

The Lexical Approach

Between Grammar and Lexis: Theory and Practice

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1. Introductory Remarks: Grammar and Vocabulary

Linguists characteristically regard language as a structured system. Their work has been almost entirely with those aspects of language whose system is most susceptible to scientific analysis – phonology and syntax. Linguists have had little to say about the lexical items and one can find few studies of practical interest to, particularly, language teachers. Linguists preoccupied themselves with grammar and adopted a view that the acquisition of a foreign language is centered mainly on the full control over the structural rules of it. we notice that methodologists' focus is on the subordination of lexical items teaching to grammar teaching. The range of lexical items should be deliberately limited while grammar is still being acquired so that the learners' powers of acquisition can be concentrated on what is important. Once the learner knows many grammatical frames, then to expand the number of words which can operate in frames is relatively a simple task and therefore, comes later. However, we need not accept the neglect of vocabulary in language teaching.

2. Formal Vocabulary Teaching

Traditionally, the teaching of vocabulary above the elementary levels was mostly incidental, limited to presenting new items as they appeared in reading or

sometimes in listening texts. This indirect teaching of vocabulary assumes that vocabulary expansion will happen through the practice of other language skills, which has been proved not enough to ensure vocabulary expansion.

At the present time, it has been widely adopted that vocabulary teaching should be the core of language teaching. Lewis, (1993) and some other authors claim that language consists of grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalized grammar. But, vocabulary teaching has rarely been systematic. It is assumed that students will pick up the necessary vocabulary by reading while focusing on the importance of getting the structural system. Really, formal vocabulary teaching has tended to be either random resulting from a particular student question for a certain word or centered on traditional presentation of the words associated with a certain topic or field. To concentrate on a lexical approach in teaching a foreign language needs a much more principled system of producing and exploiting lexis and even simple vocabulary in the classroom.

3. The Notion of Lexis

Methodologically, grammar and vocabulary were, in the past, considered as two separate divisions. By this view, grammar represented no more than mere structures as, for example, the present simple, passive and active voice, direct and indirect speech, etc., whereas vocabulary was viewed as being secondary in value serving to explain the meaning and scope of the grammar. (Sinclair and Renouf, 1988: 140)

There are a number of studies such as Altenberg, 1990; Erman and Warren, 2000; Kjellmer, Pawley and Syder, 1983 which showed that the Chomskian notion of a native speaker's output consisting of limitless number of

creative utterances is at best a half-truth; in fact, they are prefabricated items from a significant part of a native speaker's spoken and written output. Only this can account for what Pawley and Syder (1983:193) call the puzzle of nativelike selection: a native speaker's utterances are both "grammatical" and "nativelike", and while only 'a small proportion of grammatically well-formed sentences are nativelike, that is readily acceptable to native informants as ordinary, natural forms of expression'; these are the sentences which native speakers produce. It would seem, then, that speakers need both a prefabricated, automatized element to draw on as well as a creative generative one – both "idiom" and "open choice" components – Once the value of the prefabricated is acknowledged, the traditional grammar / vocabulary distinction becomes difficult.

4.Lexis as the Core of Language:

The terminological change from vocabulary (single words) to lexis (strings of words which go together, i.e. prefabs and collocations) seems to be pedantic and pretentious. Although collocations and the various institutionalized expressions offer obvious additions to any conventional syllabus, they do not appear to represent a radical challenge to the status quo. Increasingly, however, Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) note that lexical phrases as they call them, do represent a major change with profound theoretical and practical implications. Lewis (2002:95), quoting them, shows that:

One common pattern in language acquisition is that learners pass through a stage in which they use a large number of unanalyzed chunks of language in certain predictable social contexts. They use, in other words, a great deal of 'prefabricated' language. Many earlier researchers thought these prefabricated

chunks were distinct and somewhat peripheral to the main body of language, but more recent research put this formulaic speech at the very centre of language acquisition and sees it as basic to the creative rule-forming processes which follow.

