

## Modus Ethical Categories as a Condition for the Emergence of Phraseological Semantics, their Application in Political Discourse

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### Abstract

This article presents the results of a study of the formation processes of phraseological meanings considering cognitive-discursive conditions. Traditional and new (cognitive) approaches to the formation of phraseological semantics are analysed, and a method for the formation of phraseological meaning is proposed, namely the use of cognitive-discursive categories of state-mode. Modal categories contribute to a new moral and evaluative aspect of meaning. The research focuses on the representation of phraseological meanings in the formats of knowledge, concepts and ethical categories. The study aims to examine a new way of forming phraseological meanings based on the study of modus categories as a cognitive-discursive condition, as well as evaluative categorisation and the presentation of phraseological ethical knowledge in cognitive knowledge formats. An integrative methodological paradigm and a cognitive-semantic approach were applied in the study. Cognitive semantics offers new principles for analysing phraseological units: equality of cognitive and communicative functions of language, interdisciplinarity, multifactoriality, anthropocentricity and multilevelness. When using them, phraseological units can be studied integratively, involving knowledge and methods from various sciences. Methods of modelling, contextual inference, evaluative categorisation, interpretation, cognitive-discursive analysis and associative experiment were also used. The study analyses various points of view on the nature of phraseological semantics, the cognitive-discursive and anthropological essence of phraseological meaning, and the possibility of phraseological units acting as knowledge formats. The novelty of the work lies in the application of an integrative methodological paradigm based on cognitive-semantic and cognitive-discursive approaches, with an emphasis on the role of modus categories and evaluative categorisation in the formation of phraseological evaluative meaning in identifying the formats of phraseological knowledge, in applying a modus approach to the analysis of phraseological meanings.

**Keywords:** Phraseological Semantics; Secondary Conceptualisation; Evaluative Categorisation; Associative Experiment; Cognitive-Discursive Approach

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## Introduction

In linguistics, when examining phraseological units, studying the development of their meanings, and finding out their national semantics, a traditional approach is still applied, explaining the formation of phraseological meaning through the emergence of its internal form. Therefore, the problem is relevant due to the insufficient study of the process of formation of phraseological semantics, the poorly studied role of knowledge formats in the formation of phraseological meanings, and the application of interdisciplinary, multilevel, and anthropocentric principles in the analysis of phraseological units.

Speaking of two forms of imagery (external and internal), A.A. Potebnya emphasised the active role of the internal form in shaping the figurative meaning of phraseological units, asserting that “a word expresses thought only to the extent that it serves as a means to create it; the internal form, the only objective content of the word, has meaning only because it modifies and perfects those aggregates of perceptions that it catches in the soul” (Potebnya, 1999: 165).

Earlier, V.N. Teliya, however, asserted that the reinterpretation of the internal form of a phrase occurs through indirect nomination, carried out “through two-dimensional mediation, by relating a secondarily acting linguistic form as a name to reality — along the 'axis' of reinterpretation of meaning and along the line of influence of the signifier of the reference name, determining the semantic content and predetermining the denotation of the reinterpreted name” (Teliya, 1977: 129).

In our opinion, it is acceptable to study phraseological semantics within the framework of cognitive semantics, a science that has proposed new principles for the analysis of linguistic phenomena, including phraseological phrases, applying such principles as equality of two functions of language (cognitive and communicative), interdisciplinarity, multifactorial, anthropocentricity, and multilevel. Based on the use of these principles,

phraseological units can be studied from a cognitive-semantic perspective, focusing on the cognitive aspects of the existence and functioning of phraseological units, taking into account knowledge from various fields (cognitive linguistics, cognitive semantics, cognitive phraseology, etc.), and considering the role of humans in shaping the meanings of phraseological units. In this context, N.N. Boldyrev emphasised that “it is precisely the human being, as a subject who perceives and speaks in a particular language, who shapes meanings rather than reproducing them in ready-made form (the principle of the creativity of speech thinking)” (Boldyrev, 2008: 13). “The interaction of a human with outside the world, its knowledge takes place at different levels, including everyday life. The results of this knowledge are laid down in his/her everyday consciousness” (Temirgazina et al., 2020: 3).

In this study, considering the fundamental principles of cognitive semantics, phraseological units are studied through a multilevel analysis (processes of conceptualisation and categorisation of phraseological units), and the role of humans in shaping phraseological meaning within their cognitive-discursive activities is considered. Knowledge from various fields (linguistics, ethics, cognitive semantics, and cognitive phraseology) is drawn upon during the analysis of this complex subject. The study of cognitive phraseology is also associated with the fact that it is still unclear how phraseological meaning is conceptualised, and the composition of units of cognitive phraseology and its boundaries remain undefined, and this field of study still lacks rigorous research methods. The processes of ethical categorisation of phraseological units have not been developed so far. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the processes of conceptualisation of phraseological meaning, identifying ways of forming both figurative and evaluative meanings of ethical phraseological units through cognitive-discursive means of conceptualisation, metaphorisation, and categorisation. The research tasks include: 1) examining ways of

forming the meaning of a phraseological unit from the perspective of cognitive semantics; 2) investigating various methods of ethical categorisation of phraseological units; 3) identifying the specifics of knowledge formats: the concept of ethical categories, evaluative categorisation; 4) clarifying the role of categories in organising a group of ethical phraseological units.

## Methods

We applied an integrative methodological paradigm combining various disciplines' principles, knowledge, and methods to study this complex subject. Using the integrative paradigm, we try to integrate the following: 1) principles of cognitive linguistics and cognitive semantics (anthropocentrism, interdisciplinarity, multilevelness); 2) knowledge about phraseological meaning, knowledge formats, cognitive-discursive categories, moral categories; methods of categorisation, conceptualisation, interference, modelling, etc.

