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**Abstract:** *This article examines the semantic and structural features of phraseological units and lexical repetitions expressing adjective intensification in the French language. In particular, phraseological comparisons formed on the basis of the adjective + comme + noun model and the intensificational potential of reduplication are analyzed. The study highlights their historical development, semantic resemanticization, emotional-expressive function, and usage in modern literary discourse. It is shown that in phraseological comparisons, the object used as a standard of comparison gradually loses its literal referential meaning and shifts toward an intensifying semantic function. Furthermore, reduplication is substantiated as one of the ancient grammatical means in French for expressing a high degree of adjectives.*

**Keywords:** *phraseologism, intensification, reduplication, phraseological comparison, adjective intensity, semantic transformation, expressiveness, French language.*

In linguistics, the category of intensity is recognized as one of the semantically and functionally complex and multilayered phenomena. The concept of intensity refers to the expression, through linguistic units, of a higher or lower-than-norm degree of a feature, quality, state, or action in reality. In other words, intensity is a semantic category that expresses how a certain object or phenomenon is manifested more strongly, more vividly, or more weakly compared to a neutral state. This phenomenon is closely connected with subjective evaluation, emotional attitude,

and affective perception in human cognition, and it plays an important role in shaping the pragmatic and expressive features of speech. Therefore, the category of intensity is one of the actively studied linguistic issues in modern semantics, pragmalinguistics, stylistics, and phraseology.

In language systems, intensity is expressed through various means. Among them, lexical means (adverbs such as *très*, *extrêmement*, *absolument*), grammatical forms, syntactic constructions, phonetic stress, and phraseological units are of particular importance. In French,



especially, the ways of expressing adjective intensification are remarkably rich and diverse. Due to the highly developed stylistic potential of the French language, numerous figurative and emotional units have been formed to express intensified meanings of adjectives. These units serve not only to convey information but also to produce aesthetic and emotional effects on the listener or reader.

Among the means of expressing intensity in French, phraseological units occupy an important position. In particular, phraseological comparisons formed on the basis of the adjective + *comme* + noun model are considered one of the most productive intensifying devices of the language. For example, expressions such as *fort comme un bœuf*, *clair comme le jour*, *beau comme un ange* intensify the basic meaning of adjectives and add imagery and expressiveness to speech. In these constructions, the noun component used as the standard of comparison partially or completely loses its original referential meaning and performs an intensifying semantic function. As a result, the entire construction becomes a stable phraseological unit expressing an extremely high degree of an adjective. Processes such as metaphorization, semantic transformation, and desemantization play an important role in phraseological intensification, as the chosen image is often associated with the national-cultural experience, stereotypes, and associative thinking of the people.

Thus, phraseological units have not only linguistic but also linguocultural significance.

In addition, reduplicative constructions, i.e., lexical repetition, are also among the ancient and effective means of expressing adjective intensification in French. Reduplication occurs through the repetition of the same lexical unit two or more times: *joli, joli*; *grand-grand*; *très, très beau*, etc. Such repetitions strengthen emotional emphasis, increase semantic expressiveness, and allow the speaker to convey subjective evaluation more vividly. In spoken language, reduplication is particularly active as a stylistic device enhancing expressiveness. Therefore, the means of expressing adjective intensification in French demonstrate the semantic and pragmatic richness of the language. Phraseological units and reduplicative constructions constitute the most expressive and emotional layer of this system, increasing the effectiveness of speech.

Phraseological comparisons serve as one of the means that expand the emotional and expressive capabilities of language. They not only express a high degree of a quality but also add imagery and stylistic expressiveness to speech. Widely used modern French expressions such as *clair comme le jour*, *fort comme un bœuf*, *vieux comme le monde* have become stable phraseological units as a result of historical development [1, 58]. One of the most productive models of adjective intensification in French is the



adjective + *comme* + noun structure. This model was already actively used in Old French with a comparative meaning and later underwent a process of phraseologization [2, 94].

