

TEACHING LEXICAL ASPECT OF PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION IN ECONOMIC CONTEXT

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Key words and phrases: general scientific terms; lexical competence of students of economics; specialized economic terms; three-phase model of teaching vocabulary; types of tasks and teaching techniques.

Abstract: The paper focuses on teaching vocabulary for professional communication to students of economics. A three-phase model of teaching vocabulary is presented. A variety of teaching techniques and tasks aimed at mastering economic terminology are described.

In professionally-oriented teaching foreign languages at university level it has become traditional to describe the goal of teaching a foreign language in terms of professional communicative competence. Within the dominant communicative teaching method, as a rule, the emphasis is made on the development of such components of communicative competence as discursive, pragmatic, strategic and socio-cultural ones, while the development of linguistic competence is often unfairly ignored. In our opinion, this issue requires further theoretical and practical development.

Linguistic competence is understood as knowledge associated with recognition and use of language units, and the ability to operate them in order to produce grammatically and lexically correct speech. It is not possible to communicate in a particular professional area without extending the amount of productive and receptive vocabulary minimum through lexical units describing new topics, problems and situations of communication. Thus, teaching lexical aspect of foreign speech in the context of future work of a specialist still remains a relevant problem.

Teaching foreign language vocabulary for professional communication in economic context implies setting the following objectives:

- to determine the nature and structure of terminological vocabulary;
- to identify the differences between terms and professionalisms;
- to describe the specifics of economic vocabulary;
- to compare the features of economic vocabulary in the English and Russian languages;
- to significantly expand the amount of vocabulary units required to read and understand professionally-oriented texts;
- to activate students' knowledge about the form, meaning and use of lexical units in the English economic texts;
- to develop skills of lexically acceptable production of oral and written utterances in economic context.

The vocabulary of professional communication in economic context is far from being uniform. It consists of three layers: 1) general (neutral) vocabulary; 2) terminology; 3) professionalisms.

1. General vocabulary includes the most common words used regardless of the style of speech. It can be found in all types of oral and written utterances. It includes most of the nouns (*conflict, resource, world, life, progress*), adjectives (*right, general, potential, present*), verbs (*make, mean, read*), all numerals and pronouns, most adverbs, prepositions and conjunctions.

2. Terminological vocabulary includes words or phrases that nominate special concepts in different spheres of science and manufacture. Any term is based on the definition of the reality designated by it, therefore a term is an accurate and at the same time concise description of an object or phenomenon. Every branch of knowledge operates its own terms, which make up the terminological system of this science.

Terminological vocabulary is in its turn subdivided into several layers: a) first of all, these are general scientific terms that are used in various fields of knowledge and belong to scientific style of speech in general, e.g.: *analyze, function, identify, significant*. These terms form a common conceptual basis which various sciences share and have the highest frequency of use; b) specialized terms that are assigned to specific scientific disciplines, sectors of manufacture and technology, for example in the economics: *equilibrium price, quantity demanded, frictional unemployment, entity*. These terms form the essence of every science.

3. Professionalisms are words and expressions peculiar to the speech of a professional group. Unlike terms, they do not form a system, since a professional name is often either conditional or built on a metaphor. In contrast to a professionalism, a term (a scientific notion) tends to reveal the essence of the concept.

Economic vocabulary includes names of phenomena and concepts of socio-economic and political spheres. As such, it is an actual part of the lexical system of any language. Developing and changing alongside with society, economic terms reflect the history of economic forms and ideas. The economic system of the country is closely linked to its social and political life. As a consequence, socio-political terms tend to penetrate into economic terminology, e.g.: *strike, full employment, privatization, price denationalization, public ownership, redistribution of income*. On the other hand, economic terms, in their turn, are included in the field of social and political terminology.

Among economic terms one can find both the terms that are not familiar to a wide range of speakers, e.g.: *futures, warrant, dispatch, factoring*, and the terms that are well known to the vast majority of the speakers, e.g.: *market, demand, employment, tax, interest rate, debt*.

With the aim of teaching and learning vocabulary necessary for successful communication in professional economic setting, we have been developed a wide variety of tasks concerned with the introduction, activation and communicative use of general and highly specialized vocabulary of the English economic language.

The introduction of vocabulary is realized through the tasks on the identification of the forms and meanings of a lexical unit. The study of the form of lexical units is based on the derivation models. Students, for example, are asked to fill the gaps in the sentences by choosing one of the cognate words (*economy, economics, economic, uneconomic, economical, economically, economist, economize*), or to fill a gap in the text, by changing the morphological form of the suggested word.

