



MODERN APPROACHES TO TEACHING LEXICOLOGY AS A MEANS OF ENHANCING STUDENTS' COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Dilnoza G'ulomovna Nazarova

Teacher at school No. 28 in Peshku district, Bukhara region,
PhD in Pedagogical Sciences

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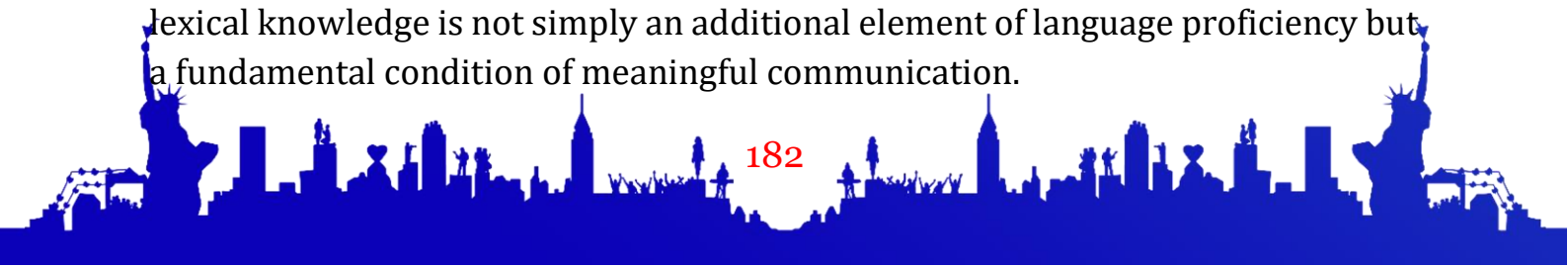
Abstract. This thesis examines modern approaches to teaching lexicology and their potential for enhancing students' communicative competence. Particular attention is given to contextual learning, communicative language teaching, task-based learning, cognitive approaches, collocational instruction, corpus-based learning, collaborative learning, and digital technologies. The thesis argues that an integrated approach combining meaningful contexts, active interaction, lexical analysis, communicative tasks, systematic vocabulary recycling, and learner autonomy can significantly improve the effectiveness of lexicology instruction. The study concludes that modern lexicology teaching should move from the memorization of individual words toward the development of students' ability to understand, select, combine, and use lexical units according to communicative purposes and contexts.

Keywords: lexicology, lexical competence, communicative competence, vocabulary teaching, contextual learning, communicative approach, collocation, interactive learning.

INTRODUCTION

Foreign language education has undergone significant changes as a result of globalization, international academic cooperation, technological development, and the increasing demand for effective intercultural communication. In this context, the ability to communicate successfully in a foreign language has become more important than simply possessing theoretical knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. Modern learners are expected to express ideas clearly, understand different types of discourse, participate in discussions, adapt their language to different situations, and interact with speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

A learner may have sufficient knowledge of grammatical rules but still be unable to communicate effectively if his or her lexical resources are limited. For example, a student may understand how to construct grammatically correct sentences but may not know the appropriate words to express an opinion, explain a problem, provide an argument, or negotiate a solution. This demonstrates that lexical knowledge is not simply an additional element of language proficiency but a fundamental condition of meaningful communication.





Lexicology is the branch of linguistics concerned with the vocabulary of a language and its structure, meaning, development, and functioning. It examines such phenomena as synonymy, antonymy, polysemy, homonymy, word formation, phraseological units, lexical fields, and collocations. In language education, however, lexicological knowledge should not remain purely theoretical. It should help students understand how vocabulary functions in authentic communication.

One of the major challenges in teaching lexicology is the difference between knowing a word and being able to use a word. Students may memorize the translation of a lexical item but still be unable to use it appropriately in speech or writing. This problem is especially evident when learners encounter polysemous words, synonyms with different stylistic characteristics, or collocations that cannot be translated literally. For example, a learner may know the word decision but produce the expression do a decision because the learner has not acquired the collocational pattern make a decision. Similarly, a student may know the meanings of big, large, great, and significant but may not understand their contextual and stylistic differences. Therefore, contemporary teaching methodology should focus not only on vocabulary quantity but also on the depth and quality of lexical knowledge.

The purpose of this paper is to examine modern methodological approaches to teaching lexicology and to demonstrate their potential for enhancing students' communicative competence.

Modern approaches to teaching lexicology

Contextual approach. The contextual approach is one of the most effective methods of modern vocabulary instruction. According to this approach, lexical units are introduced and practiced within meaningful linguistic and situational contexts. Traditional vocabulary instruction often presents a list of words accompanied by translations or dictionary definitions. Such presentation may help students recognize individual lexical items, but it provides limited information about how those words function in real communication. Contextual learning, by contrast, allows students to observe:

- the meaning of a word;
- its grammatical behavior;
- its common collocations;
- its stylistic characteristics;
- its relationship with surrounding words;
- its pragmatic function.





For example, the word *issue* can be presented in several contexts:

Climate change is a serious global issue.

I read the latest issue of the journal.

The company issued an official statement.

Students can compare the examples and identify how the meaning of the same lexical form changes according to context. This method develops students' ability to infer meaning and increases their contextual awareness.

Communicative approach. The communicative approach considers language primarily as a means of communication. From this perspective, lexical material should be taught through situations in which students have a genuine reason to use vocabulary. Teachers can organize:

- discussions;
- debates;
- interviews;
- role plays;
- information-gap activities;
- presentations;
- simulations;
- pair and group tasks.

