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# Diachronic Phraseology in Belarusian Studies

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## ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the works, which focus on the formation of the phraseological fund of the Belarusian language. It is emphasized that the two aspects evidently arise in the discussed works: (1) formation of the source base for the study, which according to the Belarusian linguists occasionally includes written records as monuments of the Ukrainian language, (2) conduct of comparative studies that prove the common development of the phraseological funds in the Belarusian and Russian languages.

KEY WORDS: phraseology, phraseological fund, diachrony, written records, Belarusian language

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: frazeologia, związek frazeologiczny, diachronia, źródła pisane, język białoruski





In Belarusian linguistics, the study of phraseological units in diachrony still remains *terra incognita*, which is surprising given the fact that it is the Belarusians who were the first to spread information through printing in Eastern Slavia. However, the factual and analytical bases of this scientific field are seen to be in a kind of dependence on the other two – Ukrainian, and Russian. With the reference to the former, the Belarusian linguistics competes mainly for the factual, i.e., source, base, bringing texts written in the Ukrainian language of that time to the arsenal of its monuments, and providing a simple argument to justify that: if the monument was printed on the Belarusian lands, taking into account the change in the borderlines and frontiers with time, it would clearly be defined the monument of the Belarusian language. Such and similar arguments result in false conclusions for the history that regards the development of the Belarusian literary language.

To exemplify, it may be reasonable to consider the famous *Lexicon* by Pamva Berynda, first published in 1627, on the premises of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra printing house. The dictionary was reprinted for the second time in 1653 in the Epiphany Kutejin Monastery printing press near Orsha, with the foreword by Abbot Ioil Trutsevyč, where the Abbot expresses his gratitude to Pamva Berynda for his titanic work, and also briefly describes the specifics of the dictionary itself. This publication

- 1 A.S. Aksamitaŭ, *Bielaruskaja frazieolohija*, Minsk 1978, p. 137.
- 2 *Ibidem*, p. 138.
- 3 The period of the 11<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> cc.

serves the history researchers of the Belarusian language inasmuch confirms the development of the lexical composition of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, the other works evidence this fact, please see the *Historical Dictionary of the Belarusian Language* in 37 volumes, such monographs as *Old Loans of the Belarusian Language* and *Lexical Loans in the Belarusian Language of the XIV–XVIII centuries* by A. Bulyka, a collection of works *Historical lexicology of the Belarusian language*, etc.

As regards the latter, the Russian language, the Belarusian linguistics conducts a comparative analysis, which is carried out to confirm the unified linguistic development of the phraseological funds.

Nevertheless, the Belarusian diachronic phraseology is known for its significant achievements. It is noteworthy that in the Belarusian studies the phraseological *terra incognita* was moved late, in the end of the 1970ies. Thus, in 1978, Aksamitov published his monograph *Belarusian Phraseology*, in which a separate chapter was devoted to the development of the phraseological composition in the Belarusian language. According to the researcher, “the complexity of the problem lies in the fact that the number of ancient texts is limited”<sup>1</sup>. The scientist is convinced that “the consideration of phraseological units in the composition of ancient texts is not yet a historical approach to this phenomenon in itself. Diachronic research involves the analysis of systems that replace each other in the process of historic development”<sup>2</sup>. For the diachronic study of phraseological units, Aksamitov suggests using the division of lexemes into denotative and connotative. The connotative lexemes have a greater phraseological potential as compared to the denotative lexemes and have already been characterized by stable idiomatic conjugation in the oldest texts.

Without proposing a periodization for the development of the phraseological fund of the Belarusian language, Aksamitov, however, unites the lexemes into the following chronological groups – East Slavic<sup>3</sup>,

Old Belarusian, and Modern Belarusian phraseology. The researcher divides stable verbal complexes of the East Slavic language into 5 subject-thematic groups: 1) everyday life / household lexis; 2) state and administrative lexis; 3) church and religious lexis; 4) military lexis; 5) folk-poetic<sup>4</sup> lexis; although, the scholar distinguished phraseology *per se* (*бити челомъ, кръстьцьловати*, etc.); stamps, high-frequency speech expressions of a stencil character, devoid of idiomaticity and expressive-emotional coloring (*богъ вестъ, бысть стъча велика*, etc.); and proverbs and sayings (*волосье долго, а умъ коротокъ*, etc.)<sup>5</sup>.

For that period, stable verbal complexes were created according to the following models: *Group 1* – “verb + noun in Accusative” (*извъхати городъ*), “verb + noun in Ablative” (*главами покивати*), “verb + preposition + noun” (*посадити на столъ*), “adjective + noun” (*божьа мудрость*); *Group 2* – “noun + noun in Nominative / Genitive case” (*земля и вода*), “preposition + noun” (*безъ вѣсти*), “preposition + short form of adjective” (*въ малъ*), “pronoun / noun + noun” (*въсьмъ сьрдъцемъ*), “*не / ні* + adverb” (*ни мала*). According to Aksamitov, most of the phraseological units of that period consist of two components, but there are also three- or four-component phraseological units<sup>6</sup>. The researcher concluded:

the phraseological corpus of the Old Slavic language in the period of the 11<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries was in the stage of initial formation. Most of the stable verbal complexes that were part of it were only partially idiomatic. A significant part of the stable verbal complexes of the Old Slavic language consisted of phraseological clusters of Church Slavonic origin, deriving from the relations between the Kyiv Rus and Byzantium, and Bulgaria. In fact, combinations of lexemes of Slavic origin played a smaller role in the formation of the Old Slavic phraseology<sup>7</sup>.

4 A.S. Aksamitaŭ, *op.cit.*, p. 147.

5 *Ibidem*, pp. 143–144.

6 *Ibidem*, pp. 144–146.

