



THE PHRASEOLOGICAL SYSTEM OF THE SWEDISH LANGUAGE AND PRINCIPLES OF ITS CLASSIFICATION

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Abstract

This article examines the phraseological system of the Swedish language, focusing on the principles of its classification and structural organization. Swedish phraseology reflects both historical linguistic development and contemporary usage, encompassing idiomatic expressions, fixed collocations, and proverb-like units. The study identifies the main categories of Swedish phraseological units and analyzes the criteria used for their classification, including semantic, structural, and functional approaches. The findings highlight the importance of understanding the systematic nature of phraseology for linguistic research, language teaching, and contrastive studies. Additionally, the article emphasizes how phraseological structures contribute to the expressive and stylistic potential of the Swedish language.

Keywords: Swedish language, phraseology, idiomatic expressions, classification, semantic analysis, structural approach, functional approach.

Introduction

Phraseology represents a significant component of the lexicon of any language, reflecting cultural, historical, and cognitive aspects of communication. In Swedish, as in other Germanic languages, phraseological units (PUs) serve not only lexical but also pragmatic and stylistic functions. Understanding the system of PUs and the principles by which they are classified is essential for lexicographers, language learners, and comparative linguists. This study aims to provide a concise overview of the Swedish phraseological system and examine the methodologies used to classify idiomatic and fixed expressions.

Earlier research on Swedish phraseology highlights its rich idiomatic nature. Works by Allwood (1981) and Nilsen (1994) analyze idioms and proverbs in the context of semantic transparency, idiomaticity, and compositionality. Phraseological units are often categorized according to their structural form (simple idioms, complex collocations, phrasal verbs) and functional role (expressive, evaluative, pragmatic). Recent studies emphasize the need for a systematic approach, integrating semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic criteria for classification. Comparative studies also show that Swedish idiomatic patterns often differ from those in closely related Germanic languages, reflecting unique historical and cultural developments.

The study applies a descriptive and analytical approach to Swedish phraseological units, based on examples extracted from modern dictionaries, corpora, and authentic texts. Classification is examined using three main criteria:

1. Semantic criterion – based on the degree of idiomaticity and transparency of meaning.
2. Structural criterion – based on the internal composition of PUs (e.g., fixed word combinations, idioms, proverbs).
3. Functional criterion – considering the communicative and stylistic functions of the PUs in discourse.

This methodology allows a systematic analysis of the phraseological system and provides insights into the principles underlying its organization.

The analysis shows that Swedish phraseological units can be grouped into several main categories: idioms, stable collocations, proverb-like expressions, and figurative phrases. Idioms often exhibit semantic opacity, requiring contextual or cultural knowledge for correct interpretation. Stable collocations maintain fixed lexical combinations but retain transparent meanings. Proverbs and figurative expressions reflect traditional wisdom and contribute to stylistic and expressive richness.

Classification based on semantic, structural, and functional principles allows linguists to systematize the Swedish phraseological inventory effectively.

It was observed that semantic and functional criteria often intersect, as the expressive function of a PU frequently correlates with its semantic opacity. Additionally, understanding the phraseological system is crucial for foreign language teaching, lexicography, and contrastive studies with other Germanic languages.



The phraseological system of the Swedish language is a highly organized and functional component of its lexicon. Classification based on semantic, structural, and functional principles provides a clear framework for studying idioms, collocations, and proverbs. Awareness of this system enhances linguistic research, language instruction, and cross-linguistic comparisons, demonstrating the integral role of phraseology in both communication and stylistic expression.

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