

A Quantitative Approach in the Study of Russian Phraseme Constructions

The aim of the study is to demonstrate the advantages of applying a quantitative approach to the analysis of phraseme constructions (PhraCons). The quantitative approach relies on the application of statistical methods to extensive linguistic data, enabling the analysis of such features as frequency, productivity, and usage patterns. This approach ensures the production of empirically substantiated findings. To this end, the Russian National Corpus (RNC) is employed as the principal research instrument, as it provides a reliable basis for evaluating component variability, the distribution of specific constructions, and the transformation of grammatical forms within PhraCons. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the structure and dynamics of Russian syntactic phrasemes.

Like phraseological units in the lexicon, PhraCons are multi-word units whose overall meaning cannot be directly derived from the meanings of their individual components. According to Anna Pavlova (2022: 366–367), their definition includes a set of criteria that are fundamental to most phraseological units, PhraCons in particular: multi-element structure, reproducibility, idiomaticity. However, PhraCons have their own special features, such as a stable syntactic pattern and variable lexical filling.

The present paper aims to summarize results of a corpus-based analysis of three Russian PhraCons with the negative particle *ne*. Corpus data concerning the PhraCon *ne po* + N.dat allowed us to determine its various lexical realizations and to identify the most frequent expressions within each meaning category: the first with the meaning ‘dislike’ (*ne po dushe*), the second – ‘not enough, not enough skill’ (*ne po silam*), the third – ‘not in accordance with one’s age’ (*ne po letam*).

Such a type of analysis was also used to study the dynamics of functioning of the PhraCon *ne v* <*svoe*> + N.loc ‘being in an unusual mental state’. Three patterns of frequency distribution can be discovered amongst occurrences in the RNC: stable (*ne v svoej tarelke*), increasing (*ne v sebe*), decreasing (*ne v svojom ume*) use.

The corpus-based analysis of the *na* <*Adj*> N.loc / N.ins + *ne ob yedesh / obskachesh*’ made it possible to trace the development of a polysemous PhraCon: from the original fixed proverb *Suzhenogo (suzhenoy) konjom ne ob yedesh* ‘you can’t escape fate’ – through a lexically variable phraseological unit – to a polysemous PhraCon with four distinct meanings: ‘be inevitable, unavoidable’, ‘cannot be deceived’, ‘be a corpulent person’, and ‘be large in size’. Notably, the last two meanings are not attested in existing phraseological dictionaries.

Furthermore, data from the main subcorpus of the RNC showed that the slot fillers are predominantly nouns denoting animals (e.g., horse, goat, pig, donkey); vehicles (e.g., motorcycle, cart, tractor); and parts of vehicles (e.g., wheel, shaft). In the PhraCon *konjom ne ob yedesh* ‘you can’t escape it, you can’t avoid it’, the instrumental case form *konjom* has been replaced by the prepositional expression *na* + N.loc (*na kone*), since in the contemporary Russian the verb *ob yekhat* – similarly to other verbs of motion – can govern a noun in the instrumental case only when it denotes a type of public transportation (Apresjyan 2010: 118).

Apresjyan, Jurij D. 2010, *Proekt aktivnogo slovarja russkogo jazyka* [The Project of an Active Dictionary of the Russian Language]. Moskva.

Pavlova, A. 2022, *Strukturno-polevoj podhod k sintaksicheskoj frazeologii russkogo jazyka* [The Structural-Field Approach to Syntactic Phraseology of the Russian Language]. *Przegľad Wschodnioeuropejski*, vol. 13, № 2, 361–375.