SEMANTIC STRUCTURE OF THE LEXICAL UNIT EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT IN MODERN ENGLISH (ON THE BASIS OF CORPORA BNC AND COCA)

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Abstract: The aim of the present research is to identify semantic structure of the lexical unit educational management in the modern English language on the basis of corpora British National Corpus (BNC) and Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). For achieving the purpose of the research, several objectives have been stated: 1) to single out all the samples and frequency of the lexical unit educational management occurrence in BNC and COCA; 2) to consider all the varieties of meaning of the analyzed lexical unit; 3) to identify lexico-semantic variants (LSVs) composing semantic structure of the lexical unit educational management in the modern English language. The research also shows some proofs for the English language being a lingua franca of modern Europe.

Keywords: English language, educational management, modern English, semantic structure.

Introduction

Higher education has always been of great importance for people who want to find a well-paid job, succeed in their career life and get to the top of the career ladder. Nowadays, the situation remains unchanged, and knowledge a person acquires while studying at a higher educational institution (HEI) is thought to be a key to prosperity.

However, the 21st century is characterized by an absolutely new approach to higher education. Since the beginning of implementation of the Bologna process principles in European universities in 1999, which is aimed at «introducing a system of academic degrees that are easily recognizable and comparable, promoting the mobility of students, teachers and researchers, ensuring high quality teaching and incorporate the European dimension into higher education and creating a European Higher Education Area» (The Bologna process: setting up the European Higher Education Area 2010), the European countries have been making efforts to correspond to the new demands and make their HEIs compatible at the global arena of higher education. As a consequence, these changes are contributing to emergence of a number of some other issues to be discussed.

Firstly, these changes lead to altering the system of managing higher education. A field of study that investigates the peculiarities of running the whole system of higher education and a HEI as such is called educational management. It should be noted that there are a plenty of papers dedicated to the study of educational management as a science. Having analyzed the works of British (Bush, 2008; William, 2003), American (Mintzberg, 1994), German (Decker, 1995; Graumann, 2004), Ukrainian (Demchuk, 2007) and Russian (Ivanov et al., 2010) researchers, we may state that this notion is used in different field of study: pedagogics, psychology, economics, marketing and legal studies. However, traditionally educational management is defined as “a process and system of running a higher education institution aimed at providing its competitiveness at the internal and external market of educational services due to the quality of educational process and preparation of specialists, high level of professional knowledge, skills and abilities, fundamental social positioning and high moral character” (Graumann, 2004).

Secondly, an effort of the Bologna process to connect national educational systems leads to the necessity of having a common language that would facilitate communication not only at the level of educational managers, but also at the level of educational providers (teaching staff of a HEI) and educational consumers (students). In the linguistic literature a “contact language for people who have neither a common language nor a common culture and for whom the language they speak is a foreign one, is called lingua franca” (Matthews,
Having studied numerous papers concentrating on various aspects of this phenomenon, we may state that, nowadays, lingua franca of modern Europe is the English language. Moreover, at present, a new variety of the English language – the European English (Euro-English) is rapidly developing, which has been shown by a number of linguists (Cenoz et al., 2000; Seidlhofer, 2009).

In the process of our research we have found out that the lexical unit *educational management* is absent in monolingual dictionaries of the contemporary English language. Considering this fact, it was decided to address the corpora of modern English: British National Corpus – BNC (British National Corpus 2014) and Corpus of Contemporary American English – COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English 2014). It is worth saying that a corpus is a new type of linguistic resources; it is a “systematic collection of naturally occurring texts (of both written and spoken languages)” (Nesselhauf, 2011). A corpus method of linguistic analysis is aimed at studying particular peculiarities of language and speech on the basis of processing computer corpus of texts (Selivanova, 2011).

Taking into account everything mentioned above, we consider it of great importance to define semantic structure of the lexical unit *educational management* in the modern English language, because it will allow us to understand the essence of educational management as a science to its fullest. What is more, we may suppose that enlightening its semantic structure will also be a considerable contribution in the linguistic science, particularly semantics. It will also be a contribution to cognitive linguistics, as *educational management* is a multisided phenomenon that includes a great number of characteristics, aspects, associations and has close connections with other fields of study (not only linguistic ones, by the way), and thus may be considered to be not only a lexical unit, but also a concept.

**Method**

In order to achieve the aim of the present research, which lies in identifying semantic structure of the lexical unit *educational management* in the modern English language, general scientific methods (methods of induction and deduction, methods of analysis and synthesis, a comparative method and a descriptive method) and special methods of linguistic analysis (corpus method, method of contextual analysis, method of semantic analysis) have been applied.

As for the general scientific methods, they have been used with the following purposes:

1) *methods of induction and deduction* helped us to analyze the general principles of the lexical unit functioning in the sample texts of educational discourse taken from the corpora of the modern English language (method of induction), and then to come to our own conclusions (method of deduction);

2) *methods of analysis and synthesis* made it possible for us to single out specific semantic features of the lexical unit *educational management* and unite them in a specific system;

3) *a comparative method* gave us an opportunity to identify similar and distinctive features of the lexical unit *educational management* in BNC and COCA;

4) *a descriptive method* has been applied in the process of description of the received results.

