

**METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING ENGLISH LEXICAL SKILLS
IN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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Abstract

The development of English lexical skills is one of the fundamental objectives of primary foreign language education. A sufficient vocabulary enables young learners to understand oral and written information, participate in simple communicative situations, and gradually develop their productive and receptive language abilities. However, vocabulary learning at the primary school level requires age-appropriate methodological approaches that take into account children's cognitive, psychological, linguistic, and communicative characteristics. This article examines the theoretical and methodological foundations of developing English lexical skills in primary school students. Particular attention is given to the structure of lexical skills, the stages of vocabulary acquisition, principles of vocabulary selection and presentation, and the use of visual, game-based, contextual, communicative, and interactive techniques. A methodological model consisting of preparatory, presentation, practice, consolidation, and communicative application stages is proposed. The article argues that systematic repetition, contextualized vocabulary learning, meaningful communication, and multisensory activities can contribute to the sustainable development of lexical competence among young learners.

Keywords: English language, primary school students, lexical skills, vocabulary acquisition, vocabulary teaching, young learners, communicative activities, language learning, vocabulary development, teaching methodology.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary educational environment, the teaching of English increasingly begins at the primary school level. Early foreign language education provides children with opportunities to develop basic communicative abilities and establish a foundation for further language learning. Among the different aspects of foreign language competence, vocabulary plays a

particularly important role because lexical knowledge constitutes the basic material through which learners understand and produce meaningful utterances. For primary school students, learning English vocabulary is not limited to memorizing individual words. A learner needs to recognize words when they are heard or read, understand their meanings, pronounce them appropriately, remember their forms, use them in appropriate contexts, and gradually combine them with other lexical units. Therefore, vocabulary instruction should be organized as a systematic process aimed at transforming new lexical units from unfamiliar items into actively usable language resources.

Young learners have specific cognitive and psychological characteristics that distinguish them from adolescents and adults. They generally benefit from visual support, repetition, physical movement, stories, songs, games, and meaningful interaction. Their attention may be relatively short, while their motivation can be strongly influenced by emotional involvement and the variety of classroom activities. Consequently, traditional vocabulary teaching based exclusively on memorization and translation may not always provide sufficient conditions for sustainable lexical development.

The methodological challenge is therefore to identify effective ways of introducing, practicing, consolidating, and activating English vocabulary in primary classrooms. Vocabulary should be presented in meaningful contexts and repeatedly encountered through different types of activities. Such an approach allows learners not only to remember lexical units but also to understand how and when these units can be used.

The present article focuses on the methodology of developing English lexical skills among primary school students and proposes a structured sequence of methodological stages for vocabulary instruction.

The main aim of the study is to theoretically substantiate an effective methodology for developing English lexical skills in primary school students.

The following objectives are defined:

- to clarify the concept and structure of English lexical skills;
- to identify the main characteristics of vocabulary acquisition by primary school learners;
- to determine the major stages of lexical skill development;
- to analyze effective methods and techniques for teaching English vocabulary;
- to propose a methodological model for systematic lexical development;

to identify appropriate types of exercises for different stages of vocabulary instruction.

Lexical skill can be understood as the ability to recognize, understand, recall, and appropriately use lexical units in accordance with a communicative purpose and linguistic context. In foreign language education, vocabulary knowledge is commonly considered from both receptive and productive perspectives.

Receptive lexical knowledge involves recognizing and understanding vocabulary when learners encounter it in listening or reading.

Productive lexical knowledge involves recalling and using vocabulary in speaking and writing.

For primary school students, these two dimensions should be developed progressively. Initially, learners may recognize a word without being able to use it independently. Through repeated exposure and meaningful practice, the word can gradually become part of the learner's productive vocabulary.

Lexical skill also involves several interconnected aspects:

knowledge of word form;

pronunciation;

spelling;

meaning;

grammatical behavior;

collocational relations;

contextual use;

semantic relations with other words.

For example, learning the word apple should not be restricted to remembering its Uzbek equivalent. Learners should gradually learn its pronunciation, written form, association with visual images, plural form, common combinations such as an apple or eat an apple, and its use in simple communicative situations.

Thus, lexical development should be understood as a multidimensional process rather than simple word memorization.

The methodology of vocabulary teaching should correspond to the psychological characteristics of young learners.

First, primary school students generally respond positively to visual information. Pictures, flashcards, objects, illustrations, posters, and digital images can help establish direct associations between a lexical unit and its meaning.

Second, children often demonstrate a strong need for activity and movement. Consequently, vocabulary can be taught through Total Physical Response activities, action games, classroom commands, and movement-based tasks.

Third, repetition is essential. However, repetition should not necessarily mean mechanical copying or memorization. The same lexical unit can be repeated in different contexts and through different activities.

For example, the word jump can first be presented through an action, then practiced in a game, used in a short sentence, included in a song, and later incorporated into a story.

Fourth, emotional engagement contributes significantly to vocabulary learning. Stories, songs, rhymes, role plays, and games can create a positive learning environment in which children encounter vocabulary naturally.

