



## LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF CLUSTER TASKS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISCOURSE COMPETENCE IN FUTURE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

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**Annotation.** This article explores the linguistic features of cluster tasks and their role in developing discourse competence among future English language teachers. It highlights how cluster-based activities through organizing vocabulary, grammar structures, and thematic concepts facilitate the construction of coherent, contextually appropriate speech in both monologic and dialogic forms. Emphasis is placed on semantic cohesion, syntactic variety, and pragmatic relevance as essential components of discourse competence. The paper argues that implementing cluster tasks in teacher education not only enhances pre-service teachers' linguistic awareness but also equips them with effective strategies for stimulating communicative competence in their future classrooms. The study underscores the pedagogical value of cluster techniques in bridging theoretical knowledge with practical language use.

**Key words.** Cluster-based task, contextual sentence, discourse competence, monologue, dialogue, lexical features.

**Annotatsiya.** Ushbu maqolada klasterli topshiriqlarning lingvistik xususiyatlari va ularning ingliz tili bo'yicha bo'lajak o'qituvchilarda diskursiv kompetensiyani shakllantirishdagi o'rni o'rganiladi. Unda klasterga asoslangan faoliyatlar orqali so'z boyligi, grammatik tuzilmalar va tematik tushunchalarni tartibga solish orqali monologik va dialogik nutqda izchil hamda kontekstga mos nutqni shakllantirishga qanday yordam berishi yoritilgan. Maqolada semantik bog'liqlik, sintaktik xilma-xillik va pragmatik dolzarblik diskursiv kompetensiyaning muhim tarkibiy qismlari sifatida alohida ta'kidlanadi. Tadqiqotda klaster topshiriqlarini o'qituvchilarni tayyorlash jarayoniga joriy etish, nafaqat ularning lingvistik ongini rivojlantirishi, balki kelajakdagi darslarida kommunikativ kompetensiyani rivojlantirish uchun samarali strategiyalarni shakllantirishiga xizmat qilishi qayd etiladi. Mazkur maqolada

klaster texnikalarining nazariy bilimlarni amaliy til ko‘nikmalari bilan uyg‘unlashtirishdagi pedagogik ahamiyati alohida e’tirof etiladi.

**Kalit so‘zlar.** Klasterga asoslangan topshiriq, kontekstual gap, diskursiv kompetensiya, monolog, dialog, leksik xususiyatlar.

**Аннотация.** В данной статье рассматриваются лингвистические особенности кластерных заданий и их роль в формировании дискурсивной компетентности у будущих учителей английского языка. Подчеркивается, что кластерные задания, основанные на организации лексики, грамматических структур и тематических понятий, способствуют построению связной и контекстуально уместной речи как в монологической, так и в диалогической формах. Особое внимание уделяется семантической связности, синтаксическому разнообразию и прагматической уместности как ключевым компонентам дискурсивной компетентности. В статье утверждается, что внедрение кластерных заданий в подготовку учителей не только развивает языковое сознание студентов, но и вооружает их эффективными стратегиями для развития коммуникативной компетентности в их будущей педагогической практике. Исследование подчеркивает педагогическую ценность кластерных методик как моста между теоретическими знаниями и практическим использованием языка.

**Ключевые слова.** Кластерное задание, контекстуальное предложение, дискурсивная компетентность, монолог, диалог, лексические особенности.

