



TEACHING SIGHT WORDS AND COMMON PHRASES TO IMPROVE EARLY READING FLUENCY

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Abstract: *This paper explores the role of teaching sight words and common phrases in developing early reading fluency among young learners. Sight words are frequently used words that children are encouraged to recognize instantly, without needing to decode them phonetically. By mastering these words and familiar phrases, students can read more smoothly and with greater confidence. The study highlights effective strategies for teaching sight words, such as repetition, visual aids, and contextual reading. It also emphasizes the importance of building a strong foundation in word recognition to support reading comprehension and long-term literacy development.*

Key words: *Reading, language, methods, learners, activities, phrase, teaching, skills*

Introduction: Reading fluency is one of the foundational skills in early literacy development, particularly in the context of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It enables young learners to read with accuracy, speed, and proper expression, which in turn supports comprehension and long-term academic achievement. Among the many strategies used to build reading fluency, teaching



sight words and common phrases has proven to be highly effective, especially for early-grade learners who are still developing basic language and reading skills. Sight words are frequently occurring words in the English language that often do not follow regular phonetic patterns. As such, they are difficult to decode using standard phonics rules and must be recognized instantly. Sight words are learned by sight, meaning they are memorized and recognized instantly by the reader. This instant recognition helps young learners to read more smoothly and with greater comprehension, as they don't have to pause and decode every word. These words are often essential for understanding texts, as they include function words (such as "the," "and," "it," and "to") and other commonly used words that appear frequently in texts but do not follow typical phonetic patterns.

A sight word is any word that young readers are encouraged to recognize instantly without needing to apply phonetic decoding rules. These words are typically high-frequency words that often do not conform to regular phonetic patterns. For instance, words like "said," "one," and "where" are common sight words because they do not follow typical phonetic rules. Children cannot rely solely on their phonetic knowledge to decode these words, making it important for them to memorize and recognize these words by sight. Importance of Sight Words in Early Literacy Increased Reading Fluency

Fluency refers to the ability to read smoothly and effortlessly. The faster students can recognize sight words, the more fluently they can read, leading to improved comprehension. The goal of teaching sight words is to build automaticity in recognition. When children become familiar with these words, they no longer have to pause to decode them, which helps them to focus on the meaning of the text.

When children are able to recognize sight words quickly, their cognitive load is reduced. This allows them to focus more on understanding the overall



meaning of the text rather than decoding each individual word. Since sight words often appear frequently in early reading books and texts, recognizing these words is essential for making sense of the material as a whole. Without sight word knowledge, readers would be forced to decode every word, which could disrupt their comprehension of the text.

Recognizing sight words helps children become more proficient in their use of language. Since sight words often consist of function words such as prepositions, conjunctions, and articles, they help children form the structure of sentences. For example, words like “a,” “the,” and “and” are essential for sentence construction and are necessary for fluency and understanding. Effective teaching of sight words and common phrases in early reading requires a combination of well-planned instructional methods and engaging activities. Instructional methods refer to the broader approaches and strategies used by educators to guide student learning, while activities are the practical applications of these strategies in the classroom.

This section explores various instructional methods—traditional, modern, and blended—and provides a wide range of activities designed to support early literacy development through focused teaching of sight words and common phrases.

1. Whole Language Approach

The whole language approach emphasizes learning words and phrases through contextual immersion. It encourages natural learning through reading, writing, and speaking in meaningful settings.

Key Methods:

Reading authentic children's literature aloud encouraging student storytelling
using learned phrases creating personalized phrase journals



Activities:

Morning Message: The teacher writes a daily message using target sight words and phrases, and students read it aloud together. **Storybook Retelling:** After reading a story, students retell it using key sight words and common phrases. **Shared Writing:** As a class, create a story using target phrases, with teacher support. **Assessment** is a key component of effective instruction. In the context of teaching sight words and common phrases, it plays a crucial role in identifying students' progress, diagnosing learning gaps, and guiding future teaching strategies. This section explores various assessment methods both formal and informal that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of sight word and phrase instruction, as well as how to analyze the data to track student improvement and adjust teaching approaches. Principles and practice in second language acquisition by Krashen, S. D. (1982).

Conclusion: Teaching sight words and common phrases plays a critical role in fostering early reading fluency in young learners. By focusing on high-frequency words and familiar expressions, teachers can help students quickly recognize and decode words, thus improving their reading speed and comprehension. The ability to read fluently is essential for academic success, as it forms the foundation for more complex reading skills, including critical thinking and interpretation. Furthermore, incorporating sight words and common phrases into interactive and engaging activities helps to maintain students' interest, promote motivation, and enhance their understanding of language patterns. A structured approach to teaching these elements, combined with consistent practice and reinforcement, enables students to build a strong reading foundation and develop the confidence to read independently.



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