

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The use of interactive technologies in teaching English vocabulary to primary school students

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Abstract. This article explores methods of teaching English vocabulary to primary school students in Uzbekistan through interactive technologies. It examines the use of interactive whiteboards, animated videos, songs, digital games, and flashcards. Furthermore, a six-stage teaching approach for a 45-minute lesson is proposed, taking into account young learners' needs and learning characteristics.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the problem

Very quickly it will become clear that children do not learn vocabulary in the same way as adults. For example if a teacher writes down 10 words on the board and asks the learners to write and memorise them. Most learners will have forgotten most of the words by the next lesson. However, if they add the vocabulary into the song, present it on a bright screen and make it a game where children have to jump, move their hands or run to the board then they will remember lots of vocabulary.

Young learners want language that they can relate to their current lives and link to real actions [3,7]. Vocabulary is an important part of young learners' early English. They will need to know some simple vocabulary relating to colours, animals, food, family and school [3]. Vocabulary cannot be learnt in one go. It needs to be repeated several times [6]. Teachers will need to find ways to repeat vocabulary for learners without making it repetitive.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Young learners and vocabulary

Children are taught differently than adults [3]. They make an attempt to understand adults' words and actions, however they don't learn language through explanation of language rules but through context and active learning. Children need clear, visual help such as pictures, objects and actions. Young learners have a short attention span, learn best through play and movement and require lots of repetition in a positive environment [7]. Vocabulary needs to be learnt as knowing a word involves knowing its form (oral and written), meaning and use. To remember a word it must be seen many times in various contexts [6].

2.2 Interactive Learning & Educational Technology

Interactive learning involves using tasks which cannot be completed individually and therefore requires cooperation [1, p.171]. Good educational technologies should have a clear concept behind them, be logical and coherent, easy to manage, effective and reusable in other schools [1, p.161]. This textbook also mentions how lexical mind maps and word clusters can be used [1]. Lexical mind maps take a word and put it into groups under a central theme, whilst word clusters group words together based on association [1, pp.171, 174]. These can be helpful with young learners as they remember words better when they are linked together and to a picture/action.

Interactive technologies appear to be the solution. Many schools in Uzbekistan now have interactive technologies such as projectors or interactive whiteboards. Teachers can use free resources from online to create games and quizzes. "Educational technologies are scientifically grounded methods of organizing the whole educational and learning process taking into account material and personnel resources as well as their interaction." [1] (Akhmedova & Azizova, p.160). This however does not always guarantee that they will learn. How can technology be used effectively with young children?

1.2. Research question and learner group

This article will look at how interactive technologies can be used effectively within English vocabulary teaching using a who, what and how framework. The learners are primary school students (approx. age 7-10) in Uzbekistan and are beginner level learners of English.

2.3. Multimedia, movement and games

Mayer conducted many experiments and demonstrated that people have better learning outcomes when using multiple media such as images and words, this is referred to as the multimedia principle [5]. For younger learners who cannot read well yet, images and sounds on a screen help them understand the meaning of new words instantly without needing translation. Using movement is an important part of language learning. Total Physical Response (TPR) was developed by Asher [2]. It uses actions in response to verbal commands and helps beginners understand and remember what they are learning. Digital games can provide extra practice and motivation. Hung and her colleagues conducted a large review and found that most studies reported positive effects on learner motivation and attitudes. Many studies also reported an improvement in vocabulary [4]. However, the quality of studies varied.

2.4. Research gap

These sources show that young learners need concrete, active and repeated contact with words, and that multimedia, movement and games can provide it. However, studies of educational technology often focus on older learners or on one tool at a time, and little practical guidance exists for primary teachers in

Uzbekistan on how to combine several interactive technologies in one 45-minute lesson. This article tries to fill this gap.

3. Method

3.1. Type of study and selection of sources

This is a literature-based (theoretical) study. No experiment or test was carried out, and the article does not report test scores or survey results. Seven sources were selected: a methodology textbook by Uzbek authors used in the training of future English teachers [1], two books on teaching young learners [3, 7], a book on vocabulary learning [6], a book on multimedia learning [5], a classic article on total physical response [2] and a review of research on digital game-based language learning [4].

