

GAMES OF ANTONYMIC PAIRS IN THE LANGUAGE OF FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING

Ioana Claudia Horea

Department of International Business, Faculty of Economics, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania
ihorea@uoradea.ro

Abstract: *A primary objective of teaching Business English is students' familiarization with specific terminology and acquisition of lexical structures and elements of vocabulary that shall then be needed by them in order to properly function in the field of their specialization, to communicate, understand discourse and authentic texts and produce correct communication in their turn. Thus, one of the language teachers' concern in this respect is to provide sufficient didactic support so as to assure a high level of assimilation of linguistic material. To appeal to mnemotechnics is only common in vocabulary teaching. Association of words on diverse criteria - semantic, lexical, linguistic or of other nature -, discussion of words in contrastive comparisons, visual aids given by various classification methods or by simply arranging terms on the page, in tables, boxes etc. or writing them in a distinct manner, using a different style, font, character a.s.o., work on and with the terms in game type activities - are all such means of vocabulary reinforcement. This article exemplifies how terminology of the economic fields of finance and accounting can be used in some quite appealing activities implying refreshment and use of knowledge from several linguistic areas - from vowels and consonants to semantic pairs of contextual antonyms. Such activities involve and make use of related aspects - from the fields of linguistics and semantics - but have as final goal reinforcement of the vocabulary units that makes the very base of the material prepared for the activities (the drills proper). These represent a mere model of how teachers and instructors of language can themselves play with the words and create interesting activities to bring more attractive material to the class so as to stimulate participation and improve an otherwise mundane approach that is generally supposed with the introduction of and dealing with business terminology.*

Keywords: *teaching Business English; finance and accounting terminology; antonyms; vocabulary games.*

JEL classification: *Y80; Z00; M53; A29.*

1. Preliminaries

Students' familiarization with the specific terminology and their acquisition of vocabulary units and lexical structures useful in the field is a main target when teaching Business English. Comprehension of authentic texts and subsequent production of accurate communication in the domain rely on this primary objective. The learners' assimilation of the linguistic material and their ability to further make good use of it have been permanent concerns of the language instructors. Up to date didactic support and learning/ teaching techniques that comprise diverse mnemotechnical aids are in the modern class supplemented with various word games and interactive activities meant to reinforce the vocabulary. Such are: word

associations, classifications, comparisons, arrangements, highlighting, emphasis, construction, transformation, derivation and others which have become quite common aids in vocabulary teaching.

2. Spelling and lexical games in vocabulary teaching

While the contextual approach is the one promoted by the classic method of vocabulary introduction in teaching a foreign language (Richards & Rodgers, 1996; Walters, 2006), the modern practice is more and more influenced by the ludic spirit and the contextual approach loses terrain to the interactive and thus more entertaining activities that involve working with words by: filling, forming, grouping, categorizing, arranging them a.s.o.

2.1. "Work" with letters, vowels, and consonants

Varying from individual, pair or group work activities of the type of filling in the missing letters in words by completing with vowels or/ and consonants, by inserting one, two or more vowels or/ and consonants, named or not, indicated, hinted at or to be identified by diverse instructions or clues, to Hangman games ("I Love Learning", 2017) or "Wheel of fortune" type games ("Wheel", 2017), going through variations of word-search games, Scrabble games ("Scrabble", 2017), or word-puzzles based on letter (re)arrangement or filling in, and ending with activities that require to unjumble scrambled letters in order to get diverse words, the play with letters, vowels and consonants is almost unlimited. Used as the core, the central task, of a seemingly more complex games such as the identification of opposites or of antonymic pairs - which will constitute in fact an easier task or a collateral one, even aiding for the first -, the abovementioned activities are prone to be more effective in attention triggering or adrenaline raising and thus constitute the catchy part of the process of finding the solutions required. Employing such activities can only be beneficial to the class, enriching the overall activity, conferring pulp to an otherwise drier or duller endeavour.

2.2. Antonyms as basis of entertaining activities

The mastering of antonyms and synonyms is quite an important acquisition in learning a language. Practising vocabulary by discussing synonyms and finding antonyms will develop in general a much sharper intuition on word choice in various circumstances, an improved vocabulary, a higher ability to find one's words when speaking, due to a better overview of the language, as seen by several researchers in the field: "The study of antonyms will not only help you choose the most appropriate word as you write; it will also sharpen your overall sense of language." (McLean, 2016) as "Antonyms are a fun and lively way to teach your students new vocabulary and improve their English language skills." (Zakhareuski, 2016) Games based on antonyms matching will be felt as a welcomed change in teaching, reinforcing, practising or even testing vocabulary, as noted by other researchers as well "Though these games may seem like more fun than learning, in fact your students will accomplish both while they advance their English language skills and develop their vocabularies." (Zakhareuski, 2016)

3. Word games of matching

Having multiple usages such as a reinforcement tool, a vocabulary introduction technique, or even a means of testing lexical acquisition, the matching activities such as those described below are proper word games, as effective for each of the aims assumed as appealing they are. Applicable as drills in vocabulary teaching, as comprehension or reinforcement exercises along the lessons or in revision classes, or as a nonconformist method of assessing knowledge of words at the end of a series of lessons, such games prove to be, for both teacher and students, a pleasant way to deal with the tasks required and implied by each particular situation abovementioned.

The three examples of activities of guided matching can be used separate or together and others can be added, the limits lying only in the teacher's creativity and the time allotted.

It is obvious that such exercises, exemplified here mostly with words from the economic field of finance and accounting can be produced and used for any type of lexical elements and conceptual categories, in any domain or branch.

