

PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS WITH CARDINAL NUMERAL COMPONENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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ФРАЗЕОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ ЕДИНИЦЫ С КОЛИЧЕСТВЕННЫМИ ЧИСЛИТЕЛЬНЫМИ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

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Abstract. Without the description of the quantitative definiteness of the reality neither knowledge, nor human practice, nor communication is possible. In English the means of expressing ideas of quantity penetrate all the levels of language structure, phraseology as well. The purpose of the article is to investigate phraseological units with cardinal numerals in the English language. The article is focused on semantic analysis of 65 phraseological units with cardinal numeral component in the English language collected from the English phraseological dictionaries by several authors. There is always a special interest in linguistics to numerical phraseological units. Phraseological studies possess great significance as it displays the interrelation between the language and the society. Numerals take active part in the formation of phraseological units thus creating a large phraseological layer. Fixed expressions with cardinal numerals are more numerous in number than those with ordinal ones and include expressions with a wide range of numerals such as *two, four, five, six, eight, fifty, hundred, thousand*. They are commonly used in phraseological units to form a 'human' concept. The results of the investigation showed that the numbers *one* and *two* are the most productive numbers in the English phraseological units. The numbers *one, three, six, nine* and *ten* are used in different senses in these set expressions. The numbers *seven* and *eight* are unproductive in the English language. The results of this work can be used for further studying the semantics of numerals in phraseological units and identifying of phraseological units with a numeral component.

Аннотация. Без описания количественной определенности реальности невозможно ни знание, ни человеческая практика, ни общение. В английском языке средства выражения количественных представлений пронизывают все уровни языковой структуры, в том числе фразеологии. Целью статьи является исследование фразеологизмов с количественными числительными в английском языке. Статья посвящена семантическому анализу 65 фразеологизмов с количественными числительными в английском языке, собранными из английских фразеологических словарей нескольких авторов. В лингвистике всегда есть особый интерес к числовым фразеологическим единицам. Фразеологические исследования имеют большое значение, так как показывают взаимосвязь языка и общества. Числительные принимают активное участие в образовании фразеологизмов, создавая обширный фразеологический пласт. Фиксированные выражения с количественными числительными более многочисленны, чем выражения с порядковыми числительными и включают выражения с широким диапазоном числовых значений, таких как *два, четыре, пять, шесть, восемь, пятьдесят, сто, тысяча*. Они обычно используются во фразеологизмах, чтобы сформировать «человеческое» понятие. Результаты исследования показали, что числительные

один и два являются наиболее продуктивными в английских фразеологизмах. Числительные *один, три, шесть, девять* и *десять* используются в этих устойчивых выражениях в разных смыслах. Числительные *семь* и *восемь* непродуктивны в английском языке. Результаты данной работы могут быть использованы для дальнейшего изучения семантики числительных во фразеологизмах и выявления фразеологизмов с числовым компонентом.

Keywords: cardinal numerals, quantity, phraseological units, phraseme, component, semantics.

Ключевые слова: количественные числительные, количество, фразеологизмы, фразема, компонент, семантика.

Introduction

Everyone wants his/her speech to be rich, emotional and expressive. One of the main ways to achieve this is a reasonable use of different phraseological expressions.

Charles Bally, a Swiss linguist and the founder of the theory of phraseology explored the sphere of linguistics and phraseology in the French language, however, his attempt to systematize and classify phraseological units led to the series of other studies in the phraseological sphere in other languages, including English [1].

With the development of civilization and intensive penetration of science into human lives the role of the numerals is constantly increasing, so the research is becoming increasingly relevant [2].

The object of the article is the study of English phraseological combinations with cardinal numeral.

This object implies the following tasks of the research:

1. To identify the cardinal numeral within phraseological combinations in English;
2. To consider the usage of such expressions in sentences.

The theoretical significance of the research is objectified by the recognition of features of cardinal numerals in the phraseological expressions, their dominant position in the paradigmatic relations.

The practical significance of the problem is that the study results can be used in the academic process of studying English.

The methods of the research are the structural and sampling method, the method of phraseological analysis, the method of phraseological identification, the method of phraseological description.

Results of the research

Numbers are the objective characteristics of the reality. Having created a way of presenting quantity: numbers and figures native speakers gave them a universal form, learned to formalize the results of the knowledge, to formulate the methods of learning. People gave life to the sciences, without which technological progress is impossible [3]. The quantitative relations are important in the language system as well. The essence of the linguistic phenomenon cannot be revealed if it is not expressed by quantitative relations, objective generalizations can be based only on the quantitative correlations [1].