7 *Ibidem*, p. 152.

Such a conclusion is believed to require serious comments, as it contradicts the author's declared essence of the diachronic approach. First of all, it is possible to assert about the "stage of initial formation" only in view of the generally accepted position during the Soviet period, that the Kyiv period is the initial period of the development of East Slavic languages, and as regards more distant times one can only make assumptions, because there is no written data to evidence this. Therefore, the study of phraseology is rather focused on written sources, which actualizes the second aspect of the two: the dominance of Old/Church Slavic writing was determined by non-verbal factors, the main of which is the forced inculcation of religion. A partial breakthrough of the vernacular into business texts, chronicles, and original literature occurred in the end of the period when religion had already established itself as a social phenomenon and institution, at the same time losing the competitive nominative and expressive and communicative struggle to the vernacular. It seems pointless to state and comment on the "stage of initial formation" from the standpoint of observing the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as it is a direct violation of the diachrony principle, which in its turn consists of many synchronies. Comparison, for example, of the phraseological composition of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries will prove all-in-all quantitative superiority of the latter only due to the expansion of the range in the realities denoted by phraseology, while other parameters – for example, structural models, component composition, reproducibility, variability, etc., will remain without significant changes. All the above signifies that a person of the 11<sup>th</sup> century possessed enough verbal means to determine and name the realities of their surrounding world, and therefore, both lexically and phraseologically, they could satisfy their communicative needs.

Moving to the next period, Aksamitov notes that "the formation and development of Old Belarusian phraseology takes place in the process of interaction and synthesis

of folk-dialect, folklore, business, state-legal, and Old Slavic stable verbal complexes and stamps<sup>8</sup>. The scientist points to the dominance in the 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries Old Slavic phraseology, which in the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century began to supplant vernacular expressions. In his opinion, vernacular and folklore elements are the main resources of the phraseology of the Old Belarusian language in the 14<sup>th</sup> through 17<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>9</sup>. The researcher divides the phraseology of that period similarly to the previously specified, i.e., he distinguishes the 5 groups: 1) everyday life / household lexis; 2) state and administrative lexis; 3) church and religious lexis; 4) military lexis; 5) folk-poetic<sup>10</sup> lexis. Emphasizing the expansion of the boundaries of Old Belarusian phraseology, Aksamitov notes that “the formation and functioning of this or that phraseology in the Old Belarusian language was determined primarily by practical needs, and the internal laws of this language – the process of the transition of denotative to connotative word combinations, determined the development of a certain meaning in it”<sup>11</sup>. It is noteworthy that the given phraseological units of different groups are formed mainly according to the models developed in the Old Slavic language<sup>12</sup>, although they undergo transformations caused by the component facultative expansion or ellipsis.

Note that the researcher understands phraseology in a broad sense of the term, therefore, he uses such terms as *phraseology*, *phraseological unit* and *stable verbal complex*. The terms are used synonymously, leaving out that the latter is characterized by a much wider semantics, absorbing the concepts of both phraseology and phraseological unit. This approach enabled Aksamitov to include denotative, i.e., terminological, and connotative word combinations in the phraseology. According to the linguist,

the phraseological system of the Old Belarusian language as at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was almost definitively formed; however, some of its stable verbal complexes remained

8 *Ibidem*.

9 *Ibidem*, p. 153.

10 *Ibidem*, p. 147.

11 *Ibidem*.

12 *Ibidem*, pp. 155–183.

13 *Ibidem*, p. 183.

14 *Ibidem*, pp. 184–186.

15 *Ibidem*, p. 187.

16 T.I. Tomashevich, *Frazeologiya belorusskogo yazyka XVI–XVII vv.*, Minsk 1980, p. 4.

embryos of future phraseological units, without acquiring the features of stability and idiomaticity that are necessary for phraseologisation<sup>13</sup>.

To identify phraseology in written records, Aksamitov advises determining the degree of figurativeness or portability of the meaning of one or two of its members, applying the general scientific criterion of repetition, supported by semantic analysis, searching for an etymologically close word, tautology<sup>14</sup>.

According to the researcher, phraseology of the Old Belarusian language is characterized by idiomaticity rather than phraseology,

the elements of figurative, abstract thinking in the ancient period of the development of the Belarusian language are still reflected insufficiently, and strong idiomaticity began to be more widely manifested in the late period of the development of the Old Belarusian language<sup>15</sup>.

Despite the presence of this chapter, in 1980 Tomaševyč notes that “Belarusian phraseology has not been studied in the historical sense”<sup>16</sup>. The work is the first thorough study that views the development of the phraseological composition of the Belarusian language in the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries, based on concrete historical material in Belarusian studies. It is noteworthy that the quantitatively represented and best-preserved texts of the business style served the source base, to which the researcher involved polemical works, as well as the works of the Belarusian writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, dialectal material, which made it possible to more objectively trace the continuity of the Belarusian language at the phraseological level. It is worth noting that Tomaševyč limited the object of research only to phraseology *per se*.

In the first chapter *From the historical and temporal characteristics*, the linguist analyzed two issues,

(i) continuity in the development of the Belarusian phraseology, and (ii) archaization of phraseological units. According to Tomaševyč's observations, historical longevity is demonstrated by somatic phraseology, which is analyzed by phraseological nests. Following the researcher, archaization is a process characteristic of living languages that respond to everything that happens in society.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 14.

Undoubtedly, the linguist writes, phraseology reflects the everyday life and concepts of a certain environment of a certain era; life changes, all along the structure of everyday activities and phenomena changes, too, – so does phraseology. The origin of many phraseological units is connected with customs, beliefs of Belarusians in the past, occupations of the people, cultural and historical changes in society. Current events, phenomena, facts of reality were the basis of the semantics of many phraseological units. The relevance was lost – the etymological content of the phraseological unit was dimmed or darkened, resulting into their passive reserves as observed with some of them<sup>17</sup>.

