PEDAGOGICAL AND LINGUODIDACTIC FOUNDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING LEXICAL COMPETENCE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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This article examines the pedagogical and linguodidactic foundations of developing lexical competence in foreign language education from a theoretical and scientific perspective. It explores the nature and significance of lexical competence, its role within the framework of communicative competence, its structural components, and its functional importance in the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, the study highlights the potential of contextual, communicative, cognitive, and integrative approaches to vocabulary acquisition. Particular attention is paid not only to expanding learners' lexical repertoires but also to developing their ability to understand word meanings, use lexical items appropriately in different communicative contexts, and retain them in long-term memory. The findings suggest that the systematic development of lexical competence constitutes one of the essential didactic conditions for improving the effectiveness of foreign language education.

Keywords: lexical competence, foreign language education, lexical items, lexical knowledge, communicative competence, linguodidactics, pedagogical approaches, contextual teaching, vocabulary acquisition, speech activities.

INTRODUCTION. In the context of globalisation and increasing international integration, foreign language learning has become one of the key factors contributing to the expansion of individuals' educational, professional, and social opportunities. In

contemporary language education, the primary focus is no longer limited to mastering grammatical rules or memorising individual words. Instead, greater emphasis is placed on developing learners' ability to use linguistic resources independently, effectively, and purposefully in authentic communicative situations. In this regard, lexical competence occupies a particularly significant position. The lexical system of any language determines its semantic richness and communicative potential. In order to express ideas, comprehend others' speech, exchange information, and communicate personal attitudes, language learners need to possess an adequate level of lexical knowledge. From this perspective, lexical competence should not be regarded as a supplementary element of foreign language acquisition but rather as one of the fundamental components of successful communication. In his research on vocabulary acquisition, P. Nation conceptualises word knowledge as a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing three essential aspects: form, meaning, and use [1]. This perspective demonstrates that lexical competence extends beyond the ability to recognise or recall word meanings. It also involves knowledge of pronunciation, spelling, grammatical characteristics, collocational patterns, and the appropriate use of lexical items in particular communicative contexts. In foreign language teaching practice, vocabulary development is sometimes associated primarily with the mechanical memorisation of individual words. However, this approach does not necessarily ensure learners' ability to use newly acquired vocabulary independently and appropriately. Memorising a word and employing it accurately in communication involve different cognitive and communicative processes. Therefore, the development of lexical competence requires the integration of theoretical knowledge with practical language use. The primary aim of this study is to investigate the pedagogical and linguodidactic foundations of lexical competence in foreign language education, identify its principal structural components, and provide a theoretical justification for effective educational approaches that contribute to its development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employs several theoretical research methods, including theoretical analysis, comparative analysis, examination of scientific literature, generalisation, classification, and systematic analysis of pedagogical phenomena. Initially, international and local scholarly and methodological literature addressing lexical competence, lexical knowledge, and communicative competence was examined. Particular attention was given to the theoretical perspectives of P. Nation, N. Schmitt, J. Richards, M. Lewis, J. Coady, and other researchers whose studies focus on vocabulary acquisition and

