

LINGUODIDACTIC FEATURES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORAL SPEECH
COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS IN THE FIELD OF PHYSICAL CULTURE
EDUCATION

Kenjabaev Jahongir Abdisalimovich
Teacher, Termez State University

ANNOTATION

Vocabulary acquisition is increasingly viewed as crucial to language acquisition. However, there is much disagreement as to the effectiveness of different approaches for presenting vocabulary items. Moreover, learning vocabulary is often perceived as a tedious and laborious process. In this article I would like to examine some traditional techniques and compare them with the use of language games for vocabulary presentation and revision, in order to determine whether they are more successful in presenting and revising vocabulary than other methods.

Key words: *acquisition, view, experience, item, competence*

From my teaching experience I have noticed how enthusiastic students are about practising language by means of games. I believe games are not only fun but help students learn without a conscious analysis or understanding of the learning process while they acquire communicative competence as second language users. **Vocabulary teaching techniques**

There are numerous techniques concerned with vocabulary presentation. However, there are a few things that have to be remembered irrespective of the way new lexical items are presented. If teachers want students to remember new vocabulary, it needs to be learnt in context, practised, and then revised to prevent students from forgetting. We can tell the same about grammar. Teachers must make sure students have understood the new words, which will be remembered better if introduced in a "memorable way". Bearing all this in mind, teachers have to remember to employ a variety of techniques for new vocabulary presentation and revision. Gairns and Redman (1986) suggest the following types of vocabulary presentation techniques: **Visual techniques**. These pertain to visual memory, which is considered especially helpful with vocabulary retention. Learners remember better the material that has been presented by means of visual aids. Visual techniques lend themselves well to presenting concrete items of vocabulary-nouns; many are also helpful in conveying meanings of verbs and adjectives. They help students associate presented material in a meaningful way and incorporate it into their system of language values.

1. **Verbal explanation**. This pertains to the use of illustrative situations, synonymy, opposites, scales (Gairns and Redman), definition (Nation) and categories (Allen and Valette).
2. **Use of dictionaries**. Using a dictionary is another technique of finding out meanings of unfamiliar words and expressions. Students can make use of a variety of dictionaries: bilingual, monolingual, pictorial, thesauri, and the like. As French Allen perceives them, dictionaries are "passports to independence," and using them is one of the student-centered learning activities.

Using games

The advantages of using games. Many experienced textbook and methodology manuals writers have argued that games are not just time-filling activities but have a great educational value. W. R. Lee holds that most language games make learners use the language instead of thinking about learning the correct forms. He also says that games should be treated as central not peripheral to the foreign language teaching programme. A similar opinion is expressed by Richard-Amato, who believes games to be fun but warns against overlooking

their pedagogical value, particularly in foreign language teaching. There are many advantages of using games. "Games can lower anxiety, thus making the acquisition of input more likely" (Richard-Amato). They are highly motivating and entertaining, and they can give shy students more opportunity to express their opinions and feelings (Hansen). They also enable learners to acquire new experiences within a foreign language which are not always possible during a typical lesson. Furthermore, to quote Richard-Amato, they, "add diversion to the regular classroom activities," break the ice, "[but also] they are used to introduce new ideas". In the easy, relaxed atmosphere which is created by using games, students remember things faster and better (Wierus and Wierus). Further support comes from Zdybiewska, who believes games to be a good way of practising language, for they provide a model of what learners will use the language for in real life in the future.

Games encourage, entertain, teach, and promote fluency. If not for any of these reasons, they should be used just because they help students see beauty in a foreign language and not just problems.

Choosing appropriate games. There are many factors to consider while discussing games, one of which is appropriacy. Teachers should be very careful about choosing games if they want to make them profitable for the learning process. If games are to bring desired results, they must correspond to either the student's level, or age, or to the material that is to be introduced or practised. Not all games are appropriate for all students irrespective of their age. Different age groups require various topics, materials, and modes of games. For example, children benefit most from games which require moving around, imitating a model, competing between groups and the like. Furthermore, structural games that practise or reinforce a certain grammatical aspect of language have to relate to students' abilities and prior knowledge. Games become difficult when the task or the topic is unsuitable or outside the student's experience. Another factor influencing the choice of a game is its length and the time necessary for its completion. Many games have a time limit, but according to Siek-Piskozub, the teacher can either allocate more or less time depending on the students' level, the number of people in a group, or the knowledge of the rules of a game etc.