In the chapter *Changes in phraseological units*, Tomaševyč analyzes phraseological units in a diachronic aspect and determines changes in their form, semantics, combination, which made it possible to reconstruct their initial forms. As the researcher observes, “during the formation of the phraseological unit, there is a need for «excessively» emphasized clarity and completeness of the structure, therefore, all its components are mandatory”<sup>18</sup>. Only after the design of a phraseology as an indivisible and reproducible unit, one may follow the trend to its concise weight, which manifests itself in the release of components that have the least influence on the general semantics of the phraseology. Tomaševyč touches on the issue of grammatical and lexical variants

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 17.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 18.

of phraseological units, their synonymy. The researcher also draws attention to transformations in the semantics of phraseological units that

occur when the form is preserved or is accompanied by insignificant changes. Updating the expressiveness of phraseological units is facilitated by their use in conversational speech. Semantic development is achieved mainly by those phraseological units that are characterized by expressive and emotional coloring<sup>19</sup>.

In the chapter *Phraseological Borrowings*, Tomaševyč analyzes foreign phraseological units in applied and transformational aspects. In particular, the scientist divides such phraseological units into 2 groups: “phraseological units borrowed from the Old Slavic language, and foreign phraseological units left without translation from Western European languages”<sup>20</sup>. According to the linguist’s observations, the latter group of phraseological units is characterized by functioning in an untransliterated (Latin) or transliterated (Cyrillic) form<sup>21</sup>. Tomaševyč points out to the interlingual contacts of the Belarusian language with Latin, Ukrainian, Polish, and Russian, which were not just mediators in the borrowing of phraseology, but also helped to adapt foreign language phraseology.

The author, after conducting a comparison with modern times, concludes that

the phraseological system of the Belarusian language in the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century reached its high level of development. [...] The vernacular was the main source of phraseology. Even during a difficult historical period for the Belarusian language, phraseological units arose, lived and developed in the spoken environment, being passed down from generation to generation. [...]



Phraseological units that characterize a person from the point of view of moral and ethical, intellectual, mental, and physical qualities turned out to be the most viable<sup>22</sup>.

Another scholar Suško devotes more than one research plunge to various issues of the formation of the phraseological fund of the Belarusian language<sup>23</sup>. In particular, the article *Phrase-semantic field “man” in the Old Belarusian language*<sup>24</sup> presents the result of an experimental study in which integral and differential semes of phraseological meaning were determined via the phrase-semantic field (PSF); it made it possible to organize the components of the field, pointing to its core, center and periphery. According to the monuments of Belarusian literature in the 14<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Suško presents the structure of the PSF *Man* as follows:

1. Micro-field *Man as a Spiritual Person*, sub-breaking it into 1.1. PSF *Faith*, which comprises 55 phraseological units (hereinafter PU), 1.2. PSF *True and False*, with 23 PUs and 27 PUs, correspondingly, 1.3. PSF *Love*, with 17 PUs, and *Hatred*, 1.4. PSF *Responsibility and Irresponsibility*, having 19 PUs in the former, 1.5. PSF *Good* as opposed to *Evil*, analyzing 17 PUs and 22 PUs as per the mentioned, 1.6. PSF *Life* with 58 PUs versus *Death* with 27 PUs.
2. Micro-field of *Man as a Spiritual Personality*, sub-breaking into the two PSFs – 2.1. PSF *Feelings and Emotions*, which includes 30 PUs, 2.2. PSF *Intellect*, with 35 PUs.
3. Micro-field *Man as a Social Personality*, which includes four PSFs: 3.1. PSF *Military sphere*, with 47 PUs, 3.2. PSF *Judicial sphere*, coming to 59 PUs, 3.3. PSF *Social and political sphere*, with 13 PUs, and finally 3.4. PSF *Family life*, which contains 20 PUs<sup>25</sup>.

In addition, the author describes the semantic nature of the connectivity that is inherent to some individual units within groups and subgroups, indicates the possible

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 20.

<sup>23</sup> T. Žukoŭskaja, *Varyjantnaść i kantaminacyja u fraziealohii starabielaruskaj movy* [in:] *Aktualnija problemy movaznaŭstva i lihvadydaktyki*. Zbornik navukovych artykulaŭ, Brest 2008, pp. 40–43; *eadem*, *Fraziealahizmy z kampaniantam-samatyzmam u starabielaruskaj movie*, “Viešnik HrDU imia Janki Kupaly. Ser. 3, Filalohija. Piedahohika. Psichalohija” 2010, nr 2, pp. 4–14; *eadem*, *Koncept ‘šmierć’ u fraziealohii bielaruskaj movy XIV–XVIII stst.* [in:] *Linhvistika i metodika v vysšej škole*. Zbornik navukovych artykulaŭ, Hrodno 2009, pp. 29–35; *eadem*, *Koncepty ‘žyćcio’ i ‘šmierć’ u fraziealohii bielaruskaj movy XIV–XVIII stahodździaŭ*, “Izviestija Homielskoho hosudarstviennoho univiersitjeta imieni F. Skoriny” 2010, nr 4, pp. 60–65; T. Suško, *Frazieasiemantynaje pole «Čalaviek» u starabielaruskaj movie*, “Biaŭorutenistyka Bialostocka” 2012, t. 4, pp. 301–322; *eadem*, *Reprezientacyja vobrazu ilžyvaha čalavieka ŭ fraziealohii starabielaruskaj movy* [in:] *Falklor i sučasnaja kultura*. Zbornik navukovych artykulaŭ, č. 2, Minsk 2011, pp. 91–93; *eadem*, *Adlustravaŭnie asabliwašćej myšlennia ŭ fraziealahizmach starabielaruskaj movy* [in:] *Jazyk. Obščestvo. Problemy miežkulturnoj komunikacii*. Zbornik navukovych artykulaŭ, č. 2, Hrodno 2012, pp. 223–227; *eadem*, *Dyjachraničny analiz frazieasiemantynajaha pola “Maralna-etyčnyja kaštoŭnaści”* [in:] *Linhvistika i metodika v vysšej škole*. Zbornik navukovych artykulaŭ, vyp. 3, Hrodno 2011, pp. 118–126; *eadem*, *Fraziealahičnyja adzinki aksijałahičnaha charaktaru ŭ starabielaruskaj movie*, “Viešnik Mažyrskaaha dziaŭžaŭnaha piedahahičnaha ŭniversiteta imia I.P. Šamiakina” 2012, nr 2, pp. 142–149; *eadem*, *Frazieasiemantynaje pole «Boh» u starabielaruskaj movie*, “Viešnik HrDU imia Janki