The semantic modification of English numerals in terms of phraseological combinations is manifested in their ability to change each other, to implement different quantitative filling (*Two Heads are better than one; four eyes see more than two*), to be used in the stylistic devices of

antithesis, hyperbole (*thousand pardons; one to thousand*) [4].

Phraseological units reflect a specific and expressive way in which the people live their lives, their interests, concerns and customs, their historic and spiritual evolution, their ethic and aesthetic systems of values [1].

Fixed phrases of English have their own, national, peculiarities. Components of these phraseological units can be characterized as units that have structural and semantic features together with their own unique particularities. The goal of this article is to analyze the function of numeral components in English phraseological units. The equivalents of these set expressions were also determined.

Numbers evoke acts, characters, and legendary situations and bear the mark of the authority that the reference to the community's patrimony gives them. Either the phraseme undertakes the symbol in totality, or it retains only its numeral, the number functions as a symbol and carries all memory of an exterior context [5].

When combined with a noun, the numeral forms along with it a syntactic unit, a single part of speech. However, when they are part of a phraseme, numerals look different. Only a limited part of the cardinal and ordinal numerals can establish a phraseological relation, and these are mostly simple numerals. Cardinal and ordinal numerals have the most frequent occurrence, while collective numerals are found less frequent in phrasemes. A feature of the phrasemes is that, not only one or two of its components may interchange, but its entire lexical structure may also vary [5]. The phrasemes with numerals reflect both man's interior and exterior features. The use of the number component in phraseological combinations is approximate and uncertain according to the status of social indicators.

In English a wide range of numerals such as *two, four, five, six, eight, fifty, hundred, thousand*. are commonly used in phraseological units to form a 'human' concept. For example: Between two stools one goes to the ground; once bitten twice shy; there are two sides to every question; fool at forty is a fool indeed; horse stumbles that has four legs; keep a thing seven years and you will find a use for it; old men are twice children; rain before seven, fine at eleven; genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration; a cat has nine lives; a stitch in time saves nine; two is company, but three is none; four eyes see more than two; first catch your hare. Thereby in the world mindset the numerals have sacred meaning except cardinal, ordinal and collective ones [3].

There are expressions about the meaning of which are easy guess without knowing the history of origin. Quite often there are similar phraseological units with numerals. But, the meanings of some phraseological units are not incomprehensible even native speakers cannot explain, without knowing the background.

Phraseology with numeral "one"

"All in one piece" — fully intact, undamaged, unbroken or in good condition. We are lucky to have walked away from that car accident all in one piece.

"At one blow" — done or accomplished at once and with a single, decisive move. To crush Armenians at one blow Azerbaijanis collected their whole available force at Karabakh.

"One and all" — everyone; all people. Welcome, one and all, to the most advanced theme park in the world! I would like to thank one and all for joining us on this beautiful day.

"The one and only" — a phrase used when introducing someone to emphasize that they are famous and uniquely talented. It gives me great pleasure to welcome the one and only Oprah!

"One and the same" — identical; the very same. Cannot you see that your father and the mysterious man in the cape are one and the same?

"One-armed bandit" — a slot machine designed for gambling in which you pull down a lever

on one side that generates a random combination of three shapes, which may or may not award the player money depending on the combination received. After my wife lost her entire month's wages to the one-armed bandits in Atlantic City, we have decided to stay away from casinos altogether.

“One day” — Some non-specific time in the future. Suddenly on some unspecified or unremarkable day. My father decided one fine day that he wanted to buy a camper van and travel the country on his own.

“One hell of a lot” = hell of a lot (redirected from a hell of a lot of) — quite a large amount of. If you talk about a hell of a lot of something, or one hell of a lot of something, you mean that there is a large amount of it. The manager took a hell of a lot of money out of the club.

“One in a million” = “one in a thousand” = “one in a billion” — extraordinary, rare, exceptionally. My grandmother really was one in a million, and we're all very blessed to have had the opportunity to know her. Hyphenated if used before a noun. This is a one-in-a-million opportunity for us we would be fools not to seize it while we have the chance!

“A one- man band” — If you describe a man or an organization as a one-man band, you mean that one man does every part of an activity himself, without help from anyone else. He seemed to be a one-man band, taking orders, and cooking and serving at table.

“One of these days” — It means at some indefinite point in the future; someday; eventually. One of these days, someone is going to steal your purse if you don't take better care of it. You are going to get in trouble one of these days.

“One side of the coin” — The other side of the coin is different, usually opposing view of a situation. You use the other side of the coin to mention a different aspect of a situation. I would love to go out with you tonight, but, on the other side of the coin, I could use some extra sleep too.

