

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Phraseological Units With “Wealth” And Their Cognitive Features in Literal Context: A Cognitive-Linguistic Approach

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Abstract

This paper investigates phraseological units associated with the concept of “wealth” and examines their cognitive features in literal and semi-literal contexts. While idiomatic expressions are typically analyzed through figurative meaning, this study emphasizes their behavior when literal semantics remain active. Drawing on cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor theory, and discourse analysis, the research demonstrates that wealth-related phraseological units encode complex mental representations, including schemas of accumulation, possession, and value. The study argues that even in literal contexts, these expressions reveal deep cognitive and cultural models, reflecting socio-economic perceptions and human experience.

KEY WORDS

Phraseological units, wealth, cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor, literal meaning, mental representation, discourse.

INTRODUCTION

Language encodes not only communicative intent but also cognitive and cultural knowledge. Among lexical and phraseological categories, phraseological units (PUs) represent a particularly rich domain for studying conceptual structures. The concept of “wealth” occupies a central place in human cognition due to its connection with survival, power, and social organization.

Although phraseological units are predominantly examined in terms of idiomaticity and figurative meaning, their use in literal or semi-literal contexts remains underexplored. This paper addresses this gap by focusing on wealth-related phraseological units and their cognitive features when used in contexts that preserve or activate literal interpretation.

Mazkur tadqiqot “wealth” (boylik) konsepti bilan bog'liq frazeologik birliklarning lingvokognitiv xususiyatlarini, ayniqsa ularning literal, ya'ni to'g'ridan-to'g'ri kontekstdagi talqinini o'rganishga qaratilgan. Tadqiqotning asosiy yo'nalishlari

sifatida boylikka oid frazeologik birliklarni tasniflash, ularning semantik va struktur xususiyatlarini tahlil qilish, literal kontekstdagi kognitiv mexanizmlarni aniqlash hamda madaniy va diskursiv jihatlarini ochib berish belgilangan.

This instructional material is designed to teach the topic “Phraseological Units with ‘Wealth’ and Their Cognitive Features in Literal Context” and aims to develop students’ systematic knowledge and analytical skills regarding the linguo-cognitive properties of phraseological units. This topic is particularly relevant for students of philology, linguistics, translation studies, and foreign language teaching, as it reveals the close relationship between language and cognition.

METHOD

The primary objective of this lesson is to enable students to identify phraseological units related to wealth, distinguish

between their literal, semi-literal, and figurative uses, and analyze their semantic and structural features. In addition, students are expected to explain the cognitive mechanisms underlying these units, such as conceptual metaphor, image schema, and mental representation, as well as to interpret their usage within cultural and discourse contexts.

The theoretical part of the lesson begins with an explanation of the concept of phraseological units. These are defined as stable, reproducible language units that often carry figurative meaning. They represent not only linguistic phenomena but also cultural and cognitive information. Following this, the concept of "wealth" is analyzed in a broader sense. It is emphasized that wealth is not limited to material possessions but also includes abstract domains such as knowledge, experience, and opportunities.

Phraseological units related to wealth are classified into three main groups. The first group consists of fully literal units, which express wealth in its direct economic sense. The second group includes semi-literal units, where the concept of wealth is extended metaphorically to express abundance or richness. The third group comprises fully idiomatic units, which are characterized by strong imagery and evaluative meaning.

In explaining the cognitive features of these units, conceptual metaphor and image schema play a crucial role. Wealth is often conceptualized as a resource or substance, reflecting human experience with material objects. Image schemas help structure this understanding through patterns such as accumulation, containment, and distribution. Furthermore, mental representation links wealth to fundamental concepts such as possession, control and value.

To reinforce students' understanding, the lesson incorporates various interactive teaching methods. Identification tasks require students to locate phraseological units within texts and determine their types. Classification exercises encourage systematic thinking by grouping expressions according to their semantic properties. Cognitive analysis tasks help students uncover the underlying metaphorical and semantic structures of expressions. Additionally, discussion questions and cross-cultural comparison activities promote critical thinking and deeper conceptual understanding.

Practical exercises also play an important role in mastering the topic. Students complete tasks such as filling in missing elements in sentences, analyzing expressions, and creating their own examples. These activities enhance independent

thinking and the ability to apply linguistic knowledge actively.

Assessment is conducted in two stages. Formative assessment includes question-and-answer sessions, group discussions, and short analytical tasks, allowing continuous evaluation of students' progress. Summative assessment is typically carried out through a short essay, in which students independently analyze the role of the concept of wealth in language and cognition.

To ensure effective teaching, various instructional aids are recommended, including PowerPoint presentations, handouts, real-life examples, and board-based explanations. As homework, students are assigned to find phraseological units related to wealth, classify them, and provide a cognitive analysis of each.

In conclusion, this instructional material contributes to the development of students' ability to understand phraseological units in depth, analyze them from a linguo-cognitive perspective, and interpret them using a scientific approach. As a result, students not only acquire linguistic knowledge but also gain a deeper understanding of human cognition, culture, and social experience as reflected in language.

