Abstract. This article provides an overview over the current phraseological didactic research with focus on German. Firstly, I will discuss some characteristics of a phraseological competence. Then I will touch up on the prominence of phraseology in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Furthermore, I will explore methods to define the phraseological units that are to be learned as phraseological basic vocabulary in foreign language acquisition, such as aspects of frequency and native speaker’s knowledge and their influence on the selection of phraseological units for teaching materials. Finally, using the example of German as a foreign language, some general aspects of phraseology in foreign language teaching will be illustrated, e.g. Kühn’s three step model on phraseological didactics. Here, also newer research approaches such as the intersection of multimodality and the language competence in the context of the learning of phraseology are addressed.

Key words: phraseological didactics, phraseological competence, phraseological basic vocabulary, CEFR, multimodality

1. Introduction

Phraseology is here regarded as an integrated “normal” part of every language and phraseological units account for a large part of the vocabulary in language use. As pointed out in Hallsteinsdóttir/Farø (2006: 3), phraseological units are bilateral linguistic signs that – in the traditional sense of de Saussure – build a lexicalized unit of form and meaning. The form is, in difference to lexicalized words, graphically disjunctive, i.e. the lexicalized form contains components separated by blanks. In most cases the components function as words as well, which makes the identification of phraseological units via their form difficult. Phraseological units are on principle ambiguous, as there is always an option to interpret the components compositionally.
Thus, to be able to recognize a phraseological unit as such and reproduce the lexicalized phraseological meaning, one has to know the unit beforehand. Otherwise, one would probably identify its components as lexicalized words per default.

Additionally to the lexicalized linguistic knowledge of common phraseological units in the native language, we assume that speakers use linguistic strategies to process unknown phraseological units. Such strategies are a part of a phraseological competence, as will be discussed in section 2 in relation to phraseology in foreign language learning. In section 3, I will explore the role of phraseology within the educational and didactic policy in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In the following discussion in section 4, I will touch upon different methods to define those phraseological units that are to be learned (phraseological basic vocabulary), such as aspects of frequency and native speakers knowledge and their influence on the selection of phraseological units for teaching materials. Using the example of German as a foreign language, I will illustrate some general aspects of phraseology in foreign language teaching in section 5. Finally, in section 6, I will address newer research approaches such as the relevance of multimodality in the acquisition of language competence and thereby the learning of phraseology.

2. What to know? Phraseological competence

The phraseological competence is often defined as a complex part of the general linguistic and communicative competence in the native language and other languages mastered. This presupposes that speakers possess a general language competence that consists of the overall linguistic, i.e. phonetic, morpho-syntactic, grammatical, lexical-semantic, textual, situational, pragmatic and cultural knowledge and the communicative competence in (a) given language(s). The communicative competence is thereby seen as the ability to adequately use language in communication. Phraseological competence, thus, is the overall knowledge of phraseological phenomena and the ability to use phraseology. The phraseological competence is a part of a general communicative, cultural and linguistic competence that enables a speaker to communicate successfully in a given socio-cultural context. The phraseological competence, hence, includes everything a speaker needs to know in order to be able to adequately understand and use phraseology in communication (cf. Hallsteinsdóttir 2011a for an extensive discussion).
Research has shown that non-native speakers and language learners of German use a combination of compositional bottom-up and holistic top-down strategies when processing both known and unknown phraseological units (Hallsteinsdóttir 1999, 2001; Petrič 2013). The application of strategies depends on several aspects as:

- the degree of lexicalization, i.e. of the student’s knowledge of the foreign phraseology;
- semantic predictability and transparency of the meaning;
- the literal meaning and the formal structure of the components;
- visualization potential of both the phraseological and literal meaning;
- parallel structures (form, meaning and usage) in the L1;
- frequency and context of use.

Beside the inevitable role of information from the context in the process of understanding phraseological units, the native language might be the strongest aspect influencing the phraseological competence. As the results from Hallsteinsdóttir (2001) and Petrič (2013) clearly show, the conceptual, semantic and morpho-syntactic transfer from the native language – and other languages – is one of the dominating strategies of understanding and probably also of using phraseology in a foreign language (Hallsteinsdóttir 2001, Petrič 2013; Reder 2006, 2008). Newer research on phraseology confirms that also the literal meaning of the components plays a significant role in phraseological language processing (cf. Hallsteinsdóttir 2001; Rabanus et al. 2008: 27). If phraseodidactic work is to profit from a systematic implementation of results from research on the phraseological competence, more research is needed. For instance, the role of the literal meaning in cognitive processes needs to be clarified and described in order to define the influence of the literal meaning of the components, their symbolic meaning and structures of mental concepts (in the native and in the foreign language) on the processing of the overall phraseological meaning (cf. in detail on research desiderata in Aguado (2002); processing strategies in Hallsteinsdóttir (2001); metalinguistic strategies in Bergerová (2009, 2010), Kispál (2011) and Jesenšek (2006)).

