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## ISSUES OF IMPROVING LEXICAL COMPETENCE OF B2 LEARNERS USING ONLINE DIGITAL TOOLS IN LINGUISTIC UNIVERSITIES

### Annotation

This article explores the challenges and potential solutions in enhancing the lexical competence of B2 learners through the utilization of online digital tools within linguistic universities. By examining the current issues faced by students at this proficiency level, as well as the benefits and drawbacks of incorporating technology into language learning, this study offers insights into effective strategies for improving vocabulary acquisition in a digital age. Through a blend of theoretical analysis and practical considerations, the research aims to provide educators with valuable recommendations for optimizing language instruction and fostering greater linguistic proficiency among B2 learners in academic settings. Besides article discusses the most prominent scientists' research in the field. To achieve concrete results, the researcher used interviews, observation, experiments, and statistical methods.

**Key words:** Lexical competence, online digital tools, active level, passive level, Lexical knowledge, CALL, language proficiency, idiomatic competence.

## ПРОБЛЕМЫ СОВЕРШЕНСТВОВАНИЯ ЛЕКСИЧЕСКОЙ КОМПЕТЕНЦИИ ОБУЧАЮЩИХСЯ B2 С ПОМОЩЬЮ ЦИФРОВЫХ ОНЛАЙН-ИНСТРУМЕНТОВ В ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИХ ВУЗАХ

### Аннотация

В данной статье рассматриваются проблемы и потенциальные решения, связанные с повышением лексической компетенции студентов уровня B2 посредством использования цифровых онлайн-инструментов в лингвистических университетах. Изучая текущие проблемы, с которыми сталкиваются студенты на данном уровне владения языком, а также преимущества и недостатки внедрения технологий в процесс обучения языку, данное исследование предлагает взглянуть на эффективные стратегии для улучшения усвоения лексики в цифровую эпоху. Благодаря сочетанию теоретического анализа и практических соображений исследование призвано дать педагогам ценные рекомендации по оптимизации преподавания языка и содействию повышению уровня владения языком среди учащихся B2 в академической среде. Кроме того, в статье рассматриваются исследования наиболее известных ученых в данной области. Для достижения конкретных результатов исследователь использовал интервью, наблюдение, эксперименты и статистические методы.

**Ключевые слова:** Лексическая компетенция, цифровые онлайн-инструменты, активный уровень, пассивный уровень, лексические знания, CALL, владение языком, идиоматическая компетенция

## LINGVISTIK UNIVERSITETLARDA RAQAMLI ONLAYN VOSITALARDAN FOYDALANGAN HOLDA B2 TALABALARINING LEKSIK KOMPETENTSIYASINI OSHIRISH MUAMMOLARI

### Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqola lingvistik universitetlarda onlayn raqamli vositalardan foydalanish orqali B2 darajasidagi talabalarning leksik malakasini oshirish bilan bog'liq muammolar va potentsial echimlarni ko'rib chiqadi. Tilni bilishning ushbu darajasida talabalar duch keladigan dolzarb muammolarni, shuningdek, til o'rganishga texnologiyani integratsiyalashning afzalliklari va kamchiliklarini o'rganib, ushbu tadqiqot raqamli asrda lug'atni o'zlashtirishni yaxshilashning samarali strategiyalari haqida tushuncha beradi. Nazariy tahlil va amaliy mulohazalar kombinatsiyasi orqali tadqiqot o'qituvchilarga til o'qitishni optimallashtirish va akademik sharoitlarda B2 talabalari o'rtasida til bilish darajasini oshirish bo'yicha qimmatli yo'l-yo'riqlar berishga qaratilgan. Bundan tashqari, maqolada eng mashhur olimlarning ushbu sohadagi tadqiqotlari muhokama qilinadi. Aniq natijalarga erishish uchun tadqiqotchi suhbatlar, kuzatishlar, tajribalar va statistik usullardan foydalangan.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Leksik kompetentsiya, raqamli onlayn vositalar, faol daraja, passiv daraja, leksik bilim, CALL, tilni bilish, idiomatik kompetentsiya.

**Introduction.** Continuous reforms in teaching foreign languages demand professionals in this field to find more productive and efficient ways of conducting language classes. Due to the vital connection with the world economy and diplomacy, the English language and English language teaching methodology have become one of the main foundations of the country's development. The integration processes taking place in the world in recent decades, the new political and socio-economic situation, and the rapid growth of international relations in various fields of economics, science, culture, and sports determine the need of society for specialists capable of carrying out successful intercultural communication in a foreign language.