Fifth, primary learners benefit from short and varied activities. A lesson may combine visual presentation, pronunciation practice, a game, pair work, and a short communicative task rather than relying on one activity for an extended period.

These characteristics indicate that lexical instruction should be multisensory, contextualized, repetitive, communicative, and emotionally engaging.

The development of lexical skills in primary school students can be organized around several interconnected components.

1. Phonological component

This component involves recognizing and producing the sound form of a word. Students should learn how a lexical item is pronounced and gradually distinguish it from similar-sounding words.

Useful activities include:

listen-and-repeat exercises;

pronunciation games;

rhymes;

chants;

minimal-pair activities;

identifying words from oral input.

2. Graphic component

The graphic component concerns recognition and reproduction of the written form of a word.

Students can practice vocabulary through:

matching words with pictures;

completing missing letters;

word puzzles;

word cards;

labeling pictures;

simple spelling activities.

3. Semantic component

The semantic component involves understanding the meaning of a lexical unit. At the primary level, meaning can initially be established through visual demonstration, gestures, real objects, actions, or simple contextual examples.

4. Grammatical component

Vocabulary cannot always be separated from grammar. Students should gradually learn how words function in simple grammatical structures.

For example:

a book – two books;

I play football;

She likes apples;

This is my bag.

Such examples allow learners to acquire vocabulary together with basic grammatical patterns.

5. Contextual component

Students need to understand that the meaning and use of a word may depend on its context. Therefore, vocabulary should be presented in short phrases, sentences, dialogues, stories, and classroom situations.

6. Communicative component

The final objective of lexical development is the ability to use vocabulary for communication. Learners should therefore have opportunities to use newly acquired words in pair work, group activities, games, dialogues, descriptions, and simple problem-solving tasks.

STAGES OF DEVELOPING ENGLISH LEXICAL SKILLS

A systematic methodology for primary school vocabulary instruction can be organized into five major stages.

Stage 1. Preparation and motivation

The first stage prepares learners for the new vocabulary and activates their existing knowledge.

The teacher can use:

pictures;

realia;

questions;

short videos;

sounds;

gestures;

songs;

stories.

For example, before teaching vocabulary related to animals, the teacher can show pictures and ask:

“What is it?”

Students may already know some animal names in their first language. This prior knowledge can be used to introduce the corresponding English words.

The primary objective of this stage is to create interest and establish a meaningful context.

Stage 2. Presentation of new vocabulary

At this stage, new lexical units are introduced.

The teacher should provide:

the word;

pronunciation;

meaning;

visual or contextual support;

a simple example.

For example:

Teacher: “This is a lion. Repeat: lion.”

Students repeat the word and associate it with the image.

However, vocabulary presentation should avoid introducing too many unrelated words simultaneously. A limited number of semantically connected lexical units is generally more manageable for young learners.

Stage 3. Controlled practice

After presentation, learners need structured practice to strengthen recognition and recall.

Suitable activities include:

matching;
categorization;
word-picture association;
repetition;
gap filling;
multiple choice;
bingo;
memory games;
odd-one-out activities.

For example:

Match the words with the pictures:

lion
elephant
monkey
tiger

The controlled practice stage provides repeated exposure while reducing the cognitive difficulty of producing language independently.

Stage 4. Consolidation

At the consolidation stage, learners encounter the same vocabulary in different contexts.

The teacher may use:

short stories;
songs;
dialogues;
board games;
crossword puzzles;

information-gap activities;

vocabulary races;

sentence-building tasks.

For example, after learning food-related vocabulary, students may complete a simple dialogue:

A: "What do you like?"

B: "I like apples."

A: "Do you like bananas?"

B: "Yes, I do."

In this way, individual lexical units become connected with meaningful language patterns.

Stage 5. Communicative application

The final stage involves the independent or semi-independent use of vocabulary.

Students can:

describe a picture;

talk about their family;

describe their room;

discuss their favorite food;

participate in a role play;

create a short story;

complete a classroom survey.

For example, after learning vocabulary related to hobbies, students can ask classmates:

"What do you like doing?"

and record the answers.

This stage transforms vocabulary from passive knowledge into an active communicative resource.

Visual materials are particularly effective in primary English classrooms. Flashcards, pictures, objects, diagrams, and illustrations can establish a direct association between the English word and its meaning.

Instead of immediately translating sun, the teacher can show a picture of the sun and pronounce the word several times. This can help students establish a stronger direct association between the lexical form and its concept.

Game-based learning

Games create opportunities for repetition without making vocabulary practice monotonous.

Effective vocabulary games include:

Bingo;

Memory;

Word chains;

Guess the word;

Find someone who;

Hot seat;

Pictionary;

Vocabulary races.

For example, in Guess the Word, one student describes a word without saying it, while classmates guess the target vocabulary item.

Storytelling

Stories provide meaningful contexts for vocabulary acquisition. A small number of target words can be repeated throughout a short story.

For example, while teaching big, small, fast, and slow, the teacher can tell a simple story involving animals. Learners encounter the vocabulary repeatedly in a meaningful context.

