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## TEACHING VOCABULARY IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGLISH CLASSES

*The article is devoted to the actual problem of teaching young learners a foreign language and specifically one aspect – teaching them vocabulary. Vocabulary is considered as an essential and integral part of a language because any language is first and foremost plenty of words. The article discusses the features of teaching a foreign language, especially teaching vocabulary to primary school students. The initial stage of learning a foreign language is very important because at this stage the foundations of students' communicative competence are laid, which are necessary for further language acquisition and for the development of students themselves.*

*The article deals with the psychological and psychophysiological characteristics of primary school learners. Taking these characteristics into account will contribute to the effectiveness of the process of learning a foreign language. The teacher's awareness of such characteristics of younger students as the memory or the peculiarities of attention will help to build certain strategies for methods and technologies that would be suitable for teaching primary school students.*

*The article provides examples of various exercises and games for learning new vocabulary items that can be used at different stages of teaching process (learning new material, practicing skills or consolidating vocabulary). They are not final and full, as today there are many game methods and exercises that are offered for teaching primary school students, but they can be varied and changed to suit your needs and goals. The Total Physical Response method, which has proven to be effective in teaching primary school students, is also highlighted there. This method is based on the principles of natural acquisition of the mother tongue as children communicate from the moment of birth, and has many advantages in teaching younger learners.*

*It is concluded that primary school stage is especially important in teaching a foreign language. A significant role in the learning process belongs to the teacher and how well he or she can organize the process of language teaching in the classroom, choose the ways and teaching methods, which lay the foundation for further foreign language learning and communication.*

**Key words:** foreign language, foreign language teaching, teaching vocabulary, young learners, games.

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## НАВЧАННЯ ЛЕКСИКИ УЧНІВ ПОЧАТКОВОЇ ШКОЛИ НА УРОКАХ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

*Стаття присвячена актуальній проблемі навчання молодших школярів іноземній мові та її лексичного аспекту. Лексика вважається невід'ємною частиною будь-якої мови, тому що мова – це перш за все слова, багато слів. В статті розглянуто специфіку та особливості навчання лексики школярів початкової школи. Початковий етап вивчення іноземної мови є дуже важливим тому, що на цьому етапі закладаються основи комунікативної компетентності учнів, які є необхідними для подальшого опанування мовою і для розвитку самих учнів.*

*В статті розглянуті психологічні і психофізіологічні особливості учнів початкової школи. Врахування цих особливостей буде сприяти ефективності процесу засвоєння іноземної мови. Обізнаність вчителя щодо таких характеристик, як тривалість пам'яті у молодших школярів чи особливості уваги допоможуть вибудувати певні стратегії щодо методів і технологій, які будуть підходити для навчання учнів саме початкової школи.*

*В статті наведено приклади різних вправ та ігор для роботи з вивчення нових лексичних одиниць, які можна використовувати на різних етапах (вивчення нового матеріалу, відпрацювання навичок вживання чи закріплення лексичного матеріалу). Вони не є остаточними і вичерпними, так як на сьогоднішній день існує безліч ігрових методик і вправ, які пропонуються для роботи з учнями початкової школи, але їх можна варіювати, змінювати під свої потреби та цілі. Також окремо висвітлений метод фізичної реакції, який доказав свою ефективність під*

час навчання учнів початкової школи. Цей метод базується на принципах природнього опанування рідної мови, якою діти спілкуються з моменту народження, і має багато переваг в роботі з молодшими учнями.

Зроблено висновок, що початковий етап має особливо важливе значення в навчанні іноземної мови. Значна роль в навчальному процесі належить вчителю і тому, як вдало він зможе налагодити процес навчання мови в класі, підібрати саме ті шляхи і методи роботи з учнями, які покладуть фундамент для подальшого опанування іноземною мовою і здатністю комунікації.

**Ключові слова:** іноземна мова, навчання іноземній мові, навчання лексики, молодші школярі, ігрові методи.

**Research analysis and problem statement.** The problem of teaching vocabulary has always been important for language teachers because a new language means totally unfamiliar words needed to be understood and learnt by learners. Any language consists of words. The Second Edition of the 20-volume Oxford English Dictionary contains full entries for 171,476 words in current use (and 47,156 obsolete words). Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged, together with its 1993 Addenda Section, includes some 470,000 entries (The Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Knowledge of a foreign language is associated with knowledge of words.

