LEXICAL FLUENCY IN ENGLISH: CHALLENGES FOR ESP STUDENTS

Boiko Liubov Mykhailivna
Cand. Philol. Sc., Assoc. Prof.,
Department of Hotel and Restaurant and
Tourist Business and Foreign Languages
Kherson State Agrarian and Economic University, Ukraine

Summary. Lexical competence is a vital part of the foreign language fluency. The students who studied English as their second language and continue studying English for Specific Purposes should master not only general, but professionally-oriented vocabulary during their course of study. The paper explores various approaches to learning vocabulary and gives examples of different types of exercises which help students gain lexical competence.

Keywords: lexical exercises, vocabulary, foreign language, professionally-oriented vocabulary, English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

In modern higher education, foreign language proficiency is gaining the status of one of the principal indicators in students' professional training. Lexical competence is a core part of a student's cognitive activity. It is included into a student's cognitive base that provides a solid foundation for mastering a foreign language. Lexical competence is the ability of a person to correctly formulate their own utterances and understand the speech of others, which is based on a complex and dynamic interaction of relevant skills, knowledge and lexical awareness [2]. Thus, mastering vocabulary in a professionally oriented foreign language course is one of the main tasks. The acquisition of curriculum lexical material can be carried out according to the principles of lexical advancement. This principle implies that while learning different aspects of the language, particular preference should be given to vocabulary. It is in the vocabulary that the content with which people communicate with each other is embedded. Word perception and word use are closely related to the processes of forming, formulating and arranging thoughts with the lexical means of a foreign language.

The principles of teaching vocabulary studied by the known scientist V.A. Buchbinder [1], are:
- rational limitation of the vocabulary minimum;
- directed appearance of lexical units in the educational process;
- taking into account the linguistic qualities of lexical units;
- taking into account the didactic and psychological features of learning;
- complex solution of the main didactic and methodological tasks; when the tasks of forming the present vocabulary, expanding the potential vocabulary and developing lexical guessing are solved;
- reliance on lexical rules;
- unity in teaching both vocabulary and speech activities.

In the process of acquiring lexical knowledge, the first place is given to explanation. The initial link in the explanation involves introducing the word through the utilization of contextual or combined methodological techniques. According to Tarnopolskyi O., Kabanova M. [3] “it is rational to work on vocabulary in two stages: 1. Presentation. 2. Spontaneous learning (memorization) and consolidation to the level of automatic recognition, understanding in the oral and written speech of other people and use in your own oral and written speech. Such acquisition occurs through oral and written practice in reading, listening, speaking and writing in a foreign language”.

However, when introducing professionally-oriented vocabulary, it is not enough to limit oneself to its presentation and explain some specific points related to the peculiarities of the form, meaning and norms of the term's use; it is necessary to ensure the correct understanding of the meaning and activation of new lexical material in students' memory. That is why the most effective way to improve the quality of activation of lexical material in students' memory is to use numerous contexts in which special lexical items are repeated many times in texts. The wording of the tasks for the texts can be as follows:
- Before reading the text match each word with the correct definition;
- Using the line reference given, look back in the text and find words that have a similar meaning…;
- Use the information in the reading passage to help you match the terms with the appropriate explanation or definition;
- Using the line reference given, look back in the text and find the reference for the words in italics;
- Find the hidden words in the square. Some appear vertically, some horizontally, some diagonally. They may be upside-down or back to front. The number of letters in each word and the first letter of the word appear in brackets.
- Fill in the gaps in the text. Each clue is an anagram. The first and last letters are correct.
- Using the line reference given, look back in the text and find words that have an opposite meaning…
- Find words in the text which mean…
- Look at the text again and find examples of sentences that include the following words…
- Which of the headings will give information on...
- Read the text. Which title goes with which paragraph… [4, 6]
- Match each device with its use;
- Complete some word partnerships and expressions from the text by matching the words on the left with the correct word on the right;
- Find the English equivalents;
- Find the best synonyms of the words… [5]

The acquired knowledge about different aspects of a foreign language word influences the correct choice of the appropriate word from the whole structure to express an idea, the ability to combine lexical units with each other on the basis of
the rules of lexical and grammatical valence, and the ability to express a thought with the available lexical resources. The development of lexical competence requires a system of exercises, because the exercise is an elementary unit of learning.

Exercises used in foreign language classes have certain parameters. These parameters are as follows:

1) The exercise has a specific learning objective. That is, it is aimed at mastering the lexical material, at its functioning in productive and receptive types of speech activity. The exercise should motivate students through tasks.

2) Each exercise has a specific task, which is correlated with the learning objective in the sphere of functioning of lexical bases in different types of speech activities.

3) The exercise specifies certain speech activities and the conditions for their realization. In exercises with a lexical focus, the activities will be reproductive in nature but characterized by a receptive orientation.

4) The exercises specify the object of an action. The action object can be material or ideal. If the subject of the action is ideal, then the exercises are aimed at recognizing the lexical means that express the main idea of the text. If you need to formulate and articulate a thought, you need to choose lexical items, combine them according to specific rules and include them in your sentences.

5) The speech product is always predicted in the exercises. It is expressed in the form of an opinion or conclusion after reading or listening to a text.

6) The exercise is given a certain amount of time. This amount can be limited or unlimited.

7) The exercise is based on both verbal and non-verbal material: words, pictures, diagrams, speech patterns, etc.

8) Exercises are performed in different organizational forms.

9) Each exercise has its own specific place and is closely related to other exercises. The order of the exercises is determined by the degree of difficulty encountered in its implementation.

In the process of performing exercises, the teacher always refers to the motivational sphere of students, to the knowledge and skills that have already been formed.

Our experience in higher education shows that there are a number of problems that need to be solved to overcome lexical difficulties in the process of mastering a foreign language by students. The final stage is especially difficult for students in the process of mastering specialized vocabulary. These are practical tasks represented by speech exercises. The purpose of the exercises is to apply the acquired knowledge and skills. These types of exercises are aimed at comparing, generalizing, isolating, and systematizing various linguistic, speech, and professional tasks that bring speech activity closer to the future specialist’s professional activities.

Examples of the exercises may include:
- choose one of some annotation options;
- using a picture (diagram), describe the process depicted in it;
- explain the diagram or picture;
- make a statement based on the plan (diagram);
- after reading the text, complete the crossword puzzle.
After the final stage of mastering vocabulary on a particular topic, it is advisable to move on to scientific and creative tasks aimed at developing speech skills at the motivational and incentive level of foreign language speech activity. These tasks may be: preparing a report on new achievements in the professional field; selecting from the proposed list of literary sources that will be useful in preparing a review on a particular topic; compiling a bibliography for preparing a report; reporting on a topical issue in the speciality.

References: