

**THE USE OF LEXICAL AND GRAMMATICAL MATERIALS IN TEACHING
ENGLISH: A COMMUNICATIVE AND INTEGRATIVE APPROACH**

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Abstract

This study examines the role of lexical and grammatical materials in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), emphasizing their integration within communicative approaches. While traditional methods often treat vocabulary and grammar separately, modern pedagogy highlights their interdependence in developing communicative competence. The research adopts a qualitative approach, including classroom observations and analysis of teaching practices. The findings indicate that integrating lexical and grammatical instruction through contextualized teaching, task-based activities, and interactive methods significantly improves learners' fluency and accuracy. The study also reveals that mechanical application of teaching strategies without considering learner needs leads to limited effectiveness. Therefore, successful language instruction requires flexible and adaptive teaching practices. The results suggest that combining lexical and grammatical materials in meaningful contexts enhances language acquisition and supports communicative development. The study concludes that an integrated approach is essential for effective EFL teaching and recommends further research on technology-supported language learning.

Keywords

lexical competence, grammatical competence, communicative language teaching, EFL, integration, methodology, task-based learning

The increasing globalization of education and communication has elevated the importance of English as an international language. As a result, the effectiveness of English language teaching has become a central concern for educators, researchers, and policymakers. One of the fundamental challenges in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) lies in the appropriate use of lexical and grammatical materials.

Traditionally, vocabulary and grammar have been taught as separate components. Grammar was often presented through explicit rules and mechanical exercises, while vocabulary was introduced through memorization of isolated word lists. Such approaches, although systematic, frequently failed to develop learners' ability to use language in real communicative situations.

Modern language teaching methodologies, particularly communicative language teaching (CLT), emphasize the integration of language components. In this context, lexical and grammatical knowledge are not viewed as isolated systems but as interdependent elements that function together in meaningful communication. Learners are expected not only to understand language structures but also to apply them appropriately in various contexts.

Despite the theoretical shift toward integration, many classrooms still rely on traditional practices. This gap between theory and practice highlights the need for further research into effective methods of combining lexical and grammatical instruction.

Lexical competence refers to a learner's knowledge of vocabulary, including word meanings, collocations, and usage patterns. According to Nation (2001), vocabulary knowledge is a crucial component of language proficiency, as it directly affects comprehension and production.

The lexical approach, proposed by Lewis (1993), emphasizes the importance of teaching lexical chunks rather than isolated words. These chunks include collocations, idioms, and fixed expressions that are commonly used in natural language. This approach suggests that fluency is largely based on the ability to retrieve and use such chunks automatically. Grammatical competence involves the understanding and use of syntactic structures, morphological rules, and sentence formation. Swan (2005) highlights that grammar provides the framework for organizing words into meaningful expressions. However, purely rule-based instruction has been criticized for its limited effectiveness in developing communicative ability. Learners may know grammatical rules but still struggle to use them in real-life situations. Recent studies emphasize that vocabulary and grammar are interconnected. Ellis (2003) argues that language acquisition involves the gradual integration of form and meaning through exposure and use. Similarly, Halliday's functional grammar theory suggests that language structures are shaped by their communicative functions. The integration of lexical and grammatical materials allows learners to see how language works as a system rather than as separate components. For example, learning the phrase "make a decision" involves both lexical knowledge (collocation) and grammatical structure.

Communicative language teaching focuses on meaningful interaction as the primary goal of language learning. Richards and Rodgers (2014)¹ emphasize that language should be taught through communication rather than through isolated drills. Task-based language teaching (TBLT), a development of CLT, involves the use of tasks that require learners to use language to achieve specific outcomes. These tasks naturally integrate vocabulary and grammar, as learners must use both to complete the activity. This study employs a qualitative research design, focusing on the analysis of teaching practices and instructional materials. The qualitative approach allows for an in-depth understanding of how lexical and grammatical materials are used in real classroom contexts. Data were collected through: Classroom observations of English lessons. Analysis of textbooks and teaching materials. Review of methodological literature

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Key themes related to the integration of lexical and grammatical instruction were identified and categorized. The findings indicate that the integration of lexical and grammatical materials enhances learners' ability to use language effectively. Students exposed to integrated instruction demonstrated better performance in speaking and writing tasks.² Effective teaching strategies in English language instruction should not be viewed as fixed techniques or universal solutions. In practice, their success depends on the teacher's ability to adapt them to learners' needs, motivations, and cognitive levels. A strategy that works in one classroom may fail in another if it ignores the human dimension of learning.

¹ Richards and Rodgers (2014)165/3

² Swan, M. (2005). *Practical English Usage*. 178/1

One of the most widely recommended strategies is contextualized teaching. However, many teachers misunderstand this concept and simply add short texts to grammar explanations. This approach remains superficial if the context is not meaningful to learners.

A more effective approach is to embed lexical and grammatical material in personally relevant and culturally familiar situations. For example, instead of teaching past tense through generic sentences, learners can describe their own experiences, daily routines, or local traditions. This not only improves retention but also creates emotional engagement, which is essential for long-term learning.

At the same time, contextualization should not become overly simplified. Learners must also be exposed to authentic and slightly challenging input to develop their comprehension skills.