The place and the role of vocabulary in teaching foreign language has been changed since the 1970<sup>th</sup>, when the Communicative approach appeared. Well-known linguist David Wilkins focused on the importance of learning vocabulary: "Without grammar very little may be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (Wilkins D., 1972: 111). Scott Thornbury said: "We have been talking about the importance of having an extensive vocabulary – that is knowing lots of words. But what does it mean to know a word? At the most basic level, knowing a word involves knowing: its form, and its meaning" (Thornbury, 2002).

In light of the foregoing it's obvious to define **the purpose of our paper:** to actualize the problem of teaching vocabulary in the English classroom, especially when the learners are 6–9-year-old children. We as teachers should realize which words exactly we are teaching and how many words should primary learners know. We should regard all the peculiarities young learners have, as we realize that teaching at the primary school is completely different from teaching for senior learners.

**The outline of the main research material.** New Ukrainian school place the proficiency in language as the main purpose. Proficiency in language means that you have lexical skills, which provide the functioning of vocabulary in communication. Therefore, teaching lexical skills should be considered as the most important and essential component of foreign language teaching process. Mastering foreign vocabulary is one of the most important criterion for acquiring any foreign language. At the same time, there are great difficulties for learners in accumulating vocabulary

and ability to use it appropriately. One of the reasons for this is the immensity and boundlessness of any language and its vocabulary. To achieve quite good results in teaching vocabulary for primary school learners, there are some basic things to do for teachers: to limit the number of lexical units to be learned during the lesson, to choose carefully the content of material they should study.

Considering the insufficient number of lessons at schools, the conditions of studying and the learning environment we try to develop a common strategy of how to teach the vocabulary young learners.

First of all, as we deal with young learners we should pay attention to the psychological peculiarities of their age, to physiological features of their memory and attention. It's obviously that we can't apply the same methods and technics for teaching young learners and senior ones.

The first thing we must regard is the feature of memory of young learners. Memory can be defined as a psychophysiological process that performs the functions of memorization, storage and reproduction of material. Memory is the process of taking in information from the world around us, processing it, storing it and later recalling that information, sometimes many years later (Wellcome Trust Centre for Neuroimaging, 2015). This peculiarity we can define even in infants, we see that memory appears in its elementary form – memorization and subsequent recognition of vital influences for the child. In the early stages of development, memory is included in the process of perception and has a spontaneous character. Everything the child sees, hears, watches, repeats and feels is included in the process of remembering. Thus we should construct the learning process so that a learner can engage all these tools while s/he mastering a foreign language.

All kinds of child's activities have a significant impact on the child's development. But scientists stress that the game is the leading activity for young learners and that is why it occupies significant place. After all, the goal of remembering has a visual, specific meaning for the child. One of the important ways of the genesis of preschoolers' memory is the development of its indirectness, memorization with the help of visual aids. Children remember better only the things which were included into their activity,

were involved into the circle of their interests, were interesting for them, emotional and touching.

Memory of primary school children develops in two directions – arbitrariness and awareness. Children spontaneously memorize educational material that is thought-provoking, intriguing and is presented in the form of a game, as well as associated with vivid visual aids or images.

Improving content memory at this age makes it possible to master a large number of rational ways of memorizing. When a child is aware of the course material, understands it, then at the same time he remembers it.

First-graders (as well as preschoolers) have well-developed spontaneous memory, which fixes bright, emotionally saturated information and events of the child's life. But much of what a first-grader has to memorize at school is interesting and attractive for him. Therefore, involuntary memory is not enough here. There is no doubt that the child's engagements in school classes, his active position, high cognitive motivation are necessary conditions for the development of memory. It is appropriate to say that not so much special memorization exercises are useful for the development of memory as the formation of interest in classes, in individual subjects, the development of a positive attitude towards them. Practice shows that interest in learning is not enough for the development of voluntary memory as a higher mental function.

Simultaneous consideration of logical and emotional reactions guarantees better recording of the material in memory, and the better the quality of recording, the easier it is to reproduce.

We know about short-term memory and long-term memory. Short-term memory is superficial and fragile. To prevent information from disappearing in a few seconds, it is necessary at any age to repeat it, several times during the lesson, at the next lesson, and include it into the learning resources. Long-term memory is supported by the search for the meaning of the memorized material. This type of memory is associated with complex mental operations.

This information should have been taken into account at the stage of preparing for the lessons and selecting educational context during teaching vocabulary to primary school students.