During the conceptualisation of phraseological meaning and evaluative categorisation, the modelling method is used, employing generative metaphor models such as personification, orientational, and zoomorphic metaphor models (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). Additionally, the method of contextual inference is employed (by extracting hidden (implicit) meanings in the process of discourse interpretation) (Gunina, 2012); here, this method is used for interpreting phraseological meaning. The method of evaluative categorisation, characterised by N.N. Boldyrev, Dubrovskaya O.G., Tolmacheva I.N. as the interpretation of acquired knowledge, secondary conceptualisation, and secondary categorisation within another system of coordinates: the system of opinions, evaluations, values, stereotypes — carried out by a person (Boldyrev et al., 2017, p. 103).), is also utilised. Finally, the method of interpretation is understood as the comprehension of text aimed at revealing its content. When interpreting phraseological phrases, attention is focused on revealing their figurative content, which is not manifested explicitly; the method of cognitive-discursive

analysis of phraseological semantics, the essence of which is to study how cognitive mechanisms and cognitive-discursive conditions of generating a new meaning contribute to the formation of phraseological semantics; associative experiment aimed at identifying associations of representatives of different ethical groups. During the experiment, associative fields were compiled.

## Literature Review

The scientific literature on the formation of phraseological meaning was utilised during this research. The study considered two perspectives: a) traditional— scholars like V.G. Gak (1998) and E.L. Radchenko (2010) argue that this traditional perspective presupposes the reinterpretation of the prototypical situation of the internal form of a phraseological unit in an individual's speech, and then in the speech activity of many native speakers; b) cognitive-interpretative, which suggests the development of the figurative meaning of a phraseological unit through secondary conceptualisation.

According to scholars— N.F. Alefirenko (2005), A.K. Sagintaeva (2010), and O.V. Magirovskaya (2009), representatives of the second perspective, analyse phraseological units based on the principles of cognitive semantics.

The study considered two points of view: a) the traditional point of view presupposes a rethinking of the prototypical situation of the internal form of a phraseological unit in the speech of an individual and then in the speech activity of many people by native speakers (Gak, 1998 and Radchenko, 2010); b) the cognitive-interpretative approach involves the development of the figurative meaning of a phraseological unit through secondary conceptualisation (Alefirenko, 2005; Sagintayeva, 2010; and Magirovskaya, 2009). Here, the analysis of phraseological units is based on the principles of cognitive semantics.

Researchers emphasise the “cognitive-synergetic essence of a phrase, harmoniously focusing the energy of linguistic creative thinking” (Alefirenko, 2008: 14), shifting the emphasis from system-centricity to

anthropocentricity (Teliya, 1996: 27). Within the cognitive approach, phraseological units are often defined from the perspective of language as microtexts, in which the nominative basis, associated with the situational character of what is denoted, includes all types of information characteristic of situational representation in text, but presented in the phraseological unit as a “package” ready for use as text within a text (Guselnikova, 2009: 8). The following section critically discusses our findings.

## Discussion

The article focuses on the study of the formation of phraseological meaning in the cognitive-semantic aspect and critically considers the previously widespread method of development of phraseological meaning described in the works of V.G. Gak (1998), and E.L. Radchenko (2010). According to V.G. Gak the formation of phraseological meaning as follows: “At first, some prototypical situation corresponding to the “literal” meaning of a phraseological phrase appears in the world. The content is fixed behind it, which is then reinterpreted, i.e. the image of a phraseological unit is formed because of the primary meanings of words in the prototypical situation. It is these primary words that leave their meaning in the image. This is how the internal form (IF) appears, which contains the main information related to culture” (Gak, 1998: 104). E.L. Radchenko, however, believes that the process of phraseological meaning formation should be considered dynamic, since it (the process) may not be consciously understood by the speaker (thinker), but it may be consciously carried out. The most significant dynamic changes occur in the individual meaning of a phraseological phrase (Radchenko, 2010: 48). The dynamic nature of the process of forming phraseological meaning is manifested in the fact that the basis of a phraseological unit, for example, “*without a penny in one’s pocket*” is the word “penny.” It means a small coin. Within the phraseology, the word “penny” loses its literal meaning and takes on the abstract categorical meaning of “completely without money”. Based on the phrase “*without a penny in one’s pocket*”, numerous new variants of

phraseology emerge in speech (e.g., “*to make a penny*”, “*not worth a penny*”, “*a penny’s worth*”, “*not a penny to one’s name*”).

Previous researchers consider phraseological units to be signs of indirectly derived nomination as well (Alefirenko, 2005; Gak, 1998; Radchenko 2010; Sagintaeva, 2010). Within the framework of the cognitive approach, the question of phraseological meaning is reinterpreted. Researchers have proposed several approaches to identifying the specificity of phraseological meaning. Teliya (1996) for instance proposes a model of declarative-procedural form of phraseological meaning, which includes both descriptively oriented and pragmatically oriented blocks of information. This model can describe all types of information contained within the structure of a phraseological unit. It represents a series of procedures that, including their corresponding meanings belonging to the “Ideal” world, indicate not only the properties of an object from the “Real” world but also the dispositional abilities of the denotative aspect of knowledge, as well as the nature of the speaker’s/listener’s subjective relations to the referent and to the speech conditions” (Teliya, 1996: 126). Similarly, Alefirenko (2005) examines the conceptual essence of phraseological meaning based on its discursive nature. According to him, verbalised discursive categories (such as—situations, events, presuppositions, pre-construct, interdiscourse, etc.) are the linguistic creative elements that form the cognitive basis of phraseological meaning as a special semantic category (Alefirenko, 2005). The cognitive substrate of phraseological semantics is the concept— a unit of language consciousness that projects its ethnocultural specificity into the internal form of a phrasem, determining phraseological connotations.

