



# The need to study the sociocultural aspect in the process of comparative language for specific purposes learning on the example of English and Spanish business terminology

## La necesidad de estudiar el aspecto sociocultural en el proceso de aprendizaje comparativo de idiomas para fines específicos en un ejemplo de la terminología de negocios inglesa y española

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#### ABSTRACT:

This article discusses the comparative study of English and Spanish business terminology in the sociocultural aspect as an effective method of teaching a foreign language for special purposes. The author deals with the issues of comparative description of languages for methodological purposes, as well as the classification of business terms according to the lexical-semantic fields representing professional business reality, which is reflected in English and Spanish.

**Keywords:** comparative method of teaching a foreign language, the English language, the Spanish language, sociocultural aspect

#### RESUMEN:

Este artículo discute el estudio comparativo de la terminología de negocios inglesa y española en el aspecto sociocultural como método eficaz para enseñar una lengua extranjera para fines específicos. El autor aborda las cuestiones de la descripción comparativa de los idiomas con fines metodológicos, así como la clasificación de los términos de negocio según los campos léxico-semánticos que representan la realidad profesional del negocio, que se refleja en inglés y español.

**Palabras clave:** método comparativo de enseñanza de una lengua extranjera, la lengua inglesa, la lengua española, el aspecto sociocultural

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, with the active development of the global business sphere, new technologies, daily information exchange, international forums and negotiations, the skills of competent speech, clarity of expression, knowledge of the peculiarities of presentation building and the ability to analyze information is essential. Business terminology, despite the direct reflection of business realities, at the same time is objectively tied to the sociocultural component (reflecting the national character, behavioral stereotypes, cultural realities), which must be taken into account in the study and usage of business terms.

As follows, the requirement to take into consideration national linguistic and cultural features arises especially in the process of an interpreter preparation in the field of business and international relations. The ability to find an invariant meaning of the basic concept (penetrating into the lexical-semantic, linguistic and cultural depth of the original business language) is specially appreciated. Hence the importance of terminological translation as a means of exchanging scientific information and of linguistic and cultural communication, in which translator becomes a mediator in the contact of spiritual heritage of

nations and peoples. Effective translation is impossible without a deep understanding of the linguistic and social culture of native speakers. The main complexity of terms translation lies not only in the requirements imposed on it, but also in the difficulties caused by linguistic and cultural differences of languages, as the terms are partly a reflection of national culture and mentality.

The research aims to deepen the development of comparative study of English and Spanish business terminology for methodological purposes. This work also attempts to highlight and bring to scientific discussion the importance of understanding the differences in the lexical-semantic and linguistic-cultural capabilities of original and target business languages, as no language can fully reproduce the cultural specificity of another one.

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## **2. Comparative methodology**

The teaching method has a significant impact in training process, consequently, the correct method choice is the key to the education effectiveness and the acquisition of a student's high skill level.

In comparative linguistics languages are opposed for the purposes of theory (linguistic reasons) and methodology (linguo-didactic reasons). Many scholars understand it as a comparative study of languages for linguistic and didactic purposes. Therefore, they believe that comparative linguistics should identify differences between the languages to be compared in order to find sources of interference, identify difficulties and explain typical errors. Thus, the main tasks of comparative language learning for methodological purposes are to determine: the similarities and differences between the compared phenomena; similarities and differences methodological relevance; the nature of interlingual interferences; interlingual system correspondences (Usupov, 1983).

The comparative teaching method of a foreign language for special purposes is aimed at training the specialists in the field of intercultural communication, comparative history, comparative linguistics, interpretation, translation, as well as the teachers of English and Spanish for higher educational institutions. Students should be provided with a system of linguistic knowledge (the main phenomena and patterns of languages functioning) as well as with knowledge of the values and concepts inherent in the cultures of countries studied. Moreover, they need to possess analytical skills in order to conduct independent research in the field of linguistics, translation theory and intercultural communication using modern methods of scientific research.

