I. Mel'čuk, *General Phraseology. Theory and Practice*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam 2023 (= Lingvisticae Investigationes Supplementa, 36), pp. XIV-280.

General Phraseology. Theory and Practice is the last book written by the world-renowned linguist Igor Mel'čuk, published in 2023. As the author states in the Introduction, the publication aims to improve upon his previous studies on phraseology, and the English terminology introduced in this book is supposed to replace the versions he previously disseminated (e.g., 1964, 1995, 2012, 2015). He developed widely appreciated linguistic theories, first and foremost the Meaning-Text theory (first introduced in 1974), on which this book is founded. He also proposed different Explanatory Combinatorial Dictionaries (e.g., 2006, 2012-2015) that aim at explaining semantic and lexical combinations among words, thoroughly contributing to the research in the lexicographical field as well.

The book under review is written in English and divided into eleven chapters, followed by an appendix presenting a list of Lexical Functions (used in the discussion in the chapters) and a section dedicated to the References, as well as four Indexes (*Definition*, *Notion and Terms*, *Linguistic Items*, *Language*).

The volume aims at providing a universal conceptual apparatus for the description of phrasemes, composed of 51 terms. Each of them is defined within the framework of the Meaning-Text theory, with a further reliance on dependency syntax. Definitions are presented in an algebraic form, while, given that the author's mother tongue is Russian, most of the examples provided in the book are in this language and in English. This notwithstanding, examples in other languages (e.g., Italian, Korean) are provided too.

In the first chapter, the notions of phraseology and phraseme are presented. The ambiguity of the term 'phraseology' is elucidated, since it can indicate both the set of phrasemes in a single language and the linguistic discipline studying the phraseology of all the different languages (in this case, it is called general phraseology).

The second chapter considers two of the basic characteristics of a phraseme: constrained selection (the non-free selection of its lexemic components) and possible compositionality (the signified of the multiword expression composed by the union of the signifieds of the words forming it). The chapter ends with a proposition of a universal classification of phrasemes into lexemic, morphemic, and syntactic.

Chapters 3 to 9 are dedicated to lexemic phrasemes, the best-known family of the three, with a synchronic approach.

In particular, chapter 3 is dedicated to the notion of lexemic phrasemes (formed by lexemic components), which can be syntactically discontinuous and are divided into two major typologies:

Giulia Colombo (University of Milan) – giulia.colombo5@unimi.it
The author declares that there is no conflict of interest

semantic-lexemic and conceptual-lexemic. The first are characterized by a free transition from a conceptual representation of a real situation to the corresponding semantic representations of near-synonymous expressions, but a constrained selection of the semantic representation (as in idioms and collocations). The second typology is defined by a bound selection of the semantic representations for a particular conceptual representation of a real-world situation (as in nominemes and clichés). The author then considers degenerate lexemes, defined as lexemes used only in phrasemes, which do not possess the same properties as normal lexemes (p. 45).

Chapters 4 and 5 focus on idioms, semantic-lexemic phrasemes that are semantically non-compositional (often, not only in the signified but also in the signifier and syntactics). They can be more or less transparent in their signified as well as syntactically discontinuous, while having only a deep part of speech (at the deep syntactic level, they can be considered as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs or clausatives). They can contain degenerate lexemic components, such as quasi-lexemes which do not appear outside of the phraseme in question and do not have a defining meaning or a set of inflectional forms (p. 51).

Idioms can have synonyms, copolysemes and homonyms, as well as lexical functions, and they are divided into three major subclasses: strong (which include neither of the signifieds of the components), semi- (which include the signified of one of its components and an additional semantic component) and weak (which include the signifieds of all the components and an additional semantic component). In the last part of the chapter, three problems concerning idioms are considered (their 'artistic' deformation in speech, their regular grammatical transformations and their dissolution), followed by the lexicographic description of some exemplifying expressions (each idiom has its own lexical entry).

Chapter 5 is dedicated to a practical analysis of three Russian idioms: *Užas kakoj* 'extremely', *Čto za* 'what kind of', and *Anjutini glazki* 'pansies'.

