

Translation and ICT-enhanced Language Learning for Teaching Idioms and Formulaic Sequences

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Abstract

The linguistic and socio-cultural functions of audiovisual translation, in the form of subtitles, are regarded by many language practitioners as undeniable aids in the field of foreign-language teaching/learning.

Idiomatic expressions and formulaic sequences (which will be briefly defined and illustrated with examples) are frequently avoided in the EFL curriculum in public schools in Portugal, possibly because of the high risk of idioms being mistaken for resembling expressions in the L1. For example, the structure 'to say grace' (one of the fixed sequences appearing in the study) was incorrectly translated by some students as meaning "dizer uma graça" (to tell a joke).

We will briefly describe a study conducted with Portuguese EFL learners and show some segments of the audiovisual materials used and the methodology used to create a variety of viewing, listening and translating activities. The aim was to raise students' awareness of props and clues, as well as to enhance their linguistic fluency in this tricky area of language.

The results of the study will show how exposure to idioms in audiovisual materials and later recognition and retaining of those expressions led to active learning expressed through real production in the foreign language. It also led to enhanced learner-autonomy.

ICT being a general term for all kinds of technologies which enable users to create, access and manipulate information, can in this particular context, clearly offer users/students the opportunity to create their own subtitles, to develop their foreign-language skills and to manipulate the information for communicative purposes and conceptual fluency.