

LEARNING TO READ NEWSPAPERS IN EFL CLASS, OR NEOLOGISMS IN ENGLISH NEWSPAPER TEXTS

Iskander E. Yarmakeev, Albina R. Abdrafikova,
Tatiana S. Pimenova*, Alina F. Nigmatullina

Kazan Federal University (RUSSIA)

*Corresponding author: pimenova_ts@mail.ru

DOI: 10.7813/jll.2016/7-2/60

Received: 04 Apr, 2016

Accepted: 24 May, 2016

ABSTRACT

No doubt, reading newspapers in EFL class has become a must, for newspapers provide relevant information telling the reader all about what is happening in the world, and, in this way, deepening and broadening the outlook of students. Another feature of newspapers is that they include texts of different types and language styles not easily found in belles-lettres. The relevance of the research topic is determined by the fact that modern lingua-didactics pays much attention to the functioning of new words in texts of different types, including newspaper texts. However, the problem of teaching students to read newspapers containing new words (neologisms) is not sufficiently studied. This determined the purpose of this research. The authors were able to analyze the functioning of neologisms in English newspaper texts and pinpoint the frequency of their use, which resulted in compiling a glossary and developing a set of training and test exercises which were approbated in the experiment with the aim in view to help students deal with the large amount of vocabulary they confront, and learn to distinguish neologisms associated with a particular content area from general academic vocabulary. The findings of the research can serve as general recommendations for university faculty and can be used in EFL class.

Key words: academic vocabulary, articles of different genres, EFL class, glossary, learning to read newspapers, neologisms, newspaper texts

1. INTRODUCTION

An appeal to newspaper texts and studying English neologisms' features in these texts is dictated by the stylistic characteristics of newspaper texts. A new word in the newspaper text passes through the stage of socialization. The newspaper, in most cases, is the first written retainer that keeps lexical innovations, which tend to enter the literary language and native speakers' speech. The newspaper being created in the shortest possible time does not provide the opportunity to make the processing of linguistic material ideal.

In newspapers one can find poems, comics and articles about new movies, new youth movements, sports clubs, music, art, environmental issues. A huge variety of newspaper articles offers a great number of sources of information which can meet students' needs and favors activities with this material. Most newspapers publish articles on the youth problems which attracts students' attention (Ilyina, 2014). The size of newspaper articles can range from a short paragraph to a whole page which enables the class-room teacher to select the most suitable text for his class taking into account its size, the complexity of the language, the amount of new information, and the level of students' knowledge. It explains, to some extent, why rather a lot of researchers in education and language teaching in Russia (Malyavin, Anikina and Latushkina, 1981; Stam, 1981; Chepik, 1993; Kirsanova, 2001; Perkas, 2002; Freidlin, 2004; Kosareva, 2004; Kuryanova and Belkina, 2013; Abdukadyrova, and Khidirbaev, 2013; Popovich and Bulgarova, 2013; Ilyina, 2014; Sadikova, 2014) dedicated their publications to the problem of teaching students to read newspapers in foreign languages, although only a few of them have touched upon the outlined topic.

Thus, it has become a necessity to expose that knowledge what neologisms are and how neologisms function in English newspaper texts lets students, on the one hand, understand this linguistic phenomenon and, on the other hand, make the most of this knowledge:

- ♦ focus on the neologisms that are most important to remember
- ♦ transit from passive knowledge of neologisms to active use
- ♦ reinforce general academic vocabulary.

In this study, for the analysis of functioning of neologisms there were selected newspaper articles from different genres: messages, comments, reports, editorials, essays, etc. It was revealed that new lexical items are present in all types of newspaper articles.

For the solution of the second goal of the research - compilation of the glossary and development of the set of training and test exercises which were aimed at facilitating reading newspaper texts that contain neologisms - the authors conducted a multi-staged experiment.

The teaching technique how to learn to read newspaper articles with neologisms proposed by the authors showed itself effective and positive.

The practical output of the research consists in the possibility of the usage of approbated materials in EFL classes and language training courses.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the Encyclopedia (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neologism>), a neologism is the name for a relatively new or isolated term, word, or phrase that may be in the process of entering common use, but that has not yet been fully accepted into mainstream language. Neologisms are often directly attributable to a specific person, publication, period, or event. A neologism may also be a new usage of an existing word, sometimes called a semantic extension.

