

# Structural-semantic transformations of phraseological units in Russian and Slovak newspaper articles

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*This paper deals with one of the manifestations of current innovative processes in phraseology, i.e. structural-semantic transformations of phraseological units in Russian and Slovak newspaper articles. The aim of this paper is to present an overview of structural-semantic transformations followed by a comparative Russian-Slovak analysis of creative modifications from selected journalistic sources and to summarize certain national-specific features of phraseological transformations in the given languages. Structural-semantic transformations include a spectrum of various types of modifications that affect both the structural and semantic levels of phraseological units. They are popular among journalists because they are an effective means to attract the recipient's attention, to increase the overall expressiveness of the newspaper articles, and to add semantic richness and imagery to transformed phraseological units. We will focus on insertion, substitution of components, phraseological paronomasia, contamination, and phraseological ellipsis. Each type of transformation is distinguished by its characteristic features and fulfils different functions in journalistic style, which we aim to determine throughout the analysis. Incorrect (or inappropriate) transformations of phraseological units are included in the material as well, even though they are not so frequent in journalistic practice. Structural-semantic transformations of phraseological units are widely used in both analysed Slavic languages; however, they appear to be more productive and richer in the Russian language.*

**Keywords:** *structural-semantic transformations, phraseological unit, newspaper article, journalism*

## 1 Introduction

Phraseological units (PUs), traditionally described as fixed polylexical units, tend to undergo significant changes. Therefore, “there is unanimous agreement that we should rather speak of relative fixedness” (Jaki 2014: 9), which can result in creative transformations of these units. Transformations of PUs are generally one of the most currently discussed topics in contemporary phraseology. Very generally speaking, these transformations of PUs can be understood as “nonce-use changes in the form and/or semantics of fixed phrases that allow to maintain the unity of PUs, i.e. they leave them recognizable” (Jefanova 2005: 123).

Use of PUs in modified form is now an integral part of spoken language and journalistic practice. J. Gallo, however, points out that a few decades ago the use of any PU was considered a serious violation of the basic characteristics of a journalistic style, the aim of which was brevity and emphasis on the information. J. Gallo rightly attributes the change in this direction to the commercialization of contemporary society, which puts pressure on textual media authors (2010: 191). Because of competition, journalists attempt to make the language more attractive for the readers. One way to achieve actualization and expressivisation of journalistic texts is the transformation of PUs. As T. Grigorjanová notes, “PUs not only make a linguistic expression more interesting and engaging, but they also add argumentative force and persuasiveness, and they can influence the recipient more effectively when incorporated into a specific context” (2012: 109).

There are a number of classifications of transformed PUs. The division of phraseological transformations into semantic and structural-semantic categories dominates in research and is supported by such authors as V. M. Mokienko & A. M. Melerovič (1997), I. JU. Treťjakova (2010), and others. We believe this classification is accurate because it reflects the character of modifications and allows us to categorize different sub-types of various intentional creative changes of structure and semantics of PUs. Semantic transformations of PUs, however, are beyond the scope of our research. We intend only to analyse structural-semantic transformations because they offer the most diverse range of creative and contextual modifications of PUs and are widely used by Russian and Slovak journalists as a device to engage the reader. Structural-semantic transformations of PUs introduce new shades of meaning and semantic shifts in addition to interventions in the structure of PUs, which leads to increased expressiveness and brings an evaluative element into journalistic articles. The novelty of the work lies in the comparative approach to the research in which authentic material from the two Slavic languages of Russian and Slovak will be compared in terms of innovative modifications of PUs, specifically, regarding their types and frequency in journalism.

## **2 Literature review**

The innovative processes in phraseology, some of which are also transformations of PUs, have been more actively discussed and researched in recent years. It is a natural consequence of the massive application of various transformational processes in language practice and journalism. In Russia, V. M. Mokienko, A. M. Melerovič, and I. JU. Treťjakova, to mention just a few, have significantly contributed to the research in this area. Slovak phraseologists also actively elaborate on various aspects of transformations of PUs, e.g. J. Mlacek (2007), D. Baláková, V. Kováčová (2009), T. Grigorjanová (2012), and others. To a certain degree, the language creativity and word play are universal phenomena in all natural languages. The research into types and functioning of transformed PUs is conducted in other languages as well. R. Moon (1998) uses a corpus-based approach to analysis of fixed expressions, idioms, and their modification/variation. S. Jaki (2014) focuses on phraseological substitutions and conducts an association test on their reception in newspaper headlines. Idiomatic creativity resonates in A. Langlotz's work as well (2006). A. Naciscione (2010) analyses the phraseological transformations through the prism of stylistics. A. Urban (2009) and S. Ptashnik (2009) discuss functions of modified PUs in German.

Our paper will proceed from the theoretical foundations of works by these authors and approach the structural-semantic transformations of PUs from a comparative perspective.

## **3 Methodology**

The objectives of this paper are to present an overview of structural-semantic transformations followed by a comparative Russian-Slovak analysis of creative modifications from selected journalistic sources and to summarize nationally specific features of transformations of PUs in the given languages. This paper uses a methodological framework based on the methods of continuous sampling to extract PUs from the press; linguistic identification, descriptive, component analysis, cognitive, and functional analysis. Comparative and quantitative methods will be dominant in the conclusion.

This paper focuses solely on the transformations of PUs; phraseological variants will not be taken into consideration. The extracted units will meet the following set of criteria. These also distinguish phraseological transformations from variants: they will be coined intentionally by individual journalists (although a few examples, which we consider erroneous, will be included for illustration); they will undergo changes in semantics and/or structure (phraseological variants have variable components with the same meaning and the same figurative image); they will fulfil certain functions in journalistic texts (e.g. adaptation to a specific context, attention-grabbing function, increased expressiveness, irony, humour); they are context dependent (Context will be provided where needed to specify the meaning.). Just as important, a link between the modification and the original unit can be established in all examples.

The paper follows an intensive study of relevant scientific literature and a collection of material from journalistic sources. As R. Moon said, “In fact, journalism represents the cutting edge of language change, or the popularization of language change” (1998: 121). Therefore, we find it reasonable to base our research into phraseological transformations on the material from the press.

Practical examples of structural-semantic transformations of PUs are excerpted from Russian and Slovak newspaper articles from 2000–2021 from the following online sources: *kp.ru* (Abbreviation KP will be used further in the text as a reference.), *mk.ru* (MK), *kommersant.ru* (K), *eadaily.com/ru* (EA), and *aif.ru* (AiF) and the Slovak sources *etrend.sk* (TR), *pluska.sk* (PLUS), *hnonline.sk* (HN), *pravda.sk* (PR), *parlamentnelisty.sk* (PL), *aktuality.sk* (AK), *cas.sk* (CAS), and *sme.sk* (SME).