This idea shows a total reversal of the traditional structural trend. Structuralism maintained that the learner should have control over the grammatical system of a language and in this case he would be able to use correct sentences. Now, it seems plausible that an essential part of language acquisition is the ability to produce lexical phrases as unanalyzed wholes or 'chunks' and these chunks, will, ultimately, become the basis for the learner to perceive patterns, word-structure and those other features of language formally thought of as 'grammar' (rules of language). This new step of the acquisition of phrases as wholes represents the basic resource by which the structural system is acquired.

5. Lexis in the Classroom

The theoretical background of language teaching is characterized by the claims that many writers laid more emphasis on lexis than has formally been the case in question . Carter and McCarthy (1988:111) state that:

There have been changing trends – from grammar translation to direct method to the communicative approach – but none of these has emphasized the importance of the learner's lexical competence over structural grammatical competence.

Referring to the importance of lexis over grammar, Lewis (2002:115) 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."

In fact, these ideas are basically different from the position usually taken by language learning which involves the control over the structure of language and vocabulary control should be kept to the minimum. Even, at the present time, many textbooks are designed in accordance with this minimal view of vocabulary. Linguists in Britain accepted this point of view that vocabulary mastery should be less emphasized, unlike to Wilkins (1972:111), 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."

In his new role of lexis, Lewis (1993:95) proposed the following major points:

1. Lexis is the basis of language.
2. Lexis is misunderstood in language teaching because of the assumption that grammar is the core of language and that the control over the structured system is a must for effective communication.
3. The key principle of a lexical approach is that " a language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar"
4. One of the central organizing principles of any-meaning-centered syllabus should be lexis.

6. The Emergence of the Lexical Approach: preamble

The lexical approach to second language teaching has received interest in recent years as an alternative one to grammar-based approaches. The lexical approach puts emphasis on developing the learner's competency in lexis, or word and word-combinations. It focuses on the idea that an important part of language mastery is the ability to comprehend and produce lexical phrases as unanalyzed wholes, or "chunks" and that these clunks become the raw data by which learners perceive patterns of language traditionally thought of as grammar (Lewis, 1993:95). Instruction focuses on relatively fixed expressions that occur frequently in spoken language, such as, "I'm sorry", "I didn't mean to make you jump" or "That will never happen to me", rather than on traditionally created sentences (Lewis, 1997:212). In particular, lexical phrases were seen as a productive resource for learners, helping in the production, comprehension and necessary analytical reflection on the forms and meanings of the target language. Lexical fields represent knowledge in a language, but there is much more to vocabulary than simple lists of words, nouns or verbs.

The lexical approach can be summarized as in the following account: language includes not only traditional grammatical rules, but also certain multi-word prefabricated chunks. Teachers, using the lexical approach will not analyze the target language in the classroom, but will be more inclined to concentrate learner's attention upon these chunks.

This new approach is considered as a serious attempt at reevaluation of the individual teacher and the profession

as it develops many of the basic principles advanced by proponents of communicative approaches. The most important distinction is the increased understanding of the nature of lexis in naturally occurring language and its potential contribution to language pedagogy. According to Lewis, too few language teachers exhibit the kind of intellectual curiosity and readiness to the change connected with professional status. It is disappointing that so few teachers are anxious to inform themselves and their learners about recent changes in linguistics and methodology; it is even more disappointing that many teachers are not content with anything which challenges the central role of the grammatical explanation, grammatical practice and correction and all ideas which the lexical approach degrades and discards. This hesitating situation and the negative attitude adopted by teachers can be postulated (but not shared or understood) by summarizing the guiding principles of the lexical approach.

- (a). The grammar/vocabulary dichotomy is invalid.
- (b). Collocation is used as an organizing principle.
- (c). Successful language is a wider concept than accurate language.
- (d). Most importantly, language consists of grammaticalised lexis – not lexicalized grammar.

(Lewis, 1997:255-270)

6.1 Principles of the Lexical Approach

There are some principles for the Lexical Approach. They can be outlined as follows:

Students can learn best in language - rich classrooms and with language- rich materials.