Around this idea, the advantages of the comparative method are:

- interdisciplinary nature (it integrates linguistic, historical and cultural knowledge);
- opportunity to learn several languages (in this case - English and Spanish, which are relevant in modern business activities);
- acquisition of research skills, abilities and competences in the field of linguistic typology through the prism of history and culture;
- possibility to identify equivalents, specific and partially coinciding lexico-semantic variants with an illustrative function, contributing to the conscious assimilation of new material related to semantics;
- ability to dose and structure the new training material taking into account the interfering effects of the students' native language, to highlight the main and peripheral, to identify logical connections (which also ensure the strength of the knowledge received by students and the training availability);
- opportunity to build an effective system of exercises that generates the students' activation during the lesson and involves them in the problem solution (finding and solving theoretical and practical problems). Furthermore, it's necessary to observe comparative analysis as a way to implement general didactic principles of learning. The principle of consciousness, creative activity and
- students' independence under the teacher leadership is one of the main principles of the modern didactic system, according to which learning is effective when students show cognitive activity, being the subjects of activity.

Within this perspective it is adult students who are most prepared to learn through the usage of a comparative method. The learning process will be most fruitful only if their cognitive and creative potential is actively involved by teacher. The teacher's activity, who set the goal of conscious language acquisition by students, is generally characterized by the following (Podlasiy, 2004):

- Dosage of training material.
  - Organic connection of new material with a carefully selected and absorbed previous one.
  - Revelation of each language concept in a brief and vivid form on specific examples.
  - Usage of a certain system in the classroom (with various kinds of exercises and the active work of students during the lesson).
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## **3. Business terminology in comparative method of learning a**

# language for specific purposes

Business terminology, as well as any other terminological sphere, reflects the social and cultural environment because the terminological base of each language has been formed for a long time and has been influenced by the speakers' mentality and the nation behavioral characteristics.

National and cultural features of business, including the rules of linguistic behavior, are the object of scientific analysis in the works of specialists in cultural studies, sociolinguistics and psychology. National-cultural specificity is the connection between the unit of language and stereotypes, standards, symbols and other cultural manifestations of native speakers, while the terminological system of the business language reflects the material, social and spiritual culture of the linguistic community (Sapozhnikova, 2004).

Due to the historical evolution of the concept "business" and the business terminological base formation in English, many languages have not yet had time to develop their own business terminology. As a result, each of them includes a significant number of gaps or terms that do not have a similar single-component translation equivalence from English.

The language of business communication, because of its international nature, needs the accuracy of formulations and statements, brevity and conciseness as any business event is strictly regulated by time and protocol. It is generally accepted that at the moment it is the English language that most fully meets these requirements, but on a par with it the Spanish language is increasingly used.

For the previous reason, in order to identify the role of the sociocultural component in business terminology, it is necessary to consider the requirements for the term, and their interaction with culture and society. Terminological units are characterized by such criteria as: systematicity, content accuracy, paradigmaticity, objectivity, convenience of the name, nominative character, term monosemy (Sanguinova, 2005). Despite all the above criteria, among which the impact of native speakers' material, social and spiritual culture is not mentioned, in the linguistic reality business terminology (as well as general vocabulary) is still subject to sociocultural influence.

## 3.1. Lexical-semantic fields in business terminology

Focusing on the peculiarities of the national psychology of the English and Spanish, it is necessary to conduct a sociocultural analysis of terminological units represented in the most complete and voluminous general business dictionaries as "Diccionario de términos económicos, financieros y comerciales inglés-español" (Varó, 2012), "Business English Dictionary" (Longman, 2007), "The terminology database of the UN".