We excerpted a total of 70 phraseological transformations (40 Russian units and 30 Slovak units) from 287 articles in Russian and 287 articles in Slovak. The same number of analysed articles will allow us to shed light on the national-specific features of phraseological transformations and to draw relevant conclusions.

Within our database, we encountered several units we will refer to as incorrect or not appropriate. To distinguish between an innovative and incorrect transformation is somewhat challenging; no common consensus has been reached to date. According to A. A. Jevtjugina, ignorance of the exact meaning of a PU, its lexical and grammatical compatibility, its expressive and stylistic features, and its sphere of use and an inattentive attitude to its figurative nature lead to speech errors (2009: 84). S. Yaki claims that in differentiating between modifications and errors, the most important aspect lies in the inherent non-intentionality of errors. “Errors are always mistakes that result either from a slip of the tongue/pen or one’s insufficient familiarity with a PU” (2014: 32). Non-intentionality will not be in our focus; we cannot judge intentions of journalists. A journalist can coin the transformation intentionally, but if they do not consider all the characteristics stated by A. A. Jevtjugina, the desired effect on the reader may not be achieved. For these reasons, we will focus solely on the outcome and the expressiveness of transformed PUs. As emphasised by K. N. Dubrovina, the expressiveness of PU decreases as a result of its repeated use over time. This is why various transformations are so widely used; they can “revive” the phraseological image and, by the transformation, increase the expressiveness of the PU (2005: 107). Taken together, in our analysis we will be inclined to define incorrect transformations as units that either disrupt inherent phraseological characteristics or do not lead to increased expressiveness.

#### **4 Results and discussion**

The structural-semantic transformations of PUs manifest in several ways: insertion, substitution of components, phraseological paronomasia, contamination, and phraseological ellipsis. We will successively analyse all these using practical Russian-Slovak examples and provide a sufficient theoretical basis and comparative viewpoint.

#### 4.1 Insertion

Insertion is a common and relatively undemanding way of transforming PUs that quantitatively expands the original phraseological structure by adding additional elements. It should be noted that insertion is not just an arbitrary extension of the phraseological structure, but is always the penetration of individual key elements of the context into the PU.

Although newspaper headlines tend to reduce PUs to comply with the requirements of linguistic economy, insertion is also one of the expressive means used in headlines because it allows the author to indicate the topic of the article, as in the following examples: *Северный тернистый путь. Ведомства выясняют, какие суда можно пускать в Арктику* [Severnyj ternistyj put'. Vedomstva vyjasnjajut, kakie suda možno puskat' v Arktiku] 'The northern thorny path. Departments are trying to find out which ships can be allowed into the Arctic' (K, 18.06.2018); *Белорусская АЭС – червивое яблоко раздора* [Belorusskaja AES – červivoje jabloko razdora] 'Belarusian nuclear power plant – a wormy apple of discord' (EA, 11.06.2017); and *spôsobiť homosexuálne božie dopustenie* 'to cause homosexual havoc' (TR, 27.02.2019). All these examples are extended by adjectives. Nouns are usually responsible for the overall meaning of the whole construction (cf. Ptashnyk: 16) and adjectives primarily specify their meaning, adapting a PU for a particular context. Research confirms that adjectives are used in insertion in up to 43.8% of all cases in the Russian language (Sajutina 2012: 61).

However, we can expand the structure of the PU with the help of other parts of speech as well, although this is not as common, e.g. with noun: *Над Петром Порошенко завис Дамоклов меч импичмента* [Nad Petrom Porošenko zavis Damoklov meč impičmenta] 'Damocles' sword of impeachment hovers over Petr Poroshenko' (EA, 23.06.2017); *Душа и тело нараспашку. В Твери прошли любительские соревнования по стриптизу* [Duša i telo naraspašku. V Tveri prošli ljubitel'skie sorevnovanija po striptizu] 'Soul and the body wide open. There were amateur contests of striptease in Tver' (MK, 18.04.2012).

An insertion of PUs based on a metaphor from the field of card games is observed in both analysed languages, e.g. *hrať "moslimskou kartou"* 'to play the "Muslim card"' (PL, 08.11.2017); *Экологам смешали арктические карты*. [Ekologam smešali arktičeskie karty.] 'The Arctic cards have been shuffled up for ecologists' (K, 26.03.2017). These transformations are based on the conventional metaphorical model: *politics is a game*. This productive model (among others) was set out in 1991 by J. Lakoff in a study of metaphors used to justify the first Gulf War (1991). Researchers have established that this metaphorical model is reproduced through modifications in the political discourse of many countries (Budajev & Čudinov 2006: 124).

All of these examples are enriched with one component. Less often, more components are inserted into the structure of PUs to achieve further specification, e.g. *sedíme na zdravotnej, bezpečnostnej i spravodajskej časovanej bombe, ktorú zatiaľ nikto nechce zneškodniť* 'we are sitting on a health, safety and news time bomb that no one wants to defuse yet' (CAS, 28.09.2016), where the immigrant crisis is reflected. In the second part, we perceive a partial dephraseologisation.

The fixed PU *mať Filipa* ‘lit. to have Philip’ in the meaning of ‘being able to think rationally’ is expanded by two adjectives *mal bystrého obchodníckeho Filipa* ‘lit. he had a shrewd business Philip’ (AK, 10.02.2017). The word *bystrý* ‘shrewd’ is synonymous with the expression *mať Filipa* ‘lit. to have Philip’, and it only specifies the original structure. We consider it redundant because it does not bring new meaning to the transformation.

The possibilities of insertion are evidently wide and can be surprising for the reader; only the context sets the limits for the journalist, e.g.: *Кто ищет Кому, тот всегда найдет ФБР и куклу Дракулауру. Как реагирует поисковик во Вконтакте на коми названия* [Кто iščet Komi, tot vseгда najdet FBR i kuklu Drakulauru. Kak reagiruet poiskovik vo Vkontakte na komi nazvanija] ‘Anyone looking for Komi will always find the FBI and the Dracula doll. How a search engine on Vkontakt reacts to Komi names’ (KP, 19.01.2016). Slovak equivalent *Kto hľadá, ten nájde* ‘He who seeks, finds’ has also been adapted to the context by insertion *Kto hľadá, svojho vraha si nájde* ‘He who seeks, finds his or her killer—the mysterious case of a woman who ordered her own murder’ (CAS, 25.08.2014).

