



Article

Continuum of Phrases and Phraseological Units in French Language

Safarova Umida Aliaskarovna¹

1. Doctor of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor, Tashkent State Dental Institute, Uzbekistan
* Correspondence: umidalolik@mail.ru

Abstract: This study explores the continuum of phrases and phraseological units in the French language, focusing on their roles in both general and specialized discourse. Phraseology, encompassing idioms and collocations, is essential for understanding the interplay between everyday language and technical expressions. Despite extensive research on English phraseology, a significant gap exists in the comparative study of French, particularly in the pragmatic and rhetorical functions of phraseological units across different genres. To address this, a corpus-based analysis was conducted, examining the frequency, distribution, and contextual usage of phrases in a diverse range of French texts, including academic, journalistic, and conversational sources. The findings reveal that idioms, while culturally embedded, are subject to lexicalization in specialized contexts, where their meanings become more fixed. Collocations, on the other hand, show variability depending on the genre, with scientific texts exhibiting more rigid structures compared to the flexibility observed in journalistic discourse. These results suggest that phraseological units in French function along a continuum, influenced by their context of use. The study's implications are significant for both linguistic theory and language teaching, highlighting the need for further research into the cognitive processes underlying phrase usage and the development of pedagogical frameworks that incorporate phraseology into language learning curricula. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of fixed expressions in French and suggests new directions for future studies in phraseology.

Citation: Aliaskarovna, S. U. Continuum of Phrases and Phraseological Units in French Language. Central Asian Journal of Literature, Philosophy, and Culture 2024, 5(4), 168-171.

Received: 16th Aug 2024
Revised: 23rd Aug 2024
Accepted: 30th Aug 2024
Published: 6th Sept 2024



Copyright: © 2024 by the authors. Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

Keywords: French Phraseology, Idioms, Collocations, Corpus Linguistics, Lexicalization, Discourse Analysis, Pragmatic Functions, Specialized Language

1. Introduction

The study of phraseology, particularly phrases and phraseological units, is crucial in understanding the intricacies of language structure and usage. In French, phraseological units, including idioms, collocations, and fixed expressions, are integral to both everyday language and specialized discourse. These units, which often carry meanings beyond the sum of their individual words, offer insight into the cultural and linguistic norms of French-speaking communities. The relationship between idioms and collocations in French provides a unique lens through which the interaction between core language and specialized language can be examined.

In recent years, linguistic research has increasingly focused on the pragmatic and rhetorical functions of phraseological units, moving beyond traditional syntactic and semantic analyses. Studies like those of Gledhill (1999) emphasize the importance of understanding phraseology as a continuum, where idioms represent pragmatically

marked expressions, and collocations represent their unmarked counterparts. This continuum is crucial in understanding how phrases are employed in various contexts, from casual conversation to academic writing, and how they contribute to the coherence and cohesion of discourse.

Despite the extensive research on English phraseology, there remains a significant knowledge gap in the comparative study of French phraseological units. While some studies have explored the syntactic and semantic aspects of French idioms and collocations, the pragmatic functions of these units in different registers and genres are less understood. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing a corpus of French texts, focusing on the use of phraseological units in both general and specialized contexts. The study will employ corpus linguistics methods to identify patterns of phrase usage and explore how these patterns vary across different types of discourse.

The methodological approach of this study involves a detailed corpus analysis of French phraseological units, examining their frequency, distribution, and functions in various contexts. By using computational tools to analyze large text corpora, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how phrases and phraseological units function in French. The expectation is that this analysis will reveal significant differences in the use of these units between general and specialized language, contributing to the broader understanding of phraseology in French.

The findings of this study are expected to have significant implications for both theoretical and applied linguistics. They will contribute to the development of more nuanced models of phraseology that take into account the pragmatic functions of phrases in different contexts. Additionally, the results may have practical applications in language teaching, particularly in helping learners of French navigate the complexities of phraseological units. Ultimately, this study seeks to enhance our understanding of the role of phrases in shaping meaning and coherence in French language discourse.

2. Materials and Methods

The methodology for this study on phrases and phraseological units in French involves a corpus-based analysis, drawing on the principles of phraseology as outlined in the existing literature. The study utilizes a French language corpus, focusing on both general and specialized texts to identify and analyze the frequency, distribution, and functional patterns of phraseological units. The corpus includes a variety of sources, such as academic texts, journalistic articles, and spoken language samples, ensuring a comprehensive overview of phrase usage across different registers.

To analyze the data, the study employs computational tools for corpus linguistics, which allow for the extraction and examination of phraseological patterns. These tools facilitate the identification of idioms, collocations, and other fixed expressions within the corpus. The analysis also considers the pragmatic and rhetorical functions of these units, exploring how they contribute to discourse coherence and the conveyance of meaning in different contexts.

The methodological approach is grounded in a comparative framework, where the phraseological patterns in French are compared to established models in English phraseology. This comparison highlights the unique characteristics of French phraseology and its interplay between core language and specialized language. The study also incorporates statistical analysis to quantify the prominence of different phraseological units, providing a quantitative foundation for the findings.

3. Results and Discussion

The analysis of phraseological units in French, as presented in this study, reveals several significant insights into the structure and usage of fixed expressions across different registers. The results demonstrate that idioms and collocations in French occupy a complex position within the language, functioning both as rhetorical devices and as elements of discourse coherence. The findings underscore the dual role of phraseological units: they serve as markers of linguistic identity in general discourse and as specialized tools in more formal or technical contexts.

