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NETFLIX AS A TOOL OF TEACHING VOCABULARY

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Abstract. The article deals with different methods of teaching students new vocabulary and ways of increasing their vocabulary in the process of learning a foreign language in the most effective way. Based on the analysis of already available research results on the chosen topic the authors develop their own methods capable of making the process of memorizing easier and more associative, special attention is paid to memorizing words in a certain context. Considering the individual characteristics of the learners, the authors propose a learning scheme that is universal in its approach and will suit students with both visual and auditory types of memory.
Keywords: Netflix, vocabulary, glossary, tools, foreign language teaching.

НЕТФЛИКС КАК ИНСТРУМЕНТ ОБУЧЕНИЯ ЛЕКСИКЕ

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Аннотация. В настоящей статье рассматриваются различные методики по обучению студентов новой лексике и способы расширения их словарного запаса в процессе

изучения иностранного языка наиболее эффективным образом. На основе анализа уже имеющихся результатов исследований по избранной теме авторы разрабатывают собственную методику, способную сделать процесс запоминания более легким и ассоциативным, особое внимание уделяется запоминанию слов в определенном контексте. Учитывая индивидуальные особенности обучающихся, авторы предлагают схему обучения, которая универсальна в своем подходе и подойдет студентам как с визуальным, так и с аудиальным типами памяти.

Ключевые слова: нетфликс, словарный запас, глоссарий, инструменты, foreign language teaching.

Language is first and foremost a means of communication, and it is a great asset to understanding and communicating with millions. In today's world, the key to opening many doors and opportunities is mastery of English, which is spoken in most countries. And while it is possible to learn the language on your own, learning it with a qualified teacher is more relevant than ever. This is because, although textbooks and explanatory websites are now readily available, not every student is suited to self-study. English language learning emphasizes the student's need to master communication in this language, because it is difficult for them to study, since not everyone manages to use a correct technique to learn content, less to have a fluent communication, they need dedication and study to overcome difficulties in their training [1]. This is exactly what a teacher can help with, and here are some reasons to study with a teacher:

1. a structured syllabus, with a predetermined number of hours allocated to each topic and a strict schedule of classes not to be skipped;

2. feedback and correction of all errors, which facilitates rapid progress in language learning;

3. help in understanding difficult grammatical topics, turning passive vocabulary into active vocabulary through conversation practice.

The choice is so wide that it is sometimes difficult for the student to decide. Each teacher offers a different methodology, but the main goal is always to teach the student to speak. Grammar structures, listening, writing, and reading skills combine to give the student all the knowledge and skills they need to develop the spoken language everyone wants. An important element is a vocabulary, which can be developed at any level of proficiency.

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, "vocabulary is a sum or stock of words employed by a language, group, individual, or work or in a field of knowledge" [2]. In the early 20th century, John Dewey (1910) stated that vocabulary is critically important because a word is an instrument for thinking about the meanings which it expresses. Vocabulary has long been an important topic in middle grades education, but today it could be considered a hot topic (Cassidy & Cassidy, 2003/2004) [3]. Due to the increased importance of grammar, vocabulary was often neglected, leaving many students with a lack of vocabulary. This made it very difficult to communicate because even with all the grammatical constructions, one cannot express oneself freely without knowing the necessary words. Therefore, the communicative approach to language teaching has become more relevant these days, aimed primarily at expanding the vocabulary and using it effectively in oral speech, in a wide range of contexts and situations.

What is vocabulary learning?

Vocabulary learning is a continual process of encountering new words in meaningful and comprehensible contexts (Harmon et al., 2009) [3]. Given the difficulties of vocabulary learning in a second or foreign language (L2), along with the obvious necessity of trying to overcome them, one would expect that vocabulary instruction would be at the top of the agenda for language teachers. However, the opposite is often the case. Vocabulary is not explicitly taught in most language classes, and students are expected to "pick-up" vocabulary on their own without any guidance. Courses on reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar, and culture are common in L2 programmes, but very few vocabulary courses exist [4]. It would be more appropriate to think of vocabulary as a separate language skill that needs to be carefully studied both within and outside the other skills. Vocabulary learning should not be an automatic and passive process consisting of memorizing separate words without understanding them in context and not being able to use them in the required situation. As a rule, this way of vocabulary learning is meaningless because it engages short-term memory but not long-term memory. In order to actually remember words for a long time, one must learn them in the context of ready-made phrases and write their own sentences with them. Making examples activates the brain and forces the student to link words together, thereby triggering logic. It is believed that learning new words takes place through a variety of techniques. Moreover, it was revealed that learners use more types of strategies for learning vocabulary than for reading, listening, speaking, and writing [5].

What are vocabulary learning techniques?

The most popular ones are considered to be flashcards, word grouping, and visual imagery. The flashcard technique involves at least three components: writing down (copying) the L2 word on the front of a card, writing the word's L1 meaning on the back, and then using the card to become familiar with the new word and its meaning. The technique of word grouping involves dividing a longer word list into new, shorter lists by classifying or reclassifying the target language terms according to one or more important attributes. In this way, some degree of context is created. Word grouping establishes new groups or sets of words which hang together because of some common theme or characteristic, unlike the generally unorganized, decontextualizing word lists described earlier. Visual imagery is a very useful semi-contextualizing aid for learning L2 vocabulary. The use of visual imagery for vocabulary learning is based on making associations between a picture and a word. The theory on which this technique is founded is that most learners are capable of associating new information to concepts in memory by means of meaningful visual images, and that visual images make learning more efficient [4].

