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TEACHING LEXICAL-SEMANTIC FEATURES OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND PETROLEUM PRODUCT TERMS IN ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

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Abstract
This article examines methodological approaches to teaching road transport and petroleum product terminology within English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The study is based on the lexical-semantic characteristics of specialized terms used in professional transport and petroleum-related communication. Particular attention is given to polysemy, synonymy, semantic narrowing, motivated and non-motivated terms, word formation, borrowing, and contextual variation. The research demonstrates that specialized vocabulary cannot be effectively taught through isolated word memorization because the meaning of many terms depends on professional context. The study proposes the use of contextualized texts, terminological dictionaries, semantic classification, authentic professional materials, comparative analysis, and communicative exercises as effective methodological tools for developing students' professional lexical competence. The findings suggest that systematic instruction of specialized terminology can improve learners' comprehension of technical texts, accuracy in professional communication, and ability to use English terminology appropriately in transport and petroleum-related contexts.

Keywords: ESP, specialized vocabulary, terminology teaching, lexical-semantic features, road transport, petroleum products, professional communication, polysemy, synonymy, terminology learning.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of transport, petroleum, and other industrial sectors has created new demands not only for specialists but also for language education. Modern professionals increasingly need English to read technical documentation, communicate with international partners, understand professional literature, and use specialized terminology accurately. Therefore, the teaching of professional vocabulary has become an important component of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). In ESP instruction, specialized terminology represents one of the most important elements of professional communicative competence. Learners are expected not only to recognize technical terms but also to understand their meanings in particular professional contexts and use them appropriately in oral and written communication.

Road transport and petroleum industries contain a considerable number of specialized lexical units. Terms such as truck, trailer, axle, cargo, fuel, diesel, petrol, platform, and engine may have specific meanings in professional discourse. At the same time, some lexical units may demonstrate polysemy, synonymy, semantic narrowing, or contextual variation. Consequently, traditional vocabulary-learning techniques based mainly on direct translation and memorization may not always provide sufficient results.

For example, the word fuel may refer to gasoline, gas, or mazut depending on the professional context. Similarly, the term platform may denote different objects in transport-related discourse. Such examples demonstrate the necessity of teaching terminology through contextualized and professionally oriented materials.

The teaching of specialized vocabulary should therefore combine lexical, semantic, contextual, and communicative approaches. Learners need to understand not only what a particular term means but also how it functions in authentic professional communication.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the lexical-semantic characteristics of road transport and petroleum product terminology and determine effective methodological approaches to teaching these terms within ESP.

The following research objectives were established: to identify the major lexical-semantic characteristics of road transport and petroleum-related terms;

to examine polysemy, synonymy, semantic narrowing, and contextual variation in specialized vocabulary;

to classify terms according to their motivation and word-formation patterns;

to determine the difficulties these features may create for ESP learners;

to develop methodological recommendations for teaching specialized terminology in English.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of specialized terminology has traditionally been associated with terminology, lexicology, and professional communication. However, terminology is also highly relevant to ESP methodology because specialized lexical units constitute an essential part of learners' professional language competence.

Terminological studies emphasize that professional terms are not isolated lexical units but elements of organized systems reflecting particular areas of human knowledge. Consequently, effective terminology instruction requires learners to understand relationships between concepts and the lexical units representing them.

The communicative nature of terminology is particularly important in ESP. Professional terms are influenced by institutional discourse, professional conventions, technological development, and the communicative needs of specialists. A learner may know the dictionary equivalent of a term but still experience difficulties when the same lexical unit acquires a different meaning in another professional context.

Transport-related vocabulary provides a clear illustration of this problem. Words such as cargo, trailer, axle load, and platform may demonstrate semantic specialization or contextual modification. Petroleum-related terminology also includes lexical units that may be interpreted differently depending on the technical situation.