Kupały. Sier. 3, Filalohija. Piedahohika. Psichalohija” 2012, nr 3 (143), pp. 63–74; eadem, *Reprezientacyja kanceptu «ŭlada» ŭ starabielaruskaj fraziealohii (na materyjale «Biblii ruskaj» F. Skaryny i «Katechizisa» S. Budnaha)* [in:] *Respublikanskaja Kupalaŭskaja čytaŭni. Zbornik navukovych artykulaŭ*, Hrodna 2013, pp. 254–261; eadem, *Ustojliwyja slovazlučeŭni terminalahičnaha charakteru ŭ starabielaruskaj movie* [in:] *Linhvistika i mietodika v vysšej škole. Zbornik navukovych artykulaŭ*, Hrodno 2012, pp. 180–185.

24 T. Suško, *Frazieasiamantyčnaje pole «Čalaviek»...*, pp. 301–322.

25 *Ibidem*, pp. 305–318.

26 T. Žukoŭskaja, *Kancepty 'žyćcio' i 'šmierć'...*, p. 61.

27 *Ibidem*.

28 T. Suško, *Reprezientacyja vobrazu ilžyvaha čalavieka...*, pp. 91–93.

occurrence of such lexical phenomena as synonymy, variability, antonymy, and also emphasizes the inheritance and decline of old phraseological units in the modern Belarusian literary language.

The study *The concepts of “life” and “death” in the phraseology of the Belarusian language in the 14<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries* sets out Suško’s detailed analysis of the phraseological units that represent various aspects of the declared concepts. In particular, the concept *Life* in written records is verbalized via the phraseological units of 5 groups: *Life as a Beginning*, which includes 12 PUs, *Life as a Choice*, with 10 PUs, *Life as a Physical State of a Person*, which contains 8 PUs, *Life as Eternal Existence*, totaling 28 PUs, *Life as Existence in Society*, having 28 PUs<sup>26</sup>; at the same time, the concept *Death* is found to be verbalized with the help of phraseological units, which fall into the three following groups: *Death as the End of Life*, which includes 29 PUs, *Death as a Transition from Physical Existence to Metaphysical Existence*, numbering 37 PUs, *Death as Eternal Rest*, with 24 PUs analyzed<sup>27</sup>.

The article *Representation of a lying person’s image in the phraseology of the Old Belarusian language* authored by Suško proves that for the phraseological verbalization of a liar, it is the phraseological units mainly with a somatic center, as well as of biblical origin, that are specifically involved<sup>28</sup>.

The article *Diachronic analysis of the phraseological field Moral and Ethical Values* is devoted to the study of the peculiar phraseology functioning in the moral and ethical spheres of the human life. According to the researcher,

in the linguistic representation of the world, the normative canon of the linguistic personality and the system of behavioral norms are fixed and expressed in the semantics of phraseological units that denote the moral and ethical qualities of the Belarusian personality in the

period of the 14<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries, which can be traced via the identified 79 PUs. The majority of phraseological units certify deviations from the norms, which is represented by a negative qualification, please account for 237 phraseological units. Conformity to the norm is accompanied by a positive evaluation, which is connected to the internal form of phraseology, and it evokes in the speaker's mind typical and related situations that carry a positive or negative evaluation produced by the collective consciousness of previous generations<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> Eadem, *Dyjachraničny analiz frazieasiamantyčnaha pola...*, p. 125.

<sup>30</sup> Eadem, *Fraziealahičnyja adzinki aksijałahičnaha charaktaru...*, p. 148.

Investigating the phraseological units of axiological nature in the Old Belarusian language (the title of the work), the researcher analyzes

phraseologisms that in semantics contain the evaluative-value orientation of the people and society in general, reflect the normative canon and the system of norms in the behavior of the Belarusian person in the period of the 14<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries, which was guided by the authority of the Holy Scriptures<sup>30</sup>.

According to Suško, most of the analyzed phraseological units (237) verbalize deviations from the norms and give a negative assessment of human actions and deeds.

Next, Suško is of the opinion that terminological units do not belong to the phraseological composition of the Belarusian language. She proves this opinion in the article called *Stable Word Combinations of a Terminological Nature in the Old Belarusian Language*, where she concludes, in particular:

From a grammatical, semantic and functional points of view [...] the considered [...] units are of the same type, built according to the same

<sup>31</sup> Eadem, *Ustojlivyja slovazlučenni terminalahičnaha charakteru...*, p. 185.

<sup>32</sup> Eadem, *Adlustravańnie asablivašciej myśleńnia...*, p. 226.

