

USING PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS WITH ZOONYMIC ELEMENTS IN TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE 5th FORM

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Rezumat: *Articolul este axat pe tehnica de utilizare a unităților frazeologice, ce conțin nume de animale, în predarea limbii engleze în clasa a 5-a. Sunt prezentate cinci etape de familiarizare a elevilor cu o nouă unitate frazeologică: vizualizarea imaginii, utilizarea contextului, determinarea sensului, traducerea și consolidarea, care sunt demonstrate în detaliu în baza folosirii unei serii de unități frazeologice cu nume de animale în predarea limbii engleze în timpul practicii școlare.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *unități frazeologice, nume de animale, imagine, vizualizare, context, sens, traducere, predare.*

Using Phraseological Units (PhUs) in teaching a foreign language plays an important role in maintaining the motivation and interest from the part of the students to learn this language. Pupils gain additional knowledge making use of PhUs, because these language units carry information about the culture, lifestyle, as well as about the traditions and customs of the native speakers whose language they are studying. The knowledge of PhUs of a foreign language enriches the vocabulary of pupils, develops their views, helps them learn the figurative meaning of the language and introduces them to the folk wisdom. The study of PhUs at school seems necessary, because PhUs are one of the most expressive and vivid means of the language that help to make speech more colourful. The use of PhUs in teaching English is one of the most effective methods of enhancing pupils' interest, their performance and activity during classes. In addition, the use of PhUs develops pupils' creative initiative, allowing them to express their own thoughts and feelings, fact that favorably affects the psychological climate in the classroom during the lesson. During our practice at school I made an attempt to introduce PhUs in the process of teaching English during my classes. I concentrated more on the PhUs containing names of animals, that is, on zoonymic phraseology. The use of namely this type of phraseologisms is motivated by my research interest and not only. PhUs containing names of animals are quite common and are actively used in any language. We also think that pupils, especially at this level, can learn with interest such types of PhUs and memorize them quickly. Thereof, it seemed interesting for me to observe how these PhUs will be assimilated by pupils alongside with the basic vocabulary for this level. So, to familiarize pupils with a new PhU I used five steps: *picture viewing, using context, determining meaning, translation and consolidation*. Further, I will demonstrate how I used the above mentioned steps on concrete examples, and namely, I will show how I introduced four PhUs associated with weather while teaching Unit 3, Lesson 1 "Round the Year" from the textbook "English For You" for the 5th form [1, pp. 42-43]. Thus, pupils got acquainted with the following zoonymic PhUs:

- *to rain cats and dogs* – “to rain heavily/to pour”
- *brass monkey weather* – “very cold weather”
- *lovely weather for ducks* – “wet, rainy weather”
- *dog days of summer* – “the hottest days of summer”

First I introduced the PhU *to rain cats and dogs*. I started with viewing a picture, illustrating this PhU.



Then I offered pupils this PhU in context. I suggested reading a series of sentences containing this PhU and pupils tried to guess its meaning in the given contexts.

*How will you go to play football today? **It's raining cats and dogs.***

*I think it's not safe to drive the car now. **It's raining cats and dogs.***

*Don't forget to take your umbrella, **it's raining cats and dogs** outside.*

The pupils easily determined the meaning of the presented PhU: “to rain very hard” or “to rain heavily”.

After determining the meaning of *to rain cats and dogs* pupils attempted to translate it into the native language, in our case, into Russian. The pupils had to choose the right variant of translation out of three suggested Russian variants:

кошки и собаки

лечь как из ведра

купать кошек и собак

The pupils indicated without doubt to the second variant in the list: “лечь как из ведра”.

Subsequent consolidation was accompanied by making up a dialogue using this PhU. For example, the following is a sample dialogue composed by two pupils:

- *Hello, Andrew. How are you?*

- *Hello, John. I am fine, thank you. And you?*

- *I am not bad.*

- *Did you have a good trip to the beach yesterday?*

- *Not really, it **rained cats and dogs**, so we had to come home early.*

The second PhU we worked with was the PhU *brass monkey weather*. I suggested pupils to look at a picture representing this PhU. Then I offered them to read three sentences containing this PhU and asked them to guess its meaning.



