

TEACHING LEXIS USING VISUAL AIDS AND MULTIMEDIA TOOLS

Qambaraliyeva Iroda Hayrulla qizi
Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies
qambaraliyevairoda7@gmail.com
+998996938970

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АННОТАЦИЯ:

Teaching lexis is an essential component of foreign language education because vocabulary knowledge enables learners to understand and produce meaningful communication. Traditional vocabulary teaching methods may not always provide sufficient opportunities for learners to engage with new words in meaningful contexts. Therefore, the integration of visual aids and multimedia tools can make vocabulary instruction more effective, interactive, and engaging. This article examines the role of visual materials and multimedia technologies in teaching lexis, explores practical classroom applications, and discusses the advantages and challenges of these approaches. It also highlights the importance of selecting appropriate teaching materials according to learners' ages, language proficiency levels, and educational needs.

Lexis refers to the vocabulary of a language, including individual words, phrases, collocations, and other meaningful lexical units. Learning lexis is a fundamental aspect of foreign language acquisition because learners need an adequate vocabulary to develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

However, learning new words involves more than memorising their meanings. Learners must also understand pronunciation, spelling, grammatical behaviour, collocations, and appropriate usage in different contexts. Consequently, teachers need to employ effective methods that help students understand, remember, and use new lexical items.

Visual aids, such as pictures, flashcards, diagrams, posters, and real objects, can support vocabulary learning by connecting words with visual representations. Multimedia tools, including videos, animations, digital presentations, interactive applications, and online exercises, offer additional opportunities to present vocabulary through sound, images, movement, and contextualised examples.

The purpose of this article is to investigate how visual aids and multimedia tools can improve the teaching of lexis and to identify practical strategies for incorporating these resources into foreign language classrooms.

1. The Role of Visual Aids in Teaching Lexis

Visual aids are instructional materials that communicate information through images, symbols, diagrams, and other visual representations. They are particularly useful in foreign language classrooms because they help learners associate unfamiliar words with concrete objects, actions, and situations.

One of the most common visual techniques is the use of flashcards. Teachers can present a picture of an object alongside its written form, allowing students to establish a connection between the word and its meaning. For example, when teaching vocabulary related to animals, a teacher can display pictures of a lion, elephant, giraffe, and monkey. Students identify the animals, repeat their names, and practise using them in simple sentences.

Pictures and illustrations are also effective for teaching abstract concepts and describing situations. For instance, photographs showing people expressing happiness, sadness, anger, or surprise can help learners understand adjectives associated with emotions. Similarly, diagrams and mind maps can help students organise vocabulary into semantic categories, such as food, transportation, education, and the environment.

Another useful technique is the use of realia, which refers to authentic objects brought into the classroom for teaching purposes. Teachers may use fruits, classroom objects, clothing, or household items to introduce new vocabulary. This approach creates a direct connection between language and real-life experience.

Visual aids offer several educational benefits. They attract learners' attention, support comprehension, encourage participation, and can make vocabulary easier to recall. They are especially valuable for young learners and students with limited proficiency because they reduce the need for lengthy explanations in the target language.

Nevertheless, visual materials should be selected carefully. Pictures must be clear, relevant, and appropriate for the learners' age and cultural background. Teachers should also encourage students to use new words in sentences and communicative activities rather than relying exclusively on picture recognition.

2. The Use of Multimedia Tools in Lexis Instruction

Multimedia tools combine different forms of information, such as text, sound, images, animation, and video. Their integration into language teaching creates opportunities for learners to encounter vocabulary through different sensory channels and in a variety of contexts.

Videos are particularly effective for presenting words and expressions in authentic or realistic situations. For example, a short video about shopping can introduce expressions such as How much does it cost?, I would like to buy this, and Can I try it on? Students can observe

how speakers use these expressions, listen to their pronunciation, and understand their meanings through contextual clues.

Digital presentations can also help teachers introduce vocabulary systematically. A presentation may include a new word, its definition, pronunciation, an illustrative image, and an example sentence. This structure enables learners to understand the meaning and usage of lexical items more comprehensively.

