

***Ejercicios para enriquecer el vocabulario en estudiantes de la
carrera lengua extranjera***
***Exercises to enrich vocabulary in the students of the foreign
language career***

Reina Mirtha Echizarraga-Batista; Hiram I. Pérez-Rivero; Yonathan Elias-Vázquez

Universidad de Guantánamo, Cuba

Correo (s) electrónico (s)

reina@cug.co.cu

hirami@cug.co.cu

yevazquez@cug.co.cu

ORCID:<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3124-5583>

<http://orcid.org/0009-0007-5971-4891>

<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-6227-0184>

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Resumen

En el trabajo los autores, a partir de su experiencia en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras y del diagnóstico de la situación actual del dominio del vocabulario que poseen los estudiantes de años superiores de la carrera y la incidencia de este en su competencia comunicativa proponen actividades de aprendizaje para resolver el problema científico detectado. Se ofrece un sistema de ejercicios para aprovechar las potencialidades de la disciplina Estudios Lingüísticos el inglés para el logro de objetivos fundamentales entre los que destacan la ampliación del léxico, la comprensión textual, la pronunciación, la incorporación de los aspectos de la cultura de la comunidad anglófona en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje. En esta investigación se aplicaron instrumentos como son: encuesta a estudiantes, entrevista a profesores y observación a clases donde se pudo constatar que la pobreza de vocabulario afecta la comunicación de los estudiantes en la lengua inglesa.

Palabras clave: Lexicología y semántica; Vocabulario; Ejercicios; Foreign language

Abstract

In this work the authors, taking into account their experiences as professors of foreign language and the diagnosis of the real situation of the students' mastery of vocabulary and the impact it has in the development of the communicative competence, proposed teaching activities to solve the scientific problem detected. There is proposed a system of exercises to take advantage of the potentialities of this subject to achieve the main objectives, among them it can be mentioned: the wideness of the lexicon, the textual comprehension, pronunciation, the incorporation of cultural aspects of the English-speaking people in the teaching learning process. Through the investigation there were applied some instruments such as: inquiry to students, interview to teachers and observation to lessons where it was proved that the poor vocabulary of the students affects their communication in the foreign language.

Key words: Lexicology and semantic; Vocabulary; Exercises; Foreign language

Introduction

The teaching of a foreign language has different characteristics that depend, among other factors, on the method used, the purpose for which it is being taught, the scenario or social context where it is being taught, the means and resources available, the interests of the students and teachers or the institution where it is being taught, the level of language required, the objectives of a specific study plan and the level of preparation of the teacher.

In our country, the continuous demands for highly qualified professionals imposed by the scientific-technical development of each era led to the need for the improvement of study plans and programs. Thus, in 1977 the so-called Plan A was introduced, and in 1982 Plan B was implemented, which favored the development of pedagogical content, although not at the required level. In 1992, Plan C was implemented with its adjustments, which produced a radical transformation in the direction of the English language teacher training process, emphasizing the development of pedagogical and communicative competence.

In Plan D, the Professional Model, as a representation of the ideal to be achieved by the graduates of this career, aspires that students are able to, among others, direct the teaching-learning process at the primary, middle and high school levels, showing an adequate mastery of the didactics of foreign languages that allows them to work with programs and textbooks, The teaching and learning of foreign languages at the elementary, middle and high school levels, evidencing an adequate mastery of didactics of foreign languages that allows them to work with the programs and textbooks, English

Reina M. Echizarraga, Hiram I. Pérez, Yonathan Elias: Ejercicios para enriquecer el vocabulario en estudiantes video classes and display their linguistic and sociocultural knowledge of the foreign languages they teach as concrete evidence of the communicative and pedagogical-professional competence achieved according to the levels established for each language in the curriculum.

In the current plan E, the current and prospective socioeconomic and cultural development demands the mastery of at least one foreign language as a necessity for the social and professional development of people, hence it is considered a life skill. The world is becoming increasingly multilingual and universal languages such as English, French, Spanish and others such as Portuguese, widely spoken as a mother tongue or official language in the area of America, the Caribbean and Africa, are becoming increasingly necessary for professionals in our country and the population in general, in order to facilitate the growing insertion of Cuba in the international context.

