**Spontaneous speaking assignments as a way of improving the amount and diversity of the vocabulary of an EFL students**

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Speaking assignments are the crucial elements of an effective learning process. With years of continuous improvements in the sphere of education, we have established that speaking assignments should be clear and organized into the ordinary process of a lesson as well as thoroughly prepared both from the sides of teacher and their students. However, I noticed that while this method is effective during most of the times, the amount of used vocabulary was lacking and dull, with lots of repetitions and simple expressions. It was “enough” to fulfill the basics of assignments, yet wasn’t enough to fulfill my personal goals as a teacher. That is why I’ve decided to temporarily step away from the trusted process of classic speaking assignments to their more chaotic alternative – spontaneous speaking assignments.

Spontaneous speaking assignments are tasks that rely strongly on student’s memory and based on pair or group work. They force learners to use as much vocabulary as possible within short time limit, thus stimulating the need of learning and revising to improve their results. The spontaneous form of tasks allows teacher to use them as supplemental techniques, suitable for revision or extracurricular types of lessons. Moreover, the minimal amount of initial preparation and semi-competitive appearance of such assignments stimulate attention and involvement of students, attracting children of both low and high qualities of knowledge.

For the basis of such assignments, I have decided to use the adapted version of the Japanese game called “Shiritori”. Its rules are similar to the Russian game called “Города”. The rules are simple: first, student one is given a random letter and must pick a word beginning with that letter. Then, students start taking turns with the last letter of each word becoming the start of the next word. In order to add limitations, students’ words must have not been used before and shouldn’t include names, related to person, brand or city. This is the basic set of rules, which can be modified to suit advanced goals and achievements.

In order to test the effectiveness of such assignments, I’ve decided to use spontaneous tasks as a sidestep of classic exercises. The implementation of spontaneous speaking assignments (or S.S.A. to be short) was divided into 3 parts: initial, where students complete the basic form of “Shiritori” without additional limitations or corrections; sustainable, where basic criteria of speaking assignments is added (pronunciation, relation to the current curricular theme); and advanced, where more specific rules can be applied (connection to the specific themes, usage of minimal amount letters, etc.). All assignments include the obligatory time limit, where each student is given only a certain timeframe for answer.

The initial stage was so unexpectedly successful, that I had to reduce the expected deadline for this part. Students were highly motivated to participated in assignments due to two major factors: familiarity with the similar Russian game and high sense of competition. Simple ruleset helped children to quickly adapt to the task and the idea of being the winner motivated students to use more and more vocabulary. The initial exercises contained approximately 10-30 spoken unique words. After two weeks of implementation, the established amount was in the area between 30-60 words per pair and (as an extracurricular contest) 150-170 words per group. Students tried to use vocabulary from the previous book units, as well as previous years of study. In addition, the speech of students during the regular assignments has started to be slightly more distinctive, which was the victory on its own.

The sustainable part of the implementation showed expectedly less enthusiasm, yet the engagement ratio was still fairly high. The cornerstone of this part was the improvement of speaking skills of the students with low quality of knowledge. They were softly forced into applying more effort into proper and thorough memorization of vocabulary, which caused the slight improvement in other areas of FLE, precisely writing and reading. The established amount during this part was the 20-50 words per pair with moderate amount of accuracy.

The advanced part has shown the similar statistics as the sustainable timeframe. The main idea of this part was to redirect students’ vocabulary to the practical area, where they can utilize their knowledge in solving functional tasks as well as slowly dissolve S.S.A in order to replace its niche with classic speaking assignments. Instead of spontaneous callouts, they’ve started managing known vocabulary to form extended and diverse answers.

As the result of the whole process, the vocabular diversity became, to be subjective, satisfactory. Instead of repetitious answers, students’ speech has become more bright and vivid. The speaking ability of low knowledge students has also raised, which was a pleasant addition to the main goal.

However, this method has one tangible drawback, that can put its use into question – time limit. Students can make quite a long “word duel” between each other, causing delays for the transitions into other exercises. While it usually shows good results, the S.S.A can cause the congestion in the lesson process with that kind of precedents.

To conclude, the main goal of using such method was fulfilled. Spontaneous speaking assignments amplified the amount and diversity of the vocabulary of an EFL students, completing its main reason of existence. It has the potential in development and usage, yet it will be the next "story to tell”.