What types of neologisms are frequently used in English newspaper texts? That was the first task the authors set in this study. After the analysis of 80 issues of newspapers, it was found out that proper neologisms, trans-nominations and semantic extensions constitute the most frequent types of neologisms in English newspapers. In Fig. 1 the frequency of the usage of neologisms in English newspaper texts is presented.

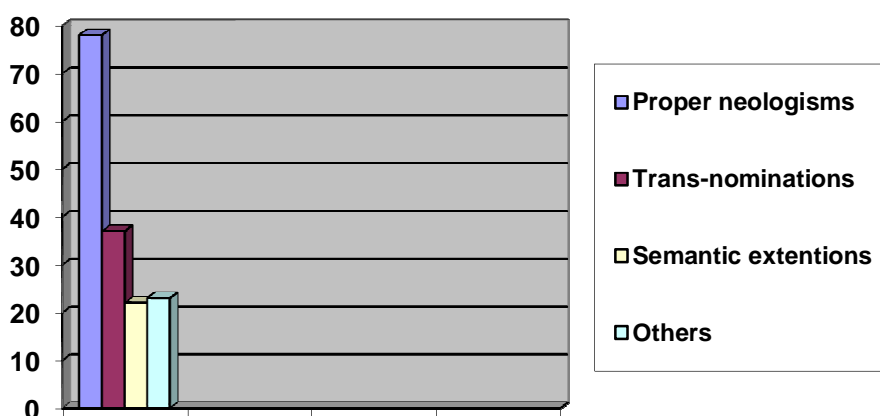


Fig. 1. Frequency of the usage of neologisms in English newspaper texts

As can be seen from the graph, proper neologisms comprised the most extensive group of new words (e.g. audio-typing, bio-computer, thought-processor).

Researchers in education and language teaching Popovich and Bulgarova (2013) share an opinion that at the present moment English is developing very swiftly and there is the so called «neology blowup».

Kuryanova and Belkina (2013) notice that contemporary English has also become a language-giver recently, especially with the development of computerization.

Sadikova (2014) states that new words, as a rule, appear in speech of an individual person who wants to express his idea in some original way. This person is called «originater».

A number of educators come to understanding that new lexical units are primarily used by university teachers, newspaper reporters, by those who are connected with mass media. In this way, they explain a great role newspapers can play in reinforcing students' vocabulary that has to include new words. The English classroom teachers' responsibility is to search for novel and appealing methods to properly teach students to read newspaper texts in EFL class.

According to Malyavin, Anikina and Latushkina (1981), teaching students to read newspaper texts correctly stimulates their interest to learning foreign languages and promotes the development of language skills.

Stam (1981) points out the significant role learning to read newspapers plays in the formation of students' media literacy.

In Chepik's opinion (1993), teaching students to read newspapers promotes ideological and political education of the youth of today.

Kirsanova (2001) considers that the use of authentic materials in EFL class, newspapers including, forms students' cultural competence.

Perkas (2002) provides additional arguments in favor of working with newspapers in the native language in the process of mastering foreign language speech.

Freidlin (2004) and Kosareva (2004) specify teaching methods that can be implemented to teach senior students to read newspaper texts.

Abdukadyrova and Khidirbaev (2013) advocate the idea of complementing work with newspapers by watching television and listening to radio programs that share similar content with further information exchange.

3. MATERIALS AND STUDY INSTRUMENTS

3.1. Students' Background

Number, age and gender characteristics: 78 students, 17-18 years old, mixed who made up two groups: 1 control and 1 experimental.

Students' status: B.A.

3.2. Research Site

Leo Tolstoy Institute of Philology and Intercultural Communication of Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Russia.

3.3. Studied materials

To satisfy the requirements of the study, the authors collected a corpus of 160 neologisms found in two British dailies, namely The Guardian and The Daily Express. These two contrasting newspapers were chosen intentionally as the first one belongs to the quality newspapers whereas the latter one is a tabloid. The neologisms were isolated from 80 issues of newspapers. 75 of them are from the copies of The Guardian and the remaining 85 - from The Daily Express. The vast majority of newspapers (68.7 %) were issued between the end of 2015 and the first five months of 2016.

A structural-semantic classification of neologisms (Table 1) designed by Locket (2004, 2006) was taken into account with the collected glossary correspondingly as the basis of the experiment.