The CEFR defines the language proficiency of foreign language learners as a communicative language competence including pragmatic, sociolinguistic and linguistic competences. In the next section, the notion of phraseology within those competences in the CEFR is explored.
3. What to learn? The role of the CEFR

The aim of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is to provide “a common basis for the explicit description of objectives, content and methods” for foreign language teaching in Europe:

The Common European Framework provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners’ progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis.

The prominence of phraseology in the CEFR has been explored by Hallsteinsdóttir (2014), Jazbec and Enčeva (2012) and Pirttisaari (2006).

Jazbec and Enčeva (2012: 161) state that the CEFR does not explicitly define phraseology as a competence goal in foreign language learning before C1-level as the following citation illustrates:

From Level B2, users are then found able to express themselves adequately in language which is sociolinguistically appropriate to the situations and persons involved, and begin to acquire an ability to cope with variation of speech, plus a greater degree of control over register and idiom. (CEFR p. 121)

This does not correspond to a phraseodidactic approach that states that knowledge of formulaic language is indispensable (Aguado 2002: 43) and phraseology – a phraseological competence including both phraseological units and processing strategies – therefore should be implemented in the language learning already from the beginning (cf. Iglesias 2013).

A closer look at the three communicative competences in the CEFR – pragmatic, linguistic and sociolinguistic – shows a more differentiated picture. Phraseology is not mentioned explicitly in the description of the pragmatic competence. The pragmatic competence consists of highly formalized aspects, whose linguistic realization is not specified in the CEFR. Highly

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formalized phenomena are often connected to highly formalized language and therefore we assume that the adequate language use bound to the content of the pragmatic competence would include phraseology from A1 level. Phraseology is in fact defined explicitly as a part of both the sociolinguistic (as expressions of folk wisdom, cf. CEFR p. 120) and the lexical competence. The lexical competence as “the competence of, and ability to use, the vocabulary of a language” (CEFR p. 110) includes grammatical and lexical elements. The lexical elements, i.e. the vocabulary, consists of elements from two main categories, “fixed expressions” and “single word forms”. Fixed expressions that “consisting of several words, which are used and learnt as wholes” (CEFR p. 110) seem to include more or less phraseology in broad sense as all categories of multiword units.

Pirttisaari (2006: 249–250) points out the terminological inconsistence in the German version of the CEFR, e.g. the ambiguous use of the terminus idiomatic. There seems to be some terminological difference between the English and the German version of the CEFR. The German version explicitly uses the term phraseology, while the English version uses fixed expressions, idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms while the term phraseology does not occur. Nevertheless, the terminological inconsistence can be found in both versions and becomes a problem, when the terminology is used to distinct between idiomatic and non-idiomatic language use, e.g.

- **idioms**: reading comprehension: B2 (p. 69),
- **idiomatic usage**: listening comprehension: B2 (p. 66); watching TV and Film: C1 (p. 71); informal discussion (with friends): B1 (p. 77); formal discussion and meetings: B1 (p. 78); sociolinguistic appropriateness: C1 (p. 122),
- **idiomatic expressions**: spoken interaction: C2 (p. 27); qualitative aspects of spoken language: C2 (p. 28); spoken interaction: C2 (p. 74); descriptors: C2 (p. 36); listening comprehension: C1 and C2 (p. 66); vocabulary range: C1 and C2 (p. 112); sociolinguistic appropriateness: C1 and C2 (p. 122)
- **non-idiomatic speech**: interviewing and being interviewed: A1 (p. 82)

Even though phraseology is defined explicitly as a part of the sociolinguistic and lexical competence, the decision making of, which vocabulary and thereby also phraseological units should be learned, is explicitly left to the consideration of the users of the CEFR (p. 122). That is, the decision on “which proverbs, clichés and folk idioms learners should need/be equipped/be required to a) recognise and understand and b) use themselves” and “which formulae, idioms and lexical items to require candidates to recognise or recall” (CEFR p. 140, also p. 112 and 149–150) is not made by the
CEFR at all. The next section describes phraseodidactic approaches to the selection of a basic phraseological vocabulary.

