

EFFECTIVE METHODS OF TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY

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Abstract: Teaching vocabulary is one of the most important aspects of English language instruction because vocabulary knowledge directly affects learners' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. However, in almost every classroom setting, both teachers and students face challenges in learning vocabulary. While passive learning can be counted as one of the most common reasons, lacking effective methods to learn and use new vocabularies efficiently is still a critical problem. To overcome this issue, teachers should follow a step-by-step guide, encouraging students to learn vocabulary in an interesting and meaningful way with the help of flashcards, games, spaced repetition and AI tools.

Аннотация: Обучение лексике является одним из важнейших компонентов преподавания английского языка, поскольку словарный запас напрямую влияет на развитие навыков аудирования, говорения, чтения и письма учащихся. Несмотря на это, в процессе обучения как преподаватели, так и студенты сталкиваются с различными трудностями при усвоении новых слов. Одной из основных причин данной проблемы является пассивное обучение, а также недостаток эффективных методов изучения и практического использования новой лексики. В данной статье рассматриваются эффективные методы обучения английской лексике, а также возможности развития словарного запаса с помощью карточек (flashcards), игровых технологий, интервального повторения (spaced repetition) и инструментов искусственного интеллекта.

Annotatsiya: Ingliz tili leksikasini o'qitish chet tilini o'rgatishning eng muhim tarkibiy qismlaridan biri hisoblanadi, chunki lug'at boyligi o'quvchilarning tinglab tushunish, gapirish, o'qish va yozish ko'nikmalarining rivojlanishiga bevosita ta'sir ko'rsatadi. Shunga qaramay, ta'lim jarayonida o'qituvchilar va o'quvchilar yangi so'zlarni o'zlashtirishda turli qiyinchiliklarga duch keladilar. Ushbu muammolarning asosiy sabablaridan biri passiv o'rganish bo'lsa, yangi leksik birliklarni samarali o'rganish va amaliy nutqda qo'llash usullarining yetishmasligi ham dolzarb masala bo'lib qolmoqda. Mazkur maqolada ingliz tili lug'atini o'qitishning samarali usullari tahlil qilinadi hamda flashkartalar, o'yinlar, interval takrorlash (spaced repetition) va sun'iy intellekt vositalaridan foydalanish orqali so'z boyligini rivojlantirish yo'llari yoritiladi.

Keywords: vocabulary teaching, vocabulary acquisition, English language learning, flashcards, spaced repetition, educational games, artificial intelligence, language teaching methods, lexical competence, communicative approach.

Ключевые слова: обучение лексике, усвоение словарного запаса, изучение английского языка, флеш-карточки, интервальное повторение, образовательные игры, искусственный интеллект, методы обучения языку, лексическая компетенция, коммуникативный подход.

Kalit so'zlar: lug'at o'qitish, lug'at boyligini o'zlashtirish, ingliz tilini o'rganish, fleshkartalar, interval takrorlash, ta'limiy o'yinlar, sun'iy intellekt, til o'qitish metodlari, leksik kompetensiya, kommunikativ yondashuv.

Vocabulary is a fundamental component of language proficiency and it plays a crucial role in the development of communication skills. Without enough vocabulary knowledge, learners may find it difficult to express their ideas, understand spoken or written texts, and participate effectively in communicative activities. For this reason, teaching vocabulary has become one of the overwhelming problems in English language education.

Traditional methods of vocabulary teaching often rely on memorization and repetition. Although such methods may help learners remember words for a short period, they frequently fail to foster long-term memory and practical use as Thornbury mentioned in his article in 2002. As a result, many students struggle to recall and apply newly learned vocabulary in real-life situations. This challenge requires the need for more engaging and effective approaches to vocabulary instruction.

Recent developments in educational technology and language pedagogy have introduced innovative strategies that enhance vocabulary learning. Techniques such as flashcards, educational games, spaced repetition systems, and artificial intelligence-based learning tools provide learners with meaningful opportunities to encounter, practice, and retain new words. These methods not only improve vocabulary acquisition but also increase learner motivation and participation. The purpose of this article is to examine effective methods of teaching English vocabulary and to analyze how modern instructional techniques can contribute to vocabulary development.

