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**SOME WAYS OF USING A LEXICAL APPROACH
WHILE TEACHING BUSINESS ENGLISH****E. V. Buyanova***PhD in Philosophy, associate professor,
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Abstract. The article considers the implementation of the lexical approach in teaching Business English. It is placed at the centre of the syllabus. The functional language of business has been also analyzed. It is stressed that the lexical syllabus develops students' ability to identify the chunks of language. While teaching Business English students should try to combine the words into word partnerships they don't know. To do this successfully we offer using such self-study and class-based activities which employ sorting, matching, identifying and describing, e.g. language puzzles or collocation dominoes.

Keywords: lexical approach; lexical syllabus; chunks; lexical blocks; collocation; vocabulary skills.

Currently, there are a lot of trends in teaching foreign languages, and the teacher personally can choose any method he likes [1; 2; 3; 15]. Traditionally it is believed that a grammatical approach is used mainly when teaching a foreign language. That is the student firstly acquires basic knowledge of the grammatical phenomena of the language. The role of mastering vocabulary (words and phrases) is in the background only complementing certain grammatical structures.

The lexical approach proposed by Michael Lewis in the nineties of the 20th century is based on the development of students' vocabulary skills, the ability to understand and produce lexical phrases, that is having their own meaning units-chunks [9]. The Russian linguist O. L. Svirina calls them lexical blocks [5, p. 282]. This concept seems to her quite broad: "These are language phenomena that occur in stable and semi-stable units and that require independent efforts in learning. Thus, this is a fairly broad concept, including whole phrases (Have a good trip) or the beginning of phrases (I'd like to..., How about...), as well as collocations, idioms and phrasal verbs as well as proverbs" [5, p. 283]. It is no coincidence when teaching English it is the acquisition of lexical blocks that is emphasized. Research in the field of

cognitive linguistics confirms when learning a foreign language there are the combinations of words that the brain perceives as a whole that remain in a long-term memory: «There is a good psycholinguistic basis for believing that the mind stores and processes these chunks as individual wholes» [14, p. 400].

In fact, the latest corpus research findings into what the language of business really is de-emphasize a lot of the functional and structural input of the traditional course and place the lexical approach at the centre of the syllabus.

Computational analysis forced a close look at the most frequent vocabulary and grammar items in English. The 700 most frequent words in English account for only around 70 per cent of all English text. That is to say around 70 per cent of what English native speakers say and hear, read and write is made up of the 700 commonest words in the language. The most frequent 1,500 words account for around 76 per cent of text and the most frequent 2,500 for 80 per cent. Thus word frequency should be critical in developing the contents of the syllabus for students learning English.

Traditionally, the response to the language needs of business people has been the provision of resources combining a conven-

tional structural syllabus in a business context with the functional language of meetings, telephoning, presentations and socializing. But this approach often proves to be unsatisfactory. Business people who have no trouble getting through to the person they want on the phone, have all kind of trouble dealing with them once they have got through.

For much of the functional language of business that is taught is both unnecessary and unnatural. There are always simpler and more effective alternatives. For example, one of the most common ways of disagreeing in a meeting is to say “Yes, but...”. One of the most common ways of changing direction in a presentation is simply to say “OK, so...”. And recording of both native and non-native speakers shows that English favourites like “I’m afraid I can’t agree with you there” and “If we could just turn our attention for a moment to the question of cost” are actually rather rare.

Inevitably a lexical syllabus focuses on the commonest patterns, and develops not only learners’ awareness of word partnership but their ability to identify the “chunks” of language and combine a lot of words they already know (company, contract, run and draw up) into word partnerships they do not know (run a company, draw up a contract) and fixed expressions (We can hardly keep up with demand) rather than individual words (meet, keep, demand, etc.). Most important of all, the focus on a lexical approach shifts to the patterns in their most natural environment. Therefore, the counter-productive de-contextualized exercises of a standard course should be replaced with those of meaningful input. For example, a standard multiple choice gap filling exercise “_____ reservation for the flight” practicing the word “confirm” would certainly sound more natural in the phrase “Can I just make a quick call, please& I need to _____ my return flight, just to be on the safe side”.

The language of business is informationally dense, and word partnerships, which are really concentrated packets of meaning, play

a much more central role in business English, which tends to be more lexically diffuse. Because of this, the lexical syllabus not only subsumes the structural syllabus, it also indicates how the structures which make up that syllabus should be exemplified. It does this by emphasizing the importance of natural (probable rather than possible) language.

As in any modern paradigm, the lexical approach emphasizes communication of meaning, encouraging student ability to learn. This results in referring to learner-activity, and overtly or covertly, excluding reference to teacher-activity.

Lexical approach suggests that many traditional classroom activities and attitudes are counter-productive and should be abandoned, or at least greatly de-emphasized. As a result, teachers should be encouraged to see the multi-word chunks of which much text is made up. They should also help students make explicit their perception of similarities and differences, and then, by selecting the further “input” materials, help them to correct, clarify and deepen those perceptions. Methodologically it implies activities which employ sorting, matching, identifying and describing. These may be for self-study, resembling language puzzles, or class-based, involving, for example, collocation dominoes, dictation where students write down only utterances of a particular kind, or collocates they hear of words given on a worksheet.

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