

Application of Associative Memory Method in English Vocabulary Teaching in Junior Middle School

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Abstract: Vocabulary is one of the most important aspects of learning junior high school English, and there are still some problems in teaching junior high school English vocabulary. In order to solve the problems in vocabulary teaching, many kinds of vocabulary memorization methods have been studied, among which the associative memory method has unique advantages. This paper describes the application of the associative memory method based on association theory in junior high school English vocabulary teaching, analyses its positive effect on improving the current problems in vocabulary teaching, and discuss how to apply the associative memory method to English vocabulary teaching in junior middle school.

Keywords: Associative memory; Vocabulary teaching; English teaching

1. Introduction

With the deepening of the new curriculum reform, students' demands for English listening, speaking, reading and writing in English continue to increase, and the problem of insufficient vocabulary has become increasingly prominent. In junior middle school English teaching, vocabulary teaching is both a key and a difficult task. Students often struggle a lot to memorize words, and teachers usually do not use many methods to memorize vocabulary, which makes students feel very bored and difficult when memorizing words.

The specific content of the associative memory method is to first establish the relationship between new words and words already learned, then master the common points between words and words, and then do a lot of practice to improve the ability to remember words. Therefore, starting from the associative memory method based on the associative theory, this paper aims to analyze the feasibility of the associative memory method in junior middle school English vocabulary teaching and discuss how to apply the associative memory method to English vocabulary teaching in junior middle school.

2. Present Situation of English Vocabulary Teaching in Junior Middle School

In the course of the investigation, the author finds that there are some problems in English vocabulary in junior middle schools, both in teaching and in students' learning. There are many problems in students' memory and application of words.

First of all, students may misread new words, which will directly lead students to make mistakes in the word listening, speaking and writing. Some students do not spell the words correctly when they first learn it, or mark Chinese homophones next to English words, which will lead to students' wrong first impression of the word. Through the investigation of the author, it is found that most junior middle school students memorize words by rote reciting single words and repeating dictations^[1]. This method is too rigid, students will soon forget the word again in using this method. At the same time, students misuse part of speech in the application of words. Many students use nouns as verbs, the sentence will be wrong, students who do not notice such mistakes in their usual practice will make the same mistakes in exams^[2]. Over time, students will form a muscle memory and it will be difficult for them to correct them. Moreover, in the process of learning English, many students do not spend time memorizing English words, but only do exercises to remember some of the words.

3. Application of Associative Memory Method in English Vocabulary Teaching

This chapter mainly introduces the application of different kinds of associative memory in English vocabulary teaching, students can learn to use the following memory methods to improve their word memory ability.

3.1 The Application of Word Form Similarity Association

Word similarity association is a way of remembering English words with the help of recognizing variations in English word forms,

such as substitutions, adding or subtracting letters, and combining them with associations to enhance the effectiveness of remembering English words^[3]. The teacher first finds out the features and differences of the shapes and meanings of the words, and then helps the students to remember them. This can be broken down into the following categories:

1) With a different initial or last letter

Ray-bay beam-team call-tall sat-fat dead-deaf line-link

2) With a different letter in the middle

Attitude-altitude wonder-wander eager-eater

3) By adding or subtracting a letter

Long-along though-through back-black pear-ear many-may

4) Same words, same letters, different order

Chain-china night-thing hoers-horse earth-hater

5) Complete reversal of the alphabetical order of words

love-evol rebut-tuber pools-sloop liar-rail

Word-shape similarity association has been used by some teachers in junior middle school English teaching in recent years. It has been proved that this method can improve the effect of memorizing words by using intuitive thinking in images, which can extend the effective memory time. Learners can remember a group of words based on differences in individual letters or a sentence made up of similar words, which is in itself humorous and interesting and should be encouraged.

3.2 The Application of Root Affix Association

Root word association mnemonic is a method of memorizing words by using the connection between the meaning of the root word and the meaning of the word and by making appropriate associations. The root meaning is combined with the meaning of affixes (prefixes and suffixes) to produce the meaning of a word. A root can be derived from many words, and then from more words a set of suffixes that mainly change part of speech and prefixes that mainly change meaning. According to this connection, from the small number of roots and affixes can be inferred. The meaning of a large number of words can be inferred from a small number of roots and affixes. For example, the root “-cede, -ceed, -cess” means “to go”, while the prefixes “pro-” and “re-” mean “forward”. Also, the prefix “ex-” means “... exceed” means “exceed”; the prefix “pre-” means “before”, so the precede table “occurs before ...”; the prefix “ac-” is “close to, toward”, so access is “close to”, which leads to “the right to use...”^[4].