4. What to teach? A phraseological basic vocabulary

One major aspect of phraseodidactics is the selection of phraseological units belonging to the basic vocabulary and therefore should be learned in foreign languages. The phraseodidactic research on basic vocabulary includes an exploration of methods to define relevant phraseological units (phraseological minimum/optimum), such as aspects of corpus linguistics and cross-linguistic research and their influence on the selection of phraseological units for teaching materials and learner’s dictionaries.

The selection criteria for a basic phraseological vocabulary as such have been known and approved upon for a long time (cf. Baur et al. 1996; Daniels 1985; Durčo 2001; Eismann 1979; Häcki Buhof/Burger 1994; Hallsteinsdóttir et al. 2006; Hessky 1992; Jesenšek 2011; Möhring 2011; Weller 1979). The main criteria are (cf. Hallsteinsdóttir et al. 2006: 118 for a detailed discussion):

- **Actuality** in the sense of an adequate frequency of the phraseological unit in language use (corpora) and in the native speaker’s knowledge of phraseology (cf. Jesenšek 2006: 142).

- Thematic relevance of the phraseological meaning and pragmatic aspects of usage according to the levels, content and competences defined in the CEFR (linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences as well as reading, writing, listening, speaking and interacting skills).

- **Cross-linguistic** structures and problematic units in relation to the learner’s native language phraseology, their linguistic proficiency and learning aims (cf. Hallsteinsdóttir 2001; Hessky 1992: 167; Reder 2011).

There are several approaches to the selection on the basis of actuality as a high degree of native speakers’ knowledge (Jesenšek 2006; Šajankoá 2005, 2005a) and occurrence in authentic texts and/or dictionaries (Möhring 2011, Hallsteinsdóttir et al. 2006).

A methodic approach for the selection of a phraseological minimum of 300 German proverbs is introduced in Kacjan (2013). The selection is based on frequency in corpora, occurrences on the Internet and in monolingual German dictionaries. Also Baur et al. (1996) and Durčo (2001) have contributed considerably to the theoretic-methodical approach to a proverbial basic vocabulary.
As for other phraseological units, Hallsteinsdóttir et al. (2006) introduce a mixed method approach based on two separate studies on frequency in corpora and a questionnaire study on native speaker’s knowledge. Data from both studies on 1,112 phraseological units extracted from dictionaries and research literature is used to define their actuality and relevance and thereby usability in teaching German as a foreign language. The conclusion is that only 401 phraseological units (in groups AB and CB, cf. Hallsteinsdóttir et al. 2006: 127) are well known and frequent enough to be included in a basic phraseological vocabulary. As Hallsteinsdóttir et al. (2006: 129) point out very clearly, their selection of relevant phraseological units is to be seen as an open list, that is only the very first step in the phraseodidactic working process and it should be supplied with didactic and phraseographic work in order to make the vocabulary usable in learning and teaching materials.

A mixed corpus-linguistic and language competence based approach is a promising method to explore the actuality and relevance of phraseological units. The selection should though, always be based on linguistic material that generally can and should be used in foreign language teaching, that is very large corpora containing everyday language and a very large group of native speaker from a broad range of sociolinguistic groups. Special corpora containing only one genre or media should only be used very carefully and with a caution of their restrictions in language use.

Ettinger (2013) introduces the criterium of “individual usability” for the selection of phraseological units for use in the independent learning of phraseology in foreign languages, i.e. by compiling a personalized phraseological dictionary. A usable framework for the operationalisation of an “individual usability” in order to define what phraseology should be learned, could be connectet to collective usability of phraseology in social groups (e.g. defined by age, native language, study subject or learning goal) or the linguistic context of use (genre, situation, context, thematic specification, etc.). Individualized learning as proposed by Ettinger (2013) should be based on a solid phraseological awareness from the native language and institutionalized foreign language learning or in the learning material used. Furthermore, for such individualized learning to be succesful, learners have to develop an interest in learning phraseology. A part of that is to understand and accept its relevance for their language acquisition and communicative competence. For a learner to achieve this, phraseology should be seen as an integrative part of language learning and the role of phraseodidactics in foreign language acquisition has to be clearly defined. A short description of phraseodidactic approaches is given in the next section.
5. How to teach? Phraseodidactic approaches

