



Learning Environmental Terms Evolution

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Abstract

Texts on environmental topics represent a very fertile field to teach the means necessary to interpret and translate new meanings of vernacular words of the studied foreign language. The purpose of the research is to make Russian students in ecology and agriculture learn to identify new environmental terms in the French texts of the socio-political content, including chat rooms and Internet forums and to find equivalent lexical units in the mother tongue acting on a specific readership: professionals, government officials, the general public. Consequently, the role of figurative means of expression is analyzed as a non-researcher uses terms quite loosely, involves a shortened unit (hydrail) not inherent to scientific style, uses only a portion of a combination of words. In many cases, a neologism has potential value for a momentary transition into the category of commonly used widely spread lexical units, or for turning into a narrow useable professional word. There are cases of an obsolete special term-historicism coming back to everyday life (e.g. pastille verte, loi Grenelle) demanding a special historical commentary. The present paper touches on the major tasks of the teacher organizing such a work based on texts concerning new researches, namely: to constantly make selection of news; to prepare exercises for a work at the lesson or at home, to find an easy way of making students guess the meaning of the new term or a semantic change.

Key words: environmental and agricultural terms, foreign language for special purposes, new meaning, semantic change

1. Introduction

Texts on environmental and agricultural topics are of great interest for application of new approaches to learn foreign language for special purposes and to acquire skills of translation techniques based on ICT technologies.

Future Russian specialists in Ecology and Agriculture reading special literature have to understand new notions entering the research field in an increased number and speed in an English or French form. The purpose of the research are ways to make them identify new environmental terms and new meaning of well-known lexical units and to find equivalent lexical units in the mother tongue.

Teaching of the scientific text properties [1], especially organization of a lesson according to types of activities [2], demands a previous study of linguistic means proper to such kind of texts [3] which includes particularly the de-semantization and the re-semantization of lexical forms [4] as processes of evolution of the semantic structure of environmental terms.

A significant part of the environmentalist texts is written by journalists and not by scientists. As public is concerned with the themes of environmental domain, necessary terms and especially new meanings of common words are discussed in blogs, chats and forums for instance: [5; 6; 7], specifying means of synonymic expression of the same notion [8]. Terminological saturation of the field requires quite an eclectic collection of terms; sometimes emptied forms are filled with new content. Consequently, dictionaries do not satisfy the need of a young specialist. He/she has to go further and to find an interpretation according to a given context. So, the teacher does not propose a glossary well done beforehand, but is to form skills of a free search for a right variant of interpretation of moving semantics.

2. Methods and materials

A big part of the material to be analyzed is provided by Euronews site [9], precisely its department of news about discoveries and environmental innovations Futura-Sciences (subsections: Futuris, Science, Terra viva, Innovation, Tomorrow's city, etc. have been used) [10] and its forums, using

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common words as an environmental news concerns a wide readership together with special terms needed to an acute explanation of a discovery. We propose to compare English, French and Russian versions of scripts of the same video and make students understand at the same time how information is adapted for Russian audience.

The last three years we mostly use the video and résumés from www.francetvinfo.fr/ [11] accompanying them by articles and readers' remarks of mainstream newspapers such as *Le Monde.fr*; *Libération.fr*. We intend to give examples of such viral discussions texts highlighting vital environmental issues as well as to teach the means necessary to interpret and translate vernacular words of the studied foreign language acting on a specific readership: professionals, government officials, general public especially when a common word acquires a term function changing its semantic structure.

Students are very much impressed if and when the article to be analyzed is fresh; the research is produced and published the same week or rather the day before. So, the teacher tends to find a new material on the same topic for each lesson (of course, with the help of a set of key-words).

A significant part of the environmentalist texts that we study have two variants at the same lesson:

1. An information written by a journalist, for example [12], sometimes compared with a Russian variant, for example [13];
2. An original scientific text, for example [14].

