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The Extension of Students' Potential Vocabulary on the Basis of English Polysemantic Lexemes

Key words: derivability, language guess, lexeme, polysemy, potential vocabulary.
The importance of mastering language guess; the existence of two types of derivability: intralingual and interalingual; pedagogical principles of working out a potential vocabulary; the ways of using contextual analysis; the algorithm to find out an unknown meaning.

One of the practical aims of teaching of a foreign language is reading teaching. Experience has shown that the main students' difficulty in the process of reading texts represents unknown lexical units. The work on the extension of a potential vocabulary ensures students' readiness not only for speech communication, but also for language self-education which is achieved thanks to the mastery of methods and techniques of a direct understanding of a text on condition that there is lack of language means.

The following research methods were applied: literature review on the subject and its critical analysis (works of E. I. Passov, H. E. Palmer, N. D. Galskova, N. I. Gez, E. I. Solovova, F. A. Litvin, etc.), teaching observation in VSU, scientific analysis of English training.

The research in question was conducted in 6 – 9 forms including 50 pupils in total at Vitebsk school № 45 and among 5-year students of a philological faculty at VSU (20 students all in all). Such methods as semantic, contextual and contrastive-comparative analyses were applied.

The given study is the result of the teaching experiment. It was held at 3 stages:

1.　　A preparatory phase. While teaching students at school, we paid their attention to the ways of defining unknown word meanings via specific intralingual (within the English language) and interalingual (combining the possibilities of a native language and the English) means except for traditional dictionary word-for-word translation. Regarding meaningful English morphemic structure, we have explained the interconnection between word morphemes and word meanings, e.g. the prefix '*pre- (пре, при)*' indicates '*precedence (предшествование),*' the suffix '*-less (без)*' points out '*the absence of a certain* There were introduced all the means of language guess: 1) conversion (*work – to work; a fly – to fly; a match – to match; a look – to look*);

2) word formation elements (*use – useful – usefulness – useless – uselessness);*

3) international lexemes (*atom; telephone; television; autobus; cousin*);

4) compound words (*timetable; pencil-box; school-bag; house-keeper; traffic lights*).

Conversion is considered as the most productive means of word-formation in modern English. One should well aware of the fact that only thorough study of grammatical forms and syntactical analysis of a new lexeme define whether this or that word is a converted one.

Furthermore, the English language is quite rich in meaningful affixes. Lecturers should teach all these formation paradigms since primary period of studying.

There estimated many international lexemes. Mostly these words are of Greek or Latin origin and are quite widely used in numerous scientific fields. However, these lexical units shouldn't be mixed up with the so-called 'interpreter's false friends.' One should learn a list of the words which can't be semantized via language guess (*e.g. complexion, cottage, conductor, comma, Caucasian, etc.*).

The percentage of compound words in English is much bigger than those in Russian. Teachers can explain that there is a rule of a left attribute. This very rule works quite often in many compound words (*e.g. season sport, well-bred, living-room, high-school*).

Then necessary 60 contexts were sorted out and unstudied vocabulary units were highlighted for the upcoming experiment.

2. An experimental phase. Each student at school and university was given one context and was to decide what meanings the underlined word could have and what indicators helped them to define its sense.

3. A summary. After finishing the above-mentioned research work, we have acquired a strategy to teach potential vocabulary. Firstly, let us introduce the term 'potential vocabulary.' From a methodological point of view, all unknown words in a text can be divided into two groups: 1) the words which a reader can guess with the help of a dictionary; 2) the words which meanings one can guess on the basis of a context or thanks to the internal linguistic possibilities. It is the second group which belongs to the sources of the vocabulary extension and has a peculiar 'potential.' A potential vocabulary is considered as such affixal derivatives, compound and polysemantic words, converted formations and cognate words which students haven't come across yet, but can be perceived by them if they are taught to find out these very word meanings using certain techniques [1, 47].

From a methodological point of view, all unknown words in a text can be divided into two groups: 1) the words which a reader can guess with the help of a dictionary; 2) the words which meanings one can guess on the basis of a context or thanks to the internal linguistic possibilities of the most unfamiliar word. It is these words which belong to the second group are the sources of the extension of vocabulary and have peculiar 'potential.'

