THE DIFFICULTIES IN STUDYING NEGATIVE WORDS AND THE TEACHING METHODS OF OVERCOMING THEM

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Annotation: This article is revealed several problems within each language skill and found several solutions in the form of teaching strategies to reduce problems in language understanding in students.

Key words: Negation, Problem, Solution, common grammar challenge.

Comprehending and using negative words is a common grammar challenge in language acquisition. Although children use negatives in their first years (such as using the word "no"), other negations can be quite complicated for children to produce and comprehend. Understanding those negatives is critical to a child's success at school, home, and in the community. Negation is absolutely necessary for being able to communicate and reason effectively.

Negation is especially difficult to learn and teach for a few reasons. First, negatives cannot be taught as nouns and adjectives because they hold a number of different meanings and uses. Second, it can be hard for teachers or parents to pinpoint which aspect of negation the child is having trouble. Third, negation completely reverses the meaning of the sentence, which can be a hard concept to grasp!

There are some ways of teaching negative words:

Visuals – First, the child needs to understand the meaning of the word "no." To do this I use some kind of visual! For example, shaking your head while saying "no" or "not."

Tangible Objects – Use two familiar and tangible items (favorite toys/ food) and ask "Which one is NOT a ball?" Put emphasis on the word "not" and you can continue to use your visual (head shake). As they being to grasp the concept, fade these models out. Then add more items to the field and change up the question to include the positive questions as well ("Which one is the ball?"). The next level would be to incorporate adjectives by asking: "Which one is NOT red?"

Pictures – Follow the same guidelines but with pictures. Real pictures are best! You can begin to ask different types of questions to generalize the negation concept. For example, ask about object function: "Which one is not for

cooking?" Begin to incorporate other types of negatives, such as: "Which animal can't fly?" You can also use picture scenes as a higher-level activity.

Following Directions – The next step of comprehension is being able to follow verbal directions. Make it a fun, silly game of having to listen extra hard to the directions. For example, "Touch the chair but don't look at it!" or give conditional directions such as, "If you are not a boy, touch your nose." Once your student gets the concept, they can be the ones in charge of giving the directions! This requires a whole new level of thinking and verbal planning.

Barrier Games – Barrier games are a great way to incorporate listening to verbal directions in a more structured activity. In short, they are a language game in which two players sit across from each other with a barrier between them. Each player is given the same scene and pieces. A barrier is placed between the players to hide one's scene from the other player. Directions are given on where to place the pieces and at the end, you compare your scenes, which should be the same.

You can easily give the students directions on where to place their pieces while incorporating negatives. For example, "Put the kite in the sky but not touching the cloud," or "Put on all the kids but not the baby."

Repetition – When it comes to teaching the more complex negations and asking questions with negations, it's all about finding a motivating, functional game and modeling the phrase/question with the negative. For example, playing "Go Fish" and reinforcing the sentence "I don't have it." I also find using puppets helpful and doing silly things with them. For example, covering the puppet's eyes and saying "I can't see! I can't see!" Smaller children tend to find this funny and then want a turn.

There are a few different ways that you can work on the words "no" or "not" if they are causing difficulty. You can use the following ideas in teaching them:

- Use gesture or sign. You don't need to learn a sign to represent "no" – shaking your head works well! Use this to help your child to understand. Shake your head as you say the negative word to help them focus on it and understand the meaning. Also emphasise it with your voice.

- Play a Simon Says type game. However instead of the "Simon says" part, just tell the children whether to do the action or not. EG "walk to the door" or "don't clap your hands".

- Get a selection of objects or toys and lay them out on the table. Ask your child to find one which is "not an animal" or "not yellow" or "not soft"…. If your child struggles with these it may be the concept words (yellow, soft etc) that are tricky for them rather than the "not" part. Make this easier by just naming items instead. EG "find something

that is not a pencil" or "give me something that is not a sock". Remember to add some in which don't use "not" as well so that they really have to listen and understand.

- Look at pictures with your child. Ask them to follow instructions containing negatives. For example, "find a girl with no glasses" or "can you see a child who is not eating?"

- Black Sheep Press have some great packs of activities for working on negatives, and I saw last week that they have just updated one of them to a color versions.   I hope these ideas will help you.

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