



The Problem of Identifying Socio- cultural Difficulties in the Course of Teaching ESP Reading

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Introduction

- Socio-cultural difficulties as opposed to lexical, grammar and structural ones
- The problem of identifying socio-cultural difficulties
- Layers of reading material denoting socio-cultural information

Theoretical Background

- general issues in ESP teaching (Dudley-Evans, T and John, M (1998), Richards, J.C. & Rodgers, T.S. (2001))
- socio-cultural matters of ESP teaching and language acquisition in general (LoCastro, V. (2011), Byram, M. (1998), Kasper, G. (2001), Lantolf, J. (2000)),
- certain layers of language, numerous studies of teaching ESP reading, and its various aspects (Macalister, J. (2010), McNamara, D. S. (2007), Nation I. S. P. (2009), Harris, A. & Sipay, E. (1990), Willis, J. (2008)).

Methods of research

- Surveying students and teachers
- Teaching reading observation
- Classification
- Comparative analysis
- Method of continuous sampling

FINDINGS AND RESULTS 1

- characteristics of texts that were used in the course of teaching ESP reading: authentic (primary) texts, secondary texts, adapted subject to content and functional parameters

- texts were ranked in accordance with:

the level of difficulty taking into account that of the vocabulary (according to the level of abstraction, with the relevance to the life experience);

the sentence structure;

quantitative characteristics of conceptual intensity

the degree of interest shown while perceiving the texts;

conceptual complexity, informativeness, subjects;

the degree of idiomaticity and expressiveness;

problematic character;

the perspective to transform the text, its adaptation.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS 2

4 groups of socio-cultural difficulties a student encounters while reading ESP texts were identified:

- The first group:

difficulties related to analysis and enrichment of knowledge, namely, inability to: systemize and group their background, linguocultural knowledge according to different criteria: new-old, known-unknown etc; set sociocultural guidelines; identify gaps in their background knowledge; consolidate and enrich knowledge; to revitalize their professional, linguistic and background knowledge.

- The second group :

difficulties related to inability to systemize and group socio-cultural lexical units. The skills of systemizing and grouping constitute: systematizing and categorizing, grouping in accordance with frames, based on etymological connections (time-oriented, cause and effect), abilities to reveal connotative semantics; broaden, narrow socially-oriented vocabulary units.

FINDINGS AMD RESULTS 3

- The third group:

difficulties related to inability to use sources of reference, to correlate word meanings given in dictionaries to the contextual ones, to identify meanings of lacunas using dictionaries, to select reference sources.

- The fourth group:

difficulties arising due to inability to contrast socio-cultural professional realia in English and Russian (inability to spot lacunas, full and partial equivalents, semantic differentiation, establish associative links (similarities, contrasts)).

Conclusions and recommendations

- Raising students` awareness of socio-cultural components of Legal English texts (at different levels from words to non-text information)

- Providing for techniques to employ to overcome socio-cultural difficulties.

- Preventing such mistakes by:

 - reconsidering the teaching style, the forms and methods of teaching reading, taking into account students` learning experience, their professional and background knowledge;

 - drilling equivalency on the level of words, word combinations, sentences, paragraphs, texts and non-textual information;

 - teaching to identify full or partial equivalents, inclusion, to analyze the target and translation languages, compare jurisdictions at issue.

Thank you!

