

# On the Question of the Method of Typological Study of Phrases

Safarova Umida Aliaskarovna

*PhD of*

*Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages*

**Abstract.** In the article, the author considers the problem of studying the word combination microsystem of the syntactic level of the modern French language. Also, in accordance with the requirements of modern didactics, such issues as 1) optimal principles for determining the essence of a phrase as a special unit of syntax, 2) system-level analysis of phrases in order to determine their optimal classification, 3) a phrase in a system of adjacent language units and 4) evolution of views on the theory of word combinations from the perspective of individual constructions.

**Keywords:** *phrase, analytical form, linguistic analysis, syntactic system, semantic aspect, structural type, lexical abstraction, function word.*

**Introduction.** the problem of word combination has long attracted and continues to attract the closest attention of many researchers of the syntax of various languages, including modern French [2].

Currently relevant is a general linguistic and methodological-didactic task designed to illuminate the most important and fundamental issues of the theory of word combinations in modern French:

1. General theoretical issues related to the doctrine of phrases (methods of linguistic analysis, the theory of word valence as one of the prerequisites for the formation of phrases).
2. Determination of the place of the phrase in the syntactic system of the modern French language. The main features of a phrase and its difference from adjacent linguistic units.
3. History of the formation and development of the theory of word combination in novels.

**Materials and methods.** The division of the science that studies grammatical structure into morphology and syntax, and the attribution of a number of concepts and categories either to the field of morphological or syntactic phenomena has been repeatedly revised by various linguistic schools. The problem of defining a word as a unit of morphology or syntax still remains unclear.

It should be noted that in the French language there are special difficulties in determining the boundaries of a word, associated with the phonetic independence of the word: not words, but rhythmic groups are stressed (M. Grammont, 2009), and also has its own sufficient history. After much debate as to whether a phrase should be considered an independent unit of syntax, different from a word and a sentence, we can now justifiably assert that no one doubts the recognition of a phrase as an independent syntactic unit, just as the importance and necessity of further study and generalization of information is beyond doubt about word combinations accumulated in the treasury of modern language science.

Since not everything has been resolved in the study of collocations, we can conclude that the problem of collocations still continues to be one of the most interesting and controversial linguistic problems. So, are there predicative phrases? This is a matter of distinguishing a phrase from a sentence. If a phrase is distinguished as a special unit of syntax, then, unlike a sentence, it is not characterized by predicativity - the main feature of a sentence.

The problems of coordinating and predicative phrases still remain unresolved. There is no unambiguous solution to the problem of prepositional phrases like:

*Maison Laffitte - > Maison de Laffitte*

*Ingenieur – constructeur - > Ingenieur et constructeur,*

where, along with subordinating ones, there are coordinating relations between the components.

It is undeniable that syntax is the organizational center of grammar. Wed. Robert Robins (2006; p.259) said: "Syntax is the heart of grammar, not an appendage to the use of morphological forms."

Thus, models of phrases (cf. Adj A, N1 N2, etc.) turn out to be in modern French the "epicenter", in which many essential problems of linguistics converge and intersect: the interaction of words and phrases, syntax and vocabulary, syntax and semantics. Hence, further study of the phrase will, to a certain extent, contribute to the solution of a number of general linguistic issues relating to trends in the development of the syntactic subsystem of the French language, the semantic aspect of syntactic relations, etc. The syntactic structure of the French language is characterized by two contradictory trends: one generates analytical forms, the other, compressing them, brings them closer language to syntactic type. Since the French language, unlike inflectional languages, is poor in morphological means expressing the relationship between words, purely syntactic means have developed in it: the use of function words and contraction of syntactic groups. This, in turn, led to the fact that a word with its determiners in the French language is primarily a member of a syntactic group (M. Dessaintes, 1999, p. 118).

Modern French (as, indeed, all other Romance languages) is characterized by the use of full-valued words in auxiliary functions. More and more new categories of French words are crossing the boundaries of full meaning and moving into the category of function words (M. Canepel, M. Moens, 1994, p. 11-12), ex. *un verre plein*, where the adjective *plein* has all the fullness of its meaning, and *un pré plein de fleurs*, where the adjective *plein* acts as a connective and even as a preposition: *du soleil plein la tête*.