*The weatherman says minus 10 degrees and strong winds for tomorrow. That's **brass monkey weather.***

*John, it's **brass monkey weather** outside tonight! It's **brass monkey weather** today. You'd better put on warm clothes!*

The pupils immediately gave the meaning of the PhU: “extremely cold weather”. Then the pupils translated the PhU into Russian. Out of three translated options (“холодная погода”, “медная обезьяна”, “непогода”) they chose “холодная погода” for *brass monkey weather*. Finally, the pupils made up mini dialogues applying this PhU. Next follows one of the pupil’s dialogues:

- *Hello, John. Did you finish your homework?*
- *Hello, Andrew. Yes.*
- *Let's go to play in the yard.*
- *It's **brass monkey weather** today.*
- *You must put on warm clothes!*

The next PhU (from the three previously mentioned) was *lovely weather for ducks*. Again I presented a picture, illustrating the named PhU. Then I started asking the pupils suggestive questions – “Who is depicted in the picture?” They answered: “A duck in the rain”. I asked: “Do ducks like rain and water?” The pupils answered in chorus: “Yes!”

After that I wrote the PhU on the board. The pupils had to make sentences using it, and put into words the meaning of the PhU.

*It rained all day and it was **lovely weather for ducks**.*

*It's **lovely weather for ducks**, but I don't like it.*

*What is the weather like?- It's **lovely weather for ducks**, take the umbrella.*



The pupils’ examples were followed by the explanation of the meaning of the PhU – “wet, rainy weather”.

Then I wrote on the blackboard three variants of translation of this PhU into Russian. Pupils had to choose the correct form. Out of “прекрасная погода для уток”, “дождливая погода” and “лечь как из ведра” they picked the variant “дождливая погода”.

To get hold of this PhU pupils again worked in pairs making up small dialogues. For example:

- *What's the weather like today?*
- *It's **lovely weather for ducks**.*
- *Oh, a lot of rain!*
- *How do you like this weather?*
- *It's lovely weather for me, too. I like to play in the rain.*

The last PhU connected with weather and presented at this unit was *dog days of summer*. Acquainting the pupils with this PhU I started a conversation about seasons. Then I asked the pupils a question – “Who loves summer?” The majority of them raised their hands. I also asked them about their activities in summer, whether they have pets and if they like to play with them. After that I placed a picture illustrating the stated PhU on the blackboard.



I continued asking suggestive questions: “How do your pets behave in summer?”, “Do they like to play a lot, or are they lazier than usual?” Then I wrote three sentences on the board around the picture. Pupils had to read these sentences and guess the meaning of the PhU.

*During the **dog days of summer** people prefer to stay at home.*

*I love to swim in the swimming pool during **the dog days of summer**.*

*It's **dog days of summer** and my cat sleeps all day.*

Thus, the pupils could easily deduce the meaning of the PhU *dog days of summer* – “the hottest days of summer”. Further, the pupils chose the correct variant of translation out of three suggested variants (“непогода”, “самые жаркие дни лета”, “собачьи дни”). They named the second variant - “самые жаркие дни лета” (usually from July to the end of August).

In order to reinforce the PhU I suggested pupils to make up a short story (5-6 sentences) using this PhU. A sample of a story written by the pupils is presented below.

*It is summer vacation. The weather is nice, even if it is very hot. All the children are having fun outside. But where is Alex? He is in his house. He is playing video games. He doesn't like **the dog days of summer**.*

After that I performed another activity intended to consolidate all the three PhUs connected with weather. I divided the pupils into four groups according to the seasons – winter, spring, summer and autumn. The regarded PhUs with zoonymic elements were written on the blackboard. Parts of the PhUs were mixed. Pupils had to put the parts together and then the pupils of each group had to identify one PhU corresponding to the weather appropriate to their season. The goal was to complete the task correctly and quickly.



The pupils enjoyed this activity immensely. They detected the right parts of the PhUs and the corresponding PhU for each group in no time. When the class was over the pupils kept asking when they will perform more activities like this.

Here I presented four PhUs and the ways or steps through which they were introduced to the pupils of the 5th form. I introduced other PhUs as part of the topical vocabulary of the lessons I was teaching during my practice at school.

Finally, I can say that using PhUs that include names of animals in teaching English, even to such young learners, turned out to be exciting and entertaining. The pupils worked actively, with enthusiasm. I did not see “bored” ones. Every time I used a new PhU at a certain lesson I managed to capture the pupils’ interest, they were all involved in the activities, becoming animated and lively, often even bustling. Some PhUs caused smile or laughter among pupils. However, the attention of the pupils was constantly concentrated on the tasks, they proved creative and worked efficiently during the whole lesson. Everyone had the opportunity to answer and demonstrate his/her knowledge, forgetting about the usual embarrassment when pupils are afraid to answer or speak because of mistakes they can make. Moreover, they were looking forward to new assignments based on zoonymic PhUs. So, we may conclude that using PhUs which include names of animals as part of the vocabulary is captivating and engaging particularly for the pupils of this age, for the most part enhancing their interest for studying the foreign language.

References:

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