Preparing Non-Native English Speakers for the Mathematical Vocabulary in the GRE and GMAT

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to develop vocabulary materials to aid non-native English speakers, specifically Russian speaking test-takers, in their preparation for the mathematical sections of the General Record Examination (GRE) and the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) in terms of English mathematical vocabulary. GRE and GMAT preparation materials and practice tests published by the Educational Testing Service, Kaplan, and Barron's were analyzed with the help of computer software. This data was then used to determine which key words to include in the vocabulary tool, which is now available on Quizlet (www.quizlet.com). The developed materials were further proofread by competent mathematics and English language professionals and assessed with the help of a questionnaire administered to them. The rationale of the materials development and the procedures used for the process are described in detail in this thesis project.

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Coming to the GRE when English isn't your first language can feel like you've been put at a profound disadvantage. In this article, we'll go through a couple of tips for those of you coming to the test as non-native speakers and talk about what you can do to prepare yourself. Math, a universal language (sort of). Well, yes, pure mathematics is universal, so it is common that non-native speakers feel more confident about the Quantitative section. But just because you think you will do better here does not mean you should neglect studying for it! As mentioned above, many Quantitative problems are formed as word problems—that is, an English sentence dressing up a math problem as some kind of practical dilemma. Admissions expert Cara Skikne gives her essential vocab tips for non-native English speakers. Unlike the GRE, the GMAT does not explicitly test your vocabulary. The GMAT Verbal section, however, does test your understanding of words and statements, and the overall meaning of sentences. The language of the GMAT is very precise. I’d recommend non-native English speakers take these approaches to vocabulary for the GMAT: 1. Learn to use context to guess the meaning of words. Don’t go to your dictionary straight away. Rather, try to tackle the question first and get used to guessing the meaning of words from their context.