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## **FORMATION OF LEXICAL COMPETENCE IN JUNIOR STUDENTS**

**Abstract.** The article considers the use of different exercises aimed at the formation of lexical competence in junior students, analyses the four main stages involved in the process of mastering new vocabulary and gives the examples of exercises on the topic "Forms of Business Organisation".

**Key words:** lexical competence (LC), vocabulary, lexical unit, communication pattern.

**Introduction.** Modernisation of the educational process is related to upgrading the mastering of foreign languages. It mostly concerns the improvement of communication competence which is made up of students' lexical base and skills to operate it. The lexical component of any foreign language has always been regarded as the key element of language learning. Despite the general recognition of the priority of this task, it is the lexical competence that causes difficulties for those who master the language. On the one hand, it requires constant students' work on vocabulary, on the other hand, teachers have to organise students' work on lexical material in a most efficient way, so that it provides automatisisation of the acquired skills. Moreover, it is the teacher who must create conditions for students to constantly use the acquired vocabulary, update it, integrate it and further repeat it.

Even though the problem of lexical competence formation has been developed by a number of scientists [1; 2], its constant updating and diversification of students' groups are forcing further development of ways concerning mastering students' vocabulary, in particular sub-systems of exercises which would provide qualitative learning of lexical units in junior students of non-language specialties.

**The purpose of this work** is to present the subsystem of exercises for the formation of lexical competence in junior students majoring in economics.

**Discussion.** Lexical competence (LC) is considered by experts as a person's ability to form their own utterances and to understand the speech of others which is

based on a complex and dynamic interaction of relevant skills, habits, knowledge, lexical awareness, and communicative experience. By knowledge we mean both lexical units and word combinations, and even sentences. Skills and habits present the ability to realise automatic actions with language material due to constant drilling. Communicative experience is seen as an overall practice of implementing the required knowledge, skills and habits in practical interaction with foreign language speakers or other foreign language learners, which presupposes concentrating not only on language means, but also on the meaning of utterances in cross-cultural settings.

Skills necessary for perception and understanding of information in oral and written speech are considered as receptive skills, they are built on the mechanism of recognition, differentiation and identification of lexical phenomena. To form lexical competence, it is necessary to automate the process of extracting the necessary lexical unit from the long-term memory, its well-formed reproduction, cohesion with other units, and thus the appropriate formation of context utterances.

According to M. Kagan, the stages of any activity include orientation, cognition, transformation and evaluation [3]. Assimilation of educational material depends on many factors: the external environment, visual aids, methods of their application, the level of how students are prepared for the perception of information, individual characteristics of students, etc. The acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities is a holistic pedagogical process in which all the elements are interconnected. I. Lerner distinguishes between primary assimilation; recognition-reproduction; application according to the sample; creative application in a new situation [4]. According to V. Bespalko, the levels of knowledge acquisition are classified into acquaintance (recognition of objects and processes while re-perceiving the information); reproduction / playback (copying and use of information to perform a certain action); productive action (search for new information for independent action); creative action (independent construction of mode of operation) [5]. These theories provide grounds for identifying the stages of pedagogical technology. They include orientation-

motivational, cognitive-informational, transformational-analytical and reflexive-evaluative stages.

**Results.** Based on the above-mentioned research and the psychological theory of a person's activity, we propose to divide the process of lexical competence formation into four stages: 1) receptive; 2) reproductive; 3) productive; 4) communicative. After considering each stage, we will provide examples of corresponding exercises, a teacher can choose from, in accordance with their students' needs [6-8].

The quality of lexical competence formation is stipulated by the system of corresponding exercises. By the term "exercise" we imply a specially organised repetitive action or activity in educational conditions, aimed at their mastering or improvement. A system of exercises presupposes successive and logical order of presentation of the material, taking into account the principles of increasing complexity of the tasks, consistency with the previously mastered material which provides the gradual formation of the required competence.

Let us consider in detail the process of lexical competence formation in first-year students of economic specialties on the topic "Forms of Business Organisation".

