METALINGUISTIC DIFFICULTIES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH

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Studierea şi predarea limbii engleze ca o specialitate sau în scopuri profesionale în diferite domenii: filologie, ştiinţe juridice, economie, politologie, fizică şi matematică, chimie, tehnologii informaţionale etc. presupun studierea lexicului şi a gramaticii, analizând în plan comparativ diferite fenomene lingvistice, ca: polisemia, omonimia, antonimia, redundanţa, transpoziţia formelor lexicale, lexical-gramaticale şi gramaticale în limbile engleză şi română. Studierea englezei la nivel ontic şi gnostic ne va ajuta să explicăm dificultăţile latente din limba-ţintă din punct de vedere lexical, gramatical, stilistic şi fonologic. Un deosebit interes prezintă procesele lingvistice ce ţin de producerea masivă de unităţi lexicale abreviate în diferite stiluri funcţionale ale limbii engleze, generos împrumutate de alte limbi de pe glob. Scopul lucrării este de a familiariza studenţii filologi cu fenomenul social-lingvistic extraordinar de abreviere în masă a lexemelor. În prezent există dicţionare de abrevieri online ce conţine peste 750 000 unităţi lexicale. Problemele sociale, politice, de ordin naţional şi internaţional, tot ce este legat de existenţa omului sunt afectate de acest fenomen sociolingvistic. Importanţa abrevierilor în procesul vital, în economisirea timpului, resurselor în comunicare este incontestabilă. Acronimele folosite în denumirile unor instituţii, organizaţii, societăţi etc. pot fi create cu scopul de a atrage atenţia şi a produce un impact emoţional asupra vorbitorilor de limbă. Este evident caracterul subiectiv în crearea abreviaţiilor şi prescurtărilor noi în politică, economie, în diverse activităţi sociale. Apar tot mai multe unităţi lexicale abreviate sau prescurtate cu caracter jovial, emoţional în diferite stiluri funcţionale ale limbii, inclusiv în argoul limbii engleze, fenomen ce apare şi în alte limbi.

The metalinguistic issue. In the comparative process of teaching/learning grammatical categories we should give the terms used by linguists to make it easier for students and teachers to better understand the material on the subject. We compare terms and often find a discrepancy in the units used to denote particular categories and also in the naming or description of the concepts. In grammar the terms *continuous, durative, progressive, imperfective, imperfect, dynamic, extended aspect*, etc (17 terms) are regarded as synonyms. Analyzing the terms we clarify whether they denote the same object, or they are used to indicate that a grammatical form may express several categorial forms and meanings. The terms are reprehensible when they are used to denote grammatical meanings, such as the notional category of *perfective, indefinite, generic, general*, etc. aspect. In English by *perfective vs. imperfective* and *perfect vs. imperfect forms* we find out two different interpretations. P*erfective* is not so easy to distinguish from the lexeme *perfect*. The term *perfective* is used to indicate a categorial form of durative aspect, but not necessarily continuous, while *perfect* is retained to denote the categorial form of anteriority, then the system is less convincing than the opposition of *continuous/non-continuous*. If we take the opposition of *perfect aspect vs. progressive aspect* then as soon as we come to examples like *He had been reading his book for two hours before I came back*, we should explain that we cannot have two aspectual categorial forms expressed simultaneously by the same form - *had been reading* - to express a finished and an unfinished action simultaneously! Perfect here expresses grammatical anteriority supported and intensified by the lexical anteriority marker *before*. Anteriority is the main meaning of all the perfect forms. The metalinguistic problem presents much more difficulties in the field of the vocabulary of the English language. A good example is the massive creation and usage of various types of abridged lexical units, most of them representing metalinguistic systems in all the fields of human activity. Various types of abridgements, which were considered as minor word building means, surpass quantitatively many other classic procedures of word-building. In the previous articles we have mentioned the fact that abbreviations are used to codify linguistic information in order to optimize communication. The abridged units have become an efficient means of stocking and communicating a considerable volume of information in a concise way without any meaning losses. More and more people participate in the formation of abbreviations, acronyms, clippings and fusions.