<sup>33</sup> Eadem, *Reprezientacyja koncepcy «ŭlada»...*, pp. 254–261.

model, have specific denotative relations, lack expressiveness, have all the properties of a term combination. And, therefore, they have nothing to do with historical phraseology and should be studied in historical terminology<sup>31</sup>.

The phraseological verbalization of the cognitive processes with the medieval Belarusians is reflected in the article *Reflection of peculiar thinking in the phraseology of the Old Belarusian language*. It is followed that there the author makes a logical conclusion:

First, the close connection of thought with those life images, beliefs and naive convictions presented by a linguistic unit, is striking. After successfully speaking about any subject or phenomenon, there was no need to further modify what was said, therefore, the stability of those phraseological units that convey the thought very accurately remains. This testifies to the concreteness of the ancient ancestor's thinking. Secondly, the phraseological units of the Old Belarusian language testify to associative-figurative thinking, the ability to compare, and to find successful associative parallels. Thirdly, transferring the facts of reality to one's own body reflects the anthropocentricity of human thinking. Fourthly, the thinking of the old couple is characterized by the theo-centricity of human consciousness, which focuses on caring for the inner part of a person<sup>32</sup>.

The concept Power also becomes the object of the phraseological research by Suško, for detail please see Representation of the concept Power in Old Belarusian phraseology (based on the material of "Russian Bible" by Skoryna and "Catechism" by Budny)<sup>33</sup>. The selected source requires a clear correlation of the author, the text,

the recipient and the researcher. Through the prism of religious consciousness, Skoryna and Budny try to convey to their contemporaries the “rules” of a powerful person, with which, unfortunately, hardly anyone manages to live. In the orbit of emotional and expressive nominations, the authors include phraseological units that represent the specifics of social life. Therefore, the given contexts distinctly illustrate the semantic and stylistic connotations and testify to the presence of inter-stylistic phraseological units in the language.

Moving further with the readings on the matter, it is necessary to mention the article *On the antiquity of some phraseological units and the influence of the Polish language in the medieval period*, in which Tomaševyč and Žukovska touch upon the issue of Belarusian-Polish language contacts at the phraseological level. The analysis conducted proves that “direct borrowing and tracing of phraseological units was very characteristic of the Old Belarusian language, due to which the national language fund was enriched with means of expression”<sup>34</sup>.

The other view is found with Paliaščuk, whose studies deal with the phraseology of business writing in the Old Belarusian language<sup>35</sup>. The articles *Phraseology of Old Belarusian business writing and ways of studying it*, *Stencil expressions in Old Belarusian business documents*, etc. are devoted to the mentioned problem. In particular, in the article *On the Phraseological Structure of Old Belarusian Business Writing*, the linguist offers her own understanding of phraseology in diachrony. More specifically, it is a construction that

includes ready-made, reproducible linguistic units, which are a certain combination of lexemes with varying degrees of semantic intensity. Their main indicators can refer to fixed setting arising from the peculiar stability of its meaning and component composition, metaphoricality, reproducibility, [...] semantic commonality of

34 T.I. Tamaševič, T.S. Žukoŭskaja, *Ab spradviečnaści niekatorych fraziealahičnych adžinak i polskamoŭnym upłyvie ŭ siarednieviakovy pieryjad* [in:] *Hrani rodnaha slova. Zbornik navukovykh artykulaŭ*, Hrodna 2010, p. 295.

35 N. Paliaščuk, *Trafaretnyja vyrazy ŭ starabielaruskich dziełavych dakumientach* [in:] *Kab żyto naša Slova. Zbornik navukovykh artykulaŭ*, M.I. Novik (red.), Brest 2009, pp. 253–257; *eadem*, *Ab fraziealahičnym składzie starabielaruskaj dziełavoj pišmiennaści* [in:] *Slavianskaja fraziealohija v arjealnom, istoričeskom i etnokulturnom ašpiektach. Zbornik navukovykh artykulaŭ*, Homel 2007, pp. 66–70; *eadem*, *Fraziealohija starabielaruskaj dziełavoj pišmiennaści i šlachi jaje vyvučėnia* [in:] *Jazyk i soćium. Zbornik navukovykh artykulaŭ*, č. 3, Minsk 2011, pp. 162–165.

<sup>36</sup> *Eadem*, *Ab fraziealohičnym skla-dzie...*, p. 67.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 68.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 70.

<sup>39</sup> *Eadem*, *Fraziealohija starobelaru-skaj dziełavoj pišmiennaści...*, p. 162.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 163.

<sup>42</sup> T.G. Trofimovich, *K problemie obshchej charakteristiki starobeloruskoj frazieologii* [in:] *Nacyjanalnaja mova i nacyjanalnaja kultura: ašpieky ŭzajemadziejania*. Zbornik navukovyh artykulaŭ, Minsk 2010, pp. 99–104; *eadem*, *Frazeologija v staroruskom i starobeloruskom delovom diskurse (k probleme nominativnikh funktsii)* [in:] *Jazyk i sotsium. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, ch. 1, Minsk 2009; *eadem*, *Onomasiologičeskii aspekt staroruskikh i starobeloruskikh frazeologičeskikh nominatsii* [in:] *Nominatsija i diskurs. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, ch. 1, Minsk 2006, pp. 54–56; *eadem*, *Staroruskaya i starobeloruskaya frazeologija v sra-vnitelno-sopostavitelnom aspekte i isto-ričeskoj retrospektive* [in:] *Ruskii jazyk v kontekste natsionalnoi kultury. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, Saransk 2012, <https://elib.bspu.by/handle/doc/4190> [access: 3.09.2022]; *eadem*, *Staroruskaya i starobeloruskaya pravovaya frazeologija (sostav, proiskhozhdenie, nominativnie funktsii)* [in:] *Slavyanskaya frazeologija i paremiologija v XXI veke. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, Minsk 2010, pp. 47–52.

components, of which there must be (i) at least two and (ii) in a certain sequence, functional unity of the entire word combination, quite frequent tautology of its components, possible synonymous replacement of a phraseology with a separate word. However, the listed features of the phraseological unit are not always found altogether<sup>36</sup>.

