

Suggested Readings

Vocabulary

By John Morgan and Mario Rinvoluceri

ELBS (Educational
Low-priced Books
Scheme)

Oxford University
Press, UK

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ELBS edition first
published: 1991

ISBN: 019442135X
(Paperback)



Vocabulary is part of the 'Resource Books for Teacher' series. It provides the teacher with a guide to some of the key concepts of language teaching. Intended as a book for teachers of English as a foreign language, the book explores the process of vocabulary learning and suggests practical classroom activities that can help learners acquire vocabulary. There is no linear divisioning as such in the book, and one section can be read independently of the other. The sectioning follows the authors' core underlying intuitions regarding the acquisition of vocabulary—that it is *not* linear but a branching process; it is *not* an impersonal but an intensely personal process; that it is *not* a solitary but a social process and finally, it is not a purely intellectual/effortful process but an experiential and 'hands on' process. The book also gives freedom to the teacher to plan lessons that reflect the required styles of activity rather than follow any sort of progression within the text.

The book is divided into seven sections of which

sections A and B deal with vocabulary in written texts. Section A comprises exercises that draw the student's attention to new or known vocabulary, and offers a psychological reason for reading. Section B lists exercises such as guessing words in the target language from a given context. Section C is concerned with the imagery of words, and the associative power of image and gesture. Pictures, for example, can help in remembering words, and children can be asked to draw all the words related to a certain concept which can then be labeled. The basic idea being explored is that children tend to remember things that they have created or discovered for themselves. Section D deals with the set theory of words—why and how we categorize words internally thematically in causative and/or temporal chains, through associations that derive from reading or clichés and prejudices. There are activities to explore word profiles, intelligence tests, unusual word families, collocations, classifications, etc. Section E encourages the learner to explore personal responses to words ('power words' for instance that are important in view of the learner's life experiences), while section F suggests ways in which the dictionary can help in creative learning. From the point of vocabulary improvement, section G is crucial in that it gives novel as well as traditional ways of coping with vocabulary revisions. Apart from the traditional bilingual 'lists' of words, there is also scope for interactive learning of vocabulary from some of these exercises, which makes this book an extremely effective resource book for teachers.

Language Teaching Games and Contests

By W. R. Lee

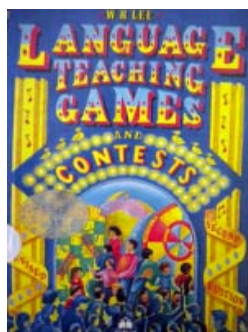
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Language Teaching Games and Contests, now considered a classic, is designed for effective and enjoyable learning of language. Although it includes games for all age groups and language levels, it is especially suited for use with large classes. There are ten chapters in all and each chapter begins with a short introduction followed by an explanation of a game. The chapters have suitable titles: 'Structure games', 'Vocabulary games', 'Spelling games', 'Pronunciation games', 'Number games', 'Listen-and-do games', 'Read-and-do games', 'Games and writing', 'Miming and role play', 'Language club games' and 'Discussion games'.

An underlying tenet of the book is that a language is learnt by using it in situations and communicatively. Language teaching through games not only improves the performance of students (games are typically played to outstrip another's performance), but also proves enjoyable given the involvement of classmates. An advantage of using language games is that often, these games distract the learners' attention from the study of linguistic forms per se: "They stop thinking about the language and instead use it, receptively or productively as a means of considering something else" (p. 2-3). Repetition of successful and interesting communication is an enjoyable and encouraging way of learning language. Each chapter suggests

different games dealing with various aspects of language learning. Chapter 1 for instance proposes structure games that expose the learner to the syntax of the target language. Also included are 'guessing games', which encourage learners to communicate what they think is the right answer to the questions. These can be learnt at an elementary level (example: yes/no answers), intermediate level (example: brushing up vocabulary with here/there kind of answers), or advanced levels (example: conditionals/hypotheticals such as "I would visit...", and tenses/reported speech). Likewise, Chapters 2 to 5 give various examples where vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation and numbers may be learnt at an elementary, intermediate or advanced levels. Chapters 6 and 7 may be particularly useful in that they deal with conventional listening and reading skills of language learners. The former includes games that help in the recognition of oral commands, listening and communicating via storytelling/drawing etc, while Chapter 7 gives variants of games that help in responding to familiar commands in an unfamiliar print medium, and facilitates word recognition, etc. Chapter 8 introduces and thereby encourages meaningful writing practice through games (from elementary level games that familiarize learners with the letter-shapes: A is like a hut, S like a snake, and T like an umbrella; to advanced levels of sentence relay type of games). Finally, Chapters 9-10 include games involving miming, role play and discussion that ensure maximum class participation and enjoyment while learning. This handy book should be on the 'must read' list of all teacher training programmes.

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Meri Badi Kitab (in Hindi)

By Franz Hohler

Translated in Hindi

by Amrit Mehta

Vani Prakashan,

Delhi

First published in

2009

Hindi edition 2012

Pages: 316

ISBN 978-93-5072-205-3



Meri Badi Kitab—a collection of short stories by Franz Hohler, the famous writer and cabaret performer from Switzerland—is a valuable addition to children’s literature published in Hindi. Unfortunately, since writing for children has not yet become a serious and viable business in India for authors and otherwise also, it lacks diversity of form, style and content. At the same time, children reading Hindi and other Indian languages hardly get an exposure to world literature (not even Raduga Publishers’ Hindi titles from Russia, which used to be a staple diet for the previous generation).

The stories in this collection, written originally in Swiss, have all the characteristics which mark Franz Hohler’s literature. His stories oscillate between the real and the imaginary. They have a narrative that is often grounded in fantasy, but the fantasy in these stories is such that it will fascinate even those readers who may not have a particular liking for things intangible. This is because these stories are contextualized in the real, everyday world. The fantasy in Hohler’s stories does not aim to mesmerize or mystify; it gives a subtle element of comic and humorous, e.g. a chimney visiting a doctor for sore throat (*Saaf-Saaf Mamlā*, p. 155), or Mr. Tsogg’s clothes going to his office to attend duties when he refuses to get up on time (*Mr. Tsogg’s ke*

Kapre, p. 137). These stories also have a wide range of how and why stories (such as *Mendhak aur Toothpaste*, p.152), etymological stories (such as *Beemar Bahane ya Nursen*, p. 266), and a story with seven different endings (*Luhar aur Naanbai*, p. 168) which compels children to analyse a situation and reflect on it. Many of the stories in the collection have the quintessential Hohler feature of having a social relevance. They covertly focus on the problems of society (as in *Shahar me Van ki Zameen*, p. 253). Thus, Hohler’s stories are different from the kind of stories Indian children get to savour usually in terms of form, craft and content. Another attraction of the Hindi edition is the artistically done original colour illustrations.

While these stories are refreshingly enjoyable for children, they also give them exposure to a different culture. In fact, these stories are also a good resource material for teachers to use in the classroom. Given the fact that the book is bulky and the stories have different levels with regard to background knowledge (*Maskhari*, p. 258), abstraction (*Srijan*, p. 78, *Ek Doosari* p. 80, *Aadmi ka Baccha* p. 268) etc., the teacher can pick and choose specific stories for pleasure reading according to the level of the students.

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