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DEVELOPING PRACTICAL TASKS IN ENGLISH BASED ON THE CLIL+LEXICAL APPROACH FOR FOOD TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS

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Abstract

This article presents a specialized pedagogical framework for Food Technology students, integrating Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) with the Lexical Approach. The core objective is to move beyond isolated vocabulary lists toward lexical chunks specifically used in food science, such as processing techniques, safety protocols, and chemical reactions. The study details an exploration of a 4-skill exercise system: reading, listening, writing, and speaking that designed to improve both professional competence and linguistic fluency.

Keywords: CLIL, Lexical Approach, Food Technology, ESP (English for Specific Purposes), Lexical Chunks, Food Safety.

Introduction

The modern language classroom increasingly demands efficiency. Traditional methods often separate content from language, leading to fragmented learning. CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) addresses this by teaching subjects through a foreign language. However, CLIL often struggles with linguistic fossilization if the language instruction isn't precise.

For students of Food Technology, English is not merely a subject but a tool for accessing international safety standards, research on food processing, and global

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supply chain logistics. Traditional grammar-heavy methods often fail to prepare students for the highly formulaic and technical nature of the industry.

By combining CLIL (teaching the science of food through English) with the Lexical Approach (focusing on multi-word collocations), educators can help students internalize the language of the lab. This article proposes a system where the chunk (e.g., extend the shelf life, ensure thermal stability) becomes the primary unit of instruction.

2. Methods

2.1 The Food Tech Lexical Framework

The methodology relies on "Lexical Priming" within a food science context. Tasks are categorized into four macro-skills, ensuring that the same technical chunks are encountered receptively before being produced.

✓ Selection – identifying high-frequency collocations from Food Safety and Food Chemistry texts.

✓ Integration – embedding these chunks into authentic scientific scenarios.

✓ Application – moving from controlled recognition to free production.

3. Detailed Framework

3.1 The "Triple-A" Lexical model

In a Food Technology context, the Lexical Approach isn't just about learning nouns; it's about learning the verbs and adjectives that naturally magnetize to them. We use the Triple-A Model: Analysis, Acquisition, and Articulation.

3.2. Analysis: a) Identifying the "Food Tech" chunk

Teachers must first extract the most pregnant lexical units from authentic materials like the *Codex Alimentarius* or ISO 22000 standards.

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Table 1

Word type	Examples in Food Tech
Collocations	*Enhance* flavor, *Inhibit* oxidation, *Fortify* vitamins, *Tolerable* daily intake.
Fixed Phrases	Store in a cool, dry place, Subject to rigorous testing, Meets regulatory standards.
Semi-fixed frames	The process of [X] involves [Y] to ensure [Z].

b) Deconstructing the Professional text

In this initial phase, the student acts as a linguistic detective. Instead of looking for single words, they analyze authentic Food Technology texts (manuals, safety standards, research papers) to identify how words cluster together to identify collocations and fixed expressions, analyzing a HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) document. Students highlight Verb + Noun combinations.

Example: They don't just see "limit"; they see establish "critical limits". They don't just see "hazard"; they see "conduct a hazard analysis."

3.3. Acquisition: Priming the Lexical brain

Acquisition in this model is not about rote drilling; it is about Lexical Priming. This theory suggests that every time a student encounters a chunk in a meaningful context, it becomes weighted in their brain, making it easier to retrieve later to move the chunk from short-term memory to long-term ready-to-use storage, focusing on sensory evaluation and lab reporting. Students are given a table where they must match technical adjectives with the correct food properties.

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Table 2

Adjective (The Prime)	Noun (The Target)	Resulting Chunk
Aqueous	Solution	Aqueous solution
Volatile	Compounds	Volatile compounds
Organoleptic	Properties	Organoleptic properties

3.4 Articulation: Productive real-time usage

The final stage is where the student uses these pre-fabricated chunks to communicate complex scientific ideas fluently. Because the chunks are retrieved as a single unit, the student's Cognitive load is significantly reduced, to produce native-like professional discourse without the mental translation lag. Students are given a "skeleton" of a speech regarding a new preservation method. They must fill in the blanks using the chunks acquired in the previous stages.

