

OPINION

**by Assoc. Prof. Elena Slavcheva Savova, Ph.D.,
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***1.3. Foreign language (German language) teaching pedagogy,*
about obtaining the educational and scientific degree “Doctor of Philosophy” in
professional field *1.3. Pedagogy of teaching of...*, scientific specialty “Modern language
(English language) teaching methodology”,**

**by candidate Dilyan Petrov Gatev,
Senior Lecturer at the University of National and World Economy – Sofia, Bulgaria**

The presented dissertation entitled “Increasing the Efficiency of Terminological Vocabulary Acquisition in Teaching English for Specific Purposes by Bulgarian Students of Economics” contains 266 pages of main text and consists of an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion. The bibliography comprises 194 theoretical sources, of which 30 in Bulgarian and 164 in English, as well as reference works, links to electronic databases and tools, dictionaries and press publications. To the dissertation are added 10 appendixes.

1. Importance of the researched issue in scientific and applied respect

The dissertation topic is justified by societal and educational needs of optimizing teaching English for specific purposes to students of economic specialties. The need for employees in the field of business and economics, who know English for specific purposes at a high level, is generally recognized. Well known are also the high requirements of teaching and learning a language for specific purposes as well as the needs for more specific approach to students, depending on their first language. The research is intended to make contribution to solving scientific and practical issues in this respect.

2. Justification of the aims and tasks in the dissertation

Against the background of the outlined needs, correctly is set the research aim directed towards their satisfaction through developing and testing a methodological model of teaching. The research interest is focused on students’ terminological vocabulary competence (object) and the possibilities for its effective development (subject). A comparison with the research itself shows a certain exceeding of the aims, the subject and the object, which in the

course of work could have been made more specific and extended. The research object is actually not only terminological, but also specialized vocabulary competence, which includes terminological vocabulary competence, but does not exhaust it. The “possibilities” mentioned in the subject turn out to be “techniques and means of teaching” for the development of that, not only terminological, but also specialized vocabulary competence. The research tasks are defined very ambitiously and in full compliance with the set aim.

3. Compliance between the selected methodology of research and the set aim and tasks of the dissertation

To the fulfilment of the set tasks contribute the adequately selected methods, which almost follow the classical design of pedagogical research. To them however we could add the method of modelling (creating a complex of activities and techniques of teaching) and creating an author’s teaching tool – a learner’s dictionary, which in my opinion is among the most valuable contributions of the dissertation.

The theoretical analysis in the first chapter and the content analysis of a syllabus and tools for teaching English for specific purposes at the University of National and World Economy – Sofia, Bulgaria, are targeted and lay good foundations for developing the methodological model. They demonstrate a very good acquaintance with both the theoretical and the practical aspects of the researched issue. Lead and significant authors of publications in the issue under consideration are quoted. Well defined is the subject – terminological vocabulary competence against the background of communicative competence. Clarified and distinguished are the concepts of terminology and specialized language, as well as the language-systematic and functional peculiarities of these phenomena. Examined are important tools for terminology management – such as corpora, banks, glossaries, dictionaries, computer tools. Outlined are the characteristics of teaching English for specific purposes and business English, as well as the requirements and challenges related to the teaching content, methods, learners and teachers. The special significance of vocabulary competence is justified against the background of the other knowledge and communicative skills; methodological aspects of its development are examined. The analysis of the syllabuses for teaching the specific target group illustrates the link between theoretical formulations and practice. The analysis of the sets of textbooks, workbooks and teacher’s books could have been more targeted, with shorter presentation of (sample) unit structure, and focused on vocabulary knowledge introduction, exercise and application against the overall background of each set of textbooks, workbooks and teacher’s books. The outlined inferences serve as a starting point for creating teaching tools and a methodological model for

