

ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ВИКЛАДАННЯ МОВНИХ ДИСЦИПЛІН ПРОФЕСІЙНОГО СПРЯМУВАННЯ

УДК 378.14:81'24:130.2

DOI 10.33251/2522-1477-2021-9-173-177

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BUILDING CULTUROLOGICAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE FOR DEVELOPING BUSINESS ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The article deals with the issue of culturological background knowledge in the process of Business English teaching and learning. The author defines the essence and nature of culturological background knowledge differentiating it from the other similar terms used in recent publications. The study is aimed to substantiate the need for building culturological background knowledge in the process of Business English teaching and learning. Such qualitative methods of research as content analysis, observation and expert interviews have been applied to collect data for the study.

Key words: *culturological background knowledge, Business English, professional foreign language communication skills, communicative behaviour, cultural realities.*

Research problem formulation. Social transformations that the global community is witnessing nowadays have resulted in the change of social identification and given birth to new features of the society. Strong interdependence of languages and cultures that has been explored and proved for many centuries has revealed the necessity for a new paradigm – self-identification as a global citizen. Being a member of a certain cultural community, which has national traditions, language, history and literature, a person should be ready to participate in the dialogue of cultures. Perfect knowledge of vocabulary and grammar appear not to be enough. Some implicit factors matter. The issue of achieving adequate understanding in the context of intercultural communication is given special significance by both researchers and methodologists. Culturological materials should contribute to the effectiveness of communication in everyday life and understanding of everyday phenomena. The acquisition of culturological background knowledge is seen as a necessary condition for adequate language use.

Analysis of the latest research and publications. A significant contribution to the coverage of the essence of background knowledge is made by such domestic and foreign scientists as O. Akhmanova, I. Bazhenova, M. Borelli, E. Vereshchagin, O. Karpyuk, V. Kostomarov, O. Miloserdova, G. Tomakhin and others. Recent research has been focused on the use of background knowledge in certain areas. S. Safarian studies the role of background knowledge in the process of learning foreign literature. O. Osadcha investigates the main ways to reveal the meaning of cultural realities. T. Haniicheva deals with the role of background knowledge in developing interpreter's competence. L. Chernovaty explores the influence of language interference and background knowledge on interpreting the original text by translators. However, the problem of building professional culturological background knowledge for the future specialists of business sphere has not found the necessary reflection in the theory and practice of teaching Business English.

The aim of the study is to substantiate the need for building culturological background knowledge in the process of Business English teaching and learning.

Main body. It is a matter of common fact that knowledge is an important component of the content of education. In terms of our research, we deal with culturological knowledge that consists of encyclopaedic and background knowledge. It is believed that encyclopaedic knowledge includes active acquaintance with the cultural picture of the world as a certain systemic integrity, as well as the experience of studying the dynamics of value orientations of the countries. As a rule, this knowledge is acquired while studying at secondary schools and continues to be enriched at higher education institutions in the course of humanities. Background knowledge can be obtained from experience at work but no one will deny that it is much better to get it in the process of learning as soon as possible. Personal experience influences the picture of the world of every person is formed. We must not forget that it is also formed within the framework of some culture and determines the way we interpret phenomena and events.

In our opinion, background knowledge deserves special attention in the process of foreign language teaching and learning. As background knowledge can depend on the field of human activity, we consider it relevant to look into the field of business activity. In our opinion, it will not only help future specialists to feel equal in the process of communication but also enable them to identify certain opportunities.

Having used the content analysis method, we have found out that there is some ambiguity in the use of the term. V. Gudikunst and Y. Kim, R. Skollon and S. W. Skollon [3, 8] use this term in the meaning of all our knowledge about the world. Some scholars substitute the term "background knowledge" with "prior knowledge". However, it is not always correct. In the plane of our research we agree that prior knowledge is what students already know (what they learned prior) and background knowledge is cultural or contextual information provided by a teacher on a topic (the teacher provides the background) [7]. V. S. Vinogradov offers to use the term "background information" as he considers it to be broader than knowledge and include historical, geographical facts and ethnographic, folklore phenomena [2].

We interpret background knowledge as the unique information a representative of some cultural community has on a particular topic. It is involved in the process of interpreting communicative behaviour and influences our expectations and presuppositions, which are a part of the communicative situation.