Besides, Baranov and Dobrovolsky (2009) argue that the source of phraseological meaning formation is not the meanings of component words but rather the associated frames and scenarios. Therefore, idiom meanings should be described as the result of conceptual transformations over frames (scenarios and

their components— slots) (Baranov & Dobrovolsky, 2009: 3).

In addition, Sagintaeva (2010) also considers metaphors as cognitive mechanisms of phraseological meaning formation: “[m]etaphor is a highly productive cognitive mechanism, a cognitive operation for creating figurative lexical and phraseological means of communication” (Sagintaeva, 2010: 335). In our view, the cognitive approach to forming phraseological semantics is more acceptable. Indeed, cognitive mechanisms such as metaphor and metonymy contribute to the formation of figurative meaning in phraseological units. In contrast, cognitive-discursive conditions (concepts, secondary conceptualisation of collocations in human discursive activity, evaluative categorisation of phraseological units, discursive-interpretative activity of humans) facilitate the development of phraseological semantics. In the sphere of anthropocentric energy, human behaviour receives a name; an idiom acts as an informational text, the meanings of which are filtered by the mentality of the speaker and listener and interpreted in the space of society and culture. The subject activates this during communication.

According to M.M. Bakhtin, the world of actions, the world of deeds, is not the “world of being,” as in the world of action, the object of nomination enters the sphere of anthropocentric energy, begins to be experienced and enters into relations with intentionality. At the same time, a modal attitude towards it is formed. The object, during experiencing thinking, begins to be perceived in a particular event unity, in which the “moments of intentionality and being” and the “being of value” are inseparable (Bakhtin, 1986: 237). Humans are characterised as cognitive beings. They are characterised as organisms in which a representational system is formed that facilitates the representation of knowledge (Kornblith, 2008).

From this moment on, the nominated object becomes an object of culture, understood as a system of value-oriented meaning in the surrounding world. During the formation of

phraseological meaning, the “being in the world,” that is, the action in the prototypical situation, is experienced by the subject, involving them in a cognitive procedure of inference that contributes to interpreting the event. In this case, the speaker, using generative metaphorical models, transfers the denomination (phrase) into the sphere of the psyche. This transfer is based on associative links arising from the perception and comparison of objects of the material and mental worlds. The formation of figurative meanings of phraseological units can also occur at the stage of secondary conceptualisation, characterised as interpretive-evaluative. Secondary conceptualisation relies on the results of preceding stages of conceptualisation and is oriented towards a specific cognitive experience. Both empirical and linguistic “concepts have their own methods of objectification in the lexical system of the language” (Akosheva et al., 2022: 144).

This secondary conceptualisation is realised in the cognitive-interpretive activity of a person who acts as the subject of evaluation. Such activity of the subject relies on the results of primary conceptualisation, carried out at the level of conceptual understanding and generalisation of the features of the object or situation. Then, a concept is formed about it, and a denomination (phrase) is given. After that, at the level of secondary conceptualisation, this situation is interpreted by the subject, and an evaluation is made. At this stage, the subject carries out cognitive-linguistic processing of information about the world. This stage of conceptualisation implies “understanding the world from the point of view of the subject of cognition as a bearer of a system of individual knowledge, opinion, evaluation” (Magirovskaya, 2009: 92).

In our view, evaluative categories as knowledge formats can contribute to the formation of phraseological semantics, as they facilitate the development of the domain of the internal form of phraseological units associated with mental categories — subjective modality and modus categories. Romanova (2006) argues that central

to the category of modality “is the subject of speech, thought, perception, and feeling” (29). Within the modal framework of this category, there are moduses— normative (norm modus) and evaluative (evaluation modus). The category of modality itself is linked to culture, to the conceptual picture of the world, as it reflects not only the value system of society but also “the individual value system of the subject themselves, entering into the modal framework of the text and evaluation (Boldyrev, 2006: 15). Boldyrev (2006) indeed regards evaluative categories as modal categories, the specificity of which lies in the fact that “they are united by certain linguistic means based on their conceptual function” (15). Their interpretive nature manifests in the fact that they serve as forms of individual experience, knowledge, and evaluations. For instance, suppose concepts and metaphors contribute to the formation of figurative meaning in phraseological units (through primary and secondary conceptualisation, cognitive processing of information using these cognitive mechanisms). In that case, these categories facilitate the development of the modus semantics of phraseological units. The process of evaluative categorisation facilitates the acquisition of specific evaluative significance against or within the context of particular content. It helps organise evaluative knowledge into one category based on the commonality of their evaluative content and interpretative function. The contextual content of modus categories encompasses a vast body of knowledge about morality as a distinct spiritual phenomenon. This includes descriptions and explanations of morality, its ethical categories, values arising from human actions, the aggregate of moral qualities, systems of norms and prohibitions, and moral concepts (such as goodness, evil, virtue, conscience, etc.).

### Critical Analysis

Even though the valuable characteristics and evaluative aspects expressed by phraseological semantics are recognised as fundamental features of human existence and society, they remain poorly studied subjects. Meanwhile, a

cognitive-discursive approach to studying phraseological meaning can contribute both to identifying the role of the individual and their discursive means (situations, cognitive mechanisms, modus categories, evaluative categorisation, discursive-event stimuli for generating phraseological meaning, and concepts) and to facilitate the identification of the individual’s value relationship with the Other, clarifying the moral significance of their actions, assessing them on an ethical scale, showing why a particular object or ethical category is valuable to the speaker. A person’s value attitude arises in a situation of free choice when a person decides what has value and significance for him/her. Al-Yanai (2020) understands this attitude as “a value-sense space of spiritual activity, characterized by the interiorization of values, ideals, beliefs, which is a component of the system of value orientations of the individual” (Al-Yanai, 2020: 8).

