature branch of linguistics, with an established theory and its own distinct methodology. The founder of the theory of phraseology is the Swiss linguist of French origin, Ch. Bally who distinguished four groups of phrases according to their degree of persistence: free word combinations, usual word combinations, phraseological series and phraseological units.

The emergence of phraseology as a linguistic discipline in Russian science is inextricably linked to the name of V. Vinogradov. It was he who first gave a synchronic classification of phraseological units of the Russian language by dividing them into three large groups: phraseological fusions, phraseological units and phraseological combinations.

The main task of phraseology as a linguistic discipline is the comprehensive study of the phraseological fund of a particular language. To this end, phraseology addresses a wide variety of research questions. Its object is the totality of all phraseological language units. In turn, the subject of phraseology consists in the study of the origins of phraseological units and their categorical features, as well as in revealing the regularities of the functioning of phraseological units in speech.

The study of phraseological units is complicated by a number of terms that are often used interchangeably: phraseological units, phrasemes, idioms, fixed expressions, set phrases, stable word-groups, etc. According to O. Akhmanova, the abundance of terms is due to the lack of development of the basic concepts of phraseology, of which many are synonyms and most have multiple meanings.

The term that most accurately reflects the essence of the linguistic phenomenon in question is, in our opinion, that of phraseological unit, proposed by V. Vinogradov. This notion is interpreted much more broadly and includes all kinds of fixed turns (at the level of a phrase) and stable expressions (at the level of a sentence). When combining this approach with the later findings of A. Kunin, a conclusion can be drawn that *phraseological unit* is an umbrella term that encompasses all multi-word units of the language whose meaning is not

compositional; a stable combination of words with fully or partially reinterpreted meanings.

Phraseological units may be used both in oral and written speech in a usual way and in an occasional way. When phraseological units are used usually, their literal meaning in relation to denoting a person, object, process, phenomenon, situation, etc. is realised, which can be found in the dictionary. Occasional meaning is the meaning that a phraseological expression acquires in some context, accompanied by a digression from the usual and generally accepted one. The possibility of occasional transformations of phraseological units is due to a number of factors, which can be both linguistic and extra-linguistic in nature. These include structural and semantic stability of the constituents of PUs, their separation as well as their contextual reinterpretation.

Semantic and structural stability in phraseological units, which is manifested in complete or partial reinterpretation, is established by overlaying the meaning of the phraseological unit on the literal meaning of its components. Separation is another one of the core indicators of phraseology that make occasional transformations possible. The term *separation* refers to the distinguishing feature of syntactic unity in that its constituent units are separate words. That being said, the most relevant factor that causes occasional transformations of PUs is arguably that of their contextual use. The use of context and dictionary definitions helps to indicate whether the meaning of a PU has been reinterpreted.

Chapter 2. Contextual Transformations of Phraseological Units in *What Alice Forgot* by Liane Moriarty

In this section of the paper, we are going to be looking at structure-semantic, semantic and other occasional transformations of phraseological units in *What Alice Forgot* by Liane Moriarty.

Liane Moriarty is an Australian author best known for her bestselling novels that blend mystery, drama, and humour with relatable characters and real-world issues. She was born on November 15, 1966, in Sydney, Australia, and grew up in the suburbs of the city. She started writing at a young age, but did not pursue it as a career until later in life.

Moriarty's first novel, *Three Wishes*, was published in 2004 and was well-received by both readers and critics. She continued to publish several more novels over the years, including *The Last Anniversary*, *What Alice Forgot*, and *The Hypnotist's Love Story*. However, it was her sixth novel, *The Husband's Secret*, that became a breakout hit and garnered international attention. Moriarty then followed up with several more bestselling novels, including *Big Little Lies*, which was adapted into a highly successful television series starring Reese Witherspoon and Nicole Kidman.

Moriarty's novels are known for their witty dialogue, relatable characters, and exploration of complex themes such as family dynamics, relationships, and personal growth. Her writing style is engaging and easy to read, making her novels accessible to a wide range of readers. She has won numerous awards for her work, including the Australian Book Industry Award for General Fiction for *The Husband's Secret* and the Goodreads Choice Award for Fiction for *Big Little Lies*.

Moriarty's novels have been praised for their ability to tackle serious and thought-provoking issues while still being entertaining and engaging. She often explores topics such as infidelity, divorce, and mental illness with sensitivity and nuance, allowing readers to connect with her characters on a deeper level. The book we have selected for this chapter is a prime example of that.

What Alice Forgot is a novel written by Liane Moriarty, published in 2009. The story follows the life of a 29-year-old Alice Love, who falls off her bike during a spinning class and suffers from amnesia. The last thing she remembers is being pregnant with her first child and being in love with her husband, Nick. However, when she wakes up, she discovers that she is actually 39 years old, a mother of three children, and in the midst of a bitter divorce from Nick.

Alice's memory loss is a blessing in disguise as she rediscovers herself and her life, which has changed dramatically in the past ten years. She struggles to understand how she became a mother of three and how she ended up in a relationship that she no longer recognizes. As she tries to put the pieces of her life back together, Alice begins to realize that she may have lost more than just her memory.

The story alternates between Alice's perspective and the perspectives of her sister, Elisabeth, and her grandmother, Frannie. Elisabeth is the perfect sister who is dealing with infertility and a troubled marriage, while Frannie has been secretly dealing with a health issue. Alice's amnesia is a wake-up call for all of them to re-evaluate their lives and the relationships that they have with one another.

Throughout the novel, Alice tries to reconnect with her children and reconcile with her estranged husband, but she struggles to understand why their relationship has deteriorated so much. She also meets a man named Dominick, who becomes a confidante and a friend. As Alice learns more about her life, she begins to question whether she truly wants to regain her old memories or if she would rather start over with a fresh perspective. Eventually, Alice regains her memory and makes a decision about the direction of her life.

Overall, *What Alice Forgot* is a heart-warming and thought-provoking novel that explores the themes of love, family, and identity. The book provides a refreshing perspective on how life can change dramatically over a decade and how sometimes, starting over can be the best thing that can happen to a person. From the linguistics point of view, it is also full of phraseological units some of which

were transformed structurally or semantically by the author. Let us have a closer look at those.

2.1. Structure-semantic Transformations of Phraseological Units

Structure-semantic transformations of phraseological units refer to changes in both the meaning and the structure of a fixed expression or idiom. These transformations can occur over time or in different contexts, and they often involve changes in word order, word choice, or grammatical function.

In *What Alice Forgot* we identified a number of structure-semantic transformations some of which we are going to study in more detail in this section of the paper. The rest of the examples are listed in the appendix.

