

English Language Teaching in Practice

Portfolio of ELT practice – microteaching session

Alina Ioana Morar

1. Lesson Rationale

This paper will focus on a microteaching lesson which aims to deliver a vocabulary session on a General English course. The target of this lesson is represented by an Upper-Intermediate level class. The main aim of this lesson is to teach the learners how to use idioms as figurative language. The intended outcomes of this module include students' ability to understand the concept of figurative language, to comprehend the purpose of the idioms and to familiarize themselves with the essential vocabulary required for the following reading session. Furthermore, this report will look at the stages of the lesson plan (Appendix 1) by pointing out the activities of the microteaching lesson.

Interaction in teaching vocabulary

Based on scholars, "vocabulary teaching [...] is central of the theory and practice of ELT" (Carter & Nunan 2001 :47) as learning new words is the key to acquire a higher level of proficiency while learning a foreign language. Therefore, teaching vocabulary represents a challenge for language teacher as they should be aware of what kind of "vocabulary learners need to focus on, how they will focus on it, and how they can take control of their own learning" (Webb & Nation 2012 : 5676). The chosen topic of this session is about the concept of the term "idiom". In order to deliver an effective teaching, the activities (Appendix 3) are designed to encourage students' noticing; scholars argue that words cannot be assimilated by a learner without some noticing that there is a new term which is being learned (Carter & Nunan 2001). Research shows that interaction plays an important role in the language classroom; as a result, it can be argued that pleasant learning environment is created by group dynamics which represents a successful time management strategy (Dörnyei & Murphey 2003); thereby, this lesson includes five groups of four students each. Scholars state that working in groups increases learners' confidence and makes them feel less anxious as the environment gets more safely and more enjoyable (Goh 2016). As an interactive approach is essential in a language session, pair-work tasks are included in the lesson plan (Appendix 1) because it encourages students' personal response, it allows free discussions and it gives learners autonomy to one extent.

The first stage of the lesson plan (Appendix 1) is designed based on a "whole-class approach" (Klapper 2006 :208) and it includes a short warm-up activity which aims to activate the schemata and to engage the students with the topic. It must be mentioned that the tasks of this lesson plan are collaborative in order to challenge the learners and to increase the STT.

The next stages include topic presentation and introducing the new vocabulary which allows the students to discover information by noticing. The following activities encourage students' personal response by practicing and producing the new vocabulary, therefore learners may personalise the vocabulary production. In order to consolidate the new information, students will work in pairs to solve the second exercise on the handout (Appendix 2) with the aim of linking the real meaning with the figurative meaning of the idioms.

The use of pictures in vocabulary sessions

This report looks at a microteaching lesson which uses pictures as an educational tool in teaching vocabulary to deliver language instruction. The tasks of this lesson will be projected on a PowerPoint presentation which will facilitate students' implication in every activity. Research shows that pictures make the learning sessions more enjoyable. It can be argued that introducing new vocabulary requires students' attention, their motivation and their interest in the topic. Furthermore, the use images during a lesson engages the learners with the topic and it involves them actively in the discussions. Research shows that there are advantages of using pictures in the language classroom; for example, "pictures provide concrete referents for the learning of new words, phrases, and sentences", withal "the picture word chart serves as an immediate reference to enable students to add these words to their sight vocabulary" (Wood & Tinajero 2002 :50). Moreover, "an advantage of using pictures or diagrams is that learners see an instance of the meaning and this is likely to be remembered" (Nation 2001 :85) because the meaning of the new words is received not only in a linguistic way, but also in a visual way.

Based on research, visuals are used to avoid monotony during the lesson (Seburn 2017). Even though images may be used with a decorative purpose in language session, this microteaching session involves visual activities that aim to illustrate specific vocabulary items in order to help the learners guess the meaning of the idioms. On the other hand, during this lesson pictures are used with the purpose of providing opportunities for the learners to deeply understand the meaning of every idiom. According to scholars, images hold many details; therefore, "it may be necessary to present several examples so that learners can determine the essential features of the concept or accompany the object or picture with focusing information". (Nation 2001 :85). During the lesson, students are given instructions for every task they have to discuss. Throughout the designed activities (Appendix 3), learners will work in groups in order to identify the idioms related with the pictures and they will define the concept of the term "idiom"; also, they will identify the real meaning of each idiom, they will identify the

missing words by looking at the pictures and they fill the gaps for the first exercise on their handouts (Appendix 2). Lastly, they will produce new vocabulary by using two idioms in a short conversation and they will link the meaning of the idioms in the second exercise on the handout. Based on the information mentioned above, it can be argued that images “can bring recognition to a reader in ways that text alone sometimes does not” (Seburn 2017:79).