We understand value as the subject’s attitude to the object of thought or observation (deed, behaviour). This attitude is evaluative. Its starting point is a statement recognised as a standard, a norm. Ethical evaluation is based on a minimum set of basic evaluation mechanisms called ‘moral grounds. There are five such grounds: 1) care (approval of caring for loved ones, the weak and defenceless, prohibition of inflicting emotional and physical harm); 2) justice (unbiased attitude, equality, honesty); 3) loyalty to the group (devotion to the interests of the group, intolerance of traitors); 4) respect (respect for power, authority figures, traditions, observance of hierarchy); 5) purity (condemnation of disgusting, shameful deeds, corruption and promiscuity, approval of chastity and honouring of sacred things) (Belousov et al., 2020: 16-17).

Ethical evaluation can also encompass qualitative assessment. This occurs when the speaker attributes a qualitative characteristic to the object, evaluating it on a scale of “good” and “bad.”

During cognitive-discursive analysis, we consider a person evaluating an action or behaviour. They express an assessment according to the fifth

point of the "moral grounds " and based on ethical normative and qualitative evaluations.

The subject expresses these evaluations in the process of secondary conceptualisation, when, in accordance with the moral norms of society, s(he) evaluates, with the help of metaphor in some moral situation, the deeds and behaviour of "the other," reinterpret them and forms the figurative, ethical meaning of phraseological expressions.

To form a semantic group of moral phraseological units, the subject carries out their ethical categorisation, distinguishing phraseological units that express ethical and qualitative assessment types. In order to carry out ethical categorisation, the subject performs the following procedures: a) identifying the object – "phraseological units expressing ethical assessment"; b) forming ethical categories "moral-immoral", "ethical-unethical", "good-bad"; c) identifying their cognitive classificatory features; d) determining their cognitive differential features; e) finding the evaluative predicate "moral-immoral", clarifying prototypes; and f) forming ethical categories.

Following the scientists, we distinguish two types of cognitive features: cognitive differential

features and cognitive classificatory features. A *cognitive differential feature* is an individual feature of an object consciously recognised by a person and reflected in the structure of the corresponding concept as a separate element of its content. A *cognitive classificatory feature* is a component of the content of a concept that reflects a particular aspect or parameter of categorising an object or phenomenon, and it generalises homogeneous differential cognitive features within the structure of the concept (Popova & Sternin, 2007: 128). The phraseological categories distinguished on the basis of these attributes are systemic formations with characteristic links and relations and, at the same time, possess specific features. Thus, a characteristic feature of this category is the realisation of the attribute "ethically". These categories are also included in paradigmatic relations (relations of similarity and difference). Based on the cognitive classification feature "commonality of features", phraseological phrases with the meaning an act corresponding to the scale "morally" can be united in one category "morally", and in another - with the meaning "immorally". The phraseological phrases of the category "immorally" differ from those of the category "morally". This is clearly visible in Tables 1 and 2.

<b>Table 1: Ethical Categories "Morally", "Immorally"</b>	
<b>Morally</b>	<b>Immorally</b>
Prototype: <i>"Lamb of God" (embodiment of purity), "angel in the flesh," discerning eye, joyful eye, matter of honour, kind soul, troubled soul, living soul, open soul, holy soul, strong leaven, to go hand in hand, clean treasure, wellspring of wisdom, prince among princes, godfather to the king, sweating brow, seven feet tall, kind people responsible person, responsible citizen</i>	Prototype: <i>to go through other people's laundry, to beat around the bush, to stir up trouble, to take greyhound puppies, to throw money, to twist tail, to throw words to the wind, to live in the wind, to wagtail, to wiggle, to wiggle like a hedgehog, to wolf in sheep's clothing, to rub glasses, to ride on someone else's back into paradise, to take by the throat, to take sin on the soul, dog's soul, to fill pockets, to shave in ticks, to drink blood</i>
<b>Source: Phraseological Dictionary of the Russian Language, 2009</b>	

<b>Table 2: Ethical Categories “Morally”, “Unethically”</b>	
<b>Ethically</b>	<b>Unethically</b>
<p>Prototype: <i>to put on one’s feet (support, help), from the bottom of one’s heart, belly up, cry on one’s shoulder, to have the patience of a saint, to have the patience of an angel, to take to heart, to do one’s part, to stretch out like a string, to know like the back of one’s hand, to lend a shoulder, to remember no evil, holy simplicity, an early bird, to be born with a shirt on, the hand never fails, to be one’s own man, a big heart, a man of his word</i></p>	<p>Prototype: <i>moss-covered heart, chase the long ruble, two blacks do not make a white, to wash one’s dirty linen in public, to drive a wedge between someone, crawling on one’s knees, eating with one’s hands, smoking the sky, carrying one’s nose high, wiping one’s feet on someone, spoiling a meal, a lost sheep, rubbing glasses, spitting on the ceiling, a bitter radish, a heart of stone.</i></p>
<p><b>Source: Phraseological Dictionary of the Russian Language, 2009</b></p>	

As we can see, Tables 1 and 2 present the values of the moral consciousness of people who adhere to directly opposite moral attitudes and assessments. One of the ways to objectify evaluation is the presence of an emotive component in the structure of phraseological units. Connotation then appears as a semantic macro component, a product of evaluative perception and reflection of reality during the nomination. The following examples provide moral phraseological units in the ethical category “morally.” They are used in a political text with a positive assessment: “[t]he most important thing is to be a responsible citizen, work conscientiously, and earn a living through honest labor”,—urged President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev (Mager, 2024). The word *responsibility* in the political context has not only the meaning of *being endowed with rights and bearing responsibility* but also *personal responsibility for everything that happens*. In the modern information society, there is a tendency to avoid responsibility, and in the meantime, an irresponsible act by an individual can have undesirable consequences for society. Therefore, K.J. Tokayev emphasises the importance of the moral quality of “responsibility” for the individual. Accordingly, the phraseological unit “responsible attitude” is used in a different sense, for example: “It is precisely the responsible attitude towards one’s work, towards one’s duties that is a necessary condition for the success of every citizen and the whole nation” (Mager, 2024).

