

REVIEW

by Prof. Daniela Nikolaeva Koch-Kozhuharova, Ph.D.,
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2.1. Philology,

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

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

The dissertation entitled “Increasing the Efficiency of Terminological Vocabulary Acquisition in Teaching English for Specific Purposes by Bulgarian Students of Economics”, provided to me well in advance in both its electronic and its paper version, with a total volume of 541 pages, of which 292 pages of main text and 249 pages of appendixes, consists of an introduction, three main sections, a conclusion, a bibliography, a list of the contributions and a list of the publications on the topic, as well as ten appendixes. The importance of terminological vocabulary acquisition in developing communicative competence for professional purposes not only in the studied foreign, but also in learners’ mother tongue is pointed out. Justified is the need for increasing the efficiency in developing a bilingual terminological vocabulary competence among Bulgarian students of economics, studying business English as part of their professional preparation, through applying a specifically developed methodological model of a combination of teaching techniques and a series of teaching activities. To the fulfillment of that aim contributes the use of the English-Bulgarian thematic learner’s dictionary of economics with definitions in English, designed mainly (but not only) for the purposes of teaching a language for specific purposes, compiled by the author.

2. Precisely formulated aims and tasks of the dissertation

In the introductory part of the dissertation (pp. 8–13), precisely, briefly and clearly are formulated both the research aim and the research tasks and subtasks, which are fulfilled

consecutively in the next three main sections and are summarized in the concluding part. “The main aim of the methodological model is to offer a combination of teaching techniques and a series of activities, which should lead to increasing the efficiency in terminological vocabulary acquisition by Bulgarian students of economics, studying English for specific purposes” (p. 177).

3. Degree of awareness of the problem state and compliance of the literature used

In practical terms, the Ph.D. student Gatev draws mainly on his personal experience of almost ten years as a lecturer of English for specific purposes to students mainly of the economic specialties of the University of National and World Economy – Sofia, Bulgaria, but he also draws on the experience of his colleagues from the Department of Foreign Languages and Applied Linguistics, as well as of other lecturers in that field from the country and abroad – Pentcheva and Shopov (p. 25), Albena Stefanova (p. 29), Zhang (p. 20), Garcia Laborda (p. 24), Leonardi and Belcher (p. 28), de Beaugrande (p. 44) and many others. That provides an opportunity for in-depth familiarization with the state of the research problem, which is also confirmed by the appropriate selection of the literature used mainly in the section presenting the theoretical basis of the research.

4. Correctness of the citation of a representative number of authors

Cited are 30 sources in Bulgarian, of which one syllabus, 163 sources in English, among which several teaching sets of business English textbooks, workbooks and teacher’s books and an article from the periodical economic press, as well as 10 online sources – mainly dictionaries and computer tools for extracting potential terms from specialized texts, and also economic periodicals in English. Among the cited authors stand out the names of lead Bulgarian and foreign scholars mainly from the field of foreign language teaching methodology as a whole and in particular – of teaching a foreign language for specific purposes and of its variation – teaching business English. Correctness of citation formatting is observed.

5. Presence of a justified and developed theoretical model of the research

In the research, well justified is the need for developing a methodological model of a combination of teaching techniques and a series of teaching activities for increasing the efficiency in developing terminological vocabulary competence among the target group of learners. This model is also justified from a theoretical point of view. “At the base of the

methodological model remains the widespread and underlying the syllabus communicative approach in foreign language teaching, supplemented by elements of the grammar-translation method in the form of greater focus on the translation equivalents of terminological vocabulary items and doing more exercises for translation and summary of specialized texts containing numerous examples of terminological vocabulary use” (p. 161).

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

At the end of the introductory part of the dissertation is specified the research methodology used, which is typical of pedagogical research and is applied correctly in the course of work, in full compliance with the set aim, tasks and subtasks, namely: theoretical analysis of scientific literature, critical analysis of the syllabus in “English as a first foreign language” for the students of “Economics and management taught in English” at the University of National and World Economy – Sofia, Bulgaria, critical overview of the most commonly used teaching sets of textbooks, workbooks and teacher’s books, pedagogical natural/quasi-experiment for testing the efficiency of the model and expert evaluation of the dictionary by economists (pp. 12–13).

7. Presence of own contribution to empirical data collection and analysis

The samples of the surveys and tests carried out, presented in the appendixes at the end of the dissertation, are indicative of their original design, which is in full compliance with the aim and tasks of the dissertation. The empirical data are collected, statistically processed and analyzed in a way relevant to the research specificity after consultations with experts in the field of statistics.