For example, after learning vocabulary related to environmental protection, students can participate in a discussion about climate change. They may be required to express opinions, agree or disagree with classmates, provide arguments, and propose solutions. In this situation, vocabulary becomes a functional resource rather than an object of memorization. The communicative approach also promotes students' confidence because learners experience vocabulary as something that enables them to express their own ideas.

Task-based approach. Task-based learning is closely related to communicative language teaching. Its central principle is that learners acquire language while completing meaningful tasks. Instead of asking students simply to memorize twenty new words, the teacher can provide a task that requires the use of those words. For example, students studying business vocabulary may receive the following task:

"Develop a marketing strategy for a new educational center."

To complete the task, students may need vocabulary such as: *target audience, customer needs, competition, pricing, advertising, promotion, market research, strategy, demand, and consumer behavior.*





The vocabulary is therefore acquired through purposeful communication. Task-based learning can develop not only lexical competence but also critical thinking, cooperation, problem-solving, and decision-making skills.

Cognitive approach. The cognitive approach emphasizes the active mental processing of lexical information. Instead of memorizing words mechanically, students are encouraged to establish semantic and conceptual relationships between new and previously acquired vocabulary. One useful technique is semantic mapping. For example, the central concept **EDUCATION** can be connected with: *student – teacher – curriculum – assessment – examination – university – learning outcomes – academic achievement – educational policy*.

Another useful technique is word-family analysis: *educate → education → educational → educator → educationally*.

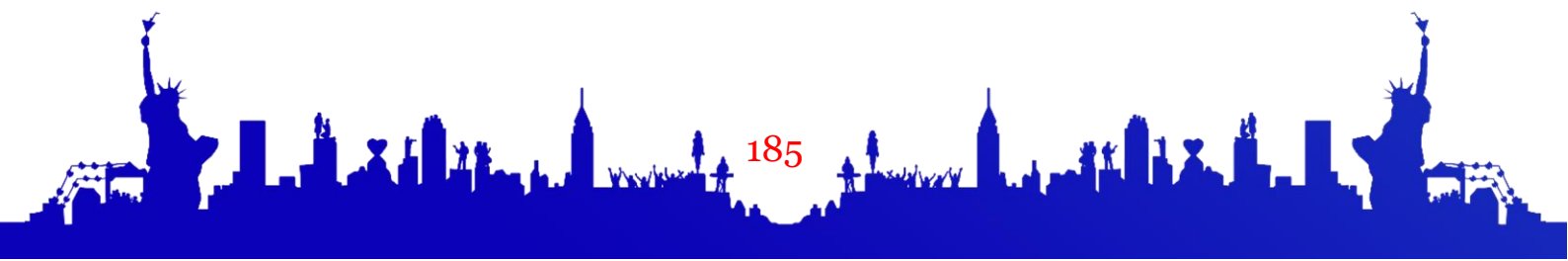
Such activities help students organize vocabulary into interconnected systems and facilitate long-term retention.

Collocational approach. Collocational competence is an important dimension of communicative competence. Fluent speakers generally use words in conventional combinations rather than constructing every expression from individual lexical items. For example:

- **make a decision**
- **conduct research**
- **take responsibility**
- **achieve a goal**
- **strong argument**
- **strong evidence**
- **deeply concerned**
- **highly effective**

Teaching individual words without their common combinations can lead to unnatural language production. Therefore, students should learn lexical units together with frequently occurring combinations. For example, instead of teaching only the word *research*, teachers can introduce: *conduct research, carry out research, research findings, research methodology, empirical research*. This approach can improve fluency, accuracy, and naturalness.

Teaching lexicology through authentic communication. An important characteristic of modern lexicology instruction is the use of authentic or realistically simulated communicative situations.





Students should be exposed to vocabulary from contexts relevant to their academic, professional, and social needs. For university students, these contexts may include:

- academic discussions;
- professional presentations;
- job interviews;
- business negotiations;
- research activities;
- public speaking;
- international communication;
- everyday social interaction.

For example, students learning academic vocabulary can be asked to discuss a research problem, present a short research proposal, or evaluate the results of a study. In this situation, vocabulary is integrated with communication, critical thinking, and academic discourse.

In conclusion, The development of students' communicative competence requires a comprehensive approach to teaching lexicology. Vocabulary cannot be effectively learned through memorization of isolated lexical units alone. Students need opportunities to encounter words in meaningful contexts, analyze their semantic and structural relationships, learn common collocations, and use them in authentic communicative situations. The analysis presented in this paper demonstrates the pedagogical value of contextual, communicative, task-based, cognitive, collocational, corpus-based, collaborative, and digital approaches. Each approach contributes to a particular dimension of lexical development, while their integration creates a more effective learning environment.

The proposed instructional sequence — contextual exposure, meaning discovery, lexical analysis, controlled practice, communicative application, feedback, recycling, and independent use — provides a practical framework for integrating lexicology with communicative language teaching. The main methodological principle is that students should progress from recognizing vocabulary to understanding it, from understanding it to using it, and from controlled use to independent communication.

Therefore, modern lexicology teaching should be viewed as a functional process aimed not simply at increasing students' vocabulary size but at developing their ability to select, combine, interpret, and use lexical resources appropriately and effectively. The integration of modern methodological approaches can contribute to improved lexical accuracy, fluency, flexibility,





contextual awareness, and learner autonomy. Consequently, effective lexicology instruction should occupy an important position within contemporary foreign language education and should be closely connected with the broader goal of developing students' communicative competence.

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