

A LEXICAL APPROACH TO THE OCCUPATIONAL ENGLISH TEST FOR VETERINARY SCIENCE AS A MEANS OF ENHANCING ACCURACY AND FLUENCY IN ENGLISH

Raluca Ștefania PELIN¹

e-mail: raluca¹pelin@uaiasi.ro

Abstract

Attaining native-like accuracy and fluency is the aim of every student that has embarked on the study of a foreign language. In order to achieve this aim, students are encouraged to perceive and analyse the way English is used in various contexts, especially in those that are of interest to them in the light of their future careers. The lexical approach facilitates the mediation of language by means of a purposeful focus on chunks of language, since words do not occur in isolation but in meaningful combinations that are formulaic (e.g. collocations, idioms, discourse markers, phrasal verbs) and reveal the speakers' level of proficiency. Linguists are in favour of teaching chunks as they facilitate the acquisition of fluency, confer idiomaticity and provide the basis for subsequent language acquisitions. The present study focuses on the extent to which the Occupational English Test (OET) for Veterinary Science practice tests can be used in order to expose students to various instances in which chunks of language occur in professional contexts. The practice tests that assess the receptive (reading and listening) and productive (speaking and writing) language skills rely on a consistent use of chunks in various healthcare professional settings and can be used to consolidate learners' linguistic knowledge and accurate communication skills. Learners can be trained to notice the various linguistic contexts in which chunks occur, to accurately infer their meaning and the typical structure they are based on, and to confidently build on this acquired knowledge. Careful consideration is given to specific collocations and formulaic phrases used in the OET listening and reading materials which can be further transferred to other communicative instances and activated in the area of productive skills.

Key words: lexical approach, veterinary science practice tests, chunks, accuracy, fluency