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PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN BRITISH AND LATVIAN NEWSPAPERS – TYPES OF USE

Abstract

The article discusses the types of use of phraseological units in the discourse of British and Latvian newspapers, namely core use and instantial stylistic use of phraseological units. The background of the research of this kind is discussed with special attention being paid to the contribution to this field of phraseological studies of two scholars – Anita Naciscione and Andreas Langlotz. Various patterns of core use (number, tense, mood variations, the use of diminutive, substitution of variable components, etc.) and instantial stylistic use (insertion, replacement, omission, addition, metathesis, periphrasis, allusion, extended metaphor, dual actualization, cleft use, etc.) of phraseological units in discourse are discussed and illustrated with the help of examples of their use elicited from British and Latvian newspapers: *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Sun*, *Latvijas Avīze*, *Izglītība and Kultūra*, *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*. The focus of attention is on the semantics of phraseological units, i.e. on the influence of the discursive use on idiomatic meaning of phraseological units, patterns of instantial stylistic use being those which are frequently used to not only convey information, but also to show the author's or the society's attitude to the events described.

Keywords: *phraseological unit, idiom, base form, core use, instantial stylistic use, variation, discourse, pattern.*

Studying phraseology of a language one faces the problem of inconsistency of terms used in this field of study. This problem of terminology aggravates if one sets as her aim to investigate phraseology in the contrastive aspect. The question of terms used to denote the linguistic units under research is still under discussion among the scholars representing different countries and schools. The most often used ones are *a phraseological unit* and *an idiom*.

The use of phraseological units (hereinafter PU) in discourse is connected with the changes in their structure and semantics. These changes can be introduced to merely fit the PU into the discourse and they change neither the form nor the overall idiomatic meaning of a PU – following Naciscione (2001) we will use the term *core use* for this type of use of PUs (other frequently used term to denote it is *usual variant* (used in their writings by Kunin 1986, Burger 2007, Langlotz 2006, a.o.). Fernando (1996; 54) uses the term *conventional grammatical transformations* and states that they are “normal variations which are part of the language system”. The variations pertaining to the core use of idioms are systematic, they do not go beyond the limits of the idiomatic meaning inherent to idioms; Langlotz (2006: 206) names these systematic changes *constructional adaptations* and states that they include “modifications of the base-form that change the inflectional and syntactic structure of an idiom in a systematic way” (ibid.). The term *constructional adaptation* is said to cover usual and conventional grammatical variants that frequently recur in discourse. The variations introduced into PUs in their core use can be the following: article variation, number variation,

passivization and fronting / topicalization, metathesis, the last three being positioned somewhat on the border between the core and the instantial use of PUs as some scholars consider them to belong to the type of core / usual use (see, for instance, Langlotz 2006), others view them as the patterns of instantial stylistic use (see, for example, Naciscione 2001, 2010). We suppose that such changes are to be considered instantial stylistic use, although the decision will often depend on the nature of a PU that is subjected to one of these variations: the more opaque, non-motivated and invariable the PU is, the more striking the effect will be, while with partially figurative PUs, as well as those with variables and more flexible grammatical structure (e.g. verbal idioms in active voice that can be used in passive or vice versa) these patterns might be referred to core use.

Various patterns of instantial stylistic use or creative idiomaticity (Prodromou 2007) have already been studied in different languages. Charles Bally was one of the first linguists to state that there is a possibility to put the components of a PU in distance from each other (Bally 1961: 394). It is necessary to mention the great contribution of A.Kunin to the establishment of fundamentals of stylistics of English phraseology (Кунин 1972). Other linguists who have studied the transformations of PUs in discourse are A.Naciscione (1999, 2001, 2002, 2010), A.Veisbergs (2001), B.Frazer (1970), Ch.Fernando (1981, 1996), J.Cook (1994), R.Gläser (1998), R.Moon (1992, 1998), Feyaerts (2006) and others.

“To think about linguistic units in isolation from usage events is at best an analytical convenience, and at worst a serious distortion” (Langaker 2001: 146).

Appearing in a text, linguistic units, and PUs in particular, show not only their regular characteristics, but also those which are latent before their actual use and functioning in context. This especially refers to the types of texts for which the factor of novelty is of great significance. The articles presented to readers in periodicals and newspapers are such texts. PUs are quite common in journalism and magazines. The authors do their best to make their articles and stories more vivid, attracting and interesting for their readers. PUs are often used by both journalists and politicians as shorthand ways of expressing their opinion or giving evaluation of the issue under discussion. Moreover, as the articles to be published are usually created in a very short time, and the authors of newspaper articles do not have much time for elaborating and sophisticating their language, they present the examples of the language as it is used in everyday life.