The Discipline has been present in all the training plans, first as Contemporary English Language and then as Linguistic Studies of English. The subject Lexicology and Semantics has occupied an important place in the frameworks of this discipline. Hence, its teaching maintains and reinforces its significance in light of the current conditions of the training of this Cuban education professional.

The observation of the process, the review of documents related to the student's activity: frequent and partial evaluations, exams, participation in class controls, methodological activities and group meetings, analysis of efficiency indicators, among others, allowed the authors to determine the existing problematic situation related to the mastery and use of vocabulary in the English language in students of the higher years of the career, which is manifested in the following aspects:

1. Vocabulary poverty affects students' communication in the English language.
2. The work with the lexicon in the upper years of the course does not always contemplate all the sources for its enrichment.
3. There is no workbook or specific bibliography for the practice and application of these contents.

Based on this situation, the following scientific problem was identified: How to contribute to the expansion of the vocabulary of English language students?

The authors of this work have proposed as an objective: to elaborate a system of learning exercises to enrich the vocabulary of the students of the English Language course.

The following methods were used to carry out this research:

From the theoretical level:

Analysis and synthesis: it allowed studying the behavior of the aspects that constitute the subject from the bibliographic analysis and previous work on the contents related to the teaching of vocabulary.

Historical and logical: it allowed analyzing with a historical approach the ideas of Cuban and foreign pedagogues on the need to develop vocabulary in the students of the career.

Induction and deduction: it gave the authors the opportunity to arrive at their own evaluations about the theoretical and methodological aspects that influence the work with vocabulary in the English career and to incorporate them to their practical contribution.

System approach: it allowed the realization of the proposed system of learning activities, the determination of its components and its structure.

From the empirical level:

Observation: made it possible to know the way in which teachers treat vocabulary and student participation in teaching tasks, the methods and procedures used and their results.

Survey: made it possible to know the teachers' level of mastery of the treatment of vocabulary in English classes, their opinions about the teaching-learning process that takes place in the classroom.

Interview: provided information about the teachers' points of view and tables related to the importance of learning vocabulary in English and the main regularities that occur in this process.

Documentary analysis: made it possible to review and study documents, to elaborate the theoretical foundation of the research and to analyze the conceptions of different authors regarding the teaching-learning process of English, particularly vocabulary.

From the Mathematical-Statistical level:

Percentage analysis: to process the data obtained through the instruments applied by means of percentage calculation, and to make inferences on the behavior of the indicators studied.

Development

The course of study in foreign languages, English, has been present in the higher pedagogical institutes since its creation with the purpose of training professionals in this subject for the different levels of education in Cuba. Although there have been changes in the curricula, this course, unlike others, has maintained and reinforced its significance up to the present time, when its mission is reinforced with new aspects based on the need to achieve the general integral culture of the new generations, which

Reina M. Echizarraga, Hiram I. Pérez, Yonathan Elias: Ejercicios para enriquecer el vocabulario en estudiantes necessarily involves the mastery of a foreign language as a means of communication and an instrument for the acquisition of knowledge.

In the teaching-learning process of the English language, there has been a transition from a structuralist approach with the application of methods that did not focus on communication as the final objective, but rather weighted the learning of grammar and vocabulary of the foreign language. This situation led to the application of theories of European and North American origin, which were characterized by a strong behaviorist approach, where memorization and reproduction prevailed, among them the translation method, the direct method, the audio-visual method, and the grammar method, among others.

However, with the appearance of the communicative approach in the late seventies, a revolution in language teaching took place and for the first time the development of communication was placed in the spotlight as a goal to be achieved both in teacher training and in the rest of the educational levels.

The application of the communicative approach focuses on language teaching under different conditions; grammar establishes the norm as the only or basic reference, while the communicative approach proposes the notion of language use; it proposes rules and strategies aimed at a cultural negotiation of the different senses of language use according to specific communication situations. (Canale and Swain, 1980, p. 3)

Thus, the teaching of vocabulary comes to be considered an essential part of the mastery of a language, since it is among the essential requirements for achieving high levels of communicative competence to master a wide range of words, idiomatic phrases, phraseological expressions that are part of the culture of the countries whose language is being studied. In other words, the lexicon is a fundamental element of grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence.