ANALYSES

This study is devoted to the investigation of phraseological units related to the concept of "wealth" and their linguo-cognitive features, particularly in literal contexts. The main focus is on classifying wealth-related phraseological units, analyzing their semantic and structural properties, identifying cognitive mechanisms underlying their interpretation in literal usage, and exploring their cultural as well as discourse-related characteristics.

First of all, phraseological units associated with the concept of wealth can be classified into several groups. The first group includes fully literal units, which express wealth in its direct economic meaning. Examples such as accumulate wealth, inherit wealth, and generate wealth clearly demonstrate this category. In these expressions, wealth is conceptualized as a tangible resource, capital, or property, reflecting a cognitive model connected with economic activity and material possession.

The second group consists of semi-literal, or partially metaphorical, units. In such cases, the concept of "wealth" is extended to abstract domains, as seen in expressions like a wealth of information, a wealth of opportunities, and a wealth

of experience. Here, wealth is no longer limited to material assets but is interpreted as abundance or richness in a broader sense. Cognitively, this reflects a metaphorical mapping where abstract entities are understood in terms of material wealth.

The third group comprises fully idiomatic phraseological units characterized by strong imagery and evaluative meaning, such as rolling in money, filthy rich, and money talks. In these expressions, wealth is represented not only as an economic condition but also as a marker of social status, power, and influence.

From a semantic perspective, wealth-related phraseological units are multi-layered and incorporate several meaning components simultaneously. The component of abundance is evident in expressions like a wealth of data, while the notion of value highlights wealth as a significant and desirable resource. Additionally, the component of power reflects the influential role of wealth in decision-making processes, and the component of social status emphasizes the role of wealth in determining one's position in society. Structurally, these units may appear as verbal constructions, nominal phrases, or complete idiomatic sentences. Despite their structural simplicity, they possess complex semantic and cognitive depth.

In literal contexts, the interpretation of phraseological units involves several important cognitive mechanisms. Conceptual metaphors play a central role in this process. Wealth is often understood as a substance, as quantity, or as a resource. These metaphorical models remain active even when the expression appears to be used literally. Furthermore, image schemas significantly contribute to meaning construction. For instance, the container schema represents wealth as something that can be stored, the accumulation schema conceptualizes it as something that can be gathered, and the distribution schema reflects its allocation within society.

From the perspective of mental representation, phraseological units related to wealth activate core cognitive models such as possession, control, and evaluation. Therefore, even in literal contexts, wealth is not perceived solely as material property but also as a broader concept encompassing value, opportunity, and potential.

The cultural and discourse-related features of these units are equally significant. Different cultures conceptualize wealth in distinct ways. In English-speaking contexts, wealth is often associated with success and independence, whereas in Uzbek

culture it is closely linked with notions such as blessing, honesty, and contentment. This demonstrates that phraseological units serve as reflections of national mentality and cultural values.

In discourse, wealth-related phraseological units perform several important functions. They may serve an evaluative function, expressing positive or negative attitudes, as seen in filthy rich (negative) and a wealth of talent (positive). They also perform a persuasive function, particularly in political and economic discourse, where expressions like "wealth distribution" are frequently used. In addition, they fulfill a descriptive function by representing social realities such as economic inequality and social stratification.

Phraseological units related to wealth represent a complex linguo-cognitive phenomenon within the language system. They function not only as linguistic elements but also as reflections of human cognition, culture, and social experience. Importantly, there is no strict boundary between literal and figurative meanings; rather, they interact and coexist within a unified cognitive framework, shaping how individuals perceive and interpret the concept of wealth.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the analysis of phraseological units related to the concept of "wealth" demonstrates that these linguistic elements represent a complex interaction between language, cognition, and culture. The study has shown that wealth-related phraseological units can be systematically classified into literal, semi-literal, and figurative types, each reflecting different degrees of semantic transparency and abstraction. Despite these differences, all categories retain a connection to the core conceptualization of wealth as value, resource, and social marker.

The semantic and structural analysis reveals that such units are not merely fixed expressions but multi-layered constructions that encode meanings such as abundance, power, and social status. Structurally simple forms often conceal deep cognitive and conceptual content, which becomes evident through detailed linguistic examination.

A key finding of the study is that even in literal contexts, phraseological units activate underlying cognitive mechanisms. Conceptual metaphors, image schemas, and mental representations continue to shape interpretation, confirming that literal and figurative meanings are not strictly separated but rather exist on a continuum. This highlights the

cognitive nature of language, where meaning is constructed through both direct experience and abstract conceptualization.

The study emphasizes the importance of cultural and discourse-related factors in shaping the use and interpretation of wealth-related expressions. Different cultural perspectives influence how wealth is perceived and linguistically represented, while discourse functions such as evaluation, persuasion, and description demonstrate the pragmatic versatility of these units. Phraseological units associated with wealth function not only as linguistic tools but also as cognitive and cultural markers. Their study provides valuable insights into how humans conceptualize material and abstract value through language. Therefore, a cognitive-linguistic approach proves essential for a deeper understanding of phraseology, particularly in exploring the dynamic relationship between literal meaning, figurative extension, and cultural interpretation.

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