8. Description of the contributions:

8.1. Brief description of the essence and credibility assessment of the material on which the contributions of the dissertation are based

The contributions listed on pages 290–291 are of theoretical and of practical essence and are based on the material presented in the three main sections of the dissertation; the material makes an impression of a high level of credibility.

8.2. Description of the candidate’s contributions and their classification

I accept the following of the contributions pointed out by Ph.D. student Gatev as ones of theoretical essence:

- defining the concept “terminological vocabulary competence” in the context of communicative language competence;
- examining the characteristics of teaching English for specific purposes mainly in comparison with the ones of teaching general English;
- laying major emphasis on teaching vocabulary (both general and specialized);
- paying attention to the role of corpora, term banks, dictionaries and digital technologies in teaching a foreign language for specific purposes – in my opinion, this is one of the leading theoretical contributions of the dissertation.

I accept the following of the contributions pointed out by Ph.D. student Gatev as ones of practical essence:

- compiling an English-Bulgarian thematic learner’s dictionary of economics with definitions in English, designed mainly (but not only) for the purposes of teaching a foreign language for specific purposes – in my opinion, this is the most substantial contribution of the dissertation, since the dictionary has a format unique in its essence, combining in itself not only specialized lexical items grouped in thematic subfields and their translation equivalents, but also their definitions in English, collocations, synonyms, antonyms and so on, which turns it into an invaluable additional teaching tool for both teachers and learners; its use would actually facilitate the application of the methodological model developed by the author; so far lecturers from the Department of Foreign Languages and Applied Linguistics at the University of National and World Economy – Sofia, Bulgaria, have compiled English-Bulgarian dictionaries of socio-political and tourist vocabulary – Stoyan Apostolov (and Blaga Blagoeva), Radmila Kaisheva and so on, but not of economic vocabulary, which is another argument in favor of the contributive character of the new dictionary compiled by the Ph.D. student;
- visually demonstrating the functionalities of the computer tools for term extraction from specialized texts *TermoStat Web* and *Sketch Engine*, as well as the bilingual online dictionaries *Glosbe* and *Linguee* presenting terms and their different translation equivalents in context – I consider that this is the second most significant contribution of the dissertation, particularly for the lecturers of the elderly generation,

since it comes to advanced and available technical tools, which are “a powerful tool supporting the teaching process” (after the quotation of Milen Shipchanov on page 97);

- developing and testing a methodological model of a combination of teaching techniques and a series of teaching activities for developing terminological vocabulary competence among Bulgarian students of economics, studying English for specific purposes as part of their professional preparation – this is a contribution no less important than the above-mentioned ones, because the results of the testing, with a high level of certainty, confirm the efficiency of the model, which can be applied in teaching not only English for specific purposes, but also any other language for specific purposes.

Based on the description of the contributions, convincingly can be drawn the following two inferences:

- the dissertation demonstrates that the candidate has in-depth theoretical knowledge of the specialty and abilities for independent scientific research;
- the dissertation contains theoretical summaries and solutions to scientific and applied problems which represent an original contribution to science.

8.3. Assessment of the degree of the Ph.D. student's personal involvement in the contributions

Judging by the description of the contributions and their compliance with the material presented in the three main sections of the dissertation, it can be reasonably claimed that the degree of the Ph.D. student's personal involvement in them is maximum height.

8.4. Assessment of the compliance of the dissertation abstract with the main points and contributions of the dissertation

The content of the dissertation abstract, which has a total volume of 63 pages, complies with the main points and contributions of the dissertation, even though it fails to cover in sufficient detail every one of them.

9. Impacts of the dissertation on the external environment:

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

The presented publications on the dissertation topic are five in total, of which four in Bulgarian and one in English. Three of them are in the proceedings of scientific conferences organized by Bulgarian higher education institutions – International Business School – Botevgrad, South-West University “Neofit Rilski” – Blagoevgrad, University of National and World Economy – Sofia, and the other two are published in scientific periodicals – *Research Papers of Paisiy Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, Bulgaria*, and the international *Educational Role of Language Journal*.

The material in four of them (all except the paper in *Research Papers of Paisiy Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, Bulgaria*) has also been presented orally in advance at the respective scientific forums (conferences and seminars). In the five publications are unfolded different aspects of the dissertation content, namely: strategies for terminological vocabulary acquisition in teaching English for specific purposes (business English), increasing the efficiency of terminological economic vocabulary teaching and acquisition through digital technology, contemporary challenges in teaching terminological vocabulary in teaching business English, computer tools for terminological vocabulary processing, as well as some techniques for teaching business English vocabulary.