We are first going to look at insertion. Insertion is a common and relatively undemanding way of transforming PUs “that quantitatively expands the original phraseological structure by adding additional elements” [p. 85]. Inserted elements expand the structure of a PU and its lexical composition. What is more, it should be noted that insertion is not just an arbitrary extension of the phraseological structure, but is always the penetration of individual key elements of the context into the PU. Let us consider some examples.

In Chapter 1, we first learn of Alice’s accident at the gym as perceived by some of her acquaintances:

*“You’re at the gym,” said Jane. “You fell and knocked yourself out. **Gave me an absolute heart attack**, although I was sort of grateful for the excuse to stop”* [p. 7].

A heart attack is a serious medical emergency in which the supply of blood to the heart is suddenly blocked. In this passage, it is used both informally and figuratively to convey the meaning of making a person suddenly feel frightened, surprised, or shocked. In fact, Alice’s fall off her bike during the spin class came as a shock to everybody else present to a point of making them scared for the main character’s life.

In this particular instance, “to give somebody a heart attack” is an example of a phraseological unit that is motivated by the original meaning of its constituents. Moreover, its impact is enhanced by the structural transformation and the insertion of the adjective “absolutely”, which, in this case, highlights Jane’s uttermost shock and disbelief. Last but not least, the employment of this particular phraseological unit is quite fitting in terms of unveiling Alice’s personality, but we will dive deeper into this in section 2.3.

Substitution of components is another productive method of phraseological transformation in the English language. Substitution interferes with the phraseological structure, which naturally leads to the increased expressiveness and imagery of a PU. Usually one component is substituted for another component, but in some cases, the substitution can be based on a replacement of a one-word component with several components, or vice versa. It is also possible to replace several components at once, but at least one component must remain unchanged to ensure the recognisability of a PU [p. 86-87].

As the story progresses, Alice’s memory loss of the last decade of her life leads to her learning some hard truths about her life, with her separation from her sweetheart Nick being the most shocking one. This leads to her reminiscing about their relationship and the role her husband had played in turning her life around.

*Except, there were no moments of bliss after grocery shopping when she was fifteen. She hadn’t met Nick yet. **Her heart still had to be broken** a few times before he could turn up and **superglue it together** with words like “besotted” [p. 6].*

This passage includes a phraseological combination “to break someone’s heart” in the passive voice as well as a structural substitution of its component “break” to “superglue”. The use of the passive voice “to be broken” can be interpreted as a manifestation of Alice’s total devotion and trust in Nick as her knight in shining armour, not the cause of her heartache. It was somebody else who had treated her wrong, who had made her miserable and lonely in the past, someone else entirely who had once broken her heart. This very same heart Nick

came to the rescue of and “superglued back together”, making Alice feel whole again. Here L. Moriarty resorts to the active voice suggesting that the man had managed to heal his beloved’s heart on his own merits.

What is more, the verb “to superglue” is also used figuratively but is motivated by its original meaning and conveys the idea of safely securing something. Stylistically, this increases the expressiveness as well as the imagery of the expression by contrasting Nick Love with any other man in Alice’s life making him one of a kind in her eyes.

This rather hopeful and rose-coloured idea that Alice has of her and Nick’s early years together is in stark contrast to the reality she now has to face. Alice and Nick of 2008 are in the middle of an ugly divorce fighting for custody of their three children and negotiating a split of the assets from their marriage, which Mrs Love seems to have had strong opinions about before her head injury. However, due to Alice’s amnesia she now has no recollection of any of that with her memory of their relationship as untainted and pure as it was the day they met. It is therefore hardly surprising that the news of their separation astonishes her: “That word – “divorce” – was so ugly; No. Not them. Never, ever them” [p. 68].

In order to demonstrate the main character’s belief in her marriage, L. Moriarty employs the following phraseological unit:

*[Nick] believed in marriage. He felt that people gave up on their relationships too easily. He once said to Alice that if they were ever having troubles in their marriage, he would **move heaven and earth** to fix things* [p. 68].

If someone moves heaven and earth, they do everything they can to achieve something sometimes making extraordinary efforts. This phraseological combination has the verb “to move” used literally and the nouns “heaven and earth” figuratively. The expression came into use in the 1700s, but its origin is uncertain. Some believe it is related to Archimedes’ statement: “Give me a lever long enough and a fulcrum on which to place it, and I shall move the world”. Others attribute the idiom to a passage in the Bible: “[...] I will shake the heavens,

and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land [...]”. However, the word “move” is not an accurate synonym of the word “shake,” here [].

Whatever its origin, the phraseological combination is widely used today. Consequently, it is highly surprising that it comes up more than once in *What Alice Forgot*. Later in the book, Alice confronts Nick about their issues pointing out:

“You told me once that if we were ever having trouble with our relationship, you would move heaven and earth to try and fix it” [p. 199].

However, L. Moriarty does not stop there and subjects the phraseological combination to a structural transformation in order to emphasise that her characters are meant to be together:

*Alice couldn’t take [their arguments] seriously because **heaven and earth wouldn’t need to be moved**; any troubles in their relationship could always be fixed with a few hours in separate rooms, a hug in the hallway, the quiet sliding of a chocolate bar under an elbow, or even just a gentle, meaningful poke in the ribs that meant “Let’s stop fighting now”* [p. 68].

As we discussed in the previous chapter, passive voice is one of the indicators of the separation of phraseological units. In this case, the novelist plays around with this linguistic feature with the aim of detaching the glorious effort of “moving heaven and earth” from her characters, suggesting what an out-of-character thing it would be for them to do. Thus, the use of the phraseological combination in the passive voice indicates that it is somebody else who might have to put in a lot of effort to save their marriage; for Alice and Nick it is a simple case of taking some time to themselves but eventually finding their way back together. At the beginning of the book, this seems highly unlikely, but the Love family do end up “patching things” up with simple acts of kindness and consideration of each other’s needs.

With that, let us move on to the next type of occasional transformations of phraseological units, namely, the expansion of their component structure. As well as being granted entry into Alice Love’s turbulent life, we also get a glimpse of her husband’s affairs. The protagonist remembers her spouse as a simple guy who

works hard at his ordinary nine-to-five corporate job. However, her delusion is shattered the moment she has to deal with Nick's personal assistant who informs her of Nick's new role as a general manager. The thought of her sweetheart filling such big shoes makes Alice both giggle and beam with pride. Here is what she thinks to herself:

*That was more than one promotion. That was **a giant superhero leap up the corporate ladder**. Alice was filled with giggly pride at the thought of Nick strutting about the office, telling people what to do. Wouldn't people just laugh at him?* [p. 39-40].

