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Linguistic Construction from Lexical Approach Perception to Develop Communication

A B S T R A C T

Linguistics is based on syntax, and syntax is essentially based on units. These units are associated with meaning or function. The form of unit can be active or passive, this is based on the context, that means we understand the sentence via the meaning, this study is an attempt to reveal the role of developing third grade female students' Lexical competence and measure its effect on students' communication performance. The participants were 162 female students from 3rd grade, Department of English, College of Education for Women, University of Anbar. The participants are distributed to section A and section B. Section B was chosen randomly to represent the experimental group, and section A to represent the control group. An instructional Lexical Approach based teaching programme was prepared to train the students to develop their Lexical competence. A pre-test and post-test were prepared to collect the data of the study. The validity and the reliability of the instrument was verified. The results revealed that there is a significant difference between the experimental and the control group students' communicative performance for the favor of the students of the experimental group. The effect size was medium. It can be concluded that focusing on the Lexical Approach in teaching productive skills is very important which equips students with the communication techniques and skills.

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البناء اللغوي من منظور المنحى المعجمي لتطوير التواصل

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الخلاصة:

تعتمد اللغويات على البناء النحوي، والنحو يعتمد أساساً على الوحدات، وهذه الوحدات مرتبطة بالمعنى أو الوظيفة. ويمكن أن تكون صيغة الوحدة سلبية أو ايجابية، وهذا يعتمد على السياق، أي أننا نفهم الجملة من خلال المعنى. هذه الدراسة هي محاولة للكشف عن دور تنمية الكفاءة المعجمية لطالبات الصف

الثالث وقياس تأثيرها على أداء الطالبات التواصلية. بلغ عدد المشاركات ١٦٢ طالبة من الصف الثالث، قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية التربية للبنات، جامعة الأنبار. المشاركات تم توزيعهن على شعبتين (أ) وشعبة (ب). تم اختيار شعبة (ب) بالطريقة العشوائية لتمثيل المجموعة التجريبية، بينما شعبة (أ) فقد مثلت المجموعة الضابطة. تم إعداد برنامج تعليمي قائم على النهج المعجمي التعليمي لتدريب الطالبات على تنمية كفاءتهن المعجمية. تم إعداد اختبار قبلي وبعدي لجمع بيانات الدراسة. تم التحقق من صدق وثبات الأداة. كشفت النتائج عن وجود فرق بين الأداء التواصلية لطالبات المجموعة التجريبية والضابطة لصالح طالبات المجموعة التجريبية. وكان حجم الأثر متوسطاً، ويمكننا أن نستنتج أن التركيز على النهج المعجمي في تدريس المهارات الإنتاجية (كتابة وتحدث) مهم جداً، حيث يزود الطلبة بتقنيات ومهارات كثيرة .

الكلمات المفتاحية: البناء اللغوي، النهج المعجمي، التواصل.

Introduction

In the early 1990s, Willis (1990) and Lewis (1993) announced the lexical approach to language teaching. This approach came after years of applying structural approaches to foreign language teaching. The basis of structural approaches is grammatical structures. According to this approach, grammatical rules have a secondary role to vocabulary (Racine, 2018). In other words, "language is not analyzed in terms of grammatical structures at the sentence level and the vocabulary items in which they are inserted (i.e., lexical grammar)." (p.1) When teaching language according to the lexical approach, the teacher treats language as "consisting of pre-made expressions and phrases, usually referred to as lexical units or chunks (grammatical vocabulary)". (Ibid: 1)

Statement of The Problem

The researcher noted that the curricula did not develop the students' communication skills, as many students do not have the ability to communicate orally or in writing for one minute without stopping and thinking and using translation strategies to form sentences and use them correctly. Students in the English language departments in Iraqi universities learn communication skills through curricula, which are often a curriculum at each stage. The communication skill is taught through a textbook. The book is based on the communicative curriculum and contains exercises through which students practice communication, but the time allocated for students' communication is limited inside the classroom to two hours per week. Students' practice of communication exercises without training in using strategies to reach a scientific method for the purpose of forming sentences in an organized and

