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## A DISCOURE-BASED APPROACH TO PHRASEOLOGY IN TEACHING

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#### Summary

When speaking about stylistic use, it is important to handle Pus at discourse level rather than at sentence level (the same applies to separate Pus as illustrations). It is also important to emphasize the cognitive and discoursal aspects. Sentence level studies do not account for the discoursal properties of Pus, which frequently may be used across larger stretches of text. Teaching instantial stylistic use is an essential strategy for raising stylistic awareness. By focusing on the discoursal qualities of use of phraseology, it is possible to develop an appreciation of and a creative approach to figurative meaning. "It takes imagination to learn a language" (McRae1996: 18); and it takes imagination to teach figurative use.

### Key words

*Foreign language teaching, Out-of-context exercises, single-sentence approach, Conventional exercises, a case of phraseology.* 

### Foreign language teaching:

My aim is to look at ways in which analysis of stylistic discoursal use of Pus is relevant to language teaching and learning. Discourse-oriented teaching calls for reinterpretation of the role of Pus in texts and for rethinking of research findings over previous years with an eye to the entirety of text. Insufficient attention has been paid to the actual processes that Pus undergo in discourse. It is important to explore the "implications for the study of larger segments of the text and a creation of cohesion thus linking different discourse features" (McCarthy and Carter[1994] 1995: 88). A cognitive approach to discoursal use helps to answer many questions about L2 acquisition at a more advanced level, especially identification of figurative meaning across sentence boundaries and its comprehension, and to develop the ability to think outside the box.



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Traditionally, Pus have been sparingly taught by language teachers and those that have been taught have been handled in traditional ways, dealing with the meaning and grammatical features of the base form and core use contained in one sentence. This attitude and practices of teaching phraseology both require review. A static, petrified view of Pus is not conducive to understanding discoursal use. Just as we come across decontextualised Pus or single sentence examples in theoretical works, the same approach is seen in teaching materials and dictionaries.

## *Out-of-context exercises:*

That is the main reason why exercises containing separate base forms and single sentences have been the traditional concern in teaching phraseology.

The two dominating approaches in teaching materials are as follows:

1.Out-of-context exercises, remaining at the level of the base form with tasks Such as:

– Match the definitions with the correct idiom (Watcyn-Jones 1990);

– Match the idioms with the words associated with them (op. cit.);

– Fill in the missing verbs (op. cit.);

- Choose the correct meaning from the list (Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms5 1998: 456);

Give the American equivalent for British idioms (op. cit.: 457).

# A single-sentence approach:

Which reflects sentence-bound thinking, remaining at the level of core use with tasks such as:

Fill in the blanks with the best idiom from the list above (McLay [1980]1998);

- Choose the word or phrase which best completes each sentence (WatcynJones 1990);

- Say whether the idioms in the following sentences are used correctly (true) or incorrectly (false) (op. cit.);

- Fill in the given missing words (op. cit.);

Complete the idioms with a suitable colour (choose from the box) (op. cit.);

- Choose a suitable word from the lists on the right to fill in the gaps in the sentences (Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms 1998).

# Conventional exercises:

Conventional exercises harness Pus in a strict unchangeable form, keeping them rigid and encased in their core use. Filling in the missing word presupposes a



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stencilled approach. These exercises should be reserved for beginner and lower intermediate levels, provided learners are introduced to:

1. The basic concepts of phraseology;

2. The fact that core use is not the only way Pus function in discourse; it is not the be-all and end-all of their existence;

3. The possibility of instantial use (even if only in a very simple way).

It is small wonder that after the traditional type of training learners feel nonplussed when faced with a real discourse situation where instantial use does not fit the prescribed form and meaning fixed in a dictionary entry.

# A case of phraseology:

In the case of phraseology, awareness is not merely a realisation that instantial use is present. Stylistic awareness also involves abilities to perceive, comprehend, and infer, assuming an adequate level of knowledge and skills. Raising stylistic awareness implies the need to foster student ability to observe and analyse instantial use in a particular text, to see beyond instantial realisations, and to discern patterns applied to achieve an instantial effect. It also means developing an ability to compare various instantial changes and identify patterns that repeat themselves, to notice successive elements that form an extended string of a PU and study the way the instantial elements are related, firstly, to the PU in the particular stretch of text; secondly, to the base form; and thirdly, to each other. Furthermore, it is essential to promote the ability to identify the explicit constituents that represent the PU in a particular application. This is especially true in the case of allusion,where it is vital to see the cognitive process whereby the meaning of the omitted implicit constituents is resurrected in the reader's mind.

# THE LIST OF USED LITERATURE:

1.The history of both linguistics and pedagogical approaches shows that the further we go back in time, the more we find a sentence-centred approach or even a word-centred approach. This is understandable in view of the development of linguistic thought. The sentence-centred approach was preceded by a word-centred approach (Nesfield 1924). Traditionally, issues of teaching phraseology have been mostly examined and illustrated in core use at sentence level. Howarth, for instance, is interested in the development of phraseological competence as a constituent of proficiency in a second language for advanced learners of English (as the title of his article shows). However, his understanding of phraseological competence does not include discoursal use (Howarth 1998).



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2.Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms (1998) gives exercises on pages 456–469 to train the base form and core use with the correct answer supplied by the answer key.

3.For due criticism of this approach, including cloze exercises, see McCarthy and Carter([1994] 1995). "Instead of targeting words at essential random intervals throughout the text and instead of deleting every nth word or instead of using the exercise to test grammatical knowledge, it will be more productive to draw attention to the specifically discourse properties of the text" (op. cit.: 76).