First of all, contextual learning has proven to be the most efficient way to enforce vocabulary learning. This is because teaching words in context rather than in isolation aids students understand meaning and usage naturally. Teachers can introduce new vocabulary by reading stories, dialogues, articles, or real-life situations. Students are more likely to remember words when they see how they are used in sentences. For example, instead of teaching a word “camaraderie” alone, if teachers show an example by reading a sentence “The dwarves shared a strong sense of camaraderie as they journeyed through the mountains.” from children’s story, learners tend to remember it better and use it in their own speech as well.

Secondly, visual aids, including pictures, flashcards, videos, charts, and real objects (realia) make vocabulary learning more engaging and memorable. It is mostly useful for beginner and young learners. While it makes language learning effective for those who cannot read yet on the one hand, different colorful cards, pictures and other visually attractive materials help learners memorize a word using their visual memory.

In addition, word mapping in which students connect new words with related concepts such as synonyms, antonyms, definitions and examples helps learners develop deeper understanding and strengthens their memory. This not only helps them memorize more and more vocabulary, but also have a larger base of vocabulary while making sentences or reading texts, which, in turn, is expected to improve their reading coherence. This method is mostly used in learning centers or special English-oriented classrooms, where students are required to know as many vocabularies as possible to achieve an intended result. Take IELTS exam as an example, if they learn vocabulary through word mapping, they can be able to use and differentiate synonyms or antonyms. For example, in listening or reading sections, students can be tricked with a wide range of vocabulary used in the passage and questions, in which case they are prone to misunderstand the text or choose the wrong answer once they lack sufficient vocabulary base.

Students can also expand their vocabulary by learning prefixes, suffixes, and root words. Understanding word formation helps learners guess meanings of unfamiliar words. For example, if a student knows the word “possible” and the use of prefixes, they can naturally conclude that “impossible” is the opposite meaning of the former. However, they should also consider some exceptions like “invaluable”, which means “extremely valuable”, not the antonym for the word “valuable”.

Moreover, encouraging learners to keep vocabulary journals helps them organize and review new words. Students can record definitions, example sentences, synonyms, antonyms, and personal notes. Learners can also create their own way of memorizing new vocabularies. For instance, I used to listen to a song while listing vocabularies from a text, which helped improve my memorization.

In this modern age, the use of digital tools and applications has been one of the most common and efficient ways as they provide interactive opportunities for vocabulary practice.

Online dictionaries, educational websites, and mobile applications support independent learning and immediate feedback, where students can search for new vocabularies and learn them without needing anyone's help. Additionally, apps and platforms such as Duolingo, Quizlet, Memrise, and Anki help learners expand their vocabulary through interactive exercises, flashcards, spaced repetition systems, and AI-assisted practice. Online dictionaries such as Cambridge Dictionary and Oxford Learner's Dictionaries provide definitions, pronunciation guides, and example sentences that facilitate vocabulary acquisition.

Last, but one of the most significant method of learning a vocabulary and using them actively is rehearsal and repetition. Regular review is essential for long-term retention. Teachers should recycle vocabulary through quizzes, games, discussions, and writing activities. Spaced repetition is especially effective because it revisits words at increasing intervals. Repetition and memory scheduling significantly improve long-term retention of vocabulary (Ebbinghaus, 1885/2013; Pimsleur, 1967).

Effective vocabulary teaching is a multidimensional process that requires the integration of several complementary approaches rather than relying on a single method. In successful language classrooms, vocabulary instruction combines contextual learning, visual support, systematic repetition, technology-enhanced tools, and communicative practice to ensure both understanding and long-term retention of new words. Effective vocabulary instruction depends on the balanced integration of these methods. When teachers intentionally combine contextual exposure, visual reinforcement, repetition strategies, technological tools, and communicative activities, students are more likely to develop a deeper and more sustainable vocabulary knowledge, ultimately improving their overall English language proficiency.

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