9.2. Use and citation by other authors, reviews in the scientific press and so on

Dilyan Gatev’s (2021) report entitled “Computer Tools for Terminological Vocabulary Processing” and published in 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* [ISBN: 978-619-232-452-0] (pp. 89–103) held in October 2020 is cited in the colleague and specialist in German studies Dr. Silvia Vasileva’s (2021) habilitation work entitled *Comparative text-linguistic analysis of activity report (Geschäftsbericht) in Bulgarian and German language: Based on reports of EVN Bulgaria* [ISBN: 978-619-232-518-3], even though that is not reflected in the official documentation related to the dissertation.

10. Personal qualities of the author (if the reviewer knows him)

I have known the author since his entry into service as a full-time lecturer of English at the University of National and World Economy – Sofia, Bulgaria, after winning a competition, in academic year 2013/2014. Since then, he has stood out as a diligent, assiduous and lecturer and a responsive colleague. The main idea of his dissertation he draws mainly on his experience of almost ten years as a lecturer to students mainly of the economic

specialties of the University of National and World Economy – Sofia, Bulgaria – work which he strives to optimize as much as possible according to his strengths and capabilities. He is a co-author of the workbook *Improve Your Business English Skills 1: Use of English* [ISBN: 978-619-232-273-1] (2020) designed for preparation for the lexical and grammatical components of the written part of the practical final exam in (business) English.

11. Comments, recommendations and notes

I congratulate the colleague and his scientific supervisor Assoc. Prof. Svetlana Dimitrova-Gyuzeleva on their efforts and the achieved scientific and applied results.

The dissertation makes an impression with its precision and accuracy at many levels (including statistical one), with its good expression in Bulgarian and with its good graphic design. I recommend its publishing, as well as the one of the newly-compiled English-Bulgarian thematic learner's dictionary of economics with definitions in English, designed mainly (but not only) for the purposes of teaching a foreign language for specific purposes.

I also take the opportunity to make the following comments, notes, recommendations and a question:

- I fully support Johns' and Benesch's recommendation that along with the specialists in English for specific purposes "learners should also have the right to participate in the assessment of their own needs" (p. 29), for example, through surveys; taking the results into account would definitely lead to increasing the efficiency of courses, which in an academic context would be beneficial to the authority of the respective higher education institution;

- with regard to Dr. Albena Stefanova's highlighting the lack of professional experience on part of learners as one of the main prerequisites for difficulties in teaching a foreign language for specific purposes (p. 29), I note, in my quality of ex head of the Department for Foreign languages and Applied Linguistics for many years, that for that reason at the University of National and World Economy – Sofia, Bulgaria, there have been talks among heads of departments about transferring the teaching of first specialized foreign language from first and second year to third and fourth year respectively in order for students to become fully acquainted with the subject matter and the issues of the respective professional field by then;

- I fully share Robert de Beaugrande's view presented that it is necessary to overcome the differences in the viewpoint on the content studied by students of the departments of foreign languages and the ones of economics in order for them to be

able to start working in better collaboration, which would lead to increasing the quality of both teaching a foreign language for specific purposes and teaching specialized disciplines (p. 44);

- I would like to complement the justified recommendation made on pp. 78–79 that it is necessary in business English courses “to pay attention to cultural differences, which would possibly lead to hindering communication in an international environment” with the clarification that the peculiarities of national cultures, just like languages, can develop and change over time under the influence of factors of a different essence – for example, the handshake mentioned by the author underwent modifications during the COVID-19 pandemic, when it was replaced by nodding, greeting with a touch of a fist only and so on – *tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis*; therefore, it is expected from the teacher of a foreign language for specific purposes to be acquainted with the current state of cultural peculiarities in order for him to be of maximum benefit to his students;

- question: what does the author mean in the description of the first stage of the development of the dictionary by the clarification that it “is designed mainly (but not only) for Bulgarian students of economics” (p. 143);

- I congratulate Dilyan Gatev on the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic did not prevent the Ph.D. student from collecting the empirical material necessary for his research, while at the same time he took “all possible actions to guarantee the validity of the data obtained in an online environment” (p. 185).

Conclusion

Based on everything said so far, I give my absolutely positive assessment to the dissertation entitled “Increasing the Efficiency of Terminological Vocabulary Acquisition in Teaching English for Specific Purposes by Bulgarian Students of Economics” and unreservedly propose for the esteemed scientific jury to award Dilyan Petrov Gatev 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*.

Sofia, February 26, 2023

Signature:

(Prof. Daniela Koch-Kozhuharova, Ph.D.)