1. A student should be more encouraged to practice listening comprehension.

2. Language lessons represent a combination of input, awareness – raising learner training and language practice.

3. Communicative competence is much wider concept than accuracy; therefore it is important to value fluency. Accuracy will, whatever, language teaching approach is adopted, be the last element of competence to be acquired.

4. Many grammatical mistakes are caused by lexical deficiency.

6.2 Theory of Language

The principles of the Lexical Approach have[been around] since Michael Lewis published his book, (1993) The Lexical Approach [more than 10 years age.] [It seems, however,] that many teachers and researchers do not [have a clear idea of what the Lexical Approach looks like] in practice. To explain this task, we notice that all parts which are written inside brackets are fixed or set phrases – Different commentators use different and overlapping terms such as prefabricated phrases, lexical phrases, formulaic language, frozen and semi-frozen phrases. Lexical chunks and collocations are used as alternative terms for all the above ones. A lexical chunk is defined as an umbrella term which includes all the other terms referring to any pair or group of words which is commonly found together or in close proximity. Collocation is also included in the term 'lexical chunk', but it is referred to it separately from time to time, so they are defined as a pair of lexical content words commonly found together. Applying this definition, the "basic principles", for

example is considered as collocation whereas; "look at" is not because it combines a lexical content word and a grammar functional word.

Here are some examples of (a) the lexical chunks that are not collocations as in: "by the way, up to now, upside down, if I were you, along way off, out of my mind" and (b) some other examples of lexical chunks that are collocations as in: "totally convinced, strong accent, terrible accident, sense of humor, brings good luck". In recent years, it has been recognized that native speakers have a vast stock of these lexical chunks and that these lexical chunks are vital for fluent production. Fluency does not depend so much on having a set of generative grammar rules and a separate stock of words – the 'slot' and filler or open choice principle – as on having access to stock of chunks. The grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalized grammar. This shows that lexis is more needed to create meaning whereas grammar-control plays a subsidiary managerial role. When we want to attain good results for the lexical approach, we have to concentrate more on helping learners develop their ability in the lexical phrases and less in the grammatical structures.

In the lexical approach, making students familiar with acceptable collocations is very necessary, so we may find this kind of task as in: underline the word which does not collocate with 'theme' as, for example, in: "main theme", "large theme", "important theme", "central theme", "major theme". Each one of these phrases does not sound wrong, but it may seem a strange combination for the native speaker's ear.

6.3 Lexis in Language Teaching and Learning

Methodologically, in the lexical approach, lexis plays a dominant role in the sense that Nattinger (1980:341) proposes that teaching should be centered on the idea that language production means the piecing together of ready-made units appropriate for a particular situation. Understanding of such units depends on knowing the patterns to predict in different situations.

For this reason, teaching should be based on these patterns and the ways they can be pieced together, along with the ways they differ, and the linguistic situations in which they occur. Now, the teacher should adopt a certain teaching strategy. The activities used, here, are:

1. Intensive and extensive listening and reading in the target language.
2. First and second language comparisons and translation – carried out chunk-for-chunk, rather than word-for-word aimed at developing language awareness.
3. Repetition and recycling of activities such as summarizing a text orally one day and again a few days later to keep words and expressions that have been learned active.
4. Guessing the meaning of lexical items from context.
5. Noticing and recording language patterns and collocations.
6. Working with dictionaries and other reference means.

Misunderstanding about Grammar in the Lexical Approach

In recent studies, there has been a strong emphasis on lexis as a main principle for language teaching. It is undeniable that there has been, and remains, the central misunderstanding of language teaching to assume that

grammar is the basis of language and that

the control over the structural system is a need for active act of communication.

Although it is possible to convey quite complex messages through lexis alone, it is evident that the ability to grammaticalise is vital. Really, any language teaching approach laying emphasis on lexis and de-emphasizing grammar represents a shift emphasis. The dominant role given to grammar is regrettable for a number of reasons. These are:

1. Much of the taught grammar is inaccurate.
2. Rules of grammar are frequently incomprehensible by the students who are taught.
3. There is no exact research evidence that proves the idea that explicit knowledge of grammar helps in the acquisition of language grammatical system.