4. Model activity

Here is the model suggested for a reinforcement lesson at the end of three chapters dealing with finance, accounting and international trade, when the students were given handouts as seen in subtitle 4.1 and could work as described in subtitle 4.2 so as to get to the solutions shown in 4.3:

4.1. Handouts

The contents of the handouts distributed are as follows:

Match each word in column A with its antonymic pair in column B:

I. filling in the missing vowels in each word (Table 1)

Table 1: Missing vowels

	A		B
1.	D _ M _ ND	a.	L _ _ B _ L _ T _ _ S
2.	_ SS _ TS	b.	R _ C _ SS _ _ N
3.	D _ F _ C _ T	c.	L _ SS
4.	R _ V _ N _ _ S	d.	S _ PPLY
5.	_ MPL _ Y	e.	D _ SM _ _ SS
6.	B _ _ M	f.	CH _ LL _ NG _ R
7.	_ NV _ ST	g.	SP _ ND _ NGS
8.	L _ _ D _ R	h.	S _ RPL _ S
9.	PR _ F _ T	i.	W _ THDR _ W

Source: own concept and design

II. Inserting the missing consonants (the same in each pair - the number of consonants to insert increasing for each pair) (Table 2)

Table 2: Missing consonants

	A		B
i.	e a r	a)	c r e i
ii.	e b i	b)	e x o
iii.	i m o	c)	u l l

Source: own concept and design

III. Unjumbling the letters in the words (Table 3)

Table 3: Jumbled letters

	A		B
1.	CKOSST	a.	AEHLTW
2.	BOORRW	b.	BDNOS
3.	ICHR	c.	ABEKNNOTS
4.	AFFIRTS	d.	EDLN
5.	EOPRTVY	e.	AOQSTU
6.	CIONS	f.	OOPR

Source: own concept and design

4.2. Actual progress of activity

After the handout are distributed the students can be asked to work separately, in pairs or in small groups - according to various factors from general level of class to the number of students participant in the class, from number of copies of the handouts available to particularities of the room (desks arrangement and position). While not too relevant and rather at teachers' choice and decision as for what number of students should work together, how they can proceed will become of pertinence in each case.

Thus, in individual work, the student will be asked to silently follow the instructions and announce when they finish one exercise, the checking of the answers given being done together with the whole class after each exercise - the teacher nominating one student to read each pair and indicate (spell) the vowels put in the word (in the first exercise) indicate the consonants and spell the entire word (for the second exercise) and spell the word (at the third exercise).

With pairs and groups, the students will have to communicate to reach agreement with respect to the solutions and competitions can be organised, the winning group (first to solve correctly - all exercises or each one at a time) being awarded a prize such as an extra point for the final mark for its members. In such approach the checking of the solution brought by the group is done by the teacher silently and the activity can end either when the first correct solution is found or when the first two or three groups bring their correct solutions and have them checked by the teacher. Only then the answers are checked with the entire class in a similar way as for individual activity.

4.3. Solutions

The solutions of the three exercises on the handout presented in 4.1 can be seen in the three corresponding columns in Table 4.

Table 4: Solutions

	I	II	III
1	demand and supply	bear and bull	stocks and bonds
2	assets and liabilities	debit and credit	borrow and lend
3	deficit and surplus	import and export	rich and poor
4	revenues and spendings		tariffs and quotas
5	employ and dismiss		poverty and wealth
6	boom and recess		coins and banknotes
7	invest and withdraw		
8	leader and challenger		
9	profit and loss		

Source: own concept and design

5. Conclusion

This paper merely brings a model of how financial and accounting terms can be reinforced by being employed as the base material on which attractive interactive activities are created. It puts forward exercises that can be produced, as imagined and prepared by language instructors, for implementation in class. They will elicit use of linguistics in activities involving work with vowels and consonants and will imply knowledge of semantics in tasks concerning the pairs of contextual antonyms. Making use of related aspects of linguistics and semantics, such activities aim at reinforcing the lexical elements, the vocabulary units found at the core of the material proper (the very drills prepared for the activities).

Language instructors can indeed play with words, creating appealing activities so as to present the class with catchier and more attractive materials meant to incentivise and ensure participation of learners. They shall thus colour, invigorate and ultimately better the rather mundane traditional approaches of introducing and teaching the blank terminology of Business English.

References

1. Ellis, Mark; Johnson, Christine *Teaching Business English*, Oxford University Press, 1994.
2. <http://www.businessenglishsite.com/business-english-finance.html>.
3. "I Love Learning", Games for vocabulary study, [Online], Available: <http://www.hangman.learningtogether.net/> [8 April 2017].
4. McLean, Scott *Business English for Success*, Flat World Education 2016, [Online], Available: http://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/bookhub/4311?e=mcleanbuseng-ch03_s05 [16 November 2016].
5. Richards J. and Rodgers T. (1996) *Application and Methods in Language Teaching*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

6. "Scrabble", [Online], Available: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scrabble> [4 April 2017].
7. Walters, J.D. (2006) *Methods of Teaching Inferring Meaning from Context*, RELC Journal 37 (July 12, 2006), London: SAGE, pp.176-190, [Online], Available: <http://rel.sagepub.com/content/37/2/167> [14 Feb 2014].
8. "Wheel", [Online], Available: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wheel_of_Fortune [7 April 2017].
9. Zakhareuski, Andrei *Opposites Attract. Having Fun with Antonyms*, [Online], Available: <http://busyteacher.org/8044-opposites-attract-having-fun-with-antonyms.html> [16 November 2016].