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NAVIGATING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING THROUGH LEXICAL APPROACH: HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE

Abstract. The field of English language teaching (ELT) has witnessed a paradigm shift in recent years with the emergence and growing prominence of the Lexical Approach. This article synthesizes into the principles, methodologies, and implications of adopting the Lexical Approach in English language classrooms. Focused on the significance of teaching vocabulary and collocations in context, the paper explores the theoretical underpinnings of the Lexical Approach and its practical applications in enhancing language proficiency. Additionally, the article addresses the challenges and opportunities faced by educators when implementing this approach, considering factors such as teacher's role, teacher's role, design activities, and noticing techniques. So, the necessity of implementation of noticing in the process of acquiring new language plays in ELT crucial role. It is an extremely valuable technique of teaching as it motivates learners, encourages learners interaction, provides opportunities for self-learning. By navigating the intricacies of the Lexical Approach, this article aims to provide educators with valuable insights and practical guidance for optimizing ELT within a holistic perspective.

Key words: lexical approach, English language teaching (ELT), noticing technique, language acquisition, holistic perspective.

*Language learning is important in the interests
of greater mobility,
more effective international communication combined
with respect for identity and cultural diversity,
more intensive personal interaction,
improved working relations*

*and a deeper mutual understanding.
(Common European Framework)*

Problem statement. The major goal of English language teaching (ELT) is to make students able to communicate in the English language, and especially English as the Global Language (Nunan, 2001 & Crystal, 2003), is one of the most important tools of individual empowerment. Having English proficiency is vital and life changing for many learners as this language opens doors, creates new opportunities, provides access to education and to new types of employment and mobility. Nowadays, teachers use various ways and approaches for ELT. And there are still some of them, who prefer using the traditional way of teaching. They believe that using lecture method and grammar translation methods are good ways of delivering the knowledge of the language. In relation to formal instruction, it is a known fact that there are different teaching approaches and methods which have been used to teach English language in different contexts and settings. **Lexical approach** is one of the communicative approaches that is being practiced these days. The concept of lexical approach is not new but, problems are related to the application of lexical approach and awareness about its use in language teaching and learning.

Therefore, the **research aim** is to provide educators with valuable insights and practical guidance for optimizing ELT within a holistic perspective by navigating the intricacies of the Lexical Approach. We advocate a lexical approach as an effective tool to boosting English proficiency within the educational curriculum, empowering and motivating learners engage with and contribute to the learning environment in the 21st century.

Analysis of Sources and Recent Researches. The Lexical Approach is a teaching methodology in the field of language education that emphasizes the central role of vocabulary and collocations in language learning and use. This approach was primarily developed and discussed by language educator and researcher Michael Lewis (1993) and popularized by Hugh Dellar (1993). Lexical Approach challenges traditional language teaching methods that prioritize grammar rules and sentence structures. Referring to the importance of lexis over grammar, Lewis (2002, p.115) states that “The more one considers the matter, the more reasonable it seems to suppose that lexis is where we need to start from, the syntax to be put to the service of words and not the other way round. Instead, it focuses on the acquisition and use of chunks of language, including phrases, collocations, and fixed expressions” (Lewis, 1993, as cited in Harmer, 2008, p. 74). Lexical approach views language as the means of human communication in which lexis plays vital role. As Wilkins (1972, p.111) emphasized, who was the first to stress the importance of the vocabulary role in language teaching, and who stated that “without grammar very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed “. What exactly the lexical approach refers to is a quest of interest in ELT.