The reason for choosing the English national character lies in the fact that the basic business English terminology was originally formed in the UK, since this country, in addition to economic achievements, was characterized by a large number of smart entrepreneurs, energetic and tireless in the invention of doing business and getting rich (Pavlovskaya, 2013). It is indisputable that at the moment some new terms appear in the United States being not the main layer, but only a group of Americanisms that arose under the influence of American culture (mainly related to organizations that exist exclusively in the USA). Moreover, the English language is called "glocal" (global and local at the same time) because of its opportunity to be used as a tool of international communication, without going beyond its own history and culture (Pakir, 2006). The same tendency is observed in the Spanish language: it acquires the status of "world language", bearing the imprint of the Pyrenean economic, socio-political and mental culture.

The principle of rational combination of collective and individual forms and methods of educational work can be realized by means of comparative analysis. Comparison of the semantic structure of English and Spanish business terms is possible in groups with illustration examples. The research is based on the features of national character and mentality peculiarities of The English and The Spanish described in works of A.V. Pavlovskaya and E.E. Sapozhnikova (Pavlovskaya, 2013, Sapozhnikova, 2004). Further, the reasons for the discrepancy between the meanings of the compared business terms can be found (thus, the linguistic-cultural aspect comes into effect). In accordance with the above positions in this paper lexical-semantic fields in English and Spanish business terminology can be presented as follows:

### Lexical-semantic field "Man"

This semantic field includes terminological components related to everything connected with a person (parts of the human body, the appearance of a person, the age, ways of grouping people or to the emotions and personal qualities of a person).

For example, in the English language there are business terms that include the "*back*" component, more often in the combination of "*back-to-back*". The term "*btb credit*" ("*back-to-back credit*") has a Spanish terminological analogue of "*crédito con garantía de otro*", where the component "*back-to-back*" in English is opposed to the component "*guarantee*" in Spanish. However, the Spanish component is not metaphorical and used in the literal sense. For the Englishman, the human back is a symbol of trust and a symbol of support. The English nation is characterized by such features as attention to historical cultural

features that is typical for a horizontal type of culture (main thing is agreement and interaction, so you have to rely not only on yourself but also on the surrounding individuals). Consequently, the reason for the inclusion of this component lies in the position used by the soldiers "*back-to-back*", in which each of them trusts the partner in battle.

The usage of the English term "*crowd*" - "*investores de la bolsa especializada en bonos muy poco activos*" confirms such a feature of the British as the ability to laugh at themselves, slightly devaluing the person who is not engaged in high-profit affairs. Brokers in this case are presented as an impersonal crowd of people (not as a professional community).

In Spanish business terminology components related to parts of the human body exist, for example, the "*espalda*" ("*back*") component, but in a different meaning, "*espalda mojada*" (an illegal laborer who has a wet back due to his hard labor).

### **Lexical-semantic field "Food, everyday life"**

Terminological components related to everyday life and food are found both among the English and Spanish business terms. In English, they are more common and have different meanings, while in Spanish a tendency to negative associations is observed (associated with food restriction). For example, the component "*dietas*" means "*expenses*": "*dietas por asistencia*" - "*attendance fees*", "*dietas y viáticos*" - "*substance allowance*".

Other examples of English business terminology are: "*bed and breakfast deal*" (selling securities overnight and repurchase them the next morning) - "*venta de valores por la noche y compra de los mismos a la mañana siguiente*"; or the term "*beef*" (protest, appeal) having a Spanish term analog, not associated with food - "*protesta*", "*queja*".

### **Lexical-semantic field "Buildings, house, space limitation"**

Business English terminology is characterised by the components associated with all sorts of buildings and the limitation of space. The house is the "center of the universe" for the Englishman, he regards it as: my home-my fortress. Accordingly, such lexemes are in constant usage. For example: "*cabinet*" - "*consejo*", "*house*" - "*agencia*", "*house bill*" - "*certificado*", "*housing bubble*" - "*burbuja especulativa en la propiedad inmobiliaria*", "*housing market*" - "*mercado inmobiliario*".

