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DEVELOPING YOUNG LEARNERS' LEXICAL COMPETENCE ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLE OF LEARNER AUTONOMY

According to the State Standard of primary education and foreign language curriculum for grades 1-4, learners are supposed to master the basics of communicative competence, including lexical competence. By lexical competence we mean the ability to recognize and use words in a language in the way that speakers of the language use them. The formation of lexical competence in young learners can be guided, i.e. dependent upon the teacher, and autonomous, or independent of the teacher [1, p. 23-36].

The principle of learner autonomy in the context of vocabulary building presupposes that learners set appropriate learning goals and take charge of their own learning. Learners can accept responsibility for identifying new words, learning them and evaluating the effectiveness of their learning process. By doing so, learners begin to think about learning, thus making the learning process transparent. The teacher's role in this respect is to create and maintain an environment conducive to learning. The teacher can try to regularly motivate learners to think about why they are learning certain words, exactly what they are learning, and how they learn most effectively [2].

To apply the principle of learner autonomy to teaching vocabulary in the young learners' classroom, we suggest four stages of the formation of elementary lexical competence, namely: recognition, guided practice, communicative practice and self-assessment.

On the recognition stage, learners can do receptive exercises in which they listen to a text, draw an illustration for it and use it as a visual support for memory

work. The guided practice stage involves learners into self-training. They do receptive and reproductive vocabulary exercises on their own or in groups, identifying and reproducing the new words, classifying them, creating semantic maps, etc. The communicative practice stage presupposes the creative usage of acquired lexical items. For instance, learners can compose their own jazz chant basing it on the given example. On the last, self-assessment stage, learners are encouraged to use metacognitive learning strategies, such as keeping statistics of their own mistakes, identifying the ways to correct them, defining the problem that prevents them from accomplishing the tasks and searching the ways to overcome it.

Thus, the formation of lexical competence according to the principle of learner autonomy makes language knowledge more meaningful and applicable, as well as reduces the time for learning English. In our opinion, the usage of the elements of independent learning in vocabulary building provides the mastery of self-control skills by learners, who are to determine their learning goals, to organize and structure their learning process, to assess the results using a range of learning strategies.

Literature

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