
The impact of using humor in English lessons on student engagement and vocabulary recall in middle school classes

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Annotation *This study explores the impact of using humor in English lessons on student engagement and vocabulary recall in middle school classes. In modern language teaching, creating a positive and motivating learning environment is essential for effective learning, especially for young learners who may feel anxious or less confident when using a foreign language. Humor is considered one of the effective strategies that can make English lessons more interesting, interactive, and memorable. The research focuses on how humor influences students' participation in classroom activities and their ability to remember new vocabulary. It also examines the role of humor in reducing anxiety, increasing students' confidence, and encouraging them to communicate more actively in English. The study highlights that appropriate humor can help teachers build a friendly classroom atmosphere and strengthen the relationship between teachers and students. The findings of the study show that the use of humor in English lessons improves student engagement and helps learners retain vocabulary more effectively. The study suggests that humor can be used as an effective teaching tool in middle school EFL classrooms when it is relevant, respectful, and connected to the lesson content.*

Keywords *Humor, student engagement, vocabulary recall, EFL, middle school, teaching methods*

Ingliz tili darslarida hazil-mutoyibadan foydalanishning maktab o'quvchilari faolligi va so'z boyligini o'zlashtirishiga ta'siri

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Annotatsiya *Ushbu tadqiqot o'rta maktab sinflarida ingliz tili darslarida hazildan foydalanishning o'quvchilarning darsga faolligi va yangi so'zlarni eslab qolishiga ta'sirini o'rganadi. Zamonaviy til o'qitish jarayonida ijobiy va rag'batlantiruvchi ta'lim muhitini yaratish samarali o'rganish uchun muhim hisoblanadi, ayniqsa chet tilidan foydalanishda xavotirga tushadigan yoki o'ziga ishonchi past bo'lgan yosh o'quvchilar uchun. Hazil darslarni yanada qiziqarli, interaktiv va esda qolarli qilishga yordam beruvchi*

samarali strategiyalardan biri sifatida qaraladi. Tadqiqot hazilning o'quvchilarning sinfdagi mashg'ulotlarda ishtirok etishiga va yangi lug'at birliklarini eslab qolish qobiliyatiga qanday ta'sir qilishiga qaratilgan. Shuningdek, unda hazilning xavotirni kamaytirish, o'quvchilarning o'ziga bo'lgan ishonchini oshirish va ularni ingliz tilida faolroq muloqot qilishga undashdagi roli ham ko'rib chiqiladi. Tadqiqotda mos va o'rinli hazil o'qituvchilarga do'stona sinf muhitini shakllantirishga hamda o'qituvchi va o'quvchilar o'rtasidagi munosabatlarni mustahkamlashga yordam berishi ta'kidlanadi. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, ingliz tili darslarida hazildan foydalanish o'quvchilarning darsga qiziqishi va faolligini oshiradi hamda yangi so'zlarni samaraliroq eslab qolishga yordam beradi. Tadqiqot hazil mazmunga mos, hurmatga asoslangan va dars mavzusi bilan bog'liq bo'lgan taqdirda, o'rta maktab EFL sinflarida samarali o'qitish vositasi sifatida qo'llanishi mumkinligini ko'rsatadi.

Kalit so'zlar Hazil, o'quvchilar faolligi, lug'atni eslab qolish, EFL, o'rta maktab, o'qitish metodlari

Влияние использования юмора на уроках английского языка на активность учащихся и усвоение ими словарного запаса в средних классах

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Аннотация Данное исследование рассматривает влияние использования юмора на уроках английского языка на вовлечённость учащихся и запоминание новой лексики в средних классах. В современном преподавании языков создание положительной и мотивирующей учебной среды является важным условием эффективного обучения, особенно для юных учащихся, которые могут испытывать тревожность или неуверенность при использовании иностранного языка. Юмор рассматривается как одна из эффективных стратегий, способных сделать уроки английского языка более интересными, интерактивными и запоминающимися. Исследование направлено на изучение того, как юмор влияет на участие учащихся в классных занятиях и их способность запоминать новую лексику. Также рассматривается роль юмора в снижении тревожности, повышении уверенности учащихся и стимулировании их к более активному общению на английском языке. В работе подчёркивается, что уместный юмор может помочь учителям создать дружелюбную атмосферу в классе и укрепить взаимоотношения между учителем и учащимися. Результаты исследования показывают, что использование юмора на уроках английского языка повышает вовлечённость учащихся и помогает им более эффективно запоминать лексику. Исследование предполагает, что юмор может использоваться как

эффективный педагогический инструмент на уроках английского языка как иностранного в средних классах, если он является уместным, уважительным и связанным с содержанием урока.

