A RESEARCH ON VOCABULARY TEACHING STRATEGIES
AND STUDENTS' MASTERY

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By means of questionnaire and quantitative research, this article aims at investigating the effects on students' mastery of vocabulary by studying teachers' adoption of seven kinds of common vocabulary teaching strategies and the usage of analyzing strategies in intensive English in order to improve vocabulary teaching strategies and to help enlarge students' vocabulary.

Keywords: vocabulary teaching, teaching strategies, students' mastery, teaching effect.

1. Introduction

Cohen (1990) and Nation (1990) elaborately discussed various strategies about vocabulary teaching, which include phonetics method, lexical approach, visual sense method, associative memory approach, contextual approach, inductive method and cultural meaning method. The research in this article is based on these vocabulary teaching strategies.

2. Research Ways and Data Collection

The subjects of this research are 171 sophomores of non-English major, including 145 boys and 26 girls. The questionnaire is mainly divided into vocabulary teaching methods and teaching effects. The method based on seven strategies, adopting from "teachers always use the method" to "teachers never use the method" and students also evaluate teachers' vocabulary teaching effect from "best" to "none". These questions constitute a form requiring the subjects to choose the congruous or approximate choices according to their own. Subtracting 14 useless questionnaires, we totally get 157 effective papers. The author used data analysis software to analyze the data.

3. Research Effect and Discussion

3.1 Phonetics Method

Teachers who always use this method account for 10%, often use 52.5%, sometimes use 25%, seldom use 12.5%, and never use 0%.As to the effects, best makes up for 7.5%, better 30%, good 57.5%, bad 5%, and no effects 0%. According to the data of feedback, teachers who often use phonetics as the teaching method account for 52.5%, that is to say, more than half of teachers use this method, but 30% students think its effect is just better, and still 57.5% students think it's good.

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Students don't understand how to use pronunciation rules to remember English words, so learning words by rote will not make their memory firm, thus it is a waste of time and inefficient.

3.2 Lexical Approach

Teachers who always use this method account for 7.5%, often use 45%, sometimes use 37.5%, seldom use 10%, and never use 0%. As to the effects, best makes up for 5%, better 27.5%, good 60%, bad 7%, and no effects 0%.The application of the rules of English vocabulary structure can not only help students understand the basic meaning but also achieve the purpose of enlarging vocabulary. 45% teachers often use this strategy, and 60% students think lexical approach is good for them to recite words. Lexical approach is an important task of vocabulary teaching, and we should pay more attention.

3.3 Visual Sense Method

Teachers who always use this method account for 10%, often use 25%, sometimes use 37.5%, seldom use 27.5%, and never use 0%. As to the effects, best makes up for 0%, better 15%, good 60%, bad 25%, and no effects 0%.Teacher always use this teaching method, but the effect is common. There are some limits like culture, experience, structure of knowledge, and region. Some concepts can hardly image themselves in students' minds, but teachers can use objects, pictures, screens, actions, gestures and non-verbal expressions to give students a deep expression.

3.4 Associative Memory Approach

Teachers who always use this method account for 7.5%, often use 25%, sometimes use 45%, seldom use 17.5%, and never use 5%. As to the effects, best makes up for 12.5%, better 32.5%, good 45%, bad 45%, and no effects 0%.From the result, teachers always use it, and students also like this method. Vocabulary is stored in different categories in one's memory, and it is a collection based on some relations, which will be forgotten over time. Associative memory approach will help make students remember new words efficiently, arouse their interest and enlarge vocabulary.

3.5 Contextual Approach

Teachers who always use this method account for 10%, often use 32.5%, sometimes use 47.5%, seldom use 10%, and never use 0%. As to the effects, best makes up for 10%, better 42.5%, good 47.5%, bad 0%, and no effects 0%.Teacher use this method more frequently, and the effect is very good. Situational language teaching requires teachers to give a context in order to let students grasp the meaning. The research effects indicate that this method can make students remember words exactly, and make them remember words as soon as they recall the scenes.

3.6 Inductive Method

Teachers who always use this method account for 10%, often use 50%, sometimes use 22.5%, seldom use 32.5%, and never use 0%. As to the effects, best makes up for 17.5%, better 35%, good 30%, bad 17.5%, and no effects 0%.Teachers often use this method, and it is very popular in students, so the effect is best. The research of Craik and Tulving (1975) indicated that the subjects who were

taught to classify words performed better than those who were not. So as for vocabulary teaching, teachers should guide students to classify and handle with the words that are needed, in order to improve memory effect and enlarge vocabulary as soon as possible.

3.7 Cultural Meaning Method

Teachers who always use this method account for 0%, often use 5%, sometimes use 45%, seldom use 50%, and never use 0%. As to the effects, best makes up for 2.5%, better 30%, good 55%, bad 12.5%, and no effects 0% .Although teachers seldom put culture into vocabulary teaching, students' feedbacks are good. This demonstrates that students are willing to accept vocabulary with cultural knowledge. So during English vocabulary teaching, teachers should help students learn and grasp the concept meaning of vocabulary, at the same time cultivate their cultural consciousness gradually.

4. Conclusion

From the analysis above, we know that teachers in our university prefer associative memory approach and inductive approach to other teaching methods. Although these teaching strategies were proved efficiently, they are not paid much attention in classroom teaching. Hopefully, this article will help teachers realize this problem, and better use these strategies in vocabulary teaching.

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