

<https://doi.org/10.62837/2025.8.32>

ZUMRUD HAJIYEVA

English teacher at Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University

e-mail: zumrud.hajiyeva731@gmail.com

IMPROVING LEXICAL SKILLS AS AN IMPORTANT PART OF TEACHING ENGLISH

The aim of teaching any foreign language is to ensure that learners are able to communicate freely in that language. The position of English as a means of international communication is strengthening year by year. Creating interest and enthusiasm for learning this language from secondary school onwards can provide strong impetus for students' future academic activities as well as for their integration into the information society. The primary goal in foreign language instruction should be the acquisition of communicative competence. H. Douglas Brown emphasizes this issue as follows: *“One of the most important aspects of language learning is not merely the acquisition of its grammatical and lexical forms, but the ability to use these forms to fulfill the communicative function of language. If the mastery of vocabulary and structures does not allow the learner to convey thoughts, express ideas and feelings, or comprehend what is expressed in that language, then the knowledge of language acquired does not fulfill its communicative function”*. [7, p.189]

Vocabulary forms the foundation of a language. It occupies a central position because meaning in communication is conveyed precisely through words. To listen and understand, to read and comprehend, and to communicate both orally and in writing in a foreign language, one must possess an adequate vocabulary stock. Vocabulary plays an essential role in the realization of both receptive skills—reading and listening—and productive skills—speaking and writing. For productive speech activities such as speaking and writing, it is necessary to possess lexical-thematic associations, to combine newly learned words with previously acquired lexical units in order to form correct sentences, to select appropriate words from synonymic and antonymic groups, and to use words in accordance with linguistic norms and the conditions of communication. In receptive activities such as listening and reading, learners must be able to associate the sound and written form of a word with its semantic meaning, to distinguish homonymy, synonymy, and antonymy, to differentiate phonetically or orthographically similar words based on meaning, and to determine meaning through context.[6]

In addition to these, learners should also acquire socio-cultural knowledge in the field of vocabulary. This includes the ability to communicate based on speech forms existing in the country of the target language. Moreover, learners should know

words without equivalents in their native language and understand them within the context, be familiar with monetary, weight, and measurement units of the target language country, as well as lexical items expressing time. Possessing certain linguistic knowledge of vocabulary enables students to use words in their speech with greater ease—for example, to form word combinations from lexical units. The distinguished scholar N.I. Gez noted: *“In order to develop a learner’s speech properly, it is necessary to teach them lexical material. Vocabulary is the foundation of language; speech cannot be conceived without it”*. [4, p.23]

The exceptional importance of vocabulary has been repeatedly emphasized in methodological literature. Owing to its nominative function, vocabulary expresses the object of thought. It not only reflects reality but also helps represent concepts in the imagination, thus permeating all spheres of life. [4]

It is crucial for learners to know a sufficient number of words in a foreign language; however, the matter does not end with the mere accumulation of words. To engage in written and oral communication freely, lexical skills are required. The concept of lexical skill has been analyzed repeatedly by psychologists (A.R. Luria, I.A. Zimnyaya, A.A. Leontiev) and methodologists (E.I. Passov, S.F. Shatilov). Generally, lexical skill is regarded as an automatized activity that develops in the process of speech activity. Lexical skills comprise the following structural elements:

1. **The ability to pronounce a lexical unit correctly.** If a learner has not adequately mastered a new lexical item, they may mispronounce it, confusing phonetically similar sounds and thereby distorting the phonetic structure of the word.
2. **Operations related to the selection of lexical units.** If the learner cannot perform the necessary operations of word selection during speech activity, they encounter difficulties in communication.
3. **Operations of combining lexical units.** This involves the learner’s ability to connect newly learned words with those previously acquired.
4. **The use of newly learned lexical units in speech.** If new vocabulary is presented without the explicit aim of applying it in speech, learners may know the isolated meanings of words but fail to use them communicatively [8].