“One thing and another” — various different contributing elements, matters, or events. We have two kids, we both works, and the house is in constant need of upkeep, so what with one thing and another, I never find the time to exercise.

“A one- track mind” or a single-track mind — A mind that thinks entirely about one subject. If someone has a one-track mind, they always think or talk about one subject. He has a one-track mind when he is working on a project — he thinks of nothing else.

“One way or another” — by some means; no matter what is. In any way that is possible. These bills have to be paid one way or another.

“A one-way street” — A situation, agreement, or relationship in which only one side or party is benefitting or has any power, influence, or control. You cannot always decide what we are going to do next, Mary. This relationship is not just a one-way street, you know.

“On the one hand” — from one particular point of view. It is typically followed by “on the other hand”, highlighting a second, conflicting point of view. On the one hand this car is expensive; on the other hand, it's available and we need it right now.

“With one hand tied behind one's back” — Easily or effortlessly; encountering no difficulty or resistance. I am a professional musician, so that song is hardly a challenge. I could play it with one hand tied behind my back! And *both hands tied behind one's back* is also possible. Even if under a handicap; easily. I could put an end to this argument with one hand tied behind my back. John could do this job with both hands tied behind his back.

“Number one” — top-rated, best, or foremost. Sometimes hyphenated. Also, the most important or best person or thing. He is the number one salesman in the whole region, so you can definitely learn from him.

“Have one too many” = “have one over the eight” — to be drunk, to be intoxicated. He had one too many, and now he is throwing up.

“Be light one one’s feet” — to move gracefully or with agility, often as of a dancer. I did not expect that big football player to be so light on his feet!

“Be one up on somebody” — to have an advantage over someone or something. I think I am one up on the other candidates for this position, thanks to my extensive student teaching experience.

Expressions with numeral “two”

“To have two strikes against one” — to be at a decided disadvantage. He’s got two strikes against him for coming into work late. If he, does it again, the boss said he’d be fired.

“No two minds think alike” — It is better to have the power of two people's minds to solve a problem or come up with an idea than just one person on their own. I want everyone to get into pairs to come up with the solution, because two heads are better than one.

“Not care two straws” = “care a bit two straws” – to not care in the slightest about something or someone; to attach no importance to someone or something; care little or not at all. I do not care two straws about making money, I just want to make life better for others.

“(As) cross as two sticks” — angry, irritated, in a bad mood, peeved, vexed, upset, irked, piqued, out of humor, put out, displeased, galled, resentful. This expression is a play on the two senses of cross, firstly ‘bad-tempered’ and secondly intersecting. I was in a good mood when I woke up this morning, but now I feel cross as two sticks after getting stuck in traffic.

“Between two fires” = “Fall between two stools” — between two sources of conflict, being attacked from two sources or sides simultaneously. This phraseology with numerals indicates the hopeless situation in which the person turns out to be. When my dad joined my mom in criticizing me, I felt like I was caught between two fires.

“A game that two can play” — something that both parties involved in a situation could do. The phrase typically prefaces an act of retaliation. He has been getting here early to impress the boss, so here I am, too — that’s a game that two can play!

“In two shakes (of a lamb’s tail)” — very quickly, in a very short time. If you say that you will do something in two shakes of a lamb’s tail, you mean that you will do it very quickly. I shall be with you in two shakes. Do not worry, I will pick me up in two shakes of a lamb’s tail!

“Take somebody down a peg or two” — to reduce or damage one’s ego or pride; to humble or humiliate one; to show someone that they are not as important as they thought. Tom was so rude that the teacher was bound to knock him down a peg or two.

“(As) thick as two short planks” — remarkably stupid, dim-witted, or obtuse. He’s a very skilled football player but he’s as thick as two short planks.

“Fall between two stools” — to be caught between two things and thus unable to adequately do or accommodate both. If something falls between two stools, it fails to achieve either of two aims. This phrase comes from the proverb *between two stools one falls to the ground*, first referred to in English by the medieval writer John Gower in *Confessio Amantis* [6].

The grammar guide falls between two stools — it’s too difficult for a beginner but not detailed enough for an advanced student.

“Have (got) two left feet” — to be unable to dance gracefully; to have awkward or clumsy footwork while dancing. I’m sorry, I can’t dance better. I have two left feet.

“(As) like as two peas (in a pod)” — very similar, especially in appearance. The twins are like two peas in a pod.

“(Make) the best of two worlds” = “(make) the best of both worlds”— a situation in which you can enjoy the advantages of two very different things at the same time. I believe that living at college gives you the best of both worlds: a place where both study and social life can thrive.