C. Kramsch emphasizes the need to shift the paradigm from being to doing culture and focuses on three insights of the discourse perspective to intercultural communication:

- culture is not given, static or something you belong to or live with, but something one does;
- discourse systems (including that of culture, gender, profession, religion, the workplace, or the classroom) are multiple, intersect with each other and sometimes contradict each other, as a reflection of the multiplicity and scope of identities that people bring along to or bring about through interactions;
- intercultural communication is a social (inter-)action – a series of interrelated actions mediated by ideologies, societal structures, power (im)balances, self-ascribed and other-prescribed identities, memories, experiences, accumulated cultural knowledge, imagination, contingencies, and the combined forces of globalization and local adaptation and resistance [5].

According to the sphere of application, G. D. Tomakhin divides background knowledge into universal knowledge; regional information; information familiar to members of a particular ethnic and linguistic community; information known only to members of a locally or socially closed group; information known only to members of a certain micro-team [6, p. 84]. In real communication, one can face all types of background knowledge. Background knowledge of the third type is the closest to national culture and is of interest in the process of Business English teaching and learning. Background knowledge of universal and regional nature allows communication participants to understand each other to some extent, but only the correct use of

culturological background knowledge enables them to achieve complete mutual understanding in the dialogue of cultures. That is why building professional culturological background knowledge should be an integral part of the content of Business English teaching and learning.

Having applied observation and interviews as two basic data collection methods we have determined the most significant components of professional culturological background knowledge in Business English. They include: 1) knowledge of generally accepted norms of behaviour (etiquette) or communicative patterns of behaviour in the country; 2) knowledge of cultural realities. We will consider these two groups in more details.

Knowledge of generally accepted norms of behaviour in the country. Ignorance of communicative patterns of behaviour can lead to misunderstandings and culture shock. An example is the handshake, which is the usual greeting in international business. However, people shake hands in different ways. In France, handshakes are very quick, but in Brazil, people take more time to shake hands. People do not shake hands as often in North America. Only when two business executives officially represent each other in the UK they can shake hands. Communicative patterns of behaviour can be verbal, nonverbal, and mixed. Professionally oriented verbal models include forms of addressing colleagues and partners; norms of behaviour when applying for a job; telephone conversation etiquette; rules for writing a business letter, etc. Models of nonverbal behaviour include paralinguistic (intonation, pauses, diction, tempo, volume, etc.); extra linguistic (noises, laughter, crying, etc.); kinaesthetic (gestures, facial expressions, eye contact); proxemic (postures, body movements, distance). Non-verbal means of communication are no less important than verbal ones. They perform the following functions: emphasize part of the verbal message; anticipate what will be conveyed verbally; express a meaning that contradicts the meaning of the statement; fill in or explain pauses; maintain contact between interlocutors and regulate the flow of speech; replace a single word or phrase [4, p. 87]. For example, if a British business partner is silent during negotiations, it does not necessarily mean consent, as it is customary in Ukraine. It can simply mean waiting. If a Japanese colleague nods his head while listening to you, it does not mean that he agrees with you, but that he is following your train of thought. I. S. Bazhenova studies somatic language or body language and classifies it into communicative movements, psychophysiological symptoms of emotional state and non-communicative movements [1, p. 17]. When teaching professional foreign language communication, it is expedient to draw attention to culturological communicative movements, especially the ones that do not coincide in different communicative situations. An example is the manner of counting on the fingers, Ukrainians usually count by bending the fingers inside the palm, while the Americans or the British count by stretching the fingers outwards.

Knowledge of realities includes the idea of an object or phenomenon characteristic of history, culture, way of life of a particular cultural and linguistic community. The word "reality" denotes, mainly in philological texts, objects of material culture, which are the main ones for the nominative meaning of the word. On the other hand, in linguistics, the term "reality" refers mostly to words that name such objects and concepts. One of the main difficulties in their selection for the process of teaching is to find the boundaries, that is, answer the question 'What should be included in the background knowledge?' Not all knowledge about the country's culture belongs to the cultural background knowledge, but only the realities that are relevant to the professionals in a particular field. For example, business people in the UK are well aware that plc in the name of the company indicates that it is Public Limited Company – an open limited liability company, and Ltd is a Private Limited Company. Every Englishman or American knows what type of hotel a B&B is and what a starter means in the UK and an appetizer in the US, that Diners Club and Midland Gold are credit card types, that Selfridge's is the largest department store in London and at Marks and Spenser's you can buy cheap clothes.

