

CHALLENGES IN ENGLISH VOCABULARY ACQUISITION FOR UZBEK STUDENTS

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Annotation. *This article examines the main challenges faced by Uzbek students in learning English vocabulary. It focuses on difficulties such as lack of context, limited practice, and differences between native and target languages. The study also highlights the importance of using effective teaching strategies, including contextual learning and interactive methods. These approaches can help students improve their vocabulary knowledge and use English more confidently in real communication.*

Key words: *vocabulary acquisition, Uzbek learners, EFL, learning difficulties, teaching strategies.*

Annotatsiya. *Ushbu maqolada o'zbek talabalarining ingliz tilidagi lug'atni o'rganishda duch keladigan asosiy muammolari tahlil qilinadi. Unda kontekst yetishmasligi, amaliyot kamligi va ona tili bilan farqlar kabi qiyinchiliklar ko'rib chiqiladi. Shuningdek, samarali o'qitish usullarining ahamiyati yoritiladi. Bu yondashuvlar talabalarning lug'at boyligini oshirishga va ingliz tilida erkinroq muloqot qilishiga yordam beradi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *lug'at o'rganish, o'zbek talabalar, EFL, o'rganish muammolari, o'qitish strategiyalari.*

Аннотация. *В данной статье рассматриваются основные трудности, с которыми сталкиваются узбекские студенты при изучении английской лексики. Анализируются такие проблемы, как недостаток контекста, ограниченная практика и различия между родным и иностранным языком. Также подчеркивается важность эффективных методов обучения. Эти подходы помогают студентам лучше усваивать лексику и увереннее использовать английский язык.*

Ключевые слова: *усвоение лексики, узбекские студенты, EFL, трудности обучения, методы преподавания.*

Introduction

Learning English vocabulary is one of the most important parts of language acquisition.

However, many Uzbek students face serious difficulties when trying to learn and use new words. In most cases, students can remember the translation of a word, but they cannot use it correctly in speaking or writing. This shows that vocabulary learning is not only about memorizing words, but also about understanding their usage in real contexts. One of the main reasons for this problem is the traditional teaching method. In many classrooms, vocabulary is taught through word lists and direct translation. For example, a teacher may give students a list like “develop – rivojlantirmoq”, “achieve – erishmoq”, but students do not see how these words are used in sentences. As a result, they may forget the words quickly or use them incorrectly.

Another important issue is the difference between Uzbek and English language structures. Some English words do not have exact equivalents in Uzbek, or they are used differently.

This can confuse learners and make vocabulary acquisition more difficult. Therefore, this article aims to analyze the main challenges in English vocabulary acquisition for Uzbek students and provide practical examples. It also suggests possible solutions to improve vocabulary learning in EFL classrooms.

One of the most serious challenges in English vocabulary acquisition for Uzbek students is the lack of contextual learning. In many traditional classrooms, vocabulary is introduced through isolated word lists, where students are expected to memorize meanings without understanding how the words function in real communication. For example, students may learn the word “take” as “olmoq,” but they are not exposed to its different uses such as “take a break,” “take responsibility,” or “take part in.” As a result, students often become confused when they encounter the same word in different contexts. This problem shows that vocabulary learning should not be limited to translation, but should involve meaningful usage.

Another important issue is that students often rely heavily on direct translation from Uzbek to English. This leads to structural and lexical errors. For instance, a student might say “I have 20 years” instead of “I am 20 years old,” because in Uzbek it is natural to express age with possession. Similarly, phrases like “open the light” instead of “turn on the light” are common among Uzbek learners. These examples clearly demonstrate the influence of the native language on vocabulary use. While translation can be helpful at early stages, overdependence on it can limit learners’ ability to think in English. In addition to this, limited exposure to English outside the classroom also affects vocabulary acquisition. Many students only encounter English during lessons, which are usually limited in time. This means that students do not get enough repetition or practice. For example, a student may learn a new word during the lesson, but if they do not use it again in speaking or writing, they are likely to forget it quickly. Research shows that repeated exposure is essential for vocabulary retention. Without it, learning becomes temporary and ineffective.

Another challenge is the lack of active usage. In many cases, students passively recognize words but cannot actively use them. This is known as the difference between receptive and productive vocabulary. For example, a student may understand the word “improve” when reading a text, but may struggle to use it in a sentence like “I want to improve my English.” This happens because students are not given enough opportunities to practice speaking or writing. Classroom activities often focus more on recognition than production, which limits language development.