L. Moriarty reveals Alice's appreciation for her husband's success with the help of yet another phraseological combination. "Corporate ladder" refers to "a series of increasingly important jobs that someone can do within a company" []. "To climb the corporate ladder" means to "progress inside an organisation from the basic level to the top level through promotions" []. When comparing it to the original, the first thing that really stands out in the book quote is the substitution of the verb "to climb" with a noun "leap" + preposition "up" combination. This is done intentionally in order to stress how far Nick had come in the years that had been erased from Alice's memory. In fact, "a giant leap" is a collocation used to highlight the importance of the progress that has been made. For instance, when Neil Armstrong stepped onto the moon July 20, 1969, he famously declared: "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind" [].

In our view, this switch of the stylistically unmotivated verb "to climb" for the "giant leap up" is not accidental but rather intentional as it suggests the out-of-the-ordinary nature of such a development in the life of the Love family. To put it differently, the novelist expands the structure of the PU by occasionally combining it with the collocation. However, she does not stop there. As expressive as the collocation "a giant leap" is, L. Moriarty deems it necessary to enhance it even further by introducing another additional element in the form of the noun modifier "superhero". This provides more insight into Alice's perspective on life now versus ten years ago. The choice of the lexical unit "superhero" suggests a more

naïve and simplistic outlook on the world where people succeed professionally not as a result of their hard work but due to supernatural powers and a sprinkle of sheer luck. This is exactly how Alice sees Nick: a man with superhuman abilities who has accomplished something they had never dared to dream of.

Interestingly enough, while adoring her husband, the Alice from ten years ago does not have a particularly high opinion of herself. In her own eyes, she is a rather mediocre people pleaser who is helpless at social gatherings. While that could be a bit of an exaggeration, Alice's relatives do like to point out to her that standing up for herself is a skill she needs to work on. As it is a running theme as well as a sign of the main character's personal growth throughout the novel, we will look at a few examples here.

*“I wish you wouldn’t let people **stomp all over you**,” Elisabeth was always telling her. Sometimes, long after Alice had forgotten the incident, Elisabeth would say, “I was up all last night thinking about what that woman in the chemist’s said to you. I can’t believe you just took it – **you’ve got no backbone!**” [p. 40].*

In English, a person who is treated badly or is easily defeated, who is dominated at work or at home without defending their principles is “walked all over”. In other words, when someone walks all over somebody else, they “do not respect that person and treat them as if they are inferior”; they also “make someone do something for them while not considering that person’s feelings” []. In the example selected this idea is intensified through substitution of one of the components of the phraseological units. The younger Alice’s lack of self-esteem results in people not simply “walking” but “stomping” all over her with the latter describing the act of “walk[ing] with intentionally heavy steps, especially as a way of showing that you are annoyed” or “put[ting] a foot down on the ground hard and quickly, making a loud noise, often to show anger” []. This substitution makes the phraseological unit more expressive implying Alice’s complete inability to take control of her own destiny. Interestingly enough, the Alice of today is nothing like that.

To make the description complete, the author introduces another phraseological unit just a few lines down: “You’ve got no backbone”. Alice’s sister Elisabeth is worried that she does not have the courage to do things which need to be done. From the linguistic point of view, this expression is motivated by its constituent elements as a person’s backbone is the column of bones down the middle of their back which support the entire body allowing it to stay vertically. In other words, this particular transformation of the phraseological unit is purely semantic and not structural.

However, as this older and more mature version of Alice Love begins to break through, so does her new self-assured self:

*I left a message with some horrible secretary. I stood up to her. You [Elizabth]’d be proud of me! **I showed backbone. My backbone was like steel***” [p. 54].

The usual form of the idiom is “to show some backbone”, meaning, to demonstrate to others that you are able to fight back when life throughs punches at you. The author omits the determiner “some” in favour of subjecting the phraseological unit to second-degree occasional transformation. In doing so, she achieves a particular expressive effect omitting elements of the original phraseological unit (phraseological ellipsis) and introducing a comparison “like steel” (substitution), signifying “extremely strong, resistant and durable”. This combined hints at Alice’s transformation that comes full circle in the course of the book.

All things considered, the analysis of structure-semantic transformations in *What Alice Forgot* showcases how these changes contribute to the expressive and figurative language used in the novel, conveying deeper meanings. The first type of transformation discussed is insertion, where additional elements are added to expand the structure and composition of the phraseological unit. An example is the expression “gave me an absolute heart attack”, which conveys a figurative meaning of sudden fear or shock. The insertion of the adjective “absolute” intensifies the shock and disbelief.

The second type of transformation is substitution, where components of the phraseological unit are replaced. An example is the substitution of “break” with “superglue” in the phrase “superglue it together”. This substitution emphasises the healing and restoring presence of Alice’s husband Nick.

The third type involves the expansion of component structure, where additional elements are introduced. For instance, the phrase “climb the corporate ladder” is transformed to “a giant superhero leap up the corporate ladder”, highlighting Nick’s remarkable progress and Alice’s admiration for him.

In summary, the examination of structure-semantic transformations in *What Alice Forgot* highlights how these changes enhance the novel’s expressiveness, showcasing character development.

2.2. Semantic Transformations of Phraseological Units

The uniqueness of phraseological units lies in their ability to describe a phenomenon figuratively and expressively and to attract recipients’ attention. Therefore, the phraseological fund finds significant application in fiction. Writers, however, may feel that using a phraseological unit in its original form does not always allow them to achieve the necessary stylistic effect. In search of more effective means of expression, they sometimes violate phraseological norms intentionally, and phraseological units undergo extensive changes not only in form (as discussed in the previous subchapter), but also in semantics despite fixedness as their primary feature. This is one of the manifestations of innovative dynamic processes that actively take place in all languages, affecting all language levels, including phraseology. This “phraseological metamorphosis”, as aptly called by T. Grigorjanová [3. P. 109], is known as the transformation of phraseological units and is currently at the centre of attention of phraseologists.

The formation of semantic transformations is enabled by the means of the so-called inner form. V.N. Vakurov assumes that this aspect of phraseological units gives authors the opportunity to re-construct the image to a certain extent and

to adapt the metaphorical meaning to specific conditions of the context [13. P. 40]. Considerable attention is paid to the inner form of phraseological units in contemporary linguistics. The inner form is mostly perceived as an image: “The inner form of a phraseological unit is an image formed on the basis of an initial (non-idiomatic) phraseological unit and motivating the real meaning of a phraseological unit” [1. P. 262].

Despite the wide variety of phraseological units that can be semantically transformed, there are far fewer semantic transformations than structural-semantic ones. According to A. Spisiakova and O. Iermachkova, the predominance of structural-semantic types of transformations of phraseological units over semantic ones is caused by the fact that the author is limited only to the possibilities the given phraseological unit offers. Apart from the context, the author does not have any other available methods to adapt the semantics of phraseological units creatively. In order to broaden the limited possibilities of semantic transformations, the authors often combine them with structural changes which allow them to create a wider range of different effects.

