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Helping learners use lexical items in building stream. A case study in Idiofa third and fourth EFL classes

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Abstract : This article addresses the challenges in teaching English vocabulary in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classes at the elementary level. It emphasizes that vocabulary acquisition is central to language learning, as it supports the development of the four key language skills. However, many teachers struggle to use appropriate materials and methods, resulting in limited vocabulary use among learners. The paper seeks to explore effective strategies to improve vocabulary instruction in realistic, communicative contexts.

Keywords: EFL teaching, Vocabulary, Language skills, Classroom materials.

Résumé : Cet article traite des difficultés rencontrées dans l'enseignement du vocabulaire en anglais langue étrangère (EFL) au niveau élémentaire. Il souligne que l'acquisition du vocabulaire est essentielle à l'apprentissage de la langue, car elle soutient les quatre compétences fondamentales. Toutefois, de nombreux enseignants ont du mal à utiliser des supports et des méthodes adaptés, ce qui limite l'utilisation du vocabulaire chez les apprenants. L'article vise à explorer des stratégies efficaces pour améliorer l'enseignement du vocabulaire dans des contextes réalistes et communicatifs.

Mots-clés : Enseignement EFL, Vocabulaire, Compétences linguistiques, Matériel pédagogique.

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1. Introduction

In science of education, the process of teaching and learning foreign language as for English is central and elementary in EFL classes. The central goals of early elementary education are growing on helping pupils to expand their vocabulary in the second language acquisition.

Beyond the obvious communicative benefits) vocabulary has been proven to improve outcomes on everything from listening, reading, speaking, and writing, says: the four language skills. And those skills are mainly concerned with teaching units such as: grammar, vocabulary, reading, conversation composition, dictation and exercise. Here, we are basically concerned with vocabulary.

To reach the main objective in teaching vocabulary, there is a concept of education so widely accepted to be ultimately concerned with teaching and learning process. Vocabulary being a classroom activity implies the use of adequate and visible materials of language teaching a check control of making

communicative meaningful.

Now, teachers of English in EFL classes are supposed not to be competent, they do not help their learners use lexical items in national ways of a realistic communicative. As a mother of fact, vocabulary is required painfully and does not look for genuine of communicative use in building stream. From the above idea, we try to ask the questions:

- Why do not pupils communicate easily?
- Do teachers care of teaching vocabulary? Are there any ways to improve their teaching?

To answer those questions, we have to investigate in the following topic: “Helping Learners use Lexical items in building stream”.

A case-study in Idiofa third and fourth EFL classes.

2. Methodology of the study

Hartmann and Stork (1972:141) define a method as a way of approaching, observing, analyzing and explaining a particular phenomenon. The particular phenomenon we are concerned in our work is “helping learners use lexical items in building stream”.

In fact, it is what Nkwoy (2012) quoted by Mafundu (2013) who clarifies that the researcher in linguistic does get without having in mind a technique. So, a technique is what this researcher actually does to obtain data.

In our work, we refer rightly to three methods and two techniques. The first method deals with the documentary or library analysis. This method helped us to read. Some undergraduate term papers and courses, some different books about teaching vocabulary. The second method was descriptive analysis method. We have identified problem, described, analyzed. And explained it. The third was lesson analysis method. That one is concerned with content in what materials is included in the lesson on lexical items. It concerns equally the techniques of teaching, Seaton (1982: 104).

As to techniques, we referred to field inquiry and classroom observation. Of course, we went to attend lessons in third and fourth secondary schools in order to get data. In classroom observation, we do not refer only in physical aspect but also in analysis.

3. Results

3.1. Generalities on the vocabulary lesson

3.1.1. Definitions

1. Teaching and learning

The concepts “teaching and learning” would refer to the objectives “teacher and learner”, those two actors imply the action of teaching and learning process.

In any teaching unit, in the classroom, for instance, we have the teacher and the learner. The former is the instructor and the latter is the receiver of the teacher’s instruction. So, the teacher presides and guides to the learning achievement.

2. Vocabulary lesson

Vocabulary lesson is well understood as a classroom activity. It is one among the units that should be taught in the classroom and

500 words of active vocabulary are recommended, Programme National d’Anglais (1988:8)

3. A stream

Oxford Advanced learner’s Dictionary (2005:462) defines a stream as a group in which students of the same level of activity are placed in some schools.

As to the organization of schools in Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire), Congolese pupils go to secondary schools after primary education. Then, in the process of study, there are some important systems with pedagogic distinction being made between sections’ as streams. Those streams are clearly explained in terms of general streams with five hours a week to be taught. They are: Biology chemistry, Literature, Mathematic physic, Pedagogy etc..., Sernafor (1987.2).

