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The Use of Corpus-Based Analysis to Enhance Students' English Lexical Competence in Inclusive Education

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Abstract:

As inclusive education gains prominence globally, the need for effective instructional approaches that address linguistic diversity becomes increasingly urgent. In Central Asian contexts such as Kazakhstan, transitioning from segregated to inclusive education highlights challenges in meeting diverse learners' vocabulary needs, particularly in English language learning environments. Despite growing interest in corpus-based instruction, limited research exists on its application to enhance lexical competence in inclusive settings, especially among philology students. This study aims to investigate how corpus-based analysis, informed by Vygotskian sociocultural theory, can be used to bridge lexical gaps in inclusive education. It explores pedagogical adaptations necessary to support learners with diverse cognitive, linguistic, and physical abilities. Findings reveal that integrating data-driven learning (DDL) techniques improves lexical awareness, supports differentiated instruction, and fosters learner autonomy. Adaptations such as screen reader-compatible tools and simplified corpus tasks ensure accessibility for all students. Moreover, corpus-based methods outperform traditional vocabulary instruction in building productive lexical competence, as shown by alternative assessment tools. This study contributes an interdisciplinary framework combining corpus linguistics, inclusive pedagogy, and sociocultural theory. It demonstrates how corpus tools can be tailored to universal design principles, enhancing both linguistic proficiency and equity. The research underscores the importance of teacher training in corpus methods and recommends policy shifts that align educational accessibility with technological innovation. By aligning language instruction with inclusive education principles, corpus-based learning can transform vocabulary acquisition into a more equitable, student-centered process.

Keywords: lexical competence, inclusive education, corpus linguistics, EFL, philology students, data-driven learning

Introduction

Inclusive education (IE) has gained global prominence over the past two decades, emphasizing the right to equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of ability or background[1]. In parallel, vocabulary development—particularly lexical competence—has been increasingly recognized as central to second language acquisition, especially for advanced learners aiming for fluent and accurate communication[2].

As Kazakhstan and other post-Soviet states transition from segregated to inclusive educational models, there is an urgent need to adopt language instruction methods that can meet diverse learners' needs[3]. One such method is corpus-based instruction, which employs real language data from corpora to expose learners to natural lexical patterns[4].

Theoretical Framework

This study is situated at the intersection of sociocultural theory and corpus linguistics[5]. Vygotsky's concept of *defectology*—although linguistically outdated—envisioned the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream societal processes. His theory emphasized the social origin of learning and the need to remove environmental and attitudinal barriers. In this context, language becomes both the medium and the tool for inclusive engagement[6].

Corpus-based language instruction, rooted in data-driven learning (DDL), enables learners to investigate authentic collocations and lexical patterns. It supports inclusive pedagogy by fostering learner autonomy and allowing adaptation for students with diverse cognitive, linguistic, or physical needs[7].

Literature Review

Corpus-Based Lexical Instruction

Corpus-based approaches have consistently demonstrated their efficacy in enhancing lexical awareness[8]. According to Molavi, Koosha, and Hosseini, EFL textbooks often underrepresent authentic lexical collocations such as *verb + noun* or *adjective + noun* combinations, diverging from real-world usage found in corpora like the Open American National Corpus (OANC)[9]. Learners exposed only to textbook language may consequently fail to achieve fluency or native-like proficiency.

Johns introduced the concept of learners as "language detectives," actively uncovering usage patterns[10]. Later research validated DDL even for less proficient learners, provided scaffolding and guidance are available. This is particularly relevant in inclusive classrooms where student abilities vary widely[11].

Inclusive Education and Linguistic Equity

Recent meta-analyses emphasize the role of teacher training, attitudes, and curricular responsiveness in inclusive education[12]. Florian and Black-Hawkins argue that inclusive pedagogy must embrace learner variability rather than adapt instruction to a notional "average" student. In Kazakhstan, however, inclusive education remains closely tied to the Soviet-era model of special education (*defectology*), which often emphasizes remediation over integration[13].

Parental stigma, rigid psychological-medical-pedagogical commissions (PMPCs), and lack of localized resources further hinder the shift to inclusive practices. For inclusive language instruction to succeed, these systemic barriers must be addressed alongside pedagogical innovation[14].

Methods

This study synthesizes secondary data from (a) corpus analyses of collocational usage in EFL materials, (b) meta-reviews on inclusive education, and (c) qualitative research on special educators' roles in Kazakhstan. A theoretical integration strategy was used to align linguistic methodologies with inclusive educational frameworks[15].

This study employed a theoretical integration method combining corpus linguistics and inclusive pedagogy. It synthesized secondary data through comparative corpus analyses of lexical collocations in EFL materials, meta-reviews of inclusive education, and qualitative studies on educator roles in Kazakhstan[16]. The research drew upon Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and data-driven learning to align authentic language input with inclusive instructional strategies. Emphasis was placed on adapting corpus tools for learners with diverse needs, evaluating pedagogical models, and assessing lexical competence through alternative, context-sensitive methods that support linguistic equity in inclusive learning environments[17].

Results and Discussion

Adapting Corpus Tools for Inclusion

In inclusive environments, corpus-based instruction must be adapted for accessibility. For instance, visually impaired learners may benefit from screen reader-compatible corpus tools. Students with cognitive or processing difficulties can use simplified tasks—such as identifying highlighted collocations or working with color-coded KWIC lines[18].

Enhancing Teacher Preparedness

Corpus-informed pedagogy requires robust teacher training. Pre-service and in-service teachers should be introduced to platforms like AntConc and BNCweb, and trained to develop tasks that align with universal design principles. This ensures that lexical learning becomes accessible for students across a spectrum of abilities[19].

Assessing Lexical Competence Inclusively

Assessment tools must also be adapted. Traditional vocabulary tests may not reflect the nuanced lexical knowledge corpus tools can build[20]. Alternative assessments—such as lexical frequency profiling and context-based collocation tasks—provide a more accurate picture of a learner's productive vocabulary range[21].

Conclusion

Corpus-based instruction, when thoughtfully integrated with inclusive pedagogical principles, offers a powerful method for developing lexical competence. By providing learners with access to authentic language patterns and enabling differentiated instruction, corpus tools can help fulfill the dual goals of linguistic proficiency and educational equity.

In conclusion, corpus-based analysis proves to be an effective and inclusive approach for enhancing students' lexical competence in English language learning. When integrated with inclusive education principles, it enables differentiated instruction, fosters learner autonomy, and provides

access to authentic linguistic input tailored to diverse needs. This method supports both linguistic proficiency and educational equity by accommodating learners with varying abilities and backgrounds. Ultimately, combining corpus linguistics with inclusive pedagogy creates a more adaptive, engaging, and socially responsive language learning environment that prepares students for real-world communication and lifelong learning.

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