However, not every insertion into the structure of a PU can be perceived as justified and innovative. A. A. Jevtjugina recommends avoiding inserting PU by the use of specifying components in speech, because it leads to redundancy. The author demonstrates the following example: *полное фиаско* [polnoe fiasko] ‘a complete fiasco’ (2009: 86). Such an instance was observed in our database as well: *тренера ждет полное фиаско* [trenera ždet polnoe fiasko] ‘a complete fiasco awaits the coach’ (K, 30.11.2018). In this example, we also perceive the substitution of the original verb *потерпеть* [poterpet’] ‘to fail’. An unjustified insertion of this PU was likewise encountered in the Slovak language: *Úplné fiasko* ‘A complete fiasco’ (PL, 22.06.2017).

A PU transformed by insertion has great potential to become conventionalised with repetitive usage. Based on the research by V. M. Mokienko, we know that insertion is one of the most important ways of creating PUs in the diachronic aspect (Mokienko 1980; cited in: Stěpanova 2004: 141).

Despite the general tendency of journalism towards linguistic economy, insertion is one of the productive ways of transforming PUs in both analysed languages. It does not lead to a significant change in the semantics of a PU, but it naturally complements and intensifies its meaning. If used correctly it can be an effective means of presenting the topic of an article.

Let us now proceed to the analysis of the following way of transforming PUs, i.e. substitution.

#### 4.2 Substitution of components

Substitution of components is probably the most productive method of transformation in the Russian and Slovak languages. According to M. Omazić, substituted PUs amount to roughly 25% of all modifications (2007: 65-66). Substitution interferes with the phraseological structure, which naturally leads to the increased expressiveness and imagery of a PU.

Usually one component is substituted for another component, but in some cases, the substitution can be based on a replacement of a one-word component with several components, or vice versa. It is also possible to replace several components at once, but at least one component must remain unchanged to ensure the recognisability of a PU. Multiple components are substituted in the headline *Lepšie pivo v žalúdku ako voda v pľúcach* ‘Better to have beer in the stomach than water in the lungs’ (AK, 24.07.2018), yet there is a noticeable connection with the original proverb *Lepší vrabec v hrsti ako holub na streche* ‘Better to have a sparrow

in the hand than a pigeon on the roof' because the syntactic structure is preserved: comparative + noun + adverb of place + as + noun + adverb of place, as well as the structure of the connotations, positive + negative.

Most frequently, a noun is substituted for a noun, which will be noticeable in our further analysis. This is the case in up to 49% of all substitutions in the Russian language according to N. V. Sajutina (2012: 58), e.g. *Украине протянут уголь /руку/ помощи. Добыча на Дону заместит донецкий антрацит* [Ukraine protjanut ugol' /ruku/ pomošči. Dobyča na Donu zamestit doneckij antracit] 'Ukraine will be offered a coal /hand/ help. Extraction on the Don will replace Donetsk anthracite' (K, 20.06.2018). Such a trend could be due to the dominance of the nominal group (noun + adjective combinations) over the verbal group in Russian phraseology (Reichstein 1980: 15).

The statement of a Slovak politician also underwent a substitution of a noun and insertion: *nesiaha ani po opätky jeho topánok* 'he doesn't even reach to the heels of his shoes' (PLUS, 06.10.2008). This expression is a hyperbole to the productive PU *nesiahat' niekomu ani po členky* 'not reaching to anyone's ankles'. Due to the exaggeration of the already very negatively coloured PU, the speech aggression is noticeable, which could be the result of creative transformations of PUs in political discourse.

To a lesser extent, we find the substitution of an adjective for an adjective, e.g. in the transformation of the anthem of the Russian Federation adapted to the conditions of China by incorporating its geographical specifics: *От желтых /южных/ морей до пустынного /полярного/ края. Как Компартия Китая удерживает вместе 33 региона* [Ot želtyh /južnyh/ morej do pustynnogo /poljarnogo/ kraja. Kak Kompartija Kitaja uderživaet vmeste 33 regiona] 'From the yellow /southern/ seas to the desert /polar/ region. How the CCP holds 33 regions together' (K, 03.06.2018).

The possibilities within the substitution of components are varied, and journalists follow more than the basic and traditional techniques of transformation. In most cases, the substitution is applied by substituting words of the same parts of speech. However, we observe a change of a component and a part of speech in the PU *после дождя /нас/ хоть потоп* [posle doždja /nas/ chot' potop] 'After rain, /us/ the flood' (K, 14.07.2017). The expression shifts from a metaphorical level and, following the context of the floods in Moscow, actualizes its literal meaning.

Some PUs seem to undergo one type of transformation more often than do other types. For example, one of the most frequently transformed PUs by means of component substitution in Russian mass media is the biblical PU *камень преткновения* [kamen' pretknovenija] 'stumbling block', which creates countless modifications. The first component is always substituted, and the second ensures its recognisability, e.g. *Почка преткновения. Россиянке не разрешат стать донором для своего мужа* [Počka pretknovenija. Rossiyanke ne razrešat stat' donorom dlja svoego muža] 'Stumbling kidney. Russian woman will not be allowed to become a donor for her husband' (AiF, 06.07.2018); *Памятник преткновения* [Pamjatnik pretknovenija] 'Stumbling memorial' (K, 24.05.2021). Transformations of this PU cause a shift from the metaphorical meaning to a concrete and literal meaning. The Slovak equivalent *kameň úrazu* 'stumbling block' is more fixed and is not that productive compared to the Russian. If it is transformed, insertion is preferred: *Ďalší koaličný kameň úrazu* 'Another coalition stumbling block' (HN, 18.11.2003).

According to the same principle, the PU of mythological origin *яблоко раздора* [jabloko razdora] 'the apple of discord' is transformed and is also characterized by a high frequency of transformations by the substitution of the first component, e.g.: *Суррогатные*

*дети раздора* [Surrogatnye deti razdora] ‘Surrogate children of discord’ (K, 20.04.2021); «*Медведь раздора*»: фильм про приключения Паддингтона выйдет в прокат уже 20 января [«Medved’ razdora»: fil’m pro priključenija Paddingtona vyjdet v prokat uže 20 janvarja] ‘Bear of Discord’ a film about the adventures of Paddington will be released on January 20’ (KP, 19.01.2018). The abundance of the transformations of this PU has been observed by other researchers as well (cf. Iermachkova 2016: 99). The Slovak equivalent, *jablko sváru* ‘the apple of discord’, is productive in its canonical form. We have only encountered one transformation of this PU by means of a component substitution: *Libération: Blízky východ je miestom sváru aj medzi krajinami Európskej únie* ‘Libération: The Middle East is also a place of discord among the countries of the European Union’ (SME, 15.02.2002).