In difference of general streams, the curriculum (Programme scolaire) refers to all the classes/lessons

offered in a school. The curriculum in a technical school xviii differ considerably from the one in a literature section, for example, different subjects will be taught and how many hours a week depends on the curriculum, and what will be taught during the year for each subject is determined by the programme.

In fact, technical or specific streams have two hours a week to be taught in secondary schools, they are: Agroveterinary stream, dressmaking, electricity, building, nutrition, social etc.

Here, we set our basis on building stream in which stream our investigation will take place.

3.1.2. Planning a language teaching

Here, we look for pupils make the right sounds (speaking) and the right signs (writing) and put words in the correct order or make them sure in the use of the safe, a satisfactory condition. In teaching vocabulary lesson, the teacher measures the pupil utterance in his own model. If it is the accurate, he accepts it silently or he makes some encouraging comments. If it is not, the pupil tries again. Then, the teacher helps him to correct it himself (or another pupil can involve) and asks the pupil who made the mistake to try again for a natural utterance of an appropriate adaptation to the language stream.

And it reads in Dubin and Olshtain (1979:30).

«The best faith for a teacher is to believe in his or her own. Ability to make decisions based on. t sound acquaintance with as many approaches and as many sources of materials as possible. In the final analysis, it can be u teacher's option to fit the approach and the materials to the particular needs and goals for the students and the society”.

From the above quotation the teacher should believe in what he is doing, planning and taking into account the learners needs in the society. So, a good teacher is the one who varies his teaching techniques and who adapts his material to the stream where he is teaching. This is mostly true when teaching in technical stream where English for specific purposes should be taught.

3.1.3. Advantages in learning vocabulary lesson

The English language teaching (ELT) in secondary schools aims to enable pupils to correctly understand speak in different conditions of purposes write English and extend vocabulary.

From the above idea, we have to join Mulwala, K (2015) who says that “a vocabulary lesson increases pupils number of words, providing clear meaning, opposition, equivalent meanings, translation of new words, enable pupils to understand and use words in correct sentences, in appropriate context”.

In addition, we try to investigate in Littlewood (1981) who says that the purpose of learning a foreign language is to use it as a means of communication. So, the designers of the English program in our country do not oppose Littlewood's view. As to the objective, it reads :

“Le but du programme est de donner aux élèves un vocabulaire actif d'environ 2000 mots, ainsi que la connaissance des idiomes les plus courants. Ce vocabulaire et ces idiomes ne seront jamais étudiés d'une manière isolée, mais toujours dans un contexte, (Programme National d'Anglais 1988 :6)».

In short, building good. vocabulary habits from an early age is a good way of making sure that pupils succeed in the long run that that demonstrate how to effective work in and out of the classroom, through use not only a formal vocabulary work but also in building the ability to deduce the meaning of words from context. Learners understand easily the items and practice them in effective communication.

3.1.4. The place of teaching vocabulary in the Programme National d'Anglais

From the previous limes of our work, in our contrary, the Democratic Republic of Congo, English has been taught as a compulsory school subject. It is by means of instructions that the language is taught.

In the Programme National d'Anglais (1988:6), it reads:

“L'étude de l'Anglais est une importance croissante pour les élèves de l'enseignement secondaire au Zaïre (Congo) à une époque où le pays multiplie ses contacts avec les pays d'expression Anglaise et en particulier ceux d'Afrique, les difficultés de communication dues à l'utilisation de langues différentes doivent surmontées”.

From the important place of teaching vocabulary, a chart has been made in the programme in order to promote listening and speaking skills.

Vocabulaire actif à acquérir		Pratique de la langue (skills)		
		Comprendre + Parler	Lire	Ecrire
3ème année	500 mots	80 %	15%	50/0
4ème année	1 000 mots	70 %	20%	10%
5ème année	15 000 mots	60 %	25%	25%

3.1.5. The steps of teaching vocabulary lesson

1. Warm-up/Recall This step concerns:

- The preparation of pupils about the new lesson with activities related to that one;
- Or the revision of what has been taught previously.

2. Presentation

It concerns the teacher's explanation of the new lexical through contexts (showing, relating, pictures or drawing on the blackboard). The teacher may go on eight and not fewer than six words. Priority should be given to active words. Here, the teacher:

- ❖ presents the word orally (twice) and asks pupil to repeat it;
- ❖ presents the word in appropriate and meaningful sentence;
- ❖ invites pupils to repeat the sentence (orally) before writing it on the blackboard. Meanwhile, he continues on the use of visual aids (asks pupils to manipulate or touch them). He may also create the situation in context in order to clarify the explanation of the lexical items not in isolation but in a meaningful sentence.