The aim of **the receptive stage** is to ensure the process of word semantisation, which is realised by doing mostly receptive exercise. This stage is based mainly on visual, verbal and explanatory-illustrative teaching methods. It should be aimed at the systematic accumulation and expansion of vocabulary.

The ways of mastering foreign lexical units can be different. The students' aim is to understand the active words by reading or listening (these skills can be combined).

The teacher's task is to ground their work on vocabulary according to the specific programme within the curriculum. The precise account of the units studied helps to organise students' work in the appropriate way. As practice shows, students work better if they are aware of the scope of their target knowledge, the quantity of words that need to be learnt and the words that need additional training. It stimulates their studies initiative, search for rational methods of memorising lexical and phraseological units in independent work.

**Task 1.** Purpose: to teach students to choose the right option.

*Underline the correct word in italics.*

1. My brother is a plumber. He's *autonomous* / *self-employed*.

2. The people who own a private company might include the founder of the company, some family members, and perhaps a few business *associates* / *companions*.

3. In a public company anybody can buy the *actions* / *shares*.

4. A public company is *listed* / *posted* on a stock exchange.

5. Our railways were recently privatised. I think the service was better before, when they were a *public company* / *state-owned enterprise*.

**Task 2.** Purpose: to teach students to fill in the gaps in sentences which illustrate semantics of lexical units with the corresponding words.

*Fill in the correct word / words using active vocabulary: 1. .... is the simplest way of starting a business. 2. You are self-employed and entirely .... for all aspects of the management of your business. 3. Two or more people starting a business together can set up a ... . 4. All ... are responsible for debts of the partnership, and profits and losses are shared between them. 5. If the company goes out of business, the responsibility of each shareholder is limited to the amount that they have contributed: they have .... .*

The outlined exercises help students to adapt to the study of a certain economic topic. The creation of conceptual maps, sociograms, clusters will contribute to the in-depth penetration of students into the essence of basic concepts, the formation of systems thinking. When students know the meaning of new words, they are ready to work with them in a more profound way, thus we come to **the reproductive stage** of lexical competence formation. At this stage we use explanatory-illustrative and reproductive teaching methods (tasks that help reproduce the modes of action according to the sample in variable situations) as multiple reproduction of modes of action allows not only to apply but also to deepen the underlying knowledge, to expand it and thus to ensure its sustainable assimilation [4]. This stage deals with consolidating the material by doing exercises on matching, finding definitions, substitution, comprehension. Formulation of communicative instructions,

subconscious memorisation of lexical units by their multiple repetition in new combinations, variation of educational surrounding by pair or group work, with comments and interpretation of language phenomena will streamline vocabulary mastering.

This stage is characterised by a system of exercises focused on the formation of reproductive skills of communication and the creation of phrase and beyond-phrase unity. Automatisation of students' actions based on the use of new lexical units is aimed at teaching students to operate with new lexical units at the appropriate stage. To reach this goal, students do conditionally communicative exercises, where they perceive a model of communication and do certain actions with it (in an oral or written form). The teacher creates the corresponding communication context by suggesting the following exercises: imitation of communication patterns, transformation, paraphrasing, interpretation of information (true / false) etc.

**Task 3.** Purpose: to teach students to paraphrase and interpret information, using the active vocabulary.

*a) What type of organisation is each of these? 1. A group of engineers who work together to provide consultancy and design services. There are no outside shareholders. 2. A large British engineering company with 30,000 employees. Its shares are bought and sold on the stock market. 3. An American engineering company with outside shareholders. 4. An engineer who works by herself providing consultancy. She works from home and visits clients in their offices. 5. An independent British engineering company with 20 employees. It was founded by three engineers, who are shareholders and directors of the company. There are five other shareholders who do not work for the company.*

*b) Paraphrase the following sentences using active vocabulary. 1. The majority of businesses are owned and run by one person. 2. The sole trader is totally responsible for the success or failure of the business. 3. The small business is very flexible. 4. Membership of the company is restricted to private individuals. 5. The unsuccessful businesspeople may have to sell nearly all their possessions, in order to pay their debts.*

**Task 4.** Purpose: to create communication situations to activate formation of reproductive skills on the basis of the lexical units on the topic “Forms of Business Organisations”.