Table 1. A structural-semantic classification of neologisms designed by Locket

Neologisms		
A word in which both the form and the meaning are new	The form is new, but the meaning has already existed in some other word	The meaning is new but the form has existed before

4. SUMMARY

This study is aimed to reveal, distinguish and classify neologisms in English newspaper texts and to conduct an experiment with regards to prove that special introductory theoretical course with a set of practical seminars can be helpful for first year students in studying and recognizing neologisms in English newspaper texts.

The experimental training was conducted among freshmen of Leo Tolstoy Institute of Philology and Intercultural Communication (1 control group and 1 experimental group) during two semesters: Fall 2015 and Spring 2016.

78 students volunteered to participate in the experiment: 1 control group - 39 students and 1 experimental group - 39 students.

The experiment consisted of three phases:

1. Ascertaining experiment.
2. Forming experiment.
3. Control experiment.

At the ascertaining stage various excerpts from The Guardian and The Daily Express newspapers were offered to the students with a view of neologisms presence to find and identify them. Contradictory results followed that stage of the experiment due to the students' nescience of unknown words and neologisms (that are most often confused).

All these data were taken into account during the experiment in the organization of the educational process at the formative stage where various teaching exercises, while reading English newspapers full of neologisms proposed by the authors, were implemented into EFL class.

The control experiment was carried out to assess the effectiveness of the exercises on teaching neologisms to students in EFL class.

The preliminary test (excerpts) was aimed at revealing students' knowledge in the following topics as: neologisms, abbreviations, derivation, compounds, shortenings.

The results of the test in the control and experimental groups are shown in Fig. 2.

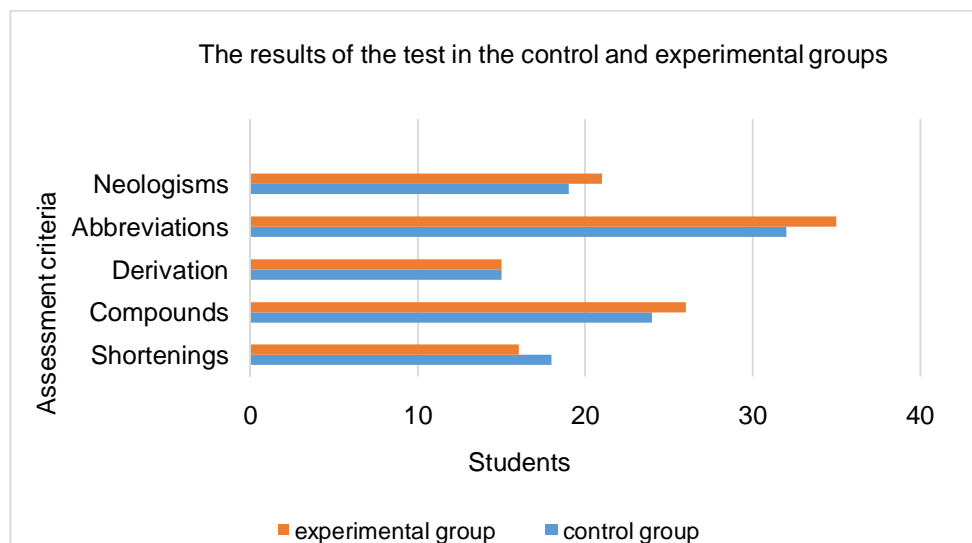


Fig. 2. Results of the test in the control and experimental groups

The overall results show the correct answers given by the students of the control and experimental groups. As can be seen from the diagram, it proves that less than half of the students were unaware of their level of knowledge in English, mostly in the proper usage of neologisms and their classification.

A further investigation of the problem was carried on at the formative stage of the experiment with a theoretical and practical overview to the problem of neologisms in English newspapers. Moreover, creative exercises were worked out and implemented to boost consolidation of new neologisms in EFL classes during an academic year.

To master and memorize neologisms, students had to undergo a series of exercises:

Task 1.

Match the following neologisms with their definitions:

Neologism	Definition
Umbrella	A person belonging to the lowest level of society.
Belonger	Political shelter etc.

Task 2.

Define the following neologisms:

dangle-dolly - (e.g. She gave him a dangle-dolly as a present, and he immediately put it into his car for luck);

zero-zero (double zero) - (e.g. The SALT treaty established zero-zero between the two global leaders and promoted nuclear nonproliferation);

fudge and dudge - (e.g. During the war in Iraq the US government stuck to fudge and dudge, which resulted in complete stalemate);

bio-astronomy - (e.g. Researchers in the field of bio-astronomy wonder if there is life on other planets).