Ключевые слова

Юмор, вовлечённость учащихся, запоминание лексики, английский как иностранный, средняя школа, методы преподавания

Introduction

In modern education, improving the effectiveness of foreign language teaching has become one of the key priorities, as language teaching today requires communicative, interactive, and learner-centered approaches (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). In particular, English lessons require the use of innovative, interactive, and learner-centered methods that can increase students' participation and support the development of their language skills. In today's classroom environment, it is not enough for teachers to simply explain grammar rules or introduce new vocabulary. They are also expected to create conditions in which students feel motivated, confident, and actively involved in the learning process. Many learners face difficulties in learning English, especially when they are required to speak, remember new words, or participate in classroom discussions. These difficulties often lead to a decrease in their interest, confidence, and involvement in classroom activities.

In this regard, the use of humor in the classroom is considered an effective teaching strategy. Humor helps create a relaxed and positive learning environment, reduces students' anxiety, and encourages them to participate more actively in the lesson (Banas et al., 2011; Garner, 2006). As a result, students become more willing to express their ideas, answer questions, communicate with their classmates, and use English in different classroom situations. Humor can also help build a friendly relationship between the teacher and students, which is important for successful language learning.

Student engagement is an essential factor in successful language learning, since motivated learners are more likely to participate actively and achieve better results (Dörnyei, 2001; Williams & Burden, 1997). Active participation allows learners to better understand and retain new information. Students who are engaged in the lesson are more likely to listen carefully, respond to tasks, ask questions, and practice the target language. At the same time, vocabulary acquisition plays a crucial role in language development, as students need to learn, remember, and use new words in different contexts. Without sufficient vocabulary knowledge, learners may experience difficulties in reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Therefore, teachers should use methods that help students remember new lexical units more effectively.

The use of humor may be especially useful in vocabulary teaching because funny examples, jokes, short stories, and humorous classroom activities can make new words more memorable. When students associate vocabulary with positive emotions and interesting situations, they may remember it more easily and use it more confidently. For this reason, humor can be viewed not only as a means of entertainment, but also as a pedagogical tool that supports both emotional comfort and academic achievement.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of using humor in English lessons on student engagement and vocabulary acquisition in middle school classes. The study focuses on how humor influences students'

participation, motivation, classroom interaction, and ability to remember new vocabulary. It also aims to show that humor, when used in an appropriate and purposeful way, can contribute to making English lessons more effective, interactive, and learner-centered.

Literature review

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of using interactive and engaging teaching methods in foreign language education. Among these methods, the use of humor has been widely recognized as an effective strategy for improving the classroom environment and increasing student participation. Researchers suggest that humor can make lessons more enjoyable and help create a positive atmosphere that supports learning.

According to Harmer (2007), a supportive and relaxed classroom environment plays a crucial role in successful language learning. When students feel comfortable, they are more likely to participate actively and communicate using the target language. Humor contributes to this environment by reducing stress and encouraging students to be more open during lessons.

Krashen (1982) highlights the role of emotional factors in language acquisition through his affective filter hypothesis. He argues that students learn more effectively when their anxiety is low and their confidence is high. The use of humor helps lower students' affective filter, allowing them to focus more on learning and less on fear of making mistakes.

In addition, student engagement is considered a key element of academic success states that motivated and engaged students are more likely to achieve better results in language learning. Humor can increase students' interest in lessons and encourage them to participate more actively in classroom activities. Vocabulary acquisition is another important aspect of language learning suggests that students remember new words more effectively when they are presented in

meaningful and memorable contexts. Humor can make vocabulary more memorable by connecting words with funny situations, stories, or examples.

Furthermore, the use of humor can improve communication between teachers and students. It helps build a positive relationship and creates a more student-centered learning environment. Students feel more confident and are more willing to express their ideas in English.