According to the researcher, the very purpose of Old Belarusian business texts determines the dominance in them of phraseological units of legal, socio-political, socio-economic content<sup>37</sup>. A thorough analysis of business style monuments enable Paliaščuk to conclude that “the phraseology of Old Belarusian business writing actually includes phraseology, stable word combinations, stencil formulas”<sup>38</sup>.

In addition, the article *Phraseology of Old Belarusian business writing and ways of studying it* underlines that the phraseological composition of the Old Belarusian language is “a combination of lexemes with varying degrees of semantic complexity of the components. The core is actually phraseological units... The periphery witnesses: a) series of stable word combinations of terminological content, b) verbal word combinations, c) stencil expressions”<sup>39</sup>. Paliaščuk adheres to the traditional method of describing phraseological units and proposes to classify them according to their correlation with the part of speech, the number of components, and the structure<sup>40</sup>. The opinion about the need to collect recorded phraseological units in a separate historical phraseological dictionary is very valid. Such a lexicographic guide will have a scientific and practical perspective, as it will not only influence the further development of issues of diachronic phraseology, but also fill in a gap in Slavic historical lexicography and phraseology<sup>41</sup>.

A major development in the field of diachronic phraseology is made by the studios of Trofimovich<sup>42</sup>. It is

observed that phraseology is treated in a wide understanding, as evidenced by the terminological language units, the absolute majority of which are recorded. Terminological units are used mainly for the nomination of actions and objects<sup>43</sup>. Having conducted a comparative analysis based on the phraseology of the Old Russian and Old Belarusian languages of different groups, the linguist comes to the conclusion that the phraseological structures of the Old Russian and Old Belarusian languages features the Old Slavic basis, insignificant in scope, though. However, in the 15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries neoplasms that testified to significant divergence and originality of phraseological structures of the named languages prevailed. The fund common to the Old Russian and Old Belarusian languages was hardly big in numbers.

Trofimovich and Pališčuk in several articles continue to investigate the functioning of phraseological units in the Old Russian and Old Belarusian languages<sup>44</sup>, where they emphasize the codification problems of phraseological units in dictionaries: “The problem of lexicographic practice is the marking of phraseological and phraseologized units. The traditional mark in the form of a rhombus [...] does not correspond to modern ideas about the volume of phraseology, nor takes into account its heterogeneity”<sup>45</sup>.

The conclusion on the semantic-onomasiological status of coloratives in phraseological units is significant. In particular,

in such nominations, the onomasiological basis correlates with a substantive component that preserves the same denotative-significant meaning as a parallel word with free combination. The exponent of the denotation named by it is categorically the same as that of the word. The attributive component of the analyzed phraseological units is reinterpreted to varying degrees, it is a means of explicating the onomasiological feature and is perceived as such<sup>46</sup>.

43 Eadem, *Frazeologiya v staroruskom i starobeloruskom delovom diskurse...*, p. 95.

44 N.V. Poleshchuk, T.G. Trofimovich, *Chernii v staroruskoi i starobeloruskoi frazeologii* [in:] *Russkii yazyk: sistema i funkcionirovanie. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, ch. 1, Minsk 2006, pp. 315–318; T.G. Trofimovich, N.V. Poleshchuk, *Belii vo frazeologicheskikh nominatsiyakh staroruskogo i starobeloruskogo yazykov* [in:] *Nominatsiya i diskurs. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, ch. 2, Minsk 2006, <https://elib.bspu.by/handle/doc/16894> [access: 3.09.2022]; eadem, *K onomasiologicheskoi traktovke staroruskoi i starobeloruskoi frazeologii* [in:] *Lichnost – slovo – sotsium. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, ch. 2, Minsk 2007, pp. 197–202; iidem, *Visshaya sila v zerkale staroruskoi i starobeloruskoi frazeologii* [in:] *Yazyk i mezhkulturnie kommunikatsii. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, Minsk 2007, pp. 198–200; eadem, *Vostochnoslavyanskaya istoricheskaya frazeografiya v nastoyashchem i budushchem* [in:] *Russkii yazyk: sistema i funkcionirovanie. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, ch. 1, Minsk 2009, pp. 108–111.

45 T.G. Trofimovich, N.V. Poleshchuk, *K onomasiologicheskoi traktovke staroruskoi i starobeloruskoi frazeologii...*, p. 200.

46 N.V. Poleshchuk, T.G. Trofimovich, *Chernii v staroruskoi i starobeloruskoi frazeologii...*, pp. 317–318.



47 M.I. Svistunova, *Frazealohizmy ŭ "Antyryzisie" I. Pacieja* [in:] *Bielaŕuskaje slova na skryŭalach historyi. Zbornik navukovych artykulaŭ*, Minsk 2007, p. 85.

48 *Ibidem*, p. 86.

49 *Ibidem*, p. 87.

50 *Eadem*, *Prykazki ŭ starabelaruskich palemičnych tvorach* [in:] *Falklarystyčnyja dašledavańni. Kantekst. Typalohija. Suviazi. Zbornik navukovych artykulaŭ*, вып. 3, Minsk 2006, p. 120.