However, sometimes such topic components are associated with non-freedom, for example, "*garden*" - in the Spanish terminology "*oficina*" (office). The British are freedom-loving and do not tolerate pressure and restrictions, although their national feature is the love of a cozy hearth.

### **Lexical-semantic field "Death"**

The usage of the terminological component "*dead*" and "*death*" - "*inactivo, sin movimiento, sin valor inmovilizado*" - is common in English. This happens because the British tend to compare real people and phenomena to things connected with death. Englishmen are inherent in such emotional and volitional psychological traits as restraint, coldness, respectively, such a concept as "death", does not cause any discomfort and is perceived as an integral part of human existence (Vikhrstuk, 2014). At the same time the emotionality and sensitivity of the Spaniards does not allow them to use these concepts freely, especially in the official business sphere.

In order to avoid the usage of the terminological component "*death*" directly in the Spanish language, the following analogues are used: "*dead capital*" - "*capital inactivo*", "*dead cat bounce*" - "*recuperación monetaria de bolsa*", "*dead end job*" - "*empleo sin futuro*", "*dead letter*" - "*papel mojado*", "*deadlock*" - "*estancamiento*", "*deadline*" - "*fecha*" ("*plazo*", "*límite*"), "*dead season*" - "*época turística de demanda muy baja*", "*dead rent*" - "*arrendamiento mínimo fijo*", "*death duties*" - "*impuesto de sucesiones*", "*death grant*" - "*subsidio para gastos de entierro*".

### **Lexical-semantic field "Life"**

A similar trend is observed in the usage of the terminological component "*life*". Likewise, The British more than the Spaniards tend to compare phenomena and processes to the life and death of man. For example, in English business terminology the following terms with this component can be found: "*life annuitant*" - "*rentista*", "*life estate*" - "*usofructo, dominio vitalicio*", "*life of a loan*" - "*vigencia de un préstamo*", "*life table*" - "*table de mortalidad*", "*lifeline*" - "*cuerda de salvamento*".

In Spanish, the analogous element "*vida*" does not appear (in most cases, comparisons to life are avoided). Sometimes the component "*vigencia*" is used instead, which can be translated literally as "*validity*": "*vigencia de garantía*" - "*warranty period*", "*vigencia de un préstamo*" - "*the duration of the loan*".

Component "*angel*" (bond with a rating acceptable to investors, sponsor) - "*de primera calidad*" is used in the English language, as the British are characterized by "lack of soul", they prefer silence and recognize only common sense and reason. Therefore, salvation (help) is the highest quality and seems something divine, wonderful, otherworld and not connected with the person, because a person has no soul, but has common sense. The Spanish business terminology uses the equivalent component "*alma*", which

emphasizes the presence of the inner spiritual power of a person, the possibility of an internal miracle, the support generated by the human soul. The English expression "*angel investor*" corresponds to the Spanish: "*alma curativa*", in this case sociocultural component is observed in both languages.

**Lexical-semantic field of "Weather"**

Terminological components related to the sphere of meteorological phenomena are common in English business terminology, as the UK population always expresses concern about the changeable and often cloudy weather. Respectively, meetings in most cases start with a discussion of this issue. This tendency was reflected in business terminology:

component "*sun*" – "*sol*": "*sunset clause*" – "*disposición transitoria*", "*sunset industry*" - "*sector industrial en declive*"; component "*umbrella*" – "*paraguas*": "*umbrella brand*" (the term for a trademark under which there is the release and promotion of not one product, but the whole product group), "*umbrella cover*" – "*seguro supplimentario*", "*umbrella fund*" – "*fondo offshore que invierte en otros fondos offshore*", "*umbrella project*" – "*proyecto marco*";

component "*weather*" – "*sobrellevo*", "*atmósfera*";

component "*wind*" – "*viento*": "*wind down inflation*" - "*reducir inflación*", "*winding-up*" - "*liquidación*", "*windfall*" – "*inesperado, imprevisto*";

component "*chill*" – "*enfriamiento*": "*chilling of a sale*" – "*manipulación del precio de un producto vendido por acuerdo entre los compradores*";

component "*cloud*" – "*sospecho de mala reputación*", "*cloud of title*" – "*imperfección de títulos*".