Most of the vocabulary at the initial stage is acquired by pupils from both sides: for comprehension in reading and listening and for use in their own oral and written expressions. However, there is a certain layer of vocabulary that is intended for receptive acquisition only: some extended expressions of class content, individual words and expressions that occur

in listening and rhyming texts. By the end of the primary course, students master about 600 vocabulary units for speaking and 700 for listening comprehension. According to the laws of memory, a person tends to forget about half of the information received after its first presentation, and in general, forgetting is stronger in the first days after the presentation of new information, then the forgetting curve falls. Considering these psychological features, the teacher should build the first stage of work on a new word in such a way as to use as many exercises as possible at the time of the first presentation of lexical material in order to ensure the maximum number of repetitions of the new word, the possibility of repeated listening and reproduction of it by children in speech.

Experience as a teacher convinces that if a weak and even average student has not spoken a new lexical unit several times during one lesson, has not listened to its reproduction by teachers and friends, there is no certainty that it will not “go” from his memory immediately after the end of the lesson. Such an approach requires from the teacher the utmost attention to the choice of exercises intended for the primary development of vocabulary and the organization of work with it. Therefore, learning new words is very hard work for learners.

The traditional strategy involves two main stages of work: semantization of lexical units and automation of lexical units.

Semantization is the process of discovering the meaning of foreign words and memorizing them, and automation is the process of using words in speech in order to master them. Let us consider some examples of the teaching vocabulary.

1. Flashcards. In addition to the usual use of pictures to semantize the word and repeat it after the teacher, we offer a number of interesting exercises to practice new vocabulary.

Exercise 1 “Magic Eyes”. The teacher places 6-8 pictures with new words on the board. First, the children repeat the words after the teacher. Then the teacher removes the first picture, but with their “magic eyes” the children “see” it and name it, and continue to name the pictures of the whole row. Then the teacher removes one more (next) picture. This time, the children name the two missing pictures from memory and continue the row. The exercise continues until the teacher removes all the pictures from the board. Children do the exercise with enthusiasm, because it has an element of challenging their wit and memory, without noticing the process of mechanical repetition of words.

Exercise 2 “Whisper”. The teacher whispers the already trained new words in turn, and the students

have to recognize the word by the movements of the teacher's lips. The purpose of this exercise is to check how well the students have learned the vocabulary.

Exercise 3 "Guess". The teacher shows only a small fragment of a flashcard with a request to guess what is on the card. Children usually cannot guess right away and list many newly learned words. This is a provocative trick of the teacher aimed at activating vocabulary.

Exercise 4 "Circle" (through the prism of vocabulary on the topic "*Clothes*"). The teacher invites the children to stand in a circle and, giving a card with a picture of jeans to the student standing on the left, asks: "Do you like wearing jeans?" The pupil answers: "Yes, I do/ No, I don't". The student asks the same question to the next student to his left and receives a new card with a new question from the teacher. For example, "When do you wear gloves?" The cards go around the circle and the activity ends, when the last card is returned to the teacher. During this activity different grammatical structures can be used, such as: "Is/are there..." "Can you..." "Have you..." etc.

2. For successful memorization of vocabulary it is advisable to use proverbs, tongue twisters, riddles and phonetic exercises, illustrating them with pictures. For example, *A pretty girl with a pretty curl. Look at this good cookery book.*

3. The study of nursery rhymes, in our opinion, contributes to the acquisition of vocabulary.

4. Extremely popular and universally loved are songs. The teacher has a wide range in the use of song material. After listening to the song *Chocolate Cake*, for example, children can be asked to write their own song, replacing the key phrase *chocolate cake* with their favorite product.

5. Watching fairy tales, cartoons and short dialogues on video with the opportunity for children to play the roles of the main characters is the key to enriching active vocabulary.

6. A relevant way to learn vocabulary is the approach "Learning Through Doing", when children, doing some work, comment on it. For example, "I cut/glue/nail etc."

7. Children are also fond of vocabulary games: crossword puzzles, word searches in tables, substitution of letters in words, making words from individual letters/syllables, etc.

8. Do not forget about traditional learning exercises to check and test vocabulary: Gap Filling, Matching, vocabulary dictations.

The game "ABC Match" – to find the letter in the picture, which begins what is depicted in the picture, while it is necessary to remember where this or that picture and letter are located. Two game modes are

available: with and without time limit. As a result of this game, children consolidate the previously learned vocabulary and develop attentiveness and concentration.