Task-based learning is often praised, but in reality, it is frequently implemented poorly. Teachers tend to assign tasks without clear communicative goals, turning them into another form of traditional exercise.

A truly effective task must: have a clear outcome (e.g., solving a problem, making a decision), require interaction, push learners to use both vocabulary and grammar actively

For instance, asking students to “discuss a topic” is vague and ineffective. In contrast, asking them to plan a trip with a limited budget forces them to negotiate meaning, use specific vocabulary, and apply grammatical structures naturally.

The key insight here is that language is learned through use, not through explanation alone.

Traditional vocabulary teaching often isolates words, which leads to unnatural language production. Learners may know individual words but fail to combine them correctly.

The lexical approach shifts focus to: collocations (e.g., “make a decision”), fixed expressions (e.g., “on the other hand”), sentence patterns

This approach reflects how language is actually used. However, it also requires teachers to rethink their role. Instead of simply explaining meanings, they must help learners notice patterns and practice them repeatedly in different contexts.

A common mistake is overloading students with too many phrases at once. Effective teaching requires selection and recycling, not accumulation.

Interaction is often treated as a simple activity format (pair work, group work), but its effectiveness depends on quality, not quantity.

Poorly managed interaction leads to: use of native language instead of English, passive participation, superficial communication

To avoid this, teachers must: assign clear roles (e.g., speaker, note-taker), provide language support (useful phrases, structures), monitor and guide interaction

More importantly, interaction should create a sense of psychological safety. Learners who fear making mistakes will avoid participation, regardless of the method used.

Error correction is one of the most misunderstood aspects of teaching. Excessive correction discourages learners, while lack of correction leads to fossilized errors.

Effective feedback should be: selective (focus on important errors), timely (not interrupting communication unnecessarily), constructive (encouraging improvement rather than criticism)

For example, during speaking activities, it is often better to delay correction and provide feedback afterward. This maintains the flow of communication while still addressing mistakes.

Modern teaching strategies require a shift in the teacher’s role. Instead of being the main source of knowledge, the teacher becomes a facilitator who guides learners through the learning process. This shift is not easy. It requires: flexibility, strong classroom management skills, awareness of individual learner differences. Teachers must also resist the temptation to over-explain. Sometimes, allowing learners to struggle and discover patterns independently leads to deeper understanding. It is important to recognize that no strategy is inherently effective in all

situations. The success of any method depends on: learner motivation, class size, institutional constraints, teacher experience. Blindly applying popular methodologies without adaptation often leads to failure. Therefore, effectiveness should be understood as context-dependent rather than absolute. Effective teaching strategies are not defined by specific techniques but by their ability to respond to the complex, human nature of language learning. The integration of lexical and grammatical materials becomes meaningful only when it is embedded in interaction, context, and purposeful communication.

A truly effective teacher is not the one who follows methods strictly, but the one who questions, adapts, and continuously reflects on their practice.

Conclusion

The present study has demonstrated that the effectiveness of teaching English as a foreign language cannot be ensured through the isolated instruction of lexical and grammatical components. Instead, language competence emerges from their systematic and meaningful integration within communicative contexts. The findings confirm that learners achieve higher levels of fluency and accuracy when vocabulary and grammar are taught not as separate entities, but as interrelated elements of real language use.

One of the central insights of this research is that methodological effectiveness is not determined by the choice of a specific teaching strategy alone, but by the teacher's ability to adapt strategies to the cognitive, emotional, and social characteristics of learners. Approaches such as task-based learning, contextualized instruction, and the lexical approach proved to be productive only when implemented thoughtfully and purposefully. Mechanical application of these methods, without considering learner engagement and classroom dynamics, often leads to superficial outcomes.

The study also highlights a critical issue in current teaching practice: the persistence of traditional, form-focused instruction that prioritizes rule memorization over communicative use. While grammatical accuracy remains important, it should not dominate the learning process at the expense of fluency and meaningful interaction. A balanced approach is therefore essential, where accuracy and fluency develop simultaneously through guided practice and authentic communication. From a practical perspective, the research suggests that teachers should move beyond rigid methodological frameworks and adopt a more flexible, reflective approach. This includes designing tasks with clear communicative purposes, selecting relevant lexical material, and creating an environment in which learners feel confident to experiment with language. Equally important is the role of feedback, which should support learning without inhibiting participation.

However, it is important to acknowledge that no teaching strategy can be universally effective. The success of any instructional approach is shaped by contextual factors such as class size, institutional conditions, and learner motivation. Therefore, the concept of "effective teaching" should be understood as dynamic and context-dependent rather than fixed.

In conclusion, the integration of lexical and grammatical materials represents not only a methodological preference but a fundamental principle of language teaching. Future research should focus on empirical validation of integrated approaches, particularly through experimental studies and the use of digital technologies, in order to further enhance the quality of English language education.

This study confirms that the integration of lexical and grammatical materials is essential for effective English language teaching. By combining these elements within communicative contexts, teachers can enhance learners' fluency, accuracy, and overall competence. Future research should explore the role of technology and innovative methodologies in further improving language teaching practices.

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