The recognition of the meaning of a lexical unit (meaning interpretation) is carried out through the tasks concerned with matching a word to a definition, synonym, antonym, description, translation equivalent, replacing the narrow concepts by more general concepts. For example, *market surplus – the amount by which the quantity supplied exceeds the quantity demanded at a given price* (the dictionary definition); *poverty – the situation facing those in society whose material needs are least satisfied. Poverty can be defined by some absolute measure... or in relative terms... In either case it is necessarily an arbitrarily defined concept* (description); *land, capital, labour – economic resources* (enumeration, which allows to understand the more generalized meaning).

Effective is the task aimed at identifying the term which does not belong to the list of words of the same conceptual category, on the basis of which the sorting of words can be performed by students. For example, in the chain of economic terms: *social security, income tax, unemployment benefits*, the concept *income tax* is the «odd one out», as it does not refer to the concepts that designate a government transfer.

Activation of professional vocabulary (word reinforcement) is carried out through the following tasks:

- filling the gaps to reconstruct a coherent text;
- completing a sentence with the word or phrase from the text being read/listened;
- the creation of a semantic field or a mind-map on the basis of semantic associations: students are encouraged to organize and logically link basic concepts of the discussed problem in the form of a map, in the centre of which they place the main concept. For example, the keyword *market structure* may lead by association to the generation of a semantic field, including concepts like *monopoly, duopoly, oligopoly, monopolistic competition, perfect competition*. This field may be disordered as a result of brainstorming or organized in a logical-semantic map based on the criterion of increasing / decreasing market power;
- paraphrase, when students are asked to convey concepts, ideas and thoughts through other language means;
- reconstruction of the distorted logical order in a sentence or coherent text;
- ranking, when students are asked to evaluate information contained in a list of words (phrases, sentences) and distribute it according to some criteria, for example, terminological phrases *frictional unemployment, cyclical unemployment, structural unemployment* can be ranked by the degree of the plight of the unemployed;
- defining true/false statements, when students make a meaningful judgment by referring judgments to the content of the text;
- translation of profile-oriented texts into native language.

Tasks concerned with communicative use of lexical units (control of mastering vocabulary) include:

- re-encoding information from non-verbal into verbal form: for example, students are asked to describe and explain in detail the diagram that shows the relationship between empirical, theoretical and applied economics (the relationship between facts, principles and policies in economics);
- re-encoding verbal information into visual one, for example, students are asked to present the content of the text dealing with the main problem of the economy in the form of a pattern reflecting a contradiction between the limited resources (scarce resources) and unlimited human needs (unlimited wants);
- commenting quotes of prominent economists;
- oral presentations using prompts;
- discussion of the current economic problems in the form of a debate;
- problem solving tasks.

We think the rational way of organizing teaching foreign language vocabulary for professional communication is a three-phase model which includes pre-activity, while-activity and post-activity phases.

The pre-activity phase consists of tasks aimed at the recognizing forms, meanings and potential use of lexical units.

While-activity phase is concerned with further development of lexical competence of students. They are involved in doing the tasks aimed realizing conceptual categories and their linguistic form. Professional vocabulary organized according to certain criteria is better memorized, association between the terms being enhanced. Lexical units are repeatedly used in correlated tasks, which are based on methods of comparison, contrast, grouping, sorting, ranking, matching, classification correlated with cognitive mechanisms of speech activity.

The post-activity phase involves productive type of tasks, during which control and self-control of gaining terminology and vocabulary take place. While doing

communicative tasks students use lexical units actively and independently, which results in acquisition of lexical material.

Our experience has shown that using a three-phase model of teaching contributes to successfully mastering foreign language vocabulary for professional communication by students of economics.

Обучение лексическому аспекту профессионального общения в экономическом контексте

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Ключевые слова и фразы: лексическая компетенция студентов-экономистов; общенаучные термины; специальные экономические термины; типы заданий и приемов обучения; трехфазовая модель обучения лексике.

Аннотация: Рассмотрена проблема обучения лексике профессионального общения студентов-экономистов. Представлена трехфазовая модель обучения лексике. Описаны разнообразные приемы обучения и задания, направленные на овладение экономической терминологией.

Ausbildung dem lexikalischen Aspekt der professionellen Kommunikation im Wirtschaftskontext

Zusammenfassung: Es ist das Problem der Ausbildung der Lexik der professionellen Kommunikation der Studenten-Ökonomen betrachtet. Es ist das Dreiphasenmodell der Ausbildung der Lexik dargelegt. Es sind das dreiphasische Modell der Ausbildung und die Aufgaben, die auf die Beherrschung von der Wirtschaftsterminologie gerichtet sind, beschrieben.

Apprentissage à l'aspect lexical de la communication professionnelle dans un contexte économique

Résumé: Est examiné le problème de l'apprentissage à l'aspect lexical de la communication professionnelle des étudiants-économistes. Est présenté le modèle à trois phases de l'apprentissage à l'aspect lexical. Sont décrites de différentes techniques de l'apprentissages ainsi que les devoirs adressés à la maîtrise de la terminologie économique.

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