



EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING VOCABULARY TO YOUNG LEARNERS

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Abstract: *This article highlights some effective teaching strategies for teaching vocabulary to young learners. Vocabulary range has always been regarded as an essential part of learning a second language as the more vocabulary we know the better we can understand the meaning of a particular word or communicate with English speakers.*

Key words: *vocabulary, techniques and methods, young learners, integrated skills.*

Vocabulary range is considered as a central part of learning a second language. It is very important for all people who are in the process of acquiring a language to understand and improve their vocabulary range. Teaching vocabulary to younger learners is not as the same as to teenagers or older people. It requires some different methods to teach lexical resources effectively to younger learners. In particular, teachers have an important role to improve children's vocabulary range. Teachers should be aware of various factors in teaching children such as strategies, techniques, methods, materials as well as knowing the characteristics of a young learner.

Young learner: Young learners mean children from the first year of formal schooling (5 or 6 year old) to eleven or twelve year age. Young learners have own special characteristic that differentiate them from adult learners. It should be known and understood by the teacher to give contribution to improve their quality of teaching process [2].

In this age they find difficulty to know abstract thing because they have a limited knowledge about the word. Because of that every teacher should be able to and know how to work with young children and have patience to explain every tiny thing to them. As Cameron recommends some special characteristics of young learners that teachers should take into consideration:

- Young learners have short attention span. Teachers should give them different types of activities so as to break their boredom;
- They are very active. Teachers should ask them to do role play or involve them in competitions.
- They are less shy than older learners: they should be always involved in a task and teachers should ask them to repeat utterances;
- They are imaginative. Teachers should use as many pictures as they can to teach new vocabulary related to concrete meanings;
- They respond well and positively to rewards from the teacher;



- They have limited knowledge about the world;
- They don't have much listening and reading skills even in their first language;
- They need physical movement and activity as much as stimulation for their thinking.

Vocabulary: A.S. Hornby, English linguist and methodologist, widely known for his works in the field of methods of teaching English to foreigners in "The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English" states that vocabulary is: (1) all words that a person knows or uses, (2) all words in a particular language, (3) words that people use when they talk, and (4) a list of words with their meanings, especially in a book for learning a foreign language [5].

According to Napa, states that 'it is a fact that vocabulary is one of the components of the language. There are no languages that exist without words. They are the means by which people exchange their thoughts. The more words we learn the more ideas we should have. This way we can communicate our ideas more effectively. It is not easy to teach vocabulary, especially new vocabulary, to junior high school students, because teaching it requires an explanation of every part. However, at other times the teacher should see that the meaning and use of words should also be given a lot of attention' [6].

Methods and Techniques. Before talking about effective strategies for teaching vocabulary to young learners, it should be differentiated techniques and methods. According to Cambridge English Dictionary method is a particular way of doing something. Technique is a way of doing activity that needs skill.

Furthermore, H. Douglas Brown states that method is described as an overall plan for systematic presentation of language based upon a selected approach. Techniques are the specific activities manifested in the classroom that are consistent with a method and therefore are in harmony with an approach as well [1].

The Direct Method. The Direct Method can also be called as Reform Method, Natural Method or Berlitz Method. The basic premise of this method is that second language learning should be more like first language learning – lots of oral interaction, spontaneous use of language, no translation between first and second languages, or no analysis of grammatical rules. The principle of this language is "knowing a language is being able to speak". There are some main principles of this method which can be useful while teaching young learners:

1. Classroom instruction is conducted exclusively in the target language: the teacher should demonstrate, not explain or translate;
2. Only everyday vocabulary and sentences are taught;
3. Vocabulary is taught through known words;
4. Authentic objects, pictures and miming are used;
5. Vocabulary is acquired more naturally. Students should learn to think in the target language as soon as possible [1].

This type of method can be effective for younger learners to acquire more stocks of words rather than other methods as this method requires to be active both physically and mentally which is proper to young learners.



Techniques. There are various types of interactive techniques which can be used during the teaching process of young learners. For instance, Meaning-based technique, Vocabulary games, Discussion, Debates, Role playing, Project work, Group work and other techniques can be used by teachers during the lessons.

Meaning-based technique. Meaning-based teaching is connected to visual instruction, and teachers often use objects or images to support the learners. The main objective is to create a parallel between words and their meaning. This can be done with the help of objects, strategies, pictures or even music.

According to Rogova, it is possible to group the techniques into two groups: visual and verbal. with the help of visual techniques, teachers can provide with different kinds of objects or pictures of animals, fruits, vegetables or different kind of things to teach mostly concrete words to children. After learning new vocabulary they can revise by looking at the picture or touching the different kinds of objects. For example, the teacher uses objects like pencil and looking at it says: *What is this? It is a pencil. Is it a pencil? Yes, it is. Is it a pen? No, it is not.* The pupils do not only grasp the meaning of the word pencil, but they observe the use of the word in familiar sentence patterns [7].

The second group of technique, that is to say verbal technique, involves utilization of verbal means for conveying the meaning of unfamiliar words. These may be context, synonyms, antonyms, definitions and world building elements. The context may serve as a key to convey the meaning of a new word. For instance:

Teacher: It was hot. We had nothing to drink. We were thirsty. Do people need water or bread when they are thirsty?

Pupil: They need water.

Teacher: What do people need when they are thirsty?

Pupil: They need water.

Teacher: It was hot. We had nothing to drink. We were thirsty. Were we thirsty?

Pupil: Yes, you were.

Teacher: Were we thirsty or hungry? (The pupils are familiar with the word hungry.)

Pupil: You were thirsty.

Teacher: Why were we thirsty?

Pupil: You were thirsty because it was hot [7].

The pupil's answer to the teacher's question testify to their comprehension of the word. So there is no need to turn to the mother tongue as pupils can grasp the meaning of the word *thirsty* from the context. Besides, while presenting the new word a conversation takes place between the teacher and the class, so they have practice in listening comprehension and speaking.

All things considered above, Students vocabulary deficit will affect their integrated skills, that is to say, reading, writing, oral and listening skills. The 2,000 most frequent words should be considered when teaching vocabulary since students will encounter these words more often. Different strategies, such as visual aids, have shown to be an effective method for teaching vocabulary to young learners.



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