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Dialogue of Cultures - Culture of Dialogue: from Conflicting to Understanding

CREATING A CULTURE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNICATION: SEMIOLOGICAL ASPECT

Yulia G. Kurovskaya (a)*, Vladlena V. Lysenko (b), Natalya A. Rogovaya (c),
Ekaterina A. Vorontsova (d)

*Corresponding author

(a) Institute for Strategy of Education Development of the Russian Academy of Education,
Zukovsky str, 16, Moscow, Russia, kurovskaja@mail.ru

(b) Institute for Strategy of Education Development of the Russian Academy of Education, Moscow, Russia

(c) Far Eastern Federal University, Sukhanova Street, 8, Vladivostok, Russia

(d) Institute for Strategy of Education Development of the Russian Academy of Education, Moscow, Russia

Abstract

The article describes the unit “Academic publications” included in the “English for Academics” coursebook, which consists of three thematic sections: “Publishing matters”, “Popular science articles”, “Research reports”. The purpose of the article is to discuss the structural and substantive features of the concept “Academic publications”. It demonstrates the content, semantic component and structural originality of the concept using the methods of pedagogical semiology, cognitive linguistics and discourse analysis. The article analyses the meaning of the name of the concept – its semantic dominance, identifies and characterizes the cognitive features of the concept, describes and illustrates its linguistic diversity of the conceptual space, describes the central and remote meanings of the conceptual units of the educational material under consideration, which emphasizes the nominative density and meaningful saturation of the studied concept. The authors of the coursebook demonstrate the special world in which the researcher resides and creates, through revealing to the reader the specifics of publishing, the mysteries of perceiving and creating an academic text, showing the art of conducting scientific activity and the science of writing a report on research work, which helps the student to form and develop a culture of English-language academic communication as an important component of academic literacy.

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1. Introduction

The modern global world promotes international interaction between countries, which forms a steady demand for qualified specialists who speak a foreign language. The lack of scientific information about the processes taking place in the world is in contradiction with the requirements of modern times, which updated the views on the processes of international integration and the use of foreign experience in professional activities. A specialist must be proficient in a foreign language so that he is able to follow trends in international space; understand and translate basic professional terms; communicate and conduct business correspondence with colleagues from other countries; understand and use information in a foreign language. But not only that.

Modern education, which currently involves lifelong learning, is changing the concept of literacy, expanding its boundaries from reading and writing skills to a format of thinking that meets the rules and canons of a particular cultural environment, which allows the specialist to actively interact in professional world, share the results of their (including research) activities, gain experience from foreign colleagues.

The freedom and effectiveness of international professional communication depends on the level of proficiency in the English scientific language by specialists in various fields. The skill of translating a professional text is insufficient, because in the global world the recognition of a new idea, the dissemination of the author's method, and the acceptance of the results of the study can only be provided by publications and speeches in the scientific and professional community in English – modern lingua franca. Therefore, the development of a culture of English-language scientific communication as an important component of academic literacy, which is understood as “the ability to broadcast academic written discourse on the basis of professionally oriented academic texts in foreign languages, to think critically, to increase one's self-educational competence for educational and professional purposes” (Smirnova, 2015, p. 59), is of particular importance in the system of university education and represents the subject of our study.

2. Problem Statement

In the context of globalization, the development of a culture of English-language scientific communication as an important component of an individual's academic literacy is a necessary condition for the success of a modern specialist. In this regard, the study, comprehension and analysis of the content of educational programs and courses aimed at forming an academically competent professional, represent an urgent research problem that can be solved on the basis of a semiological analysis. The study aims to reveal the features of the linguistic picture of the world, presented in the form of concepts in the educational literature on the English language and reflecting the different aspects of the student's academic literacy.

3. Research Questions

The focus is on issues that cover the content of the coursebook “English for Academics”, designed to develop the academic literacy of students, that characterize the concept of “Academic publications” presented in the course.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to reveal the features of the “Academic publications” concept.

5. Research Methods

The work has taken into account studies that reflect the main trends in the development of modern pedagogical science and the features of the evolution of universities in Russia and abroad (see works: Bebenina & Elkina, 2017; Ivanova & Bokova, 2017; Osmolovskaya et al., 2019, etc.), as well as works devoted to the problem of the development of scientific literacy (Fatimah, 2018; Korotkina, 2018; Murray & Muller, 2019; Nizonkiza & Dyk, 2015; Sebolai, 2016; Smirnova, 2015; Wallwork, 2016; Wingate & Dreiss, 2009 etc.).

To conduct a semiological analysis of educational materials and provide a description of the educational concept, we use the methods of pedagogical semiology (see, for example: Kurovskaya, 2017; Lukatskiy, 2015), semiology and discourse analysis (see, for example: Breitling, 2017; Karasik, 2019; Sharifian, 2017 etc.).

