

# APPLICATION OF ETYMOLOGY FOR SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Вінницький національний технічний університет;

## **Анотація**

*Запропоновано використовувати етимологію в якості інструменту для створення активного словникового запасу тих, хто вивчає іноземну мову. Було доведено, що розуміння етимології слів зменшує кількість орфографічних помилок та помилок пов'язаних з вимовою слів, а також сприяє розумінню структурних компонентів лексем, покращуючи таким чином здатність запам'ятовувати лексичні одиниці.*

**Ключові слова:** етимологія, лексема, запозичення, морфемні запозичення, афікси, коренева морфема.

## **Abstract**

*It has been suggested to use etymology as a tool for the developing active vocabulary of foreign language learners. It has been proved that the knowledge of etymology reduces pronunciation and spelling errors and facilitates understanding of the structural components of the lexemes thus improving the ability to memorize lexical units.*

**Keywords:** etymology, lexeme, borrowings, morphemic borrowings, affixes, root morphemes.

## **Вступ**

The process of the language teaching as well as the process of the language acquisition by other people is rather complex and diverse. Mistaken are those who believe that to master a language you should just read and memorize some words and phrases. In fact, language acquisition goes far off beyond this. At the most primitive level the process of the language learning presupposes the knowledge of a certain amount of commonly used words and word combinations and understanding their structure. But, more profound knowledge demands the formation of the deeper comprehension of the language. To be a proficient language speaker, you should develop a scope of different skills aimed at the understanding of the implicit meaning of the words. That is, it is not enough to enlarge the vocabulary by simply learning the lexemes by heart. When we take in information without connecting it to the existing knowledge, we have little chance to create long-term retention. However, with the help of some language techniques, vocabulary learning can become easier and more productive.

Finocchiaro believes that “we may help students develop the skills they need in several basic ways, among them is: to help students enrich their vocabulary by giving them (or to help them discover) cognates, paraphrases, antonyms, synonyms, and words of the same family. Oxford (1985) cites Cohen’s list of strategies used by a successful language learner. According to him, “teaching involves such items as making association, attending to the meaning of the part of the word, placing the word in a topical group with similar words, visualizing and contextualizing it, linking it to the situation in which it appears, creating a mental image of it, and associating some physical sensation to it”. Wilkins (1972) claims that, according to psychology of language people learn and retain better words which have been presented to them with a range of visual and other associations. [1]

Etymology can become a powerful tool in developing the active vocabulary of the students. Using etymology can largely expand vocabulary; it teaches how to understand the structural components of the words and how to distinguish similar lexemes. It also improves the ability to guess the words’ meanings, so the learners can memorize long and complicated words efficiently. Besides, it reduces spelling errors and helps learners to get familiar with culture and history of the country the language of which they study.

In the broad sense, etymology is a branch of lexicology that investigates the origin and history of words and their meanings. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as “the science of investigation of the derivation and original signification of words”. [2] Etymology helps to answer the question “Why does this word mean this?” It provides a diachronic point of view to study English lexis, which can help learners improve vocabulary in-depth acquisition.

The English language is the language which has a great portion of the loan words borrowed from other languages. It has gone through many periods in which large numbers of words from different languages were borrowed. These periods coincide with times of major cultural contact between English speakers and those speaking other languages. According to the borrowed aspect, there are following groups of borrowings: phonetic borrowings, translation loans, semantic borrowings, and morphemic borrowings. [3] All of these types have certain interest for the linguist. But let us consider morphemic borrowings as the source for the vocabulary acquisition.

Morphemic borrowings are borrowings of affixes which occur in the language when many words with identical affixes come from one language into another, so that the morphemic structure of loan words becomes familiar to the people speaking the borrowing language. [4]

New lexis is created when words or word building blocks, such as roots, prefixes, and suffixes, are combined in new ways. Latin and Greek have become the source of many words in English. Therefore, the English learners are supposed to understand some roots, prefixes, or suffixes of Latin and Greek origin to know difficult and academic vocabulary. Knowing the “building blocks” of the English language helps people remember a word’s meaning, spelling and pronunciation convention. Furthermore, on the bases of the known word components they can guess the meaning of the lexis that is unknown for them.

Let us consider some of the most typical Latin and Greek word-building elements and see how etymology can be applied in practice.

The Latin prefixes *bi-*, *bin-*, *bis-* mean *two*. As a result, the lexemes having these components denote objects and notions consisting of two parts or having dualistic nature, as, for example, in the words *bicycle*, *bifocal*, *bisexual*, *bigamy*, *binary*, *binoculars*.

The root *cardi-* which comes from the Greek καρδιά (*kardiá*) “*heart*” has given birth to the name of the science that studies heart (*cardiology*) and has become a constituent part of the terms used in the sphere such as *cardiac*, *cardialgia*, *cardiograph*, *cardiospasm*, *electrocardiogram*, *electrocardiography*, *neurocardiology* and others.

*Crypt-* is a derivative from the Greek κρύπτειν (*krúptein*) “*to hide*”. It is used in a variety of modern English words preserving its basic meaning: *apocrypha*, *crypt*, *cryptanalysis*, *cryptic*, *cryptobiosis*, *cryptobiotic*, *cryptogam*, *cryptogenic*, *cryptography*, *cryptology*.

The prefixes *hemi-* and *semi-* used to mean “*half*” in Greek. This meaning is preserved in a number of English words: *hemicube*, *hemicycle*, *hemimetabolism*, *hemisphere*, *semicircle*.

