

EFFECTIVE WAYS OF TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY IN CHINESE PRIMARY
SCHOOLS

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Abstract

EFFECTIVE WAYS OF TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY IN CHINESE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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Under the Supervision of Dr. Madelon Kohler-Busch

The difficulty of teaching English vocabulary in Chinese primary schools has grown significantly. This essay looks at efficient methods for teaching English vocabulary in Chinese primary schools. The paper examines the difficulties Chinese primary school teachers encounter while attempting to teach English vocabulary by reviewing recent research on vocabulary teaching and learning. A number of efficient methods for teaching English vocabulary in Chinese primary schools are suggested as a result of the investigation, including the use of images, gestures, games, songs, and stories. Additionally, it's essential to foster a favorable learning environment and encourage the development of students' motivation. Finally, this work suggested that additional investigation is required to examine the efficacy of these tactics and their possible effects on students' English vocabulary learning in Chinese primary schools. [OBJ]

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Chapter I Introduction

Vocabulary, words, are the smallest meaningful units of language, just as bones are to the human body and brick is to towering buildings. A complete English sentence is often composed of multiple words. Without words, utterances will be pale and tasteless, without any practical significance. Thus, vocabulary is the most basic and important aspect of language teaching. The quantity and firmness of a student's vocabulary will directly affect his or her language expression ability and the richness and accuracy of their thought expression. Therefore, in the process of primary school English teaching, word learning, or vocabulary development, is a most important teaching task, linking different English learning aspects. The students' interest in learning English words is related to the teachers' inspiration. This requires teachers to fully mobilize students' enthusiasm for learning words while completing teaching tasks on time. This article will discuss effective teaching methods for vocabulary development in primary school English teaching.

Statement of the Problem

What kind of methods are helpful for Chinese primary school students for learning English?

Once these methods are identified, how can teachers use these methods to strengthen progress in their students' English vocabulary?

Definition of Terms

Picture-word Inductive Model: “The PWIM is a strategy that uses an integrated language arts approach to teaching beginning reading and writing, and it includes the component skills of phonetic analysis, structural analysis, spelling, and mechanics,” stated Calhoun, E. (1999, p. v).

Chinese Cheng-yu: “Chinese Cheng-yu is one of the precise and essential lexical part in the Chinese lexical system by its unique formation and wisdom background. Chinese Cheng-yu is

one of the four types of formulaic expressions, together with collections, two-part allegorical sayings, and proverbs,” stated Gu, & Lornklang, T. (2021, p. 122).

Purpose of the Study

This paper is intended to provide some referential experience for teachers teaching English in primary schools in China; it also aims to provide references for researchers studying ESL or EFL. Foreign language learners can also try more vocabulary learning methods through this paper. I hope this paper can help foreign language teachers, researchers and foreign language learners.

Significance of the Study

At present, in China, English courses are set up early in schools. In addition to learning English in school, parents also want their children to learn more English in extracurricular institutions. Parents can also see that more and more people are learning English through online courses. A common phenomenon is that vocabulary recall is a big problem that puzzles many students.

From the perspective of teaching, vocabulary teaching is a very important part of language teaching. Students need to lay a solid vocabulary foundation in primary school. Vocabulary can be accumulated in the process of listening, speaking, reading, reading and writing, but effective vocabulary teaching methods are not clearly understood and known by all teachers. Therefore, it is necessary to define effective vocabulary teaching methods.

Methodology

The main research methods of this study will be literature review and practical examples. By summarizing the reference documents, this paper summarizes the English teaching methods that teachers can use for reference; it also discusses effective English vocabulary teaching

methods in primary schools in China by combining the examples in the actual English classroom vocabulary teaching. [OB]

Chapter II Review of Literature

This chapter summarizes four vocabulary teaching methods, which are all in line with the content of *English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education* (hereinafter referred to as the curriculum standards) (2022).

Each method has its own applicable teaching stage, and there are also some suitable methods for learning at home, which will be helpful for English learning in primary school and also align with the direction of this study.