Further, Svistunova investigates phraseologisms in the polemical work *Antyryzis* by Potia (the issue of authorship is not considered). The scholar singles out a group of phraseological units of the comparative type, which join the sentence with the help of a relative word *як/яко*. The linguist unites them into two groups: a larger one, where the means of comparison are living creatures (animals and birds, insects), and a smaller one, where the means of comparison are objects of peasant life. The author notes that the Old Belarusian language borrowed phraseology *яко вѣ шраньки вѣступити* from German through Polish<sup>47</sup>. The second largest group consists of somatic phraseological units, the centers of which are nominatives *око, губа, зуб, чоло, шыя, горло, палець, рука, брова*<sup>48</sup>. The researcher analyses the phraseology *сѣ клюбы выпалѣ* and draws the attention of the compilers of the *Historical Dictionary of the Belarusian Language* to the register *клюба*. She underlines that despite the illustrative material with the language units is provided *вѣ своей клюбѣ зостали, с клюбы своей выступаюць*, they are not qualified as set or fixed<sup>49</sup>.

In another research *Proverbs in Old Belarusian polemical works*, Svistunova compares polemical works authored by Potiy and Filalet, and comes to the conclusion that proverbs get active in the works of Potiy – 15 vs. 5 in *Apocrisis*. However, the researcher makes an important caveat: “what mainly characterizes *Apocrisis* is a large number of phraseological units and constructions close to paremias”<sup>50</sup>.

Furthermore, Dziadova also touches on the functioning of phraseological units in diachrony. The studio *The phenomenon of variation in Old Belarusian phraseology of the 14<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries* is based on the study of two religious monuments written in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The author proves a wide variant palette of Belarusian phraseology at that time; in particular, she emphasizes the structural, semantic and stylistic identity of some units (*бисеръ божий – бисеръ Хрыстовъ*) and lexical,



phonetic, morphemic, grammatical variation of others. Lexical variation, according to Dziadova's observations, was the most common, e.g., *бути зруду (перси)* "to show despair, remorse", *взяти голову (горло)* "punish with death"<sup>51</sup>; less common – phonetic (*велика (волика) ласка* "form of polite address", *сведецтво (свидечство) выдавати* "to testify")<sup>52</sup>, morphological (*бобры (бобровѣ) гонити* "engage in beaver fishing", *доконати бегъ (бегу)* "to pass away, to die")<sup>53</sup>, word-forming (*жалобу чинити (учинити)* "to file a complaint")<sup>54</sup>. For the studied period, Dziadova also defines combined variant, when two or more components of a phraseological unit undergo changes within one or more texts (*взяти (приняти) корону (коруну)* "to become a king, to be crowned"). According to the linguist, most of the phraseological units of the Old Belarusian language have been lost. The reasons for this were changes in the everyday and social life of the Belarusian people, the loss of the realities and concepts that they denoted<sup>55</sup>.

Besides, the study *Cultural and historical connotation of phraseological units in the Old Belarusian language of the 14<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> century* was an attempt to investigate a wide layer of phraseology through the prism of linguistic and cultural studies. Dziadova proves that a significant part of phraseological units is built on symbolic, metaphorical and metonymic images. The largest number of such combinations of words was formed around the concept of MAN<sup>56</sup>, reflecting all spheres of Belarusian life (traditions, everyday life, family relations, religion, war, book printing, etc.). According to the linguist, these stable combinations of words "combine the results of people's observations and carry certain information about their worldview and mentality"<sup>57</sup>.

An important achievement of Belarusian phraseology is a thorough study by Moroz – *Phraseology of Belarusian annals*. The objective of the research is formulated "to determine phraseological parallels in the ancient and modern (literary and dialectal) Belarusian language by

51 A. Dziadova, *Zjavy varyjantnaści ŭ starabielaruskaj fraziealohii XIV–XVIII stst.* [in:] *Sučasny stan i dynamika norm bielaruskaj litaraturnaj movy. Materyjaly mižnar. navuk. kanf.*, Minsk, 24–25 kastr. 2006 h., Minsk 2006, p. 73.

52 *Ibidem*, p. 74.

53 *Ibidem*.

54 *Ibidem*, p. 75.

55 *Ibidem*.

56 *Eadem*, *Kulturna-histryčnaja kanatacyja fraziealahizmaŭ u starabielaruskaj movie XIV–XVIII stst.* [in:] *Dyjalektalohija i historyja bielaruskaj movy. Materyjaly Mižnarodnaj navukovaj kanfierencyi*, Minsk, 15–16 krasavika 2008 h., Minsk 2008, p. 253.

57 *Ibidem*, p. 256.

<sup>58</sup> V.K. Moroz, *Frazeolohija bieloruskich letopisiej*, Minsk 1986, pp. 9–10.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 10.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 11.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 13.

comparing the main semantic groups of phraseological units from the chronicles with the corresponding units of the modern language”<sup>58</sup>. The linguist identifies the prerequisites that determined the inclusion of phraseological units in historiographical texts: “The semantic volume of the phraseological reserve of Belarusian chronicles is determined mainly by the topic of the genre, limited to reports on military, state and political events. Household phraseology found an incomplete reflection”<sup>59</sup>. Next, Moroz semantically unites phraseology into classes, substantive, attributive, predicative, circumstantial, etc., in particular. Delimiting, for example, phraseological units of military semantics into phraseological units and combinations of a terminological nature, the researcher points out that in the direction of modernity, most of the latter were phraseologicalized, which is connected “with the transfer of the use of these units from the military to other spheres of reality: mental, moral, and intellectual”<sup>60</sup>.

Annals are a genre that could hardly allow for expressiveness. However, over time, it is observed the events are covered through the prism of the author’s apperception, which enabled the set expressions with corresponding connotations get into the annals. In this regard, Moroz notes that “in the annals evidence phraseological units that negatively characterize human behavior, and such prevail; in their nominative meaning, most of them have a negative evaluation”<sup>61</sup>.

