

What are the pedagogical implications of a phraseological approach to language?

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Promoting phraseology to 'the core of language instruction' (Ellis 2008: 9)

- focus on phraseology in FLL/T recent
- its implementation entails a.o.
 - a necessary shift from research results to classroom practice
 - the need to take into account national curricula and realities

...

- the access to phraseological information
- the promotion of phraseology in teacher training
- the adaptation of teaching materials
- etc.

Focus on three issues

- 1. Metalanguage
- 2. Place of grammar teaching
- 3. Digital turn

1. Metalanguage

"Ce qui se conçoit bien s'énonce
clairement
Et les mots pour le dire arrivent
aisément."

Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (1674) for poetry

whatever we conceive well, we express clearly

Gries 2008

- argues in favour of more rigorous definitions of phraseologisms (on the basis of six dimensions)
- to provide a unified framework of reference to promote cross-disciplinary work and to integrate accounts of phraseologisms into larger theories of the linguistic system

Problems

- Metalanguage is “*designed to teach language <and> to engage learners in the process of learning*”. Widdowson (2003: 135-136)
- Phraseology is “*a field bedevilled by the proliferation of terms and conflicting uses of the same term*”. Cowie (1998: 210)
- Textbooks use phraseological metalinguistic terms inconsistently. Gouverneur (2008)

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- **Solution**: setting up a core list of pedagogically oriented phraseological terms ?
 - e.g. some of the terms suggested by Granger & Paquot (2008)

Phrasemes

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graph TD; A[Phrasemes] --> B[Referential function]; A --> C[Textual function]; A --> D[Communicative function];
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Referential function

Referential phrasemes

(Lexical) collocations

Idioms

Irreversible bi-and

trinomials

Similes

Compounds

Phrasal verbs

Grammatical collocations

Textual function

Textual phrasemes

Complex prepositions

Complex conjunctions

Linking adverbials

Textual sentence stems

Communicative function

Communicative phrasemes

Speech act formulae

Attitudinal formulae

(including attitudinal sentence stems)