English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education

Core literacy is the concentrated representation of the curriculum education's value in China. It is the right values, necessary character and crucial ability of students to meet the needs of their own and meet society's social and personal growth.

The fundamental skills of the pupils that must be developed in English classes are language ability, cultural awareness, quality of thought, and learning capacity. Language ability is the crucial component in the growth of core literacy. The four components of core literacy interact, integrate, and grow alongside one another.

After the curriculum standards in 2022, Shen Fangdi (2022) pointed out in her article that the necessity of putting an emphasis on the transfer, application, and learning understanding of students' knowledge. The author suggested that teachers should emphasize language and cultural knowledge as the focus of course teaching to improve students' English literacy because this will improve their practical abilities.

According to Shen Fangdi (2022), primary school English teachers need to go over their

teaching plans as well as try to meet the requirements of the curriculum standards. Educators are suggested to create a relaxed and interesting atmosphere so that students can be inspired. In this way, students may think critically and creatively, participate in more real contexts and participate better in the classes. Teachers can also make more dynamic and engaging teaching methods, tools or resources.

Shi Man (2022) discussed the curriculum and highlighted the three key components: "Big concept/idea," "discourse," and "thinking quality." Shi Man mentioned in her 2022 that "the overall overarching notion of the English discipline can be loosely divided into two aspects: the concept linked to the content as well as the concept related to the language," The basic idea behind the theme is how language acquisition helps people develop cross-cultural emotional attitudes and values. The concept of language mostly pertains to the development of particular language skills. The two elements work together and complement one another. The concept of English language instruction is expressed through discourse, which offers pupils a variety of literary and creative resources. In terms of students' comprehension, analysis, comparison, inference, criticism, evaluation, and other skills. Thinking quality refers to the distinctive qualities of human thought. Students learn to find, evaluate, and solve problems as well as make accurate value judgments about items with the support of improved thinking skills. Shi Man (2022) has pointed out that when planning lessons, teachers should take these three factors into account.

Picture-word Inductive Model

Learning new words is a crucial part of learning a language and is a necessary ability for people studying English as a foreign language (EFL). A visual image is created in the learner's mind by associating new vocabulary words or phrases with pictures using the Picture Word

Inductive Model (PWIM), which aids with memorization and recall.

Wang et. al. (2021) studied the effects of PWIM and readers' theater so as to enhance the English vocabulary learning level of Chinese primary EFL learners. The results state that compared with the pretests, the average scores of the post tests are improved significantly. The students were also very satisfied with the learning method. According to the study, using PWIM and readers' theater to teach English vocabulary is a smart idea since they provide learners with opportunities to learn vocabulary and visual assistance.

Zhao et al. (2019) investigated how well PWIM, which focuses on Chinese culture, helps young learners acquire English vocabulary. Zhao et al. (2019) discovered that the findings of this study show that students who studied English using PWIM in the subject of Chinese culture had a significant improvement in their average scores following the English vocabulary acquisition tests. The research of Zhao et. al. (2019) demonstrates that Chinese culture-themed vocabulary teaching is an effective teaching method, which can promote young students' vocabulary acquisition, broaden and strengthen the application of vocabulary and cultural knowledge.

Triwahyuni's (2020) study set out to focus on the impact of PWIM on reading skills in early primary schools in Indonesia. The results suggest compared with traditional textbook teaching, PWIM has a great effect on primary school students' early reading ability so that PWIM has a certain effect on the enhancement of pupils' inductive thinking. Triwahyuni's (2020) also mentioned the use of improper learning models and learning media which could create difficulties for first-grade students in reading.

Besides, PWIM is also effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery. Kamarudin (2021) studied with second-grade students of MTs NW Lingsar in Indonesia and found that PWIM had a positive effect on students' vocabulary mastery. The findings imply that the t-test's

value was greater than the t-table's value. This can suggest that the use of PWIM significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery.