The two abovementioned PUs (*камень преткновения, яблоко раздора*) [kamen’ pretknovenija, jabloko razdora] are highly productive in the Russian language. They semantically express negative concepts as problems, the cause of disagreements, as supported by F. Miko’s thesis about phraseology as a language of problem situations (Miko 1989: 114).

Other PUs of biblical and mythological origins undergo substitution despite the fact that their origin predetermines them for substantial fixedness and literariness. We perceive numerous transformations of the PU *не хлебом единым жив человек* [ne chlebom edinyim živ čelovek] / *nielen chlebom je človek živý* ‘Man shall not live by bread alone’ in both studied languages, which is transformed solely by the substitution of the component *хлеб* [hleb] / *chlieb* ‘bread’, e.g. *Nielen futbalom je človek živý* ‘Man shall not live by football alone’ (PLUS, 07.05.2016); *Не люксом единым* [Ne ljuksom edinyim] ‘Not by luxury alone’ (K, 15.06.2018). The original PU indicates that man needs more than just material affluence in his life. The following transformation *Nielen duchovnom je človek živý!* ‘Man shall not live by spirituality alone’ (PLUS, 08.11.2013), however, suggests that man also needs materiality and thus is in semantic opposition to the original meaning of the PU.

When comparing the canonical and the new form of some PUs, we observe that a change in the stylistic qualifier can be achieved by component substitution. It is usually a shift from a high style to a neutral or a low style. This change is very obvious in the case of biblical PUs because their style is predominantly bookish. Biblical PUs are transformed in articles on everyday topics, e.g. *На банк /Бога/ надейся, а сам не плошай* [Na bank /Boga/ nadejsja, a sam ne plošaj] ‘Bank /God/ helps those who help themselves’ (K, 15.03.2018). This change of style is typical for fixed slogans that were significant in the past as well, for example: *Пьянство /свобода/, равенство, братство* [P’janstvo /svoboda/, ravenstvo, bratstvo] ‘Drunkenness /freedom/, equality, fraternity’ (K, 14.03.2018). A lot of idiomatic phrases and slogans associated with the Soviet era have a similar fate. Their transformations tend to acquire strong ironic connotations in today’s society, which can also be observed in our instances. The communist slogan, *Пролетарии всех стран, соединяйтесь* [Proletarii vseh stran, soedinjajtes’] ‘Working men of all countries, unite’, is productive in both languages: e.g. *Сепаратисты всех стран, объединяйтесь* [Separatisty vseh stran, ob’edinjajtes’] ‘Separatists of all countries, unite’ (MK, 28.09.2016); *Трамписты всех стран, соединяйтесь?* [Trampisty vseh stran, soedinjajtes’?] ‘Trumpists of all countries, unite?’ (MK, 14.11.2016); *Zadočky celého Slovenska, hláste sa!* ‘Butts of all Slovakia, sign up!’ (CAS, 16.04.2014).

Certain PUs with substituted components that circulate in mass media are so productive that we can talk about particular models. Transformation based on these models is called *phraseological derivation* (Mlacek et al. 2009: 63). These are units such as *от любви до ненависти один шаг* [ot ljubvi do nenavisti odin šag] ‘from love to hatred there is only one

step'. The following transformations of this PU were encountered in our research corpora: *Культурные итоги года: от "Матильды" до решетки один шаг* [Kul'turnye itogi goda: ot "Matil'dy" do rešetki odin šag] 'Cultural results of the year: from "Matilda" to the iron bars there is only one step' (МК, 25.12.2017); *От "Траста" до ареста один шаг* [Ot "Trasta" do aresta odin šag] 'From "Trust" to arrest there is only one step' (К, 23.11.2016).

An interesting transformation that can be perceived as incorrect is *odstrániť Janukoviča z tváre Ukrajiny* 'to remove Yanukovych off the face of Ukraine' (PR, 25.11.2013). In Russian, there is PU *стереть с лица земли* [steret' s lica zemli] 'wipe off the face of the earth', and the given unit *стереть с лица Украины* [steret' s lica Ukrainy] 'to wipe off the face of Ukraine' is apparently a modification of the original PU with one substituted component. Such a language game is correct in Russian because the native speakers recognise the original PU beyond the creative transformation. However, the journalist apparently took the information from a Russian source and translated the PU literally, which caused a negative shift in the meaning. In this way, a non-existent expression was created in the Slovak language: *odstrániť z tváre* 'to remove from the face'. A more appropriate expression would be, e.g. *vymazať Janukoviča z histórie Ukrajiny* 'to erase Yanukovych from the history of Ukraine'.

We would like to point out that the substitution of components can, in some cases, result in the emergence of a new codified form of PUs to actualise its image to current social conditions. This is evident in the Slovak expression *ísť na plnú paru* 'to go full steam' or *ísť plnou parou vpred* 'to go full steam ahead', which arose with the invention of the steam locomotive. Today, the normative PU is considered to be *ísť na plný plyn* 'to go full gas'. The development of science and technology may soon bring another substitution that will replace the current one. For this reason, J. Skladaná claims that PUs represent "a condensed history of the society" (PR, 23.01.2014).

All in all, component substitution is a frequent means of transformation in both studied languages. The reader is able to easily identify the transformation because the form of PUs remains relatively fixed. The semantics of the PU undergoes changes to various degrees (from subtle deviations in meaning to complex changes in semantics). PUs often acquire an ironic wording. The possibilities of substitution are wide, and they all allow a simple and effective connection of the article with a PU.

#### 4.3 *Phraseological paronomasia*

Phraseological paronomasia will be the next type of phraseological transformation to be analysed. It is a structural-semantic transformation based on paronymy, i.e. words that are similar in sound but semantically different. This transformation resembles a pun. The fact that a PU consists of two or more components provides great potential for paronomasia, as each word may offer different combination possibilities. For the author, however, it is a difficult way of transformation, as a way to synchronise a PU with a context by means of a small sound change needs to be found. This small formal change significantly affects the semantic level of the transformed PU. In the case of phraseological paronomasia, the part of speech of the original component needs to be preserved.

Phraseological paronomasia is usually less noticeable than substitution or insertion for the recipient because the modified component only differs slightly from the original. Therefore, the language game contained in a PU may go unnoticed by an inattentive recipient. K. N. Dubrovina calls this method of transformation "phonetic camouflage" (Dubrovina



2005: 112). We consider it an appropriate term that captures the apparent imitation of the original PU.

