

IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DEVELOPING THE LEXICAL COMPETENCE OF FUTURE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN A BLENDED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract: This article examines the methodological substantiation and empirical deployment of a blended learning model designed to improve the lexical competence of future English language teachers in higher pedagogical education. Moving away from rigid face-to-face structures, the proposed framework strategically integrates synchronous classroom engagement with asynchronous digital learning pathways. The research analyzes how online platforms, flipped learning models, and automated lexical tracking systems optimize cognitive processing and expand students' professional vocabulary. Through a controlled pedagogical experiment conducted at the Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages, the structural model was tested for its effectiveness. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis demonstrates substantial progress in the experimental group's long-term retrieval, contextual usage, and specialized discourse management.

Keywords: blended learning, lexical competence, future teacher, English language, flipped classroom, digital integration.

Introduction

The systemic modernization of higher foreign language education in Uzbekistan calls for a thorough re-engineering of pedagogical models, shifting toward environments that bridge physical instruction with digital assets. Within professional teacher preparation programs, the mastery of advanced lexical competence serves as a foundational milestone. A future English language teacher must develop an adaptive mental lexicon that contains not only general semantic terms but also complex academic phrasing, classroom management idioms, and specialized pedagogical terminologies.

However, traditional face-to-face instructional frameworks often struggle with severe structural limitations when managing intensive vocabulary acquisition programs. The fixed hours of standard university classrooms leave insufficient room for the individual pacing, intensive practice, and systematic intervals of repetition necessary to permanently anchor new vocabulary in long-term memory. Consequently, vocabulary teaching is frequently reduced to explicit word list delivery, leaving students with a passive understanding of language structures and a notable inability to accurately deploy specialized vocabulary in fast-paced, real-time teaching scenarios.

To resolve these structural challenges, this study integrates a blended learning paradigm specifically leveraging the flipped classroom model and structured learning management

ecosystems. Blended learning redistributes the cognitive load by shifting lower-order learning tasks (such as initial word recognition and semantic definition) to independent online environments, thereby reserving valuable face-to-face sessions for high-intensity communicative interaction and pedagogical problem-solving. The objective of this study is to construct, implement, and validate an innovative methodological framework for blended vocabulary acquisition to maximize the lexical proficiency of future English language teachers.

Methodology

The empirical research was systematically conducted within the foreign language departments of the Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages. To guarantee statistical precision and objective comparison, a sample size of 60 undergraduate students was selected and divided equally into two distinct groups: an experimental group (30 students) and a control group (30 students).

The control group followed the traditional communicative curriculum, relying primarily on prescribed print textbooks, physical classroom discussions, and manual vocabulary journaling. In contrast, the experimental group was taught using an optimized blended learning methodological framework. This dual-component environment operated across two complementary spheres:

- **The Asynchronous Digital Domain:** Before attending physical classes, students utilized cloud-based platforms and Learning Management Systems (LMS) to complete pre-load modules. These modules featured multimedia context maps, interactive corpus searches, and gamified spaced repetition tasks aimed at building a semantic baseline.

- **The Synchronous Classroom Domain:** Physical meeting hours were exclusively spent on collaborative, face-to-face communicative workshops. Rather than hearing lectures on vocabulary meanings, students participated in case-study evaluations, peer-teaching simulations, structured pedagogical debates, and interactive role-plays designed to move words from passive memory to active speech.

The evolution of students' lexical competence was measured using an identical pre-test and post-test design scored on a 100-point scale. The evaluation assessed four core pedagogical criteria: Lexical Breadth (the total volume of academic and professional words mastered), Retrieval Fluidity (the speed and ease of word access during spontaneous speech), Contextual Appropriateness (grammatical and stylistic accuracy in sentence construction), and Pedagogical Discourse Execution (the ability to naturally use specialized terminology during teaching tasks). The statistical data was processed and verified using mean value distributions and net growth comparisons.

