

A Brief History of Theories on Idiomatic Expressions

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Abstract

Idiomatic expressions have been dealt with by linguists since the 19th century, when Russian scholars outlined the existence in a language of various special units, made up of two or more words, whose combination is fully integrated and has a specialized meaning. This paper is a short review of theories on idiomatic expressions, from the first researches in the field, of Saussure and Bally, and up to the present days. Our aim is to present those conceptions which have marked a change in the field, with a particular emphasis on the definition of phraseology and the various terms coined for idiomatic expressions. A specific insight is provided on phraseological research in English, Spanish, French and Romanian.