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ПРИОБРЕТЕНИЕ И РАСШИРЕНИЕ СЛОВАРНОГО ЗАПАСА: ОТ ЕСТЕСТВЕННОГО МНОГООБРАЗИЯ К ОРГАНИЗОВАННОМУ ПРОЦЕССУ

Аннотация. В статье показано, что усвоение лексики это процесс постоянного совершенствования, основанного на знании языковой системы, ее использования в речи, а также на языковом чутье: движение происходит от внутреннего многообразия к организованному процессу с учетом потребностей обучаемых в рамках хорошо организованной пошаговой методики расширения словарного запаса.

Ключевые слова: словарный запас, расширение словарного запаса, внутреннее разнообразие, подход, метод, методика, деловая английская лексика, организованный процесс, функциональная стратификация, страта/страты.

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VOCABULARY ACQUISITION AND VOCABULARY EXTENSION: FROM INTRINSIC DIVERSITY TO ARBITRARY ORDER.

Abstract. In the article vocabulary acquisition is shown to be a process of ongoing improvement based on the knowledge of the language system, its use in speech and one's feel for the language; the

movement is from intrinsic diversity to arbitrary order with the needs of the learners at the core of a well-organized step-by-step methodology of vocabulary extension.

Key words: vocabulary, vocabulary acquisition, vocabulary extension, intrinsic diversity, arbitrary order, approach, method, technique, Business English vocabulary, functional stratification, stratum/strata.

-One of the common misconceptions in ELT (English language teaching) tends to treat vocabulary as a homogeneous inventory of patterned unilateral items reduced to the meanings they acquire in speech at the speaker's will. The natural diversity of forms and meanings within the lexical system is purposefully disregarded and, not infrequently, levelled out. Vocabulary acquisition itself is often enough approached as a highly subconscious activity that requires no effort on the part of the learner; the need for the consciously devised and consistently deployed methods is hardly ever given a thought. In fact, vocabulary extension is erroneously confounded, or purposefully identified, with osmosis in plants. This pervasive myth has been cleared up on several occasions [3, 4].

Acquiring the vocabulary of a highly developed literary language presupposes a lot of hard work and controlled activity; it is not as instant, easy, effortless and subconscious as some people allow themselves to believe. Some vocabulary items find their way into people's individual lexical inventories on their own, surfacing with time in numberless related contexts, settings and situations of spoken and written interpersonal/professional/intercultural/business interaction. However, no one has uncovered so far the actual volume and impact of the subconscious (and of the uncontrolled) on language learning in general and vocabulary acquisition in particular. Teaching as well as learning vocabulary should be approached as a consciously organized and continuously monitored process of ongoing improvement [3, 4].

The role and significance of the vocabulary in the system of the language and the centrality of words in language learning have been highlighted by both linguistics (the science of natural human languages) and linguistic didactics aimed at elaborating practicable methods and learner-oriented methodologies. It has been shown that words denote concepts, the latter being the essential instruments of one's cognition of the world. The number of words as lexical items exceeds the number of sounds and phonemes on the diacritical level. Words change with time phonetically, morphologically, and semantically (through new uses and new meanings). The lexicon of the language is heterogeneous: it embraces clear-cut associative links and numerous borderline cases – phonetic and morphological variation, polysemy, homonymy, antonymy, synonymy, paronymy, etc. The lexical system presented in dictionaries by different generations of lexicographers is constantly and continuously outpaced by usage,

change, and innovation. Words do not function in speech as isolated monolexic entities, but display patterns of morphosyntactic and lexical-phraseological combinability (colligation and collocation, respectively) [3, 7, 9].

These and other significant properties pertain to the intrinsic diversity (cf.: Greek "physei" – разнообразие «поприроде») discovered in the lexical area of the language by linguists, lexicologists and lexicographers around the world. Intrinsic diversity, however, cannot be transplanted into an ELT (English language teaching) setting in all its natural splendour and ontological variety. In theory and in practice, ELT has to impose arbitrary order (cf.: Greek "thesei" – порядок «поустановлению»), ensuring orderly procedure and organized acquisition. Instituting arbitrary order means adjusting the volume of possible variation and objective variety to the needs of the language learners as part of their ongoing foreign language acquisition. Arbitrary order emphasizes the role and significance of consciously applied approaches, methods and techniques; it downplays the reign of indeterminacy and the supposed lead of the subconscious; it intensifies the need for organized and controllable vocabulary acquisition that is not confined to the classroom situation, where the initiative predominantly lies with the teacher, and increasingly involves the students themselves, so that with time acquiring new words and extending individual lexicons would become their responsibility. Actively-controlled vocabulary learning should not be confined to the teacher-initiated: the teacher controls vocabulary acquisition in the ELT classroom, but the ultimate goal is to teach the students to organize and control their own vocabulary acquisition. The power of instruction and guidance vested in the teacher is limited in time, whereas the need for more – and better – vocabulary is always there [3].

The determination to learn, or attempt to learn, all the words of a given language is futile, impracticable and clearly unrealistic. With the staggering numbers of lexical items involved, dynamic change and growth being at the core of the lexicon of a natural human language, one has to reconcile to the fact that vocabulary acquisition is not a one-time static deal, but a long-term commitment. No ELT classroom will ever be able to teach the learners more than a limited segment of the total lexical thesaurus of a given language. At a certain point in time the language learners themselves will have to become able and willing monitors of their own progress. Vocabulary acquisition is thus to be seen as ongoing vocabulary extension – a process unfolding in time and space, requiring both competent guidance and continuous control.

