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LEXICAL MEANING AND LITERARY INTERPRETATION AS VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION IN CROSS-CULTURAL LITERARY READING

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ANNOTATION

The article examines explicit vocabulary instruction as a means of strengthening reading comprehension and supporting comparative literary reading. It synthesizes established research on vocabulary development and proposes a classroom framework that combines learner-friendly definitions, contextual analysis, visual organizers, vocabulary games, repeated exposure, and meaningful production. The article also considers how comparing words, images, metaphors, and culturally marked expressions across literary texts can deepen semantic awareness and intercultural interpretation. Particular attention is given to learners who benefit from structured, multimodal, and differentiated instruction. The discussion is conceptual and literature-based; it does not claim to report original experimental findings. The proposed approach treats vocabulary not as an isolated list of definitions but as a network of meanings shaped by context, genre, culture, and readers' experience.

Keywords: vocabulary instruction, reading comprehension, comparative literature, literary texts, contextual learning, visual organizers, repeated exposure, learner-centred teaching.

АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье рассматривается эксплицитное обучение лексике как средство развития понимания прочитанного и поддержки сравнительного анализа литературных произведений. На основе научной литературы предлагается учебная модель, объединяющая доступные определения слов, анализ контекста, графические организаторы, лексические игры, многократное обращение к новым единицам и их осмысленное использование. Отдельное внимание уделяется сопоставлению слов, образов, метафор и культурно маркированных выражений в разных литературных текстах, что способствует развитию семантической чувствительности и межкультурной интерпретации. Обсуждаются возможности структурированного, мультимодального и дифференцированного обучения для учащихся с различными образовательными потребностями. Статья носит теоретико-обзорный характер и не представляет результаты оригинального экспериментального исследования. Лексика рассматривается не как изолированный перечень определений, а как система значений, формируемая контекстом, жанром, культурой и читательским опытом.

Ключевые слова: обучение лексике, понимание прочитанного, сравнительное литературоведение, художественный текст, контекстуальное обучение, графические организаторы, повторное предъявление, личностно-ориентированное обучение.

ANNOTATSIYA

Maqolada lug‘at boyligini aniq va tizimli o‘rgatish o‘qib tushunish ko‘nikmasini rivojlantirish hamda qiyosiy adabiy tahlilni qo‘llab-quvvatlash vositasi sifatida ko‘rib chiqiladi. Ilmiy manbalar tahliliga tayangan holda sodda ta’riflar, kontekstual tahlil, grafik organayzerlar, lug‘aviy o‘yinlar, yangi so‘zlarga takroriy duch kelish va ularni mazmunli qo‘llashni birlashtiruvchi ta’lim modeli taklif etiladi. Turli adabiy matnlardagi so‘zlar, obrazlar, metaforalar va madaniy jihatdan belgilangan ifodalarni qiyoslash semantik sezgirlik hamda madaniyatlararo talqinni rivojlantirish imkoniyati sifatida yoritiladi. Turli o‘rganish ehtiyojlariga ega talabalar uchun tizimli, multimodal va differensial yondashuvning ahamiyati ham muhokama qilinadi. Maqola nazariy-tahliliy xarakterga ega bo‘lib, unda original eksperimental tadqiqot natijalari da’vo qilinmaydi. Lug‘at birliklari alohida ta’riflar ro‘yxati sifatida emas, balki kontekst, janr, madaniyat va o‘quvchi tajribasi orqali shakllanadigan ma’nolar tizimi sifatida talqin etiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: lug‘atni o‘rgatish, o‘qib tushunish, qiyosiy adabiyotshunoslik, badiiy matn, kontekstual o‘rganish, grafik organayzerlar, takroriy duch kelish, o‘quvchiga yo‘naltirilgan ta’lim.

Reading comprehension depends on more than the ability to pronounce or decode written words. Readers must connect lexical meanings, sentence relationships, background knowledge, and the purpose of a text. When too many words are unfamiliar, the effort required to identify them may interrupt the construction of a coherent interpretation. The National Reading Panel’s review concluded that vocabulary instruction can improve reading achievement and that effective teaching combines direct instruction with contextual learning, repeated encounters, and active engagement (National Reading Panel, 2000). Vocabulary is therefore not an optional supplement to reading; it is one of the resources through which readers make meaning.

