

VOCABULARY GAMES AS A WAY OF MOTIVATING STUDENTS

Shcherbina V.V., PhD in Philology (Kharkiv)

The article is devoted to the analysis of vocabulary games as specific learning activities and the way of motivating students in their combination with the other English language teaching techniques at all the stages of an English lesson. Vocabulary games are taken into consideration as alternative to the traditional way of forming lexical competence and teaching vocabulary. They are described as the form of work designed for activating, practicing, controlling and retrieving stored vocabulary. It is shown that vocabulary games are a good way of recycling and memorizing linguistic units. Such games may help students improve their general knowledge and to be able to communicate on various subjects. Vocabulary game is viewed both as a kind of time-filler and the activity playing the central role in communicative situation created for developing learner's communicative

skills. Vocabulary games may be viewed as integral parts of other activities. They seem to be helpful for passing new lexical items from the short-term to more reliable long-term memory.

It is pointed out that vocabulary games usually require some preparation. The games make use of variety of techniques. They may be enacted around the certain topic and are based on the use of active vocabulary. It is proved that crossword puzzles are especially time-consuming as they require more time to prepare and organize.

The set of vocabulary games efficient for the development of students' lexical competence has been offered. It is proved that vocabulary games give learners the opportunity to sense the work of language as living communication. They help students to become more word curious and more confident in their everyday speech and writing. It is shown that vocabulary games may be based on team work in order to maximize ways of making every learner experience success. It is pointed out that some games may have quite a complicated structure consisting of a number of activities. Some of them can be used as warming-up exercises some activities can help students to integrate new knowledge into existing knowledge. The vocabulary games offered in the article may be especially efficient if there is a lot of vocabulary to review. Such activities may be challenging but they help to create learning environment which leads students to success and joy of learning. They get students motivated and make learning process more memorable and exciting.

Key words: language units, lexical competence, motivation, vocabulary games.

Щербина В.В. Лексичні ігри як засіб мотивації студентів. Стаття присвячена аналізу лексичних ігор у їх поєднанні з іншими методиками навчання англійської мови на різних етапах її вивчення. Лексичні ігри розглядаються як альтернатива традиційним методам навчання іноземних мов. Доведено, що ігри, спрямовані на розвиток лексичної компетенції, можуть мати складну структуру. Більшість ігор потребують додаткової підготовки. Показано, що лексичні ігри часто використовуються для повторення та закріплення нового матеріалу. Подібні методи навчання створюють сприятливе середовище на занятті та підвищують мотивацію студентів. Лексичні ігри можуть бути складовою частиною інших методик, спрямованих на розвиток комунікативних умінь. Лексичні ігри допомагають студентам підвищувати рівень знань, полегшують процес спілкування іноземною мовою.

Запропоновано низку вправ, найбільш ефективних у процесі розвитку лексичної компетенції студентів.

Ключові слова: лексична компетенція, лексичні ігри, мовні одиниці, мотивація.

Щербина В. В. Лексические игры как способ мотивации студентов.

Статья посвящена анализу использования лексических игр в сочетании с другими методиками обучения английскому языку на разных стадиях урока иностранного языка. Лексические игры рассматриваются как альтернатива традиционным методам обучения иностранным языкам. Показано, что игры, направленные на развитие лексических навыков, могут иметь сложную структуру. Большинство игр требуют дополнительной подготовки. Многие игры используются для повторения и закрепления нового материала. Подобные методики обучения создают благоприятную обстановку и повышают мотивацию студентов. Лексические игры могут быть частью других методик, направленных на развитие коммуникативных умений. Такие методы обучения способствуют повышению уровня знаний студентов и облегчают процесс общения на иностранном языке.

Предложен ряд упражнений, наиболее эффективных для развития лексической компетенции студентов.

Ключевые слова: лексическая компетенция, лексические игры, мотивация, языковые единицы.

The topicality of the research. All foreign language teachers know how important vocabulary is. Students are to learn and memorize lots of new words at every English lesson. The problem of learning vocabulary is getting especially topical as more and more learners (including intermediate level students) realize that communication stops if they lack the necessary words. Nevertheless, for many students nothing is more tedious and tiresome than learning vocabulary lists and nothing is less efficient and interesting than learning vocabulary lists. So the questions arise: how does one memorize vocabulary then? How can a foreign language teacher transform the process of learning vocabulary into the way of motivating students? How can new words be integrated into existing word store?