Semantic transformation, on the other hand, is a specific type of phraseological transformation. All types of transformations are largely context-dependent, but in the case of semantic transformations we observe the maximum need for a specially adapted text for their implementation. While some linguistics argue that an essential criterion for such a modification is the preservation of the original structure of a phraseological unit [], others consider it much more broadly, seeing metaphors, euphemisms, semantic shifts, synecdoche, metonymy, etc. as examples thereof [], []. For this subchapter, we cherry-picked phraseological units that acquire new shades of meaning through the context as well as those where there is an intersection between the direct and figurative meanings (also known as double actualisation). Let us consider the following examples.

When reminiscing about the happy moments she shared with Nick throughout the years, Alice could not help but think back to how their feelings for each other first blossomed. This is how she remembers it:

*[Alice] could remember the euphoria of those early dates with Nick [...]. She was drinking a huge creamy cocktail, and Nick was telling a story about one of his sisters, [...] and [Alice] felt such an intense sensation of happiness it frightened her, because surely there was **a price to pay** for this sort of bliss. (And was this the price? All these years later? Nick swearing at her on the phone from the other side of the world. Had she finally been **sent an exorbitant bill**?)*

The collocation “to pay a price” is commonly used in the English language to describe not just the act of giving away money in exchange for something, but is also reinterpreted figuratively to refer to “experiencing the bad result of something you have done”. In this case, the context in which the phraseological unit appears provides the reader with pointers necessary to understand the meaning correctly: “an intense sensation of happiness”, “this sort of bliss” are things that the main character deems herself unworthy of and therefore prepared to pay the price of.

That being said, this passage highlights the linguistic potential of double actualisation of the phraseological unit. Just a few lines down Alice’s memory lane she is asking herself whether her and Nick’s separation is “an exorbitant bill” she will have to pay for their years of happiness. Linguistically, the price comes in the form of a bill, transforming the phraseological unit back to its original, or usual, meaning.

In other words, double actualisation allows for the use of the expression in its literal and figurative sense just a few lines apart. However, while being separated but by a few lines, from the point of view of the narrative, the two reinterpretations serve as a bridge between Alice’s past and her present, tying together the last ten years of her life.

As desperate and determined as she is to cling on to her former self, Alice is constantly dragged into her new reality, which she has no choice but to adapt to. For instance, while being set on saving her marriage, Mrs Love is shocked to discover that in 2008 she is in a relationship with another man.

Dominick is a school principle at the school Alice’s kids attend. According to him, the two have been going out for a month, which Alice initially refuses to

believe. She finds Nick's replacement "not unattractive, not disgusting, just a stranger" [p. 157]. The thought of opening up to him make her feel thrilled and revolted at the same time. What is more, apparently, in 2008, she is not the only one who has her eyes on the school principle:

"The claws are out, by the way. Miriam Dane has had her eye on him for ages. Apparently, she told Felicity that she thought it was rather poor form for you to go after him only three months after you and Nick separated. I promised I wouldn't pass it on, but of course I knew you'd want to know!" [p. 223]

"To get one's claws out" is an expression which underwent a linguistic metamorphosis known as semantic shift (where the meaning of the phrase changes over time due to changes in language use or cultural context). As a result, when used literally, it describes the way an animal prepares for an attack or for defence by protracting or displaying its claws. By extension, its phraseological meaning suggests becoming particularly aggressive, especially in preparation for a confrontation []. Interestingly enough, it is most often said of a woman. In this particular context, however, it seems to relate to Miriam Dane's intention of claiming (or stealing) Dominick from Alice, even if the man in question is unaware of her romantic interest.

In addition, the semantic transformation of this phraseological unit references one of the earlier revelations Alice made about her new personality while still in hospital: "Alice hung up [on Nick's personal assistant] and said, with the phone still to her ear, "Cow. Slut." She spat the words out of the side of her mouth, like poisonous pellets [...]. Now that was even more surprising; she sounded like a tattooed girl who quite **liked the occasional catfight**" [p. 41] – *an angry fight or quarrel, especially between women*. Resemblant to how cats get their claws out when fighting their opponent, the sweet and gentle Alice from the past appears to have turned into a bitter and resentful middle-aged woman who did not shy away from settling her problems in a pushy and rather unladylike fashion.

Naturally, Alice Love is not the only character in the novel whom life's punches had made sour and miserable. In fact, her very sister Elisabeth is seeing a

psychiatrist Dr. Hodges who is helping her deal with mental implications of her infertility. On the surface, therapy seems to be working, and the woman writes in her diary:

*At the pedestrian crossing I saw a pregnant woman, a woman pushing a pram, a woman holding a child's hand. And I actually felt nothing, Dr. Hodges. Nothing! That's a big thing for an Infertile – to see a pregnant woman and feel nothing. No **knife-in-the-stomach feeling** of bitterness [p. 156].*

At first glance, the “knife-in-the-stomach” feeling has nothing to do with Elisabeth’s mental state. In fact, the word combination is usually employed to describe physical pain that comes from being stabbed with a knife. Yet, in this case, the bodily response to this kind of assault is transferred into the emotional realm. In addition, the phrase is framed in the negative form “no knife-in-the-stomach feeling of bitterness”. This serves to emphasise Elisabeth’s lack of a strong emotional reaction to something that is supposed to cause unbearable pain. To put it differently, the negation creates a contrast between the speaker’s lack of bitterness and the expected emotional response of someone in her position. Consequently, it highlights the significance of not experiencing the anticipated negative emotions upon seeing pregnant women.

It goes without saying that the phrase gains specific relevance within the context of infertility. The speaker explicitly mentions being an “Infertile”, indicating her personal struggle with fertility issues. By stating that it is a “big thing” for an infertile person to feel nothing when encountering pregnant women, the phrase highlights the speaker’s unique emotional journey and is supposedly a sign of her inner healing. However, this could not be further from the truth as we will see in the next subchapter.

For now, let us present one final example of a semantically transformed phraseological unit in *What Alice Forgot*. Alice saw that her sister’s failed attempts to conceive a child were getting the better of her and were about to send her over the age. The only solution she could think of was to convince Elisabeth’s husband Ben, who used to be against adoption, to reconsider, which she seemed to have

succeeded in. However, upon learning of her sister's meddling in her family life, Elisabeth became furious and decided to confront her:

*“On Thursday you told Ben that he needed to get over [...] his problem with adoption. You said that plenty of people didn't get on with their biological parents and that it was **a lottery**, but that any kid who got Ben and me as parents would **hit the jackpot**”* [p. 181].

