

# THE EMERGENCE OF PHRASEOLOGY AS A FIELD OF LINGUISTIC RESEARCH

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## Abstract:

This article addresses the complexity of conducting a comprehensive analysis of the origins of phraseology and providing a detailed overview of its historical development. Instead, the paper proposes a more grounded approach by outlining the key stages in the evolution of phraseology as an independent branch of linguistic science. Special attention is devoted to the study of fixed expressions within German and Swedish philological traditions, with careful consideration of the specific characteristics of the research material. The article also highlights significant issues and methodological aspects of contrastive phraseology, which merit particular scholarly attention.

**Keywords:** Origins of phraseology, linguistic research, key research directions, contrastive phraseology, fixed expressions.

## Introduction

Within the framework of the present study, it would be problematic to provide an exhaustive analysis of the origins of phraseology or a detailed overview of its historical development. A more reasonable and methodologically sound approach appears to be the identification of key stages in the evolution of phraseology as an independent branch of linguistic science, with particular emphasis on the study of fixed expressions in German and Swedish philology, taking into account the specific nature of the research material. Special attention is paid to the issues and challenges of contrastive phraseology.

Phraseology represents an independent area of linguistic inquiry, constituting a distinct field within the broader scope of linguistic research focused on phraseological units—fixed word combinations (Krohn 1994, p. 13; Burger 2003, p. 11; Glaser 1990, p. 50). Scholars in this domain generally agree that the

foundations of phraseology were laid by Charles Bally in his seminal work *Traité de stylistique française* (1909), where he categorized phraseological units into two main types: in the broad sense and idioms (see also Burger et al. 1982, p. 1). Despite the significance of Bally's contribution, his ideas did not gain widespread recognition in Western Europe (Burger 1973, p. 61).

By contrast, Bally's ideas found considerable resonance among Soviet linguists, which led to an intensified interest in the study of phraseology (Palm 1995, p. 106). The 1930s and 1940s marked the formative phase of phraseology as a distinct scientific discipline. Initially perceived as a subfield of lexicology, phraseology gradually attained the status of an autonomous linguistic domain. The 1950s, in particular, witnessed rapid growth and institutionalization of phraseological research (Palm 1995, p. 106). Comparable in theoretical significance to Bally's legacy are the works of Academician V.V. Vinogradov, who developed and substantiated many foundational principles and methodologies for investigating fixed expressions (Higi-Wydler 1989, p. 7).

Of particular relevance to the present dissertation is the body of research on phraseology conducted in German-speaking countries and based on German-language material, along with the principal directions and issues of scholarly inquiry in this field.

Systematic research into German phraseology gained momentum in the 1970s. One of the earliest yet content-rich contributions was I.I. Chernysheva's *Phraseology of Contemporary German*, published in 1970. Scholars from the former East Germany also made substantial contributions to the field. The year 1982 proved pivotal with the publication of two major reference works: *Handbuch der Phraseologie* (Handbook of Phraseology) by Harald Burger, Annelies Buhofer, and Ambros Salm, and *Phraseologie der deutschen Gegenwartssprache* (Phraseology of Contemporary German) by Wolfgang Fleischer.

Christine Palm's 1995 introductory work *Phraseologie: eine Einführung* offered a comprehensive overview of the field, and this line of inquiry was further advanced by Harald Burger through his influential study published in 1998, with revised editions appearing in 2003 and 2007. Since 1988, the field has been supported by a series of international conferences under the name *Europhras*.

While research on German phraseology and idiomatics can be characterized as extensive and well-developed, Swedish phraseological studies remain relatively underexplored (Sköldberg, 2004, p. 7). There is a notable lack of comprehensive introductory texts on Swedish phraseology, in contrast to the German context where multiple such works exist (Södersved, 2006, p. 291). One of the earliest publications on Swedish phraseology is the study by Anward and Linnell (1976), which focuses on lexicalized phrases in Swedish. Since the 1990s, interest in this area has grown significantly. For example, Skog-Södersved (2006, 2008) investigated the use of phraseological units in newspaper headlines. The contributions of Clausen (1993, 1996, 1999, 2005) are also noteworthy, as they encompass a range of important aspects of Swedish phraseology. Arnstad (2001) published a series of articles addressing the use of idiomatic expressions and their variations. Niemi conducted an analysis of verbal idioms (2002) and examined body-part-related idioms in a separate study (2004). Sköldberg investigated alternative forms of idioms in the NEO dictionary (1999), and further explored idiomatic structures in dictionaries and their usage in contemporary language (2001). He also analyzed the ambiguity of idioms (2002) and their variability (2004) (Sköldberg 2004, pp. 7–9).

According to Krohn (1994, p. 14), recent developments in phraseological research prioritize not the classification of phraseological units within individual languages, but rather text-linguistic and contrastive aspects of phraseology. These theoretical and practical dimensions of contrastive phraseological research will be discussed in greater detail in Section

Theoretical and Practical Dimensions of Contrastive Phraseological Research. The growing interest in contrastive phraseology reflects a broader shift in linguistic research toward cross-linguistic comparison and functional analysis of language in context. As Dobrovolskij and Piirainen (2006) emphasize, contrastive studies of idioms and fixed expressions not only shed light on language-specific features but also reveal deeper cognitive and cultural patterns underlying figurative language. In this respect, contrastive phraseology transcends purely descriptive purposes and contributes to the development of intercultural competence, lexicography, translation studies, and language pedagogy.

Methodologically, contrastive phraseology requires a multifaceted approach that combines structural, semantic, and pragmatic analyses. One of the key challenges in this domain is the identification of true phraseological equivalents across languages, as direct translations often fail to preserve idiomatic meaning. Researchers such as Korhonen (2007) and Moon (1998) have argued for the necessity of context-based comparisons, supported by empirical data from corpora and actual usage patterns. The inclusion of corpus-driven studies allows for more nuanced insights into frequency, variation, and contextual deployment of idiomatic units.

In the context of German and Swedish phraseology, the contrastive perspective reveals both typological similarities and significant divergences. While both languages exhibit a rich inventory of idiomatic expressions, their structural realizations, metaphorical motivations, and degrees of lexicalization may differ considerably. For instance, body-related idioms—frequent in both traditions—may vary not only in their lexical composition but also in their figurative interpretations and syntactic behavior.

Furthermore, attention must be given to the sociolinguistic and cultural dimensions of phraseology. As idioms are often deeply rooted in cultural knowledge, their successful interpretation and use in a second language context requires an understanding of the associated cultural frameworks. In this regard, comparative studies between German and Swedish idiomatic systems can serve as a valuable tool in fostering cross-cultural awareness and improving phraseological competence among learners and translators.

This dissertation seeks to contribute to this growing field by analyzing a representative corpus of idiomatic expressions in German and Swedish, focusing on their formal properties, semantic fields, usage patterns, and translation strategies. Special emphasis will be placed on identifying regularities and asymmetries in idiom formation and function, as well as on developing a typology of correspondences and mismatches between the two languages.

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