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## **Lexical composition of business English: characteristic features**

### **Лексичний склад ділової англійської мови: характерні риси**

**Summary.** The article highlights the peculiarities of the lexical composition of business English, which is the main tool of business discourse in a modern multicultural society. The peculiarities of modern business discourse in comparison with the established norms of business communication are noted. The set expressions, clichés, and terminological expressions are accompanied by the use of professional jargon in oral business speech. It has been found that the lexical composition of business English is represented by simple words, compound words, abbreviations, and phrasal words. The semantic composition of business English is represented by both common words and professional terms. Words that have more than one meaning, as well as noun phrases, are widely used. The peculiarities of using business English in various fields, including management, marketing, advertising, etc. are considered. The ability of individual words and phrases to acquire a different professional meaning in the context of a particular field of business activity of entrepreneurs and companies is highlighted. The features of using business English as a professional jargon in the context of business discourse are analyzed. Examples of business English terminology are presented, in particular, terminology that is widely used by representatives of business circles in Ukraine. Examples of phrasal verbs and abbreviations used in business discourse are given. The peculiarities of using noun phrases in written business discourse are clarified, and examples of such phrases are given. It is noted that business discourse is characterized by a combination of business communication and extralinguistic context. Expressive words, idiomatic expressions, and metaphors, have become widely used in modern business discourse. Professional jargon as a layer of specialized vocabulary is used by representatives of one professional field with professionally limited vocabulary for the purpose of professional communication.

**Key words:** business discourse, business English, lexical composition, professional jargon, semantic composition, business communication.

**Анотація.** У статті висвітлені особливості лексичного складу ділової англійської мови яка є основним інструментом ділового дискурсу в сучасному

мультикультурному суспільстві. Відзначено особливості сучасного ділового дискурсу порівняно зі сталими нормами ділової комунікації. Сталі вирази, кліше, термінологічні вирази супроводжуються застосуванням професійного жаргону в усному діловому мовленні. З'ясовано, що лексичний склад ділової англійської мови представлений простими словами, складеними словами, абрєвіатурами, фразовими словами. Семантичний склад ділової англійської мови представлений як словами загального вжитку, так і професійними термінами. Широко застосовуються слова, які мають більш ніж одне значення, а також іменникові словосполучення. Розглянуто особливості застосування англійської ділової мови в різних галузях, зокрема в галузі менеджменту, маркетингу, реклами тощо. Висвітлено здатність окремих слів та словосполучень набувати іншого професійного значення в контексті певної галузі ділової діяльності підприємців та компаній. Проаналізовано особливості застосування ділової англійської мови як професійного жаргону в контексті ділового дискурсу. Представлено приклади термінології ділової англійської мови, зокрема, термінології, яка широко застосовується представниками ділових кіл в Україні. Наведено приклади фразових дієслів та абрєвіатур, які застосовуються в діловому дискурсі. Уточнено особливості застосування іменникових словосполучень в письмовому діловому дискурсі, наведені приклади таких словосполучень. Зазначається, що діловий дискурс характеризується поєднанням ділової комунікації з екстралінгвістичним контекстом. Ідіоматичні вирази, метафори стали широко застосовуватися в сучасному діловому дискурсі. Професійний жаргон як шар спеціалізованої лексики застосовується представниками однієї професійної галузі з професійно обмеженим вокабуляром з метою здійснення професійної комунікації.

**Ключові слова:** діловий дискурс, ділова англійська мова, лексичний склад, професійний жаргон, семантичний склад, ділова комунікація.

**Introduction.** The linguistic picture of the world includes numerous aspects of human activity, one of which is the business sphere, which is impossible without the use of language. Business discourse appears as a way in which companies conduct business in oral and written form. Communication often acts as a business driver. Business discourse is used in organizational, corporate and management communication.

Business English as a tool of business discourse is a linguistic variety used for professional communication in the business environment, presented by many economic situations and mental manifestation of these situations in the form of specific knowledge.

The main aim of the article is to highlight the characteristic features of lexical composition of business English as one of the most essential aspects of human activity.

Oral business discourse coincides with the style used as in journalism as in informal communication. As I. Rolak notes, "clichés, terms, terminological expressions are widely used in oral business communication, sometimes official expressions, even slang words are used" [15, p. 109].

Initially, expressive words, idiomatic expressions and metaphors were not inherent in business discourse, since there are clear rules defined by the business code that is reflected in speech of individuals whose professional activities are related to business. Today, the process of business communication has become more dynamic due to intercultural relations in all spheres of human life. Professional jargon has become part of business discourse as a means of intercultural communication in a multicultural society.

Professionals who work in the same field use professional jargon when discussing professional topics. Professional jargon is a layer of specialized vocabulary that is presented in microsystems typical of a particular professional activity with professionally limited vocabulary, which is used by various socio-professional groups in the field of professional communication. As long as business discourse is presented in organizational, corporate and managerial communication, in business it includes professional jargon that is used in these areas of communication.