vocabulary teaching methodology. Comparative analysis was employed to identify the similarities and differences among existing theoretical approaches to lexical competence. Furthermore, a systematic approach was applied to examine its structural components as interconnected pedagogical and linguodidactic elements. The methodological framework of the study is based on the following approaches: **Competence-based approach.** This approach emphasises not only learners' acquisition of lexical knowledge but also their ability to apply it independently and appropriately in various communicative situations. **Communicative approach.** This approach focuses on the practical use of lexical items in authentic communication and aims to develop learners' abilities to express ideas, ask questions, respond appropriately, and exchange information. **Cognitive approach.** This approach encompasses the cognitive processes involved in perceiving, processing, understanding, memorising, and retrieving lexical items, as well as establishing semantic relationships between words. **Contextual approach.** Within this approach, new lexical items are introduced and taught not in isolation but through meaningful contexts, including texts, dialogues, communicative situations, and authentic language materials. The combination of these methodological approaches makes it possible to examine lexical competence comprehensively, taking into consideration the interaction between language, cognition, memory, and communication.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The analysis of relevant scholarly literature indicates that lexical competence is a multidimensional and complex communicative-pedagogical construct. It encompasses learners' knowledge of lexical items, their understanding of word meanings, their ability to recognise the functions of words in context, and their capacity to use vocabulary appropriately in different speech activities. To provide a comprehensive understanding of lexical competence, it is necessary to identify its major structural components. **Semantic component.** This component involves knowledge of lexical meanings, polysemy, synonymy, antonymy, and the meanings that words acquire in particular contexts. For instance, the English word *bright* can convey different meanings, such as "full of light", "intelligent", or "vivid", depending on the context. Therefore, learners should be able to identify not only the dictionary meaning of a word but also its intended meaning within a particular communicative context. **Formal component.** This component refers to learners' knowledge of the written and phonological forms of lexical items. It includes the ability to spell and pronounce words correctly, recognise their stress patterns, and understand their phonological structure.

Grammatical component. This component involves knowledge of the grammatical categories of words, their morphological forms, and their syntactic patterns. For example, the correct use of prepositions in expressions such as *depend on*, *interested in*, and *responsible for* demonstrates the close relationship between lexical and grammatical knowledge. **Collocational component.** This component concerns learners' ability to recognise and use words in conventional and natural combinations. For example, mastering collocations such as *make a decision*, *take a photo*, and *strong tea* contributes to more natural and fluent language production. **Pragmatic component.** This component involves selecting and using lexical items according to communicative purposes, social contexts, levels of formality, and the characteristics of interlocutors. For instance, understanding the differences between vocabulary used in formal and informal communication represents an important aspect of pragmatic lexical knowledge. Thus, lexical competence cannot be reduced to the knowledge of individual words. Rather, it develops through the integration of semantic, formal, grammatical, collocational, and pragmatic knowledge. From a pedagogical perspective, lexical competence involves creating conditions in which learners can acquire new vocabulary independently, consolidate lexical knowledge, retain it in memory, and apply it in practical language activities. In this process, the teacher functions not merely as a source of knowledge but as a facilitator of learning who takes into account learners' individual needs, abilities, and cognitive characteristics. From a linguodidactic perspective, the development of lexical competence requires careful selection, presentation, consolidation, and activation of lexical material in speech. Accordingly, the process of vocabulary instruction can be divided into three interconnected stages. **The first stage: Recognition and comprehension of lexical items.** At this stage, learners become familiar with the pronunciation, spelling, and meanings of new words. The use of visual aids, real objects, short videos, audio materials, and contextual examples facilitates the comprehension and initial acquisition of vocabulary. **The second stage: Consolidation of lexical items.** At this stage, newly introduced vocabulary is reinforced through various activities, including repetition, classification, word-combination exercises, gap-filling tasks, and semantic grouping. The application of techniques such as spaced repetition and active retrieval is particularly beneficial for strengthening vocabulary retention. **The third stage: Application of lexical items in communicative activities.** At this stage, learners are encouraged to use previously acquired vocabulary in dialogues, monologues, discussions, presentations, writing assignments, and other communicative situations. Through these activities, receptive lexical knowledge is gradually transformed into

productive language skills. The logical sequence and integration of these stages contribute to the effective acquisition of vocabulary and its active application in communication. Digital educational resources also provide valuable opportunities for developing lexical competence. Electronic dictionaries, interactive learning platforms, educational videos, audio recordings, and mobile applications enable learners to expand their vocabulary and engage in independent language learning. Nevertheless, the use of digital technologies alone does not guarantee effective learning outcomes. Their educational value largely depends on the quality of the content, its relevance to learning objectives, and the appropriateness of its methodological implementation.