To sum up, PWIM has discovered to be a valuable tool in improving students' English vocabulary acquisition and early reading skills. Teachers are suggested to use cultural methods combining with PWIM when they design the teaching activities.

Readers' Theater

Readers' Theater is a teaching approach that has gained considerable attention in recent years in China. Many teachers and researchers have studied about this teaching method and many related analyses are also developed in various ways. Reading needs the accumulation of vocabulary. By using Readers' Theater, students' reading ability can be improved.

Young et. al. (2009) highlighted that the use of Readers' Theater provided a motivating and enjoyable instructional tool for both students and teachers. Teachers can easily organize the activities and see effects in students learning. The findings of Young et. al. (2018) suggested that Readers' Theatre can be a valuable tool in enhancing reading fluency in primary school education.

Eight English teachers from secondary schools in Kisumu County, Kenya, were interviewed by Kulo et al. (2021) about their usage of Readers' Theatre in the classroom. According to the findings, Readers' Theater activities boosted students' participation in reading assignments during class. It is clear that working together in groups helps better boost students' reading confidence.

In conclusion, vocabulary mastery abilities can be developed by using Readers' Theater which has been found as an effective teaching approach. It can improve reading fluency and comprehension in various educational contexts. In second language learning, students need more chances to activate themselves during the learning process to keep focus, so that they could

better cooperate, read, act in roles and so on especially in primary schools.

Mind maps

The use of mind maps in education has expanded the range of creative and efficient teaching techniques. Enhancing students' learning experiences by using mind maps to creatively and engagingly visually organize knowledge and ideas might help kids develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills earlier in life.

Van der Wilt et. al. (2019) found that using mind maps improved six-week period children's language skills and story comprehension obviously. The use of a central question in the mind maps approach resulted in a collaborative learning environment that developed the language skills and comprehension. Even young children who cannot yet read or write can understand and benefit from the use of mind maps. In this way, teachers could try to implement the mind map approach in their own early childhood classrooms.

Choporova (2020) studied on the use of Mind Maps in the context of teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The Mind Map building technique in Choporova (2020) 's study proved to be an effective method for organizing and summarizing the information, and for promoting a deeper understanding of the content. Choporova (2020) also pointed out the potential of Mind Maps as a pedagogical strategy for ESP teaching and learning.

Numerous research has made the connection between creativity and learning processes, and they have found that creativity is important in various courses and disciplines. In their research, Yan, Lee et al. (2022) found that self-assessment mind mapping has the potential to be a successful and long-lasting teaching technique to enhance students' higher-order talents, particularly in the context of creativity.

In conclusion, using mind maps is one of the powerful tools. It can be widely used to

enhance learning in various environments. The benefits of mind mapping are obvious, whether in early childhood education or purposeful English teaching. Mind maps give children a wider horizon of vocabulary and it is easy to follow. In conclusion, using mind maps might help students become more adept at mastering language, reading, critical thinking, problem-solving, and higher-order skills (particularly in the context of creativity).

Shared Book Reading

Shared book reading is a common and effective instructional practice used in early childhood education. It aims to facilitate the literacy skills in children. This practice includes an adult and child reading together, engaging in dialogue about the text, and utilizing various reading strategies to support comprehension. In recent years, shared book reading has drawn more and more attention in school education as a valuable tool to develop literacy in classrooms.

Landry et al. (2012) studied the participation in Play and Learning Strategies (PALS), and it turned out to have a positive effect on maternal and child behaviors throughout shared book reading interactions. The study also found out that changes in maternal response behavior can affect children's behavior while shared reading.

Steiner et al. (2022) carried out a study and it suggested that parents who utilized discussion and spoken reading strategies to support their children's reading and had many different kinds of responses to the program training. Children did better in reading rates, accuracy, fluency as well as independent reading measures during the whole program. Teachers who want to implement shared book reading can use this book to help them better accomplish clear and direct language use in classes. They can minimize the gap between read-aloud and independent reading as well as improve students' critical thinking ability and participating.

