

LES EXPRESSIONS IDIOMATIQUES ET LA DIDACTIQUE DU FRANÇAIS LANGUE ÉTRANGÈRE : PISTES À EXPLORER

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to underpin the importance of systematically introducing idioms in the official curriculum for French as a Foreign Language and in the teaching manuals. It draws on the semantic and lexical richness of a certain number of idioms, their content and underlines their importance for communication. The present research targets the French idioms containing at least one component referring to the human body (*la dent, le visage, le nez, le cœur, la bouche, le pied, la main*, etc.), such as “*se faire les dents*”, “*laver la tête à quelqu’un*”, “*avoir le cœur au bord des lèvres*”, “*avoir quelqu’un dans le nez*”, “*avoir dans sa barbe*”. These expressions that often serve to express physical and psychological aspects, as well as emotional states of mind, represent an important part of the French lexicon and have been the object of research in the field of linguistics and social sciences.

Our work consists of linguistic description and semantic interpretation of data resulting from semic analysis of the idioms cited above. On the one hand, research is based on certain concepts from semantic syntax, and on the other, on the semic stylistics, such as the ones defined by A.J. Greimas. The semic analysis makes reference to the lexicographic definitions of the idioms as well as to those of lexemes designating the parts of the human body. A.J. Greimas and B. Pottier, as well as J. Rey-Debove have underlined the importance of the lexicographic definition in semantic research. The description of their semantic values accompanies the preceding part and consists of the definition of real contexts, that is, of the aspects of real life to which the expressions under scrutiny make reference. We have noticed a certain coincidence between the conception of the contexts and that of the cognitive spaces, coincidence privileged within the framework of cognitive linguistics in terms of explanation of fixed expressions and idioms. Having analysed a large number of expressions containing different constituents referring to the human body, we have noticed the existence of a certain number of general contexts and their under-contexts characteristic of this precise type of expression. The semic analysis aiming at lexicographic definitions on the one hand and the description of communicative functions of idioms, on the other hand could represent a precious source and the reference point for the creation of teaching activities.

Key words: Teaching idioms; Vocabulary acquisition; Communication.

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