The ethical category “justice” in the political text receives social significance. It is used not in the

sense of “equal distribution of benefits and resources” but gets another political meaning – “equal distribution of rights and responsibilities”.

When compared:

I believe this is a simplified understanding and interpretation of justice, primarily as equal distribution of goods and resources. Justice and responsibility are inseparable concepts because justice cannot exist without responsibility (Mager, 2024).

Ethical connotative phraseological units with moral and evaluative content are often used in political texts. They serve a characterising function, reflecting the speaker’s negative attitude towards the interlocutor:

A severe shortage of professional archaeologists and systemic gaps in excavation licensing [has] led to the dominance of various profiteers in archaeology in Kazakhstan (Mager, 2024).

In the article *Billions have not cut through a single window*, ethical connotative phraseological units are used to demonstrate the dishonest attitude of Kazakhstani officials towards partners of the “International Academy of Medicine and Sciences”, LLP. The author criticises officials from the Akimat of Almaty Region for their dishonest approach to their duties:

It would seem that successes, as they say, are evident, but even here the Almaty Regional Akimat managed to put its



spoonful of tar in a barrel of honey (Brusilovskaya, 2024).

In this case, the phraseological unit *“a spoonful of tar in a barrel of honey”* is transformed. This ethical phraseology expresses a negative assessment of the immoral actions of officials. The same negative attitude is manifested in the modus phraseological unit: *“a non-commissioned officer’s widow whipped herself”*. What is most surprising, if not funny, is that the draft agreement was developed by the state partnership itself and signed by it. It is just like in Gogol’s *“The Government Inspector”*, where, according to the bribe-taking town governor’s words, *“the non-commissioned officer’s widow whipped herself”* (Brusilovskaya, 2024). In the speeches of politicians, ethical phraseological units expressing a negative attitude towards the immoral actions of officials are also used: *“Everyone understands that the government is fattening up the people with empty words”* (Brusilovskaya, 2024). In this context, the phraseological unit *“to feed with promises”* is transformed, where the words *“feed”* and *“promises”* are replaced by *“fatten up”* and *“words.”*

The component *“empty words”* returns the phraseological phrase to its original meaning. The following phraseological phrase expresses the negative attitude of a politician to the actions of populists:

Our people have learned well to separate cutlets from flies, real politics from the soap bubbles of unconcealed populism (Zhumagulov, 2007).

Evaluative relations are manifested in ethical categories. Ethical phraseological phrases themselves are grouped into categories based

on similarity of assessments and connotations given to the subject on the basis of evaluations *“morally-immorally,”* and *“ethically nonethical”*. In the following ethical categories *“good”* and *“bad,”* phraseological phrases are united on the basis of the socially established attitudes of speakers (*“good,” “bad”*) towards extralinguistic facts, language, and speech facts.

The evaluative categorisation here represents the result of the intersection or overlay of two conceptual systems reflecting two aspects of perceiving the surrounding world — the literal, physical, valuable and the ideal, that is, the result of reinterpreting of the surrounding world from the positions of value concepts and categories.

In evaluative categorisation, the starting point is the person herself/himself with her/his system of values. Based on her/his moral values, ethical qualitative evaluations of human qualities and characteristics are expressed. The following cognitive operations should be carried out for qualitative evaluative categorisation of a person: 1) selection of the object of evaluation; 2) identification of the subject (evaluator); 3) selection of the basis for evaluation (qualities, character traits); 4) identification of cognitive classificatory features that contribute to the grouping of ethical phraseological units into one category; 5) identification of cognitive differential features by determining the characteristics of a worthy or unworthy person, based on which ethical phraseological units are distinguished from each other (*“good – bad”*); 6) determination of evaluative predicates *“good,” “bad,”* and correlating them with the categorised phraseological units; 7) clarification of prototypes of categories *“good,” “bad.”*; 8) construction of categories. This is clearly visible in Table 3.

<b>Table 3: Ethical Categories “Good” and “Bad”</b>	
<b>Good</b>	<b>Bad</b>
<p><b>Prototype (worthy):</b> <i>hold one’s tail up, put a question edge-on (decisive), put aside for a rainy day (prudent), to work hard (industrious), to take the bull by the horns (energetic), to weigh the pros and cons (clever), to be both a swordsman and a reaper and to play the musical instrument (skilful), God gave it to you, everything burns in your hands, to look three arches into the ground, to hold your head up high, to keep your head up, lucky hand, to keep your face up, to save your face, to take it on your shoulders, to hold your answer, to hit the target, to be on top, to see through</i></p>	<p><b>Prototype (unworthy):</b> <i>stringless balalaika, wooden boot, raking hands, envious eyes, man in sheep's clothing, insatiable throat (greedy), to bully the nose, to live by other people's wits, you cannot ask for snow in winter, God has offended, not brilliant in talent, a goose with legs, to take on a swindler, fluttering like a butterfly, with a breeze in his head, without conscience, hair on fire, no face (on someone), black soul, to warm a snake on one's chest, to lead by the nose, sucking out of his finger, a grim reaper, come out of the water dry, wiping one’s feet on someone, stabbing a sharp knife in the heart.</i></p>
<p><b>Source: Phraseological Dictionary of the Russian Language, 2009</b></p>	

Ethical phraseological units can also be grouped into an evaluative category based on an evaluative-somatic feature, where human qualities are assessed based on somatic code. Cultural code is understood as “a set of signs (symbols) and a system of specific rules by which information can be represented (encoded) in the form of a set of such symbols for transmission, processing, storage, and memorization.” (Naumova, 2009: 241). The somatic code’s main purpose is to assess a person's qualities and abilities in another reality (spiritual). In this case, somatisms carry information about the bearer’s evaluative representations regarding the reality they nominate.