Lexical skills include the ability to use words stylistically appropriately in a sentence, to employ synonyms and antonyms correctly, and to form accurate word combinations. Furthermore, English contains fixed expressions that must also be learned, correctly applied in writing and oral speech, and recognized and understood in texts. Learners should also be able to look up unfamiliar words independently in dictionaries and, in some cases, deduce meanings from context. A person with well-developed lexical skills in English can express their thoughts more freely and naturally, both in writing and speaking. [5]

For the development of lexical skills, it is insufficient merely to know the form and meaning of words; one must also understand their usage and combinatory properties. The use of vocabulary is closely linked with syntactic skills. Knowing a language does not consist of mastering only one of its aspects, such as grammar or vocabulary. It is clear that possessing a rich vocabulary alone is not enough to construct sentences; grammatical skills are also necessary to arrange sentence elements appropriately. Mastery of vocabulary in terms of semantic precision, synonymic richness, and correct usage is a vital prerequisite for developing oral and written communicative competence.

The development of lexical skills requires that the social, contextual, and structural nature of words be taken into account in instruction. Learners must acquire both the form and meaning of lexical units and use them in oral and written communication in various situations, as well as comprehend them in reading and listening. [6]

One of the ways to enhance fluency is to expand learners' vocabulary. Lexical skills provide opportunities to express ideas more fully. A student who has developed only grammatical competence might respond to the question "*Were you happy at that time?*" with a simple "*Yes, I was.*" By contrast, a learner with an enriched lexical base could answer more expressively by using a fixed expression: "*Yes, I was over the moon.*"

Methodological literature identifies three components in the teaching of lexical units: linguistic, methodological, and psychological. The linguistic component involves selecting words necessary to achieve communicative aims in particular speech activities. The methodological component includes the use of dictionaries and guidelines on how lexical material should be systematized. The psychological component pertains to the processes of encoding lexical items in memory and retaining them. [9]

In vocabulary instruction, attention must be paid both to form and content, especially to nuances of meaning and their equivalents in the native language. Presenting words comparatively with their native language counterparts contributes to better acquisition of foreign lexical material. Learners comprehend concepts more deeply by comparing the features of a notion expressed in the foreign language with its equivalent in their mother tongue. [3]

Thus, it is advisable to take into account several important factors in the formation of learners' lexical skills. One of these is the relationship between a foreign word and its equivalent in the native language. Translation has both advantages and disadvantages in clarifying meaning. It facilitates the clear comparative presentation of semantic meanings and saves considerable class time. However, translation also presents difficulties, as in some cases it is hard to find precise equivalents for foreign words in the native language, due to differences in

semantic scope. Except for words denoting concrete objects, exact translation is often possible only with reference to context. [8]

Another important issue is the presentation of new lexical items in connection with previously learned vocabulary and grammatical structures. In our view, learners should have the freedom to express their ideas in class. To achieve this, it is important to develop students' individual thinking in the process of English language instruction. It is not sufficient for learners to simply memorize new vocabulary; emphasis should also be placed on using acquired words and expressions in expressing their own thoughts.

It should also be emphasized that vocabulary teaching must be comprehensive, taking into account auditory, visual, and motor memory—factors fundamental to the formation of lexical skills. Another important matter is that vocabulary materials should be selected and organized based on the principle of frequency of usage. In addition to ensuring that new lexical items are actively used during class activities, attention must also be paid to their recognition during reading and listening tasks.

In the field of language pedagogy, the selection of vocabulary is guided by a number of well-established principles. Among these are thematic selection, frequency, prediction of errors arising from language interference, semantic selection, the principle of compatibility, stylistic unboundedness, and derivational value. Each of these criteria serves a distinct role in ensuring that learners acquire a lexical foundation that is not only functional but also communicatively meaningful. Importantly, this process does not aim to cover the entire lexicon of the target language, but rather to identify and teach a relatively limited set of words and expressions that are indispensable for effective communication within a given thematic domain. The determination of lexical frequency, for instance, is typically informed by a careful analysis of dictionaries, textbooks, and reference works, thereby ensuring that the vocabulary taught reflects actual usage in authentic communication. [4]

The principle of predicting errors caused by linguistic interference further refines the process of selection. Students, when engaged in foreign language production, often attempt to transfer structures and lexical items directly from their native language. This tendency is influenced by their reliance on the semantic systems and structural speech patterns of their first language. As a result, mismatches frequently arise between the communicatively valuable lexical items of the native language (e.g., Russian) and their counterparts in English. By anticipating these interference-induced errors, educators can identify a lexical minimum that equips learners with idiomatic and contextually appropriate means of expressing their thoughts in the target language.