The questions that invariably arise when considering the phrases of the French language can be considered not only linguistic (particular), but also general theoretical, since their solution at the microsystem level will allow us to draw certain conclusions about the general and specific features of the entire syntactic system of the modern French language.

The relationships between the components of the phrase are reduced to four types:

1. Subject of action to action: *l'homme s'arrête; le train part; la pluie tombe.*
2. Object: *ouvrir les portes; reprendre sa place.*
3. Attributive: *de larges gouttes; le premier jour; un chapeau de feutre.*
4. Circumstantial: *luire au soleil; lire beaucoup.*

**Discussion.** A phrase is the smallest syntactic structure in which the combinatorial properties of parts of speech are revealed, and at the same time it is the closest context in which the properties of parts of speech are expanded through transposition and new types or subtypes of phrases are created. The development of a phrase, without violating its binomiality, forms complex syntagmas" (L.I. Ilia, 1970, p. 115). Deployment can be supplemented by the attitude of composition: *un homme grand et beau*.

The results obtained to date on the development of the theory of collocations do not in any way reduce the relevance of its further development. Compare, for example, the following opinion: "The study of a phrase as a special structure is completely justified, since it allows: 1) to establish the compatibility potential of each part of speech, its combinatorial properties, 2) to explore the means of expressing connections in a binary phrase, 3) to observe the conditions of change functions of a part of speech under the influence of a dependence relationship, the so-called transposition of parts of speech, 4) to identify paradigmatic classes of phrases that form one of the closed subsystems of the language" (L.I. Ilia, 1972, p. 16).

A special role is given in the theory of phrases to the means of expressing syntactic connections in a phrase. The main means are recognized in this case: 1) word form, 2) function words and 3) word order.

If we talk about the form of a word, we should proceed primarily from the analytical nature of the French language, in which such forms are preserved in the form of agreement in the personal forms of the verb, adjective and past participle.

Thus, inflection as a means of communication in French plays a much smaller role than in other languages (for example, Russian).

Morphological features of parts of speech in French lead to the formation of certain types of phrases that are absent in other languages (for example, in Russian). Wed: *souliers sport, jaune citron, (rideaux) bleu ciel*, and these are also prepositional phrases.

The main role in expressing syntactic relations in a phrase belongs to the preposition. The presence or absence of a preposition allows us to distinguish objective phrases from attributive (*bleu du ciel, bleu ciel*) and adverbial (*habiter une jolie maison / dans une jolie maison*).

A remarkable thing about French syntax is that there is a group of adverbial words that, depending on the environment, are either prepositions or adverbs: *devant, après, avec, contre*, etc. The difference between them is that prepositions serve only to express relationships in a phrase, without themselves being members of the phrase: *courir après quelqu'un, marcher derrière la maison, se mettre devant le mur*, etc. Analogous adverbs differ from prepositions in that they can be members of a phrase: *courir après, marcher derrière, se mettre devant*.

The numerically limited group (about 20 prepositions) is complemented by a large group of prepositional combinations, the formation of which is a productive means of replenishing prepositions in modern French. These are formations like: *faute de, en face de, à longueur de, en bordure de, en direction de, par rapport à...*

So, function words, not being members of a phrase, do not lead to a violation of its binomiality. Hence the phrase in French is always two-word (but not necessarily two-word).

All types of phrases can be represented in the form of the formula  $A + \text{means of communication} + B$ , in which  $A$  and  $B$  do not denote the linear order of words, but the position of the main and dependent word.

The means of communication can be not only a function word, but also the form of the word and word order (H. Huot, 2005, p. 440-441). Moreover, with regard to the order of words in a phrase, two points should be especially emphasized here:

- 1) mobility - immobility of the members of the phrase (*bien vouloir, vouloir bien*) and
- 2) the predominance of progressive word order, i.e. movement from the known to the unknown, when the dependent word, as a rule, follows the main one.

The picture is complemented by the possibility of breaking the phrase – *Il écrit une lettre à son ami (écrit une lettre / écrit à son ami)*.

