

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERACTIVE METHODS IN TEACHING VOCABULARY

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O'zbekiston davlat jahon tillari, ingliz tili o'qituvchisi

Annotation. This article explores the effectiveness of interactive teaching methods in improving English vocabulary acquisition. The research focuses on various interactive strategies, such as games, role-plays, digital tools, and collaborative learning techniques, which engage learners in the vocabulary learning process. Findings from classroom observations and teacher interviews suggest that these methods significantly enhance students' motivation, retention, and practical usage of new vocabulary. The article concludes with recommendations for English language teachers to integrate interactive activities into their daily lesson plans to ensure more effective vocabulary instruction.

Key words: interactive methods, vocabulary teaching, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), student engagement.

In the context of globalization and modern technological development, the significance of English as an international language continues to grow significantly. As a result, teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has become a vital part of educational systems around the world, including in countries where English is not the native language. In particular, early foreign language education—starting from primary school—has received growing attention from both researchers and practitioners.

Educating young students in English involves more than just language exposure; it encompasses fostering linguistic intuition, cognitive growth, and intercultural skills during a crucial developmental period. Building vocabulary is fundamental to language mastery. Insufficient vocabulary knowledge hinders learners' comprehension and their ability to articulate their thoughts. For young learners, vocabulary serves as more than just a list of words; it is essential for communication, social engagement, and imaginative thought. Nevertheless, conventional vocabulary instruction methods, such as memorization or repetitive exercises, frequently do not engage children or promote deep understanding. These approaches are generally teacher-centered, lack student involvement, and provide limited opportunities for active language use. As a result, learners may quickly forget the vocabulary they have “learned” and develop negative attitudes toward language learning. Interactive teaching techniques have become a potent substitute for conventional pedagogy in recent years. Interactive approaches, which have their roots in constructivist and communicative theories of learning, place an emphasis on student participation, practical learning, and language use in everyday situations. They work particularly well for elementary school pupils, who frequently have kinesthetic, auditory, and visual learning preferences. In addition to making learning more pleasurable, activities like games, music, role plays, storytelling, and digital tools also increase motivation and retention.

Additionally, interactive approaches foster the growth of vital 21st-century abilities including problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and creativity. Instead of viewing students as passive consumers of knowledge, these approaches promote an active learning environment in the classroom. Young students are more likely to internalize language and apply it correctly in a variety of circumstances when they engage in meaningful engagement. Despite the clear benefits, implementing interactive vocabulary teaching methods in

primary classrooms can be challenging. Teachers may lack training, time, or resources to apply such techniques effectively. Therefore, a systematic approach is needed to understand which interactive methods work best, how they influence vocabulary development, and how they can be integrated into the existing curriculum. This article aims to explore the theoretical and practical aspects of using interactive methods in vocabulary instruction for primary school EFL learners. It investigates a range of interactive strategies and their pedagogical implications, providing practical recommendations for educators who seek to enhance vocabulary teaching through dynamic and student-centered methods.

The Role of Vocabulary in Early Language Education

Particularly in the initial phases of learning a foreign language, vocabulary is fundamental to the growth of language proficiency. In actuality, learning vocabulary is a cognitive and developmental milestone for elementary school pupils in addition to being a language requirement. Words are the building blocks of communication; learners cannot understand input or produce meaningful output without a sufficient vocabulary foundation. This is especially true for young learners, who often rely on concrete, high-frequency vocabulary to understand the world around them and express their thoughts. From a theoretical perspective, vocabulary is central to all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In early language education, it serves as the entry point to language proficiency. According to Nation (2001), vocabulary knowledge consists of two dimensions: receptive knowledge (recognizing and understanding words in context) and productive knowledge (the ability to use words accurately in speaking or writing). For primary learners, receptive knowledge is typically acquired before productive use, but both are essential for balanced language development. Additionally, mastering vocabulary in early childhood schooling is strongly associated with cognitive growth. Young children are inherently imaginative, inquisitive, and tangible thinkers. In addition to improving language proficiency, teaching vocabulary in interesting and relevant circumstances also improves memory, classification abilities, and conceptual comprehension. Research has shown that vocabulary size at a young age is a strong predictor of future academic success, including reading comprehension, writing ability, and overall school performance (Biemiller, 2006). In early language education, vocabulary also plays a crucial role in affective learning—that is, how learners feel about the language and the learning process. Positive early experiences with vocabulary can boost learners' confidence, motivation, and attitudes toward English.