One of the possibilities of phraseological paronomasia is to change one sound within one component of a PU. This way of transformation has a powerful effect on the reader who is forced to go beyond the mechanical perception of the text. The effect of defeated expectancy occurs in which the reader subconsciously expects a PU in its original form, e.g. *Не всё в аazure /ажуре/. У чартерной Azur Air нашли недочеты в лётной годности самолетов* [Ne vsë v azure /ažure/. U čarternoj Azur Air našli nedočety v lëtnoj godnosti samoletov] ‘Not everything is in azure /all right/. The charter Azur Air has found defects in the airworthiness of aircraft’ (K, 03.02.2018). The sound paronymy based on the change of a voiced consonant to an unvoiced one is observed in the headline: *Пабье /Бабье/ лето. Где в Москве посмотреть матчи ЧМ?* [Pab'e /Bab'e/ leto. Gde v Moskve posmotret' matči ČM?] ‘Pub /Indian/ summer. Where to watch World Cup matches in Moscow?’ (AiF, 23.06.2018).

The previous example was not based on deeper semantic connections. However, the original component *голод* [golod] ‘hunger’ and the transformed component *холод* [cholod] ‘cold’ in the example *Холод – не тётка* [Cholod – ne tëtka] ‘Cold is not like an aunt’ (KP, 06.01.2005) are based on similar associations. They both have negative connotations. This facilitates the understanding of the PU even without context.

The exchange of two or more phonemes, or the combination of different transformation methods, is applied more often than the exchange of only one phoneme, e.g. *Всякой карри /твари/ по паре* [Vsjaškoj karri /tvari/ po pare] ‘all sorts of curry /animals/’ (KP, 09.06.2017); *Заткнут за пояс /пояс/. Как в России будут страховать инвестиции* [Zatknut za polis /pojas/. Kak v Rossii budut strahovat' investicii] ‘Tucked behind the policy /belt/. How investments will be insured in Russia’ (K, 21.01.2017).

A productive means of transformation in the Russian language is the use of paronymic derivation in which a similar sounding wording is achieved through word formation. It is often accomplished by word-forming transformations that interfere with the form of a root, a prefix, or a suffix. The sound similarity is weakened, but the possibilities of phraseological paronymy are expanded, e.g. *медвежья заслуга /услуга/* [medvež'ja zaslug a /usluga/] ‘bear’s merit /service/’ (K, 26.02.2018).

We have also encountered a paronymic insertion, in which sound similarity is achieved by adding one or more phonemes: *Минтайное стало явным. Кто выиграл от ухода из России крупнейшей китайской рыбной компании* [Mintajnoe stalo javnym. Kto vyigral ot uhoda iz Rossii krupnejšej kitajskoj rybnoj kompanii] ‘Pollack truth has come out. Who benefited from the departure of the largest Chinese fish company from Russia’ (K, 04.03.2017).

The names of companies are popularly incorporated into PUs through various transformations in Russian journalism. One way to achieve such incorporation is to add phonemes with pun motivation. Interlingual homonymy of PUs arises when a combination of words with the same (or similar) components in one language is fixed, and in another language, it is a free combination of words (Gajarský 2021: 33). A language game based on the name of the grocery store was created: *Сойти на «Нетто». Продовольственный ритейлер не удержался на плаву* [Sojti na «Netto». Prodovol'stvennyj ritejler ne uderžalsja na plavu] ‘Netto has come to naught. Food retailer did not stay afloat’ (K, 19.04.2018). A phraseological homonymy was created by the abbreviation in the following example *ВОЗ и ныне там (Всемирная организация здравоохранения)* [VOZ i nune tam (Vsemirnaja organizacija zdravoochranenija)] ‘Cart – WHO is also there now’ (AiF, 04.01.2019).

Elliptical phraseological paronomasia manifests itself as the ellipsis of one or more sounds from the components of a fixed PU, resulting in a new word: *Добро должно быть с Glockами /кулаками/* [Dobro dolžno byt' s glockami /kulakami/] 'Good should be with Glockes /fists/' (K, 05.04.2018). Here we also observe a language game based on the name of the Austrian arms manufacturer.

Phraseological paronomasia is a rare phenomenon in the Slovak language. In our corpora, we have come across a simple exchange of two sounds, *korzický /gordický/ uzol* 'Corsican /Gordian/ knot' (PLUS, 10.11.2011), in which a mythological PU was adapted to the context of the article on the unsuccessful attempt to stop the uncontrolled growth of the mouflon population. The transformed component *korzický* 'Corsican' is derived from the name of the former homeland of this animal.

Phraseological paronomasia proves the richness of a language in which there are not only enough individual PUs to express notions of life but also a number of sound possibilities to create a play on words. A transformation of this type demonstrates that even a minimal, and at first sight insignificant, intervention in PU can achieve a great effect. In addition to the traditionally increased expressiveness and emotionality, such a transformation surprises the reader with non-traditional forms and stimulates their active perception of the text.

#### 4.4 Contamination

We will proceed to the following type of structural-semantic transformation – contamination. The term contamination covers different types of interaction of linguistic units or their parts similar in meaning, structure, associations, or functions, leading to a semantic or formal change of these units, as well as to the formation of a new word on their basis (Beľčikov 1990: 238).

The new contaminated unit is an independent unit and only functions in the given context. According to D. N. Davletbajeva, "as a result of the contamination process, phraseological contaminants are formed, which are characterized by new meaning, new imagery, and new inner form with expressive and evaluative markedness" (2012: 270).

In general, we can say that contamination occurs less frequently in journalism, probably because intentional contamination is a difficult way of transforming PUs for the author, and it is just as difficult for the reader to analyse these modifications. Contamination is a complex phenomenon in which it is necessary to analyse each PU separately and discover the model on which the contamination is based.

We can define two reasons for the transformation of PUs by means of contamination. The first reason is the incorrect usage of a PU, which most often occurs in spoken language. It is caused by the author's ignorance of semantics and the use of individual PUs in a certain context. The following example is a common speech error often described in scientific literature, *играть значение* [igrat' značenie] 'to play meaning' (Ščerbakova 2018: 85), in which the contamination of two PUs is perceived: *играть роль* [igrat' rol'] 'to play a role' and *иметь значение* [imet' značenie] 'to have a meaning'.

We will mention one more example of an inappropriate contamination in the Slovak language: *kameň sváru* 'block of discord' (PLUS, 20.03.2011). The meaning of the component *svár* 'discord' as the cause of disagreements is not reflected in the context. The article merely describes the cause of the problem for which the original PU *kameň úrazu* 'stumbling block' is sufficient. Therefore, we perceive this contamination as ineffective because it does not lead to increased expressiveness.