**Methodology/Methods.** At the initial stage, the branch vocabulary of business discourse was identified as a certain lexical group, which is part of the general vocabulary and serves a specific professional field. The branch vocabulary is a kind of general-purpose vocabulary that provides lexical material for a certain field of knowledge. It consists of general vocabulary, the terms inherent in this particular field, and stylistically marked units – professional terms and jargon words.

At the first stage of the research, a lexicographic analysis was conducted: relevant lexical units were selected by means of analyzing lexicographic and encyclopedic sources. The selected lexemes are nominative units relating to the professional field of business.

The following stage included the analysis of the English-language lexicon for business discourse in terms of its system organization. As a result of the analysis of different approaches to the study of the vocabulary, the field approach was found to be the most relevant in the study of the structural organization of the vocabulary.

The semantic analysis of the components of the lexicon allowed for determining the nuclear group of the vocabulary represented by the terminology units. Stylistically labeled vocabulary (professional terms, jargon, and slang words) form the periphery of the business vocabulary.

The structural-semantic analysis allowed for determining the main ways of forming units of business lexicon, namely word-formation, phraseological, and language borrowings.

The socio-cultural approach in the study of the business lexicon made it possible to determine the peculiarities of the socio-cultural environment in which the formation of the branch vocabulary of business discourse

took place and determine its influence on the further development of the lexical subsystem. The study also examines the issues of social variability of the language, such as the existence of such lexical levels as commonly used vocabulary, professional terms, jargon, and slang.

**Results and Discussion.** Business English as the language of business discourse is based on the lexicon with a positive connotation that is used in a business environment. In particular, business terms are widely used, as well as the commonly used vocabulary, which often changes its general meaning and acquires a special meaning according to the sphere of application in business discourse.

According to researcher A. Taifor, “Business language is an interdisciplinary field that explores the role of discourse in business settings, examining the linguistic features, communication strategies, and discourse patterns that shape organizational communication, marketing efforts, workplace interactions, and intercultural communication in the business world” [17, p. 394].

The vocabulary of business English is presented by simple words, compound words, abbreviations, and phrasal words. In the semantic aspect, the characteristic features of business English are applying commonly used words, which are of particular importance in the terminology of business discourse; frequent use of words that have more than one meaning; and the use of noun phrases.

Many scholars regard the vocabulary of business English as a characteristic feature of specialized discourse. It can be defined as a broad, comprehensive, energetic, and sometimes technical group of English words used to achieve the efficiency and success of business operations.

The authors of business textbooks M. Gaffi and C. Siefer believe that accurate communication is a key condition for business discourse, and insist that there is a clear link between vocabulary and performance of official duties, namely “skilled workers, in the majority of cases, have larger vocabularies than unskilled workers. Supervisors know the meanings of more words than the workers they direct, and executives have larger vocabularies than employees working for them” [6, c. 441]. Consequently, scholars also regard the lexicon of business English as its most characteristic feature.

Researcher M. Nelson, to identify the boundaries of the business English vocabulary, created a special business English stock of words based on factual material from the press, television, mail materials, negotiation records, business meetings, and telephone conversations. With the help of the British National Corpus (BNC), which is more general, he analyzed the differences between business English and the commonly used English language. His review is based on the criterion of “keywords”, which are

divided into positive keywords that occur much more often than in the reference corpus [12], and negative keywords that are fewer in number in its business English than in BNC.

Applying the typical procedures of vocabulary computer processing, M. Nelson defines a small number of typical semantic categories of business English such as “business people”, “companies”, “money”, “business events”, “modes of communication”, etc. [12]. The semantic division of the vocabulary into business English and general use English can be made based on binary opposition, due to which the author defines the key lexical units of business English as explicitly positive, dynamic, action-oriented, and irrelevant to people: most adjectives relate more to material objects – products and companies than to people.

Admitting positive connotation of the business English vocabulary – the presentation of good or useful qualities for someone or something, M. Nelson at the same time points to the fact that business English is different from the lexicon used for solving personal, family, and social affairs, as well as those words that are usually associated with negative states and express emotions and feelings.

M. Nelson noted that “there is a well-defined list of vocabulary statistically related to business English” [12], but the keywords of business English are often used in general English.

Thus, he argues that the lexical composition of business English, despite its specificity, does not exist separately from the commonly used language, but is merely fueled by it, which, in turn, is enriched by business English. This statement is close to the idea of D. Picket that business communication is “...a lot nearer to everybody language spoken by the general public than many other segments of ESP” [14, c. 9].

Thus, business English is composed not only of technical and special vocabulary, but also of commonly used words that gain new meaning in a particular context, especially in combination with other words. It should be noted that features of the specialized English language (in the field of medicine, technical or business English, etc.) are reflected in the lexical composition.

“As professional fields, which support the business communication process, the areas of management, public relations, marketing, advertising, and sales exist in the corporate companies” [8, p. 59]. Thus, business English is used in many spheres by representatives of different professions. This means that the same word can be related to one or more areas such as accounting, finance, banking, marketing, etc. Many words and terms refer to more than one subject and relate to more than one occupation, such as *stakeholders*, *terms*, *revenue*, *turnover*, *networking*, *branding*, etc.

