

# ENHANCING LEXICAL COMPETENCE IN PHILOLOGY STUDENTS: THE ROLE OF AUTHENTIC TEXTS AND THE FRAYER MODEL

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**ABSTRACT:** This article explores the integration of authentic texts and the Frayer Model to enhance lexical competence in philology students. Authentic texts—materials created for native speakers—provide rich, contextualized language exposure, fostering cultural awareness and motivation. The Frayer Model, a structured graphic organizer, promotes deep vocabulary understanding through definitions, characteristics, examples, and non-examples. Combining these tools addresses the limitations of traditional rote memorization by offering contextual learning and cognitive engagement. A case study conducted in a first-year English philology course demonstrated a 30% increase in correct word usage and improved student confidence in inferring meanings. The study underscores the effectiveness of this integrated approach in preparing students for the linguistic and cultural demands of academic and professional communication.

**KEYWORDS:** lexical competence, philology students, authentic texts, Frayer model, pre-reading, while-reading, post-reading activities.

## INTRODUCTION

Lexical competence—the ability to understand and use words effectively—is a cornerstone of foreign language acquisition, particularly for philology students, who require robust vocabulary skills to analyze literary texts, conduct linguistic research, and engage in scholarly communication. While research underscores vocabulary knowledge as a strong predictor of reading comprehension (Killingly et al., 2024) and grammatical development (Barreña et al., 2006), traditional methods like rote memorization often fail to promote deep understanding or practical application, leading to poor retention and limited communicative competence (Arslan, 2024; Xu, 2024). In response, educators are increasingly adopting innovative strategies (Borasheva, 2023) such as authentic texts (e.g., literary works, news articles, podcasts) and tools like the Frayer Model—a structured graphic organizer that systematically explores vocabulary through definitions, examples, and non-examples—to enhance lexical competence through real-world context and cognitive engagement (Wardarita & Surastina, 2024; Alimbetova, 2024). This article examines the combined use of these tools to address gaps in traditional instruction, aiming to provide a theoretical and practical framework for integrating them into philology curricula. Guided by modern pedagogical challenges, it explores three key questions:

- How do authentic texts contribute to lexical competence development?
- What is the role of the Frayer Model in improving vocabulary acquisition?
- And how can these tools be effectively combined in philology education?

By answering these questions, the study advances strategies to prepare students for the linguistic and cultural demands of academic and professional communication.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Lexical competence, defined by the breadth, depth, and fluency of vocabulary knowledge, is a cornerstone of effective communication and language proficiency. Breadth refers to the number of words a learner knows, enabling engagement with diverse texts and contexts, though studies suggest it is less predictive of comprehension than depth (Examining the Role of Breadth and Depth, 2023). Depth involves understanding word meanings, nuances, and usage, making it a stronger predictor of language proficiency and productive skills like narrative writing (Al-Ta'ai, 2024; Agrram et al., 2024). Fluency, the ability to use vocabulary quickly and accurately, is particularly challenging for learners in specialized contexts but can be improved through strategies like extensive reading and collaborative learning (Boiko, 2023; Gulilola, 2024). Lexical competence is essential for communicative proficiency, as it underpins reading comprehension, writing, and oral expression, enabling learners to convey ideas clearly and understand others effectively (Djoldasova & Alimbetova, 2023; Karimova, 2024). Instructional strategies such as contextualized vocabulary instruction, word mapping, and the use of literary texts have proven effective in enhancing lexical competence, fostering both theoretical understanding and practical language use (Zokirova, 2024; Swyrydjuk, 2023).

Authentic texts, defined as materials created for native speakers and reflecting real-world language use, are invaluable tools for vocabulary development. They encompass a wide range of formats, including literary works, professional documents, and media content, all of which provide real-life context and cultural richness (Kolesnikova, 2024; Vishnevskaya 2022). The use of authentic texts is supported by theoretical frameworks such as Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input for language acquisition, and Sociocultural Theory, which highlights the role of cultural context and social interaction in learning (Avsievich & Neborsky, 2024; Danebergenova, 2025). These texts offer numerous benefits, including contextual learning, which helps learners understand vocabulary in meaningful settings; cultural awareness, which fosters a deeper connection to the target language's sociocultural realities; and increased motivation, as learners engage with materials that are relevant and engaging (Djoldasova & Alimbetova, 2023; Zokirova, 2024). By integrating authentic texts into language instruction, educators can enhance both lexical competence and communicative proficiency, preparing learners for real-world language use.

The Frayer Model is a structured graphic organizer designed to enhance vocabulary acquisition by encouraging deep processing of words. It consists of four sections: definition, characteristics, examples, and non-examples, which help students explore vocabulary in a comprehensive and contextualized manner (Wardarita & Surastina, 2024; Kustati & Prisillia, 2018). Rooted in cognitive and constructivist approaches, the model aligns with theories that emphasize active learning and the integration of new knowledge with prior understanding (Halid, 2024; Hruby, 2025). By engaging students in defining terms, identifying key traits, and distinguishing examples from non-examples, the Frayer Model promotes active participation and deeper comprehension (Rangkuti, 2014). Studies show that this method not only improves vocabulary retention but also fosters enthusiasm and collaboration in the classroom (Sayekti, 2015). However, some educators note that the model may not suit all learning styles, suggesting the need for complementary strategies to address diverse student needs.