3. Fixation

Pupils produce their own sentences and write them on the blackboard. Here, the teacher should play his role in the step (he controls, prompts and helps his learners to fix lexical items communicatively).

4. Synthesis

The teacher goes on asking pupils to produce sentences or paragraphs. He asks them to use new lexical item.

5. Practice

The teacher gives oral or written works in appropriate use.

6. Note-taking

He asks his pupils to copy down correct sentences he kept on the blackboard.

3.2. Presentation and analysis of data

3.2.1 Presentation and analysis of data

1. Activity 1

Teacher: X

School: ITP St Christian

Class: 4th Form Building

Lesson: vocabulary

Subject: Going to work

Date: March 7, 2019

Hour: 750:840

Reference: Mills, D et al (198 fl4eEnglish for Africa pupils' book p2.

Aim: at the end of the lesson pupils will be able to use new items from the text

Visual aids: —

Presentation

T: Ok class, today we have a vocabulary lesson based ongoing to work

1. Work

T: Bola goes to work in the morning

Ps: Bola goes to work in the morning (pupils repeat individually and in group)

T: (writes)

2. Bed

T: Bola went to bed very late

Ps: Bola went to bed very late (individually and in group) T: (writes)

3. To shout

T: He shouts in the classroom

Ps: He shouts in the classroom (individually and in group)

T: (writes)

4. Puddles

T: There are a lot of puddles on the road

Ps: There are a lot of puddles on the road (individually and in group) T: (writes)

5. come on

T: Come on! You will be late to school

Ps: Come on! You will be late to school T: (writes)

6. Bus

T: People are in the bus.

Ps: Pupils are in the bus (individually and in group)

T: (writes)

Comments

In this class, the lesson was so theoretic. The pupils were repeating items in the sentences but they could not understand what those items or expressions meant.

Somewhere we noticed that the text was mainly concerned general stream and pupils were not interested in their proper technical building one.

2. Activity 2

Teacher: X

School: Institut Bosembo 1

Class: 4th Form Building

Lesson: vocabulary

Subject: The work of a Mason

Date: March 11, 2019

Hour: 7⁰⁰:7⁵⁰

Reference: Nkwar, M (2008), English for specific purposes, p4.4

Aim: at the end of the lesson pupils will be able to use new items from the communicatively.

Visual aids: Mason, brick, joiner, carpenter, cement

Presentation

T: Class, today we have a vocabulary lesson based on “the work of a Mason”

1. A mason

T: A mason builds a house

Ps: A mason builds a house T: (writes)

2. The brick

T: The brick is made of cement

Ps: The brick is made of cement T: (writes)

3. Building material

T: Cement is a building material

Ps: Cement is building material T: (writes)

4. A joiner

T: A joiner makes door and windows

Ps: A joiner makes door and windows

T: (writes)

5. A carpenter

T: A carpenter makes the framework

Ps: A carpenter makes the framework

T: (writes)

Comments

In this activity, the teacher presented the new item in a sentence, he asked his learners to repeat it individually and in group. Despite of the visual aid that he has foreseen, he was absent minded to show them all opportunities. The lesson was so abstract. The teacher lack of strategies did not allow learners to understand theoretical notions.

3. Activity 3 Teacher: X

School: ITP Ebwa

Class: 3rd Form Building

Lesson: vocabulary

Subject: Building materials

Date: March 12, 2019

Hour: 840:930

Reference: Nkwar, M (2008), English for specific purposes, p4. Aim: at the end of the lesson pupils will be able to use new items in their works

Visual aids: pictures and drawings

Presentation

T: Ok class, today we have a vocabulary lesson based on building materials

1. Spade

T: The spade is in the metal

Ps: The spade is in the metal T: (writes)

2. Trowel

T: We use trowel in the building

Ps: We use trowel in the building

T: (writes)

3. Wheel barrow

T: Mason use wheel barrow

Ps: Mason use wheel barrow

T: (writes)

4. Level

T: My father has a level

Ps: My father has a level T: (writes)

5. **Ladder** T: You take a ladder.

Ps: You take a ladder.

T: (writes)

6. **Brick hammer** T: Peter has a brick hammer.