The corpus of PUs studied within the present research has been built up on the basis of a kind of random sampling the focus being on the discursal usage of ideational (informative) PUs and primarily by means of intensive collecting from British and Latvian newspapers: The Times, The Sunday Times, The Guardian, The Independent, The Sun, Latvijas Avīze,

Izglītība un Kultūra, Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze. No word count is possible but the volume of language we have been exposed to while collecting the instances of the discursal use of PUs probably amounts to millions of words. The number of individual PUs collected numbered approximately 1,000 – 1,100, and they were listed in two tables (for the two languages: English and Latvian) in which the PUs were given in their base form, their dictionary meanings were checked and presented, the example of PU usage in discourse and the analysis of the type of use and the resulting effects were included.

Now we would like to check our tentative hypothesis that in both languages under discussion the systematic variations of the core use and the patterns of instantial stylistic use of PUs in newspaper discourse are similar. To prove this we will present and analyze a number of examples of the discursal use of PUs exemplifying the above-mentioned variations and patterns.

At first we will consider the examples of core use of PUs elicited from Latvian newspapers.

The PU *kā ar (aukstu) ūdeni apliets – apliet kā ar (aukstu) ūdeni* – to throw cold water on – ‘surprised, shocked, disappointed’. The core use of the ideational, verbal PU is used in the simple past tense and it describes in a concise figurative form the emotional state of the listeners, as it evokes the picture it has been created on in the reader’s mind and thus making them understand how disappointed those people actually were.

Pāris mēnešus šis kungs pētīja Latvijas situāciju, līdz nāca klajā ar ziņojumu Ministru kabinetā. Tur mūs visus ***aplēja kā ar aukstu ūdeni***, pasakot – sākumdeklarācijas nevajag ieviest.

Latvijas Avīze / 2011-03-02 / Redakcijas viesis (ekonomists Guntars Krasts): Egils Līcītis, Kritika nerimsies. Bet... (p.8)

In the next example two idiomatic word-combinations based on animal images are used to create a contrast (antonymic relations) and help the author of these words to express his indignation: *slaucama govjs – milking cow* ‘an object of use’ and *darba zirgs – work horse* ‘a person who does hard work and works tirelessly’.

Valstij trūkst nodokļu filozofijas. Nodokļi ir instruments, ar ko valdība attīsta ekonomiku, nevis to padara par naudas iekasēšanas instrumentu vien. Bizness nav ***slaucama govjs***, tas ir ***darba zirgs***.

Latvijas Avīze / 2011-03-03 / Šodien: Spilgts citāts (p.2)

Another, relatively new formation which has not been registered in Latvian dictionaries, but we consider it being a PU as it has all the salient features of PUs – non-compositionality of meaning, cohesion and conventionality, is the phrase *nogriezt skābekli – turn off oxygen* – ‘to stop, to prevent from continuing’. In this example the mood of the verb is changed.

Optimistiskākie finanšu eksperti bilst, ka principā ar tabakai un alkoholam pacelto akcīzi valsts kasi pildīt būtu iespējams, BET – kā mēdza uzsvērt viens no V. Dombrovskā priekštečiem – ar noteikumu, ka *jānogriež skābeklis* šo preču kontrabandai un nelegālajai apritei.

Latvijas Avīze / 2011-03-02 / Komentāri, viedokļi: Monika Zīle, Konsolidēšanas tupiks (p.3)

The use of the PU translated from Russian: *вилами по воде писано* – *written with a hayfork in water* – ‘it is not known yet if it will happen or not’ can be justified if we take into account the headline of the article, which is “Konsolidēšanas tupiks” (“Consolidation Deadlock”). In this example it is used as a modifier to express the author’s evaluation of the financial situation in the country. And there are three more PUs that all refer to the unpleasant situation in the country’s economy.

Bet turpat blakus *ar dakšām ūdenī zīmētajam* ciparam redzama arī bez problēmām iekasējama summa, atceļot samazināto pievienotās vērtības likmi mājāsaimniecībā patērētajai dabasgāzei un *pie vienām sūpēm* paaugstinot tai akcīzes nodokli. Iespējams, stipri manīgi ļaudis arī te atradīs spraudziņu papildus netērēties, bet vairākums tomēr būs spiesti *attaisīt maku*.

Tiesa, viss nodokļu druvā reāli plūjamais nošņāpts un *gaisā pagrābtu* ciparu ierakstīšana svaigajā plānā liecina: pa izvēlēto ceļu konsolidācija iebrukusi tupikā – tā šādas situācijas mēdza dēvēt augstākminētais V. Dombrovskā priekšgājējs.