In addition, the meaning of a specialized term is often superimposed on the meaning of a simple word such as, for example, *accelerator* – an organization that offers advice, mentorship, and resources to help small businesses grow; the expression *bridge loan* is a loan taken out for a short-term period until long-term financing can be arranged; *incubator* – an organization that nurtures young firms during their first few months or years, usually in exchange for equity; *unicorn* – a company often in the tech or software sector worth over US\$1 billion [13].

Phrasal verbs are often used in business discourse such as *branch out* – begin to do a different type of activity or work, *hold back* – to restrict the progress or development of smth, *put down/off* – return the money on loan, *spin off* – turn a subsidiary into a new and separate company, etc.

Business English is considered by some scholars as a professional jargon that is divided into several subgroups, such as corporate jargon (used in large corporations, administrative management systems, and similar places of work, it involves the use of long, complex, or incomprehensible words, abbreviations, euphemisms, and acronyms) and in the language of marketing (used in marketing press releases, promotional texts and prepared statements made by executives and policy-makers, characterized by the use of professional jargon terms, neologisms, as well as the terms that entered the language of marketing from specialized technical fields [7, p. 7]).

Professional jargon is a layer of specialized vocabulary, presented in microsystems typical of a particular field with professionally limited vocabulary, which is used by various socio-professional groups in the field of professional communication. As L. Andersson and P. Trajill point out, for a third person jargon is a “technical language that is used within a particular group” [1, p. 17].

“In terms of cognitive processing and social interactions, jargons serve as examples of in-group speech or language that signifies group belonging” [5, p. 163].

Words and expressions such as *acquisition, assets, bond, capital market, commodities, common stock, equity, flotation, hedge fund, merger, securities, stock, tombstone, and yield* relate to commonly used financial terms [10]. They are vivid examples of business terminology.

Such words and expressions as *capital, central bank, controllers, option, privatization, recapitalization, syndicate, and risk*, which are included in the same list, are widely used by Ukrainians – users of English, who are involved in various areas of business.

Regarding the language of marketing, examples of jargon professional terms are *authenticity, content marketing, customer-centric, engagement, golden ratio, guerilla marketing, lookalike audiences, machine learning,*

*psychographics, programmatic advertising, retargeting, storytelling, viral, word vectors* [11]. Jargon professional terms such as *globalization, paradigm, innovation, logistics, and strategy* are also widely used by Ukrainian users of English.

A great share of business English word stock is presented by abbreviations, for instance, IPO (Initial Public Offering), MVP (Minimum viable product), VC (Venture capital), etc.

As it was mentioned above noun phrases are often used in business discourse. C. Cipriani following the opinion of D. Kies states that “Noun phrases serve to condense information, which is a useful skill when looking to fit all of this information onto one or just a few pages” [3, p. 38].

Such noun phrases as *market forces, sales figures, customer service, brand name, business model, market leader, product launch, advertising campaign, balance sheet, bank loan, sales report* are just a few examples of a great number of this linguistic phenomenon used in business discourse.

“*Customer service refers to support and assistance given before, during, and after customers purchase a product or service*” [9].

“*The right brand name can be one of the most valuable assets for a business, driving differentiation and acceptance*” [4].

“*...when enterprises compete using business models that differ from one another, the outcomes are difficult to predict*” [2].

“*The success of an advertising campaign is measured by its ability to achieve the desired outcomes, such as increased brand recognition and customer engagement*” [16].

The phraseology of business English is rich in set phrases and idiomatic expressions. The examples are *at the helm* (in charge of), *in the pipeline* (in the process of being planned or developed), *tall order* (unreasonable or difficult demand), *work against the clock* (try hard to finish before specific time), *touchpoint* (an interaction between a business and its customers), etc.

**Conclusions.** Thus, business discourse is a social and communicative system that ensures the efficient functioning of numerous business sectors. Business discourse is characterized by such features as a combination of business communication with extra-linguistic context, high-penetration capability and efficiency. The language of business discourse is characterized by the use of professional terms, professional jargon, metaphors, and neologisms according to the branches of business, which is the subject of further research. Professional jargon is used in the form of socially marked vocabulary in business discourse.

Business discourse is a hallmark of a multicultural society. It is represented by such types as academic business discourse, public business

discourse, business discourse of documents, media business discourse, and discourse of professional business communication. A characteristic feature of these types of business discourse is the use of professional jargon by social groups represented by people involved in various spheres of business.

The lexical composition of business English is represented by simple words, compound words, abbreviations, and phrasal words. The semantic composition of modern business English is represented by words of common word stock, terms, and professional jargon words. In written business communication official phrases, terminological expressions, and noun phrases are often used. In oral business discourse clichés, terms, and terminological expressions are widely used in oral business communication, sometimes official expressions; even jargon words are used depending on the sphere of business activity. Some terms may belong to more than one sphere of business activity.

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