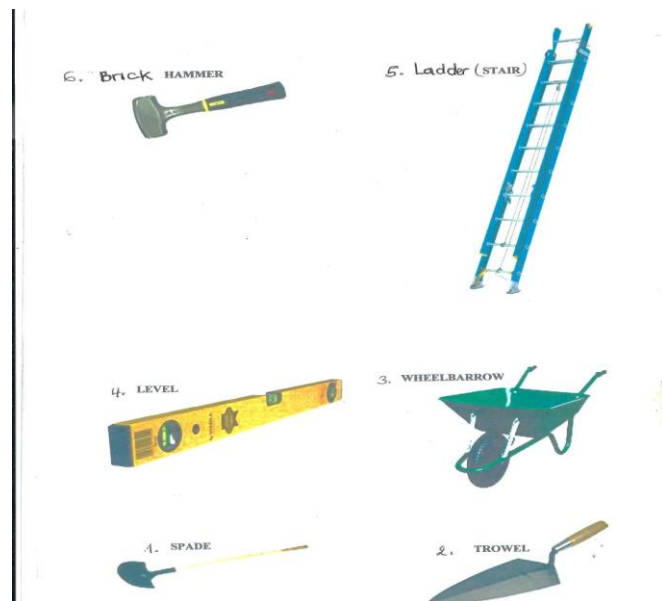
Ps: Peter has a brick hammer.

T: (writes)

Comments

In this activity, the teacher presented the new items in sentences and repeated them individually and in small groups explain them, he referred to pictures and drawings.

We noticed that the teacher was full of confusion; Le presented tools used in building but not materials as seen in the prescribed subject. The teacher didn't go deeply to exploit on how those tools were important in the work of mason.



4. Activity 4

Teacher: X

School: ITP St Modeste

Class: 3rdForm Building

Lesson: vocabulary

Subject: Building materials

Date: March 13, 2019

Hour: 7⁰⁰:7⁵⁰

Reference: Nkwar, M (2008), English for specific purposes, p4. Aim: at the end of the lesson pupils will be able to use new items in their works Visual aids:

Presentation

T: Class, today we have a vocabulary lesson based on "building

T: read silently the text and point out difficult words

P¹: a brick

P²: cement

P³: sand

P⁴: iron

Ps: a nail

T: (translation in French)

1. a brick: une brique
2. cement: ciment
3. sand: sable
4. iron: fer
5. a nail: un clou

Comments

In this activity, the teacher asked the pupils to put out the new difficult words from the text. Then, the teacher was translated words in isolation in French. He did not prevent any visual aids for illustration.

We noticed that this procedure did not allow learners to practice the items in their own sentence because they were not trained before.

Common features

In all activities, we attended in third and fourth forms of building stream, we noticed that the teachers did not present clearly vocabulary lesson. The words were used in isolation and without illustration. The use of text books were not adapted to of stream and items were translated because of teachers lack of strategies.

3.3. Suggestions

1. Activity 1: Going to work

In this activity, the teacher would select appropriate text to building stream. He would make learners more interesting in the subject of their stream. There, they would discover and manipulate the new existences of building easily and become significant in the communication.

2. Activity 2: The work of a Mason

In this activity, the teacher would care of the presentation of the material foreseen as soon as possible he presented the item. He would ask his pupils to manipulate, show or touch where it was.

3. Activity 3: Building materials

In this activity, the teacher would care of teaching materials and tools in building stream. He would set his teaching on tools and get deeply effort to explain in term of their importance.

e.g. - we use the spade to dig the well;

- we use towel to connect cement with bricks or stones; - we use wheel barrow to transport cement, sand, etc.
- we use level to test right measure;
- we use ladder to transport higher floor, point the walls etc.
-

4. Activity 4: Building materials

In this activity, the teacher would sufficiently train. His learners to have a habit of communication in English. He would use items in full sentences that would be practicable by learners instead of translating words or expressions in isolation in French,

By there, the teacher would give some opportunities to communicate easily.

Conclusion

Incorporating the vocabulary lesson in the Programme National d'Anglais is a great way of increasing proficiency.

Today's classroom does not need to be sacrificed, however, for vocabulary to be reinforced. Many teachers have found success in using words and expressions to constantly remind their learners in actual communication. Having a strong vocabulary foundation stands on resources with practice, practice and more practice. Then, we have been suggested that teaching vocabulary lesson should plan.

Appropriate visual aids, text books, and language teaching to the stream.

Nevertheless, we want the teachers of English in EFL classes' good procedure to make interest, motivate and encourage learners to give the best of them. We want to help learners use new language items in a transparent context. Because we want to keep a balance between controlled language practice and freer use of language in response to teacher's prompts.

To read the objective of our investigation, we have divided our work into three chapters. In the first, we have defined and explained words related to the topic. In the second, we have analyzed data we collected from secondary schools. In the third, we have suggested some procedures in which we have reconsidered the activities. There, we wanted teaching to be more practicable and very easy to facilitate the communication.

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