Latvijas Avīze / 2011-03-02 / Komentāri, viedokļi: Monika Zīle, Konsolidēšanas tupiks (p.3)

Attaisīt maku is the variation of the PU *atvērt maku*: one of the elements of its conventional form has undergone lexical substitution by a synonymous verb that in no way influences the meaning of the PU, so this is a regular variation.

In the end of the article there is the same number mentioned but here it is modified by a Latvian PU *no gaisa grābts* – *snatched out of thin air* ‘groundless, unjustified, fictional’ that has been subjected to the change of declination in the first component and addition of the prefix in the second component. But no semantic changes have been introduced.

An example of the influence of the Russian language on the writing of Latvian journalists is manifested also in another article, in which it is presented as it sounds in Russian and the Latvian translation is provided. Thus the author of the article expresses his irony concerning the Russian – American relations.

Konservatīvais Reigans pastaigājās "ļauņuma impērijas" sirdī Sarkanajā laukumā un pēc līguma parakstīšanas jokoja, atgādinot krievu teicienu: *"Doverjai, no proverjai"* („Uzticies, bet pārbaudi”).

Latvijas Avīze / 2011-03-02 / Ārzemju ziņas: Valdis Bērziņš, Pārbūves aizsācējam Gorbačovam – 80 (p.11)

There is also an example of an English PU being translated into Latvian, namely, *white collar workers* – ‘non-manual employee, such as an office worker or manager’. As it is used in inverted commas, we can state that the author’s pejorative attitude is manifested.

"Ir viegli saprast, kāpēc krīzes skarto Austrumeiropas valstu *"baltās apkaklītes"* metušās zelta skrējienā uz Briseli," raksta avīze.

Now let us turn our attention to the examples elicited from British newspapers that exemplify the possible variations in PUs in their core use.

The PU *pull no punches* – ‘to deal with something honestly without hiding anything’ (CDAI) can be presented as an example of core use with only one regular variation that is aimed at fitting the base form into the context properly.

British Airways boss Willie Walsh ***pulls no punches*** in a column in the company's staff magazine, accusing the Unite union of trying to "destroy us" with industrial action.
The Independent 2010-02-04. Business Diary: Walsh asks staff to sign up for battle

Another case of the PU core use with only systematic variations – tense adaptation and passivization is the use of the PU *keep somebody in the dark* – ‘to not tell someone about something’ (CDAI):

She added: "The workforces ***have been kept in the dark*** too long. Specific questions have been put to Ms Rosenfeld by our European colleagues, including will the takeover lead to the closure of existing plants and will there be lay-offs? All these questions need urgent answers."

The Independent 2010-02-03. James Thompson, Kraft finally acquires Cadbury after vote in favour of £11.4bn deal

The following instance of the discursal use of the PU shows the use of inappropriate register on the part of the speaker, who, by the way, is the deputy governor of the Bank of England, this deviation in formal speech being aimed at attracting attention. The PU is in its core use with no regular adaptations: *when the shit hits the fan* – *Sl.* ‘when all the expected trouble materializes’ (McGraw-Hill). The reason why he resorts to this inappropriate register is explained in the preceding sentence by another PU: *get something across* – ‘to successfully communicate something’ (CDAI).

Paul Tucker, the Bank of England's deputy governor, is a pretty polite sort of a chap, but sometimes, when you're keen ***to get your point across***, it's easy to forget yourself. Testifying to the Treasury Select Committee yesterday, Mr Tucker was eager to get MPs' attention. "***When the shit hits the fan,***" he began.

The Independent 2010-01-27. Business Dairy: The man from the Bank shocks MPs

The following set of examples of discursal use of PUs that, as it has been mentioned above, might be considered being a kind of border cases in between “pure” core use and “genuine” instantial stylistic use of PUs. We consider them being cases of instantial stylistic use for, though the overall phraseological meaning of a PU is preserved, it usually is made more precise, it receives some additional connotation or is made more context- or situation-related. The variation patterns applied are negation, insertion, lexical substitution, repetition of a component, addition, omission, use of diminutive, metathesis (component-order variation), conversion, and passivization.

The PU *turēt grožus rokās* ‘to handle the ribbons’, ‘to control – English analogue PU could be *keep a firm grip on* is used in its core use and has been subjected to the insertion specifying what exactly is and will be kept under control and to the repetition of the verb with tense variation aimed at emphasizing that the case is being and will stay under strict control of the court.