Background knowledge, as illustrated by the above examples, is realized primarily in vocabulary, because it is the vocabulary that as the first element of communication reproduces reality and responds quickly to all changes in social life. In addition to the conceptual core, the

lexical meaning of the word includes the so-called connotations – additional meanings: emotional, expressive, stylistic additions to the basic meaning. This part is called the cultural component of the meaning of the word. The cultural component is inherent in non-equivalent lexical units, connotative and background vocabulary. Non-equivalent vocabulary are lexical units that do not have vocabulary equivalents in one of the languages. The reasons are either lack of relevant realities in social practice, for example: bushel (a measure of the volume of bulk goods such as grain, fruits and vegetables, which is approximately 36 litres in England and 35 litres in the US); or lack of lexical units, which mean relevant concepts: futures agreement, offshore zones. Part of non-equivalent vocabulary has not lost its bright cultural component, which is expressed in the connotative meanings of words that do not always coincide in different languages. Such vocabulary is called connotative. If an American tells his Ukrainian colleague that he works like a beaver, it is unlikely to be taken as a compliment because of the difference in emotional attitudes towards these animals in both countries. Another example of connotative vocabulary is the interpretation by business people of such a term as the black knight. In the Ukrainian mind, a knight is associated with someone noble, but for an American executive, a black knight is a person or company who tries to buy another company against the wishes of its owners. In addition, vocabulary with a national-cultural component can also be represented by phraseology, which should also not be avoided in Business English learning and teaching. Ignorance and incorrect understanding of phraseology, such as cross your t's, that is a horse of another colour, to buy a pig in a poke, to make a mountain out of a molehill, etc., can create certain obstacles in situations of intercultural communication.

Conclusions and prospects for further research. Thus, the culturological orientation of the content of teaching professional foreign language communication reproduces the relationship between language and culture and requires the inclusion of culturological data and phenomena in all components of the content of Business English teaching and learning. The ways to represent background knowledge in the Business English textbook, technologies to activate this knowledge at the lessons can be further investigated.

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БУДУВАННЯ КУЛЬТУРОЛОГІЧНИХ ІНФОРМАЦІЙНИХ ЗНАТЬ ДЛЯ РОЗВИТКУ ДІЛОВИХ АНГЛІЙСЬКИХ КОМУНІКАЦІЙНИХ НАВИЧОК

***Анотація.** У статті розглядається питання культурологічних знань у процесі викладання та навчання ділової англійської мови. Автор визначає сутність і природу культурологічних знань, диференціюючи їх від інших подібних термінів, що використовуються в останніх публікаціях. Дослідження має на меті обґрунтувати потребу у формуванні культурологічних знань у процесі викладання та навчання ділової англійської мови. Для збору даних для дослідження застосовуються такі якісні методи дослідження, як аналіз вмісту, спостереження та інтерв'ювання експертів.*

Виділено два типи професійних культурологічних знань. Характеризуються знання загальноприйнятих норм поведінки в країні та знання реалій. Професійно орієнтовані комунікативні моделі поведінки класифікуються на вербальні, невербальні та змішані. Визначено термін «реальність». Автор торкається проблеми вибору критеріїв відбору базових знань для змісту викладання та навчання ділової англійської мови. Обидва типи професійних культурологічних знань підтверджені практичними прикладами, взятими з ділової англійської мови. Дослідження показує, що фонові знання реалізуються насамперед у словниковому запасі, оскільки це перший елемент спілкування, який відтворює реальність і швидко реагує на всі зміни у соціальному житті. Автор приходить до висновку, що культурологічна спрямованість змісту розвитку комунікативних навичок ділової англійської мови відтворює взаємозв'язок мови та культури та вимагає включення культурологічних даних та явищ у всі компоненти змісту викладання та навчання ділової англійської мови.

***Ключові слова:** культурологічні фонові знання, ділова англійська, навички професійного іншомовного спілкування, комунікативна поведінка, реалії.*

*Одержано редакцією: 20.01.2021 р.
Прийнято до публікації: 27.01.2021 р.*