The focus of Karasu's study (2020) was on the value of collaborative book reading in

fostering young children's literacy skills, including for students who have hearing impairments. Shared Book Reading was used by a first-grade student with hearing loss during the literacy stage of Karasu's study, and it was reported to be helpful in many areas, including storybook elements that are effective, literacy skills, and follow-up activities.

In conclusion, vocabulary learning can have a better outcome under the shared book reading. It is an effective instructional practice that can promote literacy development in young children, even for the hearing loss students. Students can improve many kinds of skills towards the learning process. It is also a beneficial method for both parents and their children.

Summary

English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (hereinafter referred to as the curriculum standards) (2022) advocate for students to develop core competencies in the English subject, and vocabulary is the basic part of English learning, which also make vocabulary teaching seemed to be crucial. This chapter summarizes the vocabulary teaching experience and research of domestic and foreign scholars, and how to apply these achievements in China according to local conditions is the issue to be discussed in this article. These teaching methods not only need to meet the teaching requirements mentioned in the curriculum standards, but also be able to correspond to the three types of activities mentioned in the curriculum standards and thorough by the level to achieve the best vocabulary teaching effect. This chapter's main material examines vocabulary instruction strategies that adhere to Chinese primary school English curriculum standards. [OBJ]

Chapter III Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Based on the above perspectives and the findings of this paper, it can be concluded that the use of contextualized and visualized strategies can effectively improve Chinese primary school students' vocabulary learning. In this paper, there are several recommended teaching methods for teachers to follow: picture-word inductive model, readers' theater, mind maps and shared book reading. For example, when English teachers plan to teach some abstract words for primary students in China, they can use some pictures to help students understand the meaning of the word. Sometimes, teachers can use Chinese Cheng-yu to help students to understand these kinds of words better. Then, teachers can let students spell and read the word at the same time. Students can read the word aloud in groups or as individuals. Teachers should then encourage pupils to ask and follow up on questions so that their level of thinking can be enhanced. At last, students can talk or make sentences naturally under the new relevant contexts. In the whole process, teachers should play the role of a learning guide. In this way, teachers give students

more chances to think, speak and learn by themselves. This process also meets the requirement of the curriculum standards.

Besides, while learning the story, text or other materials, students should be able to motivate themselves automatically by the activities teachers provide. For example, teachers can give meaningful contexts, situations, contexts, and images to students so as to promote their understanding and continuous memory of new vocabulary. When teachers are about to plan the lessons, remember to check the themes in curriculum standards. Teachers are suggested to have a clear understanding of the teaching materials' themes. In general, Chinese primary school students usually focus more on the things around them. It is easier and more effective for teachers to prepare real and interesting contexts for students. Besides, students are suggested to actively take part in various methods of vocabulary teaching, such as exercises, oral conversations, and reading comprehension. In this way, their understanding and memory of vocabulary can be enhanced. Students' enthusiasm and involvement in vocabulary learning can also be encouraged through the use of interactive teaching methods and multimedia resources. Teachers should utilize various technology, including movies, photos, games, and readily available applications to students so as to increase their learning enthusiasm.

Next, learning vocabulary is a process that requires constant review and repetition in order to create long-term memory. In that case, vocabulary instruction in the classroom should be integrated with the activities and real-world circumstances in each lesson. In this way, it can enhance their language use and communication abilities. Therefore, teachers should create memory scaffolding to help children have more chance to review, absorb, and use words in real contexts. For example, primary school English teachers can show a mind map to students and introduce it as the target after learning. Students can get to know how they could use this tool to

help them review and deepen their understanding of vocabulary during drawing a mind map by themselves.

Additionally, taking homework into the consideration of design of each lesson is also very important. In fact, in curriculum standards, teaching process includes teacher's activities, students' activities and the evaluation of each activity. In that case, teachers can think about several specific writing tasks, oral tasks, group cooperation tasks and other tasks that they need to implement in their lessons. In that case, a homework analysis (especially a chart) under a big idea can be very helpful. It is much easier for teachers to follow in the practical teaching.

