

SUBSTANTIATION OF A MODEL FOR CREATIVE VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE PROCESS OF TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

ОБҐРУНТУВАННЯ МОДЕЛІ КРЕАТИВНОГО НАВЧАННЯ ЛЕКСИКИ ЗДОБУВАЧІВ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ У ПРОЦЕСІ ВИКЛАДАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ЯК ІНОЗЕМНОЇ

The article addresses one of the topical issues in the training of university-level future philologists and language teachers – the development of creative, multimodal approaches to English vocabulary instruction within a student-centered paradigm and the formation of intercultural competence. The article substantiates an integrated model of creative vocabulary instruction that combines six complementary techniques: picture-based lexical mapping, dingbat and rebus puzzles, micrography and macrophotography as precision-description triggers, catchphrase-style guessing games, five-senses description cards, and metaphorical association cards. The essence of such concepts as multimodal learning, depth of lexical knowledge, affective filter, intercultural communicative competence, and student-centered learning is revealed. The main attention is focused on the theoretical and methodological principles underlying the model: it is shown that combining verbal and visual coding of information (Paivio's Dual Coding Theory), deeper processing of lexical material (Nation's principles of vocabulary depth), lowering the affective filter (Krashen's hypothesis), and developing the competencies of interpreting and relating (Byram's model) together create the conditions for forming not only receptive but also productive, culturally sensitive vocabulary. The structure of an integrated 90-minute lesson that consistently combines receptive and productive stages of lexical processing is presented, together with formative-assessment criteria: a word-association rubric, peer-description observation logs, reflective metaphor journals, and portfolios of student-created materials. Based on an analysis of domestic and international psychological-pedagogical literature, including empirical studies published between 2019 and 2025, the practical expediency of implementing the proposed model in the educational process of higher education institutions is substantiated. It is also noted that the concept of the research is ensured by the unity of methodological, theoretical, and methodical aspects and is oriented toward preparing competitive specialists capable of effective intercultural communication in a globalized educational space.

Key words: multimodal learning, creative vocabulary-teaching techniques, dual coding theory, depth of lexical knowledge, intercultural communicative competence, student-centered learning, teaching English as a second language.

Стаття присвячена одній з актуальних проблем підготовки здобувачів вищої освіти філологічного та педагогічного профілів – розвитку креативних, мультимодальних підходів до навчання лексики англійської мови в

умовах студентоцентрованого навчання та формування міжкультурної компетентності. У статті обґрунтовано інтегровану модель креативного навчання лексики, яка поєднує шість комплементарних технік: візуальне картування лексики за допомогою зображень, дингбати та ребуси, мікрографію й макрофотографію як стимули до точного опису, ігри на кшталт «Катчфрейз» (пояснення цільового слова без використання спільнокореневих і синонімічних слів), картки опису понять через п'ять органів чуття та картки метафоричних асоціацій. Розкрито сутність понять «мультимодальне навчання», «глибина лексичних знань», «афективний фільтр», «міжкультурна комунікативна компетентність», «студентоцентроване навчання». Основна увага зосереджена на теоретико-методичних засадах побудови моделі: доведено, що поєднання вербального й візуального кодування інформації (за теорією подвійного кодування А. Пайвіо), поглибленої переробки лексичного матеріалу (за принципами І. Нейшн), зниження афективного фільтра (за гіпотезою С. Крашена) та розвитку компетентностей інтерпретації й ставлення (за моделлю М. Байрама) створює умови для формування не лише репродуктивного, а й продуктивного, культурно чутливого словникового запасу студентів. Висвітлено структуру інтегрованого практичного заняття тривалістю 90 хвилин, що послідовно поєднує рецептивні та продуктивні етапи опрацювання лексики, а також критерії формувального оцінювання: рубрику лексичних асоціацій, журнали спостереження за стратегіями перифразу, рефлексивні щоденники метафоричних моделей і портфоліо створених студентами матеріалів. На основі аналізу вітчизняної та зарубіжної психолого-педагогічної літератури, зокрема результатів емпіричних досліджень, обґрунтовано практичну доцільність впровадження запропонованої моделі в освітній процес закладів вищої освіти. Зазначається, що концепція дослідження забезпечується єдністю методологічного, теоретичного та методичного аспектів і орієнтована на підготовку конкурентоспроможних фахівців, здатних до ефективної міжкультурної комунікації в глобалізованому освітньому просторі.

Ключові слова: мультимодальне навчання, креативні техніки навчання лексики, теорія подвійного кодування, глибина лексичних знань, міжкультурна комунікативна компетентність, студентоцентроване навчання, навчання англійської як другої іноземної мови.

