PROBLEM OF TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY TO LEARNERS USING INTERACTIVE METHODS

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Abstract

This article explores the challenges of teaching English vocabulary to learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Vocabulary acquisition is often difficult due to factors such as word complexity, lack of context, and limited exposure to authentic language use. The study emphasizes the effectiveness of interactive teaching methods, including games, group work, and communicative activities, in enhancing vocabulary learning. The findings suggest that interactive approaches significantly improve learners' retention, understanding, and ability to use new words confidently in real-life situations.

Key words: vocabulary, interactive methods, English language teaching, EFL learners, communicative approach, lexical competence, classroom activities, language acquisition

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is one of the most essential components of language learning. Without sufficient vocabulary knowledge, learners cannot effectively communicate, even if they understand grammatical rules. Many EFL learners struggle with vocabulary due to difficulties in memorization, pronunciation, spelling, and contextual usage.

The present study aims to investigate the main challenges learners face when acquiring English vocabulary and to explore how interactive teaching methods can support more effective learning. Research shows that vocabulary learning is more successful when students actively engage with words in meaningful contexts rather than memorizing them in isolation.

A strong vocabulary base allows learners to express ideas clearly, understand texts, and participate in conversations. It also supports all four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Vocabulary learning is important because it helps learners:

1. Express ideas more clearly and accurately.
2. Improve reading comprehension and listening skills.
3. Enhance fluency in speaking and writing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching vocabulary has been widely discussed in language pedagogy. According to Scott Thornbury (2002), vocabulary learning requires repeated exposure and meaningful use, as learners need to encounter words in different contexts to fully understand their meanings.

Jeremy Harmer (2007) highlights that interactive methods such as discussions, role-plays, and games encourage active participation and help learners retain new vocabulary more effectively. He argues that students learn better when they are involved in meaningful communication rather than passive memorization. Penny Ur (2012) emphasizes the importance of practice and engagement in vocabulary teaching. She suggests that activities like word games, matching exercises, and group tasks increase motivation and make learning more enjoyable.

Rod Ellis (2003) also supports the idea that language acquisition improves when learners are actively involved in the learning process. Interactive activities allow students to experiment with new

vocabulary, receive feedback, and develop deeper understanding. Furthermore, H. Douglas Brown (2000) promotes communicative language teaching (CLT), where vocabulary is taught through real-life communication. This approach helps learners use words naturally and appropriately in different situations.

From my perspective, interactive methods are essential for teaching vocabulary effectively. Based on classroom experience, students often forget words learned through memorization alone. However, when they use vocabulary in games, discussions, and collaborative tasks, they remember it better and gain confidence in using it.

ACTIVITY: VOCABULARY BUILDING GAME

In teaching vocabulary, we use an activity called a "Word Association Game."

Step 1: Introduce new vocabulary with clear definitions, examples, and pronunciation.

Step 2: Write several key words on the board.

Step 3: Divide students into small groups. Each group must create sentences or associations using the given words.

Example: Word: travel

I like to travel to new countries.

Travel helps people learn about cultures.

Step 4: Organize a competition. Each group presents their sentences, and the teacher evaluates accuracy and creativity.

This activity helps learners:

A. Understand vocabulary in context
B. Improve speaking skills
C. Increase motivation and participation

According to Azizova (2008), learners and teachers should continuously explore new teaching methods to achieve better educational outcomes. Interactive techniques play a crucial role in this process by making learning more effective and engaging. To teach vocabulary successfully, teachers should use visual aids, real-life examples, repetition, and interactive tasks such as games and group activities. These methods help students remember words more easily and use them correctly.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, vocabulary is a fundamental aspect of language learning that directly affects learners' ability to communicate. Without sufficient vocabulary knowledge, learners cannot express their ideas clearly or understand others effectively. Interactive teaching methods provide an effective solution to the challenges of vocabulary learning. They help students engage actively, practice meaningfully, and retain new words for a longer time. Therefore, incorporating interactive techniques into vocabulary teaching not only improves learners' lexical competence but also makes the learning process more enjoyable and productive.

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