

METHODS AND TECHNIQUES FOR EFFECTIVELY TEACHING LEXICOLOGY.

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Annotation. This article outlines effective strategies for teaching lexicology, the study of words, their meanings, and their evolution. It provides a comprehensive overview of how to introduce students to key concepts such as lexemes, word families, etymology, and semantics, while emphasizing practical and engaging methods for instruction. The article covers various techniques, such as exploring word formation processes, teaching dictionary skills, and using technology to enhance learning.

Key words: Lexicology, Word Families, Etymology, Semantics, Morphology, Word Formation, Dictionary Skills, Polysemy, Synonymy and Antonymy, Corpus Linguistics, Neologisms, Language Change, Critical Thinking, Interactive Learning Tools, Vocabulary Development

Lexicology, the study of words, their meanings, and their evolution, is an essential field for understanding language at a deeper level. Teaching lexicology allows students to appreciate vocabulary's depth, trace the origins of words, and grasp the intricate relationship between a word's form and its meaning. Whether you are teaching lexicology to linguistics students, language learners, or general audiences, the following strategies will help create an engaging and effective curriculum. To begin teaching lexicology, it's important to introduce foundational terms and ideas such as:

Lexeme: The basic unit of meaning in language (e.g., "happy," "book").

Word Forms: Variations of a lexeme, such as "run," "running," and "ran."

Morphology: The study of word structure, focusing on prefixes, suffixes, and roots.

Etymology: The study of the origin and historical development of words.

Semantics: The study of meaning, especially how context influences the interpretation of words.

2. Explore Word Families and Word Formation

A highly engaging way to teach lexicology is by examining word families and processes of word formation:

Word Families: Show how words are linked through common roots, prefixes, and suffixes. For instance, the word family of "act" includes "action," "actor," "react," and "active."

Affixation: Teach how prefixes and suffixes alter the meaning of base words. Examples include "unhappy" (prefix + base), "happiness" (base + suffix), or "friendship" (base + suffix).

Compounding: Illustrate how two words combine to form new meanings, like "toothbrush" or "bookcase."

Conversion (Zero Derivation): Teach how words can shift their grammatical category without changing form, such as "email" (noun) becoming "to email" (verb).

3. Incorporate Etymology and Word History

Lexicology isn't just about understanding individual words, but also about understanding their historical evolution. Etymology, or the study of the origins of words, can be an exciting aspect of lexicology, revealing how language is intertwined with culture and history.

Roots and Borrowings: Introduce words with roots in Latin, Greek, and other languages, showing how languages influence one another. For example, "television" combines the Greek "tele" (far) and the Latin "vision" (seeing).

Shifts in Meaning: Discuss how the meanings of words change over time. For instance, "silly" once meant "happy" or "fortunate," but now means "foolish."

Cognates and False Cognates: Explain how words in different languages share common origins (cognates), such as "mother" in English and "Mutter" in German, and how some words may appear similar but have different meanings (false cognates), like "actual" in English and Spanish.

4. Teach Semantics and Word Meaning

Understanding how words acquire meaning is key to lexicology. Semantics—the study of meaning—helps students explore how words take on different meanings

based on context, social factors, or culture. You can teach the following aspects of semantics:

Polysemy: Teach how words can have multiple meanings depending on the context, such as "bank" (a financial institution, or the side of a river).

Synonymy and Antonymy: Explore how words have similar meanings (synonyms) or opposite meanings (antonyms) and how these relationships shape communication.

Homophones and Homonyms: Help students understand how words that sound or look alike can have different meanings, such as "pair" vs. "pear," or "bat" (the animal) vs. "bat" (sports equipment).

5. Teach Dictionary Skills

A crucial skill in lexicology is knowing how to use a dictionary effectively. Teach students how to navigate both print and online dictionaries to explore meanings, pronunciations, and etymologies.

Dictionary Skills: Demonstrate how to look up words in a dictionary, explaining the typical layout of entries (alphabetical order, definitions, parts of speech, examples).

Thesaurus and Lexical Databases: Show how to use thesauruses and lexical databases like WordNet to examine synonyms, antonyms, and word relationships. Create exercises where students practice finding words, comparing meanings, and even compiling their own mini-dictionaries.

6. Use Interactive Technology and Tools

Incorporating modern tools and technology can make learning lexicology more engaging and interactive:

Online Word Games: Use vocabulary games, crossword puzzles, and word searches to make learning about word families, affixation, and meaning enjoyable.

Lexical Databases and Word Clouds: Use visual tools like Wordle to analyze word frequencies and encourage students to explore how words relate to each other. These tools can make learning about lexicology more dynamic and visually stimulating.

7. Foster Creativity and Critical Thinking

To engage students further, encourage them to think creatively and critically about language:

Neologisms: Discuss the creation of new words and how they enter common usage. For example, terms like "selfie" or "hashtag" are new additions to the lexicon. Have students invent their own neologisms and explore how these new words might reflect cultural trends.

Word Associations and Collocations: Ask students to analyze common word pairings, such as "make a decision" or "do a decision," and explore how word combinations affect meaning.

Debates on Language Change: Encourage students to discuss whether language should evolve and how new words are accepted into society, which will help them think critically about the flexibility of language.

8. Assess Students' Understanding through Practical Application

Finally, assess students' understanding of lexicology by giving them opportunities to apply what they have learned:

Word Maps: Have students create visual representations of words, incorporating their meanings, related words, synonyms, antonyms, and usage.

Etymology Projects: Assign projects where students trace the origins and historical development of particular words, examining how they have changed over time.

Presentations and Discussions: Let students present their findings on word histories, meanings, or the evolution of language, fostering group discussions that deepen their understanding of lexicology.

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