Another essential principle is semantic selection, which emphasizes the prioritization of words that encapsulate the most fundamental concepts associated with the communicative themes under study. In this way, learners are introduced to vocabulary that directly supports both oral and written production in meaningful contexts. Closely related to this is the principle of compatibility. The communicative value of a lexical item is often proportional to the breadth of its combinability with other words. Hence, vocabulary should be sequenced and introduced in such a way that words can be meaningfully grouped and practiced together. For example, when presenting the verb *read*, it is pedagogically effective to include adverbs such as *out loud*, *loudly*, *quickly*, and *slowly*, while omitting items that cannot naturally co-occur at that stage of instruction. [7]

The principle of stylistic unboundedness also plays a pivotal role. This principle underscores the need to consider the stylistic register of the vocabulary items—whether neutral, literary, colloquial, or formal. At the earlier stages of language learning, instruction should focus predominantly on stylistically neutral words. As learners progress, however, their vocabulary repertoire should gradually expand to encompass a broader range of registers, thereby preparing them for communication in diverse contexts. [1]

Equally important is the principle of derivational value, which concerns the capacity of words to generate new lexical items through the use of affixes and derivational patterns. Words that can serve as bases for further word-formation are especially valuable in instruction, as they promote learners' ability to expand their vocabulary independently. [8]

In addition to these principles of selection, the methods of semantization—or the strategies used to convey word meaning—are also of considerable pedagogical importance. Untranslatable methods of semantization may include the use of visual aids such as objects, gestures, pictures, and drawings, as well as definition, enumeration, synonyms, antonyms, contextual inference, and the analysis of a word's internal form or derivational base. For instance, learners may infer meaning through familiar morphemes or cognates, such as the word *patriot*. Transfer-based methods of semantization, by contrast, rely on the learners' native language and include direct translation, substitution with equivalent phrases, and the provision of additional interpretive commentary regarding semantic similarities or divergences between the two languages. [1]

A further dimension of vocabulary learning concerns the learner's interaction with dictionaries. Students are typically encouraged to maintain personalized vocabulary notebooks, which differ from standard dictionaries in that they contain only words the learners have actively studied and mastered. These notebooks often include multiple columns, where a target word is recorded alongside its synonyms, antonyms, collocations, example sentences, and native-language equivalents. Such

practices not only support retention but also foster the development of organizational and analytical skills. Teachers, therefore, play a crucial role in cultivating learners' ability to work independently with dictionaries. One effective activity, for example, involves selecting a familiar noun and then engaging learners in a competition to identify as many associated adjectives and verbs as possible, thereby encouraging lexical expansion and deeper semantic awareness.

In conclusion, paying special attention to the factors outlined above creates broad opportunities for the development of lexical skills among bachelor students in English language instruction.

HAJIYEVA Z.

**IMPROVING LEXICAL SKILLS AS AN IMPORTANT PART OF
TEACHING ENGLISH
SUMMARY**

The article examines the central role of vocabulary in foreign language teaching, with specific emphasis on English as a global means of communication. It argues that the primary aim of language instruction should be the development of communicative competence, which extends beyond grammatical and lexical knowledge to the ability to employ language effectively in authentic contexts. Vocabulary is presented as the foundation of both receptive skills (reading, listening) and productive skills (speaking, writing). The study outlines the structural elements of lexical skills, including pronunciation, selection, combination, and communicative application of lexical units. Moreover, it highlights the importance of socio-cultural competence and the acquisition of lexical items reflecting cultural realities of the target language community. The article reviews established methodological principles of vocabulary selection—such as thematic and semantic relevance, frequency, compatibility, stylistic range, and derivational potential—and analyzes effective methods of semantization. Special attention is given to independent learning strategies, including the use of dictionaries and vocabulary notebooks. The author concludes that systematic, principled, and contextually grounded vocabulary instruction significantly enhances learners' communicative competence and fosters greater fluency in English.

Key words: lexical skill, lexical unit, student, lexical competence, communicative competence

ГАДЖИЕВА З.

