

## **A Variety of Effective Methods to Teach Vocabulary in EFL Classes**

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### **Abstract**

In recent decades, teaching English has become increasingly popular in Uzbekistan, particularly among young students. English is now a core subject taught in kindergarten and elementary and high schools. While children in Uzbekistan are generally eager and quick to pick up new languages, they can easily become uninterested if traditional teaching methods are used. Vocabulary is quite challenging to teach because of the complexity of its linguistic, semantic and cognitive aspects. Therefore, teachers should keep searching for ways to teach them with more effective techniques. The purpose of this paper is to propose a few efficacious methods to teach vocabulary in EFL classes.

**Keywords:** Approach, interactive games, vocabulary, practical challenges, practical implications, suggestopedia.

### **Introduction**

Over the last 3 decades, there has been a growing interest in the learning and acquisition of vocabulary. Various research areas have explored different aspects of this topic. However, despite this, many students still rely on traditional methods to learn English vocabulary, such as memorization, explicit instruction from teachers, and reciting word lists. Furthermore, most English teachers in schools and institutes still use conventional teaching strategies to impart vocabulary knowledge. These include providing lists of English words with their native language equivalents, having students recite new words, writing sentences with target vocabularies, explaining vocabulary meanings in the native language, repeating vocabulary words and assigning numerous vocabulary exercises.

### **Methods**

Teaching English vocabulary to young learners can be done through various methods and approaches. One effective method is using tangible objects that children can visualize and repeat the words they hear. Another approach is the direct method where the use of mother tongue translation is prohibited, and only complete sentences in the target language are used. The Total Physical Response (TPR) method, which involves games and activities, is also popular among teachers as it allows hyperactive children to learn quickly. Furthermore, teachers encourage communication among their students through the Communicative Language Approach (CLT), emphasizing language meaning in context.

Several studies have shown that games are effective in teaching vocabulary to young learners. In one study, it was found that using games improved students' motivation and engagement, resulting in better vocabulary retention (Gao & Xie, 2018). Another study found that using games helped students connect new words with real-life situations, which increased their understanding and retention of the vocabulary (Habók & Nagy, 2012).

Games provide a fun and interactive learning environment for young learners. They allow students to practice new vocabulary in a context that is relevant and meaningful to them. Games also provide a low-stress environment where students can make mistakes without fear of being judged or criticized. This creates a positive learning atmosphere that encourages students to take risks and try new things.

There are various types of games that can be used to teach vocabulary. For example, word matching games, word puzzles, and word guessing games are just a few examples of the many types of games that can be used in the classroom. Word matching games involve matching a word with its corresponding picture or definition. Word puzzles involve rearranging letters to form words or finding hidden words within a grid of letters. Word guessing games involve guessing the meaning of a word based on clues provided by the teacher or other students.

Teaching English vocabulary to young learners using games is an effective way to make learning fun and engaging. Games provide an interactive and low-stress environment where students can practice new vocabulary in a meaningful context. Teachers should incorporate different types of games into their lessons to keep their students engaged and motivated throughout the learning process.

### **Research and discussion**

One of the most innovative strategies is named “The Ripple Effect.” This method has been successfully applied after thorough research carried out by Mu Fengying of China. According to Sweetser (1990), a polysemous word usually has a core meaning and all the other meanings derive from it by means of a metaphor. The word-meaning expansion works like a ripple, which begins with a center and extends outward. The core may mean a physical being in the real world with a clear concentration. This is expanded to imply to other physical bodies which it looks like. Finally, its meaning may be extended to abstract ideas by a metaphor.

The instructor can assist students in comprehending that most English words possess multiple definitions, which are frequently interconnected. Typically, there is a fundamental significance from which all other meanings stem, and with the aid of creativity and association, these meanings can be interconnected.

Another effective method is called Suggestopedia. Georgi Lozanov, a psychiatrist and educator from Bulgaria, developed a teaching approach known as Suggestopedia. This method is based on the principles of Suggestology, which focuses on the non-rational and unconscious factors that influence human behavior. Suggestopedia aims to tap into these influences and use them to enhance learning outcomes. Key features of this teaching approach include classroom decor, furniture placement, music, and teacher behavior.

The claims for suggestopedia learning are considerable. “There is no sector of public life where suggestology would not be useful “ (Lozanov 1978:2). “Memorization in learning by the suggestopedic method seems to be precipitated 25 times over that in learning by traditional approaches” (Lozanov 1978: 27). Precise depictions of the conditions under which suggestopedia experiments were run are as hard to come by as are exact depictions of “successful” classroom processes.

Suggestopedia has the goal of rapidly improving the ability to engage in advanced conversations. The method relies on students being able to memorize large amounts of vocabulary pairs, and encourages them to set this as a personal target. While Lozanov acknowledges the importance of memory, he emphasizes that it is not a skill that can be developed in isolation, but rather through a holistic approach that stimulates the entire personality.

Two methods of teaching vocabulary in second or foreign language learning include learning words in and out of context. There is disagreement among language professionals about which approach is superior. While some argue that contextualized vocabulary learning is more effective, Oxford and Scarcella (1994) believe that decontextualized learning, such as word lists, can help with memorization for tests but may not lead to long-term retention.

There have been numerous studies on the role of context in learning words and the effectiveness of contextual learning, including strategies for guessing unfamiliar words while reading. McCarthy (1990) suggests that learning a word in a meaningful context leads to better assimilation and retention. [

There are also some researches which indicate the ineffectiveness of teaching vocabulary in context contrasting with other approaches. Akbari (2008) studied the effectiveness of teaching vocabulary items through pictures and contextualization to elementary Iranian EFL students.

In the study in one class lexical items were given through pictures, and in the other class they were used in contexts and sample sentences. In the third class, control group, the new words were showed with definitions and synonyms. Analysis of the results in the final test indicated remarkable distinctions between picture group and context group, on the one hand, and between these groups and the control group, on the other hand.

Intentional vocabulary acquisition involves simply memorizing a list of words and their translations. Although this method is quick and preferred by many learners, it is also superficial and does not allow for the proper use of vocabulary in context. Additionally, intentionally learned vocabulary is easily forgotten. A recommended approach to vocabulary acquisition involves a comprehensive understanding of each term, embedding it deeply in one's mental lexicon.

The process of incidentally acquiring vocabulary, which involves deducing the meaning of words from their context while reading in the target language, aligns with these recommendations. By encountering new words along with their syntactical context, learners are better equipped to use them accurately and idiomatically. Furthermore, seeing vocabulary in various contexts helps to cement it in the mind of the learner. However, it can take a considerable amount of time before enough vocabulary is acquired to engage in fluent conversations.

## **Conclusion**

Vocabulary is quite challenging to teach because of the complexity of its linguistic, semantic and cognitive aspects. Therefore, teachers should keep searching for ways to teach them with more effective techniques. Total Physical Response (TPR) method, Communicative method, Suggestopedia, Intentional and incidental vocabulary acquisition methods were found quite effective.

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