Proverbs and proverb fragments

Commonplaces

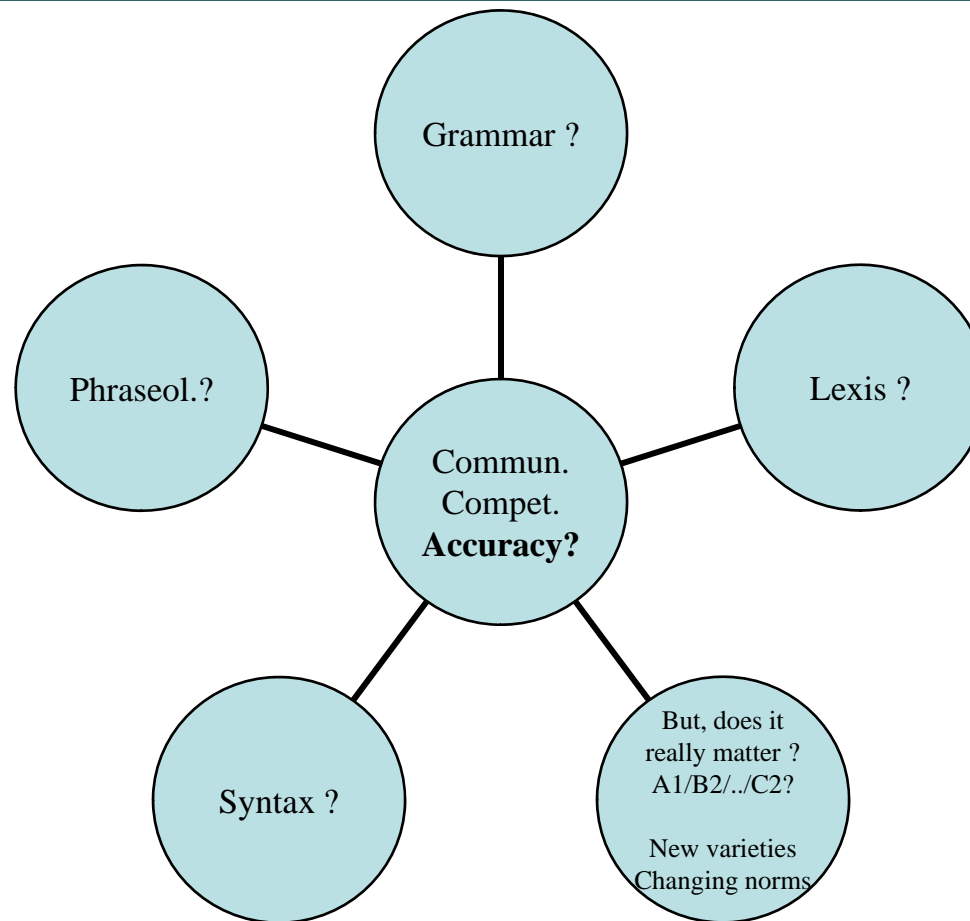
Slogans

Idiomatic sentences

Quotations

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- Some feedback on a teacher training session at UCL:
 - grammatical/syntactic ML : taken for granted
 - lexical/phraseological ML : strong resistance

2. Grammar teaching



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- obstacles to the use of more phraseological, variationist or cognitive approaches to teaching: teachers feel overwhelmed
 - gap between the expectations of learners/teachers and the desire of corpus or cognitive linguists to do justice to the way language works beyond the word level (Meunier 2008: 99)

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- may lead to some sort of schizophrenic attitude : grammar OR lexis
 - Horst (AAAL 2009) 80% of teacher intervention on vocabulary (75% single words – 25% MWUs) / 20% grammar

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- teachers' difficulties to handle the inseparability of vocabulary and syntax on a day to day basis
 - one of the reasons = access to that type of info?

3. Digital turn

miracle or menace?



digital turn

- solution to make phraseological info accessible to NNS teacher

however

- computers sometimes seen as a menace by teachers
 - ‘too easy’
 - ‘they won’t make any efforts any more’
 - ‘it will disturb classroom management’

Wible (2008: 180)

[computers & corpus analysis] “*offer fertile ground for acquiring multiword expressions and for creating well-motivated resources for fostering th[e] acquisition process*”

Yes, they can, computers!

- Handle large amount of data
- Offer easy, shared, distance, free(?) access to data
- When available, computers/laptops in the classroom : (Efaw et al., 2004)
 - provide both teachers and learners with more instructional and classroom tools (digital syllabus, reference tools, instant beam solutions, etc.)
 - enhance students' motivation
 - allow learners to apply multiple learning/discovering strategies (various types of input, quick information search, instant feedback, hyperlinks)
 - enhance critical thinking
 - facilitate notes saving and organisation
 - seem to increase learning and retention

But, can we? (Meunier, forth.2009)

- corpora often miles away from the everyday needs of a vast majority of ESL or EFL school teachers who target English for general purposes for a teenage audience
- no native or learner corpus study to date provides easily transferrable research results for EGP purposes

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- CEFR, Council of Europe 2001: 52) **thematic categories** in EGP: personal identification; house and home, environment; daily life; free time, entertainment; travel; relations with other people; health and body care; education; shopping; food and drink; services; places; language; weather.
 - include **text types** representative of the **meaningful communicative tasks** that learners are called upon to perform (e.g. writing an email, a letter of excuse to a friend, the summary of a book, his/her opinion on a film; chatting with a friend, describing where he/she lives, etc)

Discussion & concluding remarks

Small is the new big!

(Godin 2006)

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- phraseological approach in ELT : numerous and major implications
 - to give the phraseological revolution a chance : patience and determination will be necessary

It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer (Albert Einstein)

Multi-dimensional small step policy

- Keep up the good research work in usage-based approaches to SLA
- Collect and exploit new types of corpora (e.g. meaningful communicative tasks; corpus of textbook materials - Meunier and Gouverneur 2009)
- Get teachers involved (advertize the communicative benefits of a phraseol. approach)
- Adapt existing materials (provide paper + electronic data)
- Promote the use of computers/laptops in the classroom
- Promote principled eclecticism and prioritisation (Meunier 2008)

Principled eclecticism

- use (and blending) of various teaching styles in a discriminating manner as required by learner needs and styles
- integration of different ways of representing language & providing learners with access to those different representations

Prioritisation

- concept of selecting, organising, presenting or arranging items according to priority
- operationalization:
 - quantitative indicators : e.g. frequency of a certain structure in the language and/or the range of registers or text types in which the structure is found
 - qualitative indicators : e.g. users' needs (L1? type of English needed?)

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it's now time for