There is little doubt that some grammatical information is useful to students. There is evidence that awareness-raising activity can help students perceive underlying patterns more quickly than they would if unguided. Real full component use of the language includes mastering its structural system. Briefly, these factors clearly suggest that grammar has a role to play in language teaching, but not the pre-eminent role which is frequently still accorded. Grammar is the search for powerful structures. Historically, this has led to what is termed by Willis, (1990) as 'an inordinate attention' being paid to the verb phrase. Many other items within the more strictly grammatical side of the syllabus deserve increased attention within the Lexical Approach like the following:

1. Basic morphology and word formation. Some bound morphemes are basic and powerfully generative features of

English grammar such as: '-s' for most plurals; '-ed' for verb

pastness; 'un-' for making noun. As these items are part of pattern pattering systems, they are clearly of benefit to students in both encoding and decoding from the earliest stages of learning.

2. Auxiliary manipulation. It is the ability to recognize and manipulate auxiliaries. They function either: showing negatives or questions or tags or making story answers, etc. They also play a pivotal role in deciding the words as grouped into small 'packets' when articulated.

3. Oppositions. Consider the following examples:

- a. The new office is a wonderful change – it's so light and airy.
- b. I'm not really hungry, but I wouldn't mind something light.
- c. Since his accident he can only do light work.
- d. We were lucky, the traffic was very light so it only took an hour.
- e. You'll enjoy The Barber of Seville – It's a very light piece.

As these examples show only too clearly, it is meaningless to identify 'the opposite' of light. At the same time, there is some similarity of meaning in those different uses of 'light'; there is a central meaning, never fully realized in an individual example, which is expressed in the "light/heavy" and "light/dark" oppositions. Although words do not, in general, have anything which can usefully be described as their 'opposite', certain words can be useful in generating a set of collocations, and then a set of oppositions. This would include a fuller version of a table such as the following:

A light meal	a substantial/big/heavy meal
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A light opera

a serious/heavy/ opera

A light tread	a heavy tread
A light touch	a heavy hand
A very light room	a very dark room

There are some other elements of increased emphasis such as: negation, adjuncts, grammatical holophrasis as lexis, supra-sentential linking, word grammar, de-lexicalized words.

Grammar and Lexis in the Lexical Approach

Usually, teaching grammar in the classroom means explanation and practice. This has usually been the least popular factor of a language course with students, although it is still believed that grammar in language teaching is necessary. Many applied linguists and ELT specialists writing over the last thirty years have attempted to degrade grammar from its central position and de-emphasize it in the classroom situation. In language teaching terms, supporters of the Lexical Approach suggest that the particular content to which student's attention can usefully be drawn should be changed, but more importantly, they also suggest that formal grammar explanation and so-called practice are both of very restricted value. There are three central theoretical objections against the value of the grammatical knowledge of language:

a. Even today, the descriptions we have of the structures of the language are often partial and tentative. The supposed teaching simplification of these structures is often inaccurate, misleading or plain nonsense.

b. There is no proof that the grammatical knowledge of language-rules and explanations – is more

important than the most marginal value in aiding acquisition of the structural system.

c. The essence of language is meaning, and meaning implies choice. 'Controlled practice', simply, conflicts with the nature of language itself. Controlled practice, far from aiding acquisition, may actually impede it.

Kinds of Lexical Items

A lexical item is a single unit belonging to some lexical category, having an identifiable meaning or grammatical function and fairly consistent phonological shape. The lexical approach makes a distinction between vocabulary – traditionally understood as a stock of individual words with fixed meanings... and lexis which includes not only the single words, but also the word combinations that we keep in our mental lexicons. Supporters of the lexical approach state that language consists of meaningful chunks that, when combined, make continuous coherent text, and only a minority of spoken sentences are entirely new creations.