The above interpretation of the general issues of the theory of phrases allows us to move on to the classification of phrases, the types of which are distinguished based on the following distinctive features:

- 1) belonging of the main word to the corresponding part of speech, which determines the degree of breadth of its compatibility with the dependent word;
- 2) the method of combining the constituent members of a phrase;
- 3) syntactic relations expressed in a phrase by formal means.

The main problems of the theory and practice of collocation can be summarized as follows:

1. The problem of the form of the phrase. Wed. its formulation: "The form of a phrase is a historical category that is determined by the interaction of a number of structural features, for example, ways of

expressing grammatical relations, the place of components and their lexico-grammatical meaning” (M.S. Gurycheva, 1957, p. 15). Thus, the form distinguishes the phrases verb-verb, verbal-nominal, proper-nominal, adjective-nominal, participial-nominal, verbal-infinitive, substantive-infinitive, adjective-infinitive, verbal-pronominal, adjective-pronominal.

2. The problem of the structural type of phrase. In this discussion, the form of a phrase is considered to be correlated with a structural type, expressed in one or more forms. The structural type of the phrase itself is formed depending on the semantic and syntactic relationships between the components (K. Klingebiel, 2003, p.386-387). As a result, combinations of certain lexical-grammatical categories of independent words are formed, interconnected by a certain relationship, because “only the unity of a certain syntactic form with a certain grammatical meaning forms a structural type” (P. le Goffie, 1994, p. 324-325). Here the following types of phrases are distinguished: attributive, appositive, objective and adverbial.

The above approach to the analysis of phrases allowed us to establish the following: if the forms of phrases are mobile and change depending on the development of grammatical means of expressing relationships between words, then the structural types of phrases are more stable, and their number usually does not change.

3. The problem of distinguishing between phrases and sentences. Her solution comes from the following position: the structure of the sentence is more complex, which is revealed when comparing predicative phrases: *il ferme* - a phrase, *il ferme la porte* - a sentence.

In addition, a phrase differs from a sentence in the lack of semantic and intonation completeness. Thus, a phrase differs from a sentence in the absence of its most essential features: intonational completeness, predicativity and the associated category of modality” (M.S. Gurycheva, 1963, p. 103).

4. The problem of classifying phrases. In this regard, two characteristics are considered relevant:

- a) the lexical and grammatical nature of the components and
- b) type of dependency between components.

Based on the first feature, the following are distinguished: verbal-verbal, verbal-nominal, pronominal-verbal, pronominal-nominal, verbal-adverbial, phrases with an adjective as the main component (*toute petite*) or dependent (*sourire ironique*).

Based on the second feature, predicative, objective, attributive, adverbial, and appositive phrases are distinguished.

5. The problem of function words in a phrase. In its solution, great importance is attached to the preposition as the main means of forming a phrase.

The most common are phrases with the prepositions *à* and *de*, the most abstract of all French prepositions. The class of prepositions is replenished as a result of the formation of compound prepositions (*avant de*, *à cause de*, *de peur de*, *histoire de...*) (M.S. Gurycheva, 1963, pp. 102-103; 1965, p. 15).

According to the degree of lexical abstraction, three groups of French prepositions are distinguished: “1) compound prepositions of French formation and some simple prepositions derived from adverbs express adverbial relations. They are close in meaning to adverbs and in some cases can be used as an adverb. These prepositions are at the first level of lexical abstraction; 2) simple prepositions *à*, *pour*, *par*, *avec* and some others are at a higher level of lexical abstraction. In most cases of their use, these prepositions are equivalent to the case inflection of a noun, i.e. can express the addressee's relations, sociative, instrumental, etc. By establishing a relationship of dependence between nouns, they do not express spatial and temporal relations with their lexical meaning; 3) the third group of prepositions includes *de* and *à*, characterized by the highest degree of lexical abstraction. The preposition *de* usually serves as a means of expressing grammatical subordination, and in some cases it expresses only the connection between the members of the sentence” (M.S. Gurycheva, 1965, p. 134).

The allocated degree of abstraction of prepositions and the main features of their use are determined by the initial structure, as well as the method and time of their formation. At the same time, the most lexically specific

are the compound prepositions of French education, which are sufficiently adapted to express adverbial relations: *à travers de*, *à côté de*, *vis-à-vis de*, *en face de*, *auprès de*, *à cause de*, *à condition de*, *de peur de* (M.S. Gurycheva; 1966, p. 134).

