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USING FLASHCARDS IN ELEMENTARY ENGLISH LESSONS

Teacher of Kokand University, Andijan branch

Jaloldinov Islomiddin

Student of Kokand University, Andijan branch

Olimjonov Muhammadziyo

Annotation. *This article discusses the importance of using flashcards in elementary English lessons. Flashcards are simple teaching tools, but they can make the learning process more visual, active and memorable for young and beginner learners. The article explains how flashcards help pupils learn vocabulary, practise pronunciation, remember grammar patterns and take part in speaking activities. It also gives practical ideas for using flashcards in warm-up tasks, pair work, revision, games and classroom assessment. Special attention is paid to the teacher’s role in choosing clear pictures, organising meaningful practice and avoiding mechanical repetition. The article shows that flashcards are effective when they are used creatively, regularly and in connection with real communication.*

Keywords: *flashcards, elementary English, vocabulary teaching, visual aids, young learners, pronunciation, speaking practice, classroom games, motivation, language learning.*

INTRODUCTION

In elementary English lessons, learners usually meet many new words, sounds and simple sentence patterns. At this stage, the teacher’s task is not only to explain the language, but also to make it clear, easy to remember and pleasant to practise. Young learners often understand information better when they can see it, touch it or connect it with a concrete image. For this reason, visual materials have always had an important place in the language classroom.

Among different visual aids, flashcards are one of the most useful and practical tools. A flashcard may include a picture, a word, a phrase, a number, a colour, a letter or a short sentence. It does not require complicated technology, and it can be used in almost any classroom. A teacher can prepare flashcards by hand, print them, use ready-made sets or even ask pupils to make their own cards. This simplicity makes flashcards especially helpful in elementary English teaching.

The value of flashcards is not limited to showing pictures. They can be used for introducing new vocabulary, checking memory, practising pronunciation, building short dialogues and making lessons more active. If flashcards are used with movement, questions, guessing games and short speaking tasks, they can become a strong source of motivation.

Main Body

1. Flashcards as visual support for beginner learners

Elementary learners often need clear support when they learn new English words. Abstract explanations may be difficult for them, especially if their English level is low. A

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picture of an apple, a school bag, a dog or a rainy day can explain meaning much faster than a long translation. The visual image gives learners a direct association with the word, and this association helps them remember the language more naturally.

Flashcards are particularly useful because they present information in a short and focused way. One card usually contains one main idea. This helps learners concentrate on the target word or structure without being distracted by too much text. For example, when the teacher wants to introduce classroom objects, cards with a pen, a pencil, a ruler, a book and a board can make the topic simple and concrete.

Another important point is that flashcards can reduce fear in the classroom. Some beginners are shy because they are not sure how to say a word or form a sentence. When they see a picture, they receive a useful prompt. The card helps them start speaking and gives them confidence to try even when their English is not perfect.

2. Teaching vocabulary with flashcards

Vocabulary teaching is probably the most common use of flashcards. In elementary classes, learners study everyday topics such as colours, numbers, animals, food, family, school things, clothes and actions. Flashcards allow the teacher to introduce these words step by step. First, the teacher can show the card and pronounce the word clearly. Then the class can repeat it together. After that, individual pupils can name the card, match it with another card or use it in a short sentence.

A good vocabulary lesson should not stop at simple repetition. Learners need to meet the same words in different tasks. For example, after learning food words, pupils can play “What is missing?” The teacher puts several flashcards on the board, asks pupils to close their eyes, removes one card and then asks them to identify the missing item. This short game trains memory and keeps learners attentive.

Flashcards can also support spelling. At first, the teacher may use only picture cards. Later, word cards can be added. Pupils can match the picture of a banana with the word “banana” or put letters in the correct order. In this way, learners gradually connect sound, meaning and written form.

3. Pronunciation practice through flashcards

Pronunciation is an important part of elementary English learning. Many pupils find English sounds difficult because some of them do not exist in their native language. Flashcards can help the teacher organise short and regular pronunciation practice. When a card is shown, pupils can repeat the word, clap the number of syllables or identify the first sound. For example, the teacher may show cards for “ship,” “shoe,” “chair” and “cheese” to practise common English sounds.

