

Expanding the student's vocabulary

This task is created for students in the middle school and is thought as an exercise to expand their vocabulary. How to work with the task will be explained later on in this document.

I have tried to analyse the task from two different views on how to learn a new language: The mind of a behaviourist and the interlanguage-theory.

The theory behind my work is taken from chapter 1 in "Veje til et nyt sprog" by Malene Bjerre and Uffe Ladegaard: "Den historiske udvikling: Tre forskellige syn på sprogtilegnelse".

The task:

Verb (infinitive)	Verb (past tense)	Noun	Adjective
To play	Play-ed	Play-er	Play-ful
To help			
To laugh			

With this task, the column with infinitive verb and the line with "to play" will be filled from the start, but the rest of the columns will be empty. The student's job is to fill out the empty boxes. By doing so they can see that by adding on a few extra letters they can create a new word from an already existing one. The extra letters are in the first line added with a "-" to visualize how the task should be solved. In the bottom there are some blank boxes, because the students in the end will have the opportunity to try out new words on their own.

The task could be expanded, if the teacher tells the students to write a sentence with each word, they have written in the schedule. With this activity they will perhaps get a better understanding on how to use the words, they have worked on.

Through the eyes of a behaviourist:

If you look at this task through the eyes of a behaviourist, it holds both good and bad ideas.

The good thing is that it has a high level of imitation. The students can see the different letters, they need to add on to the infinitive verb to create a new word, and because of this they won't have to think too much. Another good thing is that you can see, if the student has gotten the learning or not. You don't need to hear, what they are thinking, to see if they are making the right solutions or not.

The bad thing is that the task involves a level of creativity, because the students have to add new verbs at the end. There is a risk of making mistakes in this part, which the behaviourists don't like. Because of this there should be no blank spaces in the infinitive verb section. It will also be a bad idea for the students to fill this out on their own, which is why this task should be done with the entire class listening and filling out the add-ons together. The task of creating sentences with the words are also problematic for a behaviourist, because there is too much creativity with this work as well.

With interlanguage-theory:

The interlanguage-theory agrees with the behaviourists on the matter of imitation, but what they don't agree on is the level of freedom or creativity that a learner needs to have in order to try hypothesis and feel confident with the new language. This is why the task is suited for teachers working with the interlanguage-theory. There is a level of imitation and repetition, but the learner also has to be creative. If he makes a mistake, it will not be seen as a problem but only as a natural step in his the development, which can be altered when the task is being reviewed in class.

The work with creating new sentences will also be a great way for the students to be creative and try to use and get to know the new words on their own.

Interlanguage-theory also states that a new language is learned more effectively through interaction with other people. Because of this, the task should be done in pairs, which forces the students to talk about solutions and be creative together.