



METHODOLOGY OF DEVELOPING STUDENTS' LEXICAL COMPETENCE IN TEACHING ENGLISH BASED ON CORPUS LINGUISTICS

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Abstract

This article explores the methodology of developing students' lexical competence in teaching English based on corpus linguistics. Lexical competence is considered one of the core components of communicative competence, since effective language use depends not only on knowing separate words but also on understanding their frequency, collocational patterns, semantic shades, grammatical behavior and contextual appropriateness. The study emphasizes the pedagogical value of electronic corpora, concordance lines, frequency lists, collocation analysis and authentic language data in improving students' ability to acquire, analyze and use vocabulary in meaningful communication. A corpus-based approach allows students to observe how English words function in real discourse, compare lexical units in different contexts and make evidence-based conclusions about word usage. In the context of pedagogical higher education, this approach is especially important because future English teachers must be able to select appropriate vocabulary, explain lexical differences, design corpus-based exercises and guide learners toward independent lexical inquiry. The article analyzes methodological principles, stages of implementation and expected learning outcomes of using corpus linguistics in vocabulary teaching. It is argued that corpus-based instruction strengthens students' lexical awareness, autonomous learning skills, analytical thinking and professional readiness for English language teaching.



Keywords: Corpus linguistics, lexical competence, vocabulary teaching, concordance, collocation, frequency list, authentic language data, English language teaching, pedagogical methodology.

KORPUS LINGVISTIKASI ASOSIDA INGLIZ TILINI O‘QITISHDA TALABALARNING LEKSIK KOMPETENSIYASINI RIVOJLANTIRISH METODIKASI

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Annotatsiya

Mazkur maqolada ingliz tilini o‘qitishda korpus lingvistikasi asosida talabalarning leksik kompetensiyasini rivojlantirish metodikasi yoritiladi. Leksik kompetensiya kommunikativ kompetensiyaning asosiy tarkibiy qismlaridan biri sifatida qaraladi, chunki samarali til qo‘llash faqat alohida so‘zlarni bilish bilan emas, balki ularning qo‘llanish chastotasi, kollokatsion bog‘lanishi, semantik nozikliklari, grammatik xususiyatlari va kontekstga mosligini anglash bilan belgilanadi. Tadqiqotda elektron korpuslar, konkordans qatorlari, chastota ro‘yxatlari, kollokatsion tahlil va autentik til ma’lumotlarining talabalarda so‘z boyligini egallash, tahlil qilish va mazmunli muloqotda qo‘llash ko‘nikmalarini shakllantirishdagi pedagogik ahamiyati asoslanadi. Korpusga asoslangan yondashuv talabaga ingliz tilidagi so‘zlarning real nutqda qanday ishlatilishini kuzatish, turli kontekstlarda leksik birliklarni taqqoslash va dalillarga asoslangan xulosalar chiqarish imkonini beradi. Pedagogik oliy ta’lim sharoitida bu yondashuv ayniqsa muhimdir, chunki bo‘lajak ingliz tili o‘qituvchilari mos leksik materialni tanlash, so‘zlar o‘rtasidagi ma’no farqlarini tushuntirish, korpusga asoslangan mashqlar yaratish va o‘quvchilarni mustaqil leksik izlanishga yo‘naltirish malakasiga ega bo‘lishlari zarur. Maqolada korpus lingvistikasidan lug‘at o‘qitishda foydalanishning metodik tamoyillari, bosqichlari va kutiladigan ta’limiy natijalari tahlil qilinadi.



Kalit soʻzlar: korpus lingvistikasi, leksik kompetensiya, lugʻat oʻqitish, konkordans, kollokatsiya, chastota roʻyxati, autentik til maʼlumotlari, ingliz tilini oʻqitish, pedagogik metodika.

Introduction

In modern English language teaching, the development of students' lexical competence has become one of the most important conditions for effective communication, academic achievement and professional readiness. Vocabulary is not merely a collection of isolated words that learners memorize and reproduce mechanically. It is a complex system of meanings, associations, collocations, grammatical patterns, stylistic features and pragmatic functions. A student who knows the translation of a word may still experience difficulty using it correctly in speech or writing if he or she does not understand its frequency, typical lexical partners, register, semantic restrictions and contextual behavior. Therefore, the methodology of teaching vocabulary must move beyond traditional memorization and include analytical, contextual and evidence-based approaches.

Corpus linguistics offers significant opportunities for improving vocabulary teaching in pedagogical higher education. An electronic corpus provides a large collection of authentic texts that can be searched and analyzed through digital tools. By using concordance lines, frequency lists, collocation tables and contextual examples, students can observe how English words are actually used by native and proficient speakers in different communicative situations. This approach helps learners notice lexical patterns that are often difficult to explain through dictionary definitions alone. For example, students may compare near-synonyms, identify typical verb-noun combinations, distinguish formal and informal expressions, and understand how one lexical item changes its meaning depending on the surrounding context.

