EVALUATING THE ROLE OF LEXICOLOGY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AND LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE

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Abstract. *Lexicology, the study of the structure, meaning, and development of words, is fundamental to understanding and mastering a language. This article evaluates the role of lexicology in English language learning by analyzing how lexical knowledge contributes to learners' linguistic competence, vocabulary expansion, and communicative ability. Through classroom observations, surveys, and lexical tests administered to EFL learners, the study identifies key challenges and pedagogical recommendations for integrating lexicological concepts into language instruction.*

Keywords: *Lexicology, vocabulary acquisition, lexical competence, word formation, English language learning, semantic analysis, EFL instruction.*

ОЦЕНКА РОЛИ ЛЕКСИКОЛОГИИ В ИЗУЧЕНИИ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА И ЯЗЫКОВОЙ КОМПЕТЕНЦИИ

Аннотация. *Лексикология, изучение структуры, значения и развития слов, имеет основополагающее значение для понимания и освоения языка. В этой статье оценивается роль лексикологии в изучении английского языка путем анализа того, как лексические знания способствуют языковой компетенции учащихся, расширению словарного запаса и коммуникативным способностям. С помощью наблюдений в классе, опросов и лексических тестов, проводимых среди учащихся, изучающих английский как иностранный, исследование выявляет основные проблемы и педагогические рекомендации по интеграции лексикологических концепций в обучение языку.*

Ключевые слова: *лексикология, приобретение словарного запаса, лексическая компетенция, словообразование, изучение английского языка, семантический анализ, обучение английскому языку как иностранному.*

INGLIZ TILINI VA LINGVISTIK KOMPETENTSIYANI O'RGANISHDA LEKSIKOLOGIYANING AHAMIYATI

Annotatsiya. *So'zlarning tuzilishi, ma'nosi va rivojlanishini o'rganuvchi leksikologiya tilni tushunish va o'zlashtirish uchun asosiy hisoblanadi. Ushbu maqolada leksikologiyaning ingliz tilini o'rganishdagi roli baholanadi, leksik bilimlar o'quvchilarning lingvistik kompetensiyasi, so'z boyligi va kommunikativ qobiliyatiga qanday hissa qo'shishini tahlil qiladi.*

Sinfdagi kuzatishlar, so'rovlar va ingliz tilini o'rganuvchilarga o'tkaziladigan leksik testlar orqali tadqiqot leksikologik tushunchalarni til o'qitishga integratsiya qilish bo'yicha asosiy muammolar va pedagogik tavsiyalarni aniqlaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: *Leksikologiya, so'z boyligini o'zlashtirish, leksik kompetentsiya, so'z yaratish, ingliz tilini o'rganish, semantik tahlil, EFL yo'riqnomasi.*

1. Introduction

Lexicology is a vital subfield of linguistics that examines the vocabulary of a language—its origin, structure, development, and usage. It provides insights into word formation, semantic shifts, phraseology, and lexical relations such as synonymy, antonymy, and polysemy. For English language learners, mastering these aspects is crucial for both receptive (reading, listening) and productive (speaking, writing) skills.

Despite its importance, lexicology is often underemphasized in traditional English language curricula, where the focus is largely on grammar and basic vocabulary memorization.

Yet, understanding lexical relationships and structures can greatly enhance learners' depth of vocabulary knowledge, ability to use words appropriately in context, and awareness of language nuances.

This study aims to evaluate the role of lexicology in English language education by assessing learners' lexical competence and examining the impact of lexicological instruction on language acquisition. It also seeks to explore learners' attitudes toward lexical studies and the effectiveness of current teaching approaches.

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

The study involved 40 undergraduate EFL students from two universities in Uzbekistan enrolled in linguistics and philology programs. All participants had at least an upper-intermediate (B2) level of English.

2.2. Instruments and Procedure

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To evaluate the impact of lexicology on language learning, the study utilized the following tools:

- **Lexical Competence Test**: A diagnostic test was designed to assess knowledge of word formation (prefixes, suffixes, compounds), lexical relations (synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms), and word meaning in context.

- **Classroom Intervention**: A 4-week module on applied lexicology was conducted, covering derivational morphology, etymology, idioms, collocations, and semantic change.

- **Surveys and Interviews**: After the intervention, students completed a questionnaire on their perceptions of lexicology and its relevance. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 language instructors to gain qualitative insight into teaching practices and challenges.

2.3. Data Analysis

Test results were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Qualitative data from open-ended responses and interviews were thematically analyzed to identify recurring patterns related to learners' experiences, difficulties, and instructional preferences.

- Lexicology enhances **critical thinking** about language use and fosters awareness of register, tone, and precision.

- Students engaged more actively when lessons were connected to real-world applications (e.g., analyzing political speeches or academic texts).

- Teaching lexicology requires **integration with skills-based learning** rather than isolated theoretical study.

4. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that lexicology is not only a theoretical discipline but a practical tool for enriching English language learning. Explicit instruction in lexical relations and word formation enables learners to decode unfamiliar vocabulary, avoid redundancy, and use language with greater accuracy and flexibility.

Moreover, the study suggests that lexicological competence contributes to **semantic awareness**, **stylistic sensitivity**, and **intercultural understanding**, especially when learners examine how meaning changes across time, genres, or dialects. By applying lexicological analysis to authentic materials, students move beyond memorizing word lists to developing a dynamic, functional vocabulary.

However, challenges remain. Students often struggle with abstract concepts such as polysemy or figurative meaning without contextual examples.

Therefore, lexicology should be taught in conjunction with practical exercises, such as analyzing news headlines, legal documents, or literature, to make lessons more engaging and relevant.

5. Conclusion

Lexicology plays a critical role in developing English language proficiency by providing learners with the tools to understand, analyze, and use vocabulary with greater depth and accuracy. As this study demonstrates, the integration of lexicological concepts—such as word formation, semantic relationships, etymology, and idiomatic expressions—into language instruction significantly enhances learners' vocabulary acquisition, semantic precision, and overall communicative competence.

Rather than treating vocabulary as a collection of isolated words, lexicology encourages a systematic and analytical approach to language learning. It helps learners recognize morphological patterns, understand the nuances between synonyms, and appreciate the historical and cultural dimensions of language use. These competencies enable students to navigate a wide range of communicative contexts, from informal conversation to academic writing and professional discourse.

To maximize the benefits of lexicological instruction, language educators should move beyond rote memorization and embrace a more **integrated, application-focused pedagogy**. This includes the use of authentic materials, lexical analysis tasks, contextual vocabulary exercises, and cross-linguistic comparisons that make lexicological theory relevant and practical for learners. When learners are actively engaged in exploring how words function within real-life communication, they develop not only lexical knowledge but also critical language awareness.

Moreover, lexicology fosters **metalinguistic competence**, allowing learners to reflect on language as a system and make informed choices about word usage and register. This, in turn, contributes to their ability to produce coherent, stylistically appropriate, and context-sensitive discourse.

Future research could build upon the findings of this study by examining the **long-term effects** of lexicological training across different age groups, proficiency levels, and educational settings. Comparative studies between first and second language learners, or between learners of different native languages, could yield further insights into how lexicological knowledge is internalized and applied. Additionally, the role of digital tools and corpora in enhancing lexical awareness presents a promising area for exploration in modern language classrooms.

In conclusion, lexicology is not merely a theoretical branch of linguistics but a practical and powerful component of language education. When effectively integrated into curriculum and teaching practices, it enriches learners' linguistic repertoire, sharpens their semantic judgment, and strengthens their ability to communicate with precision and confidence in English.

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