

## The Problem of Teaching Elementary Learners

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**Annotation:** Article considers about an argument that language teachers are concerned with: What is more essential aspect to focus on to be successful and accurate in acquiring foreign language? Is it vocabulary or grammar? In our research work we aimed to analyze this issue completely.

**Key words:** essential aspect, acquiring foreign language, international language, basic education, elementary learners, psychic barriers, easy to learn.

In human lives English plays a key role apparently, nowadays is considered to be an essential part of basic education for people practicing over the world. Having at least main knowledge of it is more or less important for everyone. People deal with English everywhere and every time. They need English for their working when they are dealing with their foreign business partners; people need it for their study because many specified articles are written in this language for its broad international usage; people need for English in their personal lives because they want to meet with other cultures, travel abroad and this requires the competence of speaking foreign language, English perfectly, because English became an international language - a language which people communicate and understand in almost every part of the world. This research paper deals with teaching English especially to elementary learners and its difficulties in classroom activities. It is focused on vocabulary because vocabulary is basic for building knowledge of a new language. It provides basis for studying structures and grammar. Without vocabulary it is not possible neither to communicate nor improve in language. Well acquired vocabulary ensures a good start to a successful studying process culminating in good knowledge of language and capability to use it well in real life. The learned group is adult learners. The constant need to satisfy language demands stipulated by potential employers affect everyone. Nowadays children start with English or some other languages in elementary age. Sometimes they acquire a relatively high level before the end of their compulsory education. On the other hand older generations are in a huge language disadvantage. Studying English is not easy at entire for them unless they dispose of at least basic knowledge of it (or some other Germanic language) or of general talent for languages. It is not easy to learn in mature age. Certain psychic barriers might negatively influence studying. To avoid that it is necessary to select the right and efficient studying strategy for adult learners' taking into consideration variety of essential aspects arising out of their specific needs. The aim of this work is to discuss adult learners' vocabulary teaching possibilities and outline suitable ways of effective and comfortably dealing with them.

It is not easy to learn foreign languages. People get variety of reasons for studying them. It can be a possibility of getting a better work, an interest in reading original handouts or to comprehend song lyrics. People may learn languages for pleasure or they can get many other different reasons for

that. Jeremy Harmer specifies in his Practice of English teaching the most usual reasons as the followings:

- Language is on the school curriculum – therefore the greatest number of language learner learns it compulsory.
- There occurs a chance of advancement in professional life with new language.
- People live for some reason in a learned language community where the knowledge of the language is necessary.
- Very often there is a specific reason for wanting to learn the language. Examples of that could be e.g. the need to be able to communicate with foreign customers or business partners (English for Occupational Purposes - EOP), the need to write reports or essays and to function in seminars (English for Academic Purposes - EAP) or the need to be able to read articles and textbooks about special subjects in English (English for Science and Technology - EST).
- Learners are attracted to the culture of single of the English speaking countries and want to know more about its people, places or writings.
- There are many other possible reasons for studying a language like tourism, fun from the studying activity itself, friends.... (Harmer, 1993:1-2)

But the basic reason for studying foreign languages that entire people get in simple is – communication in any mode. It is a two-sided process, which requires the capability to comprehend each other, to be able to code a message that someone wants to convey to someone else in a way, which will be comprehensible to the receiver and also appropriate to a concrete situation and status of entire participants. Vice versa the person should be able to interpret a message that someone else is conveying to them. To acquire a good skill of communication in foreign language it is necessary to be familiar not only with vocabulary (single phrases and their meanings, collocations, phrases and phrasal verbs etc.) but also with language structures and with strategies for using them in right context according to concrete situations. The functional aspect of language is the most essential one and teachers should be well conscious of that to be able to pass this sense of priority on their learners.

Although some people get a gift of studying languages there are still many people who quite struggle with it. When taking into consideration the second group, which has a ‘problem’ with studying languages, it should be stressed that there are again many different reasons for that. These will be mentisingled further in the thesis. But what is basic without any question for entire learners studying a foreign language is acquiring vocabulary. To build a good stock of vocabulary is the first and most essential step when starting to learn a new language. Well mastered capability of using the right expressions, phrases, and grammatical structures and functions ensure learners to be successful in their communication.

What exactly is ‘Vocabulary’? Very simplified explanation could be that vocabulary is knowledge of phrases and their meanings. Monolingual dictionary specifies it more properly. It says that vocabulary means:

1. All the phrases that a person knows or uses,
2. All the phrases in a particular language,
3. All the phrases that people use when they are talking about a particular subject,

4. A list of phrases with their meanings, especially in a handout for studying a foreign language.” (Hornby, 2000:1447)

Chambers Dictionary (1986:845) offers other explanations:

1. Phrases in general,
2. Phrases known and used by single person, or within a particular trade or profession,
3. A list of phrases in alphabetical order with meanings added as a supplement to a handout dealing with a particular subject.”

All the definitions are right with no doubts. But vocabulary is not as simple as that. It does not only mean to comprehend the definition of single phrases or collocations but it also requires the knowledge of how phrases fit into context. Therefore it is very difficult to be fully mastered by learners. Vocabulary studying does not officially count among the language skills (which are listening, speaking, reading and writing) but it might be included there as there is no way of making progress in language without building vocabulary that can be then applied into grammar and create meaningful utterances through which people communicate among themselves. It is difficult for learners to communicate without developing their own lexicon.

#### **Literature**

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