As an observation, this report outlines that using visuals in vocabulary sessions can be efficient for language acquisition and interactive for the learners. Scholars state that “teacher's challenge is not only to provide the right stimulus and content [...] to new language [...], but also to do so in ways that aid the retention of these items.” (O’Keeffe 2012 :243).

One-Drive link for the video presentation:

https://livecoventryac-my.sharepoint.com/:v/g/personal/morara_uni_coventry_ac_uk/EazuM4kvfENo6RwDEbY68sBSqSYOPQZaUPFq_hz0PHwuQ?e=agxruN

References:

- Carter, R. and Nunan, D. (2001) *The Cambridge Guide To Teaching English To Speakers Of Other Languages*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press
- Dörnyei, Z. and Murphey, T. (2003) *Group Dynamics In The Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Goh, C.C.M. (2012) 'Learner Strategies'. In Richards, J. and Burns, A. (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to pedagogy and practice in second language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Klapper, J. (2006) *Understanding And Developing Good Practice*. Bedfordbury, London: CILT, The National Centre for Languages
- Nation, I. (2001) *Learning Vocabulary In Another Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- O'Keeffe, A. (2012) 'Vocabulary Instruction' In Richards, J. and Burns, A. (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to pedagogy and practice in second language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Seburn, T. (2017) 'Learner-sourced visuals for deeper text engagement and conceptual comprehension '. In Donaghy, K. and Xerri, D. (Eds.) *The Image In English Language Teaching*. Malta: ELT Council
- Webb, S. & Nation, I. (2012) 'Teaching vocabulary' In Chapelle, C. (Ed.) *The Encyclopedia Of Applied Linguistics*. Wiley-Blackwell
- Wood, K. and Tinajero, J. (2002) "Using Pictures To Teach Content To Second Language Learners". *Middle School Journal* 33 (5), 47-51

2. Lesson Plan

Appendix 1

<p>Subject: General English Course Main Topic: Figurative Language – Idioms Class level: B2 (Upper-Intermediate) Length of the lesson: 10-15 minutes Number of students expected: 20</p>
<p>Aim: At the end of this lesson the learners will have been exposed to idioms used as figurative language.</p> <p>Lesson Objectives At the end of this lesson the learners will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. have been introduced to the concept figurative language 2. have an understanding of the term idiom 3. have understood the meaning of the essential vocabulary needed for the next reading session

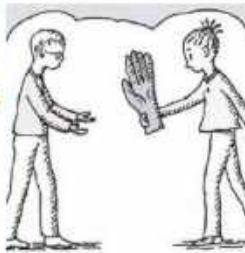
Time	Stage	Teacher Activity	Student Activity	Reason and link to Objectives	Interaction	Materials Required
0-1	Lead-in <i>Warm-up Activity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T will split the students in groups of four • T will ask each group to identify the message of the pictures on the PowerPoint. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ls will discuss in groups and they will guess the message of the pictures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To activate schemata • To engage Ls with the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T-Ls • Ls-Ls • Ls-T 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint Slide

1-2	<p>Introduce the discussion</p> <p><i>Topic presentation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T will ask Ls to guess the meaning of an idiom by providing the following • T will shortly explain the meaning of an idiom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ls will discuss in groups • Ls will define the meaning of the term “idioms” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase STT • To check students’ comprehension • To provide a clear definition for the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T-Ls • Ls-Ls • Ls-T 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint Slide
2-4	<p>Introduce new vocabulary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T will ask Ls to guess the real meaning of the idioms on the PowerPoint. • T will project the answer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ls will discuss in groups • Ls will identify real meaning for each idiom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase STT • To give Ls the opportunity to discover information by themselves • To involve all Ls in the lesson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T-Ls • Ls-Ls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint Slide
4-6	<p>Practice new vocabulary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T will ask the Ls to have a look at 1st exercise on the handout • T will ask Ls to fill in the missing word for every idiom • T will monitor the activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ls in groups will fill in the missing word for each idiom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To allow the students to practice their knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T-Ls • Ls-Ls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handout • PowerPoint Slide