Tiesas problēma te ir jau minētais nepietiekamais laiks, lai visi tiesneši būtu lietas kursā. To tiesa mēģina kompensēt ar striktiem lēmumiem, runātāju pārtraukšanu pusvārdā, ar demonstrēšanu, ka tā *tur un turēs lietas grožus savās rokās*.

Neatkarīgās Rīta Avīze /2009-10-1/, Māris Krautmanis, Vai Gulbis dziedās pirmais?

The PU *šūpot laivu - rock the boat* - ‘to cause trouble where none is welcome; to disturb a situation that is otherwise stable and satisfactory’ has been negated and there is an addition of the component *no lieka (unless necessary)* that gives additional information concerning the party’s principle of work.

Vairāk apelējam pie tā, ka "zaļie zemnieki" visās valdībās centušies sevi pasniegt kā "stabilizējošo elementu", kas *no lieka laivu nešūpošot*. Kā tādu konservatīvo spēku, kura dēļ valdības nekrīt.

Latvijas Avīze / 2011-03-02 / Komentāri, viedokļi: Egils Līcītis, «Vienotība» būšot dusmīga, bet nesaka, cik dusmīga (p.3)

Context-determined insertion of the element on the one hand and the omission of one component of the PU can be seen in the following example: the PU *izlietu ūdeni nesasmelsi - no use crying over spilt milk* ‘not to get upset about smth. bad that has happened and that you cannot change’, moreover the meaning is a little changed as it is not about getting upset but rather about a possibility to collect that spilt water, i.e., to improve the result. We consider this change in the meaning also being context-determined as the article is about sports, namely, bobsleigh.

Ar to gan nebija līdzēts, lai *sasmeltu visu pirmajā braucienā izlaistīto*. Melbārdim vietu starp pirmajiem 15 mūsu bobslejistu galvenais treneris Sandis Prūsis esot plānojis, taču Maskalāna sekmes viņš portālā sportacentrs.com kritizē bez žēlastības: "Nobrauca slikti, rezultāts ir atbilstošs, un ne uz ko vairāk cerēt pagaidām nevaram."

Latvijas Avīze / 2011-03-01 / Sports: Egīls Jurisons, Šoreiz bez uguņošanas (p.16)

In the Latvian language being a synthetic language with relatively free word order it is very difficult to pinpoint instances of metathesis – rearrangement of the components in a PU, but this could be the case. The PU used is *izstrēbt putru* ‘to settle the complications created; to set right’: there is the direct object fronting (topicalization (Langlotz 2006)), there is the insertion of a specifying context-determined post-modification and the verb is used in the future of the debitive mood. But, notwithstanding all these variations the PU maintains its cohesion and readers easily grasp its phraseological meaning.

Salaspils novada domes priekšsēdētājs R. Čudars apgalvo, ka apzinās – **šī putra ar zemes darījumiem būs jāizstrebj pašvaldībai**. Pašvaldība pašlaik nevarot pieņemt citus lēmumus tāpēc, ka prokuratūras un tiesas apstrīdētie zemes īpašumi ir pārdoti.
Latvijas Avīze / 2011-03-04 / Saimniecība: Zigfrīds Dziedulis, Zemes dalīšanā atstāj ar garu degunu (p.8)

The use of diminutives is nothing unusual in Latvian, but we so far have encountered only one example of it in the discursal use of PUs, in which the diminutive brings forth the author's ironical attitude to the relationships that have previously existed between serious political organizations – social partners and the ministers. The PU *staigā rokās sadevušies* – *walk hand in hand* – 'together'.

Draudus izsaka un ultimātu X stundas noliek ne jau nepārspējami muldēšanas čempioni un asocializējušies elementi, kuri ceļ telšu kempingus valdības ēkas priekšā, bet nopietnas, solīdas un daudzgalvainas organizācijas, tostakt agrāk mīļi par sociālajiem partneriem dēvētās, ar kurām ministri **staigāja, rociņās sadevušies**.
Latvijas Avīze / 2011-03-03 / Komentāri, viedokļi: Egils Līcītis, Katli vārās! (p.3)

In British newspaper articles we can observe the same PU variation patterns:

In the proverb *Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned*. – *Prov.* 'There is nothing as unpleasant as a woman who has been offended or whose love has not been returned'. (*McGraw-Hill*) the constituent component *woman* has been substituted by the company name *Apple* – thus we can state that this is the pattern of topic indication: the lexical substitution does not prevent from the recognition of the proverb and does not change the overall meaning of the proverb but makes it topic-related.