Another important aspect is the formation of specialized vocabulary. Terms may be created through derivation, compounding, abbreviation, borrowing, semantic extension, and other word-formation processes. Understanding these mechanisms can help students infer the meaning of unfamiliar terms rather than relying exclusively on translation.

The use of authentic professional materials is therefore particularly valuable. Technical manuals, transport documents, customs forms, petroleum industry texts, reports, and specialized dictionaries provide learners with natural examples of terminology in context. Such materials can be integrated into reading, vocabulary, translation, speaking, and writing activities.
Thus, previous theoretical observations concerning terminology can be transferred into ESP methodology through contextualized vocabulary instruction, semantic classification, communicative practice, and professionally oriented tasks.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach based on the analysis of specialized English texts related to road transport and petroleum products.

The material consisted of professional vocabulary collected from technical manuals, legal and administrative documents, industry-related reports, specialized dictionaries, and authentic professional texts.

The following methods were applied:

lexical-semantic analysis – to identify the meanings and semantic relationships of specialized terms; contextual analysis – to determine how meanings change depending on professional context; classification – to group terms according to semantic and word-formation characteristics; comparative analysis – to examine English terms and their equivalents in Uzbek and other languages; descriptive analysis – to identify common patterns of terminology formation and usage; pedagogical interpretation – to determine how the identified lexical-semantic characteristics can be used in ESP vocabulary teaching. Particular attention was paid to polysemous and synonymous terms, motivated and non-motivated lexical units, borrowed terminology, and terms whose meanings depend strongly on context.

The pedagogical interpretation of the linguistic data was conducted from the perspective of developing students' professional lexical competence. The study considers terminology learning not as mechanical memorization but as the acquisition of the ability to recognize, interpret, and appropriately use specialized lexical units in professional communication.

RESULTS

The analysis revealed several lexical-semantic characteristics that are particularly significant for ESP terminology teaching.

1.Polysemy of specialized terms

A number of transport and petroleum-related terms have more than one meaning. For example, fuel may refer to different types of substances depending on the professional context. The word platform may also refer to different objects in transport-related discourse. Such examples demonstrate that teaching a term together with only one dictionary equivalent may lead to misunderstanding. Therefore, learners should encounter polysemous terms in several authentic contexts.

For example:

-The vehicle was loaded with fuel.

-The company introduced a new fuel-efficient transport system.

In these contexts, learners can observe how the lexical unit functions within different professional meanings and collocations.

2.Synonymy and terminological variation

The research also identified synonymous or near-synonymous terms. Different terms may be used to refer to similar concepts in technical literature, legal documents, or professional communication. Such variation may cause difficulties for learners because students often expect every professional concept to have only one fixed lexical form.

Therefore, ESP instruction should include exercises in which students identify synonymous terms, compare their meanings, and determine which term is appropriate in a particular context.

3.Motivated and non-motivated terms

Terms can also be classified according to their semantic motivation.

Motivated terms may provide learners with clues about their meaning through their internal structure. For instance, compounds and derivatives can sometimes be interpreted by analyzing their components.

Examples include:

fuel-efficient;

railcar;

carburetor;

cylinder;

mechanism.

Teaching students to recognize word-formation patterns can facilitate vocabulary acquisition and reduce their dependence on direct translation.

4.Context-dependent meaning

One of the most important findings is that professional meaning frequently depends on context.

For example, platform can refer to different technical objects depending on the field and communicative situation. Similarly, cargo, fuel, engine, and other terms may acquire specialized meanings within particular professional environments.

Therefore, the contextual method should occupy an important place in ESP terminology teaching.

5.Borrowing and international terminology

The analyzed vocabulary also contains terms that have been borrowed from other languages or have international forms. Such terminology can be both an advantage and a difficulty for language learners.

On the one hand, international terms may be easier to recognize. On the other hand, differences in pronunciation, spelling, and usage can cause interference.

Consequently, comparative exercises can be useful for helping students distinguish between similar-looking terms in English and Uzbek.