On the contrary, in the Spanish business language practically complete absence of business terms containing components related to the weather theme is observed.

**Lexical-semantic field of "War, battle, feud"**

Terminological components relating to the subject of battles and war are present in both English and Spanish business terminology. The reasons for this trend are common features of their national psychology: militancy, former world domination, colonial past, fearlessness. Both Spain and Britain, throughout history, are big colonial powers having a powerful military potential. For the British challenge is sometimes more important than victory, they are not afraid to lose and, like the Spaniards, have courage and fearlessness. As an illustration, the terminological component of "*war*"- "*guerra*" can be adduced: "*war risks*" – "*riesgos de guerra*", "*price war*" – "*guerra comercial*", "*guerra pesquera*" – "*fish war*", "*guerra del atún*" – "*tuna wars*";

component "*damage*" – "*pérdida*", "*daño*": "*damage claim*" – "*reclamación a la compañía de seguros por los daños sufridos*", "*damage limitation*" – "*táctica, estrategia o campaña para minimizar reducir o limitar los daños o el impacto negativo*", "*damage recovery*" - "*reparación de los daños*", "*damage survey*" – "*valoración*";

component "*force*" - "*fuerza*": "*forced loan*" – "*empréstito forzoso*", "*forced savings*" - "*ahorro forzoso*", "*forces of the market*" – "*fuerzas del mercado*".

**Lexical-semantic field "Music, dance"**

Terminological components related to the theme of music and dance are found only in the Spanish business terminology base, as this kind of entertainment is traditional for the Spaniards. Although national songs and dances exist in every country, in Spain it forms an integral part of daily life. That can be the reason of active usage of the following terms: "*baile de cifras*" ("*baile*" is translated "*dance*") – "*number transposition*", "*ritmo*" – "*rate*" ("*speed*"), "*ritmo de amortización*" – "*rate of depression*", "*ritmo de consumo del capital*" - "*burn rate*", "*ritmo de producción*" - "*pace of production*".

A systematic illustration of the lexical-semantic fields presented in the English and Spanish business terminology is as follows:

English business terminology	Spanish business terminology
General lexical-semantic fields	
<div>- Man</div> <div>- Food and life</div> <div>- Buildings, house, space limitation</div> <div>- Life</div> <div>- War, battle, feud</div>	
Specific lexical-semantic fields	



- Adventure, adventure	- Movement
- Humor	- Music, dance
- Alien things, phenomena	
- Alcohol and entertainment	
- Death	
- Weather	

## 4. Conclusions

Comparison of different languages makes students state the similarity and the difference of the studied phenomena, moreover, to establish and analyze cause and effect relationships, formulate evidence, make logical conclusions, thereby activating the analytical abilities and stimulating speech creativity.

It emerged that in the English business language the sociocultural features of the English-speaking society are reflected: the attitude to death as to an integral part of human existence, the specifics of English humor, the ability to laugh at yourself, as well as concern about the changeable and often cloudy weather. At the same time, both the British and the Spaniards are characterized by a tendency to adventure, but this feature of the national mentality is reflected only in business English terminology. Such lexical-semantic field as "music, dance" is presented only in business Spanish terminology. It demonstrates the Spanish national mentality, the propensity of the Spaniards to active movement and easy perception of life. English and Spanish business terms have found commonality in such fundamental lexical-semantic spheres as "man", "food, life", "buildings, house, space limitation", "life", "war, battles, enmity", however, with differences in the usage of terminological components.

This research will add value to the educational process within the scope of an integrated approach in language teaching and a foreign language for special purposes learning. Open comparison should be methodically justified because skillful variation of didactic techniques on the part of the teacher and the usage of different types of tasks can make the learning process more fruitful and effective.

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