

THE ROLE OF PROVERBS IN TEACHING ENGLISH

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Abstract: This paper deals with using proverbs in teaching and learning English and how teachers can make use of proverbs to teach language materials and to keep the students interested in learning English. Basically, proverbs reflect human experience across cultures and languages, which contain folk wisdom tested throughout the time. Introducing a foreign culture and values can be carried out through the use of proverbs. Teachers can use different vocabulary activities through proverbs in teaching process.

Keywords: proverbs, vocabulary activity, English teaching

According to the paremiologist Wolfgang Mieder, proverbs have been used and should be used in teaching as didactic tools because of their content of educational wisdom. When it comes to foreign language learning, proverbs play a role in the teaching as a part of cultural and metaphorical learning. Linguists also claim that the use of proverbs in the teaching of English as a foreign language is important for the learners' ability to communicate effectively.

Writers and poets use proverbs in their works, which gives them impressive power. If we carefully study the works of Yusuf Khos Khojib, Ahmad Yassawi, Lutfi, Alisher Navoi, Bobur, Nodira, Furkat, Chulpan, Abdullah Kodiriy, Gafur Gulam and many others, we can feel the attractiveness of the proverbs. Proverbs are often used in fiction, poetry, poems, stories, and novels.

Pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary are essential elements in communication. Teaching these language materials, we can use proverbs effectively. A proverb is usually recognized by the fixed, often short form and contains frequently used vocabulary, and therefore is quite easy to memorize.

In teaching pronunciation a teacher can use proverbs bearing the some vowels or consonants which are difficult for the learners. Drilling exercises with proverbs will help learners practise vowels and consonants. For example: Vowels *A friend in need is a friend indeed. New lords, new laws. Haste makes waste.* Consonants **P**actice makes **p**erfect. **S**omething is better **t**han **n**othing. Never **t**rouble **t**rouble till **t**rouble **t**roubles you.

In teaching grammar a teacher can use certain proverbs to introduce a grammar material. For example, a teacher who wants to teach degrees of adjectives can use proverbs such as: *A bird in hand is **worth** two in the bush. Actions speak **louder** than words. **Better** late than never.* In teaching positive and negative imperative sentences, a teacher may use the following proverbs. For instance:

Make hay while the sun shines. Never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you. Don't count your chickens before they're hatched. Don't cry over spilt milk. In teaching article, **a**, **an**, or **the**, a teacher can show the use of articles used in proverbs and may ask the students to memorize the proverbs to internalize the pattern. *An apple a day keeps the doctor away. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush;* If sentences (Conditional sentences): *If wishes were horses, beggars would ride. If you can't beat them, join them.* There is/are construction: *There are more ways than one to skin a cat. There is no time like the present.*

As teaching aids, English proverbs are expected to improve learners' vocabulary learning. When we look back on our lives, it's often the things we enjoyed doing most that come to mind first. It is important to motivate our students by making vocabulary learning and new word acquisition, fun and enjoyable. Teaching vocabulary through using proverbs can be an effective technique. As proverbs are the sentences which contain vocabulary with meaning, form and function, they are considered one of the most effective materials to teach vocabulary. When the teaching and learning process takes place, teachers may have problems of how to teach students in order to gain satisfying results. The teacher should find out the appropriate techniques to implement in classes. A good teacher can prepare various and up-to-date techniques. Teachers need to be able to find the materials and make them interested and happy in the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

Here are some techniques of teaching vocabulary through proverbs. We took some commonly used proverbs as an example to implement in these techniques.

1. CLASSIFYING: *An apple a day keeps the doctor away. An empty vessel makes the most noise. Keep your mouth shut and your eyes open.*

1. Provide students with a number of proverbs.
2. Ask students to read the given proverbs and find all the nouns in them.
3. In groups, students decide how they will classify these items, e.g. human / non-human; animate / inanimate; positive / negative /neutral or whatever they decide.
4. Variation: you can do the same with verbs or adjectives (adverbs are rarer and more difficult).

2. PICTONARY: *Every cloud has a silver lining. You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs. The grass is greener on the other side of the fence.*

1. A pupil draws a picture which represents or gives the meaning of a phrase or word in the proverb.
2. The other pupils need to guess which learned proverb it is. The "artist" cannot use words in the picture and can only answer yes or no to questions.

3. The picture can be embellished as the guessing continues until the word/words are said.

3. GUESS THE MEANING OF A WORD: *Don't count your chickens before they're hatched. One man's junk is another man's treasure. A drowning man will clutch at a straw*

1. Prepare a proverb with some new vocabulary in it.

2. Tell students to read the proverb and copy onto a separate piece of paper those words they don't understand.

3. Next to each item they have copied, students write more or less the 'sort of thing' they think the item means.

4. Only when students have finished writing their guesses may they go to the dictionary and check out the answers.

5. Verify the answers they have found in full class, and compare these with their guesses.

6. Show them how their guesses narrowed down the possibilities when they were looking up the word, thus speeding up the looking-up process and making it more likely that they would find the right word.

In conclusion we may say that proverbs are the basic textbooks and rules of the school of life. This should not be forgotten and should be used in practice. Every child should keep proverbs not only in his mind, but also in his heart. That is why it is important for us to remember proverbs and explain their essence. Using proverbs in teaching English can be one of the effective ways especially in teaching vocabulary as a proverb is usually recognized by the fixed, often short form and contains frequently used vocabulary, and therefore is quite easy to memorize.

Work with proverbs and sayings at the lessons not only helps to diversify educational process and to make it brighter and interesting. Moreover, it helps to solve a number of very important educational problems: proverbs in the classroom can improve students' learning experiences, their language skills, and their understanding of themselves and the world.

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