The abstract nature of the preposition *de* has turned it into a kind of grammatical indicator of almost all compound prepositions of modern education. The main line of development of prepositions in the modern French language is the movement from more specific spatial meanings to more abstract object meanings and, finally, to the function of a sign of subordination and a connective word.

6. The problem of semantic-structural expansion of a phrase. Research in this aspect shows that any distribution of the components of a word combination gives rise to a complex formation constituting a new lexical-syntactic unity based on smaller structural units. Moreover, if structurally complex phrases coincide with a sentence like “*Je forme des soupçons d'un trop léger sujet*”, then they fully allow division into simple phrases: *Je forme* - predicative, *forme soup desçons* - objective, *trop léger sujet* - attributive, *soupçons d'un trop léger sujet* – attributive.

In this case, the form appears as a structure in which:

- a) grammatical means are represented by function words, word order, syntactic connections;
- b) the structure represents a combination of two words, i.e. it is a syntactic structure;
- c) content: grammatical, complicated, i.e. the lexical value of the second component is added to the main value of the form;
- d) the scope of grammatical meanings includes the meanings of the analytical form as a part of speech and as a member of a sentence.

These are: *J'ai travaillé*; *je vais parler*; *nous sommes parties*; *je viens d'arriver*; *j'aurai réussi*; etc.

In this case, a syntactic connection is understood as “a connection that serves to express the interdependence of the elements of a phrase and a sentence” (O.S. Akhmanova, 1969, p. 398]. Thanks to the constancy of the service component, which is a word in form and a morpheme in function, the syntactic the analytical form comes closer to the morphological form. Moreover, function words that have lost their lexical meaning are subject to stable grammatical abstraction.

In addition to auxiliary verbs, which are equated to affixes like *avoir* and *être*, there is a group of semi-auxiliary verbs *aller*, *devoir*, *faire*, *laisser*, performing the same function in front of the infinitive of the verb as *avoir* and *être* with the participle. Also included here are phrases like *être sur le point de*, *être en train de*, as well as verbs: *se mettre à*, *commencer à*, *finir de*.

As you can see, the analytical syntactic form is a combination of various forms of a word that plays the role of an auxiliary verb (usually auxiliary verbs), with a full-meaning word to express a wide variety of grammatical meanings that cannot be expressed by this word without an auxiliary verb, i.e. these are separately formed grammatical meanings. Such forms are built from two elements: semantic and service-grammatical. The latter is similar in its function to the formative morpheme in a synthetic construction.

Analytical Forms are formed as a result of grammaticalization of initially free phrases by weakening the lexical meaning of one of the components of the phrase, turning it into a function word - an indicator of grammatical meaning. Words with a more general and broader meaning are grammaticated. In this case, the main meaning is expressed by a semantic word, and the second element of the phrase clarifies and differentiates it (P.le Goffic, 1994, p.241-242).

In the grammar of Lucien Tesnier (L. Tesnier, 1976, p.44-46), the elementary syntactic unit is called the core. This is another analogue of a sentence member. Not only full-meaning words, but also their combinations with service words-prepositions, auxiliary verbs, articles, etc. can act as cores distinguished on a functional basis. Subordination is the only permissible connection here, forming the various links of the “syntactic tree”. At its top there is a predicate verb. The subject is considered as a verb-controlled form (on the same level as the

object). In other words, the verb is the organizing center of the utterance, because ultimately the entire network of subordinate connections is reduced to it. And in terms of communicative syntax, it expresses predicativity and modality - constructive features of an utterance. Syntactic elements subordinate to the verb are also divided according to the functional parameter into actants (syntactic elements predetermined by the valence of the verb) and circonstants (circumstances) (L. Tesnier, 1976, p. 102-103).

**Conclusion.** From all of the above, it follows that the main difference between a phrase and an analytical form is that the phrase includes two full-valued words, whereas in the analytical form only one of the components is the bearer of lexical meaning (Ph. Martin, 1999, p. 10). All the above interpretation of word combinations in relation to a word and a sentence receive a different interpretation from the position of the internal organization of a sentence-statement as a system of levels of subordination of hierarchically co-located word forms, their semantic-syntactic gradation.

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