On 20th May, 2021, the President signed a decree "On measures to raise the popularization of learning foreign languages to a qualitatively new level". Besides the formation and development of various skills and abilities within the framework of a competency-based approach are established. The document

"Requirements for the level of preparation of graduates of all stages of education in foreign languages" of the continuous education system approved by the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of May 8, 2013 No. 124, proves that the priority is given to the issue of in-depth teaching of foreign languages in our republic.

The modern aim of teaching foreign languages in Uzbekistan and around the world is improving Communicative competence along with the interconnected components of it. The importance of vocabulary in the communicative situation in foreign language teaching is of paramount importance. Without developing lexical competence, the most important aspect of language - communicative competence - cannot be formed perfectly. Listening and reading comprehension, speaking, and writing skills are directly and indirectly related to this lexical competence of the learners. Memorizing words and applying them in real communication is language learners' most sensitive and

problematic point. For this reason, finding an easy and effective solution to this deficiency by using online assessment tools and platforms is an important task for modern researchers.

**Literature review.** Lexical competence is an aspect of L2 which has not received a great deal of attention. Lexical competence is the most important aspect of communication matter the language is native, second, or foreign. It is an undeniable fact that learners with more vocabulary banks perform better in any aspect of L2 proficiency. There is some evidence to support the idea that lexical competence makes a significant contribution to all other skills in foreign language learning. Of course, it is impossible to assess something large with the help of a sheet of exam paper or any online assessment tool. For that reason, scholars (Li, Baki, Ayub, etc, Lin, Chan Hsiao, Oberg) are working on creating innovative methods to teach and improve the Lexical competence of L2 learners, specifically, after the introduction of CALL (computer-assisted language learning) to the foreign language teaching process. Starting with the recent studies in the literature, the research [6] on the investigation of ESL learners' vocabulary learning outcomes through reading illustrates that the students achieved greater results in learning new vocabulary and improving lexical knowledge with access to computer-mediated dictionaries than those who read the books and analyzed new words without it. Another study [7] explored how effective the vocabulary perception of learners would be while using online digital tools, they divided the participants into three: those individually with computers, those collaboratively without computers, and lastly group workers with computers. The result was 70 % positive towards CALL. Oberg's research [9] shows a preference for computer interfaces rather than paper-made picture cards in learning vocabulary. The next study [5] reveals the effectiveness of online tools over traditional ways of improving lexical competence with the help of Wordchamp.

Mobile devices offer great opportunities for organizing classes in a foreign language. Working with smartphones and tablets in a foreign language course allows working with authentic materials, encouraging students to have creativity, mobility, and flexibility in thinking [3]. The tasks involving the use of mobile devices contribute to the development of communicative, intercultural, informational, cognitive, and social competencies. Mobile devices combine work and education and enable information collection, evaluation, and processing anytime, anywhere, and in real-world learning [10]. Implementation of CALL, and then step-by-step MALL to the learning process has greatly contributed to the assessment.

A. Alfaifi (2023), discovered the effects of an interactive E-book on Promoting idiomatic competence and motivation among L2 learners of the Arabic language in Saudi Arabia. Idioms are an inseparable part of lexical competence and according to the author of the dissertation the most difficult aspect among language learners [1]. Teachers need to consider not only the meaning of the idioms but also their social-cultural background to apply them in productive language. He also proposed digital tools to improve lexical acquisition and idiomatic competence among L2 learners. The researcher aimed at the enhancement of idiomatic competence by addressing digital tools. The researcher used a web-based e-book IMapBook which has server storage. He designed some idiomatic pictures with expressions on the platform of IMapBook with the permission of the owner of the software program. Both literal and figurative meanings were given and explained. To conclude usage of CALL and MALL enhanced the learning of idiomatic expressions. The recent research illustrates the interest in the assessment of lexical competence so that some innovative ways of evaluating vocabulary knowledge are of paramount importance. However, he also mentioned what should be done further in this field of idiomatic competence improvement. Assessment of idiomatic competence with the help of online assessment tools in reading context and detecting rising or falling trends is occurring using parametric tests. He used a non-parametric test which defects the illustration of the overall research result.

One of the most prominent scholars in teaching vocabulary is Paul Nation. He suggests active usage of technology in his scientific articles, which can improve both active and passive levels of vocabulary. In 2001, Nation published a book 'Learning Vocabulary in Another Language' [8], and suggested efficient vocabulary learning strategies both inside and outside of the classroom. To be more precise, he first introduced an out-of-classroom technique that 'explores the effect of the Internet and electronic resources' to improve the lexical competence of learners. Another research by scientists [11] 'confirms the results of previous studies on the beneficial role of CALL on L2 vocabulary acquisition, and they point to the pedagogical advantages of online workbooks for large language programs as long as enough length of exposure to the online environment is allotted'.