The relevance of corpus-based vocabulary teaching is especially high in the preparation of future English language teachers. Students of pedagogical universities are not only language learners; they are also future specialists who will explain vocabulary, select lexical material, design exercises and guide school learners in developing communicative competence. For this reason, they need to develop a deeper understanding of lexical units as functional elements of



discourse. Corpus linguistics allows future teachers to rely on real language data rather than intuition alone. It trains them to justify lexical choices, explain usage differences and demonstrate authentic examples in the classroom.

In the educational context of Uzbekistan, the need to improve English language teaching is closely connected with the modernization of higher education, the expansion of digital learning resources and the increasing role of English in academic and professional communication. Pedagogical universities are expected to prepare teachers who are able to combine linguistic knowledge, methodological competence and digital literacy. Corpus-based instruction corresponds to these requirements because it integrates language analysis, independent learning and technology-supported methodology. It also encourages students to become active researchers of language rather than passive recipients of ready-made rules.

The main problem addressed in this article is the need to develop an effective methodology for forming students' lexical competence through corpus linguistics tools. This includes determining how corpus materials should be selected, how concordance-based tasks should be organized, how students' lexical awareness should be assessed and how corpus analysis can be connected with future teaching practice. The aim of the study is to substantiate the methodological value of corpus linguistics in vocabulary teaching and to identify practical ways of using corpus tools to develop students' ability to understand, analyze and apply English vocabulary in meaningful contexts.

Literature Review

The literature on corpus linguistics and vocabulary teaching shows that lexical competence should be developed through authentic language data, contextual analysis and evidence-based learning. Sinclair, Biber, Conrad and Reppen, Hunston, McEnery and Hardie emphasize that corpora provide reliable information about real language use, including frequency, collocation, grammatical patterns and discourse functions. These studies form the theoretical basis for applying corpus tools in English language teaching. Johns introduced the idea of data-driven learning, where students discover language rules and lexical patterns through direct observation of corpus examples. This approach is



supported by Cobb, Boulton and Cobb, Smart, Chambers and Frankenberg-Garcia, who show that concordance-based tasks help learners notice word combinations, compare meanings and improve independent learning skills.

Vocabulary-focused researchers such as Nation, Schmitt, Coxhead and Lewis argue that lexical competence includes not only word meaning but also collocational knowledge, academic vocabulary, lexical chunks and appropriate use in communication. Yoon and Hirvela, Lee, Warschauer and Lee demonstrate that corpus use has a positive effect on second language writing and vocabulary acquisition. O’Keeffe, McCarthy and Carter, Flowerdew, Gilquin and Granger, and Römer further stress that corpus materials should be methodically adapted for classroom use. Therefore, the reviewed literature confirms that corpus-based vocabulary teaching can develop students’ lexical awareness, analytical thinking and professional readiness as future English teachers.

Methods

The study was organized on the basis of a qualitative and practice-oriented methodological design aimed at identifying effective ways of developing students’ lexical competence through corpus linguistics tools. The methodological foundation of the research included corpus-based learning, data-driven learning, communicative language teaching, lexical approach and competence-based education. These approaches were selected because they make it possible to connect vocabulary acquisition with authentic language use, independent linguistic inquiry and future pedagogical practice. In this study, lexical competence was understood as students’ ability to recognize, understand, analyze and appropriately use English lexical units in different communicative, academic and professional contexts.

The research process involved the use of electronic corpora, concordance lines, frequency lists, collocation search tools and authentic textual materials. Students were introduced to the basic principles of corpus linguistics and then gradually trained to work with corpus data. At the initial stage, they learned how to search for words and phrases in an electronic corpus, read concordance lines, identify repeated patterns and observe the contextual environment of lexical units. Special attention was paid to the interpretation of corpus results, since the main purpose



was not only to find examples but also to understand how lexical meaning is shaped by context.

The practical tasks were designed according to the principle of gradual complication. At the first stage, students worked with high-frequency words and analyzed their most common meanings and grammatical patterns. At the second stage, they compared near-synonyms such as make and do, strong and powerful, big and large, or affect and influence in order to determine their collocational and contextual differences. At the third stage, students analyzed academic vocabulary, phraseological units and typical word combinations used in written and spoken English. They were asked to prepare short analytical explanations based on corpus evidence and to justify why a particular word or expression was more appropriate in a given context.

The study also included pedagogical modeling. Students were required to transform corpus findings into teaching materials, such as vocabulary exercises, contextualized examples, matching tasks, gap-filling activities, collocation tables and mini-lessons. This stage was important because the participants were future English teachers, and the development of lexical competence had to be connected with their professional methodological preparation. Through this process, students learned not only how to study vocabulary themselves but also how to teach vocabulary more effectively to others.

