

LANGUAGE SKILLS, LEARNING DIFFICULTIES, AND IDENTIFICATION ERRORS

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ABSTRACT

Cases of instantial use may often seem to be vague, contradictory, and hard to grasp or analyse. Many types of instantial use may exert an inhibitory effect on the learner. L2 learners in particular may find it frustrating to deal with passages based on complicated patterns such as allusion or concurrent use, or working with more difficult newspaper texts, let alone sophisticated discourses such as Shakespeare’s plays, or doing diachronic studies.

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Identification difficulties:

Learning difficulties start with identification difficulties. Acquisition of phraseology implies learning various PUs, their form and meaning, together with exploration of the functioning of PUs in discourse with the aim of enhancing the ability to read, understand, and interpret discourse. Identification difficulties may lead to misinterpretation or breakdown in communication, creating difficulties in understanding the writer’s or the speaker’s message.

Cognitive skills:

Training in cognitive insights will lead towards ability to:

1. Verify, evaluate, and monitor comprehension;
2. Remedy miscomprehension;
3. Perceive and respond to stylistic use;
4. Recognise patterns of stylistic use;
5. Understand the mental representation of an image;
6. Perceive associations and develop associative thinking;
7. Recognise continuity and cohesive ties;
8. Understand the workings of creation of new meaning in discourse.

These skills imply the need to train the working memory of the learner with the aim of retaining phraseological information: ability to retain the base form of the PU in the working memory throughout instantiation, as well as ability to keep in mind instantial formations if

reiterated or sustained. When encountering a new instantial element, the reader is able to perceive the link and recognise it as part of the stylistic use of the PU.

Identification skills:

Identification includes basic skills recognition, verification, comprehension, and interpretation (see Ch. 2.4). Improved identification strategies enhance reading comprehension and interpretation, which call for the need to:

1. Establish the identity of the PU: identify the base form, access the meaning, and identify the base image;
2. Establish the instantial pattern;
3. Identify the discursal form of the PU in full and follow up its development;
4. Trace sub-images and cues;
5. Identify cohesive elements: establish both base and instantial ties, and all the complexity of the figurative network;
6. Explore continuity versus discontinuity;
7. Establish reiterations to see whether they serve to convey novel turns or developments.

Skills of visual literacy:

Visual representation calls for ability to identify and comprehend a non-verbal mode of expression to be perceived visually in multimodal discourse, and to establish ties between the visual and the verbal, helping to create coherent visual discourse. Visual literacy is increasingly considered an essential skill for coping with the world of work and social life (Goodman 1996: 38).

Discourse analysis will be impaired if the learner fails to cope with instantial use. Identification skills are an essential part of phraseological competence. In less complicated cases the reader may be unaware of the difficulty and cope with it intuitively by understanding the general message. However, many discourse environments pose a challenge and call for enhanced awareness and conscious solutions when it is impossible to establish the precise semantic and stylistic value of the change without a special identification effort.

Learning and identification skills serve learners as a systematic resource, enabling them to discern the inherent qualities of use of PUs and to cope with the challenges of infinite textual variety and new inimitable discourses. To achieve the required skills level, a discourse-based approach to PUs needs to become normal teaching procedure during interpretation and analysis of texts. Reading with awareness, stylistic awareness included, is only possible with interpretation and appreciation of instantial stylistic use.

In conclusion, identification skills include ability to relate creative instantiation to the rules and patterns of language use. The language user must have sufficient background knowledge of and information on the base form and the instantial pattern, combined with stylistic awareness of the operation of language in discourse. Acquisition of the main patterns of instantial use and the respective cognitive and identification skills is central to discourse-based language learning and teaching. Phraseology is a useful classroom resource for training learner stylistic awareness, especially at advanced level, making learners aware of the roles of Pus in the web of discourse, their use in a particular type of discourse, linking it up with the style of a writer, a genre, or a period. Correct interpretation of instantial use in a multimodal text also depends on understanding the visual stimuli and the level of general visual literacy.

THE LIST OF USED LITERATURE:

1. For word recognition and priming, see Harley (1995:Ch. 3).
2. Italicised by McRae.