Phraseodidactics is a (mostly linguistic orientated) research discipline that addresses the systematic implementation of phraseology in native\(^4\) and foreign language learning (cf. Ettinger 2001: 87). The German phraseodidactic research goes back around 30 years and there have been several publications dedicated to phraseodidactics (mostly focusing on German) in foreign languages during the last decades, e.g. the special issues edited by Wotjak (1996), Hallsteinsdóttir et al. (2011), the anthologies edited by Lorenz-Bourjot/Lüger (2001), Jesenšek/Fabčič (2007), Konecny et al. (2013), Meunier/Granger (2008) and Rey (2013). Moreover, publications on phraseodidactics can be found in several conference proceedings (cf. Lüger 1997 and the bibliography in Lüger 1997a), journals (Jesenšek 2006) and handbooks (e.g. Ettinger 2007; Wray 2007. In addition to theoretical approaches e.g. on the role of native phraseology, several publications develop concepts for integrative, text based exercises, tutorials and software as well as phraseological dictionaries from a didactic and cross-linguistic point of view (e.g. Babillon 2001; Bergerová 2009, 2010, 2011; Ettinger 1998, 2001; Hallsteinsdóttir 2006; Henk 2001; Jesenšek 2011; Köster 2001; Kralj/Kacjan 2011; Lenk 2001; Rentel 2011; Sava 2011; Stolze 2001; Wotjak 1996).

Nowadays, there is generally a consensus on the importance of phraseology in foreign language learning. Nevertheless, results from phraseodidactic research still seem only to have very little influence on the treatment of phraseology in commercial teaching materials. Recent analysis show that the treatment of phraseology in foreign language textbooks has serious deficits in the selection, occurrence, and didactic implementation of phraseological units (cf. Iglesias 2013; Jazbec/Enčeva 2012; Jesenšek 2013: 84–85; Schuhmacher 2013). Such deficits are quite remarkable since firstly, most of the (German) publishers claim to use the specifications in the CEFR and, secondly, the relevance of treating phraseology in textbooks, as usual (in the sense of “normal”) elements of foreign language vocabulary, has been clearly described (Jesenšek 2006: 144). Furthermore, results from newer research have been used to develop research based learning/teaching materials on phraseology as e.g. the following online available phraseodidactic resources\(^5\) that

\(^4\) The role of phraseology in native language acquisition (Häcki Buhofer 2007) and didactics (cf. Kühn (2007) is a neglected area, both in phraseological research and phraseodidactics (cf. Mückel 2013).

are freely accessible and could easily serve as inspiration for the implementa-
tion of phraseology in (commercial) teaching materials:

- SprichWort-Plattform: an online phraseographic database with German-
- Teaching material on German phraseology with theoretical and didactic
  approach (Bergerová 1998–2006).
- EPHRAS, a multimedia-based learning software on German-Hungarian-
  Slovenian-Slovak phraseology (Kralj/Kacjan 2011).
- German phraseology and phraseodidactics with a phraseographic data-
  base and exercises for language learner (Ettinger).
- Italian-German collocations (Konecny/Autelli 2012).
- Phraseopedia, an online-database of German-Spanish phraseology
  (Strohschen 2013).

Peter Kühn’s model (cf. Kühn 1992, 1994) has had an essential influence
on the didactic concepts of those materials (cf. Bergerová 2011; Jesenšek 2011;
Kralj/Kacjan 2011) as well as on most contemporary approaches to how
to teach (German) phraseology. Kühn’s model includes the following three
steps:

- Step one: The recognition of a word combination as a phraseological
  unit in its context of language use.
- Step two: The decoding of the phraseological meaning e.g. by using
  information from the context, a visualization of the phraseological image
  or looking up in a dictionary.
- Step three: The learning of a phraseological unit as a linguistic unit of
  form and meaning with the goal of actively using it in foreign language
  communication.

Notably learning materials accounting for step three, including the con-
ception and implementation of exercises to support the active use of phrase-
ology in foreign language, are still a major desideratum in phraseodidactics

Newer interdisciplinary approaches discuss phraseodidactics not only
from a linguistic perspective but also at the intersection of language and liter-
Lenk 2010, 2011), advertisements (Laskowski 2010) or other non-linguistic
aspects. The next section closes the phraseodidactic discussion of this paper
with a short introduction to phraseology and multimodality.
6. Language and beyond? Multimodality

As stated in the introduction, phraseological units are on principle ambiguous. As the components of a phraseological unit retain the option to function as words in language use, there is always an option to construct a compositional meaning based on the literal meaning(s) of the components. Such semantic complexity is the basis for the realization of multimodal effects in language use. By multimodality, we here mean the use of more than one sign system in a text, e.g. the visualization as in (Hallsteinsdóttir 2011; Hallsteinsdóttir/Farø 2010). The semantic complexity of phraseological units make them notorious candidates for all kinds of word plays, often in combination with illustrations or audio-visual effect in genres like advertising, poems, song texts, headlines, etc. As an example, figure 1 shows an illustration of the German idiom *mit jemandem Katz und Maus spielen* (‘to play cat and mouse with someone’) on the front page of Hallsteinsdóttir (2001). It is based on the literal meaning of the words *cat* and *mouse* but a speaker knowing the idiom will probably activate the phraseological meaning ‘a situation

Figure 1. “to play cat and mouse with someone” (illustration by Franziska Neubert⁶)

⁶ www.franziskaneubert.de.
in which you let someone else believe that they have managed to escape, before you actually catch them’. The German and the English idiom have similar meanings, the degree of cruelty in depending on the dictionary consulted. DUDEN, though, connects the idiom explicitly to ‘the game that the cat seems to be playing with the mouse before eating it’.

