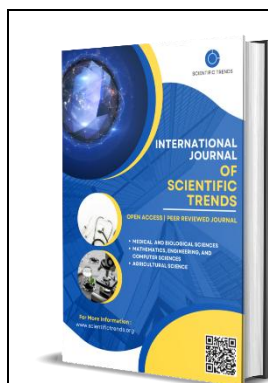


Methods for Developing the Lexical and Grammatical Competences of Future English Language Teachers

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the stages and levels of forming lexical competence among future teachers of English. It examines modern methodological approaches, digital tools and didactic technologies used in teaching vocabulary. Special attention is given to the practical value of a systematic and integrated approach that ensures the development of professionally oriented lexical training of teachers.

Keywords: Lexical competence, teacher training, future English teachers, teaching methods, digital technologies, levels of lexical competence.

Introduction

The development of lexical competence is one of the key tasks in training future English teachers. Contemporary pedagogical science and educational practice emphasize the importance of forming lexical skills as an essential component of a teacher's professional competence. Lexical competence not only ensures command of the language but also enables effective teaching of grammar, phonetics, culture, and methodological aspects of language instruction.

In academic literature, lexical competence is defined as the ability to understand and use vocabulary in different communicative situations. Researchers such as Khan (2008) and Crow (2011) point out that this competence includes both receptive and productive levels of vocabulary knowledge and requires a conscious choice of linguistic resources depending on the context. For future teachers, this is particularly important because they are responsible for developing students' language skills.

Modern scientific approaches to developing lexical competence

According to Schmidt (2014) and Rebina (2016), the formation of lexical competence can be divided into several stages:

1. Introductory stage

Learners become familiar with basic lexical and semantic units, expand their vocabulary, and learn essential thematic groups.

2. Cognitive-operational stage

This stage involves in-depth study of vocabulary through contexts, idioms, collocations, and professionally relevant terminology. Another studies by Lazy and Barker (2012) confirm that the use of interactive technologies at these stages contributes to deeper and more conscious vocabulary acquisition.

The followings are the most modern and effective approaches in improving lexical competences:

CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) – language learning through subject content.

TBLT (Task-Based Language Teaching) – acquisition of vocabulary through tasks linked to real-life communication.

The research by Bartosz and Kirkpatrick (2017) demonstrates the effectiveness of these approaches in the training of future teachers of English.

The contextual method is also significant, as it allows vocabulary to be studied within real communicative situations and academic disciplines such as lexicology, methodology, and intercultural communication.

An interdisciplinary approach, combining linguistic, pedagogical, and psychological components, is crucial for developing deep and conscious lexical knowledge.

Problems and challenges in developing lexical competence among English language learners:

Despite the variety of teaching methods, educators face several difficulties:

- ✓ insufficient readiness of students to use vocabulary in real communication;
- ✓ overload of curricula with large amounts of new lexical material;
- ✓ low motivation for independent vocabulary learning, especially in online learning;
- ✓ difficulty transferring vocabulary knowledge into practical teaching.

To overcome abovementioned challenges and difficulties encountered in fostering lexical development among English learners, scholars conducted researches.

Accordingly, Smith and Larson (2015) emphasize the need for balance: the depth of vocabulary acquisition must be combined with an adequate volume of material.

Future English teachers often struggle to adapt vocabulary to specific teaching situations, which requires the development of critical thinking, flexibility, and contextual awareness.

Stages of developing lexical competence

- ✓ Motivational-diagnostic stage which means determining students' initial level of vocabulary and motivation.
- ✓ Cognitive-analytical stage that studies word meanings, semantic relations, collocations, and contexts.

✓ Formative stage which focuses on active use of vocabulary in oral and written communication.

✓ Control-reflective stage which is about self-analysis, assessment, and adjustment of learning strategies.

Levels of lexical competence

1. Receptive Level

The receptive level involves the learner's ability to recognize and understand vocabulary when encountering it in reading and listening activities. At this stage, students do not necessarily use the words actively, but they can:

- ✓ identify meaning from context,
- ✓ distinguish between literal and figurative meanings,
- ✓ understand collocations and phraseological units in discourse,
- ✓ process vocabulary quickly enough to support overall comprehension.
- ✓ This level is foundational because comprehension precedes production.