For example:

clair comme le jour  
malade comme un chien  
bête comme un âne  
rapide comme le vent  
beau comme un ange

In these constructions, the second component of the comparison becomes a semantic intensifier of the adjective. The noun that originally denoted a concrete object gradually loses its denotative meaning and acquires an intensifying *seme*. As a result, the construction as a whole expresses meanings such as “extremely,” “very,” or “highly” [3, 117].

Linguists note that one of the main features of phraseological comparisons is their semantic integrity, meaning that the components are not interpreted separately but as a whole unit [4, 76]. For instance, in *fort comme un bœuf*, the image of the “ox” is not understood as a real animal but as a stereotypical symbol of strength. Because phraseological comparisons are highly standardized in the language system, they are recorded as dictionary units. However, their emotional and expressive coloring may sometimes weaken. For example, in *simple comme bonjour* or *doux comme un mouton*, imagery is reduced, although the intensifying meaning remains [5, 143].

In French literature, phraseological comparisons are widely used as an

effective means of imagery creation. They play an important stylistic role in expressing the psychological state of characters and the emotional atmosphere of events.

For example, in Gaston Leroux’s work: *De telle sorte, conclut Boris, que si le général mourait demain, elle serait plus pauvre que Job.*

In this example, the model *pauvre comme Job* expresses the meaning of “extremely poor.” Here, “Job” does not function as a concrete person but as a semantic symbol of absolute poverty [6, 52].

Similarly, individual-authorial comparisons play an important role in modern French literary texts. In the following example by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the author uses figurative intensification: *La nuit lui apparut vide comme un théâtre sans acteurs.*

Here, the image of a “theatre without actors” creates a strong emotional representation of emptiness and silence. Unlike traditional phraseological units, such comparisons reflect the individual style of the author and produce strong expressiveness [7, 89].

In the works of Jean-Pierre Chabrol, similar expressive imagery is observed:

*Chargé comme la bonne abeille.*

Here, the image of the “bee” is used as an intensive symbol of industriousness and being overburdened. Thus, individual-authorial comparisons create vivid associative imagery in the reader’s imagination.



One of the oldest and simplest means of expressing adjective intensification in French is reduplication, or lexical repetition. Reduplication is a universal grammatical phenomenon found in many languages [8, 211]. J. Damourette and E. Pichon emphasize that reduplication is not unique to French but exists in other languages as well: “Ce tour n’est pas spécial au français, on le rencontre dans différentes langues étrangères” [9, 324].

In French, lexical repetition appears in forms such as:

joli, joli  
grand, grand  
fin, fin  
très, très beau  
trop, trop mince  
fine-fine-fine

Through repetition, the semantic weight of the adjective increases and expressiveness is enhanced. Reduplication performs not only a grammatical but also a pragmatic function, as it directs the listener’s attention to the heightened degree of a feature [10, 167]. One of its main functions is to intensify emotional impact. In spoken language especially, reduplication serves as a means of subjective evaluation. For instance, *belle-belle* conveys a stronger aesthetic judgment than the simple adjective *belle*.

In French, phraseological comparisons and reduplication are important linguistic tools for expressing adjective intensity. In phraseological units formed on the adjective + *comme* +

noun model, the comparison standard undergoes semantic transformation and functions as an intensifier, resulting in stable units expressing a high degree of quality. Likewise, reduplication serves as one of the oldest grammatical mechanisms in French for strengthening adjective intensity. Lexical repetition increases semantic emphasis, enhances emotional expressiveness, and enriches stylistic variation in speech.

The study of phraseological and reduplicative constructions allows for a deeper understanding of the semantic system of French, its stylistic potential, and the functional transformation of linguistic units. These units reveal not only the nominative function of language but also its expressive and pragmatic capabilities. In particular, phraseological comparisons demonstrate the close connection between language and metaphorical thinking. Reduplication, as one of the oldest and most universal means of semantic intensification, enhances the emotional background of speech. The analysis shows that these constructions are stable linguistic units, not static elements, but dynamic phenomena subject to functional transformation. Moreover, they reflect national-cultural cognition, imagery systems, and linguocultural values. As a result, phraseological and reduplicative units emerge as important linguistic means that enrich the stylistic resources of the French language and enhance the expressiveness of speech, justifying their



study as an independent object of modern linguistics.

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