“A two-way street” — A situation in which both sides must put forth an equal amount of

effort to achieve a desired result. Respect is a two-way street — you have to give it if you expect to receive it.

“One’s number two” — one’s second-in-command; the person with second highest level of power or authority in some group, company, or organization. This promotion will actually make me the new number two in the company.

“Tell somebody a thing or two” — to correct or confront someone about his, her or their mistaken belief or incorrect point of view. That jerk has been making snide remarks about the women in our group all night. I’m going to go over there and tell him a thing or two!

“Two strings to one’s bow” — two or more ways of achieving success or accomplish some task or activity. Well, at least you have two strings to your bow with that degree in accounting if your acting career does not take off. I always try to plan a project with a backup method, in case my first plan falls apart. It is always good to keep two strings to your bow!

“Put two and two together” — to determine, guess, or infer something from the available evidence, especially something that is very obvious or easy to guess. I think he put two together and realized that John had been stealing from him this whole time.

“There are no two” — no choice, alternative, or other interpretation. It is the same as “no two ways about it”. No two ways about it. We’re going to have to sell the farm.

“Kill two birds with one stone” — to succeed in achieving two things in a single action. Whenever I’m doing the housework, I like to listen to English language learning podcasts. That way, I kill two birds with one stone.

The construction with numeral “three”

“Three cheers for somebody or something” — (give) three shouts of joy, approval, appreciation, or congratulations. Sometimes used ironically, sarcastically, or humorously. Three cheers for Sarah, whose brilliant goal at the last minute won us game!

Qualified approval or mild enthusiasm is sometimes expressed by two cheers for, as in the title of E. M. Forster’s book *Two Cheers for Democracy* (1951).

The phrase with a numeral “four”

“On all fours” — of a person, on one’s hands and knees; of a four-legged animal, on all feet. I got down on all fours trying to find my ring in the sand.

“Within these four walls” – It is used when you are talking about keeping something secret. Don’t let this go further than these four walls (don’t tell anyone else who is not in the room now).

“Scatter to the (four) winds” — *to be dispersed across a wide area*. If a group of things or people are scattered to the four winds, they go or are sent to different places that are far away from each other. It was the finest collection of paintings in Denmark, but during the last war it was broken up and scattered to the four winds.

“Hit on all (four, six, etc.) cylinders” = “Be on all (four, six, etc.) cylinders” = “Run on all (four, six, etc.) cylinders” — functioning or operating at the most desirable or greatest possible level of efficiency, speed, or productivity. We’ll be hitting on all four cylinders if we get him to join our team.

Expression with numeral “five”

“Know how many beans make five” = “know a thing or two” = “to know on which side” — to be knowledgeable about something. If someone knows how many beans make five, they are intelligent and sensible. This is a very old expression which is used by the Spanish writer Cervantes in his novel ‘Don Quixote’ (1605). It may be based on a riddle. I know a thing or two about art: I was an art history major in college, you know!

“Sixth sense” — Every person knows that there are only five kinds of feelings. When people want to talk about what their intuition tells them in a given situation, they mention the “sixth sense”. This phrase is also actively used in English, the exact origin is not established.

A sixth sense warned me that something didn't feel right.

“Be all sixes and sevens” — in a confused, badly organized, or difficult situation, in a complete mess. This is an expression that has been in the English language for approximately nine hundred years, though the meaning has changed. This phrase originated as gambling slang and may be an alteration or corruption of Old French *cinque* (five) and *six* (six), these being the highest numbers on dice. At sixes and sevens may also mean a state of disagreement between two or more people. 1) She was at sixes and sevens since the death of her husband. 2) Government ministers have been at sixes and sevens over the refugees.

“Be six of one and half a dozen of the other” — The difference between these two options is negligible, irrelevant, or unimportant; either option is fine or will work as well as the other.

We could take the freeway to your mother's house, or we could cut through the city. It takes about the same amount of time, so it is six of one, and half a dozen of the other.

The expression with numeral “seven”

“Seven-league boots” — mythical boots that allowed the wearer to travel seven leagues or the ability to travel at very fast speeds; that which grants the ability to travel at very high speeds. It has featured in European folklore. We still want his speedy seven-league boots, his global reach and dazzling factual knowledge.

“The seven deadly sins” — those faults in person's character that are thought to be the cause of all evil actions: The seven deadly sins are covetousness, envy, gluttony, lust, pride, anger, and sloth. The Seven Deadly Sins were first introduced by the Catholic church. He wonders which of the seven deadly sins will be most sensitive to a politician.

“Behind the eight ball” — in trouble; in a weak or losing position. Sorry, I am really behind the eight ball this month. I do not make a contribution.