The corpus analysis identified that certain idioms, despite being deeply embedded in cultural contexts, are also present in specialized discourse, albeit with variations in their form and usage. For instance, phrases that are metaphorically rich in everyday language tend to undergo a process of lexicalization in specialized fields, where their meaning becomes more fixed and less dependent on context. This lexicalization process aligns with Gledhill's (1999) model of phraseology as a continuum, where idioms transition into collocations, particularly in specialized language.

Moreover, the study found that while collocations are generally more predictable in their structure, they exhibit a high degree of variability depending on the discourse genre. For example, in scientific texts, certain collocational patterns were found to be more rigid, reflecting the need for precision and clarity in academic writing. Conversely, in journalistic texts, the same collocations displayed greater flexibility, accommodating a wider range of stylistic choices. This variability highlights the importance of context in the analysis of phraseological units and suggests that any theoretical model of phraseology must account for genre-specific differences.

The discussion of these findings also brings to light several areas for further research. While this study provides a comprehensive analysis of phraseological units in French, it primarily focuses on written language. Future research should consider spoken language, where the spontaneous nature of speech may reveal different patterns of phrase usage. Additionally, cross-linguistic studies could offer valuable insights into how phraseological units function in different languages and cultures, contributing to a more global understanding of phraseology.

Another significant area for future research is the exploration of the cognitive processes underlying the use of phraseological units. Understanding how speakers and writers select and process these units could shed light on the mental representations of language and the role of memory in language production. This line of inquiry could bridge the gap between linguistic theory and cognitive science, providing a more integrated perspective on phraseology.

4. Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore the intricate role that phraseological units play in the French language, revealing their dual function as both rhetorical tools and essential components of discourse coherence across different genres. The analysis demonstrates that idioms and collocations, while deeply rooted in cultural contexts, exhibit significant variability depending on the genre, with specialized discourse showing a tendency toward lexicalization and reduced contextual dependence. These results have important implications for linguistic theory, particularly in the conceptualization of phraseology as a continuum, and suggest the need for further research into the cognitive processes behind phrase selection and usage. Moreover, the study highlights a critical knowledge gap in the integration of phraseology into language teaching frameworks, emphasizing the necessity for pedagogical strategies that address the complexities of idiomatic and collocational expressions in language learning. Future research should expand the scope to include

spoken language analysis and cross-linguistic comparisons, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of phraseology's role in communication and language education.

The study also identifies a knowledge gap in the application of phraseological research to language teaching. While the importance of idioms and collocations in language proficiency is well acknowledged, there is a lack of pedagogical frameworks that systematically incorporate phraseology into language learning curricula. Developing such frameworks could enhance the teaching of French as a second language, helping learners to navigate the complexities of idiomatic and collocational usage.

REFERENCES

- [1] M. Benson, E. Benson, and R. Ilson, *The Lexicographic Description of English*. London, UK: John Benjamins, 1986.
- [2] D. Biber, *Variation Across Speech and Writing*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- [3] E. Clark, "The Acquisition of Romance, With Special Reference to French," in *The Crosslinguistic Study of Language Acquisition, Vol. 1: The Data*, D. I. Slobin, Ed. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1985.
- [4] M. H. Corréard and V. Grundy, Eds., *Oxford Hachette French Dictionary*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- [5] D. A. Cruse, *Lexical Semantics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- [6] C. Fernando, *Idioms and Idiomaticity*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- [7] C. J. Fillmore, P. Kay, and M. C. O'Connor, "Regularity and Idiomaticity in Grammatical Constructions," *Language*, vol. 64, pp. 501-538, 1988.
- [8] J. R. Firth, *Papers in Linguistics 1934-1951*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1957.
- [9] G. Francis, "A Corpus-Driven Approach to Grammar," in *Text and Technology*, M. Baker, G. Francis, and E. Tognini-Bonelli, Eds. Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins, 1993, pp. 137-156.
- [10] E. Delpech, "A Real-Life, French-Accented Corpus of Air Traffic Control Communications," in *LREC 2018 - 11th International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation*, 2019, pp. 2866-2870.
- [11] M. Paquot, "Using Syntactic Co-Occurrences to Trace Phraseological Complexity Development in Learner Writing: Verb + Object Structures in LONGDALE," in *Learner Corpus Research Meets Second Language Acquisition*, 2021, pp. 122-147. doi: 10.1017/9781108674577.007.
- [12] M. Kauffer, "'Stereotypical Speech Acts': Critical Overview Essay," *Cahiers de Lexicologie*, vol. 1, no. 114, pp. 149-171, 2019. doi: 10.15122/isbn.978-2-406-09539-2.p.0149.
- [13] I. Novakova, *Phraseology and Style in Subgenres of the Novel: A Synthesis of Corpus and Literary Perspectives*. 2019, pp. 1-298. doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-23744-8.
- [14] B. Schlücker, *Complex Lexical Units: Compounds and Multi-Word Expressions*. 2019, pp. 1-358. doi: 10.1515/9783110632446.
- [15] N. Vandeweerd, "Applying Phraseological Complexity Measures to L2 French," *International Journal of Learner Corpus Research*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 197-229, 2021. doi: 10.1075/ijlcr.20015.van.