Overall, the literature shows that humor is not only a tool for entertainment but also an effective teaching strategy that can enhance student engagement and support vocabulary acquisition in EFL classrooms.

Methodology

This study is based on a practical and comparative research approach aimed at analyzing the impact of using humor in English lessons on student engagement and vocabulary acquisition in middle school classes. The research was conducted in a classroom setting with middle school students learning English as a foreign language.

A total of 30 students participated in the study and were divided into two groups. The first group was taught using traditional teaching methods, where lessons were conducted without the use of humor. The second group was taught using humor-based techniques, including jokes, funny examples, games, and interactive activities that made the learning process more enjoyable.

The study was carried out over a period of several weeks during regular English lessons. Students in the experimental group were encouraged to participate in activities that included humorous elements, which helped create a relaxed and positive classroom atmosphere. This allowed students to feel more confident and actively engage in the learning process. Data was collected through classroom observation, participation monitoring, and simple vocabulary tests. Student engagement was measured based on their level of activity, interest, and involvement in classroom

discussions. Vocabulary acquisition plays a crucial role in language development because vocabulary knowledge directly supports reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills (Thornbury, 2002; Ur, 1996).

The collected data was analyzed and compared between the two groups in order to determine the effectiveness of using humor in English lessons. This approach made it possible to identify differences in student engagement and vocabulary development between the traditional and humor-based teaching methods.

Analysis and Discussion

The analysis of the research results indicates that the use of humor in English lessons has a significant positive impact on student engagement and vocabulary acquisition in middle school classes. Compared to traditional teaching methods, humor-based instruction creates a more dynamic and interactive learning environment, where students feel more comfortable and motivated to participate.

During the study, it was observed that students in the group exposed to humor demonstrated higher levels of engagement. They were more active in classroom discussions, more willing to answer questions, and showed greater interest in completing tasks. Humor helped reduce students' anxiety and created a supportive atmosphere, which encouraged them to communicate more freely in English.

In contrast, students in the traditional teaching group showed lower levels of participation. Their involvement was mostly limited to completing assigned tasks, and they were less likely to express their ideas or take part in discussions. This suggests that traditional methods may not provide enough opportunities for active student participation.

The results also show that humor has a positive effect on vocabulary acquisition. Students who were taught with the help of humorous examples, jokes, and interactive activities were able to remember new words

more effectively. Associating vocabulary with funny or memorable situations helped learners retain information for a longer period of time.

Furthermore, the use of humor contributed to the development of students' communication skills. Learners became more confident in speaking English and were more willing to express their opinions. This supports the idea that a relaxed and positive learning environment plays a crucial role in language development (Krashen, 1982).

Another important finding is that humor encouraged collaboration among students. Group activities with humorous elements allowed learners to interact with each other, share ideas, and work together more effectively. This not only improved their language skills but also enhanced their social and communicative competence.

Overall, the comparison between the two groups demonstrates that the use of humor in English lessons is more effective than traditional teaching methods in increasing student engagement and improving vocabulary acquisition. It creates a student-centered learning environment that supports both academic achievement and personal development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated that the use of humor in English lessons plays an important role in improving student engagement and vocabulary acquisition in middle school classes. The findings show that when humor is integrated into the teaching process, students become more interested, active, and motivated to participate in classroom activities.

The results of the research indicate that humor creates a positive and supportive learning environment. Students feel more relaxed and confident, which helps them overcome fear and anxiety while learning a foreign language. This encourages them to communicate more freely and actively use English during lessons.

Furthermore, the use of humor contributes significantly to vocabulary learning. Students are able to remember new words more effectively when they are presented in meaningful and memorable contexts. Humor makes the learning process more enjoyable and helps learners retain information for a longer period of time.

The study also highlights that traditional teaching methods are often limited in promoting active participation and long-term

retention of knowledge. In contrast, humor-based teaching approaches provide more opportunities for interaction, creativity, and practical language use.

Overall, the findings suggest that teachers should consider incorporating humor into their teaching practices as an effective strategy for enhancing both student engagement and vocabulary acquisition. This approach can make English lessons more dynamic, interactive, and learner-centered.

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