The need for deliberate vocabulary teaching is especially clear in additional-language classrooms and among learners who require more structured support. A student may recognize a word but not understand its connotations, grammatical behaviour, register, or role in a particular passage. Knowing a word involves more than memorizing a translation: it includes recognizing its form, understanding its meaning, knowing how it combines with other words, and being able to use it appropriately (Nation, 2022). Instruction should consequently help learners move from partial recognition towards flexible, context-sensitive knowledge.

This issue also matters to comparative literature. Reading two works across languages, periods, or cultures requires attention to how lexical choices create character, atmosphere, symbolism, and social meaning. A word such as “home” for example, may refer to a physical dwelling in one passage but evoke belonging, memory, exile, or loss in another. Comparing such uses can help students see both shared human concerns and culturally specific meanings. The present article connects research-informed vocabulary instruction with comparative literary reading and outlines practical principles for teaching words as meaningful elements of texts.

Explicit instruction means that the teacher deliberately selects useful words, explains their meanings, models how they function, and provides guided opportunities for learners to process and use them. It differs from simply asking students to copy dictionary definitions (Beck et al.2013). Emphasize selecting words worth learning, explaining them in accessible language, and creating activities that require learners to think about meanings. Such instruction can be particularly valuable when a text contains abstract, polysemous, or academically important vocabulary.

A learner-friendly definition should be accurate without reproducing the complexity of a dictionary entry. For example, instead of defining "reluctant" as "unwilling or disinclined" a teacher might say, "If you are reluctant to do something, you do not really want to do it, and you may hesitate". The definition can then be linked to a sentence from a story: "Mina was reluctant to enter the dark room" Students can identify the clue in the sentence and explain what Mina's behaviour suggests. The word is thus connected to a situation, an inference, and a character's feelings.

Instruction should also make clear that word knowledge develops gradually. Learners may initially understand a word receptively but need additional practice before using it confidently in speech or writing. Nation (2022) discusses the importance of balancing meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development. In classroom terms, students need to meet words while reading or listening, study selected features directly, use the words to communicate, and revisit them until recognition becomes more automatic. Repeated exposure is most productive when it is varied rather than mechanical. A target word might first appear in a short definition, then in a literary sentence, a visual organizer, a discussion question, a game, and a brief piece of writing. The National Reading Panel (2000) highlights multiple exposures and rich contexts as important features of vocabulary learning. Repetition should therefore deepen meaning, not merely reproduce the same exercise.

Comparative literature examines literary works in relation to one another, often across languages, cultures, genres, or historical settings. Vocabulary-focused comparison can provide a concrete entry point into this complex activity. Rather than asking students only to list unfamiliar words, teachers can invite them to examine how comparable words or images work in two passages. For instance, two texts may describe a journey, but one may use words associated with freedom while the other emphasizes danger, displacement, or uncertainty. Lexical choices guide readers towards different interpretations.

A useful distinction is between denotation and connotation. Denotation refers to a word's central or literal meaning; connotation includes emotional, cultural, and associative meanings. Students comparing "house" and "home" across a translated story and an original text can explore why the terms are not always interchangeable. "House" often foregrounds a building, whereas "home" can suggest relationships, identity, security, or longing. These tendencies depend on context and should not be treated as absolute rules. The task is to justify interpretations with textual evidence.

Teachers should prioritize words that are central to understanding the passage, useful beyond one text, or important for interpreting tone and character. Before reading, the teacher can introduce a small number of high-value items rather than pre-teaching every unfamiliar word. For each item, a compact routine is effective: say the word, provide a student-friendly explanation, show it in context, give an example and a non-example, and invite students to create their own example. The routine should remain brief enough to preserve time for reading. When these practices are integrated into comparative literary

reading, vocabulary becomes a tool for investigating how writers represent experience. Comparing words and images across texts can reveal differences in tone, connotation, symbolism, and translation. The central pedagogical principle is to make words both understandable and relevant: students should know what a word means, how it functions in a text, and why its choice matters. This approach can support more confident, independent, and reflective readers.

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