Hell hath no fury like Apple scorned

Technology website VentureBeat claims McGraw Hill was dropped from Steve Jobs' launch presentation of the Apple iPad on Wednesday (it was apparently meant to feature on a slide naming partners for the device).
The Independent 2010-01-31. Business Diary: 30/01/2010

The next example features systematic lexical substitution of the variable component of the PU and the insertion that specifies the information provided and due to which there appear antonymous relations between the components of the PU: *bring something to an end* – 'to end something; to cause something to reach its final point and stop' (*McGraw-Hill*).

Y2K computer bugs, killer bees, sex-change fish, global warming, ocean acidification and even asteroid impacts that would soon **bring our happy interlude to a terrible end**. Let me make a square concession at the start: the pessimists are right when they say that if the world continues as it is it will end in disaster.
The Sunday Times. 2010-05-16. Matt Ridley, Cheer up: life only gets better

The following example features two ideational PUs with rather contrary meanings being used alongside and resulting in a kind of contamination with the aim to make the message ironical. Besides, the first PU, which is defined in the dictionary (*McGraw-Hill*) as *pot of gold* – 'an imaginary reward', in this discourse is pre-modified by the element *tax-payers*' thus

indicating the topic and making the message ironical as here *pot of gold* implies the existence of a lot of money that can be used (addition of *to dip into*), but the next PU *make (both) ends meet* – ‘to have just enough money to pay for the things that you need’ implies the amount of money that is necessary to survive. Thus two concepts: wealth and poverty are brought into contact.

It is probably unfair to conclude that more than half of them are crooks – some of the mistakes were inadvertent – but that will be the belief of many people outside the political class who do not have *a taxpayers’ pot of gold to dip into to make ends meet*.
The Times 2010-02-05. Martin Bell, The smell from Westminster hasn’t gone away

Having considered the systematic variations that PUs may undergo in discourse, we will now focus on the instances of instantial stylistic use which may come about as the results of these variations, the main patterns of this kind being dual actualization (literal-scene manipulation, and topic-related literal scene manipulation (see Langlotz 2006)), extended metaphor, cleft use, and allusion. And again we will start with the examples of discursual use of PUs found in Latvian newspapers and then proceed with British newspapers.

The PU *gulbja dziesma* – *swan song* ‘the last work or performance of a playwright, musician, actor, etc., before death or retirement’ is a striking example of a PU instantiation: it is alluded to in the headline of the article (umbrella use) applying the wordplay based on the surname of the main character of the article – the millionaire Ainārs Gulbis. There is also a hint to the sense of *sing* as ‘to divulge information or secrets to the police’, which is strengthened by another allusion to the same PU in the final sentence of the article by the pre-modifier *sacerēto* in the meaning of ‘fabricated’, ‘not true’. The elements of the PU used in the headline and the concluding sentence of the article create strong cohesive ties within the article that are supported also by other lexical items, such as *prelūdijs*, *stāsts*, *būt lietas kursā*, *runāt*, *piebalsot*, *atskaņot melodiju*.

Vai Gulbis dziedās pirmais?

Politiskā pasūtījuma kriminālprāvā, kur apsūdzēti Ventspils mērs Aivars Lembergs, viņa dēls Anrijs un uzņēmējs Ansis Sormulis, bet cietušā lomā iecelts miljonārs **Ainārs Gulbis**, kā arī vēl viens otrs, kurš, ja nebūtu piekritis cietušā lomai, ej nu zini, varbūt arī būtu vienā solā ar apsūdzētajiem, pašlaik nevar un nevar beigties iestiepusies prelūdijs pirms īstajiem un būtiskajiem cīkstiņiem.

Ja tiesa patiešām vēlas noskaidrot patiesību, tai būtu jāsarīko jautājumu krustugunis, nevis jāklausās, kā visi pārējie cietušie *atskaņo Gulbja sacerēto melodiju* par to, kā, cik šausmīgos apstākļos viņš deviņdesmito gadu sākumā tik ļoti pārbijies no Lemberga, ka atdevis viņam savas akcijas.

Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze /2009-10-1/, Māris Krautmanis, Vai Gulbis dziedās pirmais?

The PU *galva nesāp kādam par kaut ko* has been subjected to the insertion of the element *as if* that might be considered a cleft use as it gives information about the author’s attitude to the conceptual meaning of the PU ‘smb. is indifferent to smth., does not think and

does not worry about it' actually communicating that the matter under discussion is worth considering and should be dealt with.

Iedzīvotāju aizņemtā nauda ir daudzkārt lielāka nekā valsts parāds, taču par to ***galva it kā nevienam nesāp***. Bet tie ir apmēram 14 miljardi eiro uz 2,2 milj. iedzīvotāju, no kuriem 25 procentiem esot grūtības ar parādu kārtošānu.