Example: To extend the shelf life of the product, we decided to incorporate natural antioxidants, which effectively inhibit the rate of lipid oxidation.

By following this model, Food Technology students avoid the common pitfall of clunky English.

- Analysis ensures they learn the right language (accuracy).
- Acquisition ensures they remember the language (retention).
- Articulation ensures they can use the language under pressure (fluency).

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4. Results

4.1 The 4-Skill Exercise system

Theme: Food Preservation and Safety

➢ **Receptive skills:** Reading and listening. In reading collocation mapping students read a technical data sheet on Pasteurization and UHT. Instead of answering "True / False, they must find verbs that collocate with "microorganisms".

➢ **Listening**: Students watch a video of a factory inspection. They complete a "Process Log" using fixed phrases heard in the audio, such as "maintain a constant temperature" or "prevent cross-contamination."

➢ **Productive skills:** Writing and speaking. In writing students are given a list of weak sentences (e.g., We put the food in the fridge so it stays good longer). They must rewrite these using formal Food Tech chunks – the sample was refrigerated to extend the shelf life.

➢ **Speaking**: In a role-play, one student acts as a Quality Assurance Manager and the other as a Technician. They must discuss a simulated batch failure using a lexical prompt sheet containing functional chunks such as the primary cause of spoilage was... and to mitigate further risk, we must...

4.2 Expanded applications

Phase 1: Receptive input. The Collocation grid (Reading) – students read a technical text on thermal processing. Instead of summarizing, they must map out the life of a pathogen using specific lexical partners found in the text.

Task 1 Match the verb to the noun.

1) Eradicate	*a) spoilage*
2) Neutralize	*b) enzymes*
3) Delay	*c) bacteria*

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Task 2 The Chunk-dictation (Listening): Students listen to a recorded safety audit. The teacher reads at natural speed, but students only write down the prepositional phrases and verb chunks. Focus: *...in accordance with, ...prone to contamination, ...at the critical control point.*

Phase 2: Productive output. Lexical substitution (Writing) – This addresses inter-language – the tendency for students to use Basic English for professional concepts. Students take a non-professional sentence and up-cycle it using the Lexical Approach.

- Basic: *If we put more salt in, the food doesn't rot fast.*
- Lexical (Food tech): *Increasing the concentration of sodium chloride acts as a preservative to inhibit microbial growth.*

Task 3 The technical handover (Speaking). In a simulated shift change at a dairy plant, students must use functional chunks to brief the incoming team. They are graded on their use of discourse markers:

✓ Framing the problem: *We've encountered a slight deviation in...*
✓ Suggesting action: *It is recommended that we recalibrate the...*
✓ Confirming safety: *The batch remains within the safety parameters*.

5. Observations

Using real-world documents provides immediate relevance. Learning shelf life as a single unit is more effective than learning shelf and life separately, which avoids awkward literal translations.

6. Discussion

The integration of these two methods addresses the "fluency gap" in Food Technology education. When students learn language in chunks, their cognitive load is reduced during high-stakes tasks, such as presenting a safety audit or writing a peer-reviewed abstract. The primary friction in CLIL for Food tech is cognitive overload. When a student struggles to conjugate a verb while

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simultaneously trying to explain the Maillard Reaction, the science suffers. By treating the Maillard reaction occurs when... as a single, unanalyzed block, the student's brain treats the language as a loaded tool rather than a set of parts. This allows for higher-order scientific thinking.

7. Conclusion

Developing tasks based on the CLIL+Lexical approach allows Food Technology students to acquire professional mastery and linguistic competence simultaneously. The 4-skill system ensures that lexis is recycled across different contexts, leading to more native-like professional output. Future curriculum development should focus on digitalizing these lexical grids for mobile-assisted language learning. The Practical tasks system outlined here bridges the gap between the laboratory and the international boardroom. For Food Technology students, the Lexical Approach provides the specific flavor of English required for professional credibility. Future studies should investigate how Virtual Reality (VR) simulations of food processing plants can further prime these lexical chunks by associating them with physical movements in a 3D space.

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