In a contrastive-comparative aspect, let us examine ethical categories—somatics and identify which specific groups are used by

different people in the ethical assessment of human qualities. The evaluative categorisation of human abilities is determined using somatisms: 1) selection of the object of evaluation; 2) subject (evaluator); 3) choice of the basis of evaluation (qualities, characteristics of a person); 4) code by which the evaluation is carried out; 5) identification of cognitive classificatory features, based on which ethical phraseological units are attributed to a specific category according to the qualitative assessment “good”, or “bad”; 6) identification of a cognitive differential feature, according to which phraseological units may or may not correspond to a specific category; 7) determination of evaluative predicates; 8) construction of somatic-ethical categories according to their correlation with evaluative predicates “good,” or “bad.” This is clearly visible in Table 4.

**Table 4: Qualitative Assessment Expressed Using Somatic Expressions**

Good	Bad	Good	Bad
<i>Right eye, tear out an eye, eyeless, to turn up one’s nose, to take oneself in hand, to invest one’s heart, to strain every nerve, swollen eyes, to have a head on one’s shoulders, to keep in mind, nose to the wind, to keep one’s hand, to keep one’s ear to the ground, soul aches, soul wide open, to live by one’s own wits, and won’t even raise an eyebrow, to eat one’s own teeth, to have a head on one’s shoulders</i>	<i>Sit in the liver, like a mote in the eye, rub glasses, wrap around one’s finger, stab in the heart, make dizzy, suck blood, to strain one’s sides, eyes lit up, hot head, hold in one’s hands, bring to handle, oak head, soul went into heels, clench fists, wicked tongues</i>	<i>Zhyly zhurek (warm heart), bauyry elzhiredi (soft-hearted), kez bolu (take care of someone), eski kez (old friend), bel bermedi (does not complain about difficulties), koly ashyk (generous), bauyry berik (healthy), tēbesine keteru (raise to the heavens)</i>	<i>Bauyry suyk (cold), tas bauyr (cruel), kezın shēp kaptady (does not recognise anyone), kyrfi kabak (hostile relations), zhylan kez (snake eyes), bezbyrek (ruthless), kanfıbas (tramp), alakol (dishonest), kolshokpar bolu (to be a blind instrument), kara bauyr (heartless), kuyrshak bolu (to be a puppet).</i>
<b>Source: Phraseological Dictionary of the Russian Language, 2009</b>			

In the English language, the somatic code also expresses the qualifying evaluation “good or “bad”. Somatism—phraseological expressions with the qualifying evaluation “good” and “bad” are also categorised, for example: “good”: to wear one’s heart upon one’s sleeve, two heads are better than one, he knows much who knows how to hold his tongue, a good face is a letter of recommendation, faint heart never won fair lady, a little body often harbour’s a great soul; “bad”: to work with the left hand, a fool’s tongue runs before his wit, a honey tongue, a heart of gall, fair without foul within, greedy folks have long arms, a hungry has no ears, an idle mind is devil’s workshop.

Phraseological somatism are also used in political texts, expressing different connotative attitudes towards politicians:

The announced facts of inspections and initiated cases more closely resembled the public flogging of individual managers (Plotnikova, 2021)

When we took the trouble to double-check all these 19 cases, it turned out

that none of them corresponded to reality, the cases of announcements in the media about the creation of regional election headquarters were simply “over the ears” (Razumov, 2005).

Not a single dubious slogan should get in the eyes of the guests, and even more so in the “picture” that will be broadcast by the world’s media, so as not to lose face and dignity (Vishnevsky, 2006)

The ethical evaluations “morally”/ “immorally”, “ethically”/ “unethically”, “good”/ “bad” in English are mostly expressed not by somatism but by the zoonymic code, for example:

“morally”, “ethically”, “well” ethical judgements: *Barking dogs seldom bite, catch the bear before you sell his skin, don’t count your chickens before they are hatched, don’t look a gift horse in the mouth, every dog is lion at home, don’t let the wolf look after the sheep.*

ethical judgements of “immoral”, “unethical”, “bad”: *A fly in the ointment,*

*a lazy sheep thinks it's wool heavy, a wolf in the sheep's clothing, binds of a feather flock together, crows do not pick crow's eyes, dog eats dog, fish begins to stink at the head.*

In English ethical evaluation, prudence and caution are combined: *first catch your hare, then cook him, burn not your house to frighten the mice away.*

The somatic and zoonymic codes of culture come from the material world. When forming the world of the psyche, consciousness borrows properties and manifestations characteristic of the animal world (zoonyms) or the human world (somatisms), reinterprets them because of linguocreative thinking and interprets them.

In this case, associations arise— connections that “shift” reality and create a myth about it by emphasising certain knowledge about the properties of cultural codes and their dispositions. The transition of specific vocabulary (somatisms, zoonyms) into the fund of designations of evaluative vocabulary and phraseology is made based on metaphorisation. Metaphor is a way of modelling the abstract and evaluative in the image and likeness of the concrete. In the process of forming ethical phraseological phrases, metaphor acts as a cognitive mechanism for generating new evaluative meanings. The anthropocentric and zoonymic models of metaphor take part in the formation of evaluative ethical meanings of phraseological units. The anthropocentric model is based on transferring human abilities to inanimate beings. In this case, a material object is interpreted as a human being. “This allows us to comprehend our experience of interaction- — with inanimate entities in terms of human motivations, characteristics of human activity” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008: 59). Zoonymic cognitive models generating ethical evaluative phraseological expressions are also based on the transfer of properties, habits of animals to humans, characterizing their behaviors, character and abilities.