Latvijas Avīze / 2011-03-02 /: Egils Līcītis, Kritika nerimsies. Bet... (p.8)

In the following example the proverb *runāšana – sudrabs, klusēšana – zelts – speaking is silver – silence is gold* has been subjected to instantiation, namely, ellipsis (deletion) and the result of it is the allusion to the well-known proverb. It is interesting to note that the headline of the article is “Zelts” (“Gold”) and the allusion to the aforementioned PU helps the author of the article to create strong cohesive ties within the article. But, the allusion is not the only pattern of instantiation this PU has been subjected to as it has also been negated, meaning that sometimes it is better to speak, although in this case it refers to a person's ability to reason soundly and to carry out his own ideas. (Aivars – a person whose life-story is described in the article – was deprived of his house and the only thing he possessed was an old barn and a piece of land, which he turned into a beautiful house; and now he is planning to build another one).

Īpaša pieeja dzīvojamai funkcijai par minimāliem līdzekļiem pa spēkam tikai apdāvinātājiem ar ***saprāta neklusēšanas zeltu***.

Latvijas Avīze / 2011-03-02 / Māja. Vide: Indra Ķempe, **Zelts** (p.14)

A very interesting example of instantiation of a PU is the dual actualization (ambiguation (Langlotz 2006)) and the extended metaphor on the basis of the PU *glabāt naudu zeķē – to keep money in a sock* ‘to save money, not to spend it’. The first part of it – the component *zeķes (socks)* is at first understood literally, which is also enhanced by the change of number, while the second part evokes the phraseological image and then the PU is understood idiomatically.

Vienīgi iespējamā aizsardzība ir iegalvot, ka mitināties vienistabas dzīvoklītī kopā ar vēl astoņiem radagabaliem komūnā, kā maznodrošinātais ***zeķes nenēsājat, tamdēļ arī naudu nav kur glabāt***.

Latvijas Avīze / 2011-03-01 / Komentāri, viedokļi: Egils Līcītis, Tuk, tuk, vai kāds mājās? (p.3)

The pattern of extended metaphor is featured also in the following examples:

The PU *vārās kā raganu (ells) katls – boils as a pot of witches (hell)* ‘said if the processes in the society or the nature proceeds with great force, rapidly, destructively, chaotically’ is alluded to by using its main components both in the headline (umbrella use) and whose image is extended by the verb *mutuļot* ‘to boil, to bubble’ and the last phrase of the article's final sentence *būs vēl lielāks sviests* – literally – *butter will become bigger* ‘the trouble will aggravate’.

Viss tikai *mutuļo uz ļaunu un nelāgu vien, katli vārās*, energotarifi atpūšas, jo *būs vēl lielāks sviests*.

Latvijas Avīze / 2011-03-03 / Komentāri, viedokļi: Egils Līcītis, *Katli vārās!* (p.3)

The image of the PU *būt vienā laivā – be in the same boat* ‘be in the same unpleasant situation’ is sustained by adding to its image also the way of its control – rowing and context-determined specification that makes readers to continue thinking on the figurative level still receiving essential information.

Kaut situācija, protams, nepavisam nav identiska – ES valstis *atrodas vienā laivā, kaut pastāv grūtības ar tās airēšanu vienā virzienā*, un visi ir ieinteresēti, lai arābu tautas atbrīvotos no senilajām korumpētajām diktatūrām un baudītu, eirokrātiski izsakoties, labu pārvaldību un cienīgu dzīvi savās valstīs, nevis meklētu laimi svešumā.

Latvijas Avīze / 2011-03-03 / Komentāri, viedokļi: Uldis Šmits, Diplomātiskās vētras (p.3)

The image of the PU *ēst vienam otru – to eat one another* ‘to do harm to one another’ that is often referred to as “Latvian national food” is sustained by the verb phrase the head of which is compatible with the verb of the PU under the hyperonym *to consume: to eat, not to find fault with some food* and the clause sustaining the image of a half-eaten, bleeding associate.

Var teikt, viņi sastāda nošaujamo lielo politisko zvēru piecnieku – tas vilkatis, tas lietuvēns un šitas sumpurnis... – un tad rībina kā siluetu šautuvē, lai dabūtu noņemt ragus un novilkt ādas kā trofejas. *Viņi ēd otru latvieti, nesmādējot pat apvienības biedru, kurš atvilks, aiz sevis atstājot asiņainu sliedi*.