Results

The empirical data collected at the end of the pedagogical intervention confirmed that integrating a blended learning framework results in superior instructional outcomes compared to traditional methods. The comparative matrix detailing student performance transitions before and after the research period is outlined in the table below.

Lexical Competence Progress Trajectories Across Evaluation Criteria (100-point scale)

Group Identifiers and Criteria	Pre-Test Average Score	Post-Test Average Score	Absolute Performance Gain	Net
Experimental Group (Blended Model)				
Lexical Breadth	45.1	89.4	+44.3	
Retrieval Fluidity	40.8	84.6	+43.8	
Contextual Appropriateness	39.2	82.9	+43.7	
Pedagogical Discourse Execution	34.1	81.3	+47.2	
Control Group (Traditional Framework)				
Lexical Breadth	44.6	61.9	+17.3	
Retrieval Fluidity	41.2	55.7	+14.5	
Contextual Appropriateness	39.7	54.1	+14.4	
Pedagogical Discourse Execution	33.8	49.0	+15.2	

The baseline indicators reveal that both student groups started with nearly identical language baselines prior to the research. However, the post-test results show highly divergent growth patterns. The experimental cohort achieved an exceptional surge, with net gains exceeding 43 points in every single testing category. The most dramatic improvement appeared in "Pedagogical Discourse Execution," where the control group improved by a minor 15.2 points, while the blended learning group grew by 47.2 points.

Qualitative reviews of teaching portfolios and video-recorded classroom simulations revealed that experimental group students naturally incorporated professional collocations, academic transitions, and instructional idioms. Because the asynchronous phase handled initial word introduction, students entered the physical classroom with a confident baseline, allowing them to communicate fluently and handle complex teaching tasks without language anxiety.

Discussion

The clear advantage of the blended learning model over traditional face-to-face methods requires an examination of the cognitive and psychological principles that drive language learning. Traditional, single-mode classrooms frequently cause cognitive overload or instructional disengagement; students are forced to simultaneously memorize new language forms and attempt complex communication within a restricted timeframe, leading to shallow learning outcomes.

Blended learning effectively addresses this limitation by organizing vocabulary acquisition into distinct cognitive phases. Moving mechanical tasks such as dictionary lookups, pronunciation checks, and initial semantic testing to an asynchronous online environment respects the varying learning speeds of individual students. This self-paced approach ensures that vocabulary is processed at an optimal cognitive rate, solving a major issue in traditional models where fast-paced classroom lectures often leave struggling students behind.

Furthermore, when the physical classroom is freed from basic vocabulary presentation, it transforms into an interactive space for real-world application. Future teachers can use active workshop sessions to immediately apply their online-acquired vocabulary in real-world communicative scenarios. This cycle of individual online preparation followed by immediate face-to-face collaborative application effectively moves words from passive recognition to active production.

These outcomes align closely with international research in computer-assisted language learning (CALL), which emphasizes that blended environments maximize language acquisition by providing balanced, continuous, and highly structured exposure to target vocabulary. Using this dual-channel framework helps universities train future educators who possess both rich language skills and the modern digital literacy required to manage twenty-first-century classrooms.

Conclusion

The empirical deployment of this study at the Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages proves that a blended learning framework offers a highly effective and structurally superior methodology for advanced vocabulary development. By connecting asynchronous digital modules with interactive, face-to-face classroom seminars, this model bridges the gap between passive lexical recognition and active professional discourse.

To expand the use of blended vocabulary instruction across higher foreign language education, the following methodological actions are recommended:

1. Redesign current practical English and methodology syllabi to systematically divide lexical themes into independent asynchronous modules and interactive synchronous workshops.
2. Build unified university learning management system portals that feature interactive linguistic corpora, multimedia word maps, and automated spaced repetition tracking.
3. Dedicate physical classroom hours entirely to communicative, task-based

simulations, clinical teaching trials, and collaborative pedagogical problem-solving.

4. Launch specialized training initiatives to prepare university faculty to confidently build online teaching materials and manage hybrid, learner-centered classrooms.

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