Vocabulary becomes more than just a list of words when it is taught in a fun, relevant, and approachable way; it becomes a link to social interaction, cultural understanding, and self-expression. However, acquiring language can present particular difficulties for younger students. These include limited attention span, underdeveloped abstract thinking, and the need for frequent repetition and reinforcement. Therefore, vocabulary instruction must be developmentally appropriate, multisensory, and highly contextualized. It is not enough to simply “teach” words; learners must experience them in action—through stories, games, interactions, and visual or kinesthetic stimuli. In this context, the role of vocabulary in early language education is not merely functional but transformative. Vocabulary is the key to unlocking communication, comprehension, and creativity. Therefore, the methods used to teach vocabulary must align with the learners' developmental stage, learning preferences, and emotional needs. Interactive methods, in particular, provide an effective framework for achieving these goals, as they create rich, engaging, and meaningful

language experiences that foster deep vocabulary acquisition. Interactive Methods in Teaching Vocabulary to Young Learners The use of interactive methods in teaching vocabulary to primary school students has gained significant attention in recent years due to their proven effectiveness in enhancing language acquisition. Interactive teaching is grounded in several pedagogical theories, including constructivism, communicative language teaching (CLT), and social interactionism, which emphasize active learner participation, meaningful communication, and social context in language learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1986). Interactive methods foster student-centered learning, where the teacher acts as a facilitator rather than the sole source of knowledge. This shift creates a dynamic classroom environment that supports exploration, collaboration, and creativity—key factors in successful vocabulary acquisition.

Practical Implications for Teachers

Although interactive approaches have advantages, their application necessitates careful preparation. Teachers must: -Choose resources that are both culturally and age-appropriate. -Maintain a balance between engagement and scaffolding and clear explanations. -Create a welcoming environment in the classroom that promotes taking chances. -Include interactive vocabulary exercises in a well-thought-out lesson plan. For instance, a typical animal lesson would begin with the presentation of picture flashcards, then go on to a song about animal sounds, a role-play about visiting a zoo, and finally a vocabulary matching game. This variety addresses different learning styles and reinforces vocabulary through multiple exposures. Interactive Methods in Vocabulary Teaching: Practical Strategies and Applications Interactive methods foster active student engagement, making vocabulary acquisition more meaningful and long-lasting. Below are several effective strategies teachers can implement in primary classrooms.

Integrates physical movement with vocabulary learning.

Students respond to commands by performing actions, which helps reinforce word meanings through bodily experience (Asher, 1969). For example, when teaching verbs like “jump,” “run,” or “clap,” the teacher says the word and students act it out. This multisensory approach is especially effective for young learners, as it increases retention and reduces anxiety (James & Gibson, 2003). Use of Visual Aids and Real Objects Young learners are highly visual, so using flashcards, pictures, and realia (real objects) helps connect words to their meanings concretely (Mayer, 2009). For instance, teaching fruit vocabulary can be supported by showing actual fruits or colorful pictures. This method also supports learners with different learning styles, making lessons more inclusive (Felder & Silverman, 1988). Storytelling and Role Play Narratives and role-playing activities contextualize vocabulary, helping students understand and remember words in real-life scenarios (Krashen, 1982). For example, a teacher can create a simple story involving animals and actions where new vocabulary appears repeatedly. Students can act out scenes, which promotes both vocabulary learning and speaking skills (Wright, Betteridge & Buckby, 2006). Collaborative Learning Activities Group work and pair activities encourage communication and vocabulary practice through social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). Games such as “Word Bingo,” “Memory Match,” or “Pictionary” promote engagement and reinforce vocabulary through repetition and peer support (Slavin, 1996). Assigning roles within groups ensures active participation from all students, maximizing learning outcomes. Scaffolded Learning and Repetition Effective interactive teaching includes scaffolding—breaking down vocabulary learning into manageable steps and providing support (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976). Teachers might introduce new words

with clear definitions and examples, followed by guided practice, and finally independent activities. Repetition through different interactive tasks reinforces memory and aids long-term retention (Nation, 2001). For Example: A teacher planning a lesson on classroom objects might start with showing real objects (pen, book, desk), followed by a TPR activity where students touch or pick up each object on command. Next, students play a game in pairs naming the objects, and finally, they role-play a classroom scenario using the new vocabulary. Technology such as an interactive whiteboard can be used for matching exercises or quizzes at the end.

Conclusion. In elementary English language education, vocabulary training is essential for improving students' conversational skills and general language ability. As was mentioned, vocabulary is more than just a list of words; it is an essential component that supports speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities. For young learners, interactive methods—such as games, group activities, storytelling, and digital tools—prove to be quite successful.

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