Words are the building blocks of communication. When learners have a large vocabulary, they can improve all areas of communication. Without a mastery of vocabulary, neither production nor comprehension will be possible, so vocabulary growth is an essential prerequisite for language acquisition and is achievable only when teachers employ effective teaching-learning strategies.

The discipline of Linguistic Studies has been entrusted with the teaching of these aspects, which is concerned with the linguistic dimension of the communicative competence necessary for the performance and professional development of the foreign language teacher. This means a selection of linguistic knowledge on the basis of its most direct incidence in the teaching-learning process of the

English language, which allows him/her to solve the problems of practice in correspondence with the educational model and the approach or method of language teaching prevailing in the educational subsystem in which he/she works.

Among the objectives of the teaching of lexicology in the new E curriculum, the following stand out:

- Apply the theoretical and methodological foundations of materialist dialectics, logical thinking and the principles of humanist ethics in the study and teaching of English lexicology during professional performance and development.
- Efficiently use different types of linguistic dictionaries in tasks that require it as part of self-preparation for teaching and independent study or in face-to-face encounters.
- Analyze students' linguistic performances in order to detect their speech errors and present alternative solutions.
- Conceptualize the dialectical language-speech interaction, as well as the main phenomena and relationships characteristic of the semantic lexical level of the English language with a systemic dimension.
- Use the conceptual theoretical foundations and terminology of the subject, as well as the indispensable rudiments of the comparison of the lexical system of the English language for the conception and conduct of the EDP in the school.
- To use specialized reference sources and linguistic research methods specific to the subject for teaching purposes during the conduct and improvement of the EDP, as well as for professional development.
- To improve discursive competence in English, particularly in the academic scientific style.

Based on these objectives, an assessment is made of the current situation in the upper years of the course in relation to the mastery and use of vocabulary in oral and written communication.

For this purpose, classes were observed; the results of the students' activity were analyzed through the review of applied written works, coursework and diploma reports, and the students' performance in state exams, as well as through the interview and survey to students and teachers.

Among the main strengths, there is evidence of mastery and preparation of the teaching staff, the existence of means and technology to guarantee the quality of the teaching-learning process and the realization of the methodological work in the discipline collective that ensures the main aspects of the treatment of the contents. However, it was found that students express a certain level of dissatisfaction

with the variety and quantity of exercises applied to increase vocabulary in other subjects, there is a limited development of communicative skills, related to the mastery and use of vocabulary, among other aspects.

Taking into account the theoretical and methodological postulates of English teaching, particularly the treatment of vocabulary and the real situation that manifests itself, the authors have elaborated a system of exercises for the enrichment of vocabulary in English in students of higher years.

The system is based on a diagnosis of the students, the contents of the lexicology program in the third year and its application in subsequent years, as well as the conditions available in the course of study.

The system has exercises of different nature, aimed at learning new words, incorporating words from passive to active language and using them in communicative situations according to the level. The exercises are carried out both orally and in writing, reinforcing the four linguistic skills by challenging the student to listen, speak, read and write. Different types of exercises were developed: multiple choice, completion, linguistic games, crossword puzzles, riddles, tongue twisters, all aimed at expanding the vocabulary of both frequently used and professional terms and educational sciences.

System of exercises

Exercise 1 Tongue twister.

Objective: to identify the word formation procedures used in some words and to perfect the pronunciation of the chosen sound.

Instructions:

1. Listen attentively to the tongue twister; try to identify the sounds that are repeated in the tongue twister.
2. Listen again and repeat the tongue twister at an increased speed and following the correct pronunciation.
3. Copy the tongue twister and underline the words that belong to the same family. Explain the word-formation process used to create them, (or the lexical relationship between them).
4. Try to deduce the meaning. Check it in the dictionary.
5. Write sentences with those words.

Tongue twister:

- I saw Susie sitting in a shoe shine store.

Where she sits, she shines, and where she shines, she sits.

- When you write copy, you are entitled to copyright the copy you write.

- I desire to desire the desire that you desire to desire, but if you desire the desire that witch desires, I will not desire the desire that you desire to desire.

- If you look at this notice, you will realize that this notice is not worth looking at.