3. Results

The task of the teacher is to propose to students a selection of cases, with a set of exercises in order to point out that new meanings of common words appear, and each case demands a special study. Students have to compare on-line dictionaries explaining the history, the meanings and the actual use of such units as *Grenelle* [5] or rather *durable*. As it has been shown before, the latter term includes five ideas if combined with, for instance, the word *bag*:

- The bag must be made of environmentally friendly materials,
- The bag must be locally produced,
- Manufacture of bags should be located in the region where it is used,
- Production workers must be from the local population,
- Child labor should not be used.

In such a case a scientific neologism has potential value for a momentary transition into the category of commonly used widely spread lexical units.

Although we dwell most of the time on historical roots of terms of different branches of science related to the protection of the environment, we emphasize that the terms can turn into a narrow useable professional word and then resurrect, as it is the case of *pastille verte* [15], one more time highlighting one of the vital issues – to make the transport means greener. The term designated non-polluting vehicles from 1998 to 2012, it returned in 2016 as a synonym of a new word combination *Certificats qualité de l'air* with five variations: *pastille verte*, *violette*, *jaune*, *orange*, *grise* [16].

A significant part of the environmentalist texts is written by journalists and not by scientists, so another feature of such texts is the reluctance of journalists to use accurate, but long narrative momentum to make new notions clear to readers. For instance, the proper understanding of the element “zéro” in a combination bring a complex idea of a new sophistication to make an item both producing energy to cover the energy consumption and having a system of waste management. The form is de-semantized, and after the empty form is filled with a new content: “zéro énergie, zéro émissions, zéro déchet”. We show the instability of grammar forms in such new units. For example:

*Alstom a dévoilé aujourd'hui son **train zéro émission** au salon InnoTrans [...] Coradia iLint est un nouveau **train régional à zéro émission*** [17].

We show also that French language is more resistant than English to new words-hybrids. If even the word is accepted it is put in inverted commas for a while:

*Le premier train **sans émission de CO2 appelé 'hydrail'**, a été dévoilé lors du salon InnoTrans de Berlin* [18].

The analysis with the help of different on-line tools leads students to the fact that the laws of semantic compatibility of words in the neutral style have been broken, a semantic change has occurred and the meaning of the unit is to be rethought in the given context.

Students have to analyze examples of funny or sometimes erroneous ways of English and French nominations in English and French texts of the socio-political content, including chat rooms and Internet forums. Addressing to a wide readership the everyday language is used together with too many special terms. It comes sometimes to humoristic perception of menaces and their prevention, like on this sticker on the bottle of shampooing imitating pseudo-scientific description:




ÇA Y EST, IL EST ARRIVÉ.
LE NOUVEAU SHAMPOOING DE OUSHOUSHAIË.
Dedans, il y a de l'huile de BABASSOUIA.
Mais aussi, des essences de GLAFOUK et
du concentré de BORGLÛB.
La JARTOUZE raffinée, alliée au NOTONECTRUS per
redonnera à vos cheveux la VITALITÉ et la CLANURE
dont vous rêvez.
OUSHOUSHAIË, tous les jours, nous inventons.
Notamment le vocabulaire dont nous avons besoin
pour parler du CHTAROUË de la vie.
Oushoushaïa
OUSHOUSHAIË, ACHAMOUCYOU ASHEMEUNEU AFANAFÄ.
cf : les nuits

The teacher, organizing this work based on texts concerning new researches, has the following tasks:

- to make constantly selection of news with new terms;
- to find a common word which acquires a term function;
- to reveal changes in its semantic structure;
- to prepare exercises for a work at the lesson or at home;
- to make students understand the meaning of the new term or a semantic change.

4. Conclusion

The aim of the teacher when helping future specialists to learn is not only to find such a new meaning of a word, but to make students find an explanation or better, a definition and have courage to propose an equivalent in mother tongue in case new collocations have not yet been introduced even in on-line bilingual dictionaries.

The present study focuses on a general pedagogical target: the students in Ecology and Agriculture are realizing that in the beginning of the 21st century they need to learn how to interpret the information, to communicate it in a clear and interesting manner to a precise addressee, finding common point of reference when discussing the new event with experts – scientists and practitioners.

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