Different scholars have defined lexical approach in their own views but all their definitions are somehow closer to each other. For example, Michael Lewis (1993) emphasizes the importance of vocabulary, claiming that language consists of multi-

word chunks that learners should acquire to achieve fluency. Lewis suggests that learners need exposure to authentic language use, and he advocates for a shift from a focus on grammar to a focus on lexical items. A. S. Hornby (1975), known for his work on learner's dictionaries, supported the idea of focusing on vocabulary in language teaching. He emphasized the significance of collocations and idiomatic expressions in the correct use of language. According to Grice's (1975) work in pragmatics, particularly the Cooperative Principle, aligns with the Lexical Approach. Grice's principles highlight the importance of context and shared knowledge in communication, which supports the Lexical Approach's emphasis on natural language use. Penny Ur, a prominent figure in language teaching, has discussed the importance of vocabulary and the role of lexically-based activities in language classrooms. She acknowledges the need for a balance between lexical and grammatical instruction. Thornbury (1998), a well-known language educator, has written extensively on the Lexical Approach. He emphasizes the idea that language is better learned when presented in meaningful contexts, and he supports the use of authentic materials to teach vocabulary. In Rivers's interpretation, a significant figure in language teaching methodology, has expressed the importance of integrating vocabulary into communicative language teaching. Her work aligns with the Lexical Approach's emphasis on teaching vocabulary in context. Carter and McCarthy (1997), known for their work on corpora and language teaching, have contributed to the understanding of how language is used in authentic contexts. Their research supports the Lexical Approach's emphasis on exposing learners to authentic language through real-world examples. Scrivener (2005), in his practical guidebooks for language teachers, advocates for a balanced approach that includes both lexical and grammatical instruction. He emphasizes the importance of meaningful communication and the integration of vocabulary into language lessons. Hugh Dellar is a well-known educator and author who has contributed significantly to the field of English language teaching. Along with Andrew Walkley, he co-authored the series "Outcomes", which is based on a lexical approach to language teaching. Dellar's views align with the principles of the lexical approach, emphasizing the central role of vocabulary in language learning for real communication situations while adapting teaching methods to understand learners' needs. This may involve differentiating instruction based on learners' proficiency levels, interests, and learning styles.

Presenting the basic research material. By analyzing the above mentioned issues of scholars, who have contributed to the development and promotion of the Lexical Approach we can conclude that the lexical approach refers to the use importance of vocabulary and authentic language use in ELT. Due to this, the teaching and learning activities should be guided by the lexical approach which views lexical units as central in learning English. The lexical approach starts with words and phrases students need to know and need to be familiar with that. Collocations are important to language learners (Lewis, 2000). When learners use collocations, they will be better understood and their message can be understood easily. We cannot use structures correctly if we do not have enough vocabulary knowledge because language is a means of communication and can only be fulfilled by lexis of language.

Learning a language means to be able to comprehend and produce lexical units of that language.

According to Dellar's point of view, the 5 more important basic principles of Lexical Approach are:

1) vocabulary is more important than grammar: "without grammar you can say little, without words you can say nothing". If you don't have the structure but you have the words you can solve simple things;

2) lexical is bigger than words: Understanding by lexis collocations, chunks, fixed expressions, etc.;

3) lexical is bigger than words: Understanding by lexis collocations, chunks, fixed expressions, etc.;

4) prototypical is better than atypical: students must learn things that are going to be useful in the future, real situations in real contexts;

5) grammar and vocabulary are interdependent: Dellar referred to the fact that words carry their typical grammatical information (colligation) so that learners should be taught to use words along with their typical structures. As an example Dellar demonstrated that the word "arrest" is almost always used in the simple past and often in the passive voice ("was arrested...") and hardly ever in future tense.

After analyzing the above mentioned issues we can list some of the characteristics of lexical approach in following ways: Navigating the lexical approach within a holistic perspective on language learning involves embracing the principles of the lexical approach while considering the broader context of language acquisition. Here's a guide to navigating the lexical approach holistically:

1) the Lexical Approach places a primary focus on vocabulary, recognizing words and phrases as essential building blocks of language;

2) language is taught and learned in chunks or collocations, emphasizing ready-made phrases and expressions (Nattinger, 1992) over isolated words;

3) learners are exposed to authentic materials and real-world language use, ensuring that language is taught in contexts similar to those encountered in daily life (Thornbury, 1998);