The root word association mnemonic method is in line with students’ cognitive rules, interesting, not easy to forget, regular, easy to learn and remember, can rapidly improve vocabulary in a short period of time, and help to cultivate emotion and shape cross-cultural awareness. If learners use the root word affix method to memorize words, they can memorize words by making sense of them, thus making complex words simple. In addition, because of the concise and limited construction of root words and their easy-to-understand meanings, the root word affix method is more helpful for students to understand and memorize words than simply reciting a large number of unrelated words. In basic English learning, learners can simplify a large amount of seemingly complex vocabulary, find ways to memorize English vocabulary quickly, build learning confidence, and improve learning efficiency by mastering a certain amount of root words and affixes.

To sum up, the root word affixes method is an effective way to learn English, learners who can master and use the root word affix method can significantly improve the speed of English word memory, grasp the English word construction method, learn to combine the word sound, shape, meaning to word construction analysis, so that the learning of words from mechanical recitation to meaning recognition, so as to achieve “twice the result with half the effort”. Therefore, the root word affixes method plays a key role in deriving word meanings, memorizing spellings, and creating word clusters, and is also of vital importance to English learners.

3.3 The Application of Contrastive Associative Memory in English Vocabulary Teaching

Contrast Association refers to the association formed by the things with contrast relationship. In the process of memorizing words, we can make use of the contrast between words to develop the association between words, such as antonyms and other words that can be compared^[5]. Learning and studying antonyms consciously in the process of vocabulary memorizing can make learners have a wider range of learning and a keen sense of mastering words. This method is lively and interesting, and has a good effect on strengthening the memory of English words, especially those within the defined scope. The antonyms in English can be divided into three categories. Examples are

as follows:

Gradable antonymy is the most common type of antonymy. When we often say that two words are antonymous, we are talking about this kind of relationship. For example: Long-short, big-small, tall-short and so on. This is similar to what we say in everyday life, but in linguistics, two words that are opposite to each other are hierarchical in nature, and to affirm one does not mean to negate the other. For example, the antonymous relationship between big and small, at first glance, “big and small” is what we usually call a group of antonyms, “big” is certainly “small” and negative. In linguistics, however, there is a “middle” beyond “big” and “small”. The affirmation of “big” is not a negation of “small”. There is also a middle quantity “middle” between the two, “big and small” only in the nature of the existence of a certain grade difference. Similar antonyms exist between “beautiful and ugly” and “plain”.

As the name implies, complementary antonyms mean that the affirmation of one party is necessarily the negation of the other party, and the two cannot occur at the same time. For example, “life and death”, “life” is “life”, “death” is “death”, even if there are “half-dead” and “Walking Dead” in Chinese, but still in the state of “living”. “Life and death” does not exist between the middle zone, the two cannot appear at the same time, as a complementary relationship. Then there is no superlative or comparative degree in this kind of antonymy. We can't say: “He is more alive than Harry”. But in the sentence “he is more dead than alive”, it should be noted that it is not actually a comparative form^[6].

Antonymy is a special kind of relation. The relationship between the two groups of words is not a positive or negative relationship, but rather a negative relationship. Examples include “sell and buy,” “give and receive,” “lend and borrow,” or “parents and children,” “teacher and student,” “salesman and customer.”. As can be seen from the above examples, the two kinds of relations are only viewed from different social perspectives, and are more expressed as two opposite social roles, and there is no relationship between who is right and who is wrong.

After understanding the antonyms in English, the teacher can ask the students to sort the words into different categories, or carry out various interesting activities, so that the students can remember two words at the same time.

4. Conclusion

This paper analyzes and summarizes the specific application of associative memory in junior English vocabulary teaching, and then demonstrates the application of associative memory in junior English vocabulary teaching. The author hopes that through the above analysis, the readers will understand the advantages and importance of associative memory in English vocabulary teaching, so as to guide junior middle school students to use associative memory to improve their vocabulary memory.

References

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