optimizing the development of specialized and terminological competence. One of the strongest parts of the dissertation is the creation of a specialized author's thematic dictionary designed in accordance with the specific needs. Its stages are presented logically and convincingly. Impressive is the way of language material extraction, dictionary entry development with definitions in English, examples and translation equivalents, as well as dictionary structuring into two parts dedicated to lexical items consisting of one word or collocations respectively. The methodological model developed in response to the specific needs is outlined relatively clearly. Unfortunately, I could not find instructions clear enough about the way of integrating the sets of textbooks, workbooks and teacher's books and particularly the author's specialized dictionary into the different teaching activities and scenarios. The methodological model testing is carried out in accordance with an experimental design established in pedagogical sciences. Yet, the presence of a control group would have contributed to more convincing impact of the experiment results. The data collection tools (surveys with two target groups, entry, midterm and final structural and functional tests) are designed precisely. The tests comprise relevant elements of students' communicative competence. The surveys involve important aspects of the object and subject of the research. Maybe it would have been better for the students' and teachers' surveys at the end of the first year to also include questions for verbal assessment / self-assessment of the developed specialized vocabulary competence, as well as about the satisfaction with the applied teaching methods and the learner's dictionary. The statistical processing of data impresses with precision and convinces in the tested model efficiency.

4. Scientific and applied contributions of the dissertation (description and evaluation)

On the basis of the stated so far, to a great extent could be accepted the contributions pointed out on pages 290–291 of the dissertation, which can be summarized in the following way:

- The scientific knowledge and the practical experience related to teaching English for specific purposes and business English to students of economic specialties at the Bulgarian higher education institutions are enriched;
- A valuable teaching tool facilitating that teaching is created;
- A methodological model contributing to the efficiency of that teaching is created and tested.

5. Judgment on the publications on the dissertation – number, characteristics of the editions in which they are published

Parts of the dissertation are unfolded in reports and papers, which deepen and broaden essential aspects of the dissertation – peculiarities of specialized and terminological vocabulary and its teaching, using digital technologies for terminological economic vocabulary acquisition, computer tools for terminological vocabulary processing and so on. They have been presented at university forums and published in editions of the University of National and World Economy – Sofia, Bulgaria, International Business School – Botevgrad, Bulgaria, Paisiy Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, Bulgaria, South-West University “Neofit Rilski” – Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, and in the international “Educational Role of Language Journal”.

6. Citation by other authors, reviews in the scientific press and so on

In the documentation related to the dissertation, no citation reference can be found. One of the publications is presented positively in the foreword to the Proceedings of the Jubilee International Scientific Conference Dedicated to 100 Years of Foreign Language Teaching at the University of National and World Economy – Sofia, Bulgaria. The dissertation was presented with a very good response at the doctoral seminar entitled “Current Issues in Foreign Language Teaching” and held at New Bulgarian University – Sofia, Bulgaria, in July 2021.

7. Comments, recommendations and notes

With regard to the form, content and impact of the dissertation, the following notes and recommendations can be made:

1. The general issues of communicative competence have been examined repeatedly in dissertations since the end of the 1990s, therefore in the dissertation they could have been addressed more briefly.
2. The inferences at the end of chapter one and chapter two should have represented not so much of a retelling of their content, but more of a summary of the results, which should have referred to the next research steps.
3. The strategy for extracting the meaning from the context should not have been expressed in Bulgarian with the word “otgatvane” [guessing] (even though this expression has obviously been chosen under the influence of sources in English).

4. In the test description and in the tests themselves, the word “uprazhnenie” [exercise] which has been used to label the different test tasks should have been avoided.

5. It is recommended for the compiled thematic specialized dictionary to be published and accompanied by a workbook instructing how to use it and also including exercises for introducing and consolidating selected lexical items.

In certain relation to the recommendations, I would like to ask the Ph.D. student the following questions:

1. Whether he is acquainted with Interactive Terminology for Europe (IATE) terminology database and what is his opinion of its role in teaching English for economic and business purposes;

2. Whether in the developed methodological model there are specific steps for using the learner’s dictionary not only as a reference tool, but also as a teaching tool on the basis of which tasks and exercises can be done.

8. Conclusion

There is in-depth research with a contribution to the theory and practice of teaching modern languages, in particular teaching English for specific purposes to students of economic specialties at the Bulgarian higher education institutions. It bears evidence of the author’s rich practical experience and very good theoretical and methodological preparation.

I give a positive assessment to the dissertation entitled “Increasing the Efficiency of Terminological Vocabulary Acquisition in Teaching English for Specific Purposes by Bulgarian Students of Economics”. I support Dilyan Petrov Gatev’s candidacy for obtaining the educational and scientific degree “Doctor of Philosophy” in higher education field *1. Pedagogical sciences*, professional field *1.3. Pedagogy of teaching of...*, scientific specialty “Modern language (English language) teaching methodology”.

01.03.2023

Assoc. Prof. Elena Savova, Ph.D.