In the chapter *Variability of phraseological units*, Moroz investigates the lexical-component variability of phraseological units and set expressions. According to the observations, phraseological units with variant verbal components dominate, another numerical group is made up of variant nominal components. Based on the linguist, the reason for variation is synonymy of the corresponding components outside the phraseological unit. The loss of synonymous connections between such language units causes the archaization of set expressions with a semantically archaized component and the activation of

others, where the semantics of the nuclear component is actualized<sup>62</sup>.

The chapter *Synonymy of phraseological units* considers the synonymy between phraseological units, set expressions, phraseological units and set expressions. According to the observations of Moroz, phraseological units form a series of both monostructural and multistructural synonyms<sup>63</sup>. In contrast to phraseological units, set expressions form multi-component synonymous series, some of which are doublets. The study of synonymy in relation to the phraseological units gives Moroz grounds to conclude that “in the annals of later times, the number of phraseological units, stylistically and expressively colored, is increasing”<sup>64</sup>.

Summarizing the results of the research, the linguist emphasizes the durability of the Belarusian language precisely at the phraseological level: “When comparing the annalistic phraseological units with the corresponding phraseological units of the modern Belarusian language, the stability of the main part of the Belarusian phraseology was revealed”<sup>65</sup>.

Moroz devotes the monograph *Annals and chronicles in the context of the formation of the Belarusian literary language of the ancient period* to the study of annals and chronicles inasmuch as they see them an important source that enables formation of the norms in the Old Belarusian literary language. For phraseologists diachronists, the work is valuable because the author devotes a separate paragraph to the functioning of phraseological units in monuments of the historiographic genre – *Formation of the phraseological composition of annals and chronicles as a new resource of the Belarusian literary language of the ancient period*. The researcher notes that

historical events in the annals were revealed using a diverse set of stable phraseological units, which reveal the optimal semantic volume of the annals. Accumulated from oral and written

62 *Ibidem*, pp. 14–19.

63 *Ibidem*, p. 20.

64 *Ibidem*, p. 21.

65 *Ibidem*.

66 *Idem, Letapisy i chroniki ŭ kanteksćcie farmiravańnia bielaruskaj litaraturnaj movy staražytnaha pieryjadu*, Minsk 2011, p. 153.

67 *Ibidem*, p. 155.

sources and creatively adapted phraseological units were refined over the centuries in numerous annalistic lists, which to some extent illustrates the process of formation of a new, much richer than the previous period, composition of annalistic phraseology. For centuries, there were established norms and samples in the form of ready-made artistic forms and linguistic and stylistic stencils. They were used by scribes as stable formulas with ready-made content<sup>66</sup>.

The linguist traditionally divides the phraseological fund of Belarusian chronicles into semantic classes. In particular, according to formal-grammatical features and semantic-stylistic functions, Moroz singles out the following semantic classes:

substantive (*злая прыгода* “adverse circumstances”), attributive (*жалем порушоны* “upset”), predicative (*до уш* “notify”), circumstantial (*куды вида* “everywhere”), within which the detailing is carried out according to the ideological and thematic principle. The chronicling theme, aimed largely at the description of military actions and the political confrontation of the opposing parties, created a preference for phraseological units with the meaning of predication. Phraseological and stable units corresponding to the verb in the chronicle are divided into semantic groups of interaction, relation, behavior, state, as well as action directed at the object<sup>67</sup>.

Moroz emphasizes the cases of synonymy and antonymy of phraseological units. In particular, the author gives a synonymous series *голови стинати, выдати на смерць, смерти предати (на смерць предати)* with the meaning “to kill”, which is opposed by an antonymic phraseological unit *быти горлом дарованым* “to be

pardoned, saved from death”<sup>68</sup>. The researcher proves that the language of the annals serves as a confirmation of the development of phraseological units of evaluability, which was ensured by three main factors: the motivation of the internal form, the unexpected combinability of the component words and the very nature of the component words that make up the phraseology<sup>69</sup>.

The language situation in the Belarusian lands of that time was also reflected in the language of the chronicles at the phraseological level. Historiographers used phraseological units of various origins, which were assigned this or that connotation, determine their use in texts for various purposes. Moroz notes in this regard that “the stylistic differentiation of chronicle phraseological units within synonymy arose between actually Belarusian and borrowed (mainly from Old Slavic and Polish) phraseological units”<sup>70</sup>.

Separately, the linguist investigates the variability and synonymy of phraseological units in the *Chronicles of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania*, where, in particular, she notes that “in general, phraseological variations have the qualification of universal, and not individually authored variants”<sup>71</sup>. Having analyzed the synonymy and variability of phraseological units in the lists of the chronicle, Moroz concludes:

The process of enrichment of the Old Belarusian language was characterized by considerable depth and concerned all its levels. In vocabulary and phraseology, active processes of interaction of the denotative and connotative plans of lexemes were observed, when, on the one hand, combining / coining a word with a limited set of lexemes contributed to increasing the stability and idiomaticity of compounds, and on the other hand, together with absolute conjugacy, the composition of phraseological units of the Old Belarusian language showed stable

68 *Ibidem*, p. 160.

69 *Ibidem*, p. 162.

70 *Ibidem*, p. 167.

71 *Ibidem*, p. 146.

72 *Ibidem*, p. 150.

conjugacy words not with individual lexemes, as usual, but with semantic groups of lexemes. In this aspect, chronicle phraseology demonstrates a developed variability associated with both verbal and nominal components<sup>72</sup>.

So, Belarusian diachronic phraseology has similar gaps as Ukrainian: the lack of research on all monuments, the traditional circle of sources (business texts, chronicles, monuments of polemical literature), the difficulty of distinguishing a phraseological unit in an ancient text, however, it is essential to understand the need in designing and compiling a historical dictionary of phraseological units of the Belarusian language.

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