The line between intentional and incorrect contamination is quite thin. Sometimes it is difficult to say with certainty whether the author has contaminated the PU intentionally or unintentionally. An analysis of the functions that a contaminated PU performs in the text can help to distinguish it. If contamination shows increased expressiveness and a PU has been adapted to the needs of the context, then such a transformation may be considered appropriate.

It is highly probable that some contaminations that regularly appear in the language of native speakers will eventually become widely accepted variants. Thus, the incorrect contamination *предпринимать шаги* [predprinimat' šagi] 'to take steps' (the emphasis is on the process) and *принять меры* [prinjat' mery] 'to take measures' (the emphasis is on the result) is often observed in mass media: *Путин поручил правительству предпринять меры по поддержке самбо в России* [Putin poručil pravitel'stvu predprinjat' mery po podderžke sambo v Rossii] 'Putin instructed the government to take measures to support sambo in Russia' (G, 16.11.2018).

The same contamination has become accepted in the Slovak language: *Taliánsky minister vnútra chce podniknúť zásadné opatrenia: Toto plánuje zakázať migrantom* 'The Italian Minister of the Interior wants to take major measures: This is what he plans to ban for migrants' (CAS, 31.01.2019). We clearly observe that contamination can serve as a source of new language units if adopted by the language community throughout the historical development of languages. J. Mlacek illustrates the following PU as an example of fixed contamination in Slovak: *rozniesť niekoho v zubo* (contaminated: *rozniesť niečo/niekoho na kopytách a roztrhať v zubo*) 'in the sense: to make mincemeat out of someone' (2007: 70).

The second reason for contamination is the specific realization of linguistic creativity, i.e. the deliberate combination of two PUs that perform various functions in journalism. When contamination is used intentionally, it allows the author to express their thoughts in an unusual way. An appropriately contaminated PU is clear evidence of the author's high level of language command.

Each PU may hide possibilities for contamination. Contaminated PUs can be similar in semantics, structure, or sound form. PUs often join when their components are homonyms, antonyms, or synonyms; however, "PUs that are not semantically identical, but have deep, associative, under the surface connections, which are manifested to a greater extent due to the context, can participate in contamination" (Kolobova 2008: 174-175). These types of connections between components will be seen in examples provided below.

E. A. Kolobova distinguishes two types of contamination (2008). Contaminated PUs can occur linearly, i.e. one by one, or there is a so-called crossing of two meanings, in which we can recognise one common component of a PU. Examples of linear contamination according to the model  $AB + CD = ABCD$  are: *Slovensko vs. Fínsko: Klobúk dole a hlavy hore!* 'Slovakia vs. Finland: Hat down and heads up!' (AK, 27.02.2010); and *posledná kvapka trpezlivosti, po ktorej pohár pretečie* 'the last drop of patience after which the cup will overflow' (CAS, 05.08.2017). In this example, the syntactic inversion of word order is observed. This contamination is acceptable to the reader because the author has worked with a natural metaphorical image in which patience as an emotion is represented by a vessel.

The second method of contamination, crossing, can be schematically represented as  $AB + CD = AD$ . We illustrate this model with the following headline *Šoférovi v Rusku vykypeli nervy: Sused mu zablokoval parkovacie miesto, tak zobral karbobrúsku...* 'Driver's nerves boiled over in Russia: A neighbour blocked his parking space, so he took a carbon grinder' (CAS, 17.03.2018), which is the contamination of two PUs: *v niekom kypí zlosť* 'anger boils in

somebody' and *povolit' nervy* 'to lose temper'. The affiliation of PUs to one concept, anger, enabled contamination based on the cause-and-effect model.

The contaminated PU *preťat' začarovaný kruh* 'cut the vicious circle' (HN, 24.08.2011) was created by adding a component from the PU *preťat' gordický uzol* 'cut the Gordian knot'. Contamination of these two units is possible on the basis of similar semantic meaning. *Začarovaný kruh* 'vicious circle' and *gordický uzol* 'Gordian knot' metaphorically represent a complex situation that is difficult to solve. However, *začarovaný kruh* 'vicious circle' represents a hopeless situation. Meanwhile, *gordický uzol* 'Gordian knot' not only represents a problem that is solvable, but also the need for a quick solution is semantically manifested. By adding the word *preťat'* 'to cut' to the phraseological unit *začarovaný kruh* 'vicious circle' instead of the standardized phrase *vyjsť zo začarovaného kruhu* 'to come out of the vicious circle', vigour and determination are emphasized.

Looser contamination is present in the statement: *mlieko je už dávno rozliate* 'the milk was spilled long ago' (AK, 13.03.2017). The form of the transformed PU was taken from the statement by Julius Caesar *Kocky sú hodené* 'The die is cast', and the PU *je neskoro plakať nad rozliatym mliekom* 'it is no use crying over spilt milk'. Their meaning is what connects these two units and what allows contamination. The inability to influence and to change what has already happened resonates in the semantics of both PUs. The method of cross-contamination naturally involves the process of ellipsis, as some components of PUs are necessarily omitted.

As we have already indicated, the contamination of PUs requires special attention. When used properly, it is an effective stylistic means of journalistic text. In addition, contamination introduces brevity and accuracy into PUs, as it has the potential to express more than the original unit is able to.

#### 4.5 Phraseological ellipsis

The last type of structural-semantic transformation is phraseological ellipsis, which is applied widely in journalism. It is a type of transformation of PUs in which one or more components of the original PU are intentionally omitted.

Most linguists distinguish between two types of phraseological ellipsis, the usual and occasional. I. JU. Treťjakova defines the usual ellipsis as "the stage of the diachronic process of cutting PUs off, as a result of which a new linguistic form of a PU appears", and the occasional ellipsis is understood as "a speech phenomenon in which one or more components are omitted for different purposes" (2011: 97). We will only focus on the occasional phraseological ellipsis.

PUs with ellipsis are frequently used in journalism, which may be related to the efforts of journalists to bring the language of journalism closer to spoken language, where the ellipsis is actively used. In addition, ellipsis most often appears in newspaper headlines. This is understandable because the basic properties of headlines include aptness and conciseness, which are also typical attributes of elliptical PUs.

The parts of the elliptical PUs that significantly evoke the original form of a PU are preserved. The recognisability of the transformation is ensured in this way. It goes without saying that we can never omit components at the expense of the clarity. "An elliptical statement, despite the ellipsis of a certain part of its content, is a complete statement" (Vrlíková 2001: 62).