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Statement of the problem in general terms. University students majoring in philology and pedagogy generally possess a substantial passive

English vocabulary, built up over many years of formal schooling, yet they frequently prove unable to use that vocabulary productively, idiomatically, and

in a culturally appropriate way in real communicative situations [1, p. 57]. Traditional methods of vocabulary instruction, such as word lists, bilingual glossaries, and decontextualized drill exercises, build word recognition but rarely develop the deep, multi-faceted lexical knowledge required for fluent, culturally nuanced speech [2, pp. 15–33]. This problem becomes especially acute in light of current demands for preparing competitive specialists capable of effective intercultural communication, critical thinking, and independent knowledge construction within a student-centered educational environment, as well as amid the ongoing reform of Ukrainian higher education toward a competency-based, practice-oriented approach.

Analysis of recent research and publications.

The theoretical foundation of the study rests on: A. Paivio's Dual Coding Theory [3, pp. 53–72], which explains the advantages of combining verbal and visual coding of information for long-term retention and which has recently been extended empirically to second-language learners interacting with educational media [4, p. 1184]; F. Craik and R. Lockhart's levels-of-processing framework [5, p. 673]; I. S. P. Nation's principles of vocabulary depth [1, p. 59]; S. Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis [6, pp. 30–32]; M. Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence [7, pp. 34–57]; G. Lakoff and M. Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory [8, pp. 3–6]; M. Swain's concept of "pushed output" [9, p. 238]; and the tenets of L. Vygotsky's constructivist pedagogy [10, pp. 56–60].

The empirical basis of contemporary research on multimodal vocabulary instruction is formed predominantly by studies published between 2019 and 2025. It has been established that audiovisual multimodal stimuli significantly improve vocabulary retention compared with single-modality conditions, although the effectiveness of the intervention varies with learners' proficiency level and with the specific combination of input channels used [11, pp. 11–12]. A synthesis of research on audiovisual input and on-screen text confirms that captioned video consistently outperforms uncaptioned video for incidental vocabulary gains [12, p. 12], while multimedia glossing has been shown to be broadly effective for both learning and retention, with effect sizes moderated by learner-related factors such as prior knowledge and working-memory capacity [13, pp. 740–742]. Case studies of commercial digital-learning platforms further illustrate how simultaneous image–audio–text input is now embedded in mainstream language-learning technology [14, p. 63]. A systematic review of empirical studies on gamification in EFL/ESL instruction confirms the positive effect of game-based techniques on motivation, engagement, and, under certain conditions, vocabulary retention [15, pp. 7–8]. At the same time, research on culturally responsive

teaching in university EFL courses demonstrates the effectiveness of deliberately combining linguistic and cultural components for developing intercultural competence. However, recent systematic reviews of intercultural communicative competence in EFL settings indicate that most existing pedagogical models remain largely theoretical and are rarely operationalized into concrete classroom techniques [17, pp. 361–380; 18, pp. 128–147], a gap also confirmed by a systematic review of cross-cultural communicative competence research conducted in China [19, pp. 6–7] and by a review of EFL teachers' attitudes toward intercultural communicative competence, which found that teachers frequently feel underprepared to translate ICC theory into classroom practice [20, pp. 697–698]. Models built on cultural metacognition show that reflective awareness of cultural differences during language learning fosters durable intercultural skills applicable to novel, unpredictable situations [21, pp. 3–5].

Identification of previously unresolved parts of the general problem.

Despite the considerable and rapidly growing body of research on multimodal vocabulary instruction and the development of intercultural competence outlined above, most existing studies focus either on learners in general secondary education or on the application of individual techniques in isolation – gamification alone, video materials alone, or culture-oriented modules alone – and, as recent systematic reviews confirm, intercultural competence models in particular remain largely theoretical and are rarely translated into concrete classroom tools. What is lacking is a coherent, theoretically grounded methodological model that organically combines sensory (five-senses), game-based (catchphrase-style), visual (dingbats, microphotography), and metaphorical techniques into a single system integrated with the development of future specialists' intercultural competence specifically within university-level, student-centered instruction. Accordingly, the task of developing such a model and its methodological support remains relevant.

Purpose of the article. The purpose of the article is to substantiate the theoretical and methodological principles and a practical model of creative, multimodal English vocabulary instruction for university students, oriented toward developing their intercultural competence within a student-centered learning environment.

Presentation of the main material. The proposed model is based on three methodological principles: multimodality (vocabulary is encoded through image, text, sound, touch, and movement, not text alone); student-centeredness (students independently generate, negotiate, and personalize meaning rather than receiving it passively); and intercultural relevance (tasks are designed to surface

the cultural assumptions embedded in words, idioms, and metaphors).

The model integrates six complementary techniques.

1. Picture-based lexical mapping. Students build semantic networks by arranging picture cards representing synonyms, antonyms, collocations, and register variants around a target word, then justify the structure of the map in English. The technique combines dual coding with generative learning: because students construct the visual association themselves rather than receiving it ready-made, it deepens information processing [3, pp. 191–198; 5, p. 673].

2. Dingbats and rebus puzzles. The spatial arrangement, size, and repetition of letters and symbols encode an idiomatic expression (for example, the word MIND placed directly above the word MATTER represents the idiom “mind over matter”). Students solve dingbats, explain the figurative meaning, supply a culturally specific equivalent in their first language, and then create an original dingbat for a classmate to solve. The technique holds both spatial-visual and linguistic information in working memory simultaneously, reinforcing the form-meaning link while specifically targeting idiomatic, culturally loaded vocabulary – a category for which explicit attention to the motivation underlying an idiom has been shown to enhance long-term retention [3, p. 194; 8, p. 4; 22, p. 558].