Task 3.

Watch the video on neologisms and write out the new words mentioned.

Task 4.

Add appropriate affixes to make neologisms.

Task 5.

Read the excerpt, underline neologisms and retell it, etc.

Fig. 3 compares the amount of neologisms in The Daily Express and The Guardian. All the new words which were excerpted belong to only one of the above mentioned areas.

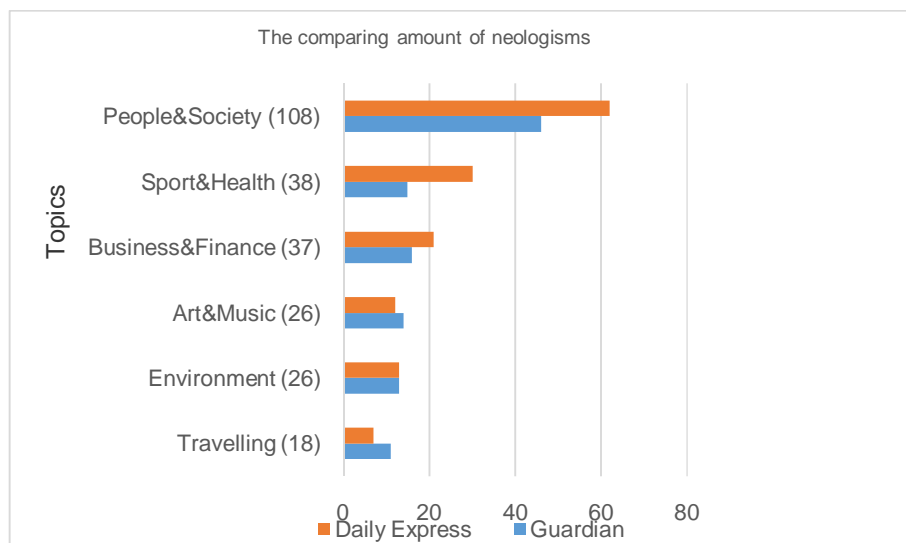


Fig. 3. Comparative chart of neologisms in *The Daily Express* and *The Guardian* newspapers

Not surprisingly, the chart illustrated that the sphere of people and society is the one in which most neologisms arise. It is logical because this is, in fact, the most important part of our everyday reality and thus contains a huge amount of words we normally use. The next thing which was, to some extent, unexpected is the decrease in environmental issues and science. These areas seem to be discussed very frequently in public, but perhaps not as frequently as would be sufficient for a significant lexical growth.

The control stage of the experiment was aimed at assessing the effectiveness of using special exercises to teach and train students to recognize neologisms in English newspapers. The control test was suggested to monitor and analyze the level of students' English proficiency on the topic of neologisms and its classification.

The results of the test in the control and experimental groups are shown in Fig. 4.

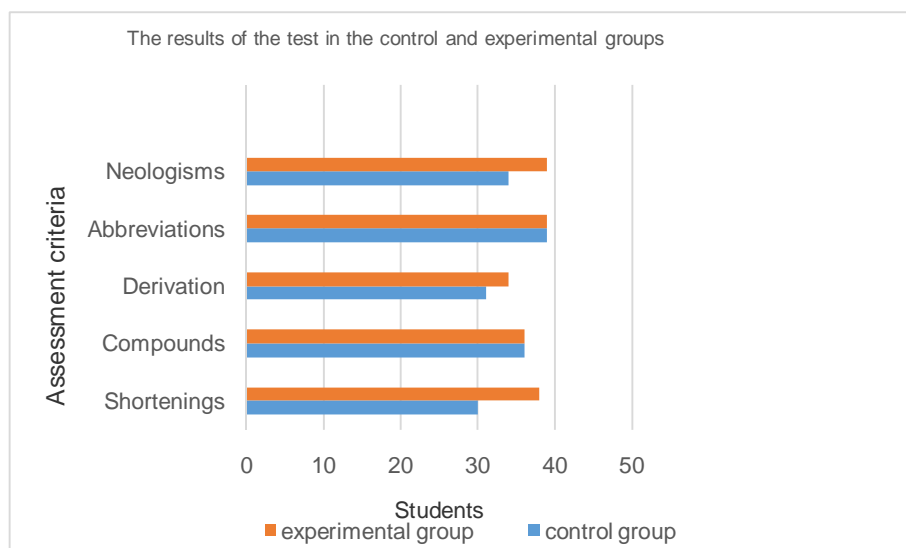


Fig. 4. Results of the test in the control and experimental groups

In summary, we have to remark that the issue of neologisms is highly topical and interesting. Its detailed study cannot only entail the listing of the means of forming neologisms, description of their usage and illustration of their frequency within two British newspapers.

