EXPLORING VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES AMONG HIGH SCHOOL EFL STUDENTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON LEXICAL DEVELOPMENT.

Tleumuratova Gulzira Baxitbekovna,

a student of UzSWLU gulitlewmuratova41@gmail.com

Scientific advisor: Sultonova Nigora Abduganievna,

a senior teacher of UzSWLU

nigorasultonova2188@gmail.com

Abstract. *The article discusses the problems and potential benefits of implementing Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) in order to widen and deepen the lexical knowledge of the 11th-grade students in Tashkent. In particular, it stresses that vocabulary learning is not a matter of learning individual word forms, but a complex process of cognitive activity that involves the creation of meaning, conceptual realisation, analytical thinking and the actual use of lexical items in real communicative situations. Lexical competence is seen as an active and dynamic process in which learners constantly interpret, relate and integrate new vocabulary into their existing linguistic system.*

The study's findings reveal that students who are trained explicitly in VLS, particularly metacognitive and cognitive strategies, have a significantly higher level of achievement in vocabulary acquisition compared to those who rely on traditional rote memorisation techniques only. These students show better skills not only in memorising new lexical items over time, but also in understanding their semantic nuances and using them correctly in both written and oral communications. Furthermore, the results indicate that strategic vocabulary

learning promotes learner autonomy, enhances motivation and leads to more efficient and enduring language learning habits.

Keywords: *Vocabulary acquisition, vocabulary learning strategies (VLS), lexical development, EFL learners, cognitive-pragmatic approach, high school education, metacognitive planning, contextual inferencing, lexical breadth, semantic mapping.*

ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ СТРАТЕГИЙ ИЗУЧЕНИЯ ЛЕКСИКИ СРЕДИ СТАРШЕКЛАССНИКОВ, ИЗУЧАЮЩИХ АНГЛИЙСКИЙ ЯЗЫК КАК ИНОСТРАННЫЙ, И ИХ ВЛИЯНИЯ НА ЛЕКСИЧЕСКОЕ РАЗВИТИЕ

Аннотация. *Данное исследование рассматривает трудности и потенциальные преимущества применения стратегий изучения словарного запаса (Vocabulary Learning Strategies, VLS) с целью повышения как объёма, так и качества лексических знаний учащихся 11-х классов в городе Ташкенте. Особое внимание уделяется тому, что овладение словарным запасом представляет собой не просто процесс механического запоминания отдельных слов, а сложную когнитивную деятельность, включающую формирование значений, развитие понятийного мышления, аналитические операции и практическое использование лексических единиц в реальных коммуникативных ситуациях. В этом контексте лексическая компетенция рассматривается как активный и динамичный процесс, в ходе которого учащиеся постоянно интерпретируют, сопоставляют и интегрируют новую лексику в уже существующую языковую систему.*

Результаты исследования показывают, что учащиеся, которые проходят целенаправленное обучение стратегиям VLS, особенно метакогнитивным и когнитивным стратегиям, демонстрируют

значительно более высокий уровень усвоения словарного запаса по сравнению с теми, кто использует только традиционные методы механического заучивания. Такие учащиеся не только лучше сохраняют новые лексические единицы в долговременной памяти, но и глубже понимают их семантические оттенки и более точно применяют их в устной и письменной речи. Кроме того, результаты свидетельствуют о том, что стратегическое обучение словарному запасу способствует развитию автономности учащихся, повышает их мотивацию и формирует более эффективные и устойчивые навыки изучения языка.

Keywords: *Vocabulary acquisition, vocabulary learning strategies (VLS), lexical development, EFL learners, cognitive-pragmatic approach, high school education, metacognitive planning, contextual inferencing, lexical breadth, semantic mapping.*

Ключевые слова: Усвоение лексики, стратегии изучения словарного запаса (VLS), лексическое развитие, учащиеся EFL, когнитивно-прагматический подход, школьное образование, метакогнитивное планирование, контекстуальная догадка, объем словаря, семантическое картирование.

Introduction.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) offer a systematic approach to help learners take control of their lexical development. VLS encourages students to interact actively with new vocabulary by integrating cognitive strategies such as grouping words thematically or by word type. Additionally, constructing semantic networks with practical skills is effective strategy, such as inferring meaning and guessing from context. In the context of the Uzbek education system, where English proficiency is a national priority, the importance of strategic learning over rote memorisation is paramount. The present study explores the use of VLS by

high school EFL learners and evaluates its effectiveness in improving the amount and quality of their vocabulary.

Materials and analysis.

VLS' Cognitive-Pragmatic Framework. The traditional "linear" model of vocabulary acquisition, based on the mechanical memorisation of bilingual word lists, is substituted by a multi-dimensional strategic approach. According to Schmitt, N. (1997), learners who use a variety of strategies from discovery to consolidation are much more lexically autonomous. Our study results suggest that the combination of metacognitive and cognitive strategies functions as a "scaffolding" mechanism that helps 10th-grade EFL learners in Tashkent to transit from passive recognition to active production. This pedagogical shift is suggestive of a fundamental change in lexical processing. Metacognitive planning, in which students purposefully set lexical goals and self-evaluate, is a higher-order executive function that optimises, according to O'Malley, J.M., & Chamot, A.U. (1990).