The value of formulaic, many-word lexical units has been stressed in both first and second language acquisition research. They have been referred to by many different terms such as "gambits" (Keller, 1979:219) and "lexicalized items" (Pawley and Syder, 1983:191). The existence and importance of these lexical items has also been argued by some linguists as for example, Cowie (1988:126) who shows that the existence of lexical units in a language such as English serves the needs of both native English speakers and English language learners, who are as

predisposed to store and reuse them as they are to generate them from scratch. The widespread "fusion of such expressions" which appears to satisfy the individual's communicative needs at a given

moment and are later reused, is one means by which the public stock of formulae and composites is continuously enriched". (Ibid: 136)

In his classification, for the lexical units, Lewis (1997:255-270) suggest the following units:

a. words:

Words are considered the most familiar type of lexical items. For research purposes, little information needed to be stated now, though they do pose certain methodological problems as far as the criteria of: "selection, sequence, familiarity and learnability" are concerned. Examples of this category are "book, pen, pencil, chair, car", etc.

b. Multi-word Items:

This category involves hundreds of lexical items which are multi-word units; each one is recognized as having a unique value, even if they could be further analyzed into components. These multi-word units can usefully be subcategorized, but any categorization will involve marginal cases and overlapping categories of this type, the two most important groups are collocations and institutionalized expressions such as "to catch a cold" and "We'll see respectively".

c. Polywords:

Polywords, like the single word are frequently found in dictionaries. They refer to short-two or three words – which may belong to any word class and the meaning of the whole group may range from immediately apparent or

totally different from the component words. Phrasal verbs are the only kind of ployword which is basically featured in language teaching. They are some examples of this kind such as: "put off, by

the way, concerning with, of course, by and by, from now on, upside down", etc.

d. Collocation: (word-partnership)

Collocation refers to the tendency in which certain words occur together such as 'grill or boil meat', 'toast bread', etc. It is a term used in Lexicology by some, especially Firthian Linguists to refer to the habitual co-occurrence of individual lexical items such as auspicious collocates with occasion, event, sign, etc. (Crystal: 1985:62). For this, Lewis (1977:8) states that collocation is "the readily observable phenomenon whereby certain words co-occur in natural text with greater than random frequency". Collocation is not determined by logic or frequency, but it is determined by arbitrary criterion in the way that some collocations are completely fixed structures such as "to catch a cold", "rancid butter" and "dry addicts", etc. while others are more or less fixed and, thus, can be completed in a relatively small number of ways as in the following examples:

1. blood / close / distant / near(est) relative
 2. learn by doing / by heart / by observation / by rote / from experience
 3. badly / bitterly / deeply / seriously / severely hurt
- (Ibid:8)

Collocations show the way that certain individual words co-occur with others. The pairs of words which can co-occur are, of course, almost infinitely numerous. Variations are possible on both syntagmatic and

paradigmatic axes. Words and collocations are intimately associated with the content of what the language user expresses rather than what the language user is doing, complaining, explaining, etc. This feature of a language is helpful for a learner in the sense

that it enables and encourages him to produce a more comprehensive and balanced range of vocabulary items which are considered as vital in the Lexical Approach.

By the emphasis on linguistic environment rather than real-world environment, collocation provides the most powerful organizational principle for language teaching, and for arranging for the efficient recording of new items. Language teaching has tended to organize things paradigmatically or vertically as in the following example:

In my free time, I really love (a) to play tennis

(b) to go riding

(c) to go swimming

Collocation also involves trying to insert words with co-text. In many cases extracting words from context has great effect on meaning and, thus, violates the nature of language itself. Collocation represents a main feature by which words may be located or even defined. 'Knowing' a word means a great deal more than being able to establish a correspondent relationship between words and real-world objects or between words in the native language and the foreign language. Generally, in order to have a reasonable control over word-language use, a learner should have a mastery over its collocational competence and the restrictions controlling that competence.

e. Institutionalized Expressions

Institutionalized expressions are a kind of multi-word units. They allow the language user to manage aspects of

the social interaction and, thus, they are considered as pragmatic in nature.

Their use means that the listener or the reader soon identifies what the language user is doing. Once what is being done has been identified, linguistic processing can concentrate on what is being

said, on specific content. Really, the institutionalized multi-word units try to encourage the efficient processing both in: language reception and language production. Despite their important role and wide applicability in communicative interacting, Lewis (2002:94) states that they remain largely unidentified in language teaching and the least exploited of potential linguistic resources for students.