When to use games. Games are often used as short warm-up activities or when there is some time left at the end of a lesson. Yet, as Lee observes, a game "should not be regarded as a marginal activity filling in odd moments when the teacher and class have nothing better to do". Games ought to be at the heart of teaching foreign languages. Rixon suggests that games be used at all stages of the lesson, provided that they are suitable and carefully chosen. At different stages of the lesson, the teacher's aims connected with a game may vary:

1. Presentation. Provide a good model making its meaning clear;
2. Controlled practise. Elicit good imitation of new language and appropriate responses;
3. Communicative practise. Give students a chance to use the language .

Games also lend themselves well to revision exercises helping learners recall material in a pleasant, entertaining way. All authors referred to in this article agree that even if games resulted only in noise and entertained students, they are still worth paying attention to and implementing in the classroom since they motivate learners, promote communicative competence, and generate fluency. However, can they be more successful for presentation and revision than other techniques? The following part of this article is an attempt at finding the answer to this question.

The use of games for presenting and revising vocabulary

Vocabulary presentation. After the teacher chooses what items to teach, Haycraft suggests following certain guidelines. These include teaching the vocabulary "in spoken form first" to prevent students from pronouncing the words in the form they are written, placing the new items in context, and revising them. I shall now proceed to present practical examples of games I have used for vocabulary introduction and revision.

Description of the groups. For the purpose of vocabulary presentation, I chose two groups of third form students. With one of them I used a presentation game and with the other translation and context guessing. In both groups, students' abilities varied-ranging from those whose command of English was very good, able to communicate easily using a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures, and those who found it difficult to communicate.

After covering the first conditional and time clauses in the textbook, I decided to present students with a set of idioms relating to bodily parts-mainly those connected with the head (taken from *The Penguin Dictionary of English Idioms*). The choice of these expressions was determined by students' requests to learn colloquial expressions to describe people's moods, behavior, etc. Moreover, in one of the exercises the authors of the textbook called for examples of expressions which contain parts of the body. For the purpose of the lesson I adapted Gear and Gear's "Vocabulary Picture-Puzzle" from *the English Teaching Forum* (1988). Students were to work out the meanings of sixteen idiomatic expressions. All of them have Polish equivalents, which made it easier for students to remember them.

Description of vocabulary picture-puzzle

To prepare the puzzle, I cut two equal-sized pieces of cardboard paper into rectangles. The selected idioms were written onto the rectangles in the puzzle-pieces board and their definitions on the game board. On the reverse side of the puzzle-pieces board, I glued colorful photographs of landscapes and then cut the puzzle-pieces board into individual pieces, each with an idiom on it. The important thing was the distribution of the idioms and their definitions on the boards. The definitions were placed in the same horizontal row opposite to the idioms so that when put together face to face each idiom faced its definition.

Many sources referred to in this article emphasise the importance of vocabulary revision. This process aims at helping students acquire active, productive vocabularies. Students need to practise regularly what they have learnt; otherwise, the material will fade away. Teachers can resort to many techniques for vocabulary consolidation and revision. To begin with, a choice of graphs and grids can be used. Students may give a definition of a given item to be found by other students. Multiple choice and gap filling exercises will activate the vocabulary while students select the appropriate response. Teachers can use lists of synonyms or antonyms to be matched, sentences to be paraphrased, or just some words or expressions in context to be substituted by synonymous expressions. Doing cloze tests will show students' understanding of a passage, its organisation, and determine the choice of lexical items. Visual aids can be of great help with revision. Pictures, photographs, or drawings can facilitate the consolidation of both individual words as well as idioms, phrases and structures. There is also a large variety of word games that are "useful for practising and revising vocabulary after it has

been introduced" (Haycraft). Numerous puzzles, word squares, crosswords, etc., are useful especially for pair or group work.

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