6-8	<p><i>Follow-on exercise</i></p> <p>Produce new vocabulary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T will project the answer • T will ask Ls to work in pairs • T will give instructions for the following exercise • T will project an example • T will monitor the discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ls will discuss in pairs • Ls will Ls to develop a short conversation by using 2 idioms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage personal response • To personalise the vocabulary production • To provide the opportunity to practice the new vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T-Ls • Ls-Ls 	PowerPoint Slide
8-10	Consolidation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T will ask Ls to discuss the 2nd exercise on the handout • T will project the answer • T will provide details for the next lesson which involves a reading activity based on today's vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ls will link the real meaning with the figurative meaning of the idioms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consolidate the new vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T-Ls • Ls-T 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handout • PowerPoint Slide

Appendix 2 – Handout

1. Identify the missing word and complete the idioms



A. _____ a leg.

B. It is just a _____ of cake.

C. Stop _____ with fire.

D. This situation is _____ me crazy.

E. I met Maria in London too.
It is a _____ world.

F. I need help, please give me a
_____.

2. Link the real meaning with the figurative meaning of the idioms.

1. If it is raining very heavily it is raining: a. frogs and ducks b. cats and dogs c. dogs and cows
2. If you are on the top of the world you feel: a. happy b. sad c. Confused
3. If you are delighted you are over the a. sky b. moon c. Roof
4. If you have your head in the clouds you are a. angry b. sleepy c. Unaware
5. If it is a piece of cake, it is: a. nice b. sweet c. Easy
6. By playing with fire you are: a. lazy b. taking a risk c. driving around

Appendix 3 – PowerPoint Activities material

One-Drive link for the PowerPoint:

https://livecoventryac-my.sharepoint.com/:p/g/person/morara_uni_coventry_ac_uk/EcuXchZbOqFPur6qSjGdJwYBJO76M1TDC05iV_kq3e06bw?e=XZnW4o

Figurative Language: Idioms

1

2 Have a look at the pictures given below and describe them by using an expression.

3 **Answers**
Over the moon, Chasing rainbows, On the top of the world

4 **What is an idiom?**
e.g. "Appear to you bright?"
"A group of words in a fixed order that has a particular meaning that is different from the meanings of each word understood on its own".
(Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary 2003)

5 **Identify the real meaning of the following idioms!**
A. Under the weather
B. Astern in a heap
C. Baining cats and dogs
D. Blag a heli
E. Time this
F. Hand in the clock

6 **Answers**
A. Under the weather: Feeling unwell, being ill
B. Astern in a heap: Feeling the way they should be
C. Baining cats and dogs: Raining heavily
D. Blag a heli: To trick or cheat
E. Time this: Being dishonest
F. Hand in the clock: Being dishonest

7 **Identify the missing word and complete the idioms**
A. _____ a leg
B. His feet are _____ of rain.
C. Stop _____ with fire.
D. This situation is _____ me crazy.
E. I see Helen in London too. It is a _____ world.
F. I need help, please give me a hand.

8 **Answers**
A. Break a leg
B. It is just a piece of cake.
C. Stop playing with fire.
D. This situation is driving me crazy.
E. I see Helen in London too. It is a small world.
F. I need help, please give me a hand.

9 **Develop a short conversation by using idioms**
• E.g.
- Do you have an exam tomorrow?
- Yes, it is a piece of cake.
- Break a leg!

10 **Link the real meaning with the figurative meaning of the idioms**
1. If it is raining very heavily it is raining a dogs-and-cats rain and dogs and cats.
2. If you are on the top of the world you feel a happy & not a confused.
3. If you are delighted you can over the moon, fly to space & god.
4. If you have your hand in the clock you are a thief & sheep is a creature.
5. If it is a piece of cake it is a nice & sweet & easy.
6. By playing with the you are a leg & being a trick & driving mental.

11 **Answers**
1. b - cats and dogs 4. c - over the moon
2. a - happy 5. c - easy
3. b - moon 6. b - taking a risk

12 **Thank you!**
Activate Windows
Go to Settings to activate Windows.