It is widely-known that presentation of new language items should be immediately followed by their practice. New knowledge needs to be integrated into existing knowledge. There are a lot of different types of tasks that teacher can use to help students to transfer new words into long-term memory. Such tasks are either receptive, when learners make judgments about words, but do not necessarily produce them, or productive, in which learners are required to insert the newly studied words into some kind of speaking or writing activity. Definitely such division is a bit vague as receptive tasks can become productive if the learners are invited to talk about their judgments.

The researcher N. Decure points out: “Words that you have to use in some practical situations are remembered best. If somebody works as an au pair in an English-speaking country, he will soon know and remember such words as *ladle*, *garbage*, *mothballs*. If one stays in autumn with a family who has a garden, *wheelbarrows* and *rakes* will soon become as familiar as *pen* and *pencil*” [3: 21].

We teach and learn English in a non-English speaking setting, that’s why words cannot be manipulated in their natural context. The best thing that might be done is to manipulate them in games. We can just take lists of words and play with them. We can also use the new words that have come up in written or oral texts in class and use them in games or exercises so that passive comprehension has a chance of getting transformed into active acquisition and use. While learning vocabulary *game* is a special helper in the process of integrating new words as well. Game factor can make words more memorable and help to involve every student into the class work and get them motivated. Vocabulary games can make work non-routine and keep learners being interested and active during the whole class.

The degree of scientific research of the issue. Vocabulary games as a method of foreign language teaching have been the object of research in the studies of many both native and foreign linguists. The works by J. Hadfield are devoted to the question of motivating learners in order to form and develop speaking as well as analytical, critical and problem-solving skills while using vocabulary games both linguistic and communicative ones [5]. Giving definitions of a game, J. Hadfield points out that “the element of fun” is viewed as the key to the successful and creative learning” [5: 12].

F. Miller works out vocabulary games which require the active involvement of learners. Such vocabulary games are aimed at recycling enough language to be able to communicate in the target language. “Vocabulary games are also a way of dealing with individual’s learning preference. Such games may help the learner enjoy the bewildering process of learning lexis and becoming aware of the lexical and structural partnerships that exist in English” [10: 19].

J. Umstatter, selected Teacher of the Year several times, designed vocabulary games “aimed at reviewing the various language arts skills including grammar, word development, vocabulary research, critical thinking” [11]. The researcher considers vocabulary games to be enjoyable,

worthwhile and motivating ones. Through such activities students may absorb more information and may enjoy themselves at the same time. In his book “English Brainstormers” [11] a number of ready-to-use vocabulary activities” which can function as introductions, refreshments, homework assignments” are offered.

F. Klippel considers vocabulary games to be the technique that may help students to develop their “feeling of the language”, which seems to be necessary for formation and development of their communicative skills [7]. In his works the linguist views vocabulary games as an integrative part of role-play exercises and simulations which he considers to be at the heart of learning communicative skills.

J. Flower takes into consideration the function of vocabulary games as the important element in modern foreign language teaching for specific purposes [4]. The activities proposed in his books are based upon the area of foreign language application. The ways vocabulary games develop students’ imagination and make them “word wise” and motivated are shown in his books

The aim of this article is to define the ways vocabulary games may function at different stages of the English lesson and to offer a set of vocabulary games which can be used for motivating language learners of different levels.

There are many ways of learning and recalling new language units. Vocabulary games are aimed at helping students learn, memorize and recycle enough language material to be able to communicate on various subjects. All foreign language teachers have their own preferred learning styles as well as favourite kinds of games. F. Miller points out that “the majority of vocabulary games seem to concentrate on activating, acquiring, testing and remembering vocabulary” [10: 19]. Vocabulary games may help and encourage many learners to sustain their interest and work. F. Miller considers the ability to play such games to be “the fifth skill”.

Vocabulary games may play a central role in the classroom as well as may be a “useful time-filler”. Let’s have a closer look at some vocabulary games which are suitable for all levels of proficiency and can be used at various stages of a lesson.

Some vocabulary games play on the physical aspect of the words, they also use definitions a lot and this is useful training for dictionary work.