4) the approach prioritizes effective communication over grammatical accuracy, encouraging learners to use language fluently in meaningful situations (Schmitt, 2004);

5) lessons and activities are designed to simulate real-life situations, enabling learners to apply lexical items in practical, authentic contexts;

6) task-based activities and projects are integral to the Lexical Approach, requiring learners to use and apply vocabulary in problem-solving and communicative tasks;

7) the teaching of collocations and word families is emphasized, helping learners understand how words naturally combine and relate to one another (Lewis, 2008);

8) listening and speaking skills are given particular attention, with a belief that exposure to spoken language enhances learners' ability to use language effectively;

9) fluency is considered more important than grammatical accuracy, aligning with the idea that language learners should prioritize expressing themselves naturally and spontaneously;

10) the Lexical Approach promotes the integration of language skills, recognizing that reading, writing, listening, and speaking are interconnected aspects of language use;

11) language learning is viewed as a process of internalizing language patterns through exposure, usage, and practice rather than through explicit rule learning;

12) language is learned and taught in context, with an emphasis on meaningful and relevant language use in different situations (Scrivener, 2005).

Thus, the Lexical Approach provides a holistic perspective on language learning, emphasizing practical language use, effective communication, and the integration of vocabulary into all aspects of language skills (Smolina, S., Grytsyk, N., Antonenko, 2023).

Roles of Teachers and Learners in Lexical Approach.

Navigating ELT through lexical approach requires a dynamic partnership between teachers and learners. Teachers play a crucial role in guiding and facilitating the learning process, while learners actively engage with the language, taking responsibility for their own progress and applying lexical knowledge in authentic contexts. Both teachers and learners have distinct roles in this approach:

Roles of Teachers	Roles of Learners
Teachers act as facilitators, guiding students through the process of discovering and understanding lexical items in meaningful contexts	Learners actively engage with lexical items in reading, listening, speaking, and writing activities, recognizing the importance of vocabulary in effective communication
Teachers choose and provide authentic materials such as texts, articles, videos, and audio recordings that expose learners to real-world language use	Learners explore and internalize common lexical chunks, idioms, and phrases, understanding their usage in different contexts
Teachers model how to use lexical chunks and expressions in various contexts, serving as language models for learners	Learners take the initiative to expand their vocabulary independently, using resources such as dictionaries, language apps, and authentic materials
Teachers design lessons that integrate vocabulary naturally into language activities, ensuring that new words and expressions are learned in context	Learners apply newly acquired vocabulary in authentic contexts, practicing the use of lexical items in real-life situations
Teachers promote communicative activities that encourage the use of lexical items in speaking and writing	Learners actively participate in collaborative activities that encourage the use of lexical items, such as group

tasks, fostering practical language application	discussions, role-plays, and collaborative projects
Teachers offer constructive feedback on learners' use of vocabulary, guiding them toward more accurate and natural expression	Learners reflect on their own language use, identifying areas for improvement in vocabulary and seeking opportunities to enhance their lexical knowledge
Teachers assess students' lexical proficiency through a variety of methods, including vocabulary quizzes, projects, and observations of oral and written communication	Learners use feedback from teachers and peers to refine their use of vocabulary, ensuring continuous improvement in their lexical skills
Teachers empower learners to take control of their language learning by providing strategies for independent vocabulary acquisition and encouraging self-directed study	Learners develop cultural sensitivity by understanding the cultural context of lexical items, including idioms and expressions

Activities in Lexical Approach

Adopting a lexical approach in teaching prioritizes assisting students in gaining vocabulary proficiency. The most crucial learning tactic we can impart to students is to cultivate the ability to NOTICE lexical chunks during their language exposure. Initially, we must heighten their awareness of language being composed of lexical structures. Subsequently, we should delineate the primary kinds of lexical structures, namely collocations, fixed, and semi-fixed expressions. So, teachers should design activities that facilitate their recognition of lexical chunks in both spoken and written texts.

