

Researching and teaching the socio-cultural background of maritime multiword units

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Naval terminology allows professionals to streamline their communication by conveying meanings as succinctly as possible using the right terminology which reflects different subjects (oceanography, fishing, strategy, history, naval customs, etc.). It is essential to take into account culture to get to know the relevant knowledge structures (i.e. frames and scripts, textual and symbolic knowledge) which underlie many terms (Skandera 2007). Understanding the socio-cultural background of phrasemes helps students acquire them faster. The aim of this paper is two-fold: a) look into the socio-cultural background of the most common twenty five multiword naval units in a pilot corpus of 250,000 words, some of them metaphorical & metonymic expressions (Kövecses, 2002, Wray 2002); b) study eight of these metaphorical units in their contexts of production (EU maritime discourse, textbooks and <http://www.sailingscuttlebutt.com/news/04/ras/>). Multiword units have been chosen with WORDSMITH TOOLS, regarding frequency of use a key factor. Examples of the metaphorical & metonymic phrasemes are *sea change*, *at the helm*, *in the same boat*, *even keel*. The conclusions point out that these multiword units are highly productive in oral and written maritime discourse and worthy of investigation. They reveal that both denotative (in terminological collocations) and evaluative meanings may be embedded in lexical-semantic structures. Metaphor is also frequently used in Naval Engineering texts and terminology for making the terms and concepts more accessible to users of maritime affairs texts. Finally, the twenty-five examples discussed provide evidence that instances of naval terminology are not only found in the maritime genre but also in everyday language texts to add emphasis in EU institutional discourse and other genres. The paper ends by discussing some of the didactic implications of teaching these multiword units (MWUs) for learning terminology.

References

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Biodata

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