As far as special methods of linguistic analysis are concerned, they have been applied in the present research for achieving the following objectives:

1) *a corpus method* helped us to find out the variety of the contexts of modern English educational discourse and analyze the communicative situations where the lexical unit *educational management* occurs;

2) *a method of contextual analysis*, which lies in investigating semantics of lexical units in their unity with their surrounding (contextual indicator, indicatory minimum, semantic radius of the word influence etc.) (Selivanova, 2011) made it possible for us to identify the linguistic meaning of a particular piece of educational discourse text samples;

3) *semantic analysis* gave us a chance to identify the whole range of lexico-semantic variants that compose the semantic structure of the lexical unit *educational management* in modern English.

**Results**

In the process of our research it has been found out that the lexical unit *educational management* has got an absolute synonym – *management in education*; and we have traced all the variants of linguistic use of both lexical units in the British National Corpus (BNC) and Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA).

The analysis has been conducted in several stages.
At the first stage, all the context examples and frequency of both lexical units’ occurrence in BNC and COCA have been identified. It has been found out that BNC offers seven different context examples of the lexical unit educational management, and COCA offers twenty-nine examples. As for the lexical unit management in education, BNC and COCA offer four context examples of its occurrence each. Thus, the total number of cases of occurrence of both lexical units is eleven context samples in BNC and thirty-three in COCA. The total number will be applied in further analysis for a better convenience.

At the second stage, contextual analysis has been applied, and all the varieties of meaning of the analyzed lexical units have been considered.

At the third stage seven lexico-semantic variants (LSVs) composing semantic structure of the lexical unit educational management in the modern English language have been singled out.

So, we may state that lexical unit educational management possesses quite a complex semantic structure and unites seven LSVs:

**LSV 1** – field of study and practice concerned with the operation of schools and other educational organizations;

**LSV 2** – the process and system of running an educational institution;

**LSV 3** – set of principles, methods, organizational forms and technological activities of running an educational process aimed at increasing its efficiency;

**LSV 4** – the agent of educational management: a group of people who perform managerial functions and tasks within the system of education;

**LSV 5** – the object of educational management: teachers, non-teaching staff, students;

**LSV 6** – the object of educational management: educational institution and systems;

**LSV 7** – the object of educational management: educational process.

It has been noticed that the most frequent meaning that the lexical unit educational management acquires in modern educational discourse is the one corresponding to LSV 1. BNC offers five context examples (out of eleven) of its occurrence in this meaning, and COCA – twenty-three (out of thirty-three), for example:

(1) …now she is working for an advanced diploma in educational management… (BNC);

(2) …a new approach to the relationship of theory and practice in educational management… (BNC);

(3) Ten experts from the fields of educational technologies, educational management and statistics were asked for their views about the questionnaire… (COCA);

(4) Following this, three lecturers specializing in Measurement and Evaluation and four specializing in Educational Management and Inspection at Erciyes University, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Sciences were asked about… (COCA).

On the basis of the presented examples we may state that the common archiseme for these context samples is field of study that corresponds to LSV 1. It is expressed by such contextual indicators as diploma, theory and practice, fields, lecturers…specializing in.

We have identified that in some cases the lexical unit educational management unites several LSVs in one and the same context. The most interesting and bright examples that prove this fact are as follows:

(5) Strategic planning in higher education: who are the customers? International Journal of Educational Management, 8(6), 29-36 (COCA).

(6) …Drawing on the insights identified above – combining the principles of human resource management, management of excellence and total quality management – it becomes possible to propose four principles for human resource management in education…: 1. Leadership: concerned with vision and growth rather than sustaining systems. 2. Team management: concerned with task and process and the quality of personal relationships. 3. Performance management: providing the means to enhance competency and stimulate development in order to achieve organizational objectives. 4. Organizational design: establishing a structure where form follows function and which contributes directly to institutional purposes and processes (BNC).

Context example (5) contains a number of contextual indicators that point at LSV 1, LSV 2, LSV 3, LSV 4 and LSV 5: journal (LSV 1), customers (LSV 2, LSV 5), strategic planning (LSV 3, LSV 4). Context example (6) unites six LSVs that have been singled out in the semantic structure of the lexical unit educational management. Contextual indicators that prove this statement are as follows: management of excellence, total quality management, performance management (LSV 2); vision and growth, to enhance competency, to stimulate development, to achieve organizational objectives, institutional purposes (LSV 3);
leadership (LSV 4); team management, human resource management (LSV 5); structure, organizational design (LSV 6); institutional processes (LSV 2 and LSV 7).

Discussion

Thus, it has been identified that in the modern English language the lexical unit educational management possesses quite a complex semantic structure that contains seven lexico-semantic variants. It has been proved by the context samples from the corpora BNC and COCA, and by the contextual indicators pointing at presence of a particular LSV in a particular context.

In the process of the investigation, it has been found out that educational management is quite a widespread phenomenon in the modern English educational discourse, and it contains a number of interconnected aspects that are reflected in LSVs which have been singled out in the semantic structure of the analyzed lexical unit. BNC and COCA indicate that context samples chosen for the present research have been selected not only from British or American texts, but also from the European ones. The fact that they are all presented in the English language points out that English may really be considered to be lingua franca of modern Europe.

The results of the research seem to be a considerable contribution both to the study of educational management as a science, because the paper presents a generalized set of definitions of the notion educational management, and in the study of educational management as a lexical unit, because its whole semantic structure has been described. The latter statement may be of importance for further semantic studies.

What is more, such an abundance of LSVs in the semantic structure of the lexical unit educational management in the modern English language makes it possible for us to suppose that educational management is not only a lexical unit, but a concept.

Further investigation is seen in the analysis of the concept EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT and variants of its verbal representation in the modern English language.

References