When learners “notice” unfamiliar language, they actively focus on its form, use, and meaning. Batstone (1996) describes noticing as “a complex process: it involves the intake both of meaning and form, and it takes time for learners to progress from initial recognition to the point where they can internalize the underlying rule”.

As a rule, noticing is facilitated by the teacher, wherein the teacher guides students to pay attention to specific lexical features deemed beneficial. Alternatively, the noticing process can be self-directed, allowing students to independently choose features they believe will be advantageous (S.Thornbury, 1997). The noticing can also take an explicit form, such as when items in a text are emphasized, or it can be implicit, as seen when the teacher rephrases a student's text.

Now, let's consider some practical way how to implement *noticing* into the process of acquiring new language.

Activity 1. If your learners are already familiar with the concepts of the lexical approach, understand what chunks and collocations are, you can ask them to list 4-5 chunks they like (students understand their meanings but do not actively use them in communication).

Aim: to bridge the gap between understanding and active usage in communication

Procedure: Students work independently. Students work in pairs/groups and compile a final list of 4-5 (they need to determine which ones are more useful or interesting). We discuss in an open class (during the discussion, we pay attention to form, meaning, application, asking questions. Special emphasis is placed on pronunciation.

Evaluation: The activity encourages practical application by asking learners to list chunks they like but do not actively use in communication. This bridges the gap between understanding and active usage, aligning with the communicative language teaching approach. The special emphasis on pronunciation is a strength as it recognizes the importance of not only understanding the meaning and form of chunks but also being able to articulate them correctly. This attention to pronunciation aligns with the holistic development of language skills. The complexity of the activity, particularly the independent and group work, may require careful time management. Ensuring that there is enough time for both individual reflection and group collaboration, as well as the subsequent discussion, is essential.

Activity 2. Teacher asks learners to prepare prompts for the chunks we want to focus on. (Prompts are stimuli that help find/see/understand the meaning of our chunk. These can be definitions, questions, associations, pictures, sentences, sentences with gaps. Don't limit yourself here).

Aim: to empower learners to actively engage with and deepen their understanding of specific language chunks. By tasking students with the preparation of prompts, the objective is to encourage them to think critically about the targeted chunks.

Procedure. Learners need to find chunks in the text. For example:

- 1) a lot of people are sure that it's true (it's a common belief);
- 2) it's not true (this is not the case);
- 3) are about to disappear (are on the verge of extinction);
- 4) as the result (in this way);
- 5) introduce to the society (bring *technologies* into the hands of the public).

Evaluation. The exercise encourages learners to use of a text for finding the chunks provides context and helps students connect the language to real-world usage. This text-based exploration aligns with practical language learning and application. By tasking students with the preparation of prompts, they take ownership of their learning and become more independent language users. The overall effectiveness of the activity would impact by incorporating a feedback mechanism, either through peer review or teacher guidance, could enhance the learning experience. This ensures that students receive validation or correction for their prompt preparations, reinforcing accurate understanding.

Activity 3. Teacher asks learners to work with translation.

Procedure 1. Learners need to provide the translation of chunks and to find them in the text. For example:

- 1) це пошире переконання (it's a common belief);
- 2) це не варіант/ це не так (it's not true/ this is not the case);
- 3) на межі зникнення (on the verge of extinction);
- 4) таким чином (in this way);

5) нести в маси (introduce to the society/bring *technologies* into the hands of the public).

Procedure 1. Learners need provide a list in Ukrainian, ask students to translate as they think, and then work with the text to find the answers.

Aim: to enhance learners' language proficiency and comprehension by engaging them in a translation exercise focused on specific language chunks

Evaluation. There is a fear that using L1 in class is very bad and will hinder the development of students' language. This is not entirely true. It is essential to understand why you are using translation. In the case of these exercises, we help students develop noticing and better see the context in their native language. So when the need to apply a chunk arises, the student will not translate literally but will use the ready-made construction

So, the necessity of implementation of noticing in the process of acquiring new language plays in ELT crucial role. It is an extremely valuable technique of teaching as it motivates learners, encourages learners interaction, provides opportunities for self-learning.