Data collection was carried out through classroom observation, analysis of students' written assignments, practical corpus-based tasks, reflective notes and oral discussions. The effectiveness of the methodology was evaluated according to several criteria: students' ability to identify lexical patterns, explain word meaning through context, distinguish collocational compatibility, compare synonyms, use frequency information, select authentic examples and design vocabulary tasks based on corpus materials. The assessment also considered the degree of students' independence in using corpus tools and their ability to apply corpus analysis to real teaching situations.

The methodological procedure was based on the integration of teacher guidance and learner autonomy. At the beginning, the teacher provided models of corpus analysis and explained how to interpret concordance results. Later, students performed independent searches and presented their conclusions. This



combination allowed them to develop lexical awareness step by step and to acquire practical skills necessary for modern English language teaching.

Results

The results of the study showed that the use of corpus linguistics tools had a positive influence on the development of students' lexical competence in English language teaching. Students who worked with concordance lines, frequency lists, collocation patterns and authentic examples demonstrated a deeper understanding of vocabulary than those who relied only on traditional dictionary-based learning. They began to perceive words not as isolated lexical items but as units that function in specific contexts, combine with particular words and express different shades of meaning depending on communicative purpose. This change was especially noticeable in tasks connected with synonym differentiation, collocation analysis and academic vocabulary use.

One of the most important results was the improvement of students' ability to analyze lexical meaning through context. At the beginning of the study, many students tended to explain English words mainly through direct translation into their native language. However, after working with corpus data, they became more attentive to the surrounding words, grammatical structure and discourse situation. For example, when analyzing near-synonyms, students noticed that words with similar dictionary meanings may differ in frequency, register and typical lexical partners. They understood that powerful argument, strong tea, big problem and large amount are not random combinations but conventional patterns that need to be learned as part of lexical competence.

The corpus-based tasks also strengthened students' awareness of collocation. Through repeated observation of concordance lines, students identified common verb-noun, adjective-noun and adverb-adjective combinations. This helped them avoid unnatural word combinations and increased their confidence in producing more native-like English expressions. In written assignments, students began to use more appropriate lexical combinations, especially in academic contexts. Their vocabulary use became more precise, and their explanations of word choice became more evidence-based. Instead of saying that a word "sounds correct,"



they were able to refer to corpus examples and explain why one lexical item was more suitable than another.

Another important result was the development of students' independent learning skills. Corpus linguistics tools encouraged learners to search, compare, classify and interpret language data by themselves. This process changed their role in vocabulary learning. They were no longer passive recipients of ready-made explanations but active investigators of English usage. Such independence is essential for future English teachers, because they must constantly select language materials, explain lexical differences and respond to learners' questions. The study showed that corpus-based learning helped students develop the habit of checking real examples before making methodological or linguistic decisions. The results also revealed the professional value of corpus-based vocabulary teaching for pedagogical university students. When students transformed corpus findings into teaching materials, they demonstrated an improved ability to connect linguistic analysis with classroom methodology. They created exercises based on authentic examples, designed collocation tables, prepared contextual vocabulary tasks and explained word usage through real corpus evidence. This activity strengthened their methodological thinking and helped them understand how corpus linguistics can be applied in school and university English lessons. At the same time, the study identified several difficulties. Some students initially found corpus interfaces complicated and needed teacher guidance to interpret search results correctly. Others had difficulty selecting relevant examples from a large number of concordance lines. Nevertheless, these difficulties decreased after systematic practice. Overall, the results confirmed that corpus-based methodology develops lexical competence by combining vocabulary learning, analytical thinking, digital literacy and future teaching practice.

Discussion

The findings of the study indicate that corpus linguistics can significantly enrich the methodology of developing students' lexical competence in English language teaching. Traditional vocabulary instruction often focuses on memorization, translation and isolated word lists. Although these methods may help students remember basic meanings, they do not always prepare them to use vocabulary



accurately in real communication. Corpus-based instruction changes this situation by placing lexical units in authentic contexts and encouraging students to observe how words behave in actual discourse. This shift is methodologically important because lexical competence requires not only knowing what a word means but also understanding when, where and how it should be used.

One of the key advantages of corpus-based vocabulary teaching is its ability to develop lexical awareness. When students analyze concordance lines, they begin to notice recurrent patterns that are not always visible in traditional textbooks. For example, they learn that words have preferred lexical partners, typical grammatical structures and register restrictions. This helps them understand that vocabulary learning is not a simple process of memorizing equivalents in another language. Instead, it involves learning networks of meaning, collocation, usage and discourse function. Such awareness is especially valuable for future English teachers, because they must be able to explain vocabulary to learners in a precise and context-sensitive way.

