THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH IN TEACHING CONVERSION TO EFL LEARNERS

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Abstract: Conversion, also known as zero-derivation, is one of the most productive word-formation processes in English. However, many EFL learners experience difficulties in identifying and using converted words appropriately. This study investigates the effectiveness of a seven-step approach to teaching conversion in EFL classrooms. A mixed-methods research design was employed involving ten Grade 11 students from a secondary school in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Quantitative data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests, while qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed a significant improvement in students' understanding of conversion, with average test scores increasing from 56% to 86%. Interview results indicated improvements in vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension, paraphrasing skills, pronunciation, and metalinguistic awareness. The

study concludes that a step-by-step approach can effectively support the teaching and learning of conversion in EFL contexts.

Annotatsiya: Konversiya (conversion), ya’ni nol derivatsiya, ingliz tilidagi eng samarali so‘z yasash usullaridan biri hisoblanadi. Biroq, ingliz tilini chet tili sifatida o‘rganuvchi talabalar konvertatsiya qilingan so‘zlarni aniqlash va ularni to‘g‘ri qo‘llashda ko‘pincha qiyinchiliklarga duch keladilar. Mazkur tadqiqot EFL sinflarida konversiyani o‘qitishda yetti bosqichli yondashuvning samaradorligini o‘rganishga qaratilgan. Tadqiqotda Toshkent shahridagi umumta’lim maktabining 11-sinfida tahsil olayotgan 10 nafar o‘quvchi ishtirok etdi va aralash tadqiqot metodologiyasi (mixed-methods) qo‘llanildi. Miqdoriy ma’lumotlar pre-test va post-test natijalari orqali, sifat ma’lumotlari esa yarim tuzilgan suhbatlar (intervyular) yordamida to‘plandi. Tadqiqot natijalari o‘quvchilarning konversiya haqidagi bilimlari sezilarli darajada oshganligini ko‘rsatdi: o‘rtacha natija 56 foizdan 86 foizgacha ko‘tarildi. Intervyu natijalari esa lug‘at boyligi, o‘qib tushunish, parafraz qilish ko‘nikmalari, talaffuz hamda metalingvistik xabardorlikning rivojlanganligini aniqladi. Tadqiqot xulosalariga ko‘ra, yetti bosqichli yondashuv EFL muhitida konversiyani o‘qitish va o‘rganishni samarali qo‘llab-quvvatlaydi.

Аннотация: Конверсия, также известная как нулевая деривация, является одним из наиболее продуктивных способов словообразования в английском языке. Однако многие учащиеся, изучающие английский язык как иностранный, испытывают трудности при распознавании и правильном использовании конвертированных слов. Данное исследование направлено на изучение эффективности семишагового подхода к обучению конверсии в классах английского языка как иностранного (EFL). В исследовании применялся смешанный методологический подход с участием десяти учащихся 11 класса

средней школы города Ташкента. Количественные данные были собраны с помощью предварительного и итогового тестирования, а качественные данные — посредством полуструктурированных интервью. Результаты показали значительное улучшение знаний учащихся о конверсии: средний показатель успеваемости увеличился с 56% до 86%. Интервью также выявили положительные изменения в развитии словарного запаса, навыков чтения, перефразирования, произношения и металингвистической осведомлённости учащихся. Исследование позволяет сделать вывод о том, что семишаговый подход является эффективным средством обучения и усвоения конверсии в условиях преподавания английского языка как иностранного.

Keywords: conversion, zero-derivation, vocabulary teaching, EFL learners, word formation, teaching strategies.

Kalit so‘zlar: konversiya, nol derivatsiya, lug‘at o‘qitish, EFL o‘quvchilari, so‘z yasalishi, o‘qitish usullari.

Ключевые слова: конверсия, нулевая деривация, обучение лексике, учащиеся EFL, словообразование, методы обучения.

Vocabulary plays a crucial role in successful language learning and communication[1]. Among the various processes of vocabulary expansion in English, conversion occupies a special position because it allows words to change their grammatical category without any formal modification[2]. Through conversion, nouns may function as verbs, verbs as nouns, and adjectives as nouns, contributing to the flexibility and productivity

1 Alqahtani, S. M. (2015). The Importance of Vocabulary in Language Learning and How to Be Taught.

2 Bauer, L. (2005). The Borderline Between Derivation and Inflection.

of English vocabulary[3]. Despite its importance, conversion is often challenging for EFL learners[4]. Students frequently encounter difficulties in identifying grammatical functions, understanding semantic relationships, and applying converted words appropriately in context. Therefore, effective teaching strategies are required to facilitate the learning of converted words. The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of a seven-step instructional approach designed to improve learners' understanding and use of conversion in English.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods research design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The participants consisted of ten Grade 11 students from a secondary school in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. To evaluate students' knowledge of conversion, a pre-test containing 28 questions was administered before the instructional intervention. After completing a seven-step teaching program conducted over three lessons, students took a post-test consisting of 46 questions. The quantitative data were analyzed through comparison of pre-test and post-test scores. In addition, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted to explore students' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes toward the instructional approach. The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Results and Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the seven-step approach had a positive impact on students' understanding of conversion. The pre-test results showed that learners had limited knowledge of converted words, with an average score of 56%. Individual scores ranged from 35% to 82%. Following the instructional intervention, students

3 Plag, I. (2003). *Word-Formation in English.*

4 Jovanović, V. (2006). Teaching Word Formation in English Language Classes.

demonstrated substantial improvement. The post-test results showed an average score of 86%, representing an increase of 30 percentage points. Individual scores ranged from 65% to 97%. All participants showed improvement between the pre-test and post-test stages. The qualitative findings supported the quantitative results. Three major themes emerged from the interview data. The first theme revealed that most students possessed little or no prior knowledge of conversion before the training. Many participants reported that they had never encountered the concept of conversion and were unfamiliar with its role in English word formation.

The second theme highlighted the development of language skills. Students reported improvements in reading comprehension, paraphrasing, vocabulary development, pronunciation, stress recognition, and the use of dictionaries. They also expressed greater confidence in identifying converted words within authentic texts.

The third theme concerned increased metalinguistic awareness. Participants demonstrated a better understanding of linguistic concepts such as parts of speech, syntactic functions, word formation, conversion, and zero-derivation. Students became more capable of analyzing language structures and recognizing how words can function differently depending on context.

Overall, the results indicate that the seven-step approach contributes significantly to learners' vocabulary growth, grammatical awareness, and communicative competence.

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that a step-by-step approach is an effective method for teaching conversion in EFL classrooms. The quantitative results demonstrated a substantial increase in student achievement, while the qualitative findings revealed positive changes in learners' language skills and metalinguistic awareness. By

combining explicit instruction, contextual practice, semantic analysis, and communicative activities, the seven-step model helps learners understand and apply conversion more effectively. The approach not only improves knowledge of word formation but also supports broader language development. The integration of structured conversion-focused activities into vocabulary instruction can enhance learners' overall English proficiency and contribute to more effective language learning outcomes.

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