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LEXICAL COMPETENCE AND METHODS OF ITS DEVELOPMENT

Tagaeva Mahfuza Abdunazarovna
Gulistan State University
makhfuzatagaeva@gmail.com

Annotatsiya
Lexical competence is a fundamental component of communicative competence in foreign language learning. It involves not only the knowledge of words and their meanings but also the ability to use them appropriately in different contexts. In the modern educational environment, the development of lexical competence has become increasingly important due to globalization and the growing need for effective intercultural communication. This article examines the concept of lexical competence, its role in language acquisition, and modern methods for its development. Special attention is given to innovative teaching approaches, digital tools, and learner-centered strategies that enhance vocabulary acquisition and retention.

Kalit so'zlar: Lexical competence, vocabulary acquisition, foreign language learning, communicative competence, Task-Based Learning, CLIL, digital tools, corpus-based learning, ESP, learner-centered approach.

INTRODUCTION

In the process of learning a foreign language, vocabulary plays a central role. Without sufficient lexical knowledge, learners cannot effectively express their thoughts or understand others. Lexical competence, therefore, becomes a key element of overall communicative competence. It enables learners to select appropriate words, understand their meanings, and use them accurately in both spoken and written communication. In recent years, the focus of language teaching has shifted from traditional grammar-centered instruction to communicative and functional approaches. This shift has highlighted the importance of vocabulary as a tool for meaningful interaction. As a result, educators are increasingly exploring new methods and strategies to improve learners' lexical

competence[1].

The Concept of Lexical Competence

Lexical competence refers to a learner's knowledge of vocabulary and the ability to use it effectively. It includes several components:

Form – pronunciation, spelling, and word structure

Meaning – denotation, connotation, and semantic relations

Use – grammatical behavior, collocations, and contextual appropriateness

Lexical competence is not limited to memorizing word lists. It involves understanding how words function in real communication. For example, knowing a word's meaning is not sufficient if a learner cannot use it correctly in a sentence or recognize it in different contexts[2].

Furthermore, lexical competence is closely connected with other language skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. A strong vocabulary base improves comprehension and enables more precise expression.

The Importance of Lexical Competence in Foreign Language Learning

Lexical competence plays a vital role in successful language acquisition. Research shows that vocabulary knowledge is one of the strongest predictors of language proficiency. Learners with a rich vocabulary can understand texts more easily, participate in conversations confidently, and express their ideas clearly. In professional and academic contexts, lexical competence becomes even more important. Students and specialists must be familiar with terminology related to their fields. This is especially relevant in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), where learners need domain-specific vocabulary for effective communication[3].

Additionally, lexical competence contributes to intercultural communication. Words often carry cultural meanings, and understanding these nuances helps learners avoid misunderstandings and communicate more effectively across cultures.

Traditional vs. Modern Approaches to Vocabulary Teaching

Traditional methods of vocabulary teaching often rely on memorization, translation, and repetition. While these techniques can be useful for initial exposure, they are not sufficient for long-term retention or practical use[4].

Modern approaches emphasize:

Contextual learning

Interaction and communication

Active learner participation

Integration of technology

These approaches aim to make vocabulary learning more meaningful and engaging, helping learners retain and apply new words more effectively.

Methods of Developing Lexical Competence

1. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching focuses on using language for real communication. Vocabulary is taught through meaningful interaction rather than isolated exercises. Activities such as discussions, role-plays, and simulations encourage learners to use new words in context[5].

2. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Task-Based Learning involves completing tasks that require language use. For example, students may prepare presentations, solve problems, or analyze case studies. This method promotes natural vocabulary acquisition and improves retention[6].

3. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

CLIL combines subject learning with language instruction. Students learn vocabulary while studying academic or professional subjects. This approach enhances both content knowledge and language skills simultaneously[7].

4. Corpus-Based Learning

Corpus-based learning uses real-life language data to study vocabulary usage. Learners analyze authentic texts to understand word frequency, collocations, and context. This method develops deeper lexical awareness[8].

5. Digital Technologies in Vocabulary Learning

Technology has transformed language education. Tools such as mobile apps, online dictionaries, and interactive platforms provide new opportunities for vocabulary practice. Features like spaced repetition, gamification, and multimedia support improve learning efficiency[9].

6. Project-Based Learning (PBL)

Project-based learning involves long-term tasks that require active use of vocabulary. Students work collaboratively to complete projects, which helps them practice and internalize new words[10].

7. Gamification

Gamification introduces game elements into learning. Points, levels, and rewards motivate learners and make vocabulary acquisition more engaging.

Factors Influencing Lexical Competence Development

Several factors affect the development of lexical competence:

Learner motivation

Frequency of exposure

Learning strategies

Teaching methods

Access to resources

Effective vocabulary learning requires consistent practice and exposure in various contexts.

Challenges in Developing Lexical Competence

Despite advances in methodology, challenges remain:

Limited vocabulary retention

Lack of authentic practice

Overreliance on translation

Insufficient use of technology

To overcome these challenges, educators must adopt flexible and innovative teaching strategies.

CONCLUSION

Lexical competence is a crucial element of foreign language learning and a key factor in achieving communicative proficiency. It goes beyond the simple knowledge of words, encompassing the ability to use vocabulary accurately, appropriately, and effectively in various contexts. In today's globalized world, where English and other foreign languages play a significant role in education, business, and international communication, the development of lexical competence has become more important than ever. The analysis presented in this article demonstrates that traditional methods of vocabulary instruction are no longer sufficient on their own. While memorization and repetition may provide a foundation, they must be complemented by modern, interactive approaches that promote deeper understanding and active use of language. Methods such as

Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based Learning, CLIL, and project-based learning create meaningful learning environments where vocabulary is acquired naturally through communication and practice.

Moreover, the integration of digital technologies has opened new possibilities for vocabulary development. Online platforms, mobile applications, and multimedia tools allow learners to engage with language in dynamic and personalized ways. These technologies support continuous learning, provide immediate feedback, and increase motivation, making the process more effective and enjoyable. At the same time, the role of the teacher remains essential. Educators must act as facilitators who guide learners, select appropriate materials, and create opportunities for meaningful interaction. They must also adapt their teaching strategies to meet the diverse needs of students and ensure that vocabulary learning is relevant to real-life situations.

The successful development of lexical competence requires a comprehensive and balanced approach that combines traditional foundations with modern methodologies and technological innovations. By adopting such an approach, educators can help learners build a strong vocabulary base, enhance their communicative abilities, and prepare them for academic, professional, and intercultural communication in an increasingly interconnected world.

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