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A linguistic basis for including unlearnt meanings of polysemantic words into a potential vocabulary is their motivation which serves as the background of their derivability. The character of unlearnt derivability of polysemantic word shades of meanings is distinct. Some shades of meanings are closely connected with a learnt meaning, some are less closely connected, and others are connected indirectly, that is with the help of an image (an imaginative or imaginative-logical derivability). Some unlearnt meanings coincide completely with the corresponding meanings in one's native language, some unlearnt meanings have a partial coincidence, and others don't have a corresponding meaning in one's mother tongue. All these factors determine different levels of difficulty in unlearnt meaning semantization of polysemantic words which should be taken into account during the educational process.

Experience has shown that unlearnt meanings of the first level of difficulty in comprehension are clear to students and don't require lecturer's explanations. Thus, forming potential vocabulary begins with the introduction of one of the polysemantic word meaning.

Teaching comprehension of polysemantic word unlearnt meanings of the second level of difficulty is conducted on the basis of exercises with an intralingual and interalingual derivability in order to present these very supports which represent the basis for deduction of indispensable meanings. Doing exercises which require the deduction of polysemantic unit unlearnt meanings, including in word combinations, students learn to use supports in a studied foreign language, for instance, *to learn English (to study the English language; учить английский язык), to learn to skate (to acquire the skill of skating; учиться кататься на коньках), to learn the news (to find out the news; узнать новости)*. A lecturer alongside with his students correlates a known meaning with an unknown one and reminds that they have already learnt figurative meanings in their mother tongue. Students fulfill the other points of the exercise on their own under lecturer's control.

Starting the work with unlearnt word meanings with an intralingual derivability, a lecturer points out the interconnection of polysemantic word different meanings, for example,

a familiar to students polysemantic word *'great'* has the following shades of meanings: *'big (большой),'* *'well-known, famous (известный),'* *'colossal (колоссальный),'* *'elevated (воз-вышенный),'* *'noble (благородный),'* *'remarkable (выдающийся),'* *'magnificent (велико-лепный).'* But all the aforementioned lexemes have a united indication, that is *'grandeur.'*

While taking up the comprehension of unlearnt polysemantic word meanings which have an interalingual derivability a lecturer pays his attention to a full or partial coincidence of shades of meanings of corresponding words in a native language and foreign language. The work on such lexical units should be started with fully coinciding shades of meanings, then should be proceeded with partially coinciding ones, drawing necessary parallels at the same time.

The next lecturer's task is teaching unlearnt shades of meanings comprehension which has an imaginative or imaginative-logical derivability. The comprehension of such words can be only carried out with the help of an inner structure of a word or a context and requires the awareness of the main types of transfer. A lecturer takes students' notice of the fact that all languages have words which can be used in their direct and figurative meanings.

An image often constitutes the basis for the transfer. This image, in some way or another, is connected with word direct meaning, e.g. the word *'mouth'* which is familiar to students in the meaning of *'рот.'* It is also used in other cases in its figurative meanings and means other notions, although they are explained via its direct meaning: *'a mouth of the river,'* *'a mouth of the volcano.'* All these meanings possess the image of *'opening'* as their basis.

It should be noted as well that there are some extralingual hints in teaching materials themselves. As one of the vividest examples, we can point out different tables, schemes, diagrams, etc. included in textbooks or other written sources. While watching a video, one is able to perceive all the scenery and characters, which make his impression brighter, and consequently, the apprehension is more profound.

The semantization is often the result of a heuristic search and acquires the character of a contextual guess regardless of the connection of an unlearnt meaning with a learnt meaning. The semantization of such lexical units is possible only within a context. A lecturer should work out such an algorithm among his students to ensure a purposeful search of an unlearnt meaning of a basic lexical unit. This procedure is promoted with examples and instructions which define the succession of cognitive acts to get unlearnt meaning semantizations: a) read a sentence (text), try to understand its main idea / its gist; b) define whether a familiar underlined word in a sentence with its meaning matches the given sense (the correlation of the semantization result of a given word with its context and the elicitation of mismatch of its meaning and its context); c) reconsider a known meaning in such a way to match its context and at the same time it were semantically connected with an unknown one (the elicitation of a new meaning which matches the given context) [2, 110].

Therefore, the proposed teaching method enables to form students' skills of unstudied vocabulary semantization. It represents an effective way of broadening vocabulary and contributes to more efficient teaching of a direct English reading excluding the translation into students' native language. Such conscious language perception will lead to the improvement of all the aspects of linguistic competence (communicative, writing, listening, and reading) on condition that there is a lack of language means. Such comprehension systematizes knowledge thanks to the parallels between grammemes and its content (lexemes), a whole textual consideration (context), as well as proper and figurative word meanings.

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