**СОВЕРШЕНСТВОВАНИЕ ЛЕКСИЧЕСКИХ НАВЫКОВ КАК
ВАЖНАЯ ЧАСТЬ ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА
РЕЗЮМЕ**

В статье рассматривается ключевая роль лексики в обучении иностранным языкам, с особым акцентом на английский как средство международного общения. Отмечается, что главной целью обучения должно быть формирование коммуникативной компетенции, которая предполагает не только знание грамматических и лексических единиц, но и умение использовать их в реальной коммуникации. Лексика представлена как основа рецептивных навыков (чтение, аудирование) и продуктивных навыков (говорение, письмо). Анализируются структурные элементы лексических умений: правильное произношение, выбор, комбинация и применение слов в речи. Подчеркивается важность социокультурной компетенции, включая усвоение безэквивалентной лексики и реалий страны изучаемого языка. Рассмотрены методические принципы отбора лексики — тематическая и семантическая целесообразность, частотность, сочетаемость, стилистическая нейтральность и словообразовательный потенциал. Описаны методы семантизации и самостоятельного изучения, включая использование словарей и словарных тетрадей. Делается вывод, что системное и целенаправленное обучение лексике способствует развитию коммуникативной компетенции и формированию беглой речи на английском языке.

Ключевые слова: лексический навык, лексическая единица, студент, лексическая компетентность, коммуникативная компетентность

HACIYEVA Z.

**İNGİLİS DİLİNİN TƏDRİSİNDƏ LEKSİK BACARIQLARIN İNKİŞAF
ETDİRİLMƏSİ MÜHÜM AMİL KİMİ
XÜLASƏ**

Məqalədə xarici dil öyrədilməsində, xüsusilə də beynəlxalq ünsiyyət vasitəsi kimi İngilis dilində, lüğətin mərkəzi rolu araşdırılır. Qeyd olunur ki, tədrisin əsas məqsədi yalnız qrammatik və leksik biliklərin mənimsənilməsi deyil, həm də kommunikativ kompetensiyanın formalaşdırılmasıdır. Lüğət bazası həm reseptiv bacarıqların (oxu, dinləmə), həm də məhsuldar bacarıqların (danışmaq, yazı) inkişafı üçün əsas hesab olunur. Müəllif lüğət bacarıqlarının struktur elementlərini — düzgün tələffüz, sözlərin seçilməsi, birləşdirilməsi və kommunikativ şəkildə tətbiqini — təhlil edir. Eyni zamanda, hədəf dil cəmiyyətinə məxsus reallıqları əks etdirən sözlərin mənimsənilməsi ilə bağlı sosial-mədəni kompetensiyanın əhəmiyyəti vurğulanır. Məqalədə leksikanın seçilmə prinsipləri — tematik və semantik

uyğunluq, tezlik, uyğunluq, üslubi neytrallıq və törəmə potensialı — nəzərdən keçirilir. Semantizasiya üsulları, həmçinin müstəqil öyrənmə strategiyaları, o cümlədən lüğətlərdən və fərdi lüğət dəftərlərindən istifadə yolları təsvir olunur. Nəticə etibarilə, sistemli və məqsədyönlü lüğət tədrisi tələbələrin kommunikativ kompetensiyasını artırır və ingilis dilində daha sərbəst ünsiyyət qurmasına şərait yaradır.

Açar sözlər: leksik bacarıq, leksik vahid, tələbə, leksik kompetensiya, kommunikativ kompetensiya

REFERENCES

1. Məhərrəmzadə G. “Sahələrası polisemantın leksikoqrafik təsviri” elmi məqalə, Tədqiqatçı, № 3-4, səh. 21-27, 2023
2. Zeynalıoğlu C. Təlim fəaliyyətinin psixoloji prosesi, 2017
3. Корндорф Б.Ф. Методика преподавания английского языка, 1958
4. Пассов Е.И. Теоретические основы обучения иноязычному говорению, 1983
5. Рогова Г.В., Рабинович Ф.М., Сахарова Т.Е. Методика обучения иностранным языкам в средней школе. 1991
6. Соловова Е.Н. Методика обучения иностранным языкам, 2005
7. Brown D.H. Principles of Language and teaching, 1980
8. Lewis M. The Lexical Approach: The State of ELT and a Way Forward, 1993
9. Thornbury S. How to Teach Vocabulary, 2006

Rəyçi: dosent Şamiyeva Rəna Xankişi qızı