Songs, chants and rhymes

Songs and rhythmic activities can support pronunciation, memory, and repetition. Repeated lexical patterns in songs can make vocabulary more memorable.

For example:

“Head, shoulders, knees and toes”

can be used to teach vocabulary related to parts of the body while simultaneously involving physical movement.

Total Physical Response

Total Physical Response is particularly appropriate for action vocabulary. The teacher gives commands such as:

Stand up.

Sit down.

Open your book.

Close the door.

Jump.

Run.

Turn around.

Learners demonstrate comprehension through physical actions before they are required to produce the language independently.

Contextual learning

Words should preferably be presented in meaningful contexts rather than isolated lists.

Instead of presenting:

book, pen, bag, ruler

the teacher can use a communicative context:

“This is my book. This is my pen. Where is my ruler?”

The contextual approach helps learners understand not only what a word means but also how it functions in communication.

The proposed methodological model can be represented as follows:

Motivation → Presentation → Controlled Practice → Contextual Consolidation
→ Communicative Application → Reflection

Each stage performs a specific function.

Stage	Main objective	Activities	Expected result
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Preparation	Create interest	Pictures, questions, songs	Motivation
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Presentation	Introduce vocabulary	Realia, flashcards, modeling	Initial recognition
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Practice	Strengthen memory	Matching, games, repetition	Vocabulary retention
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Consolidation	Develop contextual use	Stories, dialogues, songs	Contextual understanding
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Application	Develop productive use	Pair work, role play, descriptions	Active vocabulary
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Reflection	Check learning	Quiz, self-assessment	Awareness of progress
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The model demonstrates that vocabulary instruction should move from recognition to understanding and finally to independent use.

Several principles should guide the development of lexical skills among primary school students.

1. Principle of age appropriateness

Vocabulary and activities should correspond to learners' age, cognitive development, interests, and linguistic level.

2. Principle of contextualization

New words should be presented through meaningful contexts whenever possible.

3. Principle of systematic repetition

Vocabulary should be revisited at different intervals and in different activities.

4. Principle of graduality

The transition from recognition to independent use should occur progressively.

5. Principle of multisensory learning

Visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile channels can be combined to reinforce vocabulary acquisition.

6. Principle of communicative orientation

Learners should have opportunities to use vocabulary for meaningful communication.

7. Principle of learner engagement

Games, stories, songs, projects, and interactive activities can increase students' involvement in the learning process.

Assessment should reflect both receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge.

At the primary level, teachers can assess whether students can:

recognize a word when they hear it;

identify a word in written form;

associate a word with its meaning;

pronounce the word correctly;

spell the word;

use the word in a simple sentence;

understand the word in context;

use the word in a communicative situation.

Assessment activities may include picture identification, matching, short oral responses, vocabulary games, sentence completion, mini-dialogues, and short descriptions.

Importantly, assessment should not be limited to the number of words memorized. The quality of vocabulary knowledge and the learner's ability to use lexical items appropriately should also be considered.

DISCUSSION

The analysis demonstrates that lexical skill development in primary English education requires a comprehensive methodological approach. Vocabulary learning is more effective when new words are repeatedly encountered in meaningful contexts and connected with visual, auditory, physical, and communicative experiences.

One of the important methodological considerations is the distinction between teaching vocabulary and developing lexical skills. Teaching vocabulary may involve introducing a list of new words, whereas lexical skill development requires learners to recognize, understand, recall, combine, and use those words appropriately.

Another important consideration is the balance between receptive and productive activities. If students only recognize vocabulary in exercises, their productive use may remain limited. Therefore, classroom instruction should gradually move from recognition activities toward meaningful production.

The role of the teacher also changes throughout the learning process. During vocabulary presentation, the teacher provides strong guidance and modeling. During controlled practice, the teacher monitors and supports learners. At the communicative stage, the teacher becomes a facilitator who creates opportunities for students to use vocabulary independently.

Digital resources can additionally support vocabulary learning through interactive flashcards, educational games, visual dictionaries, multimedia stories, and pronunciation activities. Nevertheless, technology should complement rather than replace pedagogically meaningful interaction.

CONCLUSION

The development of English lexical skills among primary school students is a complex and gradual process that requires the integration of linguistic,

psychological, pedagogical, and communicative principles. Effective vocabulary instruction should go beyond memorization and provide learners with opportunities to recognize, understand, recall, and use lexical units in meaningful contexts.

The proposed methodology consists of five principal stages: preparation and motivation, vocabulary presentation, controlled practice, consolidation, and communicative application. The systematic transition between these stages enables learners to move from initial recognition of lexical units to their independent use.

Visual materials, games, songs, storytelling, Total Physical Response, contextualized activities, pair work, and role play can be particularly effective in primary English classrooms. At the same time, systematic repetition and gradual expansion of vocabulary are essential for sustainable lexical development.

Consequently, the methodological effectiveness of primary English vocabulary instruction depends not simply on the number of words introduced but on the quality of their presentation, repetition, contextualization, and communicative application. A learner-centered and activity-based methodology can provide a strong foundation for further development of foreign language competence.

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