3. Micrography and macrophotography. Close-up photographs of textures, surfaces, fabrics, or natural objects are presented without revealing the subject; students generate the most precise descriptive vocabulary possible (jagged rather than rough; crystalline rather than shiny), after which the subject is revealed and students write a caption and compare how a similar texture might be described metaphorically in their home culture. Defamiliarizing ordinary objects pushes students beyond overly general, overlearned vocabulary (nice, big, small) toward more precise lexical items, while simultaneously revealing that sensory description itself is culturally conditioned [1, p. 315].

4. Catchphrase-style guessing games. Adapted from the television format Catchphrase and the party game Taboo, students describe a target word to a partner or team without using the word itself or 3–4 “banned” related words, within a time limit (for example, target: procrastinate; banned words: delay, postpone, later, put off). The task forces students to activate the word’s entire network of meaning – function, category, synonym, context rather than a single translation equivalent, building associative depth of lexical knowledge, while the game format and time pressure simultaneously lower the affective filter [1, p. 318; 6, p. 31].

5. Five-senses description cards. Cards prompt students to describe an abstract or concrete concept

(for example, nostalgia, silence, bureaucracy, home) through all five senses, using the prompt “What sound / taste / texture / smell / color would this have?”, even where a sense is not literally applicable, which requires figurative extension. In small groups, students compare answers and discuss why different students chose different sensory associations, revealing personal, generational, or cultural variation. The technique operationalizes synesthetic and metaphorical language production, which is linked to advanced linguistic and cultural competence [23, p. 491; 24, p. 464].

6. Metaphorical association cards. Cards present an abstract concept (time, argument, ideas, life) together with conceptual metaphor frames (TIME IS MONEY, ARGUMENT IS WAR, IDEAS ARE FOOD) and example expressions (spend time, waste time, budget your time). Students identify which metaphor frame dominates in English compared with their first language, compose original sentences using that frame, and discuss what the dominant metaphor reveals about cultural values. This technique most directly operationalizes Byram’s competence of interpreting and relating, since it requires not translating a word but interpreting the cultural framework it reflects [7, p. 38; 8, p. 7].

An integrated 90-minute lesson combines these techniques according to the sequence “presentation – controlled practice – freer practice – deepening – cultural synthesis”: a warm-up using microphotography (10 min), picture-based lexical mapping (15 min), dingbat puzzles (15 min), a catchphrase-style game (20 min), five-senses cards (15 min), and metaphorical association cards (15 min). This sequence follows the Presentation–Practice–Production (PPP) arc while embedding intercultural reflection as a recurring, rather than an additional, component of the lesson [7, pp. 34–57].

Formative assessment relies on four instruments: a word-association rubric (scoring the number and appropriateness of collocations, synonyms, and register-appropriate uses of the target word, rather than correctness of definition alone); peer-description observation logs kept during catchphrase-style games (the instructor records the circumlocution strategies used – exemplification, categorization, antonymy); reflective metaphor journals, in which students record comparisons with first-language equivalents; and portfolios of student-created materials (original dingbats, five-senses cards, microphotograph captions), assessed for lexical range and creativity rather than a single correct answer, consistent with student-centered assessment principles that treat evaluation as an extension of learning rather than a separate, high-stakes checkpoint [25, p. 278]. The word-association rubric in particular is grounded in the word-associates testing tradition used to operationalize depth of vocabulary knowledge

[26, pp. 40–46; 27, pp. 1–30], in recent calls for greater methodological sophistication in vocabulary assessment that move beyond simple size measures [26, pp. 40–46], in guidance on how depth of knowledge can be reliably measured [28, pp. 371–386], and in findings that different depth-of-knowledge measures do not always correlate strongly with vocabulary size or with one another [29, pp. 52–64] – a finding that justifies triangulating several formative instruments rather than relying on a single test.

Conclusions. Creative, multimodal vocabulary instruction is not a departure from rigorous methodology but a practical application of well-established cognitive and sociolinguistic principles: dual coding, depth of processing, lowering the affective filter, and intercultural communicative competence realized as concrete, reusable methodological tools. Picture-based lexical mapping, dingbats, micrography, catchphrase-style games, five-senses cards, and metaphorical association cards together form a coherent, theoretically grounded toolkit that builds university students' lexical competence as a rich, culturally embedded system rather than an isolated list of translation equivalents. Applied deliberately and sequentially, and combined with formative assessment, the proposed model achieves the two goals of university-level language education simultaneously: linguistic competence and intercultural competence. Prospects for further research lie in the empirical validation of the model through pre- and post-experimental testing of depth of lexical knowledge for example, using J. Read's Word Associates Test [26, pp. 40–46] – in control and experimental groups of university students.

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