In CEFR volume 2020 [2] vocabulary range is defined according to the levels and here are the descriptors for the B2 level: "Can understand and use the main technical terminology of their field, when discussing their area of specialization with other specialists. Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics. Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution. Can produce appropriate collocations of many words/signs in most contexts fairly systematically. Can understand and use much of the specialist vocabulary of their field but has problems with specialist terminology outside it". From the descriptors, we concluded that improving the lexical competence of B2-level learners requires dealing with collocational competence, idiomatic competence, and terminological competence besides, the topic domains and wordlists.

**Research methodology.** The research participants are 1st year 13 students of Uzbekistan State World Languages University. While choosing research subjects, the author mostly focused on their level, interests in language learning, motivation, and classroom engagement ability. The research participants in this study consist of B2-level learners enrolled in linguistic universities who are actively engaging with online digital tools to enhance their lexical competence. These participants may vary in age, background, and linguistic proficiency but share a common goal of improving their vocabulary skills. The study includes students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds to provide a comprehensive examination of the effectiveness of online digital tools in supporting vocabulary acquisition. Researchers may conduct interviews, surveys, and observations to gather insights from participants regarding their experiences, challenges, and successes in utilizing these tools for language learning purposes. By including a range of participants, the study aims to capture a holistic view of how online resources impact lexical development among B2 learners in linguistic academic settings.

**Interview.** During the interviews with research participants, the focus was on gaining a deeper understanding of their current skills, abilities, language proficiency levels, and expectations regarding the research on improving lexical competence using online digital tools. Participants were asked to reflect on their experiences with language learning, particularly in terms of vocabulary acquisition, and to share insights into the strategies and tools they find most helpful in expanding their lexical knowledge.

Key themes that emerged from the interviews included participants' self-perceived language proficiency levels, their comfort, and familiarity with utilizing digital tools for language practice, as well as their expectations regarding the potential impact of the research on their linguistic development.

The observation. Participants expressed varying levels of confidence in their vocabulary skills, with some highlighting specific areas of strength and others identifying areas for improvement. Additionally, participants shared their preferences for certain types of online tools, such as flashcard apps, language learning websites, and online dictionaries, based on their perceived effectiveness and ease of use.

Overall, the interviews provided valuable insights into the diverse skill sets, abilities, and expectations of B2 learners in linguistic universities regarding the integration of digital tools for enhancing lexical competence. Participants' perspectives will inform the research findings and recommendations aimed at

optimizing language instruction and meeting the evolving needs of learners in a digital language learning landscape

**Analysis and results.** Participants. The study involved 13 participants enrolled in linguistic programs at a university. All participants were classified at the B2 level of English proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The selection criteria included students who had completed at least two years of formal English language instruction and demonstrated a baseline B2 level through a standardized placement test.

**Materials.** The primary tool used for this experiment was the website ExamEnglish.com, which offers a variety of English language practice exercises and assessments. The website includes sections dedicated to vocabulary, grammar, reading, and listening, with specific resources tailored to B2 learners. For this study, the focus was on the vocabulary enhancement sections, which feature multiple-choice quizzes, gap-fill exercises, and flashcards.

B2 is one of the CEFR levels described by the Council of Europe.

This page will help you practice for the Cambridge First and PTE exams

Ways of describing people

Education: Choose the best word to complete these sentences.

Free time activities: Match the vocabulary to its meaning.

Holidays: Choose the best word to complete these sentences.

Health: Choose the correct word to complete the sentence

The experiment spanned four weeks and consisted of the following phases:

**Conclusion.** The study's limitations include the small sample size and the short duration of the intervention, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Future research could expand on these findings with a larger participant pool and a longer study period.

This experimental design aims to explore the efficacy of online digital tools in enhancing the lexical competence of B2 learners in a controlled, structured manner. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data provides a comprehensive understanding of the impact of these tools on vocabulary acquisition.

Online tools are perfect tools to assess the passive vocabulary knowledge of the learners. Overall, the research demonstrated that online digital tools like ExamEnglish.com can effectively enhance the lexical competence of B2 learners. By providing structured, engaging, and accessible practice opportunities, such tools offer a valuable supplement to traditional language learning methods, contributing to more robust language acquisition and learner confidence. Further research with larger and more diverse participant pools over extended periods could provide more generalizable data and deeper insights into the long-term benefits of online vocabulary tools.

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