Latvijas Avīze / 2011-03-04 / Komentāri, viedokļi: Egils Līcītis, Aizšauts garām, nopūdelēts (p.3)

The pattern of instantiation – contamination – can be exemplified by the next example: two PUs *Kad vadzis pilns, tas lūst* and *mērs ir pilns* have been joined to make up one meaning that ‘if there are too many bad things, one cannot stand it anymore’:

Konkrētajā gadījumā domāju, ka pie visa vainojama ekonomiskā situācija valstī. Pieaug cenas, nodokļi, parādi, viss nelāgais krājas mūsu galvās un gadās, ka *vadzis lūst, ja mērs ir pilns*. Visi mēs lielākā vai mazākā mēra esam pakļauti stresam. Kuram varbūt tā psihe nestabilāka, tas var rīkoties neadekvāti.

Latvijas Avīze / 2011-03-03 / Atpūta. Vaļasprieks: Aldis Jermaks, Reizi mūžā izšauj arī tukša plinte (p.15)

The next example is the discursal use of the PU *savilkt jostu ciešāk*. It is interesting to note that the meaning of the PU in Latvian has changed in the course of time and under the influence of contemporary life. In the Dictionary of Latvian Phraseology (Laua 1996) it is given as SAVILKT (SAJOZT) JOSTU CIEŠĀK ‘iztikt ar trūcīgāgu uztura devu’ (‘to get along with less food’), but in this article (as well as in some others – the author’s observation) it is used in the meaning ‘to economize’ (and not only on food) similar to the English PU *to tighten one’s belt* ‘to begin to exercise thrift and frugality’. Apart from this the PU in this instance has been instantiated: the component *ciešāk* has been substituted by the phrase *par vienu iedaļu* thus featuring the literal-scene manipulation which although does not change the

overall meaning of the PU but helps the author of the article to emphasize that it is not the first time that the people are asked (or rather made) to economize. In this case it is the wordplay on the literal meaning of the image of the PU *josta – a belt – to tighten it by one more section*, *section* being the element that is understood literally.

Negrozāmo patiesību pieņemot, varētu nopūsties un *savilkt jostu vēl par vienu iedaļu*, kā klusībā esam piekrituši darīt, uzticoties tagadējam Ministru kabinetam, kurš līdztekus ikdienas pienākumiem jau čakli plāno – tā izteicās finanšu ministrs – 2012. gada budžeta konsolidāciju.

Latvijas Avīze / 2011-03-02 / Komentāri, viedokļi: Monika Zīle, Konsolidēšanas tupiks (p.3)

The corpus of examples of discursal use of PUs in British newspaper also yields a lot of interesting results.

In the following extract two PUs are used: in the first PU *bridge the gap* – ‘to make a connection where there is a great difference’ (*CDAI*) one of the components is substituted by a synonymous noun and made more context-related, and the verb is converted into an adjective and negated stressing that the situation is irreversible, while the 2nd PU *on speaking terms* – ‘friendly enough to talk’ is in its core use.

As he moved out, progressed in his career and married, *the gulf with his mother became unbridgeable*. They were not *on speaking terms* when she died.

The Times 2010-01-26. Peta Bee, Are British men becoming mummy’s boys too?

The pattern of dual actualization achieved by the help of the insertion, namely, the topic-related literal scene manipulation (see Langlotz 2006; 212) is featured in the next example of the instantial stylistic use of the PU *in heaven* – ‘in a state of absolute bliss or happiness’ (*McGraw-Hill*). The pre-modifier inserted into the constituent structure of the PU cannot be attributed a figurative interpretation on the level of phraseological meaning, it can be interpreted only literally. Thus *variable-rate* applies literally to mortgage rates and should be thus understood while the underlying PU is to be understood idiomatically.

Low interest rates are still masking the scale of the crisis, because many people who were worried about their mortgages two years ago *are now in variable-rate heaven*.

Times Online. 2010-05-05, Camilla Cavendish, Call in the IMF to tell us how bad it really is

The following newspaper extract shows three patterns of variation, namely, the topic indication that is achieved by addition of the element *trophy*, the negation, and the pattern of extended metaphor. The idiomatic meaning of the PU is not only preserved but even sustained thus creating cohesive ties between two clauses: the phrase *a love affair*, also used idiomatically in the first clause, pertains to the phraseological meaning of the PU in the second clause: *Absence makes the heart grow fonder*. ‘Being apart from someone that you love makes you love them even more’

Gerrard closed his memoir by saying he and Liverpool *were “a love affair that would never, ever end” but trophy-absence does not make the heart grow fonder.*

The Sunday Times. 2010-05-23. Jonathan Northcroft, ‘I went mad thinking about the future. I won’t make that mistake this time’

The following instance is the use of the PU in the headline and the substitution of two main elements due to which the PU is being ambiguated, i.e. the pattern of dual actualization is used. The PU used is *put the cart before the horse* - ‘to do things in the wrong order’ (CID); ‘to have things confused and mixed up’ (McGraw-Hill) but both nouns are substituted by *caution* and *ideology* correspondingly. Thus a novel literal meaning is created that has its own reference to the context. But the base form of the PU can still be recognized and in such a way the idiomatic meaning with the novel literal meaning is co-activated.