3.2. Literature matrix

The seven sources were organised in a literature matrix (Table 1), which shows the focus and main idea of each source and how it is used in this article. The material was then analysed through the three guiding questions of the course, and claims supported by the sources were separated from the author's own proposals.

Table 1. Literature matrix

Source	Focus	Main idea	Use in this article
Akhmedova & Azizova (2026) [1]	Educational technology	Interactive learning needs co-operation; qualities of a good technology	Interactive methods (how)
Asher (1969) [2]	Total physical response	Responding to commands with actions helps beginners	Movement in lessons (how)
Cameron (2001) [3]	Young learners	Children learn meaning through situations and activities	Learner profile (who)
Hung et al. (2018) [4]	Digital games	Games mostly improve motivation and often vocabulary	Digital games (how)
Mayer (2009) [5]	Multimedia learning	Words and pictures together work better than words alone	Presenting words (how)
Nation (2013) [6]	Vocabulary learning	Form, meaning and use; many spaced meetings	What to teach (what)
Pinter (2017) [7]	Young learners	Short attention span; play, movement and repetition	Learner profile (who)

4. Results

The analysis of the sources gave the following answers to the three guiding questions.

4.1. Who to teach?

The learners are primary school children, aged around 7-10. They are just starting to learn English and usually have Uzbek as their first language. Some will know some Russian from home. The children are very curious and lively but are not able to concentrate for very long on one task. They learn best through games and movement. They also need to be able to see or do something to really understand new vocabulary [3, 7]. Many of the children do not know how to read English very well so using word lists is not very useful. Most children will know how to use phones and watch cartoons but will vary greatly between schools in terms of what technology is available. These factors should be considered as hypotheses. A teacher can test these by observing the class in the early lessons.

4.2. What to teach?

The three sources highlight that vocabulary needs to be specific to the children's world e.g. colours, numbers, animals, food, toys, family members, parts of the body and items in school [3] [7]. This needs to be put into simple phrases to allow the child to use the vocabulary, such as I like, I've got, Can I have, please? etc. [3]. Nation [6] talks about the different aspects of vocabulary that children should know. They should know how to pronounce and say the word, know what it means and how to put it into a short phrase. Vocabulary should be categorised into groups. For example words relating to farm or my room (word cluster). [1] [p.171] [6]. At this age the main focus is on understanding and saying the words. Reading and writing can be done at a later time.

4.3. How to teach?

The sources suggest that each type of interactive technology supports a different step in learning a word (Figure 1). The interactive whiteboard or projector helps children meet the word with a picture, sound and animation [5]; songs and animated videos let them hear it again in context; digital games give quick and enjoyable practice [4]; and digital flashcards or picture stories help them review the word in later lessons [6].

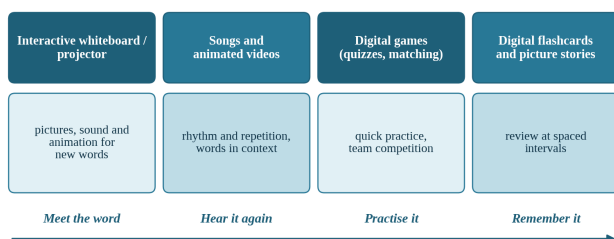


Figure 1. Interactive technologies and the steps of learning a word (based on [4, 5, 6])

Therefore, I will design each lesson with six steps (Figure 2). Firstly, I will begin with a short warm-up activity using a song or an animated video on the topic. Then the teacher will present the students with between 6-8 new words using visuals, audio and no translation on the screen [5]. Next, they will practice the words with TPR activities. They will do actions, point to the visuals or come to the board to touch the correct image [2]. After that, the students will play a digital game. This could be a quiz or matching game with their team on the interactive whiteboard. They will have to work together to find an answer [1, p.171] [4]. Finally, they can apply the new vocabulary by working in pairs to create short dialogues or describe an image using the new words and chunks [3]. Lastly, the words are recapped with digital flash cards at the beginning of the following lessons [6].