These fixed institutionalized expressions can be classified as follows:

1. Short, scarcely grammaticalised utterances, such as: "not yet, certainly, just a moment, please," etc.
2. sentence heads of frames – represents the first words of utterances serving mainly a pragmatic intention such as: " sorry to interpret, but can I just say..., that's all very well, but ..., I see what you mean, but I wonder if it wouldn't be better to ...," etc.
3. Full sentence with readily identifiable pragmatic meaning, which are easily recognized as fully institutionalized.

The institutionalized expressions are helpful to any non-native learner. Clearly, a repertoire of such phrases is an important part of fluency for the intermediate and more advanced learner. They provide a way of increasing the elementary student's communicative resources rapidly, and at the same time provide accurate and natural data against

which other novel utterances may be monitored and a valuable basis for the mastery of competence can be established..

f. Chunking

Chunking includes collocations, fixed and semi-fixed expressions and idioms. It plays a dominant role in the production of language.

This term is coined by Nattinger, referring to the way in which lexical items are kept in the memory. Nattinger (cited in Lewis: 2002:121) states that:

Many theories of language performance suggest that vocabulary is stored redundantly, not only as individual morphemes, but also as parts of phrases, or even as longer memorized chunks of speech, and that it is often retrieved from memory in these pre-assembled chunks.

Speech fluency can be controlled largely by combining chunks and reducing processing difficulty. These cases are concerned with the way we naturally store and retrieve language, but clearly there are enormous implications for language learning - if students break up the language to which they are exposed in unhelpful ways, and then store "the wrong bits", the advantage of storing chunks will be lost and tremendous processing demands will be made upon them as they try to re-create from scratch. Obviously, it is important to develop students' awareness of the pieces of which the coherent discourse or written text is composed of.

Students' storage and retrieval will be aided, and a valuable resource is provided for their long-term

acquisition of the underlying patterns, by a process which could be called pedagogical chunking. Nattinger (1988:65) claimed that "a great part of the learner's task is to chunk unfamiliar material in meaningful ways and create more effective lexical phrases". This means that introducing the process of chunking to students and providing them with the materials which encourage in the

identification of chunks should be considered as one of the most important teaching activities in language teaching.

Collocation is also included in the term 'lexical chunks', but we refer to it separately from time to time; therefore it is defined as a pair of lexical content words which are commonly found together. For example, if this definition is adopted, the phrase 'basic principles' is a collocation, but the phrasal verb, 'look at' is not because it connects a content word (look) and a functional word (at). Here are: (a) examples of lexical chunks that are not collocations such as: "by the way, up to now, upside down, out of my mind", etc. (b) examples of lexical chunks that are collocations such as: "totally convinced, strange accent, terrible accident, sense of humor", etc.

7. Aspects of the Lexical Approach

There are several aspects of lexis that need to be taken into consideration in teaching vocabulary. The following aspects, referred to them by Moras and Carlos (2001: 1-2) and these are:

1. Boundaries between conceptual meaning:

It means knowing not only what lexis refers to, but also where the boundaries are that separate it from words of related meaning (e.g., cup, mug, bowl).

2. Polysemy:

It means distinguishing between the various meanings of a single word form with several, but closely related meanings (head: of a person, of a pin, of an organization)

3. Homonymy:

It means distinguishing between the various meanings of a single word form which has several meanings but are not closely related (e.g., a file: used to put paper in or a tool).

4. Homophony:

It means the understanding of words that have the same pronunciation, but different spellings and meanings (e.g., flour, flower).

5. Synonymy:

It means the distinguishing between the different shades of meaning that synonymous words have (e.g., extend, expand, increase).

6. Affective meaning:

It means the distinguishing between the attitudinal and emotional factors (denotation and connotation), which depend on the speakers' attitude or the situation. Socio-cultural association of lexical items is another important factor.

7. Style, register, dialect:

It means the ability to distinguish between different levels of formality, the effect of different contexts and topics, as well as differences in geographical variation.