The role of metaphor as a cognitive mechanism in generating phraseological meaning lies in its ability to facilitate the reflection and mediation

of the concepts identified and generalised by the native speakers during the stage of primary conceptualisation of words and phrases, transferring their semantic features and meanings from the material world into the realm of the psyche. Information about the literal meaning and its characteristics is inherited and becomes productive for secondary metaphorical meaning. Then, it is re-conceptualised during the individual cognitive processing in the speech activity of the subject, a bearer of individual knowledge, opinions, and evaluations.

Phraseological meaning can also be formed as a result of the actualisation of an individual's associative-verbal network, which is characterised by a large “phraseology”. The direction of our research is impressed by the hypothesis about the method of storing phraseological units in the memory of native speakers “in the form of a number of nuclear prototypes of conceptual structures”, as put forward by scientists Dobrovolsky and Karaulov (1992: 7). According to their opinion, phraseological units, in this case, should be “considered as entities occupying an intermediate position between language units and speech units. In this case, the conceptual structure of the phraseological unit stored in the memory includes three components: an image represented as a compressed gestalt; a concept compressed to a conceptual core; the form of the phraseology compressed to a quasi-symbol” (Dobrovolsky & Karaulov, 1992:7). V.N. Teliya and N.F.Alefirenko support this viewpoint. V.N. Teliya suggests that the peculiarity of forming phraseological semantics lies in the fact that non-free figurative combinations arise based on direct combinations (denoting prototypical situations) through metaphorical transfer (Teliya, 1996). This transfer is based on very complex, profound associations that arise in the minds of language speakers when perceiving and comparing objects of reality. Through phraseological metaphor, a person projects various objects of reality onto themselves. Associative connections can be based on sensory-perceived properties and characteristics of animals, plants, household items, etc. As a

result, there are several directions of metaphorisation in the field of phraseological units and their meanings: plant — human qualities; animal-human qualities, character; somatic-evaluation of human properties, etc., e.g.: “milk cow”, “lame horse”, “as stubborn as a mule”, “be gentle as a lamb”, “be hungry as a hunter”, “be on one’s hobby horse”, “be poor as a church mouse” and others.

As we know, phraseological meaning has a complex field structure. Perhaps that is why N.F. Alefirenko (2008) believes that the phraseological meaning is not formed by a simple juxtaposition of the lexical meanings of words and their components but represents a new semantic, generalised (associative imagery) type of meaning of the entire phrase. The core of this structure is the concept, serving as the meaning-forming factor, and the periphery is the frame - the cognitive basis for understanding the phraseological meaning and the meaning of the entire phraseological expression (Alefirenko, 2008: 88).

To test the hypothesis regarding the formation of phraseological units through associations, we conducted an associative experiment, which is the most effective method for penetrating the consciousness. For the purpose of conducting a directed associative experiment, the following steps were taken: 1) respondents were selected (100 individuals); 2) stimuli were given to them (free word combinations — names of prototypical situations); 3) associations were selected — phraseological units based on syntagmatic relations; 4) associations-phraseological units were identified for stimulus words, names (character assessment, human behaviour); 5) respondents provided associations for the words “good”, “evil” “conscience”; 6) associative fields of word—associates have been compiled as the most comprehensive lexical formations, including words united by associative connections (based on ethical, moral, figurative associations by similarity, contrast, analogy). The core of the first associative field is the stimulus word “good”, and the second associative field — “evil”, Therefore, when compared:

For good deeds: *To remember with kindness, no evil without good, good people, to do good, in a good hour, good morning, good evening, all good, not for the good, not with kindness, a good fellow, be kind, kind soul, one doesn't look for good from good, good health is above wealth, to break the ice, as true as steel, better to do well than to say well, to take the bull by the horns, conscience is the voice of God*

For evil deeds: *Doing evil, don't rely on good; getting angry is human, but remembering evil is devilish; the evil one doesn't believe there are good people; the evil one cries from envy, while the good one cries from joy; anger is the root of evil; evil tongue; to burst with anger; on purpose; iron fist in a velvet glove; it is an ill bird that fouls its own nest; who chatters to you, will chatter of you; to add fuel to the fire; between two evils 'tis not worth choosing.*

Analysis of the associative field, compiled based on the results of filling the associative field, showed that 76% of respondents perceive “good” and “evil” as moral categories. They associate “good” with kindness, conscientiousness, determination for good deeds, and sensitivity. The stimulus to “do good” directs towards the moral category of “good”, while the phrase stimulus objectifies the moral category of “bad”.

The concept of “good” is the core of the associative field of “doing good”, embodying positive connotations, while the concept of “evil” serves as the core of the associative field, expressing negative connotations. Ethical evaluation of the phraseology within the associative field “doing good” is “morally”, whereas the phraseology within the associative field “doing evil” correlates with the evaluation “immorally”.

Due to the fact that the concept is a cognitive substrate of phraseological meaning, it plays an important role in the formation of phraseological semantics of poetic phraseological units. We argue that it is

precisely concepts as verbalised discursive categories that serve as linguo-creative elements that form the cognitive basis of phraseological meaning. Let us consider how the concept of “conscience”, serving as the designation of discursive categories (situations, events), contributes to the formation of ethical phraseological meaning and aids in expressing moral evaluation such as “morally” versus “immorally.” Forming the meaning of ethical phraseology, such as “to have a conscience”, “without a twinge of conscience”, etc., is a dynamic process. Ethical phraseological expressions may originate from individual words or phrases serving as designations of events or situations, for example, when a person becomes aware of moral responsibility for their actions: “a guilty conscience”, or “the voice of conscience.”