Collocation is another area where Uzbek students face difficulties. English vocabulary is not just about individual words, but also about how words combine with each other. For example, native speakers say “make a mistake,” “do homework,” and “take a photo.” However, Uzbek learners may incorrectly say “do a mistake” or “make homework,” because they translate directly from their native language. These mistakes may seem small, but they can affect the naturalness and accuracy of communication. Therefore, learning collocations should be an important part of vocabulary instruction.

Moreover, polysemy, or multiple meanings of a single word, creates additional challenges.

English has many words with several meanings depending on context. For example, the word “head” can refer to a part of the body, a leader, or the top of something. If students only learn one meaning, they may misunderstand sentences.

For instance, in the sentence “She is the head of the department,” a student who only knows the literal meaning of “head” may become confused.

This highlights the importance of teaching vocabulary in context. Pronunciation is another factor that influences vocabulary learning. Even if students know the meaning of a word, they may hesitate to use it because they are unsure about pronunciation. For example, words like “comfortable,” “vegetable,” or “schedule” can be difficult for Uzbek learners. Mispronunciation can lead to communication problems or lack of confidence. Therefore, vocabulary teaching should include pronunciation practice as well.

Motivation also plays a significant role in vocabulary acquisition. If students are not interested or motivated, they are less likely to remember new words. Traditional methods such as memorizing long lists of vocabulary can be boring and discouraging. For example, if students are asked to memorize 50 words without any meaningful activity, they may quickly lose interest. On the other hand, interactive activities such as games, discussions, or storytelling can make learning more enjoyable and effective. Another issue is the lack of personalized learning. Each student has a different learning style and pace. Some students learn better through visual materials, while others prefer listening or hands-on practice. However, in many classrooms, the same method is used for all students. This can make learning less effective for some learners. For example, a student who prefers visual learning may struggle with purely text-based materials. Therefore, teachers should try to use a variety of techniques to meet different needs.

Furthermore, the role of the teacher is very important in vocabulary instruction. In some cases, teachers focus too much on explaining meanings and not enough on helping students use the words. For example, a teacher may spend a lot of time translating words, but not enough time on practice activities. This creates an imbalance between knowledge and usage. Effective teaching should include both explanation and application. To address these challenges, several practical strategies can be implemented. First, vocabulary should always be introduced in context. For example, instead of giving isolated words, teachers can use short texts, dialogues, or stories.

Students can read the text and try to guess the meaning of new words based on context.

This helps develop critical thinking and deeper understanding. Second, teachers should provide opportunities for active use. Activities such as role plays, group discussions, and presentations encourage students to use new vocabulary in real communication. For example, students can be asked to role-play a situation like booking a hotel room or discussing travel plans.

This makes learning more practical and meaningful. Third, it is important to include repetition and review in the learning process. Teachers can use games, quizzes, or revision tasks to help students remember vocabulary. For example, a quick quiz at the beginning of the lesson can help reinforce previously learned words. Repetition does not have to be boring; it can be interactive and engaging. Fourth, teaching collocations and phrases should be emphasized. Instead of teaching single words, teachers can introduce common word combinations. For example, instead of just teaching the word “decision,” teachers can teach “make a decision,” “take a decision,” and explain the correct usage. This helps students speak more naturally. Fifth, the use of digital tools can greatly improve vocabulary learning. Applications, online platforms, and multimedia resources provide interactive ways to learn and practice vocabulary.

For example, students can use vocabulary apps that include games, flashcards, and spaced repetition. Watching videos or listening to podcasts can also expose students to natural language use. Finally, creating a positive learning environment is essential. Students should feel comfortable making mistakes and trying new words. Teachers should encourage participation and provide supportive feedback. For example, instead of correcting every mistake immediately, teachers can focus on communication and gradually improve accuracy.

In conclusion, English vocabulary acquisition for Uzbek students involves several challenges, including lack of context, limited practice, native language interference, and low motivation. These factors make it difficult for learners to use vocabulary effectively in real communication. However, these problems can be solved with appropriate teaching strategies.

Teaching vocabulary in context, encouraging active use, focusing on collocations, and using interactive methods can significantly improve learning outcomes. Practical activities and real-life examples help students understand how words are used, not just what they mean. Overall, vocabulary learning should be meaningful, engaging, and connected to real communication. When students are given the opportunity to use language actively, they become more confident and successful in learning English. This is especially important in the Uzbek educational context, where modern teaching approaches are needed to improve language proficiency.

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