The game "Construct a Word" is aimed at the development and enrichment of vocabulary. The main principle of the game is to build words. The player is asked to choose one of the proposed endings, after that a list of letter combinations opens. From the list you need to choose letters, added to the previously selected ending, would create a word. You should form all possible words, based on the selected ending from the proposed list of letter combinations. After making all possible words, you can continue the game by choosing another ending. As a result of this game, children will learn to navigate their vocabulary and practice writing foreign words.

Interactive game "Drag and Drop", the purpose of which is to place all the objects in their places. Hover the mouse pointer over one of the objects located at the bottom of the screen and see the description of where this object is or should be. The game is aimed at practicing the use of prepositions. As a result, children will learn how to use prepositions, learn new words and will be able to find the right place based on the description. This activity enriches the vocabulary, because children learn new words, which they will be able to use later in their speech.

The game "Food and Drink" is focused on increasing foreign language vocabulary on the topic "Food and Drink". The players are shown pictures (without words) on the topic. The goal of the game is to find all the words from the list of words. The player gets three attempts. At the end of this game, students can check and consolidate their knowledge on this topic.

The game "Matching Colours" provides an opportunity for students to learn words on the topic "Colors". The aim of the game is to match each color with its name. Any level of difficulty is available in the game. The more complex level, the more colours you need to match.

Game "What's in the bag" – you need to guess what is in the bag, listening to the hints, choosing the right option from the proposed. All explanations and hints are spoken aloud, which helps to develop certain language skills. As a result of the game, students learn to understand and make their own description of the subject.

Thus, the game should be an integral part of children's learning activities in the classroom. It is recommended to use various forms of work: pairs or group for students' activities during the game exercises.

Vocabulary games can be used at different levels of English language acquisition – from beginner to advanced. Games can be more creative and communicative (make up a story, make up a dialogue with new words, etc.) and semi-communicative, aimed at practicing and memorizing new vocabulary (gap filling, choose the right variant, etc.). Also, vocabulary games can be active, mobile and static.

Most authors consider that it is reasonable to conduct the game at the final stage of work with vocabulary on this topic, because the game makes it possible to use new material in a communication situation. But there are splendid of games. Teachers may use them in the classroom to make the process of learning new vocabulary more efficient and interesting. Games can be used at any stage of teaching the vocabulary.

We focus on teaching young learners and therefore it is worth to pay special attention to the Total Physical Response (TPR) method. This method was introduced by Dr. James Asher, American psychologist. It is effective method for teaching young learners. It's based on the way a child master mother tongue. The child looks at the parents and make attempts to repeat everything they speak and pronounce. Eventually the moment comes when the child reproduces the sounds, words and patterns spontaneously. The same effect teachers try to apply in the language learning classroom. The teacher says a word and demonstrates its meaning or action. Then learners do the same thing: repeat the word and do the action. We see that learning process accompanied by physical contacts because students learn and do the action. The focus shifts from producing the language to associating with the words and cementing the relationship between the two.

TPR method is extremally useful for teaching vocabulary. Teachers may use their body as a tool to associate the word to a certain motion, movement of

the body. The teacher simply demonstrates or shows different verbs, for example: wear, put on/off, shake hands, jump etc. TPR may be adapted for all teaching needs and educational aims. Among the advantages of this method we mention the following:

- It is fun, emotional and memorable. Everything that touches you emotionally has a great chance to be remembered better;
- It is kinaesthetic, which is important for young learners;
- It is acceptable for groups or classes with different number of students, in a small or large classes;
- It doesn't require long and complicated preparation and special books or papers, everything depends just on your creativity and imagination;
- It looks like a game, which is the leading activity for young learners;
- The learners are not expected to speak so they don't afraid and don't have stress;
- It is suitable for beginner learners (as 6-9-year-old learners).

**Conclusion.** Thus, primary school is crucial stage to learn foreign language and to pick up vocabulary. Vocabulary lays the foundation of further learning. The task of the teacher is to learn and consolidate as many lexical items as possible so that children use them in their practice of communication. Of course, the textbook alone cannot ensure the achievement of goals in learning a foreign language. It is necessary to use widely other means: audio and video materials, books for home reading, text tasks. In conclusion, I would like to say that mastering a foreign language takes place not only in the classroom, and therefore the combination of the lesson and extracurricular work will ensure the effective formation of communicative skills and abilities, will contribute the development of learners' independence, communicative, cognitive and social activity.

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