The metasemiotic, emotional and humorous usage of abridged units. Internet users in their blogs actively participate in inventing all kinds of acronyms and bacronyms/backronyms, most of them are used with a specific humorous emotional metasemiotic meaning. Quite a number of them can be classified as slang acronyms or backronyms! There are internet dictionaries with more than 750 000 abbreviations! Metaphoric homonymy has increased! Some of the terms have several hundred homonyms! The evolution of acronyms and other abridged units in various functional styles often is accompanied by a metasemiotic usage of the codified combination of initialisms or other abridged units. They gradually acquire a stylistic connotation

being used in the literary or colloquial layers. Even in slang we discover a multitude of abbreviations, clippings and blending or their combined versions. Names of institutions, organizations, etc. may be chosen in order to sound more attractive. The subjective character in creating new abbreviations is increasing in all the functional styles. Analyzing all the abridged units we discover that a great number of them possess both denotational and connotational meanings. Do they lose or gain anything? In English we find the Latin origin e.g. (*exempli gratia*) and its equivalent *for example*, The Latin abbreviation e.g. in English is a stylistic synonym of *for example*. At the first sight one could think that abbreviations are void of denotational and connotational meanings. A closer inspection of the material does not support this possible point of view. The homonymous acronyms and abridged lexemes in general may be intentionally formed to express certain metasemiotic associations. Even in the printed dictionaries the homonymy of abbreviations in general and acronyms in particular, are used to make up certain connotations. They may function as personified metaphors, creating a metasemiotic Resource Materials: Evaluation and Services, EDGAR – Electronic Gathering, Analysis and Retrieval System (US). ADAM – Advanced Data Management System (MITRE Corp. – US), Aid in Design and Evaluation of Data Management (IBM-US), Automatic Data Management System (US), Automatic Document Abstracting Method (Ohio State University – US), Many acronymic names do not always consist of pure initial letters. In order to get an attractive appellation the authors contribute to the creation of a desired attractive and fashionable term. The abridged units are created to resemble well-known names found in the Bible, World Literature and World History, Natural Sciences, every day activity words and even figures o combinations of letters and figures: MIDAS (11 homonyms), ORION, ADAM, AFRICA, BABILON, PARIS, SOCRATE, MARS (Military Amateur Radio Station; Mini Assault Rifle System; Multi-purpose aiming Reflex Sight; Multiple Artillery rocket System; Marine Air Support Squadron), etc.[8] Many acronyms and initialisms have come to the point of not just representing a combination of words they gradually developed features of independent lexical units with new global meanings. For example, LASER (known as *Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation* and its homonyms: *Learning Achievement through Saturated Educational Resources; London and South Eastern Library Region; Learning Achievement through Saturated Educational Resources*) may be used as a noun, adjective, verb: to lase. 'Laser' is used as part of more than 500 double compressed units [1].

The metasemiotic expressive function of abridged lexical units has officially been used in advertising, in the creation of all possible abridged names of institutions, firms, organizations, etc. More and more "elegant", "fashionable" and" super" compressed units come into being. They are meant for the consumers to have something jovial, euphonic, and recognizable in form, related to some well-known names that would make the new compact lexical unit more attractive, interesting and fashionable. Metaphorical homonymy is flourishing in all the functional styles of the English language and this is being borrowed into other languages, including the method of formation of humorous slang backronyms, etc. There are plenty of acronyms homonymous to the existing units. They may be intentionally chosen in order to compress information and form certain metasemiotic associations. Having analyzed the existing dictionaries we have found out that homonymy of abbreviations, and especially of acronyms, is incredibly high. Some of them have more than seven hundred homonyms and many of them are used to provoke either positive or negative connotations. According to Wikipedia a backronym or bacronym is a phrase constructed purposely to form a desired with the form of a desired word. They may be invented with serious or humorous intent, or may be a type of false or folk etymology. Taboo words are also used to form acronyms [9]. The word is a portmanteau or a blending and defined as a "reverse acronym" [9]. False acronyms are also created. Thus, the distress signal SOS is believed to be an abbreviation for Save Our Ship or Save Our Souls, Survivors On Ship, Swim Or Sink, Stop Other Signals. But it was chosen because of the simple Morse code representation — three dots, three dashes, then three more dots (. . ._ _ _. . .). Reverse acronyms may contain the acronym itself: GNU – GNU's not Unix; Wine - Wine is not an Emulation. [9] ACRONYM as and abbreviation has a backronym as well. Thus, Abbreviated Coded Rendition Of Name Yielding Meaning, (Ralph Johnston). Equally impressive is: Alphabetically Correct Representation Of Neologically Yclept Magniloquence (B Coates). ACRONYMS – Abbreviated Coded Rendition Of Name Yielding Mass Stupefication (A Brady) [9]. Backronyms can be formed from simple unabridged words: BEG – Big evil grin. Yahoo – Yet Another Hierarchical Officious Oracle; FIAT (Fabbrica Italiana Automobili Torino) = Fix It Again, Tony (concerning the relative quality); Many companies or their products may be the target of multiple humorous backronyms: thus, Ford (the car company founded by Henry Ford) may stand for "First On Race Day" (positive impressions) and "Fix Or Repair Daily" and "Found On Road, Dead" by people not pleased with the product [9]. In the Internet Russian language sites we find humorous backronyms made up by Russian speakers: ВУЗ - Выйти Удачно Замуж; ГИБДД – 1. Гони