Procedural Methodology and Data Collection. The research employs a mixed-methods analysis of the patterns of vocabulary acquisition within a fixed research period. The main sources and environments that ensured the reliability and diversity of the data were: Lexicographical and Academic Review: Sixty students were pre- and post-tested on lexical breadth (how many words they know) and lexical depth (knowledge of collocations and register). These tests were at B1/B2 levels of the CEFR. Strategic Surveying. A questionnaire was designed based on Schmitt's Taxonomy to identify the frequency and perceived effectiveness of the different VLS categories (social, memory, and cognitive strategies).

Classroom Observational Data: "Strategy-Enhanced" lessons showed real-time linguistic engagement. This included an analysis of student-created Semantic Maps and their capacity to perform Contextual Inferencing when engaged in

reading tasks (Lanteigne, 2023). Morphological and strategic classification. After the corpus of student-learned vocabulary was assembled, each learning instance was scored according to the strategy used. The results of the research were categorized into the following known linguistic and cognitive processes: Cognitive Semantic Mapping (Cognitive) Visual grouping of words by theme or synonyms (e.g., relating "sustainable" to "ecology" and "renewable"), Schmitt, N. (1997), and Oxford, R. (1990).

Metacognitive Planning (Regulative): Self-Directed Goal Setting and Monitoring (e.g., "lexical logs" where students record their own progress).Contextual Inferencing (Pragmatic): Using linguistic "clues" (synonyms, antonyms, and syntax) to infer meaning without using external aids, thus maximizing the "linguistic economy" of the learner. Mnemonics and Association (Memory): Using mental imagery or relating new L2 vocabulary to familiar L1 concepts to improve retention in long-term memory. Comparative Analysis of Data. The data collected shows that there is a marked change in the students' lexical proficiency when they are not rote learning. The most effective strategies identified during the research period and their impact on the students' performance are classified in the following table (Table 1)

Strategy Category	**Specific technique**	**Impact on Lexical Development**	**Research Correlation**
Metacognitive	Self-testing planning.	35% increase in Long-term Retention.	O'Malley, J.M., & Chamot, A.U. (1990).
Cognitive	Semantic clustering.	Enhanced Recall Speed and Organization.	Schmitt, N. (1997).

Pragmatic	Contextual guessing.	Improved Collocational Accuracy.	Nation, P. (2001).
Memory	Visual imagery.	Higher Engagement in Lower-Level Learners.	Oxford, R. (1990).

Table (1)

The results obtained were compared with Nation's (2001) theory to establish the “stability” of the acquired vocabulary. The analysis shows that strategic learners do not just “store” words, but integrate them into a functional, communicative lexicon which resists the “forgetting curve” of traditional education.

Discussion.

Structured lexical networks are produced by semantic clustering and cognitive mapping. This enables the learner to relate new words to each other through relationships of meaning, rather than as isolated items. Thus vocabulary is processed in a more systematic and retrievable way.Contextual inferencing is the capacity of learners to infer meaning from the linguistic cues in their environment, without translation. This leads to improvement of comprehension skills and helps in independent acquisition of vocabulary during reading activities. Visual imagery and association are memory tricks that also aid retention, especially for the less advanced learner. These data suggest that vocabulary learning is more effective when learners use strategies which combine meaning-based processing with conscious regulation of learning behaviour.

Metacognitive strategies like planning, self-monitoring and goal setting are effective in improving learner regulation. Active learning of vocabulary is

better retained and results in more steady progress over time. This is an effect of increased learner awareness and control of the learning process..

Conclusion.

In conclusion, vocabulary learning strategies are important tools for high school EFL students to gain control over their language learning. With the growth in lexical breadth and depth, VLS is able to transform vocabulary acquisition from a mechanical exercise to a meaningful discovery and application process.

The results verify that explicit instructions in strategies such as metacognitive planning, cognitive grouping and contextual inferencing, greatly promote the development of the lexicon more than the employment of rote learning. This has far-reaching implications for curriculum design, teacher education and language policy. In the context of Uzbekistan, where teaching of foreign languages is a national priority, the strategy-based approaches would enable learners to meet the international standards and to communicate efficiently in academic and real-life contexts.

References:

1) **Schmitt, N. (1997).** Vocabulary learning strategies. In N. Schmitt & M. McCarthy (Eds.), *Vocabulary: Description, acquisition and pedagogy* (pp. 199–227). Cambridge University Press. URL:https://www.scribd.com/document/339062146/Schmitt-n-1997-Vocabulary-Learning-Strategies-in-Schmitt-n-and-Mccarthy-m-Eds-Vocabulary-Description-Acquisition-and-Pedagogy-Cambridge-University

2) **Nation, I. S. P. (2001).** *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge University Press. URL: https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524759

3) URL: https://resolve.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/CF06A304AEC62828F03E7B9C15C820FA/9781139524759

c7_p217-
262_CBO.pdf/vocabulary_learning_strategies_and_guessing_from_context.pdf

4) **O'Malley, J. M., & Chamot, A. U. (1990).** *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*. Cambridge University Press.
URL: https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524490

5) **Oxford, R. L. (1990).** *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. Newbury House.
URL:https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309077940_An_Overview_of_Preferred_Vocabulary_Learning_Strategies_by_Learners

6) **Lanteigne, B. (2023).** The digital lexicon: English in a multimodal world. *Journal of Pragmatics, 112*, 14–29.