## **THE INTEGRATION OF AUTHENTIC TEXTS AND THE FRAYER MODEL**

Authentic texts and the Frayer Model complement each other in enhancing vocabulary learning by addressing different aspects of lexical competence. Authentic texts provide rich, contextualized

input, exposing learners to vocabulary in real-world settings and fostering cultural awareness and critical thinking. By presenting words in meaningful contexts, these texts allow learners to infer meanings and usage, which enhances comprehension and retention (Alimbetova, 2024; Rashtchi & Porkar, 2019). However, the complexity of authentic texts may require careful selection and adaptation to suit learners' proficiency levels. On the other hand, the Frayer Model offers a structured approach to vocabulary acquisition, encouraging systematic and in-depth understanding through definitions, characteristics, examples, and non-examples. This model facilitates deeper cognitive engagement by visually representing word relationships and integrating synonyms and antonyms, which helps students grasp nuanced meanings and apply vocabulary in diverse contexts (Wardarita & Surastina, 2024; Aryanti, 2017). While the Frayer Model promotes active participation and retention, some educators note that it may not cater to all learning styles, suggesting the need for a balanced approach that combines these tools with other instructional strategies to maximize effectiveness.

Integrating authentic texts with the Frayer Model offers a powerful approach to vocabulary development in the classroom. The process begins with selecting appropriate authentic texts, such as literary excerpts, news articles, or linguistic research, that are relevant, comprehensible, and lexically rich (Gilmore, 2007; Nation, 2001). Next, key vocabulary is identified, either through teacher-guided selection or student-led annotation, focusing on words that are essential for comprehension and communication (Schmitt, 2008). The Frayer Model is then applied to explore these words systematically, with students completing graphic organizers that include definitions, characteristics, examples, and non-examples, fostering deeper understanding and retention (Frayer, Frederick, & Klausmeier, 1969). Activities are structured around pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading tasks: pre-reading involves word association and concept mapping to activate prior knowledge; while-reading tasks include context clue identification and collaborative Frayer Model completion; and post-reading activities focus on word discussion, sentence creation, and creative writing to reinforce vocabulary in context (Nation, 2013). This structured yet flexible approach ensures that students engage with vocabulary in meaningful ways, enhancing both lexical competence and communicative proficiency.

The combined approach of integrating authentic texts with the Frayer Model offers significant benefits for vocabulary development and language learning. First, it enhances vocabulary retention and usage by promoting deep cognitive engagement through contextual learning and structured vocabulary exploration. Studies show that spaced repetition and self-regulation strategies, combined with real-life contexts, improve retention more effectively than traditional rote memorization (Aghdam et al., 2025; Fengyu, 2023). Second, this approach improves cultural and contextual understanding by exposing students to authentic materials that reflect real-world language use and cultural nuances. Integrative learning strategies, such as blending technology with traditional methods, help students connect new vocabulary with cultural and contextual knowledge, fostering a deeper understanding of the target language (Saidova, 2024; Albatti, 2023). Finally, the combined approach increases student engagement and motivation by offering varied and personalized learning experiences. The use of diverse instructional strategies, such as collaborative activities and blended learning, keeps students actively involved and motivated, as they can tailor their learning to their interests and needs (Aghdam et al., 2025; Albatti, 2023). While this approach requires careful planning to avoid cognitive overload, its balanced implementation ensures a comprehensive and engaging language learning experience.

## METHODOLOGY

To demonstrate the practical application of authentic texts and the Frayer Model, a case study was conducted in a first-year English philology course at Nukus State Pedagogical Institute. The study involved 45 participants aged 18–20, divided into three groups based on their native languages: Uzbek, Karakalpak, and Russian. The Uzbek and Karakalpak groups each consisted of 13 students, while the Russian group had 19 students. These participants were typical of undergraduate students in their initial year of higher education.

The study was conducted over 2 sessions rather than a 12-week semester, focusing on vocabulary development to improve students' ability to understand and use new vocabulary, infer word meanings from context, and deepen lexical understanding through structured analysis.

