

IMPROVING STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY THROUGH APHORISMS

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Abstract:

The learning of vocabulary is an important part in foreign language learning. Vocabulary is considered as central in language teaching and is of paramount importance to a language learner. Improving vocabulary skill among English language learners is a challenge faced by many teachers. The objective of the article is to find out the way in improving students' vocabulary skill through aphorisms.

Keywords: aphorisms, vocabulary, foreign language learning, memory, aspects, spoken and written language, principles.

Introduction

Language is a means of communication in human life. Through language, we can express our emotions, feelings and ideas. In many countries, English is a subject to learn from elementary school to university levels. English as a compulsory subject for the students in secondary levels is because the students in that level are considered able to learn four English skills. The students can coordinate what they listen, speak, read and write. Besides that, it is prepared for the students in secondary levels to have a skill that perhaps will support their future career. Learning English is important, as it is an international language, so that the students are expected able to communicate on global scale and do their career easier than those who are not mastering English.

Vocabulary is one of the significant components in language. Without mastery of vocabulary, a person will not be able to speak well, both in spoken and written language. In teaching English vocabulary as an element of language, it is considered the most important factor in improving mastery if students still lack vocabulary.

Teaching vocabulary is not easy to do. Some people think that vocabulary teaching only wastes the time because vocabulary number is unlimited. The English teacher had better teach English vocabulary first than other aspects of this language, such as grammar, speaking, reading and writing. Of students know more about vocabulary, it will easy for them to learn another aspect of English language. The teacher needs a good preparation before teaching vocabulary in the classroom. Depending on the teaching goal, a teacher is required to have knowledge about what words to be taught.



MATERIALS AND METHODS

However, many theories about vocabulary learning process were written, it still remains the matter of memory. Thus, there are several general principles for successful teaching, which are valid for any method. According to Wallace, the principles are:

- aim–what is to be taught, which words, how many;
- need– target vocabulary should respond students’ real needs and interests;
- frequent exposure and repetition;
- meaningful presentation – clear and unambiguous denotation or reference should be assured.

Learning vocabulary is a complex process. The students’ aim to be reached in learning vocabulary process is primarily their ability to recall the word at will and to recognize it in its spoken and written form.

Generally, knowing a word involves knowing its form and its meaning at the basic level. In deeper aspects it means the abilities to know its:

- 1) Meaning, i.e. relate the word to an appropriate object or context.
- 2) Usage, i.e. knowledge of its collocations, metaphors and idioms, as well as style and register (the appropriate level of formality), to be aware of any connotations and associations the word might have.
- 3) Word formation, i.e. ability to spell and pronounce the word correctly, to know any derivations (acceptable prefixes and suffixes).
- 4) Grammar, i.e. to use it in the appropriate grammatical form.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Today vocabulary teaching has given more emphasis to teaching vocabulary as “chunks” of language such as idioms, collocations, phrases, proverbs and aphorisms. Akbarian claims that English is rich in multi-word lexemes, such as idioms, proverbs, aphorisms and other fixed expressions that might be a stumbling block for English as foreign language learners. On the other hand, Rubin and Thompson focus on the importance of the indirect approach in learning vocabulary as it enables learners to learn vocabulary through reading and listening rather than memorizing and retention of lists of words. Moreover, the indirect approach depends on presenting the new vocabulary within texts a matter that gives the learners the opportunity to learn the intended meaning rather than presenting lists of separate words that may have different meanings according to the context in which they occur. This way of teaching vocabulary depends on implementing the use of idioms, collocations, proverbs and aphorisms, because this is the appropriate language that one needs to learn to be able to communicate fluently and accurately.

The word “aphorism” derives from the Greek; the phrase “to aphorize” comes from ἀφορίζειν, “to define”, parsable as ἀπό (“off”) and ὀρίζειν (“to set bounds”). The term dates back to Hippocrates, whose Aphorisms sum up established rules for medical practice. Proverbs and epigrams, forms related to the aphorism, also circulated in ancient Greece: philosophers and statesmen used proverbs to support their arguments, while monuments bore engraved epigrams in memory of particular events.



Aphorisms are considered to be special factors of a language's vocabulary system because they reflect cultural special characteristics of each nation, including material and spiritual values. A lot of researchers, therefore, have long shown their interests in aphorisms. Aphorisms are used to express ideas in figurative styles. They bring the vividness and richness to the speaker's speeches; therefore, knowing how to use aphorisms effectively in the right situations becomes essential. In common language, the aphorism is an original thought spoken or written by an author in a concise and memorable form.

Russian linguists Ye.Vereshchagin and B.Kostomarov consider aphorisms as the most valuable elements of the language as they contain a wealth of country-specific information, the possession of which is necessary for an adequate understanding and use of language units and communication.

Unlike proverbs and sayings, an aphorism has a specific author. If proverbs reflect the everyday wisdom of the people, clearly illustrate their way of life, traditions, culture, keep the accumulated socio-cultural layer for centuries, then the aphorism contains the treasures of human thought and experience, deep philosophical generalizations.

There are many ways to inspire students to learn about the foreign language and aphorisms whose content relates to cultural, educational development and awareness have potential to become a useful and a motivational device in foreign language classes. We have some ideas for using aphorisms in the classroom to improve the vocabulary skill of students. Below, class activities that are useful for the teachers who are looking for further ways to inspire students to master the vocabulary skill.

Teachers can use these activities with different topics. Today, we have chosen the topics of "Business. Economics. Money" and all activities and all aphorisms are related to these topics.

Activity 1. Complete the Following Aphorisms by Using One Word from the List Below.
trade- inflation-money-tax- investment

1. **The hardest thing in the world to understand is the income (Albert Einstein)**

Answer: tax

2. **Lack of is the root of all evil. (George Bernard Shaw)**

Answer: money

3. **Free , one of the greatest blessings which a government can confer on a people, is in almost every country unpopular. (Lord Thomas Macauley)**

Answer: trade

4. **..... is like toothpaste. Once it's out, you can hardly get it back in again. (Karl Pohl, former West German central banker)**

Answer: inflation

5. **..... is a flighty bird which needs to be controlled. (J.R. Hicks)**

Answer: investment

Activity 2. Comment on the Meaning of the Underlined Words in the Following Aphorisms by Henry Ford.

1. It is not the employer who pays the wages. Employers only handle the money. It is the customer who pays the wages.



2. It is well enough that people of the nation do not understand our banking and monetary system, for if they did, I believe there would be a revolution before tomorrow morning.
3. If money is your hope for independence, you will never have it. The only real security that a man will have in this world is a reserve of knowledge, experience, and ability.
4. The competitor to be feared is one who never bothers about you at all, but goes on making his own business better all the time.

CONCLUSION

The activities and exercises designed to use in the classroom to improve vocabulary skill through aphorisms can be beneficial both for teachers and students. These activities not only help the students enrich their vocabulary, but increase their awareness of learning aphorisms. Through aphorisms, students develop their thinking and imagination. If the learner wants to be an efficient user of a foreign language, he/she should be culturally aware of the foreign language as well.

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