- Can a can be canned the way a can is canned?

Exercise 2 how were they formed?

1. Objective: to identify the processes of word formation, the original prototypes of each word and to use them in the construction of written texts.
2. Instructions:
3. Analyse the following words. Find the prototype of each of them
4. Identify the word-forming process used to create them.
5. Write them under the corresponding heading.
6. Explain the changes in meaning and word class of the new words in relation to the original ones.
7. Write a paragraph using as much of the words as you can.

Abbreviation	Blending	Clipping			Acronym	Ellipsis
		initial	middle	final		

List of words: Exam, Jr., HIV Camcorder, dorm, electrocute, FAO, gas, dept. SOS, Mr., PIN, Math, Memo, WHO, Smog, phone, flu, B.C.E., Tec, PM, Coke, Prep, NATO

1. Exercise 3. Apocopes.
2. Objective: to identify apocopated words, classify them and explain by means of examples in what type of language they are most commonly used.

Instructions:

1. Read the following paragraph and identify all the shortenings used. Classify them.
2. Explain the meaning of the words and their usage using a dictionary.
3. Rewrite the paragraph to avoid the shortenings.

Last night I received a call from a VIP on my cell phone. He said, "I have to tell you something, FMI try to meet with me. Please come as soon as possible in your limo and don't be your mini. I am afraid because I think it has to do with my finals.

Exercise 4. False friends

3. Objective: to identify cognate words used in English and constitute interferences for Spanish speakers.

4. Instructions:

Read the following sentence and identify the words that are similar to Spanish in sound and spelling.

5. Try to guess the meaning by using the context. Find it in a dictionary if necessary.
6. Translate the sentence into Spanish.
7. Explain the difference between the words in the two languages

Sentences:

- The man is filling out the form to apply for the job.
- I don't understand the meaning of that idiom.
- All the teachers are involved in the solution of the problem.
- The mayor was very busy this week.
- The pan was very hot, so I couldn't hold it.
- The injury was so serious that the man was hospitalized.

- What an interesting lecture!
- I like that blouse because the fabric is very colourful.
- The principal took a dramatic decision with the teachers.
- This place is disgust.
- I eventually will go to Chicago.

Exercise 5: Two different languages?

Objective: to use the terms according to the communicative situation that arises from the knowledge of the differences between the British and American variants of the English language.

Instructions:

1. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate word or phrase according to the communicative situation.
2. Give reasons for your choice.
 1. The teacher _____ (reviewed, revised) the content because the exams will be administered next week in London.
 2. In Washington DC the _____ (transport, transportation) is affected with the crisis.
 3. My friend from California likes to drive his _____ (truck, van) early in the morning because the _____ (highway, freeway) is almost free of vehicles.
 4. Every day the price of _____ (gas, gasoline) goes up more and more in Liverpool.
 5. My cousin moved to _____ (second floor, bottom floor) of a nice building in Texas.
 6. My _____ (partner) and I went to Miami Beach last Sunday.

Exercise 6: The word dance.

Objective: to identify the lexical-semantic relationships of words in English.

Instructions:

1. The teacher gives the students cards with written words on them to pin them on their cloth.

2. 2. Students start dancing to lively music when the teacher stops the music, each student tries to find a partner who has a word that has a particular relationship with the one he/she has (possible relationships are antonyms, synonyms, homophones, homographs, hyponyms, hyperonyms).

3. Make sentences with the words.

Word pairs:

Baby ----- infant pretty ----- attractive sick ----- ill

Precede----follow knew ----- newbear -----bear

Higher ---- hire seat ----- chair rose----- flower

Meat ----- meet dog ----- animal

Conclusions

The study of Lexicology is a necessity for the adequate training of foreign language teachers, since an adequate mastery of this science favors the performance of these professionals at different levels of teaching. In the study carried out, it was found that students show a certain level of dissatisfaction with the variety and quantity of exercises applied to increase vocabulary in other subjects, there is a limited development of communicative skills, related to the mastery and use of vocabulary, among other aspects. The authors elaborated a system of exercises for the enrichment of vocabulary in students of higher years, considering it feasible to generalize it to the rest of the years with adaptations according to the year and the subject where it is going to be implemented.

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