“To hit the jackpot” is a phraseological unit the use of which is preconditioned by the earlier use of a related term “lottery”. In fact, when taken literally, both “lottery” and “hit the jackpot” denote risky financial choices. For instance, a lottery is a type of gambling game in which people hope to win a monetary prize from buying a lucky lottery ticket. Apart from that, its literal meaning motivates a figurative one: if a person describes something as a lottery, they mean that what happens depends entirely on luck or chance. Since we do not get to choose our parents, whether we are born into a loving or a dysfunctional family is a lottery that we have no control over. In other words, “lottery” is used metaphorically in this paragraph to describe the nature of having biological parents. The transformation occurs as it suggests that the relationship between individuals and their biological parents is unpredictable, just like the outcome of a lottery.

Still, Alice sought to encourage her sister and Ben to participate in this gambling adventure. She praised their family by suggesting that any kid who would get them as parents would “hit the jackpot”. This phraseological unit, in turn, also has multiple connotation depending on the context it appears in. Firstly, it describes the act of winning a lot of money on a lottery. Secondly, it can be used to refer to having great or unexpected success, especially in making a lot of money quickly. Thirdly, it sometimes puts across the idea of achieving great success, especially through luck.

That being said, in this paragraph the phraseological unit is semantically transformed to mean something else. In Alice's eyes, having Elisabeth and Ben as parents would be as fortunate and desirable as hitting a jackpot. Mrs Love

obviously thinks highly of her sister's and her husband. Alice expresses her approval in order to inspire Elisabeth and Ben to consider adoption. Moreover, she contrasts the negative experiences some people have with their biological parents with the positive outcome of having Elisabeth and Ben as parents. This contrast serves to reinforce Mrs Love's point and persuade her sister.

To put it differently, the phraseological unit "to hit the jackpot" is semantically transformed to describe the highly desirable outcome of having Elisabeth and Ben as parents. The transformation occurs as it represents the idea that any child who has them as parents would experience extraordinary luck or fortune.

All in all, the semantic transformations of phraseological units that L. Moriarty uses make the language of the book more evocative and engaging. By altering the traditional meaning of a phraseological unit, she evokes specific emotions, creates vivid imagery, or conveys complex ideas in a concise and impactful manner.

2.3. Occasional Phraseological Units as a Means of Revealing the Author's Intention

In previous subchapters, we looked at semantic and structure-semantic transformations of phraseological units in the novel *What Alice Forgot* by L. Moriarty. This now brings us to the section of the paper where, arguably, the author's personal style shines through the most.

When an author uses occasional phraseological units in their writing, they can serve several purposes:

— conveying familiarity or authenticity: Authors may use phraseological units to create a sense of realism or authenticity in dialogue or narration. By employing phrases that are commonly used in everyday language, writers can make their characters or settings feel more relatable to readers.

— setting a tone or atmosphere: Occasional phraseological units can help establish the mood or atmosphere of a scene. For example, using idioms related to darkness or shadows in a mystery novel can evoke a sense of foreboding or suspense.

— enhancing characterisation: The use of specific idioms can reveal aspects of a character's personality, background, or cultural identity. Different characters may employ different phraseological units based on their social class, age, education, or regional dialect. This can add depth and richness to character development.

— creating wordplay or humour: Occasional phraseological units often lend themselves to wordplay, puns, or humorous situations. Authors may play with the literal meanings of idioms, subvert them, or create unexpected juxtapositions to elicit laughter or add a touch of wit to their writing.

While analysing examples from the book, we identified the following stylistic patterns that the author keeps coming back to:

— coining her own unique phraseological expressions by contextually assigning new meanings to common words and word combinations;

— employing metonymy to level up the vibrancy and expressiveness of the descriptions of her characters and their lives;

— referencing characters and events from others works of fiction as well as films that by association add to the depth and precision of the story.

Here are a few examples of the stylistic tools preferred by L. Moriarty:

The most significant part of the book revolves around Alice trying to make peace with her new life as well as her more mature and ruthless self. Events from her past incessantly overlap with her present circumstances leaving the woman feeling groggy and disoriented, without proper “footing” in her new reality. The way her memories hit her at random intervals reminds Alice of amusement park rides:

*The terror of not knowing the facts of her own life gripped her again. She was on one of those **amusement park rides** that slammed you left, then right, then*

*turned the whole world upside down, giving you unfamiliar glimpses of familiar things. Alice **hated amusement park rides*** [p. 79].

There are a few stylistic devices in this paragraph that transform a simple word combination “amusement park rides” into a phraseological unit. Firstly, the author extracts from its literal meaning (a mechanically or electrically operated device designed to carry passengers in various modes and unexpectedly slam them in various directions to provide entertainment and amusement) the idea of doing something unexpectedly and with great force to evoke a thrilling sensation. Secondly, she pairs it with the phraseological combination “to turn somebody’s world upside down”, which implies “changing someone’s life completely, often in a way that is shocking or upsetting” []. As a result, the structure of the phraseological combination is expanded while its added component (amusement park rides) abandons a part of its original seme (to provide entertainment and amusement) giving way to a still thrilling, yet extremely terrifying sensation.

Last but not least, L. Moriarty subjects her chosen word combination “amusement park rides” to personification, which provides the opportunity to transform it contextually in more creative ways. This, in turn, lead to its complete reimagining in the sentence that follows: “Alice hated amusement park rides”. As a result, not only does it allow for its functioning as an independent phraseological unit, but it also opens the door for a metonymic application of the newly reimagined word combination. Subsequently, “amusement park rides” come to denote every confusing, upsetting and dreadful episode of Alice’s life that she hated with all her heart.

Still, some memories Alice welcomed. For instance, there were those that reminded her of happier times when she was full of hope for the future, newlywed, pregnant for the first time and looking for a place to settle down with her husband. While learning the facts of her own life from her sister Elisabeth, she remembered the state their house was in when they first bought it: “We had a list,” she said to Elisabeth. “[...] It was three foolscap pages of things we needed to do to the house.

There were ninety-three things on that list. It was called “The Impossible Dream” [p. 112].

The Alice from 1998 was much less ambitious and much more grounded than her 2008 version. Together with her husband they bought a run-down house with the intention of bringing it back to life. The dwelling ended up being a much bigger and more financially draining undertaking than either of them had anticipated. Nevertheless, they chose to think of it as their dream house, “the Impossible Dream” they were unlikely to ever achieve. Linguistically, it is worth noting here how, despite all odds, the author chose to refer to it as their dream. One would have expected to read of the impossible project or challenge of the Love family. Instead, L. Moriarty further proved the positive outlook on life her ten-year-younger characters had.