The vocabulary game “**Letters in Common**” may be very efficient as well as funny both for beginners and advanced learners. In this game students are to find words with identical letters at the beginning, in the middle or at the end. It may be a good idea to use sets of pictures to illustrate the activity. In the game we`d like to offer you are to find the endings of the words:

Clock Book Wheel

Lock Hook Peel

Sock Crook Heel

Word Ladder is one of the most popular games. In this game words are formed by changing one letter. For each change students are given the instructions or description of a word they are to get. Let`s follow the given instructions and transform *bear* into *coat*.

Step 1: Bear

Step 2: Hear. What deaf people cannot do.

Step 3: Heat. The noun from hot.

Step 4: Meat. Vegetarians would not eat it.

Step 5: Meal. Lunch, breakfast, dinner.

Step 6: Seal. Lives in the sea.

Step 7: Sell. What salesmen do.

Step 8: Bell. Every church has one.

Step 9: Belt. Something you wear.

Step 10: Bolt. You slide this across to fasten a window.

Step 11: Colt. A young horse.

Step 12: Coat.

The vocabulary game “**Add a letter**” may be good for memorizing words as well as for improving students` spelling. This activity may include new language items that have come up in written or oral texts in class. If students use them in games, passive comprehension will have a chance of getting transformed into active acquisition and use.

Step 1: Now – Snow – Seen in winter.

Step 2: Pure – Purse – Container for money.

Step 3: Host – Ghost – Fact or fiction.

Step 4: Roof – Proof – You need this to convict someone of a crime.

We can make the game more complicated, change the instructions and ask students to add two letters instead of one.

Step 1: Age – Eager – Keen.

Step 2: Aid – **Rapid** – Fast.

Step 3: Ale – **Ankle** – Part of the body.

Step 4: Bale – **Battle** – Fighting.

Step 5: Bare – **Barrel** – Container for beer.

It's much easier to memorize words, if they are connected with the same thing. The vocabulary game "**Word Association**" can make the process of learning words more exciting. This game is especially good for those who learn best by associating lexis with a topic or situation.

Step 1: Jacket, spine, title, chapter – **Book**.

Step 2: Matron, ward, surgeon, theatre – **Hospital**.

Step 3: Vault, deposit, counter, cash – **Bank**.

Step 4: Javelin, relay, shot, hurdles – **Athletics**.

Step 5: Pupil, iris, lash, glasses – **Eye**.

The vocabulary game "**Odd Word Out**" may be more challenging if we ask students to find in the group of words one word which includes the others and cross out the word which does not belong to the same family.

Step 1: ANT FLY **INSECT** BUTTERFLY BEETLE BEE SNAIL

Step 2: TROUT WHALE SALMON COD TUNA **FISH**

Step 3: **ISLAND** IRELAND AMERICA MALTA CYPRUS AUSTRALIA

Crossword puzzles, the most difficult and time-consuming to prepare, may be especially efficient if there is a lot of vocabulary to review. Teachers can make crossword puzzles themselves and do it fairly small and simple.

Vocabulary games can be played in teams. In the game "**Categories**", which belongs to the group of "Ranking exercises", teacher gives the students a list of words in alphabetical order. Students in teams have to put them in given categories or categories of their own choosing. Then the results are compared and discussed. The game "**Magic Shop**" belongs to such type of activities. Students get cards with positive and negative human qualities written on them. Students are divided into two teams. The representative from the first team is to describe the certain quality to another team. If another team names the quality correctly, they get the card if not the opposite team keeps it.

To sum up, it can be concluded that vocabulary games "may help students enjoy the bewildering process of learning lexis and becoming

aware of the lexical and structural partnerships that exist in English” [10: 19]. Such activities are used for recycling which is necessary for sending new lexical or structural language units into long-term memory that seems to be more trustworthy than the short-term one. Pleasure and fun are integral components of any game. Fun involvement is a wonderful way to achieve classroom goals and improve language skills. Vocabulary games make work non-routine, help to avoid boredom and keep learners being interested and active during the whole class. As a result students are given a better chance of storing and recalling their knowledge, they are enjoyably involved in the process and feel inspired to do the best.

The **further research** in this area is to be devoted to the analysis of grammar games as a significant component of developing communicative fluency.

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