Cluster-based exercises are becoming a popular and engaging way to teach lexical and grammatical components in contemporary language teaching approaches. This approach is especially beneficial for learning foreign languages because it helps to reinforce grammar and contextualize vocabulary. A cluster is a method of organizing related ideas or concepts around a central theme. In language learning, this method helps to systematize knowledge and strengthen semantic relationships between linguistic units. It is particularly useful at the beginning stages of language acquisition, as it directs learners’ attention to key vocabulary and their contextual use<sup>85</sup>. For example, when introducing the topic of “Food,” the cluster might include lexical units like “fruit,” “vegetables,” “meat,” and “snacks,” while also introducing relevant grammatical structures, such as verbs (“eat,” “cook,” “taste”) and opposites (“hot-cold,” “sweet-sour”). By employing clusters to choose lexical units, students can arrange their vocabulary thematically and create meaningful relationships between words. Learners are taught to link words to particular contexts and real-life scenarios rather than memorizing isolated keywords. For instance, in the topic of “Professions,” a cluster could include terms like “doctor,” “engineer,” “teacher,” and “artist,” along with their corresponding verbs and phrases:

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1. Buzan, T. Mind Map Book: Radiant Thinking. BBC Active. 2010, P. 53.

2. Nation, I.S.P. Learning Vocabulary in Another Language. Cambridge University Press. 2001, P. 87.

Doctor – treat, examine, patient; Teacher – explain, teach, students. This way of grouping vocabulary helps learners understand the semantic fields of words, which facilitates deeper learning<sup>86</sup>. Contextual sentence formation tasks are particularly effective in grammar teaching because they provide learners with opportunities to apply what they have learned in practical, meaningful ways. For instance, when teaching verb tenses, instead of simply memorizing rules, students can form sentences based on their own experiences. This connection to real-life situations aids retention and comprehension<sup>87</sup>. An example using the present perfect tense: I have traveled to Italy. (a completed action with relevance to the present)

This task encourages students to use grammar in contexts they can relate to, fostering a deeper understanding of grammatical structures. Selecting grammatical units, such as verb tenses, modal verbs, and articles, can also be taught effectively using cluster-based tasks. For example, when teaching future tenses, the cluster could include the following: will → will go, will eat, will study.

Be going to → is going to travel, are going to play. Time markers → tomorrow, next week, soon. This method allows grammatical structures to be taught not in isolation, but in context, which helps learners understand how to use them in real communication<sup>88</sup>.

The benefits of these exercises are they encourage students to think critically and connect words and structures on their own, they are more actively participating. Students' ability to communicate with others is improved and collaborative thinking is encouraged, particularly when they form a cluster.

Clusters encourage students to analyze, generalize, and create. They also serve as a scaffold for writing and speaking tasks, resulting in more coherent and structured output. For example, when asked to write a composition or deliver an oral presentation using vocabulary and grammar from a cluster, students tend to produce more organized and contextually appropriate language<sup>89</sup>. In addition to making learning easier, choosing lexical and grammatical units based on cluster-based assignments aids students in arranging their information logically. Through meaningful and practical language acquisition, this approach guarantees that students can apply grammar and vocabulary in everyday situations.

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Writing is a kind of communication that permits learners to disclose their ideas and feelings through a well-devised text. It is widely contemplated as a critically paramount skill in the teaching and learning of English as a Second language (ESL). It helps to solidify all other language skills of listening, speaking and reading as it is a comprehensive skill that enhances vocabulary, grammar, thinking, planning, editing, revising and other elements<sup>90</sup>. A good sentence needs to make sense on its own<sup>91</sup>. Generally, sentences are made up of clauses: groups of words that express a single idea<sup>92</sup>. Independent clauses and dependent clauses are the types of clauses. A sentence that consists of one independent clause is a simple sentence. Joining simple sentences will make up compound sentence and complex sentence is made when an independent clause and a dependent clause are merged. Apart from that, a good sentence needs to be correctly punctuated<sup>93</sup>. It always starts with a capital letter and either a full stop, exclamation or question mark will be used at the end.

Language does not exist in a vacuum; every utterance takes place in a particular context – social, cultural and situational. Context determiners the vocabulary, tone and structure appropriate to a given interaction. Teaching learners how to construct sentences within context helps them.

- Understand the pragmatic functions of language.
- Develop sensitivity to tone, formality and audience.
- Improve both written and spoken discourse skills.