Инспектору Бабки и Дуй Дальше; 2. Государственное Инквизиционное Бюро «Деньги Давай!»; ГПТУ – Господь Послал Тупых Учиться; СТУДЕНТ – Срочно Требуется Уйма Денег Есть Нечего Точка [10]. Online games contribute to the enrichment of the abridged lexical units, including those belonging to slang. Lets give some examples: 10q – Thank you; 10x – Thanks; 2B – to be; 4ever, 4eva – forever; AFAIC – as far as I'm concerned; as far as I care; as far as I can; ASAP – as soon as possible, B4N – Bye for now; CID – Consider it done; HAND – Have a nice day; PICNIC – Problem in chair, not in computer (referring to in human error); WAI – What an idiot; WAD – Without a doubt. Slang abbreviations can be expressed the combination of figures and letters and there units expressed by combining some other signs existing in the language. As to acronyms which are witty and humorous, they have been made up and placed in internet sites or blogs by really creative people. Useful lists and even dictionaries are available in the net to be enjoyed and contributions from all the visitors are accepted. That is why enthusiastic people managed to create a specific acronymic and backronimic metalanguage that gradually may be accepted by the official printed dictionaries abbreviations. Here we find 41 abridged lexical units of ACRONYM and ACROMYMS: *A Clever Re-Organization Nudges Your Memory; A Comical Reduction Of Nomenclature Yielding Meaning; A Company Reaching Out to New Youthful Markets; A Completely Random Order Never Yields Meaning; A Concise Recollection Of Nomenclature Yielding Mnemonics; A Concise Reduction Obliquely Naming Your Meaning; A Contrived Reduction Of Nomenclature Yielding Mnemonics; A Contrived Reduction Of Nomenclature Yielding Mostly nonsense; A Crazy Reminder Of Names You Misplaced; A Cross Reference Of Notes Yielding Messages, etc.* Having analyzed quite a number of online abbreviations we have to mention the fact that most blogs and dictionaries use and accumulate abridged units belonging to the colloquial stylistic layer, corresponding to various social contexts. Let's give some slang examples: *AEAP – As Early As Possible, AFAIC – As Far As I'm Concerned; AFAICS – As Far As I Can See; AFAICT – As Far As I Can Tell; AFAIK – As Far As I Know; AFAIR – As Far As I Remember; ASAP – As Soon As Possible; BABY – Being Annoyed By You; BEG – Big Evil Grin; HAK- Hugs And Kisses; HAND – Have a Nice Day; HAR Hit And Run; NATO – No Action, Talk Only; WAD – Without A Doubt; NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization – compare with NATO in Normal Army Tea Order (white with 2 sugars); NOTB – None of Their Business; Stab – Stupid Territorial Army Bastard. Offensive: AOB – alcohol on board; FOS – found on street (unidentified dead homeless person); GOK – God Only Knows; HONDA – Hypertensive, Obese, Non-compliant, Diabetic African-American* [11]. We have analyzed a number of colloquial abbreviations which are not classified as offensive slang and having quite a specific emotional connotation. In spite of the fact that many of the colloquial slang abbreviations are not found in the official printed dictionaries, they exist in the Internet communication used by a considerable number of people and we should study the given metalinguistic system as part of a continuous process of change in the existing languages of the world.

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