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BOOK REVIEW



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***Teaching Essential Units of Language: Beyond Single-word Vocabulary.* Eli Hinkel (2019). 203 pp. ISBN: 978-1-138-47876-3.**

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"Due to their frequency in both spoken and written language, idiomatic formulas and repeated word combinations can be of great value to learners at practically any level of proficiency" (Hinkel, 2019, p.11)

Aijmer (1996) and Nation and Webb (2011) said it best: idiomatic formulas and repeated word combinations are of great value indeed yet challenging to learners. Why does it make more sense to say *I did my homework* versus *I made my homework*? Why do we say *beautiful weather* instead of *pretty weather*? The reason behind these specific word groupings is that they are collocations. Collocations are key to the acquisition of vocabulary, enhancement of reading and writing style, as well as the attainment of native-like fluency. According to Hinkel (2019), learning collocations is challenging for English language learners, and despite the hundreds of research publications about collocations, there have not been sufficient pedagogical materials for collocation teaching. Therefore, an overview of both practical and research-based foundations of teaching collocation is required. With its contributions by seven top scholars, *Teaching Essential Units of Language* is designed to provide a reference source to English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers taking part in teaching second language (L2) multi-word units (collocations). The motive behind the book is to present a thorough overview of the dominant principles and techniques of teaching L2 phrases in a range of instructional settings around the world.

The book's general framework is divided into two parts: Key Considerations and Teaching Practicalities. The first part (Key Considerations) includes three chapters, focusing on the pedagogical foundations and instructional foci in teaching essential units of language. The second part (Teaching Practicalities) consists of four chapters discussing strategies, techniques, and activities for classroom teaching. A short preamble to the history of collocations precedes the seven chapters, written by Eli Hinkel, the book's editor. References are provided at the end of each chapter, and a subject index is included at the end of the 203-page book.

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Chapter one, *Teaching Multiword Unit* by Penny Ur, offers a teacher's perspective on teaching multi-word units. According to the author, it seems beneficial for L2 teachers to acquire background knowledge that might assist them in multi-word units teaching decisions through the presented definitions, distinctions, and categories accompanied by multi-word units. When teachers acquire background knowledge related to the target multi-word units before they are introduced to practical classroom teaching strategies. They become better equipped to use their teaching strategies effectively and help students acquire important multi-word units. The content of this chapter is relevant to the teaching of languages other than English.

Chapter two, *Working with Multi-word Units in ESP/EAP* by Averil Coxhead, focuses on working with collocation and lexical bundles in English for academic purposes and English for specific purposes. Although the content of this chapter might not be useful to L2 teachers in general as it is limited to EAP and ESP teachers, it still serves as a knowledgeable platform for L2 teachers offering advice on the importance and key features of multi-word units. It also reveals the extent to which published EAP/ESP textbooks focus on this element of language, giving teachers an idea of current resources that are available for teachers. This chapter also helps teachers evaluate, identify, produce, and select lists of multi-word units. EAP and ESP teachers will find it helpful that the author offers principles to consider when planning and testing specialized vocabulary in EAP and ESP courses. At the end of the chapter, the author also presents valuable pedagogical principles that can be useful for ESP/EAP teachers when making teaching decisions.

Chapter three, *Teaching Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions Across the Second Language Curriculum* by John I. Liontas, discusses the pragmatic efficacy of teaching idioms and idiomatic language. In addition, it offers guidance to educators about applying idiomaticity across the second language curriculum to assess students' knowledge of second language idiomaticity. Although this 54-page chapter is long compared to the other six chapters, the author, an expert in this field, presents a brief, precise, detailed, categorical, and clear overview of lexemes/terminologies associated with multi-word units. This chapter provides L2 teachers with a "lexemic perspective on idiomaticity" (Liontas, 2019, p.65), resulting in understanding the properties and functions of idioms and idiomatic expressions in different contexts. Reading this chapter provides L2 teachers with valuable "breadth and depth of understanding idiomaticity" (Liontas, 2019, p.80). This chapter garners information for L2 teachers about pedagogical structures that will support the process of language acquisition beyond single-word vocabulary.