Interactive applications and online learning platforms provide further opportunities for vocabulary practice. Tools such as Quizlet, Wordwall, and Kahoot! allow teachers to create matching activities, flashcard exercises, quizzes, and vocabulary games. These activities can increase motivation by introducing elements of competition, repetition, and immediate feedback.

For example, after teaching vocabulary related to food, a teacher can organise a digital matching game in which students connect words such as bread, cheese, apple, and milk with the corresponding pictures. The teacher can then ask learners to construct sentences using the new vocabulary.

Multimedia resources can also support independent learning. Students may review digital flashcards, watch educational videos, listen to pronunciation models, and complete online exercises outside the classroom.

Such activities encourage learner autonomy and provide additional opportunities for vocabulary revision.

However, multimedia technologies should support clearly defined learning objectives rather than serve merely as entertainment. Teachers must consider students' digital literacy, access to technological devices, internet availability, and the quality of the selected resources. Excessive animation, background music, or unnecessary visual effects may distract learners from the vocabulary being taught.

10. Practical Strategies for Integrating Visual Aids and Multimedia Tools

The effectiveness of visual and multimedia resources depends largely on how teachers integrate them into the learning process. A well-structured vocabulary lesson should include the presentation of new lexical items, guided practice, meaningful communication, and revision.

One practical strategy is to combine pictures with pronunciation activities. The teacher displays an image, introduces the corresponding word, models its pronunciation, and asks students to repeat it. Learners then identify the object and use the word in a sentence. For example, when teaching the word mountain, students look at a photograph, listen to the pronunciation, repeat the word, and produce a sentence such as "The mountain is very high."

A second strategy is to use multimedia materials to introduce vocabulary in context. Teachers can show a short video or animated story and ask students to identify unfamiliar words. After watching, learners discuss the meaning of the words, match them with pictures,

and use them in their own sentences. This approach helps students understand how vocabulary functions in meaningful communication.

A third strategy involves gamification and collaborative learning. Teachers can divide students into small groups and organise vocabulary competitions using picture cards, interactive quizzes, or digital matching exercises. Students may describe an image without naming the object, while their classmates guess the correct word. Such activities encourage active participation, cooperation, and the practical use of newly acquired vocabulary.

Teachers should also provide regular opportunities for retrieval practice. Instead of presenting words only once, they can revisit them through short quizzes, picture-based discussions, writing tasks, and speaking activities. Repeated encounters with lexical items in different contexts can strengthen retention and support long-term learning.

Assessment is another important element. Teachers can evaluate students' progress through oral responses, vocabulary tests, sentence construction, and communicative tasks. Assessment should examine not only whether learners recognise a word but also whether they can use it accurately and appropriately.

Finally, teachers should adapt visual and multimedia materials to students' proficiency levels. Beginners may benefit from simple pictures and clearly labelled objects, whereas more advanced learners may work with authentic videos, infographics, news reports, and context-based vocabulary exercises. Combining traditional teaching materials with digital resources can create a balanced and inclusive learning environment.

Conclusion

Teaching lexis through visual aids and multimedia tools provides valuable opportunities to improve foreign language learning. Pictures, flashcards, diagrams, real objects, videos, digital presentations, and interactive applications can make vocabulary instruction more meaningful, engaging, and accessible.

Visual aids help learners establish associations between words and their meanings, while multimedia tools expose them to pronunciation, contextualised language, and different forms of communication. When these resources are combined with communicative activities, retrieval practice, and regular assessment, they can contribute to vocabulary retention and the development of language skills.

Nevertheless, technology alone does not guarantee successful learning. The effectiveness of these approaches depends on appropriate material selection, clear learning objectives, active learner participation, and the teacher's ability to integrate resources into a coherent lesson.

In conclusion, the purposeful use of visual aids and multimedia tools can enrich vocabulary instruction and create a more interactive learning environment. Foreign language teachers should therefore consider these resources an important part of modern language pedagogy while ensuring that every activity contributes directly to learners' lexical development.

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