A decade later, standing on the porch of her beautifully renovated house and admiring it as if seeing it for the first time, Alice thought to herself:

*They’d **achieved the Impossible Dream*** [p. 112].

The context provided earlier on in the book helps the reader to understand that the Impossible Dream is the very same house the Loves had invested in ten years prior. The phraseological figure of speech employed here is once again metonymy; it serves to switch from more general and neutral vocabulary units to more personal ones that provide a lot of insight into Alice’s family life.

What is more, the context in which the author places the metonymic expression (when using it for the second time) indicates her desire to almost take back the hope the house used to give her characters. Similar to how Alice and Nick insist on calling it their dream in the early days of their marriage, now that the Impossible Dream has been achieved, nobody is there to bask in its put-together glory. We believe that these two instances of referring to the Impossible Dream are opposed by the author on purpose as she looks to demonstrate that her characters had lost track of what was really important throughout the years.

What they chose to focus on was, in Nick case, making that “giant superhero leap up the corporate ladder”, which is the structure-semantic transformation of the

phraseological unit “to climb the corporate ladder”, which we analysed in detail in subchapter 1.1. Interestingly enough, the writer does not stop there and proceeds to characterise Mr Love’s new general manager position as “Megatron’s job”:

*“He’s our general manager,” said the girl in an everyone-in-the-world-knows-that tone. Good grief. Nick had **Megatron’s job**”* [p. 39].

“Megatron’s job” is an example of a phraseological unit created through allusion. Megatron himself is a fictional character from the *Transformers* universe. He is described as “the viciously powerful and brutally direct leader of the Decepticons” – the main antagonists in the fictional continuities of the *Transformers* multimedia franchise []. Megatron is a manipulative, cunning strategist, a cruel and tyrannical leader who is skilled at ensuring that his plans run like clockwork. That being said, we strongly doubt L. Moriarty employs this allusion to Megatron to make Nick Love appear insensitive and indifferent to his subordinates. Truth be told, there are very few lines in the book that shade light on him in his professional capacity. We believe the allusion to the *Transformers* antagonist is meant to put across Alice’s astonishment at learning of her husband’s success at work. To her, it was so “not Nick”, so out-of-character for him that it made no sense yet complimented perfectly the peculiar new world she found herself in.

Before we move on to some other examples, it is worth mentioning why we believe the description “Megatron’s job” fits Nick perfectly. As a reminder, Megatron is the leader of the Decepticons. The name “decepticon” is derived from the verb “to deceive” which can mean two things:

- to make somebody believe something that is not true, usually in order to get some advantage for yourself;
- (of yourself): not to admit to yourself something that you know is true.

Previously we already explained why we had ruled out the first connotation. However, the second one seems to hit close to home. While striving to succeed professionally, Nick lost sight of what used to be important to him. While initially being guided by the desire to secure a future for his family, he got sidetracked by

one promotion after another and ended up blaming his wife for their marital problems. His pride prevented him from acknowledging the deception for a very long time, and it almost cost him his family to admit to his wife: “I haven’t been very good at achieving a life-work balance. I need to work on that. If we work things out, I’ll get better at that. I’m committed to that” [p. 313].

With that let us leave the Love family and pay attention to some semantic transformations that L. Moriarty introduces when recounting life events of another family, that of Alice’s sister Elisabeth and her husband Ben. For them, the time between 1998 and 2008 was marked by numerous and futile attempts to have a baby. Her infertility, manifested in having to live from one IVF cycle to another, from one injection to the next, toughened up Elisabeth while also making her more sarcastic and almost insensitive.

The author yet again coins her own phraseological unit by semantically transforming words and word combinations into metaphors:

*Gina’s kids were IVF pregnancies. [Elisabeth] could tell her memories were rose-colored because of the happy ending [...]. [Gina]’d **traveled across the infertility minefield** and got safely to the other side. But [Elisabeth] found her patronizing. It’s easy to think **the minefield** wasn’t that bad once you’re safely watching **other people get blown up*** [p. 161].

The phraseological unit L. Moriarty uses here is “to travel across the infertility minefield”. Its meaning is motivated by its constituent elements, the most expressive of which is “minefield”. Literally speaking, a minefield is an area of land or water where explosive mines have been hidden. As a result, getting safely to its other side requires expert knowledge that is available to a specific group of people.

By extension, if somebody describes a situation as a minefield, they are emphasising that it is full of dangers or problems, and people need to behave with care because things could easily go wrong. The author combines the second, figurative, meaning of the word “minefield” with “infertility” suggesting that, in

Elisabeth's view, getting pregnant and carrying to term was exclusive to women who knew how to navigate this danger zone.

To put it differently, the word combination "to travel across the infertility minefield" signifies "to overcome any obstacles that come with trying to start a family and end up with a healthy baby in your arms". Once safe in the knowledge of her fertility, a woman quickly forgets how terrifying being in the middle of that minefield (e.g. an IVF cycle) was; her bliss of becoming a mother blurs her unhappy "childless" memories making her insensitive to her former comrades' fears. She even goes as far as to conclude that her pregnancy journey was not particularly bad as long as it is not her anymore getting "blown up".

Despite years of treatment, Elisabeth, however, kept "blowing up" – kept making some sort of mistake (the way she saw it) that prevented her from bringing a baby into the world. The etymology of the word "to blow up" puts across the idea of a massively destructive yet unexpected disaster that strikes without warning. We believe that it perfectly describes the punch-in-the-stomach feeling women struggling with infertility get when, coming in for an ultrasound, they hear: "I'm sorry, but there is no heartbeat".

It goes without saying that, after years of being unable to get pregnant, Ben and Elisabeth considered adoption. However, while her husband was prepared to entertain the idea, Libby felt defeated and exhausted, which added to her sarcastic outlook on life:

*"[My sister] thinks we should **pop over** to a Third World country like Angelina and Brad and **help ourselves to a cute orphan**"* [p. 179].

This sentence showcases a variety of contextually transformed stylistic tools favoured by L. Moriarty. First of all, it includes the phrasal verb "to pop over," which is an idiomatic expression meaning to visit or go somewhere quickly and informally. This phrase adds a colloquial and casual tone to the sentence. However, despite its usual meaning, it creates the opposite effect implying that, in Elisabeth's eyes, adoption is much more complicated; it requires a lot of time and effort which may prove fruitless in the end.

Second of all, in the example, there is a comparative construction (“like Angelina and Brad”) to compare Elisabeth’s sister’s suggestion to the actions of Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt. This construction creates a point of reference and implies that the Alice’s idea is similar to what the famous couple did. Nevertheless, Elisabeth once again internally opposes her life circumstances to those of the two celebrities because she clearly understands how much more difficult and time-consuming adopting children is for ordinary people.