Outside of phraseological expressions, “conscience” loses its sub-categorical meaning as the designation of a situation or action occurring in reality. Instead, it acquires a psychologically abstract meaning based on a spiritual code. The main component of the phraseological expression loses its categorical meaning of situationally and morphological categories and realises abstract potential semes such as “awareness of moral responsibility before people (*the voice of conscience*)” or “awareness of shame for actions committed (*a guilty conscience*).” The attributive components “*clean conscience*” and “*guilty conscience*” realize semes related to feelings about actions (*remorse*) or the absence of worry about an action (*clean conscience*). As a result of these dynamic processes, there has been a leap in the development of word combinations. It transforms from a free word combination into a phraseological expression. Conceptual analysis of phraseological expressions arising from free word combinations (such as “*the voice of conscience*”) or the word “conscience” contributes to the interpretation of the five layers of the concept.

At the initial stage (nominative), a situation is named, and there is a transition process from the material world (naming situations, presence of sub-categorical meaning) to the psychological

world. This transition occurs through the cognitive mechanism of metaphor (anthropocentric), where the properties of a new entity are transferred to inanimate objects and personified, for example: “*conscience won’t let one sleep*”, “*reproaches of conscience*”, “*voice of conscience*”, “*conscience torments*”, “*guilty conscience*”, “*troubled conscience*”, “*conscience speaks out*”, etc. The third layer of the ethical concept is evaluative. To identify the ethical evaluation of phraseological concepts, categorisation should be carried out by grouping ethical phraseological expressions into corresponding categories based on the nature of their evaluation.

Morally: calm, clear conscience, to follow the voice of conscience, to ease one's conscience, though the purse is empty, but conscience is clear, good conscience is the voice of God, to know conscience, to make peace with one's conscience, conscience is enough, it is time to know conscience, according to conscience, speaking, not for fear, but for conscience, to clear conscience, freedom of conscience;

Immorally: unclean conscience, evil conscience, without conscience, he has conscience in a cup, shame under his heel, conscience under his sole, he does not have a half a conscience; asleep conscience, remorse of conscience, bargain with conscience, no shame or conscience, a conscienceless person, his conscience is a holey sieve, when conscience was distributed, he was not at home; his conscience is like a wheelbarrow, sit and roll.

Of the means of expressing moral *evaluations are used*: 1) epithets: morally (*a clear conscience, a quiet conscience, a good conscience; an unclean conscience, an unconscientious person, a conscience that has fallen asleep*); 2) ethical phraseological expressions; 3) irony: *when the conscience was distributed, he was not at home, he has a conscience –that wheelbarrow.*

The next layer of the concept is the cultural-mental layer. The symbol of “conscience” – *the voice of conscience* – signifies the manifestation of the Higher Principle and basic life meanings in a person. The concept of “conscience” is understood differently in various cultures. In

Western Europe, it is perceived as something rational and conscious. In Kazakh culture, *conscience* is associated with concepts like *shame (uyat) and honour (namys)*.

The nominative component of the concept includes paradigmatic relations: a) synonyms: clear conscience, quiet conscience, reproaches of conscience, remorse of conscience; on conscience — conscientiously, lies on conscience, responsibility for one's conscience; b) antonyms: clear conscience — without a guilty conscience; to lose conscience - to realise one's conscience; without conscience - on conscience; to put conscience to sleep, to awaken conscience; c) paremiological units: in whom is shame, in whom is conscience; eyes - measure, soul - faith, conscience - bail; no matter how wise, but conscience will not overthink; dress is black, but conscience is white; conscience without teeth, but will gnaw.

### Conclusion

The analysis of the development of phraseological semantics at the modern stage of cognitive phraseology formation has demonstrated the effectiveness of the cognitive-semantic approach in solving the problem of phraseological meaning. Such an approach, based on an integrative methodological paradigm and the principles of cognitive semantics (anthropocentrism, interdisciplinarity, multilevelness, the principle of conceptual unity of language and speech), contributes to identifying the role of cognitive-discursive categories (situation, events, presupposition, etc.), as well as cognitive mechanisms (metaphors). The cognitive basis of phraseological meaning comprises knowledge formats (concepts, frames, categories).

In the formation of figurative semantics of phraseological units, a special role is played by humans, as various meanings of phraseological units are interpreted by the speaking subject, experienced by them, evaluated, and thus enter into the sphere of human energy. It is the human who gives a name to a situation or an event (primary conceptualisation), using cognitive mechanisms (metaphor, metonymy), reinterprets the primary meanings of

phraseological units, employing analogies and associations that arise during the perception and comparison of objects from the material and mental worlds. The denotative meaning of a phraseological unit (the name of a situation, an event) is inherited by them (inference), transferred to the spiritual realm, involved in the sphere of the subject's value—meaning orientation, interpreted, and evaluated by the subject (the stage of secondary conceptualisation).

Modus and modal categories, as formats of knowledge, also form phraseological semantics: being associated with conceptual and cultural worldviews, they reflect both the system of values of society and the individual system of values of the subject. Using these categories, the subject interprets phraseological meanings and evaluates the reflected content (ethical and others). It allows them to be grouped into one category based on the commonality of the knowledge they express. Ethical categories are unified into one modus category through their evaluative categorisation based on the opinions and judgments of speakers. The content of modus categories consists of knowledge about morality, moral values, and societal norms.

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### **Ethical Approval**

We declare that the manuscript was prepared following the protocols of the Helsinki Declaration.

### **Conflict of Interest**

We also declare that there is no conflict of interest, either financial or non-financial, related to the manuscript submitted to the Journal *Space and Culture, India*.

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Abisheva Klara: Methodology and content analysis.

Akosheva Marzhan: Review of literature, content analysis, conceptualisation and discussion.

Nurgazina Aiman: Conceptualisation and review

Ayupova Gulbagira: Review of literature, data supervision.

Ayapbergenov Bulat: Review of literature, content analysis

Baikadamova Assel: Writing initial drafts and editing.

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We confirm that the data supporting the findings of this study is available within the article.