grammatically sound manner for the purpose of forming sentences through which students communicate within a realistic context that encourages students to master the language for life. In order to train students to develop communication skills, they must be trained to organize words into meaningful sentences in order to communicate with others. In order to discover the needs of female students who are most inclined to learn it, the researcher conducted need analysis to. An open-ended question was distributed to the students and then the students' answers were analyzed. The most important skill that the students needed to learn was communication skill, then writing skill, then vocabulary memorization skill. The previous literature was reviewed and the researcher found that the best way to teach communicative skill is to use the lexical approach. This fact has been proved by most recent studies of Racine (2018), Martins (2022), Tinkel (2022), Volkova (2022), and Zhong & Suwanthep (2022). Due to the limitations of this approach in the textbooks, the researcher prepared a training program based on the lexical approach to develop communication skill.

The Aims

This study aims to reveal the role of lexical approach in developing third grade female students' communicative performance.

The Hypothesis

To achieve the aim, the following hypothesis have been set: "There is a significance difference at ($\alpha= 0.05$) between the students' communicative performance in the experimental group and control group due to teaching methods"

The Significance

The results of the study may be a good indicator of the effectiveness of teaching vocabulary and focusing on it for the purpose of developing communication skills among university students by organizing this vocabulary using a lexical approach for the purpose of forming meaningful sentences using the most appropriate vocabulary according to the context. Also, the results of this study will be evidence of the importance of taking into account accuracy and not neglecting it at the expense of fluency for the purpose of communication based on the principles of the communicative approach, i.e., accuracy must be taken into account in constructing sentences for the purpose of effective communication.

The Limits

The outcomes of the study are limited to the following:

- 1- **The Participants:** The participants are 162 female students from 3rd grade.
- 2- **Location:** The study was conducted at the Department of English, College of Education for Women, University of Anbar.
- 3- **Duration:** The study was conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2023-2024.

Literature Review

According to the lexical approach, lexical units in any language consist of single vocabulary items that are connected with each other and with other groups of words that form a sentence or a sentence-like phrase. Gradually, the lexical approach shifted almost exclusively towards multi-word items or lexical pieces. These lexical pieces of any language are the organizing elements of the lexical system. They constitute the lexical structure and are intertwined with the concept of grammar. Understanding this is essential for learning a foreign language (Racine, 2018).

The Lexical Approach is a language teaching method that focuses on authentic context and the student's exposure to co-occurring "lexical units". The Lexical approach focuses on the distribution of "multi-word form-meaning", which is in line with usage-based approaches to teach a foreign language (Cancino & Iturrieta, 2022).

Foreign language teaching methods based on the lexical approach have the characteristics of communicative language teaching (CLT). According to this approach, the main goal is to teach students to communicate in a foreign language without focusing on the accuracy of the language. Students learn from their mistakes, i.e., lexical and vocabulary errors, the way of forming sentences, and using appropriate vocabulary in the appropriate context. Therefore, there is a strong correlation between the lexical approach and the communicative method, as they complement each other (Tinkel, 2022).

There are several categorizing of lexical chunks that the foreign language learners exposed to such as the daily words, idioms, compounds, statements and arguments, phrasal verbs, binomials and trinomials, polywords, institutionalized utterances, proverbs, similes, sentence frames, usually full sentences, collocations (Hou et al., 2016).

One of the most important works that linked the structure of language and vocabulary for the purpose of achieving communication are the results reached by Sinclair (1991) when he addressed the principle of open choice. This principle indicates that language consists of grammatical structures that are intertwined with vocabulary to form understandable sentences. In order to apply this principle for the purpose of communication, the person chooses the

linguistic structure, then chooses the appropriate vocabulary and the function of the language that is consistent with the content. When this is achieved, sentences and phrases are formed and communication with others takes place (Zhong & Suwanthep, 2022).

In order to achieve the goal of communication, many teachers use the lexical approach, which enables foreign language learners to arrange vocabulary correctly, leading to the formation of grammatically sound sentences. The lexical approach works to collect and coordinate vocabulary to form understandable sentences (Zhong & Suwanthep, 2022). In the absence of the lexical approach, communication cannot be achieved by mentioning vocabulary separately without a grammatical framework that collects and coordinates them to be valuable.