DISCUSSION

An examination of the pedagogical and linguodidactic foundations of lexical competence reveals several important connections among the theoretical perspectives of prominent researchers and different scholarly approaches. P. Nation conceptualises lexical knowledge through three fundamental dimensions: word form, meaning, and use [1]. This framework provides an important theoretical basis for understanding the multidimensional nature of lexical competence. Accordingly, knowing a word involves more than memorising its translation; learners must also understand its appropriate contexts, grammatical patterns, and functional applications. N. Schmitt associates vocabulary development with the application of various learning strategies and instructional techniques [2]. His research highlights the importance of repetition, contextual learning, dictionary use, and independent vocabulary-learning strategies in the process of lexical acquisition. J. Richards emphasises the significance of vocabulary knowledge in communicative language development [3]. From this perspective, vocabulary instruction should not be treated as an isolated aspect of language teaching. Instead, it should be integrated with the development of learners' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The Lexical Approach proposed by M. Lewis places particular emphasis on lexical units as fundamental elements of language. According to this approach, language learning involves not only the acquisition of individual words but also the mastery of multi-word expressions, conventional collocations, and fixed lexical patterns [4]. This perspective provides valuable methodological opportunities for developing learners' naturalness, fluency, and communicative effectiveness. The psycholinguistic dimensions of lexical competence can also be examined through A. Baddeley's working memory model [5]. This model provides a theoretical explanation of how new lexical information is received, processed, and temporarily retained in memory. From this perspective, it is advisable

to avoid presenting excessive amounts of new information simultaneously. Instead, lexical material should be introduced gradually, reinforced systematically, and revisited through different learning activities. The studies of J. Coady and T. Huckin highlight the relationship between vocabulary acquisition, reading processes, and contextual learning [6]. Their perspectives support the importance of reading activities and contextual exposure as effective means of developing lexical competence.

Furthermore, the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR), developed by the Council of Europe, recognises lexical competence as an essential component of communicative language competence [7]. This framework emphasises the importance of developing and assessing learners' lexical knowledge in accordance with different levels of language proficiency. The 2020 Companion Volume further develops the framework's approach to language competence and assessment [8].

Overall, the development of lexical competence is a continuous and multidimensional process. Its effectiveness depends on the appropriate integration of instructional materials, pedagogical technologies, cognitive factors, and communicative environments. The perspectives discussed above demonstrate that successful vocabulary instruction requires a comprehensive approach that combines linguistic knowledge with cognitive development and practical language use.

CONCLUSION

Based on the theoretical analysis conducted, several conclusions can be drawn. First, lexical competence represents a multidimensional component of foreign language acquisition. It encompasses knowledge of the form, meaning, grammatical characteristics, collocational patterns, and pragmatic use of lexical items. Therefore, its development requires more than the memorisation of individual words. Second, the pedagogical foundation of lexical competence lies in creating appropriate conditions for learners to acquire, consolidate, retain, and apply lexical knowledge independently. From a linguodidactic perspective, its development requires the purposeful selection of vocabulary, systematic presentation of lexical material, contextual instruction, and the practical activation of acquired knowledge through speech activities. Third, the integration of communicative, cognitive, contextual, and competence-based approaches plays a significant role in developing lexical competence. These approaches contribute not only to expanding learners' vocabulary but also to strengthening their ability to use linguistic resources independently, accurately, and

appropriately in different communicative situations. Fourth, digital educational resources, interactive exercises, multimedia materials, and professionally oriented texts offer additional opportunities for vocabulary development. However, their effectiveness depends on their relevance to educational objectives and their appropriate methodological application. Fifth, the assessment of lexical competence should extend beyond learners' ability to memorise and recall individual words. It should also consider their ability to select appropriate lexical items in context, use conventional collocations, and incorporate vocabulary effectively into independent oral and written communication. In conclusion, the development of lexical competence in foreign language education is an essential pedagogical and linguodidactic process that contributes significantly to learners' communicative independence. Its systematic and effective implementation provides a strong foundation for improving the quality of language education, enhancing learners' communicative abilities, and preparing them for successful participation in real-life communication.

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