Seminar 4 Multi-Word Units in English

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Set expressions (fixed expressions, idioms)

- the word-groups consisting of two or more words, combination of which is integrated as one unit with specialised non-literal meaning of the whole

☐ E.g. *to sleep like a log, Can a leopard change its spots?, to be busy as a bee.*

Classification according to the function

1)   Set expressions functioning like **nouns**
     E.g. *white elephant, a skeleton in the cupboard, brains trust, dog days*

2)   Set expressions functioning like **verbs**
     Special group – <u>phrasal verbs</u>
     E.g. *the cap fits , to bark up the wrong tree, to keep up with the Jonses; to give up, to make (sth) up, to put (sb) up*

Classification according to the function

3) Set expressions functioning like **<u>adjectives</u>**. A lot of them are <u>similes</u> - expressions of comparison.
E.g. *like a bull in a china shop, as old as the hills, as mad as a hatter*

4) Set expressions functioning like **<u>adverbs</u>**
E.g. *once in a blue moon, time and again, to drink like a fish*

5) Set expressions functioning like **<u>interjections</u>**
E.g. *Bless (one's) soul!, God bless me!, Hang it (all)!*

Phrases, Proverbs, Quotations

- **Set phrases**
  E.g. *Tell it to the horse marines. His bark is worse than his bite.*

- **Proverbs** – wise sayings, often warnings, which have been passed from generation to generation. Their advice will never be out of date (**adages**).
  E.g. *It's no use crying over spilt milk. Don't count your chickens before they hatch.*

- **Familiar quotations**
  E.g. Shakespeare: *"Frailty, thy name is woman."*
  Caesar: *"The die is cast."*

Collocations

☐ Words can usually be **combined** (collocated) only with certain words.

☐ If we want to master a language properly we should know what words of the language are most likely to occur together – what are the typical collocations.

E. g. the noun *rain* may be collocated with adjectives: *driving, heavy, pouring, soaking, torrential, freezing, intermittent, light, steady.*

Classification of collocations

☐   <u>A verb</u> + <u>a noun/pronoun.</u>

E.g. *reach a verdict, fly a kite, execute a will, reverse a decision, revoke a licence*

These collocations are highly important for polysemantic nouns.

E.g. *perform an operation* (in a hospital), *carry out (conduct) an operation* (on the battlefield).

☐   <u>An adjective</u> + <u>a noun</u>.

E.g. *warm, warmest* (not "hot"), *kind, kindest, best* (not "good") *regards; a rough estimate; a formidable challenge*

Classification of collocations

- A noun + a verb.

  E.g. *alarms go off (ring, sound), blizzards rage*

- An adverb + an adjective

  E.g. *strictly accurate, sound asleep, keenly (very much) aware*

- A verb + an adverb.

  E.g. *amuse thoroughly, argue heatedly, appreciate sincerely*

- A unit associated with a noun.

  E.g. *a pack of dogs, a pride of lions, a school of whales, a lump of sugar, a drop of oil*