The class that applies the lexical approach emphasizes that the role of the student in learning a foreign language is to discover the language. The role of the teacher who uses the lexical approach to teaching a foreign language for the purpose of communication is to provide opportunities for learners to discover and learn lexical items under his guidance and provide feedback (Volkova, 2022). The teacher provides authentic material for the purpose of communication, identifying the items of language and the student employs vocabulary within a grammatical framework to form a sentence that is either declarative, interrogative or imperative. This is achieved by training students to communicate in creating different authentic topics, recalling the grammatical structure of the context and the organization of vocabulary (singular or plural, present or past, imperative or declarative, etc.) for the purpose of communicating with others (Reddy, et al., 2022).

The main purpose of using the lexical approach is to expose students who are studying a foreign language to authentic content in order to increase students' awareness and comprehension of the lexical parts of the language system. The choice of educational resources that teachers use in teaching communicative skills plays a major role in students' communicative competence (Racine, 2018). The use of dictionaries plays an important role in students' selection of vocabulary that is appropriate to the context, but this vocabulary is not important without placing it in a linguistic framework that organizes it in a coherent and meaningful way (Vasiljevic, 2014). Vocabulary teaching strategies should have characteristics that make the vocabulary used frequently and regularly in an authentic context and learners should choose strategies that can be used inside and outside the classroom for the purpose of practicing the language. Effective ways to learn vocabulary are by listening to songs on a regular basis and watching TV programs and interviews that help teachers when using them to introduce lexical parts (McCarten, 2007).

Lewis (1997) set suggestions on how to implement lexical approach principles inside the language classrooms. The lexical approach requires to expose students to all kinds of "multi-word items" and raising students' awareness of how language is utilized. Based on lexical approach, the language teachers answer students' questions concerning the grammatical patterns, but the use of authentic materials are more important than how to use the foreign language.

In order students to learn long-term grammatical accuracy, authentic language students' awareness is heightened to enable students realize collocational patterns instead of receiving foreign language teachers' demonstration the underlying syntactic patterns (Cancino & Iturrieta 2022).

Previous Studies

Jones et al. (2015) analyzed students' spoken language passages. The study sample consisted of 32 participants. The spoken sentences were evaluated orally in terms of pronunciation level, grammatical accuracy, choice of vocabulary appropriate to the context, and linguistic ability to interact with the foreign language. The results of the study showed that the most frequently used linguistic passages were comparable to those produced by native speakers (foreign language), and that the participants used linguistic passages such as (perhaps, in addition) that were multifunctional.

Cancino & Iturrieta (2022) assessed the effect of lexical approach on oral proficiency. The participants were 38 EFL students who were distributed into two groups. The experimental group was taught via an instruction Lexical Approach based programme. An oral test was used to collect the data. The results revealed that the Lexical Approach has significant effect on students' oral proficiency scores.

Methodology

Population and Participants of the Study

The population is all the EFL students at the Departments of English at the University of Anbar. The participants were from the Department of English, College of Education for Women, University of Anbar. The participants were 162 female students from 3rd grade during the second semester of the academic year 2023-2024. The participants were selected randomly. The 3rd grade consists of 2 sections (Section A and Section B), section B was selected randomly to represent the experimental group, and section A represented the control group. Table 1 shows the distribution of the participants.

Table 1: Participants of the study

Groups	Participants	Pilot sample	Total
Exp. G	75	6	81
C.G	75	6	81
Total	150	12	162

The Instrument

An instruction Lexical Approach based programme, pretest, and posttest were prepared to collect the data of the study. The validity and the reliability of the instruments were verified.

The Validity and The Reliability

The validity of the instructional programme and the posttest were distributed to a jury members specialized in methodology and applied linguistics from the College of Education for Women, College of Arts, and College of Education for Humanities at the University of Anbar and University of Tikrit. The jury member recommendations, suggestions, and corrections were taken into consideration.

The reliability of the proramme and the posttest were calculated by using test- retest method within a 8 days period. The re-test reliability was computed by using Pearson correlation between the two implementations of the tests, the internal consistency reliability values of the test was 0.94 and the values of the stability index were 0.86, which is considered a high reliability.