8. Translation:

It means the awareness of certain differences and similarities between the native and the foreign language (e.g. false cognates).

9. Chunk of language:

It means the multi-word verbs, idioms, strong and weak collocations, and lexical phrases.

10. Grammar of vocabulary:

It means learning the rules that enable students to build up different forms of the word or even different words from that word (e.g., sleep, slept, sleeping, able, unable, disability).

11. Pronunciation:

It means the ability to recognize and reproduce items in speech.

Here, we should concentrate on the idea that the basic aims of teaching lexis are not only to cover a certain number of words on a word list, but we have to use more different teaching techniques that can help more in realizing this global concept of what it means to know a lexical item, in giving the learner some teaching opportunities to use the items learnt and finally in helping learner to use effective written storage systems.

8. Conclusion

It is concluded that the work of the Lexical Approach supporters – the most prominent among them, Lewis – represents a significant theoretical and pedagogical change from the past which paid great emphasis on the role of grammar in language teaching. On the one hand, their claims have revived an interest in a central role for accurate language description. On the other hand, they challenge a traditional view of word boundaries, emphasizing the language learner's need to perceive and use patterns of lexis and collocation. In this sense, language production is not a syntactic rule governed

process but is instead the retrieval of larger phrasal units from memory.

Finally, we think that the adoption of a lexical approach in language teaching classrooms does not lead to basic methodological changes. Rather, it involves a change in the teacher's mindset. One of the most demanding techniques for the language teaching activities concerning the lexical approach is that these useful activities must be geared toward naturally occurring language and

toward raising the learners' awareness and interest of the lexical nature of language rather than the syntactic one only.

To put a theory into practice, there should be **(a)** a rationale and design for lexically based language teaching and **(b)** adoption of a lexical syllabus which should be matched with an instructional methodology that concentrates much on language use. This syllabus determines words, their meaning and the common phrases in which they are used and shows the most common phrases in which they are used in most natural environment, so the lexical syllabus should not only subsume a structural syllabus, but also it should describe how the structures that form the syllabus are really used in natural language.

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الملخص

حظيت طريقة استخدام المفردات القاموسية في تعليم اللغة الانكليزية باهتمام كبير لاسيما في السنوات الأخيرة كطريقة مكملة وبديلة لطرائق التدريس المبنية أساساً على القواعد فقط. تركز هذه الطريقة في التدريس على تطوير كفاءة المتعلم في المفردات والكلمات المركبة. يستند هذا البحث على الفكرة التي مفادها أن الجزء الرئيسي في اكتساب اللغة الأجنبية هو القدرة على الاستيعاب وإنتاج العبارات القاموسية كوحدات متكاملة وحيث أن هذه الوحدات تشكل المادة الخام والتي بواسطتها يمكن للمتعلمين أن يدركوا النماذج القواعدية اللغوية التي كانت تعرف سابقاً بالقواعد. يعتقد مؤيدوا هذه الطريقة بأن هذا الجزء كان مهملًا أو لربما غير مفعّل أو مطبق تماماً وعليه اقتضى أن تكون هناك محاولة جادة للقيام بإجراءات إصلاحية في البرنامج التعليمي وضرورة التأكيد على المفردات والقواعد سويةً. في هذا الخصوص تعتبر مساهمة الكاتب لويس (1993) في إلقاء الضوء على قيمة المفردات في التدريس ضرورة ملحة وأساسية في عملية التواصل اللغوية. وتوافقاً مع هذا الرأي يوصي الباحث بأن تكون أهمية القواعد اللغوية تتماشى سويةً مع التأكيد على المفردات وليس البديل للقواعد. أي بمعنى أن يكون هناك تركيز واهتمام لكلاً من القواعد والمفردات في البرنامج التعليمي.

ومن أجل وضع هذه الأفكار أو المبادئ للطريقة موضع التطبيق يختتم الباحث بحثه بالتأكيد على بعض المقترحات التطويرية لطريقة التدريس المتبعة حالياً في برنامجنا التعليمي.