The discussion of the results also shows that corpus tools support learner autonomy. In a corpus-based classroom, students do not depend only on the teacher's explanation or dictionary definitions. They can search for examples, compare different forms, identify patterns and make evidence-based judgments. This develops an investigative attitude toward language learning. For pedagogical university students, this quality is professionally significant because a teacher should be able to analyze language independently, select appropriate examples and adapt materials to learners' needs. Corpus-based learning therefore contributes not only to students' vocabulary development but also to their methodological maturity.

Another important aspect is the connection between lexical competence and digital literacy. Modern English language teaching increasingly requires teachers to use electronic resources, online platforms and digital tools. Corpus linguistics naturally combines language learning with technology-supported analysis. Students who learn to use corpora become more prepared to work with digital language data, evaluate authentic examples and design modern vocabulary tasks. In the context of pedagogical higher education, this integration is highly relevant



because future teachers need to be competent both linguistically and technologically.

At the same time, the implementation of corpus-based methodology requires careful pedagogical organization. Students may face difficulties in understanding corpus interfaces, interpreting concordance lines and selecting relevant examples from a large amount of data. Therefore, the teacher's guidance remains essential, especially at the initial stage. The most effective approach is a gradual model in which students first work with simplified and teacher-selected materials, then move to guided searches and finally perform independent corpus-based analysis. This progression prevents cognitive overload and helps students build confidence.

Overall, corpus linguistics should not replace all traditional vocabulary teaching methods but should complement them. Dictionaries, textbooks and teacher explanations remain useful, but corpus tools provide authentic evidence and allow learners to verify how vocabulary functions in real language use. A balanced methodology that combines explanation, practice, corpus observation and communicative application can make vocabulary instruction more effective. For future English teachers, such an approach forms a deeper understanding of lexical systems and prepares them to teach vocabulary in a more analytical, practical and evidence-based manner.

Conclusion

The development of students' lexical competence in teaching English based on corpus linguistics is an important methodological direction in modern pedagogical higher education. The study shows that vocabulary learning becomes more effective when students work not only with dictionary definitions and textbook examples but also with authentic language data. Corpus linguistics provides learners with access to real examples of English usage, allowing them to understand vocabulary as a dynamic system of meanings, collocations, grammatical patterns, frequency characteristics and contextual functions. This approach helps students move from mechanical memorization to conscious lexical analysis and meaningful language use.



Corpus-based methodology develops several essential components of lexical competence. First, it strengthens students' ability to recognize how words function in context. Through concordance lines, students can observe repeated patterns and identify the semantic and grammatical environment of lexical units. Second, it improves their understanding of collocation, which is one of the most important aspects of natural English usage. Students learn that words do not combine randomly, and that correct lexical choice often depends on typical word partnerships. Third, corpus work helps students distinguish near-synonyms by comparing their frequency, register, contextual meanings and communicative functions. As a result, their vocabulary use becomes more accurate, appropriate and stylistically sensitive.

The study also confirms that corpus linguistics contributes to the formation of learner autonomy and analytical thinking. When students use corpus tools, they become active participants in the learning process. They search for examples, compare language data, identify patterns and draw conclusions based on evidence. This process develops their ability to make independent linguistic judgments. For future English teachers, this is especially valuable, because their professional activity requires constant analysis of language materials, explanation of lexical differences and selection of appropriate examples for learners. Corpus-based learning prepares them to teach vocabulary not only through explanation but also through discovery, observation and contextual practice.

Another important conclusion is that corpus-based instruction supports the integration of digital literacy into English language teacher education. In contemporary education, a teacher is expected to use electronic resources effectively and to guide learners in working with digital learning tools. Corpus linguistics creates a natural connection between language learning and digital analysis. Students who learn to use corpora become more competent in selecting authentic examples, designing vocabulary exercises, preparing collocation tasks and applying evidence-based teaching strategies. This makes their methodological preparation more relevant to the needs of modern English language education.

At the same time, the effective use of corpus linguistics requires systematic pedagogical guidance. Students should not be introduced to complex corpus



analysis without preparation. The methodology should begin with simple teacher-guided tasks, continue with partially independent searches and gradually lead to independent corpus-based projects. Such organization helps students avoid difficulties connected with corpus interfaces, excessive data and incorrect interpretation of concordance results. Therefore, the teacher's role remains central in planning tasks, explaining analytical procedures and connecting corpus findings with communicative practice.

In general, corpus linguistics can be considered an effective methodological basis for developing students' lexical competence in English teaching. It enriches vocabulary instruction with authentic evidence, develops lexical awareness, increases students' independence and strengthens their professional readiness as future English teachers. The systematic inclusion of corpus tools in pedagogical university programs can improve the quality of vocabulary teaching and help future teachers organize English lessons in a more analytical, contextual and communicatively effective way.

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