Flashcards are also helpful for stress and rhythm. The teacher can show cards with words such as “elephant,” “banana,” “computer” or “family” and ask pupils to clap the stressed syllable. This kind of activity is simple, but it helps learners hear the music of English. Pronunciation becomes more active when learners use their hands, voices and ears at the same time.

4. Flashcards for speaking and communication

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Although flashcards are often used for vocabulary, they can also help develop speaking skills. A single picture can become a reason for pupils to speak. For example, if the teacher shows a card with a family, pupils can answer questions such as “Who is this?”, “Is it a mother?”, “How many people are there?” or “Do you have a brother?” These questions are simple, but they train learners to use English for communication.

Pair work with flashcards is especially effective. One pupil can hold a card and ask, “What is this?” The other pupil answers, “It is a pencil.” Later the dialogue can become longer: “Do you have a pencil?” “Yes, I do.” “What colour is it?” “It is blue.” Such mini-dialogues are suitable for elementary learners because they are short, controlled and connected with a clear visual prompt.

Flashcards can also be used for very short storytelling. The teacher can put three or four cards on the board: a boy, a dog, a park and a ball. Together with the class, the teacher can build a short story: “This is a boy. He has a dog. They are in the park. The dog plays with a ball.” Later pupils can make their own small stories using different cards.

5. Games with flashcards

Games are very useful in elementary English classes because they create a positive atmosphere. Flashcards fit naturally into many classroom games. One simple game is “Flash and say.” The teacher shows a card quickly, and pupils say the word. Another game is “Guess the card.” The teacher hides part of the picture or keeps the card behind a book, and pupils guess what it is.

A popular activity is “Find your partner.” The teacher gives picture cards to some pupils and word cards to others. Pupils walk around the classroom and find the correct match. This game combines movement, reading and speaking. It is useful because learners do not sit passively; they communicate and check meaning with classmates.

Flashcard games should be short and well-organised. If the rules are too complicated, elementary learners may become confused. The teacher should demonstrate the game first and use clear instructions. It is also important to keep games connected with the lesson aim. A game is not only for entertainment; it should help learners practise the language.

6. Using flashcards for revision and assessment

Revision is necessary in language learning. Pupils may understand new words during the lesson, but they can forget them if they do not meet them again. Flashcards make revision quick and simple. At the beginning of a lesson, the teacher can show cards from the previous topic and ask pupils to name them. This takes only a few minutes, but it activates memory and prepares learners for new material.

Flashcards can also be used for informal assessment. The teacher can observe which pupils can recognise the words, pronounce them correctly and use them in sentences. This kind of assessment is less stressful than a written test. For beginner learners, it is often better to check understanding through short oral activities, matching tasks or games.

7. The teacher’s role in effective flashcard use

The effectiveness of flashcards depends on how the teacher uses them. First of all, flashcards should be clear and large enough for all pupils to see. The picture should not be

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confusing. Simple and bright images are usually better for elementary classes because they direct pupils’ attention to one main word or idea.

Secondly, the teacher should not use too many cards at the same time. Young learners can remember a limited number of new words in one lesson. It is better to teach six or eight words well than to introduce twenty words quickly and leave pupils confused. The number of cards should match the age, level and attention span of the class.

Finally, flashcards should be connected with meaningful practice. The teacher can use them to ask questions, create dialogues, play games, revise old words and encourage pupils to speak. In this way, flashcards become more than pictures. They become a classroom tool that supports memory, communication and confidence.

Conclusion

To conclude, flashcards are simple but very effective materials for elementary English lessons. They help learners understand meaning, remember vocabulary, practise pronunciation and speak with more confidence. Because flashcards are visual and flexible, they can be used in many ways: for presentation, practice, games, revision and informal assessment.

However, the success of flashcards depends on the teacher’s creativity and planning. If flashcards are used only for mechanical repetition, they may lose their value. But when they are connected with movement, questions, pair work and real classroom communication, they make English lessons more interesting and productive. For elementary learners, flashcards provide a clear and friendly way into the English language.

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