The root words *meter-*, *metr-* come from the Greek μέτρον (*métron*) “*measure*”. They have formed a number of words denoting notions connected with measurements and measuring tools: *barometer*, *diameter*, *dysmetria*, *graphometer*, *isometric*, *meter*, *metrology*, *metronome*, *parameter*, etc.

The vocabulary having the morpheme *counter-* (“*opposite*” or “*contrary*”) receives the appropriate meaning often creating the word units with the opposing meaning. For instance, the word *counteract* means to oppose the effects of an action; *countermand* is to cancel a previous order; and *counterforce* denotes a contrary or opposing force.

The root *vac-* (empty) has created the words like “*evacuate*” – to empty a dangerous place; “*vacant*” – empty, not occupied; “*vacation*” – a time without work.

The Latin prefix *de-* can mean “*reduce*” or “*remove*”. That is why the lexical unit “*to decelerate*” implies slowing down, reducing speed; “*to dethrone*” is to remove somebody from power; “*to debug*” is to remove bugs.

*Phot/o* used to denote “*light*” in Greek. This meaning has been preserved in a great number of modern words like *photogenic* (caused by light), a *photograph* (an image made on light-sensitive film) or *photon* (the smallest possible unit of light).

*Pre-* comes from Latin and stands for “*earlier*”, “*before*”, “*in front of*”. So, it becomes evident that the word *preamble* denotes a part which can be found in front of a formal document. *To prepare* is to get ready in advance. *Prediction* is a statement foretelling the future.

The roots *vis-*, *vid-* are derived from the Latin lexemes *videre* and *visus* (see). The lexical units built from them preserve this meaning: “*vision*” – the ability to see; “*envision*” – to picture in the mind; “*evident*” – clearly visible.

The process of the lexemes remembering is greatly facilitated when you have a body of information with which to associate either a word or a fact. Discovering the common lexical components, language learners soon understand the meaning of many unknown words, they have never seen before, but which are derived from the same root. Etymology is not only useful, effective and interesting, but it also is a fast word attack strategy. It gives people an additional set of hooks on which to hang new words. It can be a great tool to improve your English skills.

It helps highlight subtle shifts in semantics, and can make you aware of semantic shifts going on right now. Knowing the etymology of a word provides enhanced perspective about its most effective use. You start to understand its original meaning and how it may have transformed over time, how people used it in the past and what meaning it has received in the present. You can differentiate minor differences within similar or related words, both in modern usage and in archaic one. From etymology, you begin to see patterns and relationships between languages. You see the principle of the words formation. You enrich your ability to communicate by expanding your precision control over meaning based on the words which you choose to employ more wisely now. You can easily conclude a meaning of a word or how to spell and pronounce that word by understanding its constituent parts. As you become familiar with various root morphemes, you can gain more knowledge regarding the meaning of more difficult words. The study of the origin of words can help learners gain a more educated vocabulary.

Etymology which is one of the most systematic, enjoyable and effective ways of enhancing word power will increase the learners’ ability to figure out unknown and difficult words with ease and without continual reference to unabridged sources. According to methodologists, having word formation knowledge, student can increase the ability to read difficult tests without constant references to unabridged sources.

Learning etymology of English lexemes you will feel comfortable with words – you will use new words with self-assurance, you will be able to figure out the meanings of the English vocabulary words you hear or read even if you have never heard or seen these words before. That is why it is a very productive approach to learn new vocabulary words through their etymologies.

## Результати дослідження

### Висновки

Встановлено, що знання етимології лексем та розуміння побудови слів з використанням запозичених кореневих морфем та афіксів може значно збільшити словниковий запас тих, хто вивчає іноземну мову, при цьому зменшуючи кількість орфографічних помилок та помилок при вимові слів іноземною мовою.

### СПИСОК ВИКОРИСТАНОЇ ЛІТЕРАТУРИ

1. Etymology : a word attack strategy for learning the English vocabulary Masoud Hashemi, Masoud Aziznezhad <http://fulltext.study/preview/pdf/1123353.pdf>
2. The Oxford English Dictionary. – Oxford, 1961. – 760 p.
3. On Languages and Language: The Presidential Addresses of the 1991 Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea edited by Werner Winter 1 січня 1995 p. Walter de Gruyter
4. [http://borrowings.io.ua/s109779/types\\_of\\_borrowings\\_reasons\\_for\\_borrowings](http://borrowings.io.ua/s109779/types_of_borrowings_reasons_for_borrowings)
5. Webster's New World Dictionary. – Clivend and New York, 1959. – 1740 p. 3. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. – Massachusetts : Springfield U.S.A., 1999. – 1600 p.
6. 4. Круглій О. Р. Про статус комбінованих форм у сучасній англійській мові / О. Р. Круглій // Науковий вісник Волинського державного університету імені Лесі Українки. Серія «Філол. науки». – Луцьк : РВВ «Вежа» Волин. держ. ун-ту ім. Лесі Українки, 2004. – Вип. 3. – С. 183–187.
7. Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. – Tenth Edition. – Massachusetts : Springfield U.S.A., 1999. – 1559 p.
8. The Oxford Dictionary of New Words / editas Elizabeth Knowles, Julia Elliot. – Oxford University Press, 1997. – 357 p.
9. Словник іншомовних слів / за ред. О. С. Мельничука. – К. : Голов. ред. УРЕ, 1977. – 775 с.

*Медведєва Світлана Олександрівна* – викладач кафедри іноземних мов, Вінницький національний технічний університет

*Medvedieva Svitlana O.* – Department of Foreign Languages, Vinnytsia National Technical University, Vinnytsia, email: [svetlana.med79@gmail.com](mailto:svetlana.med79@gmail.com)