

Anita Naciscione, *Stylistic Use of Phraseological Units in Discourse*, Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2010.

Daniele Franceschi
Pisa, Italy

The book opens with a laudatory and affectionate preface by Wolfgang Mieder who recognises the innovative character of the monograph and introduces the reader to the contents of this expanded version of the author's previous study, *Phraseological Units in Discourse: Towards Applied Stylistics* (2001). Mieder stresses the importance of research in this area of linguistics thus welcoming and praising Anita Naciscione's analysis of phraseological communication in English.

In the introduction Naciscione provides the key terminology and concepts which will appear throughout the whole work, consisting of a longer first part with 6 chapters presenting the theoretical basis for the analysis and a second part addressing applicative issues in a final chapter. A definition of PHRASEOLOGICAL UNIT (PU) is given and then an initial distinction is made between the different instantiations of PUs in context with a list of features and functions which are described in greater detail in the following chapters.

Chapter 1 starts with an illustration of how discourse analysis has come about and developed over the past decades and shows that the observation of wide language chunks is also central to the study of discourse and cognitive stylistics, the broad area of research within which Naciscione's analysis is situated. The author warns the reader of the confusing variety of terminology used in the literature to refer to the concept of PU which she defines as a 'stable combination of words with a fully or partially figurative meaning' (p. 8). The main tenet of Naciscione's argument is that stylistic variations of PUs in discourse should not be viewed as violations or deviations from the norm, but as deliberate choices made to achieve specific effects. Most dictionaries of English, however, only tend to give examples of base/core use with just a few exceptions in which compilers also register PU manipulation.

In Chapter 2 Naciscione shows that PUs in fact appear not just in their base and core forms but also in a number of creative instantiations. The base form of a PU is generic, e.g. *to have a finger in even/ pie*, a sort of default expression on the basis of which other more elaborate formations can be constructed. While with core use changes to the base form remain insignificant, as in *He has a finger in every pie*, since they are mainly due to morphosyntactic constraints, in more "peripheral" instantiations a great deal of additions can be made, e.g. *non-governmental organisations with fingers in the environmental pie*. The shift from base/core forms to novel expressions gives rise to semantic, stylistic

and cognitive complexity which can be handled through a process of identification consisting of four interrelated phases, i.e. recognition, verification, comprehension and interpretation.

Chapter 3 presents the innovative concept of 'stylist cohesion' which, alongside the two fundamental notions of stability and figurativeness, is a characterising element of PUs. Naciscione rightly maintains that cohesion is to be observed not just between the constituents of PUs at sentence level, but also between instantial elements over larger text sequences. This makes for a complex web of coherent interconnections between the base form of a PU and its extensions that is regulated by a series of patterns responsible for meaning construction and continuity (Chapter 4). While core use is predictable, instantial use is highly dynamic as it creatively stretches the image portrayed by the PU in discourse by means of extended metaphors, puns, cleft use and allusion. Naciscione provides an amazingly rich array of examples documenting the existence of these patterns not just in contemporary English, but already in Old, Middle, Early New and Modern English. Extended metaphors (*The course of true love is said never to run true. But never did the course of any love run so jagged as that of [...]*) consist of ramified and cohesive structures of associations linked to the image provided by the base PU (*the course of true love never did run smooth*). Punning, which is based on the juxtaposition between a double level of meaning, also leads to instantial uses of PUs (e.g. "*Birds in their little nest agree*", *she said, smiling.../She knew nothing at all about birds*). But PUs are also subject to clefting (e.g. *He was a darling to have kept that list! A new leaf! She would go to [...] and get him to turn H over for her!*) or they can be retrieved only by means of allusion (e.g. *It's a choice of evils. Which do you choose? < to choose the lesser of two evils*).

Chapter 5 illustrates how PUs contribute to the text-forming process through their repetition and cumulation (i.e. reiteration of both base/core forms and instantial realisations), concurrent use ("simultaneous occurrence of several instantial changes within the framework of one PU", p.146), saturation (i.e. "interfusion of several PUs [...] in one stretch of text", p. 151) and comprehensive use (i.e. a PU encompasses a whole text) which all have a highly cohesive force. Naciscione amply demonstrates that these stylistic techniques can also be combined with any of the patterns described in Chapter 4, such as metaphors, puns, cleft use and allusion. In addition, PUs may be characterised by diminution (*an ugly duckling, a sugar daddy, a little bird told me*) producing a change in phraseological meaning by means of euphemism, meiosis, litote, hyperbole and irony.

In Chapter 6 the author analyses the aspect of visual representation of PUs in discourse which has received little attention in the literature, thus paving the way to cognitive-linguistic research studies on phraseology in multimodal texts. She provides numerous examples of illustrations taken from book covers, newspaper articles, magazines, fiction and non-fiction works as well as advertisements to show how pictures support and even extend figurative meaning construction in addition to conveying perceptual immediacy to texts. Images typically exploit the literal and metaphorical components of PUs to create visual puns which can be very effective tools of non-verbal communication.

The second part of the monograph (Chapter 7) is devoted to the discussion of the practical implications arising from the theoretical model described in the previous

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chapters. Naciscione calls for a stronger attention to the stylistic aspects involved in the use of PUs in actual contexts for more effective teaching, learning, translating, lexicographic and glossographic work as well as in other applied areas such as advertising.

Wolfgang Mieder is right in emphasising the significance, originality and value of Anita Naciscione's study since it provides an extremely comprehensive and competent analysis of PUs in use, both synchronically and diachronically, which is the result of almost forty years of research in the field. What strikes the reader is the enormous amount of empirical data used, taken from the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, Mark Twain, G. Bernard Shaw, D.H. Lawrence, Lewis Carroll, James Thurber, to cite just a few, in addition to examples from non-fiction texts, which adds depth and validity to what must certainly be viewed as an important study of phraseological communication in English from a cognitive perspective.

References

A. Naciscione (2001), *Phraseological Units in Discourse: Towards Applied Stylistics*. Riga: Latvian Academy of Culture.