The effect of multimodality is often based on confronting the usual (lexicalized meaning) with the unusual and aiming to surprise the language user which requires more processing effort and arises stronger awareness in the understanding process. The surprise effect of the illustration in figure 1 is achieved by a second illustration on the back of the book (figure 2). The normal situation of the cat eating the mouse is turned into the opposite as the mouse seems to have eaten the cat:

![Figure 2. “to play cat and mouse with someone” (illustration by Franziska Neubert – www.franziskaneubert.de – on the back of Hallsteinsdóttir 2001)](image)

Rentel (2011) focuses on the combination of verbal and visual elements in German advertisements and states that the use of multimodal advertisements in teaching has a high degree of effectiveness according to the learning process and a positive influence on the learner’s motivation to learn Ger-

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8 For instance Collins English Dictionary: ‘denoting a fight or contest in which participants attempt to confuse or deceive each other in a cruel or teasing way, esp. before a final act of cruelty or unkindness’ (www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/cat-and-mouse?showCookiePolicy=true). Retrieved 05.12.2014.
10 For those growing up watching Tom and Jerry on TV this is probably the more logical result of a ‘cat and mouse play’ though.
Konecny/Autelli (2013) have empirically tested and successfully implemented visualization as a didactic and lexicographic tool in teaching collocations in German and Italian as foreign languages. Through the visualization, so they state, the cognitive conceptualizations behind the phraseological meaning can be accessed and processed in a way that positively influences the learning process. The aspect of visualization as a learning tool is also implemented in the EPHRAS learning material.

Using and understanding multimodality requires competences at the interplay between linguistic and non-linguistic aspects. As multimodality is an important aspect of phraseology in language use, it should also be considered as an important aspect of a phraseological competence and thereby an obligatory aspect of phraseodidactics.

7. Conclusions

Within German as a foreign language there is an increasing interest in phraseodidactics and a widespread consensus amongst researchers on the necessity of the implementation of phraseology in the language learning process from the beginning (cf. pro-arguments in Jesenšek 2013: 83 ff.). The importance of implementing phraseology and phraseodidactics in the education of (both native and non-native) foreign language teacher in order to acquire a metalinguistic phraseological knowledge – as a part of a language teacher’s phraseological competence and to ensure the adequate integration of phraseology in the language classroom – is indisputable. This is already implemented in learning and teaching materials (Bergerová 1998–2002; Jesenšek 2013a) and in the curricula for German as a foreign language at several universities. However, even in the context of German, there is still a lot of work to be done in order to obtain a general awareness of the important role of phraseology in the language and to establish understanding for the necessity of implementing phraseology in curricula and teaching materials. The selection of a basic phraseological vocabulary and its didactic implementation within holistic approaches to language as an aspect of communication inclusive new media also belong to the desiderata in the German phraseodidactics even though some aspects already have been explored in detail as described in this paper. In other languages, phraseodidactics does not even exist at all or its development is still at the very beginning. Here, the German phraseodidactic research can be an inspiration also with its tradition for a strong interconnectedness and networking with other disciplines in interdisciplinary phraseodidactic approaches.
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Frazeologia w nauczaniu języków obcych

Streszczenie

W artykule przedstawiono zarys współczesnych badań z zakresu frazeodydaktyki, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem języka niemieckiego. Autorka omawia pojęcie kompetencji frazeologicznej i przedstawia rolę i miejsce frazeologii w Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Charakteryzuje metody ustalania, które jednostki frazeologiczne powinny być włączone do podstawowego zasobu słownictwa w procesie przyzwajania języka obcego, zwracając uwagę na częstość użycia i wiedzę rodzimego użytkownika języka oraz wpływ tych czynników na wybór związków frazeologicznych uwzględnianych w materiałach dydaktycznych. Na przykładzie dydaktyki języka niemieckiego jako obcego autorka omawia ogólne aspekty nauczania frazeologii w glottodydaktyce, w tym trzystopniowy model Kühna. Przedstawione są również nowsze podejścia takie jak powiązanie multimodalności z kompetencją frazeologiczną w kontekście nauczania stałych połączeń wyrazowych.