6. Findings

What is an academic publication? In search of an answer to this question, we turn to the publication “English for Academics” (Bogolepova et al., 2014), created by Russian authors with the support of the British Council and including a professional English language course, consisting of two parts and designed for students with an English level of B1– B2. The structure of the course involves a consistent study of academic English in several modules (reading, writing, speaking, listening), each of them is covered in the content of thematically related sections.

In this study, we consider a concept “Academic publications”, a part of the Reading module, that consists of three thematic sections: “Publishing matters”, “Popular science articles”, “Research reports”, and sequentially analyze the author’s message.

The choice of the concept is not random and is caused by the need to develop a culture of international exchange of scientific ideas and discoveries, whereas such development is supported by articles published in English, which reflect the progress and results of scientific research, projects, and developments.

In the coursebook under consideration, the concept of “Academic publications” is successfully integrated into the reading module, since writing an article requires its author: a) to be aware of the substantial diversity of publications; b) to be acquainted with the types of publications containing multi-genre materials, and with the reader for whom this or that article is intended; c) to have knowledge of the structure and meaningful content of the work. Of course, the linguistic and stylistic features of a publication and the specifics of the study itself (its purpose, conceptual framework, stages, theoretical foundations and experimental activity), the results of which are presented in the article, are of no small importance. So, in the “Academic publications” concept, the reader, while reading, plunges into the world of creating scientific texts in English, revealing for himself all its subtleties and nuances.

According to the “Conceptosphere of the coursebook” matrix created in the framework of pedagogical semiology (see: Kurovskaya, 2017), first of all, one should start from the key word of a concept - its semantic dominant. There are two keywords in this concept, this is the main token of “publication(s)”, which is mentioned 8 times in the book and 2 times in the section. The word “academic” describing the main lexeme in the coursebook itself occurs 59 times, characterizing not only publications, but also other facets of scientific activity: world, life, space, society, culture, sphere, community, context, work, career, cooperation, situation, event, conference, research, project, presentation, opportunity, achievement, text, article, journal, letter, correspondence, profession, course, discipline, test, vocabulary, forum. In the studied section, the academic lexeme is traced 5 times: in combination with texts (3 times), publications (1 time) and disciplines (1 time).

The name of the concept “Academic publications” occurs 1 time - only in the title of the section, however, within the conceptual space there is a diversity of its synonyms and species concepts. The nominative density of the concept is achieved not due to the private repetition of the core component of the concept (which would be unnecessary at an advanced level of language learning), but through a rich layer of vocabulary that reveals aspects of publishing and publication features.

Thus, using lexically diverse linguistic units that reflect publishing subtleties, composition and content conditions, and factors for creating multi-genre texts, the authors of the coursebook pave the learner a quick way to understand the publication as an important part of any academic and research activity.

To determine the correspondence of the meaning of the concept of “Academic publications” to its interpretation in lexicographic sources, let us turn to English dictionaries. The Latin word "publication" is multivalent, and among its main meanings there are: the act of printing a book, a magazine, etc. and making it available to the public; a book, a magazine, etc. that has been published (Publications [Def.1]. (n.d.). In Oxford Learner's Dictionaries).

The second component of the concept of “academic” in the dictionary is interpreted as 1) related to education, especially teaching at schools and universities, and 2) including the process of reading and studying, rather than applying practical or technical skills (Academic [Def. 2] (n.d.). In Oxford Learner's Dictionaries).

In the coursebook, the authors conceptually describe academic publications, firstly, as part of publishing. These are publications of different genres, different spheres of social life and different readership. At the same time, questions related to the search for necessary publications and the identification of those that may be useful in teaching or research are proposed for discussion. When mastering the “Reading” module, the reader gets acquainted with specific examples with articles that are evaluated in terms of originality, structure, research, ethics; and annotation, which has a standard structure, which involves a description of the purpose, problem statement, methodology, work results and conclusions. Readers work with keywords, compiling them and determining the main content of the article on their basis. Particular attention is paid to the language of publications, which is characterized by specific word-formation models and lexical units, which allow to word ideas briefly, clearly, and logically.

Secondly, the reader’s attention is logically shifted to popular science articles. Here the publication is the result of the study. It has a clear structure, including the introduction, description and results of the experiment, comments of the researcher and prospects for further research, and contains answers to

questions: who, what, where, when, why and how. The study itself, described in a popular science article, involves three stages of its implementation: planning, process, results.

Thirdly, the path to creating a publication is laid in the activity itself, the results of which are presented as a report. A report on research work is a publication that has a formal structure, which requires rigor and transparency of presentation, and which is reflected in its parts and sections, namely, in the introductory part, the main part and additional materials.

A significant part of all tasks within the framework of the studied concept is the search for the required information, its interpretation and comparison of the data obtained.

So, in the concept under consideration, academic publications are presented in English in the following meanings: they are part of the publishing industry, they are published materials of various subjects and target audiences, they are the result of the study and a report on it. We see publications in all their many and diversity, not only through the eyes of the reader, but also the creator of scientific texts. At the same time, the creation of a publication is subject to its laws and rules, which, however, goes beyond the norms at the substantive level and becomes art, creativity in research and scientific experiments. The reader is immersed in the process of creating publications, analyzing and comparing already published materials and their fragments, and this is the first step to writing your own text.