In addition, the sentence’s figurative meaning is reinforced through the extension of the phraseological unit “help ourselves to a cute orphan”. This expression is not meant to be taken literally but rather figuratively. Generally, “helping oneself to something” signifies “serving or providing oneself with food”, and it is commonly used at family gatherings and other events of the kind. That being said, in this instance it is followed by a rather unusual “something”, namely a cute orphan. This pairing purposefully violates the literary norm implying that adopting a child from a Third World country is as easy as helping oneself to a serving of food. In reality, though, this almost oxymoronic phraseological unit alludes to how challenging and multifaceted the process is.

As a result of combining the linguistic tools presented above, the sentence conveys Elisabeth’s sarcastic and ironic tone. The use of the phrase “pop over” in the context of adoption from a Third World country and the comparison to a celebrity couple’s actions indicates a mocking or satirical attitude. This attitude can be seen as critical of the sister’s suggestion while also hinting at a growing gap of misunderstanding and bitterness between Alice and Elisabeth, which leaves the latter wondering: “How do you find the thread that started it all and follow it all the way back through the tangles of phone calls and Christmases and kids’ parties, right back to the beginning when we were just Alice and Libby Jones?” [p. 85]

That being said, it is not just Alice whose suggestion to adopt Elisabeth refuses to consider. She puts on the same sarcastic tone when discussing it with her husband:

*Then, tonight, we're watching the news and they're showing the cyclone in Burma. I was eating corn chips and watching a woman [wail for her dead child]. And that's when Ben said, "Lots of children must have lost their parents." He said it solemnly, but also with a definite hint of cheer. As in, hey, how handy! Lots of dead parents! Lots of **spare kids up for grabs!** [p. 208]*

This passage is written in the first-person narrative form, with the speaker recounting events that occurred. This narrative style provides Elisabeth's personal perspective and engages the reader by presenting the events from her point of view. Similar to the previous example, it exhibits a tone that combines dark humor, cynicism, and sarcasm. The character's comment, "hey, how handy! Lots of dead parents! Lots of spare kids up for grabs!" juxtaposes the tragedy of the cyclone in Burma with a facetious and callous attitude. Furthermore, it manifests Elisabeth's numbness and cynicism to other people's tragedy due to her infertility.

With that in mind, the phraseological unit that stands out here in particular is "spare kids up for grabs". "Up for grabs" is a phraseological expression that means something is available for anyone to take, seize, or claim. It suggests that there is an opportunity or advantage to be gained, often with a sense of competition or urgency. In English, it usually collocates with *opportunities*, *prizes*, *rewards*, *contacts*, *deals*, etc. and is used in contexts where there is something desirable, or advantageous that can be obtained by someone.

In the example in question, however, it is combined with the noun "children", and not just any children but "spare" ones. When something is referred to as spare, it is kept for back-up in case the main object somebody is using goes out of order. Naturally, comparing children to spare parts, such as spare tires, is yet another sign of Elisabeth's deteriorating mental health.

In other words, the phrase "spare kids up for grabs" suggests a callous and indifferent attitude towards children who have lost their parents in the cyclone. It implies that Elisabeth sees these children as commodities or objects that are readily available for adoption or acquisition, rather than acknowledging the immense loss and tragedy they have experienced.

What is more, the use of irony and sarcasm in this phrase is evident. The character's remark about the convenience of "lots of dead parents" and the availability of "spare kids" implies a twisted sense of optimism or opportunism. It suggests that she sees the tragedy of others as an opportunity for personal gain, rather than empathising with the profound suffering involved.

This brings us to the end of the analysis of occasional phraseological units in *What Alice Forgot* as a means of revealing L. Moriarty intention. The author employs occasional phraseological units for various purposes, including conveying familiarity, setting tone and atmosphere, enhancing characterisation, and creating wordplay or humor.

The analysis identifies several stylistic patterns used by L. Moriarty, including coining unique phraseological expressions, employing metonymy for vibrant descriptions, and referencing characters and events from other works of fiction to add depth and precision to the story. For example, the author also characterises Nick Love's professional ambitions by transforming the phrase both structurally as well as semantically: to "climb the corporate ladder" is transformed into "making that giant superhero leap up the corporate ladder". Additionally, L. Moriarty alludes to the fictional character Megatron from Transformers to convey Alice's astonishment at Nick's success and highlight the contrast with his previous character.

Semantic transformations are employed in the portrayal of another character Elisabeth's struggle with infertility. The author creates a phraseological unit by combining "infertility" with the metaphorical expression "travel across the infertility minefield," emphasising the dangers and challenges of trying to start a family.

Overall, L. Moriarty's stylistic choices in *What Alice Forgot* contribute to the depth of characterisation, evoke emotions, and add humor to the narrative, enhancing the reader's engagement with the story.

Chapter 2: Summary

What Alice Forgot by Liane Moriarty is a novel full of occasional transformations of phraseological units. In Chapter 2 of this paper, structure-semantic as well as semantic modifications were analysed with the purpose of revealing the potential of contextual usage of phraseological units in Anglophone literature.

Firstly, structure-semantic transformations of phraseological units were studied. These transformations involve changes in both meaning and structure, such as insertion and substitution of components. Insertion expands the structure of a phraseological unit by adding additional elements. An example is the phrase “gave me an absolute heart attack”, where “heart attack” is used figuratively to convey fear or shock. The insertion of the adjective “absolute” enhances the impact of the expression. As for substitution of components, it also serves to increase expressiveness and imagery. An example is the substitution of “break” with “superglue” in the phrase “break someone’s heart”. This emphasises the healing and repairing aspect of the relationship. Overall, these structure-semantic transformations in the novel serve to enhance meaning, expressiveness, and character development.

Secondly, semantic transformations of phraseological units and their importance in Anglophone literature were analysed. Phraseological units are unique in their ability to figuratively describe phenomena and capture attention. However, authors sometimes modify these units to achieve a desired stylistic effect. These transformations occur not only in form but also in meaning, despite the fixed nature of phraseological units.

Semantic transformations are facilitated by the inner form of phraseological units, which allows authors to reconstruct the image and adapt the metaphorical meaning to the context. While there are various types of transformations, there are fewer semantic transformations compared to structure-semantic ones. This is because authors are limited by the possibilities offered by the phraseological unit

itself. To expand the options for semantic transformations, authors often combine them with structural changes.