Last but not least, using different ways of formative assessment is a good way to assist teachers in keeping track of their students' vocabulary learning progress and changing their teaching methods in time. Evaluating and providing feedback on student involvement, academic achievement, and cooperative skills are several suggested ways for teachers to employ in their teaching. There are a variety of assessment tools for teachers to choose, such as quizzes, games, and group discussions. Students can also learn the simple ways to assess their vocabulary learning. In addition, during the learning process, students can learn with their partners from the same class so that they can also assess others' learning. In the whole progress of self-assessment and evaluation of others, students get to know how to assess, and they can help each other during the process of language learning. This kind of assessment can also help students to cooperate better, which is also helpful in the afterwards activities in class. These methods above should also be used to give feedback and assistance for students' vocabulary development.

Recommendations

In order to encourage effective and interesting vocabulary learning among students, it is advised that teachers in Chinese primary schools implement contextualized and visually

appealing strategies, make a great use of multimedia and interactive technologies, incorporate vocabulary learning into students' everyday lives and practical situations, and use formative assessments. Additional techniques and technological advancements to improve vocabulary instruction and learning in Chinese primary schools can be explored through further study.

Specifically, in further research, more vocabulary teaching methods and strategies can be explored to further improve the effectiveness and quality of vocabulary teaching. The current textbooks in primary schools should be in line with the *English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education* (hereinafter referred to as the curriculum standards) (2022), and also need to be carefully selected and designed to meet the needs and interests of primary school students in various regions of China. Teachers should choose materials suitable for culture and age and provide students with meaningful and relevant vocabulary learning background. Schools can strengthen their learning of the curriculum standards, providing more scientific guidance and language learning opportunities for teachers and students.

In addition, primary schools in China can also provide more vocabulary learning resources for teachers and students including vocabulary books, English magazines and online vocabulary learning platforms. This can help raise students' learning interests. Besides, it also can keep learning and improve their vocabulary not only in the classroom. In some of the primary schools, teachers have some great resources so that they can use Reader's Theater to let students get to know what they can do under specific roles. During this process, students have another chance to transfer vocabulary into dramatic contexts.

Speaking of English teachers in Chinese primary schools, they should have sufficient knowledge and skills in English vocabulary teaching. A professional development plan or program should be given to help teachers enhance their English proficiency and understanding of

knowledge concerning effective vocabulary teaching methods. Primary school teachers often use clear and rhymed commands or language to let students focus on the ongoing activity. To improve the effectiveness of discussion, teachers can work in some specific groups to learn the curriculum standards and share their ideas and feelings towards the requirements mentioned in the curriculum standards. Each teacher may have their own understanding of the requirements in their practical teaching. Some of the requirements may be hard to implement due to the restrictions of policies, teaching requirements and other concerns in different schools and areas. For this reason, teachers can work together to discover the most suitable and effective ways of teaching vocabulary instead of leaving the problems for their own.

As for parents, they should join in their children's vocabulary learning more frequently by supporting and giving encouragement to their children at home as much as possible. There are a variety of English language learning materials for them to choose. They are suggested to read English books, watch English videos and play vocabulary games with their children. In this process, parents are a guide and they really go into children's world to read together. They have more chances to learn knowledge together, think together and read out the words together. In this process, parents as well as their children are devoted to the reading process. In this process, both parents and their children are fully focused on the same thing, and this is really very precious for nowadays people. After reading or watching, children can write down the material they used in a reading log. This can aid in their reading organization. In that situation, they can help their kids learn more vocabulary while also maintaining a happier home environment.

Since education has become a significant part in the society, more research, studies and programs are coming after the curriculum standards in China. There is more and more relevant guidance for teachers to follow. This is a big challenge as well as a great opportunity. In

conclusion, there should be more connected and proper ways for China, primary schools, teachers, parents as well as students to reach a better level of English vocabulary.

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