Provided that one's language learning is not confined to Basic English or, what is sometimes called, Survival English, students should be initiated into some of the ways of extending their vocabulary – constantly and irreversibly. In other words, vocabulary acquisition is not just a process, pure and simple; it

should be organized, directed and monitored as ongoing improvement: firstly, through continuous focus on the key words related to one's area of inquiry and frequently used in written/spoken discourse; secondly, by acquiring proficiency in the use of recurrent collocations with those key words; thirdly, by expanding one's lexicon through new words in their recurrent lexical-phraseological and morphosyntactic combinations; fourthly, by categorizing the incoming vocabulary items as based on what the learners have already got in their active lexical inventory – identifying derivatives, synonyms, antonyms, stylistic variants and other relevant paradigmatic links; fifthly, by reading articles, reports and books to ensure a significant volume of authentic input from which to draw the much-needed resources – words, related uses and more varied ways of expressing things in Modern English.

In following the principles outlined above, learners of English will have to explore different avenues that may, and can be made to, contribute to their vocabulary acquisition and vocabulary extension. Where does literature come in if the goal is to improve one's knowledge of words and their appropriate use in speech? To begin with, it should be emphasized that language and literature are interconnected. Literary works are written, couched and embedded in what the language system has to offer. Language is also enriched through its use in literature: words, word-combinations, more extended units like sentences and fully-fledged utterances may become part of the language, entering the confines of authoritative dictionaries as quotations or joining the recorded range of standardized usage. Writers often play with the language: they extend the meanings of known words and offer occasional ones as dictated by their individual inventiveness and linguistic creativity [1, 3, 9].

Learning English does imply building long-term relationships with the English-based literature. Lots of pages will be covered in pursuit of facts, realia, names of people and places; books of fiction will be read to improve one's judgement and understanding, to stimulate thought and further inquiry. Whichever goal the student pursues, there should always be room for vocabulary extension. The traditional way of doing it is to look up unfamiliar words in a bilingual dictionary, which is not very productive or enriching if one's ultimate objective is to extend and diversify one's active vocabulary. It would also be far from productive to indiscriminately appropriate and reproduce occasional word-combinations and expressions invented by literary authors. Phrases like that life of porcelain delicacy and alabaster sensibility (Salman Rushdie), the zero state of his mind and heart (David Lodge), the long winter of his obsession (Ian McEwan) are meant to intrigue and delight, but can hardly be included in one's active, i.e. productive lexicon.

In terms of vocabulary extension, one can

profit from reading fiction in a more practical way by a) selecting recurrent collocations for the familiar words, which will eventually expand the stock of phrases and expressions one already has at one's disposal, and b) identifying new collocations and contexts for them. Compare expressions like talk the party into existence and read your way out of this borrowed from Malcolm Bradbury's and Ian McEwan's novels with the conventional high-frequency collocations and utterances listed in corpora-based unilingual dictionaries for learners of English: Come here; I want to talk to you./ They were all talking at once./ I don't know what you are talking about./ We talked for hours about politics./ He refused at first, but I managed to talk him into it./ to read between lines / a well-read woman / a little read novel / I can read French but I can't speak it. / I read about... / I read that... / Her letter reads as follows... / I rewrote the last paragraph because it didn't read well. / He's widely-read.

Not every word or collocation found in a work of fiction will be ideally suited for one's active lexicon. However, keeping track of lexical-phraseological usage in fiction as part of one's organized vocabulary extension will gradually improve one's command of the language, cultivating one's feel for correct use and stimulating the search for linguistic diversity.

Another avenue worth exploring is the English of the print/electronic/integrated media. The search for suitable lexical candidates to be included in one's active /productive/production vocabulary should be conducted and carried out side by side with general information retrieval. As everywhere else, foreign learners of English are expected to be intentionally selective [1].

Awareness of methods and techniques is important in the long-term when one faces a new field of professional inquiry or personal interest. Business English (английский язык делового общения) defined as the language used for business purposes is a good example; it is a very complicated phenomenon riddled with frustrations. The most overpowering of the associated frustrations is Business English vocabulary as an increasingly diverse and ever-changing entity. What are the techniques that allow the Russian learners of English to come to grips with Business English vocabulary? The first step from the methodological point of view is to optimize the range of available material by identifying the particular register (or registers/functional uses) within Business English one is after. The registers included in the domain of General Business English/GBE (деловой английский наиболее общего предназначения) are as follows: Socializing for business purposes, Telephoning for business purposes, Business correspondence, Business documents and contracts, Business meetings, Presentations, Negotiating for business purposes, the English of the business media. Business English for Specific Purposes/BESP (деловой английский для специальных целей)

is the language used in primary/secondary/tertiary industries, numerous specialist professional areas and professional functions [1].

As far as Business English vocabulary acquisition is concerned, there are sets of techniques to be used for the lexical strata (or strands) singled out through ongoing functional stratification and studied in detail over an extended period of time: General English words, formal vocabulary items, core business terminology, industry-specific terminological systems, idiomatic terms, business idioms, high-frequency phrasal verbs, neologisms and/or occasionalisms, borrowings, lexical items with vertical context [2, 3, 6, 8]. The five techniques of business vocabulary acquisition outlined and illustrated below have been elaborated for Russian learners of Business English at the Department of English Linguistics (Faculty of Philology, Lomonosov Moscow State University): naming the monolexic/polylexemic word (or term) with its synonym (synonyms and/or abbreviations); defining the word/term/terminological phraseologism/business idiom/phrasal verb/neologism; translating the word into Russian; supplying its Russian-based definition; finding high-frequency collocations and contexts to be further used in written and spoken types of interaction as part of social and purposeful communication in English [2, 5, 8].

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