



University Ziane Achour, Djelfa

3rd Year Students

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Didactics of Teaching ESP

Department of Foreign Languages

First Term

English Division

All Groups

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I. Types of vocabulary in ESP

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:83) suggest resolving overlapping categories (Baker, 1988:91) into two broader groupings:

- a). vocabulary that has specialized and restricted meanings in certain disciplines and which may vary in meaning across disciplines.
- b). vocabulary that is used in general language but has a higher frequency of occurrence in specific and technical descriptions and discussions.

The first group should be referred to as *technical vocabulary* and the second area would be regarded as *semi-technical* vocabulary. It is important to make a distinction between these two categories of vocabulary because they are of great importance to learners studying English for specific and academic purposes.

1. Technical vocabulary (Jargon):

Vocabulary used by special group or occupational class, usually only partially understood by outsiders. The special vocabularies of architecture, medicine, law, science, and technology all fall under the heading of "jargon", so the term jargon is applied chiefly to the words and phrases that are used and understood by people within a specific profession or field of study but not by others. Examples of occupational jargon include such formal technical expressions as perorbital hematoma (black eye; to the lay person), in medicine; and escrow and discount rate, in finance etc....

2. Semi- technical or Core vocabulary:

It has often been pointed out by ESP teachers and applied linguists that the division of vocabulary in technical registers into specialized and general items is both simplistic and inadequate for the purpose of teaching English as a foreign language. Many have argued that the real difficulty with understanding scientific/technical texts, as far as the foreign specialist or learner is concerned, lies in the area of vocabulary generally referred to as "sub- technical".

The term "sub-technical" covers a whole range of items which are neither highly technical and specific to a certain field of knowledge nor obviously general in the sense of being every days words which are not used in a distinctive way in specialized texts.

II. The required vocabulary in ESP teaching

In spite of the claims that teaching technical vocabulary is not the job of ESP teachers, there may be several circumstances in which ESP teachers should offer timely help.

Firstly, when learners are reading specialized texts with a large number of unknown technical words which cannot be ignored by learners because of their close connection with the topic being discussed, ESP teachers now need to help the learners to decide which words are worth focusing on.

Secondly, when doing ESP exercises exploiting a particular context with certain technical vocabulary, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) "*it is important that both the teacher and the learners appreciate that the vocabulary is acting as carrier content for an exercise and it is not the real content of the exercise.*" (p .81)

Thirdly, ESP teachers may help learners when learners find it a bit difficult to deal with the general words used as technical words. For instance, 'wall' in biology, and 'resistance' in electronics. Fourthly, if a technical word is not cognate with the equivalent term in the student's native language, the teacher will have to give some explanations and introductions to the vocabulary to be learned.

Fifthly, usually there is a one to one relationship between the terms in English and the learner's L1, but sometimes when there is an absence of one to one explanation, the teacher should check whether learners have fully understood the term and give them guidance in the use of technical dictionaries or other similar sources.

Lastly, it is possible that difficulty with the pronunciation of some technical words could lead to poor memorizing of the words. ESP teachers can be of a great help in this respect.