Pilot Sample

12 female students were excluded from the participants (from group A and Group B) to represent the pilot sample. The results of the pilot test revealed that the workability of the test and the clarity of its instructions, furthermore, the time required to answer the test need to be between 50-55 minutes.

The Results

To verify the hypothesis "There is a significance difference at ($\alpha= 0.05$) between the students' communicative performance in the experimental group and the control group due to teaching methods", mean scores, standard deviations, and T-Test values were used. Table 2 shows the results of the participants' achievement in the pretest.

Table 2: Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and T-Test Values of the Two Groups in the Pre-test

Groups	N.	Mean	St.D	Df	Calculated T-value	Tabulated T-value	sig.
Control	75	7.31	0.91	73	0.92	2.00	0.05
Experimental	75	7.29	0.86				

Table 2 showed that the mean scores of the experimental group were (7.29) with a standard deviation (0,86), whereas the mean scores of the control group were (7,31) with a standard deviation (0,91). The calculated t-value was (0,92), which was lower than the tabulated value (2.00), at the degree of freedom (73), and at (0.05) level of significance. This result indicated that there was no significant difference between the two groups.

The participants' achievement in the posttest was calculated via mean scores, standard deviations, and T-Test values, table 3 shows the results.

Table 3: mean scores, standard deviations and T-test of the two groups in the post-test

Groups	N	Mean	St.D	Df	Calculated T-value	Tabulated T-value	sig.
Control	75	12.29	1.12	73	8.27	2.00	significant
Experimental	75	15.17	1.34				

Table 3 shows that the mean scores of the experimental group were (15,17) with a standard deviation (1,34), whereas the mean scores of the control group were (12,29), and a standard deviation was (1,12) on (73) degrees of freedom. The calculated t- value was (8,27) which is more than the tabulated t- value (2,00) on significance (0,05). This result indicates that the two groups are not equivalent in the posttest. This means that the hypothesis is accepted.

To investigate the significance of the observed difference, ANCOVA was used for the students' scores on the posttest after neutralizing students' scores on the pretest. Table (4) presents the results.

Table 4: Results of ANCOVA of the students' scores on the Posttest

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared
Posttest	7.84	1	7.27	49.24	0.000	0.13
Teaching strategy	43.29	1	43.37	249.68	0.000	0.87
Error	13.42	73	0.14			
Total	63.98	75				

Table 4 shows that there is a significant difference at ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the two means of the participants at the posttest due to teaching strategy in favor of the students in the experimental group. The practical significance of the teaching strategy was (0.87), which means that (87%) of the variance in the students' performance at the posttest is due to the instructional Lexical Approach based program.

Discussion of the Results

The results revealed that the students' performance who taught communication via the Lexical Approach was higher than the students who taught communication via the prescribed textbook. The features of the Lexical Approach have developed students' communication performance. Integrating vocabulary with grammar rules have developed students' communication ability and increased their self-confidence in engaging in communication.

The Lexical Approach has increased students' awareness of using authentic context which helps students to use the most appropriate vocabulary. Lexical Approach has helped the students to communicate more fluently and accurately. The approach helps the students to learn the unit or the words (chunks and collocations), exposing students to the collocations and the chunks lower the level of grammar learning anxiety.

When the students learned the vocabulary in authentic context, this helped them to know how to use the language and be able to communicate in English language with high confidence. In addition the use of chunks and collocations have helped the students to write correctly free errors. The students formed the patterns of the sentence without any mistakes, the rules of grammar have integrated with the chunks and collocations of words.

The results of the study are consistent with the results of studies of Jones, et al. (2015), Hou, et al. (2016), Cancino & Iturrieta (2022), and Zhong &

Suwanthep (2022) who found that lexical approach has significance role on developing students' writing and speaking skills, in addition the approach has improved learners' language performance and increased their vocabulary.

Conclusion

It can be inferred that lexical approach has multi-significance on students' communication performance. it has enabled students to engage and speaks smoothly in real context, also develop students' sentence formation, students' writing skill has been developed and be error free. in addition, students are more confidence to use the English language, they no longer feel anxiety to write a correct sentence or to speak and communicate with others without feeling shy to commit grammatical mistakes or use vocabulary that do not fit the context. The students' recognition to communication became quicker and more fluently.

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