The passage provides several examples from the novel *What Alice Forgot* by L. Moriarty to illustrate semantic transformations. These examples include the phrase “to pay a price”, which is used figuratively to describe experiencing the negative consequences of something, and “to get one’s claws out”, which denotes becoming aggressive or confrontational, particularly when referring to a woman. Another example is the expression “knife-in-the-stomach”, which is transformed from its literal meaning of physical pain to convey the absence of bitterness in a context related to infertility. Additionally, the phrase “to hit the jackpot” undergoes a semantic transformation to describe the highly desirable outcome of having specific individuals as parents.

Thirdly, the ability to enhance the author’s stylistic intention through the means of occasionally transformed phraseological units was examined. In *What Alice Forgot* L. Moriarty uses specific phraseological units strategically to achieve various effects, such as conveying familiarity, establishing tone and atmosphere, developing characters, and incorporating wordplay and humour.

The analysis identified several recurring stylistic patterns employed by L. Moriarty. These include the creation of unique phraseological expressions, the use of metonymy to vividly describe situations, and the referencing of characters and events from other fictional works to enrich the story. For instance, one example highlights the use of a phraseological unit related to amusement park rides to represent the unpredictable and disorienting nature of Alice’s memories. The author expands on the structure of the phrase and imbues it with a terrifying sensation, personifying it to symbolise every distressing episode in Alice’s life.

Overall, L. Moriarty’s stylistic choices in *What Alice Forgot* contribute to the depth of characterisation, evoke emotions, and introduce humour to the narrative, ultimately enhancing the reader’s engagement with the story.

Conclusion

The study of phraseological units and their contextual usage in Anglophone literature is of great theoretical and practical importance. This research area has gained increasing attention in modern linguistics, as scholars recognise the significance of exploring phraseological units not only at the systemic level but also in the discursive aspect. By examining phraseological units in the novel *What Alice Forgot* by Liane Moriarty, this master's thesis aimed to reveal various contextual transformations, including structure-semantic and semantic modifications, and their impact on the narrative.

The theoretical framework of this thesis drew upon the theories and models developed by Russian and foreign scholars in the field of phraseology, providing a comprehensive understanding of phraseological units and their contextual usage. Chapter 1 provided an overview of phraseology as a linguistic discipline, discussing the classification of phraseological units proposed by notable scholars. The foundation of phraseological theory can be attributed to Swiss linguist Ch. Bally, who classified phrases into four groups based on their degree of persistence. V. Vinogradov, a prominent figure in Russian linguistics, further contributed to phraseology by proposing a synchronic classification of phraseological units in the Russian language.

The main task of phraseology as a discipline is the comprehensive study of the phraseological fund of a specific language. This involves investigating the origins and categorical features of phraseological units, as well as understanding their regularities in speech. However, the study of phraseological units is complicated by the multitude of terms used interchangeably to describe them, such as phrasemes, idioms, fixed expressions, and more. This abundance of terms reflects the lack of a standardised conceptual framework in phraseology.

To address this, V. Vinogradov's concept of "phraseological unit" is deemed the most accurate and inclusive. It encompasses all types of fixed expressions, ranging from multi-word units at the phrase level to stable combinations at the

sentence level. By combining Vinogradov's approach with the findings of A. Kunin, it can be concluded that phraseological units are non-compositional multi-word units with stable and partially or fully reinterpreted meanings.

One important distinction made in the study is between usual and occasional usage of phraseological units. While usual usage refers to their conventional and stable meaning, occasional usage allows for contextual reinterpretation. The ability of phraseological units to undergo occasional transformations stems from their structural and semantic stability, which provides a framework for reinterpretation. Additionally, separation and contextual cues play a crucial role in signalling reinterpreted meanings.

Chapter 2 focused on the analysis of structure-semantic and semantic transformations of phraseological units in *What Alice Forgot*. It demonstrated how the author, Liane Moriarty, creatively employed these transformations to enhance meaning, expressiveness, and character development in the narrative. Examples were presented to illustrate the insertion and substitution of components within phraseological units, showcasing the expansion of meaning and the creation of vivid imagery. The chapter also explored semantic transformations, emphasising the author's ability to reconstruct the metaphorical meaning of phraseological units and adapt them to the context of the story.

Furthermore, the analysis revealed Moriarty's stylistic choices, including the creation of unique phraseological expressions, the use of metonymy for vibrant descriptions, and the referencing of characters and events from other fictional works. These choices added depth to the characterisation, evoked emotions, and introduced humour, ultimately enhancing the reader's engagement with the narrative.

All in all, the results obtained from this study contribute to the theoretical knowledge of phraseology and expand the understanding of contextual transformations of phraseological units in Anglophone literature. The findings have practical implications for various fields. In the realm of phraseology theory, the study deepens our understanding of the creative potential and stylistic impact

of phraseological units in narrative discourse. In the context of text linguistics and linguo-culturology, the analysis provides insights into the role of phraseological units in conveying cultural and situational meanings. Additionally, English language teaching can incorporate the findings to enhance students' understanding of phraseological units and their usage in communication. The analysis of phraseological units in Anglophone literature also contributes to the analysis and interpretation of literary works, shedding light on the stylistic choices and strategies employed by authors.

While this master's thesis has provided valuable insights into the contextual usage of phraseological units in Anglophone literature, there are several areas that could be explored in future research. These areas include:

- cross-linguistic analysis: Conducting cross-linguistic studies to compare the contextual transformations of phraseological units across different languages would provide insights into the universal and language-specific aspects of these transformations. Comparing how phraseological units are used and transformed in different languages can reveal the influence of linguistic, cultural, and cognitive factors on their contextual adaptation.

- register and discourse analysis: Investigating the contextual transformations of phraseological units in specific registers or discourse types would provide valuable insights into how these linguistic expressions are adapted to different communicative contexts. Analysing how phraseological units vary in formal and informal registers, professional domains, or specialized discourses can deepen our understanding of their role in conveying specific meanings and establishing discourse communities.

- sociolinguistic variation: Investigating the sociolinguistic variation in the contextual transformations of phraseological units would examine how factors such as age, gender, social class, or geographic location influence their usage and interpretation. Understanding how phraseological units are employed differently by various social groups can provide insights into language variation, identity construction, and sociocultural dynamics within a community.

— pragmatic analysis: Exploring the pragmatic aspects of contextual transformations of phraseological units would investigate how these linguistic expressions are used to achieve specific communicative purposes, such as persuasion, humour, or politeness. Analysing how speakers adapt and manipulate phraseological units in different interactional contexts can reveal the pragmatic strategies employed in their usage and the effects they have on discourse participants.

— cognitive linguistics perspective: Applying cognitive linguistic frameworks to the study of contextual transformations of phraseological units can provide insights into the cognitive processes involved in their comprehension, production, and interpretation. Examining how phraseological units are mentally represented, activated, and integrated into the overall cognitive processing of language can enhance our understanding of the cognitive mechanisms underlying their contextual adaptation.

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