5. CONCLUSION

We can conclude that the experimental research completely confirmed the hypothesis that reading specially selected newspaper texts that contain neologisms allows students, in a rather short time, amass a large amount of information and gain a solid foundation in the content area. Moreover, it leads to deep understanding of such a specific linguistic phenomenon as neologisms and contributes to sustaining high motivation in learning the English language.

Training exercises turned out to be an effective way to review the concepts and vocabulary of any body of material that students learnt from either lectures or readings. Training and test exercises enabled the authors to solve the problem of teaching students to read newspapers containing neologisms.

The approbation of teaching methods the researchers implemented into the experiment, proved itself positively.

The results of the study can serve as guidelines for University faculty and students.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

REFERENCES

1. Abdukadyrova, N. A., & Khidirbaev, Sh. E. (2013). The role of newspaper texts in the formation of media literacy of college students. *Young scientist*, 5, 649-651.
2. Chepik, I. V. (1993). *Learning to read newspaper texts in the French language in high school*. (Doctoral dissertation). Available from the Russian State Library: <http://www.dissercat.com/content/obuchenie-chteniyu-gazetnykh-tekstov-na-frantsuzskom-yazyke-v-starshikh-klassakh-srednei-shk#ixzz4Ge2sz2aU>
3. Freidlin, E. G. (2004). Learning to work with mass media in high school. *Foreign Languages at School*, 1, 38-43.
4. Ilyina, T. S. (2014). Teaching to read newspapers and magazines in EFL class in high school. *Young scientist*, 6, 715-718. Available at: <http://moluch.ru/archive/65/10753/>
5. Kirsanova, O. F. (2001). The use of authentic materials in EFL class as a means of the formation of cultural competence. *Bulletin of Moscow State University*, 2, 89-92.
6. Kosareva, O. G. (2004). Abbreviation as a means of speech saving and speech expressiveness (on the materials of modern press). *Foreign Languages at School*, 2, 85-89.
7. Kuryanova, E. A., & Belkina, I. V. (2013). Neologisms in contemporary British mass media. In N. V. Dmitrieva (Ed.), *Scientific Community of Students of the XXI Century. The Humanities: Proceedings of the VII International Scientific Conference, Book 1* (pp. 90-96). Novosibirsk, Russian Federation: International Academy of Sciences of Pedagogical Education. Available at: Ksibac.info/archive/humanities/7.pdf
8. Locket, B. (2004). Phraseological units and neologisms. *Foreign Languages at School*, 4, 85-90.
9. Locket, B. (2006). Beyond the dictionary: On a new meaning and use of well-known words and phrases. *Foreign Languages at School*, 6, 90-95.
10. Malyavin, D. V., Anikina, V. N., & Latushkina, M. S. (1981). *Work with English newspapers in high school: Manual for teachers*. Moscow: Publishing house "Prosvetchenie".
11. Perkas, S. V. (2002). Abstracting materials of Russian media in EFL class. *Foreign Languages at School*, 5, 37-39.
12. Popovich, I. Yu., & Bulgarova, B. A. (2013). The main objectives of teaching students of non-philological specializations to read newspaper texts. *Theory and Practice of Social Development*, 9, 156-158. Available at: <http://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/osnovnye-tseli-pri-obuchenii-chteniyu-gazetnyh-tekstov-studentov-nefilologov#ixzz4GduJXbni>
13. Sadikova, V. L. (2014). Neologisms in English newspaper texts. In N. V. Malysheva (Ed.), *Topical Issues of Philology and Translation: Proceedings of the VI International Student Scientific Conference. The International Student Scientific Bulletin of Russian Academy of Natural Sciences (electronic version)*. Penza, Russian Federation: Russian Academy of Natural Sciences. Available at: <http://www.scienceforum.ru/2014/543/6836>
14. Stam, I. S. (1981). Interpretation of newspaper texts: Article headline and text compliance. *Foreign Languages at School*, 5, 86-91.