The ellipsis of a PU can be achieved in several ways. A one-component ellipsis is the omission of only one component. The last component is most often omitted. The reader must then make less effort to recognize the PU than when another component is omitted (Jaki 2014: 146), e.g. *Csáky Durayovi neskrivil ani vlások (na hlave)* ‘Csáky did not twist a hair on (the head of) Duray’ (PLUS, 26.07.2007) and *метать бисер (перед свиньями)* [metat’ biser (pered svin’jami)] ‘to cast pearls (before swine)’ (МК, 06.12.2017). The author may, of course, omit any component that seems to be unnecessary to achieve the desired effect, e.g. *Škoda, že Fico chrlí (ohň a) síru* ‘It is a shame that Fico spews (fire and) sulfur’ (HN, 08.07.2018) and *Ale pohár (trpezlivosti) pretiekol* ‘But the cup (of patience) overflowed’ (АК, 24.04.2017). The omitted components in these examples do not affect the semantics in any way and are only omitted for the sake of language economy.

A multicomponent ellipsis is the omission of two or more components. If a polysemic component remains, ellipsis will actualise its other meaning. For example, the popular statement *Служить бы рад, прислуживаться тошно* [Služit’ by rad, prisluživat’sja tošno] ‘I’d love to serve. Servility is what I hate’ from the comedy *Горе от ума* [Gore ot uma] ‘Woe from Wit’ by A. S. Gribojedov has been reduced to: *Служить бы рад... В Кыргызстане ликвидировали военные кафедры и запретили выезд призывникам за рубеж. Временно* [Služit’ by rad... V Kyrgyzstane likvidirovali voennye kafedry i zapretili vyezd pryzivnikom za rubež. Vremennno] ‘I’d love to serve... In Kyrgyzstan, military departments were liquidated and recruits were banned from traveling abroad. Temporarily’ (КР, 10.08.2016). In this case, the direct meaning of “being in service” has been actualised, and the meaning of “following someone’s orders” is not present. The three dots of the ellipsis emphasize the incompleteness of the PU and increase its expressiveness.

Similarly, in other examples, the ellipsis leads to a dephraseologisation, i.e. to a literal understanding of a PU: *Не хлебом единым. Четыре рецепта, чтобы разнообразить постный стол* [Ne chlebom edinyim. Četyre recepta, čtoby raznoobrazit’ postnyj stol] ‘Not by bread alone. Four recipes to make your fasting table more varied’ (AiF, 19.03.2015). The following PU is often omitted in sports discourse in the Slovak language: *zavesit’ korčule na klinec: Chystá sa Jágr zavesit’ korčule? Svojím videom sa ponúkol českej armáde* ‘to hang the skates on a nail: Is Jagr going to hang the skates? He offered himself to the Czech army by video’ (CAS, 30.09.2015). We noticed ellipsis with component substitution according to this model: *Adriana Lima zavesila svoje krídla so slzami v očiach* ‘Adriana Lima hung her wings with tears in her eyes’ (CAS, 09.11.2018). Thus, the ellipsis can adapt the PU for subsequent semantic or structural transformation.

A semantic shift and a dephraseologisation are perceived in the transformation of the proverb *Век живи – век учись* [Vek živi – vek učis’] ‘Live a century and learn a century’ as well. The main idea of the article with the elliptical headline: *Учись – и век живи* [Učis’ – i vek živi] ‘Learn and live a century’ (К, 27.12.2017) is that Russians with a university degree can live 5–10 years longer than those who have only finished secondary school. The altered word order expresses a change in the sequence of events.

The next example demonstrates how the ellipsis of a verb and minor changes in word order lead to another type of semantic transformation, i.e. double actualization, in which a PU is used in its literal and figurative meaning simultaneously: *Пока «железо» горячо* [Пока «železo» gorjačo] ‘While the iron is hot’ (К, 01.02.2018). Quotation marks notify the reader that the word *железо* [železo] ‘iron’ will be the key to understanding the transformation. In this particular example, the jargon meaning of the word “железо” [železo] as “hardware” has been actualised. The article discusses the trend of bitcoin currency; the higher the bitcoin rate,

the greater the search activity for bitcoin mining equipment. The transformation thus implicitly refers to the action in the original PU: *куй железо, пока горячо* [kuj železo, пока gorjačo] ‘strike while the iron is hot’ in the meaning, ‘mine while the bitcoin is high’.

Phraseological ellipsis often affects multi-word fixed expressions such as proverbs, sayings, and aphorisms which offer wider possibilities for the application of ellipsis. Either the predictive or the nominative part can be omitted e.g. *Ako sa do hory volá... – smerákov dobehlo ignorovanie ústavy* ‘What goes around...— the Smer members have been tricked by the ignorance of the constitution’ (AK, 03.07.2014); *Lež sľuby sa sľubujú a...* ‘Promises are being made...’ (AK, 21.03.2017); *Не родись красивой* [Ne rodis' krasivoj] ‘Do not be born beautiful...’ (K, 23.04.2012). The reason for the unfinished form of proverbs or sayings could be their lengthiness, which is undesirable in headlines.

Phrases characterized by a very high degree of fixedness are frequently transformed by phraseological ellipsis because they have lost their originality and expressiveness with frequent usage. They have become clichés, and native speakers can easily reconstruct their original form and meaning. Such phrases include: *Хотели как лучше, а получилось как всегда* [Choteli kak lučše, a polučilos' kak vseгда] ‘We wanted the best, you know the rest’. It is one of the most popular statements by V. S. Chernomyrdin, which is often omitted in newspaper articles, e.g. *Хотели, как лучше. Изъятый из семьи подросток в больнице покончил с собой* [Choteli, kak lučše. Iz"jatyj iz sem'i podrostok v bol'nice pokončil s soboj] ‘We wanted the best... A teenager taken from their family committed suicide in hospital’ (AiF, 19.03.2018). Some proverbs and sayings are used in abbreviated form so often that not all native speakers know their full form, and to some extent, they may perceive them as PUs in the narrow sense. This is also observed by R. Mood; the term *truncation* is used in English (1998: 131). We will provide more examples: *Голод – не тетка, (пирожка не подсунет)* [Golod – ne tetka, (pirozka ne podsunet)] ‘Hunger is not an aunt, (it will not slip a pie)’; *Моя хата с краю (ничего не знаю)* [Moja chata s kraju (ničego ne znaju)] ‘My hut is on the edge (I don't know anything)’. The mass media tend to abbreviate these fixed units and also to use them in an abbreviated form for semantic transformation: *Голод – не тетка. Мировой продовольственный кризис* [Golod – ne tetka. Mirovoj prodovol'stvennyj krizis] ‘Hunger is not an aunt. World food crisis’ (K, 24.05.2018).

