



CHALLENGES IN TEACHING SPECIALIZED TERMINOLOGY AND STRATEGIES FOR THEIR MITIGATION

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the pedagogical challenges English language instructors encounter when teaching specialized terminology in non-philological higher education institutions and proposes effective mitigation strategies. The research indicates that the primary obstacles stem from students' limited lexical base, instructors' methodological constraints, rigid time limitations, and the selection of appropriate lexical materials. To address these challenges, the paper evaluates several instructional techniques, including L1 translation, realia, visual aids, contextual guessing, spaced repetition, and systematic dictionary utilization.

Introduction: Vocabulary is not merely an isolated list of lexical items; it constitutes the foundational framework of language comprehension and production. Academic literature emphasizes that while the size of a learner's vocabulary is critical, the strategic capacity to deploy it effectively in professional contexts is paramount. Historically, between the 1940s and 1970s, vocabulary instruction was largely marginalized in favor of structural grammar and phonetic drills due to fears that premature lexical expansion would induce syntactic errors.

In the contemporary English for Specific Purposes (ESP) paradigm, however, terminology instruction is recognized as a core component of professional communication. Even when students possess incomplete grammatical mastery, a robust command of domain-specific terminology enables them to comprehend professional contexts. Nonetheless, instructors consistently encounter student-related, teacher-related, and structural challenges during this pedagogical process.

Literature Review

Effective terminology instruction requires a systematic tripartite focus: word form, word meaning, and the integration of form and meaning. Methodologists suggest three primary modes for illustrating lexical meaning:

- Visual representations (pictures and diagrams).
- L1 equivalents or student-led native language explanations.
- Simplified target-language definitions utilizing pre-existing student vocabulary.

Furthermore, instructional guidelines emphasize allocating dedicated class time for vocabulary, facilitating context-bound learning, training students to internalize lexical items actively, and sharpening strategic guessing mechanisms.

Methods and Results: Identification of Pedagogical Challenges

The investigation identified three primary dimensions of difficulty in teaching specialized terminology in non-philological universities:

1. Student-Related Challenges

The most prominent challenges arise from learners' restricted prior knowledge of lexical meanings and accurate pronunciation. A limited vocabulary directly undermines reading comprehension and text processing. Additionally, pronunciation barriers persist because many students lack familiarity with phonetic notation and word stress patterns, which requires deliberate phonetic instruction during vocabulary presentation. Furthermore, passive learners often experience frustration when relying solely on contextual guessing, as it does not consistently guarantee long-term retention without active reinforcement.

2. Instructor-Related Challenges

Data reveals that some instructors struggle to bridge terms with their exact contextual semantic variations, leading to an over-reliance on direct L1 translation. While translation serves as an efficient tool for addressing spontaneous or highly abstract technical terms, its over-use often signals an instructor's lack of alternative semantic elicitation techniques.

3. Structural and Time Constraints

ESP instructors frequently encounter severe time constraints within the curriculum. Effective terminology acquisition demands dedicated instructional phases; without adequate time allocation, instructors cannot facilitate deep processing or meaningful interaction with new lexical items.

Discussion: Tactical Solutions for Terminology Retention

Based on pedagogical practices and empirical observations within non-philological faculties, several practical interventions have been implemented to overcome these barriers:

[Terminology Mastery Strategies]



• **Implementation of "Word of the Day/Week" Programs:** Introducing scheduled lexical inputs (5–10 contextualized terms per session) encourages independent learning. This strategy stimulates students to active utilization, though some instructors prefer delivering new terminology dynamically as it arises within the source texts rather than through isolated slots.

• **Integration of Visual Aids and Realia:** Utilizing authentic objects (realia), drawings, and flashcards significantly enhances semantic retention. Realia provides a highly meaningful, sensory-rich context that is superior to abstract explanations when available in the classroom.

• **Spaced Repetition and Cognitive Recycling:** Because vocabulary retention requires multiple cognitive exposures, structured repetition helps transition terminology from short-term memory to automated production.

• **Regulated Dictionary Competence:** Instructors encourage autonomous dictionary navigation to clarify word forms and derivatives, provided it is monitored to prevent over-dependence and passive copying.

Conclusion

Teaching specialized terminology presents complex pedagogical hurdles across student-centered, teacher-centered, and administrative dimensions. However, shifting away from rote memorization toward a blended framework of visual integration, structured lexical programs, dynamic repetition, and strategic translation effectively mitigates these barriers. These interventions systematically enhance professional communicative competence among non-philological undergraduates.

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