Chapter four, *Teaching Strategies and Techniques* by Eli Hinkel, underlines some multi-word units related tasks that a teacher can carry out in the classroom. The chapter offers several teaching strategies, techniques, and activities, followed by an introduction to the nature of collocations, lists of frequent/infrequent collocations, and ways of raising learners' awareness about collocations. This chapter is beneficial to L2 teachers who aim to provide their learners with repeated and effective exposures to collocations. Consequently, the frequent exposure allows learners to practice their long-term memory and production of the learned collocations in speaking and writing. Although the proposed teaching activities focus solely on speaking and academic writing, the chapter offers authentic examples appropriate to students from beginning to advanced level, which is useful for L2 teachers of different levels.

Chapter five, *Teaching and Assessing Multiword Expressions Using an Open Educational Resources Academic English Corpus* by Brent A. Green is dedicated to corpus-based approaches to teaching multi-word expressions. The author answers the question of which multi-word expressions should be taught to help guide L2 teachers in their lesson plan decision-making. He also creates a constructivist relation between academic English corpus and teaching multi-word expressions by presenting teacher-centered, collaborative, and learner-centered corpus tasks for multi-word expressions. The chapter also discusses how L2 teachers can maximize benefit from using corpora to develop form-focused assessment tasks, meaning-focused assessment tasks, and user-

focused assessment tasks for multi-word expression. The suggested activities are advantageous to L2 teachers because they will help teachers recognize the importance and value of using Open Educational Resources corpora to help their learners engage in corpus-based multi-word expressions activities. Although the author only suggests English language web-based corpora, teachers of languages other than English can still adopt the suggested activities if they tailor the needed activities by using corpora based on the target language they teach.

Chapter six, *Functions of Formulaic Expressions at School* by Cheryl Boyd Zimmerman, explores various practical functions of formulaic sequences. It encourages L2 teachers to consider teaching the authentic target language by incorporating formulaic expressions in various registers, which represents an essential aspect of natural language use. Although the suggested teaching strategies in this chapter focus only on speaking and writing, through this chapter, L2 teachers can help their students to notice formulaic sequences and be aware of the functions they perform.

Chapter seven, the last chapter, *Teaching Lexical Bundles* by Randi Reppen, focuses on multi-word units. However, it specifically focuses on lexical bundles, and their use in conversations, classroom interactions, and academic communication (both spoken and written). The author draws on results from previous studies of lexical bundles to present characteristics of typical bundles in academic writing and spoken language. The characteristics are then followed by suggestions of writing and speaking activities that can serve as a rich source of activities and language teaching materials for L2 teachers. The given suggestions can provide opportunities for teachers to help their students accurately use chunks of language in speaking and writing.

As with any book, space and time could limit the scope of the book. For example, chapter two, which offers a teacher's perspective on teaching multi-word units is not addressed extensively. Considering the challenges of teaching multi-word units and ways of overcoming these challenges from a teacher's perspective is needed to fill this gap. Nonetheless, this work stands as an excellent volume that should be included in the libraries of scholars, educators, and graduate students interested in teaching essential units of language.

I recommend this book for L2 teachers involved in language teaching in various contexts as this book offers valuable insights for L2 teachers working at all education levels. I found this edited volume informative for four reasons. First, it is written by top scholars who are experts in their fields. Second, it contains a reliable theoretical foundation for teaching second language multi-word units before it provides concrete, authentic/realistic activities, textbook samples, and teaching strategies for practical classroom instruction. Third, it highlights different types of multi-word units throughout the book. Finally, it is suitable for L2 teachers in general, not just ESL teachers. I am confident that many readers will respond similarly to this well-written, unique volume of resources for multi-word units instruction. This book could be used in academia by curriculum designers, policymakers, researchers, and Ph.D. students, and it could be used as a textbook in master's degree courses where L2 teachers need to learn how knowledge of L2 multi-word units (collocations) can be explored, developed, and translated into instructional practices.

References

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