The phraseological ellipsis can lead to a complete loss of motivation of the original PUs during the historical development of a given language, e.g. *Takto to dopadne, keď sa naše celebrity ožerú pod obraz!* ‘This is how it turns out when our celebrities get drunk under the image!’ (PLUS, 16.05.2018). A contemporary person, on the basis of ellipsis, associates the PU with a painting. However, the origin of the PU *byť spitý pod obraz Boží* ‘to be drunk under the image of God’ goes back to the first man, Adam, whom God created in his image. The original meaning, therefore, refers to getting drunk to the loss of the human form (Stěpanová 2004: 138).

We can state that phraseological ellipsis is an interesting means of transformation productive in both the Slovak and Russian languages. The modes of ellipsis are diverse. As our analysis has shown, in addition to the simple shortening of a PU, the ellipsis can also appear in combination with other methods of transformation, e.g. semantic transformations or substitution. Ellipsis maximally condenses the information so it can be applied in newspaper headlines where it performs the function of expressive means with different objectives, e.g. to use a PU literally, to actualise PUs for different contexts, for descriptions of new actuality. According to I. JU. Treťjakova, phraseological ellipsis “demonstrates the dynamic state of

a phraseological system of the modern Russian language as a whole, illustrates rich expressive possibilities of PUs” (2011: 99).

## 5 Conclusion

We have excerpted and analysed 70 transformations of PUs in total. PUs taken from scientific literature (used for illustration and further clarification of the transformation methods) are not included in the analysis because we only aim to analyse the process of phraseological transformations in journalistic sources. Analysis has shown that the transformation of PUs is an active trend in both languages and finds significant application in Russian and Slovak journalism. These changes can be perceived as innovative and natural for these languages. They can be successfully used by native speakers and journalists to achieve a variety of effects.

However, our extracted material clearly indicates a higher level of activity of transformations in the Russian language (40 PUs in total) than in Slovak journalistic sources (30 PUs in total). Our non-native language competence in Russian may have also affected the total number of recognised Russian units. Some of the more difficult transformations of PUs may well have gone unnoticed, and the difference could have been even more pronounced.

We can conclude Russian journalists show a greater effort for emotionality, expressive evaluation, intellectualization of the text, and wider manifestations of language innovation. Slovak media content creators are more restrained in this context and tend to inform the reader factually. Slovak journalists rarely break the boundaries of PUs and adhere to the standard form. Therefore, they do not achieve the same level of expressiveness as Russian journalists.

The analysis of practical material also demonstrates the difficulty to assign a modified PU to a particular way of transformation in certain cases, which is caused by a frequent combination of different ways transformations are applied in one modification.

Table 1 lists the obtained data from our research into the types of phraseological transformations in Russian and Slovak selected sources. As indicated in Table 1, component substitution is the most frequent way of transformation in the Russian language. Insertion and phraseological ellipsis were to a greater or lesser extent balanced in both languages. The slightly higher preference of phraseological ellipsis over insertion could be explained by the general tendency to language economy. Additionally, most of our excerpted material comes from newspaper headlines, which are characterised by accuracy, brevity and originality. Therefore, elliptical PUs perfectly comply with these requirements.

Table 1: Types of phraseological transformations and their occurrence in Russian and Slovak journalism

	Russian language	Slovak language
total number of articles	287	287
insertion	7	7
substitution	14	7
contamination	1	7
phraseological paronomasia	10	1
phraseological ellipsis	8	8
total number of extracted units	40	30

We find contamination quite rare in Russian newspapers, unlike the Slovak language in which contamination is as frequent as other methods (except phraseological paronomasia). Again, this discrepancy could be caused by our non-native competence in Russian. Contamination, as the most difficult transformation method, could be easily overlooked even by native speakers. It is important to note that not all of the provided examples were modified intentionally for specific purposes (e.g. *предпринять меры* [predprinjat' mery], *podniknúť opatrenia*), rather, they could have been a result of incorrect associations or lower phraseological competence of journalists.

Phraseological paronomasia, which leads to the language game, is the prerogative of Russian journalism. This method of transformation is not characteristic for the Slovak language. Russian journalists strive to keep the reader's attention and encourage their active perception of the text with this method.

Some PUs offer wider possibilities for transformation than others. Depending on their universality, they can be integrated into a whole range of different contexts. The analysis has confirmed that such PUs are those that express universal truths and are often PUs with biblical and mythological origins, which are suitable for describing the latest facts in mass media. We have only pointed out some of them, the ones that, in our opinion, are the most productive, such as: *камень преткновения* [kamen' pretkovenija] 'stumbling block', *яблоко раздора* [jabloko razdora] 'the apple of discord', and so on. These two units, however, are not actively transformed in Slovak journalism.

Only five phraseological transformations were recognized as incorrect or not appropriate in our analysis. Other transformed PUs were original and innovative because they were transformed intentionally to increase expressiveness and to engage the recipients. These units prove the high level of phraseological competence of the journalist and their creativity.

We have gained the overall image of transformation of PUs in Russian and Slovak press in comparative perspective. The phraseological transformation is a phenomenon that has universal character and individual national features. The types of transformations are the same in various languages, but the incidence of their distribution in the press differs. It naturally follows from the abovementioned statements that more demands are placed on Russian readers of journalistic texts (higher frequency of phraseological transformations in total and phraseological paronomasia). We know further research will be necessary to draw ultimate conclusions whether the obtained results are language related, journalism related, paper related, or even mentality related.

The fixedness of PUs is indeed relative, which allows creative modifications of their structure and semantics. It should be noted, however, that the transformations of particular PUs are one-time individual modifications that, as a rule, do not remain fixed in a language. The potential for usual usage in the future is unquestionable, as researchers point out in their work (Moon 1998: 121) and as we have outlined as well. Therefore, M. Čechová considers phraseological transformations to be a kind of "dynamic factor" in the development of phraseology (Čechová 1986: 182). The issue of innovative phraseological transformations is naturally not exhausted by the theses outlined in this article. The transformation of PUs is a complex and multifaceted process which, like other linguistic trends, will evolve. Therefore, it will be necessary to continue observations of this phenomenon as it could tell us more about phraseology and the nature of studied languages.



## Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Research Support Fund of University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava under grant No. FPPV-04-2021—Transformations of phraseological units in Russian-Slovak comparison.

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*In SKASE Journal of Theoretical Linguistics [online]. 2022, vol. 19, no. 1 [cit. 2022-06-01]. Available on web page <http://www.skase.sk/Volumes/JTL50/05.pdf>. ISSN 1336-782X*