Contextual sentence construction exercises are based on the following types:

1. Picture-based prompts – after seeing pictures, students are instructed to write or speak phrases that correspond with the scenes. This increases context awareness and vocabulary.
2. Role-play scenarios – learners construct and practice sentences in imagined situations such as ordering food, giving directions or attending a job interview.
3. Sentence completion with context cues – given a short paragraph or dialogue, students complete the sentences using contextually appropriate language.
4. Topic-based writing tasks – students write short texts such as emails, diary entries, social media posts) using vocabulary and structures relevant to the context.

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5. Discourse markers and connectors practice – exercises that encourage the use of linking words to preserve coherence and cohesion within contextual writing.

Tasks involving the construction of sentences in context greatly improve student engagement and learning results. These assignments force students to use critical thinking skills and apply grammar principles in relevant settings, in contrast to standard grammar drills that frequently concentrate on isolated forms. This not only strengthens their comprehension but also adds interest and relevance to language study.

Additionally, these exercises foster verbal and written language fluency. In order to improve their ability to use the language naturally, students are taught to construct sentences based on hypothetical or real-world scenarios. Instead of just following rules, I’ve found that when students understand how to apply grammatical ideas in real-world situations, they are more likely to remember them in my course. Students’ learning experiences are further improved by collaborative exercises, in which they compose sentences based on common situations. In language instruction, contextualized sentence construction exercises are a vital resource. They ensure that students may use their knowledge in real-world communication by bridging the gap between theoretical grammar principles and practical language use. In addition to increasing grammatical accuracy, this method gives students more self-assurance when speaking the language.

Discourse competence refers to the ability to use language coherently, logically and appropriately in a given context. It is primarily demonstrated through two forms of communication:

Monologic speech – continuous individual expression, such as presentations, storytelling.

Dialogic speech – interactive exchanges, conversations or discussions.

Thus, the development of discourse competence is closely linked to the ability to construct both monologues and dialogues.

Cluster tasks involve creating a visual map (cluster diagram) of related ideas, phrases or words around a central concept or keyword. These tasks help learners:

- Organize ideas;
- Identify linguistic units in context;
- Construct meaningful sentences.

They serve as a foundational stage for generating both monologic and dialogic speech.

Stage	Objective	Implementation example
<b>Creating a cluster</b>	Identify key concepts related to a topic	Topic: “ <b>Education</b> ” – words: teacher, student, school
<b>Constructing sentences</b>	Form context-appropriate sentences from cluster items	<i>Teachers play a vital role in education.</i>

<b>Producing speech</b>	Use constructed sentences to build monologue/dialogue	Monologue: <i>In my opinion...</i> Dialogue A: <i>What do you think about online education?</i> B: <i>I think it's very convenient.</i>
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### 1-Table. Connection Model: Cluster-Sentence-Speech (Monologue/Dialogue)

One of the main objectives of second language acquisition (SLA) is to provide students the skills they need to create sentences that are both grammatically correct and acceptable for their context. One of the best methods for accomplishing this goal has been found to be contextual sentence construction exercises. These exercises assist students gain greater linguistic competency by encouraging them to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts rather than merely concentrating on grammar rules.

### CONCLUSION

To sum up, incorporating cluster activities into the training of English language teachers is a powerful teaching technique for developing discourse competency. These tasks encourage the development of semantic cohesion, syntactic precision, pragmatic awareness, and contextual appropriateness essential components required to produce meaningful and coherent monologic and dialogic speech by structuring linguistic units around major themes. Gaining proficiency in these areas is crucial for aspiring English language instructors, both for their own professional communication and for helping students utilize the language in actual situations. Additionally, cluster activities are very flexible across all skill levels and learning environments due to their visual and interactive character. Therefore, adding cluster-based activities to teacher preparation programs can greatly improve pre-service teachers' linguistic and methodological preparedness and provide them with useful tools to improve their communicative competence in the classroom.

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