2. Productive Level

The productive level refers to the learner's ability to use vocabulary correctly and appropriately in speaking and writing. Accordingly, productive lexical competence reflects a deeper mastery than receptive recognition.

Students at this level can:

- ✓ choose contextually suitable words,
- ✓ apply grammatical and morphological forms correctly,
- ✓ form meaningful and coherent statements,
- ✓ use synonyms, paraphrasing, and reformulation strategies,
- ✓ express ideas fluently using acquired vocabulary.

3. Functional (Professional) Level

For future English teachers, lexical competence must extend to the professional domain. This level ensures readiness for independent teaching practice. It includes:

- ✓ mastering pedagogical terminology (methodology, assessment terms, classroom language),
- ✓ using precise terminology in academic writing and discussions,
- ✓ applying vocabulary in real teaching contexts (lesson planning, explaining grammar, giving instructions),
- ✓ being able to teach vocabulary effectively using methodological principles.

Effective Teaching Methods for enhancing learners' lexical competence.

Communicative Method

The communicative approach develops vocabulary through real-life interaction. Activities such as dialogues, discussions, debates, and role plays promote natural use of vocabulary, strengthen fluency and confidence and also encourage negotiation of meaning and contextual learning.

Contextual Method

This method emphasizes learning words in authentic contexts rather than in isolation. Students infer meaning through stories, academic texts, videos, real cases and situations.

Contextual learning enhances retention and helps students understand how vocabulary functions in discourse.

Lexical-Semantic Method

This method focuses on building semantic networks. Students work with synonyms and antonyms, lexical clusters, word families and collocations. Such relationships improve mental organization and retrieval of vocabulary.

Project Method

Project-based learning encourages students to use vocabulary meaningfully while creating presentations, research assignments and teaching materials such as flashcards, worksheets and lesson plans. Projects integrate reading, writing, speaking, and creative tasks, leading to deep lexical acquisition.

Practical techniques to enrich learners' lexical resource

Visualisation

Visual tools help students internalize and remember vocabulary more effectively. These include diagrams and schemes, tables and charts, mind maps and word clouds.

Visual representation strengthens associative memory and supports concept grouping.

Game-Based Learning

Gamified tasks motivate students and make vocabulary practice enjoyable. Tools like Quizlet, Anki, Wordwall, and Kahoot reinforce repetition, provide instant feedback, create competitive or collaborative learning environments.

Text Work

Working with texts enhances both receptive and productive vocabulary. Tasks may include annotating and highlighting new words, compiling glossaries, conducting thematic or stylistic analysis, summarizing and paraphrasing. As well as, texts expose learners to authentic language use.

Writing Tasks

Writing stimulates deeper lexical processing because it promotes precision and conscious word choice. Activities include composing essays, writing methodological recommendations, creating mini-lessons or micro-teaching scripts.

Microlearning

This type of technique is called microlearning. And it is highly effective in digital learning environments. Short, focused learning units such as mini-videos, quick quizzes, and short tasks allow students to learn vocabulary in manageable chunks.

Digital Tools

Platforms like Padlet, Jamboard, and various online dictionaries provide collaborative spaces, interactive vocabulary boards, multimedia materials, quick access to definitions and examples.

Reflective Practices

Reflection supports metacognitive awareness and through this technique students understand how they learn vocabulary effectively. Useful practices include maintaining vocabulary journals, tracking progress, participating in online discussions, self-evaluating learning strategies. These practical techniques develop lifelong learning skills which are essential for future teachers.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The formation of lexical competence among future English teachers is a crucial component of their professional preparation. Effective vocabulary development requires a systematic, step-by-step approach supported by modern methods. And also, developing lexical competence in future English teachers is a central part of their professional training. A systematic, intentional approach is required to ensure deep and long-term mastery since acquiring practical and professionally relevant lexical competence is essential for successful classroom performance and lifelong professional development.

Key Recommendations

- ✓ Integrate vocabulary development into all stages of teacher education, not only language courses.
- ✓ Apply integrated methodologies such as **CLIL** (Content and Language Integrated Learning) and **TBLT** (Task-Based Language Teaching).
- ✓ Actively use digital platforms and online tools to enhance practice and motivation.
- ✓ Promote independent and project-based learning to strengthen autonomy.
- ✓ Conduct regular assessments, diagnostics, and self-assessment to track progress.
- ✓ Improve the professional competence of university instructors in modern vocabulary teaching strategies.

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