Conclusions and further research prospects. In conclusion, navigating ELT through the Lexical Approach offers a dynamic and communicative framework that centers on vocabulary as a key element in language acquisition. This approach underscores the significance of teaching and learning words and phrases in meaningful contexts, promoting fluency and effective communication. As educators embrace the Lexical Approach, they shift their focus from isolated grammatical structures to holistic language use, fostering a more authentic and engaging language learning experience. Thus, the Lexical Approach aligns with the natural ways in which language is acquired, emphasizing exposure to authentic language, the use of collocations, and the integration of skills for effective communication. This approach not only enhances language proficiency but also cultivates a deeper understanding of cultural nuances embedded in lexical items. The findings of this study lead us to point out the following recommendations and implications:

1) engage in continuous professional development to stay abreast of developments in the field of language teaching and the Lexical Approach. Attend workshops, conferences, and training sessions to enhance your understanding and teaching strategies;

2) foster collaboration with colleagues to share insights, resources, and successful practices related to the Lexical Approach. Collaborative learning communities can provide valuable support and diverse perspectives;

3) choose or create teaching materials that align with the Lexical Approach. Select authentic texts, videos, and audio resources that expose learners to real-world language use and encourage the application of lexical items;

4) strike a balance between lexical and grammatical instruction. While the Lexical Approach emphasizes vocabulary, ensure that essential grammatical structures are also integrated into lessons to provide a well-rounded language learning experience;

5) recognize the diverse needs and learning styles of your students. Tailor instruction to address individual preferences, proficiency levels, and cultural backgrounds, ensuring a more personalized and effective learning experience;

6) develop assessment strategies that align with the Lexical Approach. Assess students' ability to use vocabulary in authentic contexts through tasks that evaluate both recognition and production of lexical items;

7) leverage technology to enhance lexical learning. Incorporate vocabulary apps, online dictionaries, and interactive platforms to provide additional resources and engage learners in digital language exploration;

8) engage in regular reflective practice. Evaluate the effectiveness of your instructional strategies, gather feedback from students, and make adjustments to continually enhance the implementation of the Lexical Approach in your teaching;

9) by implementing these recommendations, educators can navigate English teaching successfully through the Lexical Approach, creating an enriched learning environment that fosters effective communication and language proficiency.

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НАВІГАЦІЯ У ВИКЛАДАННІ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ЗА ДОПОМОГОЮ ЛЕКСИЧНОГО ПІДХОДУ: ЦІЛІСНА ПЕРСПЕКТИВА

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Анотація. Останніми роками у сфері викладання англійської мови (ВАМ) відбулася зміна парадигми, пов'язана з появою та зростанням популярності лексичного підходу. Ця стаття узагальнює принципи, методiku та наслідки застосування лексичного підходу на заняттях з англійської мови. Зосереджуючись на важливості викладання лексики та словосполучень у контексті, стаття досліджує теоретичні основи лексичного підходу та його практичне застосування для покращення рівня володіння мовою. Крім того, у статті розглядаються виклики та можливості, з якими стикаються викладачі при впровадженні цього підходу, враховуючи такі чинники, як роль викладача, роль студента, проектна діяльність та методи помічання. Отже, необхідність застосування спостереження в процесі оволодіння новою мовою відіграє вирішальну роль. Це надзвичайно цінний метод навчання, оскільки він мотивує студентів, заохочує їх до взаємодії, надає можливості для самонавчання. Ця стаття має на меті надати викладачам цінну інформацію та практичні рекомендації щодо оптимізації викладання англійської мови за допомогою лексичного підходу з точки зору цілісного підходу.

Ключові слова: лексичний підхід, викладання англійської мови (викладання англійської мови професійного спрямування), техніка помічання, засвоєння мови, цілісна перспектива.

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