Chapter 6 focuses on collocations, semantic-lexemic phrasemes characterized by compositionality (by definition, in the author's view) and the potential to include multi-word components, which are often 'degenerate' lexemes. Collocations can be syntactically discontinuous, and they are divided into two major classes: semantically motivated ones (with a base and a collocate, the latter used to express some meaning), and syntactically motivated ones (the collocate is used together with the base to satisfy a syntactic rule). Moreover, the distinction between actantial (in which the collocate expresses a semantic actant of the base) and non-actantial (in which the collocate is not a semantic actant of the base) collocations is provided. Examples of lexicographic descriptions of collocations are then offered, provided that, unlike idioms, in Mel'čuk's opinion, they do not have their own lexical entry (they are best presented in *Explanatory Combinatorial Dictionaries*, p. 129).

Chapter 7 investigates nominemes, non-compositional conceptual-lexemic phrasemes that can be informally described as multilexemic proper names. It is important to underline that, like idioms, nominemes can contain quasi-lexemes (e.g., Russian geographical name *Švivaja gorka*, 'Švivyj Little Hill', with the word *Švivyj* being inexistent in Russian outside of this nomineme, p. 140)

Chapter 8 focuses on clichés, compositional conceptual-lexemic phrasemes, which are divided into proper nicknames (or descriptive complex proper names), which have a specific concrete referent (e.g., *Eternal City*, to indicate the city of Rome); termemes, which denote a concrete class of individuals (e.g., *Alzheimer's Disease*); formulemes, which have a specific abstract referent and denote a particular situation (an example is the expression *Happy Birthday*); sentencemes, which refer to generic abstract referents, denoting a class of situations (such statements are generally known as 'sayings', 'proverbs' and so on).

The lexicographic description of clichés is then provided: while proper nicknames do not belong to the language dictionary, since they denote a particular concrete referent (they are better described in encyclopaedias), termemes are described under the entry of their lexical anchors, like formulemes and sentencemes (reported as wholes).

Chapter 9 focuses on pragmatemes, pragmatically constrained expressions used in special situations of linguistic communication, such as written prescriptions coming from official authorities. Mel'čuk signals his new conception of pragmatemes (different from the one proposed in his 2015 work) that considers each of them signalative (i.e., representing an internal psychological state of the Speaker) and clausative (i.e., constituting an independent clause). Pragmatemes can be divided into four pragmatemic types: lexemes, idioms, collocations and clichés (formulemes being the biggest class). They are lexicographically described as lexemes or phrasemes, with precise indications concerning their pragmatic and prosodic (if present) constraints.

Chapter 10 is dedicated to morphemic phrasemes, consisting of morphemes belonging to the same wordform (e.g., JACK+POT, to WEAK+en). Like lexemic phrasemes, they can be divided in semantic-morphemic (idioms, if non-compositional and collocations, if compositional) and conceptual-morphemic phrasemes (nominemes, if non-compositional and clichés, if compositional). Morphemic idioms (non-regular in the combination of the signified of their components) are then taken into consideration and distinguished from suppletive units (non-regular in the combination of the signifier of their components). Morphemic collocations, nominemes and clichés are described equally to their lexical counterparts, the only difference being their analysis both from a diachronic and a synchronic perspective. Indeed, many of the lexemes of a language are diachronic morphemic phrasemes, which would be not directly relevant for a synchronic analysis.

Chapter 11 considers syntactic phrasemes, which present a non-segmental signifier (as opposed to lexemic and morphemic phrasemes) composed, for instance, by a particular prosodic structure or a syntactic operation. Generally, the meaning of syntactic phrasemes is identified by a fictitious lexeme (i.e., a conventional name ascribed to a linguistic sign with a similar signified, but a non-segmental signifier, p. 195). Syntactic idioms are then considered, with the addition of an illustrative list of Russian expressions and the lexicographic description of four of the latter. In conclusion, the book definitely constitutes a solid theoretical basis for a logical study and categorization of phrasemes. It provides a universal conceptual apparatus useful to this purpose, adding to it several practical applications. The inclusion of mathematical formulations to visually describe the definitions might, for some readers, pose an obstacle to their comprehension. This notwithstanding, the volume still represents an outstanding example of Mel'čuk's work in the phraseological field and will certainly become one of the bases for a thorough methodological study of phrasemes.

Giulia Colombo