A welcome case **of putting caution before ideology**

The Independent 2011-01-20. Adrian Hamilton: A welcome case of putting caution before ideology

The same is true also for the next example, in which the same PU has undergone the same type of instantiation resulting in *to put country before party*.

It will command a healthy majority in the Commons. It will require politicians **to put country before party**. It will free the best people to abandon some of the “party political bickering, grandstanding and point scoring” that David Cameron warned against on Friday. It will enable both sides to drop manifesto policies that clashed with brutal economic reality.

The Times. 2010-05-12. Camilla Cavendish. Our democracy has emerged intact, arguably healthier than ever before

The PU *tighten your belt* – ‘to spend less than you did before because you have less money’ (CID) is in its instantial stylistic use – extended metaphor: the image of the base form is sustained and supported by additional images pertaining to the same semantic field: *cutting away fat, belt fit more comfortably*. Besides, the author helps his readers to keep thinking on the idiomatic level by specifying the type of belt – *money belt*.

Many professionals in frontline services such as health and education agree that it is good that the time has come **for belts to be tightened**. They feel that **by cutting away the fat, the money belt can fit more comfortably round the muscles and sinews that maintain essential activities**.

Times Online. 2010-05-21. Jonathan Waxman, Take the scalpel to the NHS. It’ll leave no scar.

Play with two PUs both used idiomatically and the constituent notional component of the second being pseudo-homonym of the notional component of the first PU is featured in the following extract. Both PUs are used in their idiomatic meaning, i.e., there is no switch between the literal and the figurative meanings intended, but it still produces humorous effect. The PUs used are: *on the blink* ‘not operating well’ (CDAI); *on the brink of smth.* – ‘if someone or something is on the brink of a situation, that situation is likely to happen soon’ (CID).

The roof leaks and the boiler and the doorbell have been *on the blink* for months. My eight-year-old has pinned a sign that says “please bang” to the front door. My brain is *on the blink*. Or do I mean the *brink*? Please bang.

The Times. 2010-04-09. Camilla Cavendish, Why is it ‘brave’ to want children and a career?

The possibility to introduce changes into the structure and meaning of PUs is a pragmatic value as it gives the author an opportunity to present definite semantic content in an unusual form thus also achieving certain aims. Being segmentally complex (compositional in form) expressions with more or less idiomatic meaning (partial or complete meaning transfer), PUs may be subjected to contextual transformations. The most serious transformations are those which influence both the form and the meaning of PUs, i.e., creative idiomaticity (or *idiomatic creativity* (see Langlotz 2006)). The PUs that most easily lend themselves to various transformations are those which have lively internal form, i.e. they are in active use. This fact is easy to explain as such PUs have dynamic connection with their prototypes and it is not difficult for a reader to recall the base form of an instantiated PU. What happens in cases of creative idiomaticity is that the image lying in the basis of an idiom is being renovated and revived. In general, different types of idiom instantiation in discourse are dependent on the communicative goals of the writer, but the significance of one or another type of instantiation is determined by the peculiarities of the reader’s comprehension, as well as by the strength of the impact of an instantiated PU on the reader’s thoughts and emotions.

Unlike stylistically normative, core use of idioms, i.e., with stable structure and semantics, registered in dictionaries, those which are structurally and semantically modified, i.e., instantiated idioms possess intensified figurativeness, emotional and expressive colouring, they help the authors to express their evaluation of objects and phenomena, to convey the idea in a more original way. The instantial stylistic use of idioms embellishes the author’s language, makes it more figurative, turns into a tool of the writer’s ideology and aesthetic feel and performs an important role in the expression of his individual style.

In conclusion we would like to say that the linguistic awareness of today’s readers demands some wordplay, introduction of a range of various linguistic means. There is a special demand for wit, expressivity, ultimate freedom in associations and means of their linguistic implementation. On the other hand, a reader has to be able to comprehend images, metaphorical manifestations of new understanding of the world. Therefore readers’ attention is often attracted by means of semantic potential of idioms, i.e., by the effect of understatement, a hint, allusion, wordplay, which all lead to intensification of connotative aspect of phraseological meaning.

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