Following the logic of the authors of the textbook, we can highlight the cognitive features of the concept of "Academic publications", which are based on the following conceptual metaphors:

A publication is a part of the whole (a text that has been completed in a semantic and substantial sense and has been published in a specific publication (magazine, newspaper, collection)).

Publication is an idea (the authors' idea reflected in the text, intended for a specific readership).

Publication is a structure (structural parts of a publication that reveal its internal logic and the interconnectedness of the research stages).

Publication is a sign (the linguistic component of a publication that is subject to the rules and laws of academic discourse).

Publication - the result (a study in the form of a scientific report).

Cognitive attributes are shown in the study book in a rich, concentrated form, and therefore are easily detected and remembered, which helps the student using English to learn in detail this side of academic life, to touch the mysteries of creating text, to look at it not only through the eyes of the reader, but also of the potential creator, which is one of the important competencies acquired in the academic space.

The considered concept of "Academic publications" is expressive in language terms.

The diverse lexical series constituting the conceptual field "Publications" allow to study the phenomenon under consideration in more detail and learn the different types of publications (for example: journal, newspaper, magazine) and their titles (Scientific American, The Economist, Teaching Sociology, Cosmopolitan, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Business & Management Review, The Oxford Review of Education, Computer Monthly), types of publications (e.g. published materials, articles, papers, review, report, academic texts, novel) and the names of their structural parts (abstract, key words, etc.).

The conceptual text space contains characters specific to academic discourse, including:

- "Noun + noun" models (for example: review approach, target readership, computer systems, staff meetings, system design, company policy, etc.);

- terms and professionalisms (for example: referees, editors, questionnaire, subject, phenomenon, findings, purpose, survey, method, analysis, hypothesis, conclusion, discussion, references, bibliography, etc.);
- abbreviations (for example: ICT, CM, fMRI, UniLab, CEO, CDC, US);
- links to scientists (for example: Jack Gallant at the University of California, Berkeley) and their writings (for example: Smith, 2005, etc.);
- names of international databases (Scopus);
- accurate quantitative data obtained during the study (mentioning them in the text or presenting them in the form of formulas, tables, diagrams, diagrams).

The text is full of attributes that complement and clarify the concept, here are some of them: editorial board, anonymous referees, rigorous peer review, behavioural activity, the highest standards, general development, physiological indicators, critical period, a wider public, initial editor screening, noisy and dim environments, detrimental effect, strong evidence, a broader context, warrant publication, systematic review approach, the extant higher education literature, imaginary characters and events, massive / immense increase, similar standards, exceptional circumstances, new perspectives, interdisciplinary approach, etc.

Among the stylistically colored markers, the following stand out:

- metonymy (first of all, in relation to editions and publications, which are produced by employees and authors, respectively, for example: CM welcomes, an abstract helps, articles deal with ... / seek to ... / drew on, etc.);
- metaphorization (the brain's filing cabinet, our brains are master organizers, a new door to looking at brain data, etc.);
- impersonation (the brain organizes, the method opens, etc.).

The vividness and imagery of the conceptual units that make up the concept of "Academic publications", contribute to the reader's strong and deep knowledge in English of the features of publishing, publication activity and research activity in general.

The direct interpretation of the term "Academic publications", which is the core of the concept of the same name, is comprehensively presented: academic publications are regarded, on the one hand, as an integral component of publishing, and on the other hand, they are published materials containing a rich palette of topics and subjects proposed for familiarization, and focused on a diverse readership, and thirdly, they are the result of the study, embodied in the report on research work.

The peripheral meanings (located after the main one) can be seen in other sections of the coursebook under consideration, for example, within the framework of the "Reading" module when studying the features of scientific events (section "International academic conferences"), the specifics of conducting research at the university (section "University teaching, learning and research"), the intricacies of international programs and grants (section "International cooperation"). As for the "Writing" module, which logically completes the teaching of academic English and is directly connected with academic writing, all the ideas and knowledge about academic publications acquired during the development of the course content are implemented during the process of creating your own academic texts.

7. Conclusion

The idea of academic publications proposed in the “English for academics” coursebook for a student is driven by many cognitive attributes – fragments of the concept considered, reflecting various aspects of interaction within the academic space. The concept of “Academic publications” is an integral part of the academic and scientific life of a person, a space for his socialization and inculturation, an interactive platform for the exchange of thoughts, ideas, discoveries. The student discovers intricacies of the printing industry, the mysteries of perception of the academic text and the mechanisms for creating an academic publication. While studying the educational material that is the basis of the concept under consideration, the student masters the art of conducting scientific activities and the science of compiling a report on research work in English. All these facets that make up the essence of academic publications demonstrate a special research world, which allows the student to form and develop a culture of English-language academic communication as an important component of the academic literacy of a modern specialist.

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