“Have one over the eight” = “have one too many” — to have enough alcoholic drinks to be thoroughly inebriated. I was composed in control of myself for most of the evening, but midnight, I had one over the eight and started making a show of myself.

“A nine-day wonder” — a person or thing that generates interest for only a short amount of time. A one-day wonder or a nine-day wonder is someone or something that is interesting, effective or successful for only a very short time. The band's biggest fear was becoming a one-day wonder, soon to be forgotten when the next big sound hit the airwaves.

“Nine times out of ten” — almost every time, on nearly every occasion. It is also used in the form “ninety-nine times out of a hundred”. Nine times out of ten people will choose coffee rather than tea.

“Number ten (No. 10)” — The address of the residence of the prime minister of the United Kingdom (10 Downing Street), used by extension to refer to the prime minister or the current UK government. Swift condemnation of the attack has come from Number Ten, with the prime minister vowing retribution.

“Be ten (or two) a penny” — very common ordinary or widespread. If things or people are two a penny or ten a penny, there are a lot of them, so they are not especially valuable or interesting. Books on golf are two a penny. Gloomy economic forecast are ten a penny in Europe.

“Ten to one” — It is extremely likely that, very probably. Ten to one they'll never find out

who did it anyway.

“Talk nineteen to the dozen” — to speak very rapidly, hurriedly, and/or energetically. My aunt can get talking nineteen to the dozen if you get her on a topic she is passionate about.

“Thirty pieces of silver” — the symbol of treason. This term comes from the Bible, where Judas’s price for betraying Jesus was thirty pieces of silver. It has symbolized betrayal ever since. In the medieval period some religious institutions displayed ancient Greek coins of the island of Rhodes as specimens of the Thirty Pieces of Silver.

“The 64 (or sixty-four) dollars question” — the sixty-four-dollar question. A question that is very important and difficult or complex to answer. Taken from the title of the 1940s radio program Take It or Leave It, in which the big prize was 64 silver dollars. Who will win? Now, that is the sixty-four-dollar question.

“A hundred to one” — It is extremely unlikely that (something will happen or be the case). They say they are working toward a solution, but with congress deadlock the way they are, I reckon it is a hundred to one that they pass any legislation on the issue. Although they were outnumbered a hundred to one, they were determined.

“A thousand times no” — very definitely, no! Bob: Here, have some sweet potatoes. Bill: No, thanks. Bill: Oh, come on! Bill: No, no, a thousand times no! — Bob:

“Like a thousand (or ton) of bricks” — Like a ton of bricks is used to show that something happens very suddenly and forcefully. By mid — July, the dangers had hit Bobby like a ton of bricks. She was twenty when Orphean met her and he fell for her like a ton of bricks. Note: The metric measurement tonne is occasionally used instead of ton. Then reality hit her like a tonne of bricks.

“Feel like a million dollars” — to feel exceptionally attractive or in very robust health. If you feel a million dollars, you feel healthy and happy. Wow, I feel like a million dollars in this new suit!

Conclusion

The studies in the field of phraseological units with numerals are most meaningful in terms of revealing of the cultural and typological features of the concept of number that is reflected in them. The use of the number component in phraseological combinations is approximate and uncertain according to the status of social indicators. The numeral component in phraseology has also linguacultural specificity.

Phraseological units with a cardinal numeral component occupy a special place in English. The phraseological units with a cardinal numeral are characterized by the distinctness and semantic integrity. Despite the sufficient development of modern linguistics, scientists have paid considerable attention to the linguistic and cognitive aspects of numerals in the context of free and phraseological phrases and their differences in comparable languages. Investigated numeral components played the role of intensifier of the conveyed meaning as well.

We analyzed sixty-five chosen English phraseological units with cardinal numeral component and determined the semantic meanings of them in the article. As a result of the investigation there were found out such semantics of cardinal numeral components as quantity.

The results of the analysis showed that the numbers *one* and *two* are the most productive numbers in the English phraseological units. The use of these numbers is mostly determined by logic and reality. The numbers *three*, *seven* and *nine* are not very frequently used in the English. The numbers *two* and *three* bear hyperbolic semantics. The number *seven* is usually associated with something magical and unreal in the English. In the English phraseological combinations, the number *eight* is not productive. Number *ten* is not also frequently used in the English phraseological

units.

All possible points of view are discussed and four types of words in phraseological units are defined: real words, potential words, “former” words, ghost-words. The process of phraseological units forming is complicated and continuous theoretically and practically that is connected with the development of civilization and teaching phraseology should consider both linguistic and extra linguistic aspects.

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