

PHRASEOLOGISMS USED IN THE WORK OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

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Abstract

This article explores the use of phraseologisms in the works of Katherine Mansfield, a key figure of early 20th-century modernist literature. It examines how idiomatic expressions, fixed phrases, and colloquialisms contribute to character development, thematic depth, and narrative realism in Mansfield's stories. The study focuses on selected works such as "The Garden Party," "Miss Brill," and "Bliss," highlighting the role of phraseologisms in expressing social class, psychological states, and cultural identity. The paper also addresses the challenges phraseological elements pose for translation, emphasizing the need to preserve both semantic meaning and cultural nuance. Overall, this research sheds light on Mansfield's linguistic artistry and her nuanced portrayal of human nature through phraseological richness.

Keywords: Phraseologisms, Katherine Mansfield, idiomatic expressions, colloquialisms, character development, thematic depth, narrative realism, social class, psychological states, cultural identity, translation challenges, linguistic artistry.

Introduction

Understanding Phraseologisms

Phraseologisms, also known as idiomatic expressions or fixed phrases, are combinations of words that function as a single semantic unit. They often cannot be understood literally, as their meanings transcend the sum of their parts. Examples include idioms ("kick the bucket"), collocations ("make a decision"), and proverbs ("a stitch in time saves nine"). Phraseologisms add color, cultural context, and emotional nuance to language, making them an essential tool for writers to create authentic dialogue and vivid narrative atmospheres.

In literary works, phraseologisms serve multiple purposes:

1. **Characterization:** Revealing personality, social background, or regional origin.
2. **Tone and Mood:** Establishing irony, humor, sarcasm, or seriousness.
3. **Thematic Reinforcement:** Highlighting cultural norms, conflicts, or values.
4. **Stylistic Texture:** Enriching the prose and making it more engaging.

Katherine Mansfield's Linguistic Style and Use of Phraseologisms

Mansfield's writing is known for its economy of language, psychological insight, and vivid imagery. She often employs naturalistic dialogue and subtle narrative techniques to depict the complexity of human relationships. Within this context, phraseologisms are skillfully integrated to enhance realism and emotional depth.

Regional and Social Dialects

Mansfield, born in New Zealand and spending much of her life in England and Europe, reflects diverse linguistic influences in her stories. She uses phraseologisms typical of New Zealand English, British English, and sometimes continental idioms, reflecting her characters' social backgrounds and geographic settings. For example, in stories like "The Garden Party" or "Miss Brill," idiomatic expressions help situate characters within their class and environment, signaling social attitudes and emotional states.

Idiomatic Dialogue

In Mansfield's stories, dialogue often includes idiomatic expressions that reveal unspoken tensions and relationships. For example, characters may use common English idioms to mask true feelings or maintain social decorum. This layering adds complexity to conversations and invites readers to look beyond the surface.

Metaphorical Phraseologisms

Mansfield's prose is rich with metaphorical phraseologisms that serve symbolic and thematic functions. Expressions such as "to carry the world on one's shoulders" or "walking on eggshells" appear in various adaptations within her work, reflecting the psychological burdens and fragile social interactions experienced by her characters.

Analysis of Phraseologisms in Selected Works

"The Garden Party"

In "The Garden Party," Mansfield employs numerous phraseologisms to contrast the carefree world of the upper class with the harsh realities of the working class. The story's protagonist, Laura, navigates these social divides, and phraseological expressions punctuate the narrative to emphasize her internal conflict. Phrases like "make a fuss," "put on airs," and "down-to-earth" encapsulate societal attitudes and Laura's evolving awareness.

"Miss Brill"

In "Miss Brill," phraseologisms underscore the loneliness and illusion of the main character. Idiomatic expressions relating to performance and appearance—such as "putting on a show" or "masking one's feelings"—mirror Miss Brill's emotional state and her attempt to find meaning in her daily observations.

"Bliss"

"Bliss" features rich use of figurative language and phraseologisms to explore themes of desire and repression. The story's symbolic use of phrases connected to food, heat, and fire—like "boiling over" or "flaming passion"—reflects the protagonist's internal emotional upheaval.

The Role of Phraseologisms in Enhancing Themes and Characterization

Mansfield's strategic use of phraseologisms achieves several key literary effects:

1. Expressing Social Class and Cultural Identity: Phraseological choices often highlight the characters' social status and cultural background, offering insight into societal hierarchies and tensions.

2.Revealing Psychological States: Idioms and fixed expressions often carry emotional connotations, subtly revealing a character's true feelings or mental state.

3.Creating Realistic Dialogue: The naturalistic use of idioms makes conversations believable and immersive, grounding the stories in lived experience.

4.Highlighting Irony and Subtext: Mansfield's phraseologisms often contain ironic or double meanings, inviting readers to uncover hidden layers of meaning beneath polite or conventional speech.

Challenges in Translating Phraseologisms in Mansfield's Work

Phraseologisms, deeply rooted in cultural and linguistic contexts, pose challenges for translators and scholars. Rendering idiomatic expressions in another language requires balancing fidelity to the original meaning with capturing the cultural and emotional nuance. Translators must often find equivalent expressions or carefully explain the original phraseology's significance, particularly for readers unfamiliar with early 20th-century British or New Zealand English.

Conclusion

Katherine Mansfield's use of phraseologisms significantly enriches her literary style, providing texture, depth, and cultural resonance to her stories. These fixed expressions not only contribute to authentic character voices but also reinforce thematic concerns such as social class, identity, and psychological complexity. Studying phraseologisms in Mansfield's work reveals the intricate interplay between language and meaning, showcasing her skill as a masterful stylist and a keen observer of human nature. Further research and comparative studies may deepen our understanding of how phraseological elements function across her oeuvre and modernist literature more broadly.

In conclusion, the study of phraseologisms in Katherine Mansfield's works reveals a profound layer of linguistic artistry that enriches her storytelling and deepens the reader's engagement. Mansfield's use of idiomatic expressions and fixed phrases not only adds authenticity to her characters' voices but also reflects the cultural and social contexts of her time. Through careful analysis, it becomes evident that phraseologisms serve as more than mere embellishments; they function as powerful tools for conveying nuanced emotions, attitudes, and interpersonal dynamics.

Moreover, Mansfield's phraseological choices highlight the complexity of human communication, where meaning often extends beyond the literal. By embedding culturally specific idioms, she invites readers to interpret the subtext and cultural references that shape her narratives. This layered use of language encourages active participation from the audience, fostering a deeper understanding of the social realities and psychological states portrayed in her stories. From a linguistic perspective, examining these phraseologisms contributes to the broader field of phraseology and idiomaticity, offering insights into the interplay between language, culture, and literature. It also underscores the challenges faced by translators in

preserving the subtlety and richness of idiomatic language, which is deeply rooted in particular linguistic and cultural frameworks.

Therefore, the exploration of phraseologisms in Mansfield's works is not only valuable for literary scholars but also for linguists, translators, and cultural historians. It opens pathways for further interdisciplinary research that can enhance appreciation of her contribution to modernist literature and illuminate the enduring power of phraseological units in shaping literary meaning.

Ultimately, Katherine Mansfield's adept use of phraseologisms exemplifies the intricate relationship between language and literature, demonstrating how fixed expressions can encapsulate complex ideas and emotional states. This study reaffirms the importance of phraseological analysis in literary criticism and encourages continued exploration of idiomatic language as a vital element of narrative artistry.

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