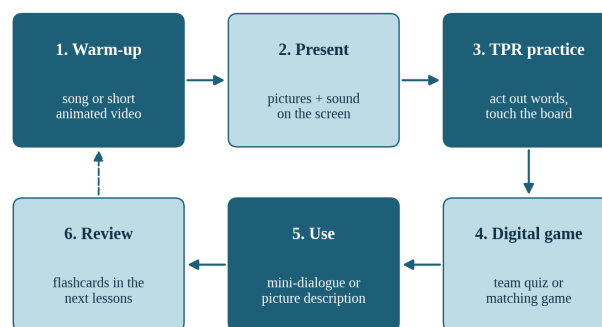


Figure 2. Proposed six-stage vocabulary lesson with interactive technologies (author's proposal based on [1, 2, 4, 5, 6])

4.4. Model application

A 45 minute lesson can be planned around the theme Farm animals for students in second grade. An animated song about animals on the farm can be played to begin the lesson. The teacher can present the students with eight different animals. When they tap on their picture the animals appear along with their name and sound. During the TPR phase, the teacher can ask the children to do actions such as Walk like a duck! or Jump like a frog! The children then perform the animal actions. Two teams can play a matching game on the interactive whiteboard. They take turns dragging the word to the correct picture. In pairs, the children can ask and answer questions using the picture cards. What is it? It's a cow. The lesson ends with the same song being played as goodbye. At the start of the next lesson the eight animals will be shown again as flash cards. Figure 3 shows the suggested timings.

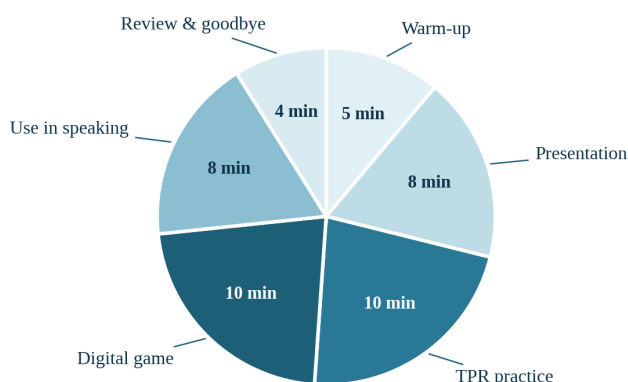


Figure 3. Suggested time distribution in a 45-minute primary vocabulary lesson (author's proposal)

5. Discussion

5.1. Supported claims and author's proposals

Several parts of this lesson are supported by the sources. The need for concrete, active and playful learning for young children is well described [3, 7]; the advantage of words with pictures over words alone is supported by research on multimedia learning [5]; the value of movement for beginners comes from TPR [2]; the positive effect of digital games on motivation is reported in a large review [4]; and the need for repeated, spaced meetings with words is a basic principle of vocabulary learning [6]. Other parts are the author's own proposals: the order of the six stages, the number of new words per lesson and the timing come from combining the sources and have not been tested in Uzbek primary schools.

5.2. Tensions between sources

The main tension concerns screen time. Technology attracts children's attention, but too much screen work can make lessons passive, while the sources on

young learners stress movement, talk and real interaction [3, 7]. For this reason, in the proposed lesson the screen is used for short periods and is always followed by an active task. Another tension concerns games. Games increase motivation, but the review by Hung and colleagues [4] also shows that results for learning itself vary, so a game should practise the target words directly and not only entertain.

5.3. Unresolved classroom problems

First, not all schools have interactive whiteboards or stable internet, and some teachers have only a phone and a small speaker. Second, many primary teachers have had little training in using digital tools. Third, in large classes of 30 or more children, it is difficult to give every child a turn at the board. Because this study did not collect data, its proposals still need to be tested, for example by comparing how many words children remember after lessons with and without interactive technologies.

6. Conclusion

Interactive technologies are a great way to teach vocabulary in primary school. The images and sounds are very useful when trying to explain the meaning of new words. Songs and videos provide natural repetition. Games make practicing fun and digital flash cards help children to revise vocabulary. This 6-step

lesson plan uses interactive technologies combined with active learning and working in pairs. The key message for primary teachers is that the technology shouldn't be the focus of the lesson but an effective tool to bring the vocabulary to life by enabling the children to meet the vocabulary repeatedly.

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