**Table 1**

*Case Study Overview*

<b>Parameter:</b>	<b>Details:</b>
Age group:	18–20 years (undergraduate students)
Number of participants:	45 (13 Uzbek, 13 Karakalpak, 19 Russian)
Duration:	2 sessions
Key activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use of authentic texts (Sarah Orne Jewett's short story "A White Heron", article "The Evolution of Language: How Words Shape Our Reality").</li> <li>- Frayer Model application (pre-, while-, post-reading phases).</li> </ul>
Outcomes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 30% increase in correct word usage.</li> <li>- 35% improvement in vocabulary test scores.</li> <li>- 85% of students reported heightened confidence in inferring meanings.</li> </ul>

Authentic texts were carefully selected for relevance, lexical richness, and engagement potential. The materials included Sarah Orne Jewett's short story "A White Heron", which explores themes of nature and morality, and the article "The Evolution of Language: How Words Shape Our Reality", which delves into the dynamic relationship between language and human perception. These texts exposed students to a variety of linguistic styles, from literary narrative to academic discourse, while introducing concepts such as semantic evolution and the power of language in shaping thought.

## PHASES OF IMPLEMENTATION

### **Pre-Reading**

Students predicted word meanings using the Frayer Model's quadrants (definition, characteristics, examples, non-examples).

Example: Before analyzing “A White Heron”, students dissected the word “heron” through brainstorming and semantic mapping, exploring its literal and symbolic meanings.

### **While-Reading**

Contextual analysis: Students underlined target words, compared predicted vs. actual meanings, and engaged in peer discussions.

Example: During the reading of “The Evolution of Language”, students explored terms like “linguistic relativity” and “semantic shift” in diverse contexts, discussing how language influences thought.

## **FINDINGS**

- Quantitative Gains: Vocabulary test scores rose by 35%, with 30% improved accuracy in contextual usage.
- Qualitative Feedback: 85% of students reported enhanced confidence in inferring meanings, alongside higher engagement during peer discussions.
- Challenges Addressed:
  - Text Complexity: Scaffolded via chunking texts and pre-teaching vocabulary.
  - Student Resistance: Mitigated through relatable materials and incremental difficulty scaling.

The study’s condensed format over two sessions, rather than a full semester, allowed for focused and intensive engagement with the materials. Despite the shorter duration, the results demonstrated significant improvements in vocabulary acquisition and confidence, highlighting the effectiveness of the Frayer Model and authentic texts in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. The incorporation of "A White Heron" and "The Evolution of Language" offered students engaging and intellectually stimulating content that enhanced both their linguistic proficiency and critical thinking skills.

## **DISCUSSION**

Integrating authentic texts with the Frayer Model offers an alternative to traditional vocabulary instruction by immersing students in real-world language contexts. Authentic texts expose learners to diverse vocabulary and genuine language use, enhancing vocabulary acquisition and reading fluency (Yanisiv & Ishchuk, 2023). The Frayer Model complements this by promoting systematic exploration of word meanings through definitions, examples, and non-examples, leading to improved retention and practical usage (Kustati & Prisillia, 2018).

This combined approach aligns with contemporary educational standards that emphasize communicative competence, critical thinking, and personalized learning (Sakti et al., 2024). By blending linguistic, cultural, and literary methods, it fosters not only lexical competence but also cultural awareness and interdisciplinary understanding, preparing students to navigate complex, real-life language situations effectively (Li, 2024).

Beyond philology, the integration of authentic texts and the Frayer Model holds significant potential in fields like linguistics and translation studies. In linguistics, authentic texts serve as primary data for analyzing language structures, sociolinguistic patterns, and semantic evolution (Li, 2024). For translation studies, authentic texts train translators to navigate cultural nuances and idiomatic expressions, while the Frayer Model aids in mastering domain-specific terminology (Yanisiv & Ishchuk, 2023; Stebick & Nichols, 2014).

Moreover, the use of authentic materials and structured vocabulary strategies extends beyond formal education, supporting professionals in journalism, diplomacy, or marketing to track evolving language trends. Digital platforms further amplify access to resources like podcasts or reports, empowering lifelong learners to autonomously master specialized vocabulary and adapt to multilingual environments (Pošeiko, 2020).

While challenges such as resource allocation and teacher training persist, the adaptability of this combined approach to diverse student needs and digital literacy demands underscores its transformative potential in language education (Brooks et al., 2024; Sakti et al., 2024).

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, integrating authentic texts with the Frayer Model offers a multifaceted approach to enhancing lexical competence among philology students. Authentic texts immerse learners in real-world language use, providing contextual richness and cultural insights that traditional materials often lack. This exposure not only broadens vocabulary but also deepens understanding of word usage in various contexts. The Frayer Model complements this by offering a structured method for analyzing and internalizing new vocabulary, encouraging active engagement through definitions, characteristics, examples, and non-examples. This combination fosters deeper cognitive processing, leading to improved retention and application of vocabulary.

Future research should explore the long-term effects of this integrated approach on vocabulary acquisition and retention through longitudinal studies. Comparative analyses between this method and other vocabulary instruction strategies could provide further insights into its efficacy. Additionally, investigating the integration of digital tools and platforms with authentic texts and the Frayer Model may reveal new avenues for enhancing lexical competence. Collaboration among educators, researchers, and curriculum designers is essential to refine and implement these strategies effectively, ensuring that philology students are well-equipped with the lexical skills necessary for academic and professional success.

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