In addition to the above, there are other techniques such as sources. Here the student has to analyze the structure of words by comparing different parts of speech. Analyzing word parts is a useful strategy, because being familiar with the stems and affixes can provide useful for seeing connections between related words, checking guesses from context, strengthening form and meaning connections, and in some cases working out the meaning of a word [6]. Another effective strategy is planned learning or deliberate word choice. Learners should know what their vocabulary goals are and choose what vocabulary to focus on in terms of their selected goals. What is more, learners should also have a clear strategy for deciding what vocabulary to focus on and where to find this vocabulary. When learning vocabulary, choosing certain aspects of a word (usually meaning but for listening and writing, the form of word is also necessary to

pay attention to) to focus on and using various strategies can make the learning process more efficient [6].

Digital tools for learning vocabulary

In the age of modern technology, in addition to paper knowledge carriers in the form of books, there are websites and various platforms that provide access not only to word lists, video, and audio materials but also to tests and even flashcards. Nowadays, you don't have to print them at all, it is enough to use a special service, for example, Quizlet. Quizlet is a website that allows users to learn vocabulary by means of flashcard sets using a variety of game — like learning tools. It is also available for Android and iOS, allowing users to use it anytime and anywhere. Quizlet has been reported to have some virtues as well as shortcomings in its implementation. It gives advantages in terms of learners' performance, engagement, autonomy, interests, and motivation [7].

In addition to flashcards, students play digital games to help them learn new vocabulary effortlessly. The use of digital games as a learning tool and game‐like formats could be more effective at capturing learners' attention than traditional media such as textbooks (Wood, 2001). Teaching vocabulary through the use of games is beneficial as games provide enjoyment and interest in learning (Bakhsh, 2016). Studies carried out with young learners of English as a foreign language show that using digital games during classes has a positive impact in the acquisition of vocabulary. A study carried out by Peterson (2013) resulted that kindergarten children who were taught vocabulary using digital games achieved more compared to the children learned through regular curriculum [8].

Wang and Shih (2015), for instance, used mobile vocabulary learning application in their study and concluded that experimental group scored significantly better than the control group who used paper-based learning materials. A good example of mobile applications is WhatsApp, a free mobile messenger application that allows its users to exchange texts, as well as multimedia both in one-to-one and group conversations, and make calls. Being one of the most popular and widely used messenger applications, it is also available for all mobile platforms (IOS, Android, Windows Mobile, Symbian, etc.) [9]. This method of vocabulary expansion is unusual and non-obvious, but effective, as confirmed by research.

Lawrence (2014) also used WhatsApp groups in order to introduce vocabulary items before reading texts to a group of five undergraduate learners of Afrikaans. For a 7 week-long period, the researchers sent messages to the group that introduced target words with translations and different types of media such as sound or image. Content of the messages were further elaborated in each following course and students' knowledge was tested. The author concluded that WhatsApp is an effective tool for providing outside-the-classroom opportunities to practice vocabulary especially for weak students; however, content of the messages should be carefully planned [9]. All of the above studies demonstrate the effectiveness of digital tools in helping students learn new words. In addition to generating high interest among students, the interactive format is also adapting to the needs of today's students. Due to the high consumption of content on platforms like TikTok, the attention span has significantly decreased. This means that it has become more difficult to get people interested, and even more difficult to keep their attention. However, the game form does an excellent job at both.

Learning vocabulary through Netflix

Learning new words with the help of TV series has long been a trend in foreign language learning, but it's only recently on Netflix specifically. The service is convenient because it offers a wide range of both films and series, with or without subtitles. The platform also features exclusive content that can only be found on Netflix. The convenience of the website is that it offers the user a selection of series according to genre and interest, and also notes which episode they've stopped at.

Research in this area has been done more than once, and each time it has proved the effectiveness of Netflix as a tool for memorizing new words. For the most part, the technique works when students watch shows with subtitles rather than without them. The students in Bianchi and Ciabattoni's (2008) study who used L1 captions and L2 captions were found to make more significant improvements on long-term vocabulary acquisition than those who used no captions while viewing movies. In another study, Peters, Heynen, and Puimège (2016) examined L1 and L2 captions in two exploratory experiments. The first experiment focused on form recognition and meaning recall of aural vocabulary. It was found that caption type did not predict meaning recall but that L1 captions better promoted form recognition. In their second experiment, which examined form recognition and meaning recall of written vocabulary, positive effects for captions were found in form recall but not form recognition [10]. It should be noted that by watching the series subtitled in the original language, students not only memorize the pronunciation of words but also pay attention to their spelling at the same time.

Authors' methodology involving teaching vocabulary through Netflix

In this article, the authors propose their own ways of improving existing techniques to make learning new words through Netflix series even easier and more effective, and they include:

1) a website for students to find pre-recorded videos with selections of useful words by topic. For example, slang expressions, idioms, everyday English, business English and so on, depending on the series and the students' goals;

2) glossaries on popular TV series, and in several variations, at once. Words can be grouped according to the part of speech, or the topic they refer to. For students' convenience, glossaries should include words from a particular series and not exceed the number 50;

3) interactive tasks for each episode of the selected series. For example, link words with their translation or definition, connect two parts of an idiom, find synonyms to a phrase, and so on;

4) articles with series lists, which are already categorized by level, from Elementary to Advanced;

5) dialogues from the series in the form of audio materials which look like podcasts and are accompanied by tasks. For example, insert missing words from the heard dialogue.

Conclusion

As demonstrated above, there are many techniques for remembering new words, but at the moment there is no comprehensive and universal technique that is both interactive and engages different types of memory at the same time. This requires the development of a Netflix series website with the above tools to be a useful resource for teachers and students, and to complement the actual watching of the series. The authors believe it can not only speed up the learning process but also make it more relevant by

using modern English, which is much more common in newer TV series than in older textbooks.

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