6.Semantic fields in transport terminology

The lexical-semantic analysis made it possible to identify several semantic fields, including:

surface transport;
air transport;
water transport;
road transport;
railway transport;
automotive transport;
petroleum products.

The classification of vocabulary into semantic fields can be effectively incorporated into ESP lessons. Instead of presenting isolated words, teachers can organize terminology around professional concepts and semantic relationships.

DISCUSSION

The results demonstrate that the lexical-semantic characteristics of specialized terminology have direct implications for ESP methodology.

First, specialized vocabulary should be presented in context rather than as isolated lexical items. When learners encounter a term in an authentic sentence or professional text, they can understand its meaning, grammatical function, collocations, and communicative purpose simultaneously. Second, semantic classification can facilitate vocabulary acquisition. For example, transport vocabulary can be organized into groups related to vehicles, vehicle components, transportation processes, cargo, infrastructure, and fuel. Such organization helps students create stronger semantic connections between lexical items.

Third, word-formation analysis can be used as a vocabulary-learning strategy. If students understand common prefixes, suffixes, compounds, and other word-formation patterns, they may be able to infer the meanings of unfamiliar terms.

Fourth, terminological dictionaries should be integrated into ESP instruction. Students should be trained not only to find translations but also to examine definitions, examples, synonyms, grammatical information, and domain-specific meanings.

Fifth, authentic professional texts can provide effective material for terminology instruction. Technical manuals, transport regulations, customs documents, reports, and industry-related articles can be used for reading comprehension, vocabulary analysis, translation, and speaking activities.

The findings also suggest several practical classroom activities. Suggested methodological activities

1.Contextual guessing

Students receive sentences containing unfamiliar terms and infer their meanings from the context before consulting a dictionary.

2. Semantic classification

Learners classify terms into groups such as: vehicles – vehicle parts – cargo – fuel – transport infrastructure.

3. Synonym matching

Students identify synonymous or near-synonymous terms and discuss differences in their usage.

4. Word-formation analysis

Students analyze compound and derived terms and identify their constituent elements.

5. Translation comparison

Learners compare English terminology with Uzbek equivalents and identify differences in meaning or usage.

6. Authentic-text analysis

Students work with short extracts from technical manuals, customs documents, or transport reports and identify specialized terminology.

7. Professional communication tasks

Learners use newly acquired terms in role plays, presentations, discussions, and simulated professional situations.

These activities can transform terminology learning from memorization into active language use.

The pedagogical value of this approach lies in the development of students' professional lexical competence. Students who understand semantic relationships and contextual variation are more likely to use terminology accurately in professional communication.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that the lexical-semantic characteristics of road transport and petroleum product terminology have important implications for ESP teaching. Polysemy, synonymy, semantic specialization, contextual variation, motivation, word formation, and borrowing can create difficulties for learners if specialized vocabulary is taught only through translation and memorization. For this reason, terminology instruction should be based on a combination of lexical-semantic, contextual, communicative, and professionally oriented approaches.

The analysis indicates that the following methodological principles are particularly effective:

presenting specialized vocabulary in authentic professional contexts;
grouping terms according to semantic fields;
teaching word-formation patterns;
comparing synonyms and contextual meanings;
using specialized and bilingual dictionaries;
integrating authentic technical documents into ESP lessons;
providing translation and comparative exercises;
applying terminology in professional communication tasks.

The systematic implementation of these approaches can contribute to the development of students' professional lexical competence and improve their ability to understand and use English terminology in transport and petroleum-related contexts.

Furthermore, cooperation between linguists, ESP teachers, translators, and specialists in transport and petroleum industries is important for developing reliable teaching materials and maintaining terminological consistency.

Thus, the study of specialized terminology should not be limited to theoretical lexical-semantic analysis. Its findings should be transferred into language teaching practice and used to develop learners' ability to communicate accurately and effectively in professional environments.

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