*Do these words describe a sole trader, a partnership, a private limited company, a public limited company? Arrange them in 4 columns. Add some more if you wish.*

*Unlimited liability, limited liability, shares, Board of Directors, number of members from two to twenty, authorized share capital, total control of your business, restricted financial risks, conflicts of personality can ruin your business, publicly available accounts, profits are distributed as dividends, losses are borne by the company, jointly liable for all the debts, no legal obligation to publish the accounts.*

**Task 5.** Purpose: to allocate the given statements to the appropriate lexical units.

*In pairs, decide which of the advantages and disadvantages you would associate with the following forms of businesses: SOLE TRADER – PARTNERSHIP – PRIVATE LIMITED COMPANY. In some cases, there may be more than one correct answer.*

*Advantages:*

- 1) You have total control of your business.*
- 2) This is a good way of sharing the pressure and work of starting a business.*
- 3) The financial risks that you are taking are restricted.*
- 4) Small start-up costs.*
- 5) You can increase your capital by selling shares.*
- 6) Profits are all kept.*
- 7) Flexibility.*

*Disadvantages:*

- 1) There is a danger that conflicts of personality could ruin your business.*
- 2) It may be difficult to expand.*
- 3) You may have to sell your possessions if the company goes into debt.*
- 4) Slow growth.*
- 5) It's more expensive to set up.*
- 6) Lack of continuity.*

7) *Accounts must be audited.*

Successful mastering of the material at the cognitive stage provides a basis for the implementation of the acquired knowledge in practice at **the productive stage** of the formation of lexical competence. It is grounded on productive conditionally communicative exercises, such as completing communication patterns, enlarging communication patterns, answering various types of questions, putting their own questions to the given paragraphs, autonomous use of lexical units in a phrase / sentence.

**Task 6.** Purpose: to practice the use of lexical units autonomously in the given tasks.

*Prove that the following statements are true or false. Use the conversational formulas of agreement and disagreement. 1. It is very hard and expensive to set up a sole trader business. 2. The association or partnership does not have a separate existence from its members, the number of which ranges from two to 50. 3. The partners agree on the day-to-day running of the business: some members can be “sleeping” partners, in that they do not take part in the daily operations. 4. Like sole traders, there is a legal obligation for the partners to publish their accounts. 5. Membership of the company is restricted to private individuals: members of the general public cannot buy shares in a private limited company.*

Formation of lexical competence is finished with communicative exercises, which presuppose solving communicative tasks for development of dialogical and monological speech. The aim of **the communicative stage** is to teach students to automate their acts with new lexical units at the text level, that is to use new lexical units in short utterances of different character. The method of problem-based learning prevails and it requires a creative search for new knowledge, methods and actions of students. The method of problem-based learning can be combined with heuristic method, which involves element-by-element learning of creative activity, mastering of individual stages of problem solving (by students) and partial explanation of new material in combination with problem questions and cognitive tasks or experiments

(by the teacher). The exercises presuppose uniting communication patterns in micro-monologues and micro-dialogues.

**Task 7.** Purpose: to develop skills of unprepared speech on the topic “Forms of Business Organisations”.

*a) Using the ideas from the previous exercises, describe the four main forms of business organisations.*

*b) Choose the form of business that appeals to you most and explain your choice.*

*c) In pairs, prepare a short checklist of the questions that you would need to ask yourselves before starting a business.*

*d) In pairs, role play a dialogue between a presenter of the programme “Outstanding Entrepreneurs of Today” and a guest, an owner of a small shop / President of a multinational company / one of the partners of a partnership providing legal services, etc.*

**Conclusion.** So, students’ lexical competence is formed by doing a number of tasks based on the constant use of active vocabulary and its systematisation. Its success results from gradual completion of receptive, reproductive, productive, and communicative stages represented by various types of lexical exercises. The content of educational material can be changed and improved according to the needs of students.

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