

Effective way for Teaching Vocabulary

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Introduction:

Should teaching vocabulary focus mainly on enriching the learner's repertoire to be able to cope with the course materials? Should it enable learners to build their own processing strategies to pursue their studies with success? In either case, how should vocabulary be taught more effectively to achieve both aims?

Passive learning is certainly not an effective strategy. Students need enough exposure to language before they can fully understand it. They also need to learn new words in a meaningful context. Teachers can emphasize active processing by having students connect new meanings to words they already know. The more students are exposed to a word, the longer they will retain it.

Current research and practice in teaching vocabulary have shown that words are made up of the base form (e.g., make) and their inflections and derivatives (e.g., makes, made, making, maker and makers). Since the meanings of these different forms are closely related, it is assumed that little extra effort is needed to learn them. While this may be true, a study on Japanese learners showed that they did not know many inflections and derivative suffixes for English verbs (Schmitt and Meara 1997). So, these forms should be taught explicitly. Vocabulary learning is more than the study of individual words. Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) have observed that a significant amount of the English language is made up of lexical phrases, which range from phrasal verbs (two or three words) to longer institutionalized expressions. (Jeanne McCarten, 2007,p1)

Vocabulary acquisition is considered as an integral part of language teaching/learning. Whether the language is first, second or foreign, it would be impossible to learn it without its lexis. Nevertheless, vocabulary instruction and learning has not been recognized as a priority in language teaching until the 1970's and early 1980's. Specialists gave credit to grammar and phonology at the expense of vocabulary. Wilkins (1972) posits that: "without grammar very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary, nothing can be converged". This supports the claim that in learning a language, grammar is not sufficient and it is the right time to cast light upon lexis. (Mofareh ALQahtani, 2015, p22)

Vocabulary has been the focus of many scientific studies, namely lexicology and lexicography and the concern of development in methods investigating how it can be best taught. We will highlight the distinction between explicit and implicit teaching in addition to vocabulary strategies that were the central field of investigation for years. Among various strategies we will focus on spelling strategies.

Our vocabulary knowledge plays a central role in oral and written language development. Comprehension of words emerges around a child's first birthday. Shortly thereafter, most children begin to produce words and expand their speech from one-word to two-word utterances. Their vocabularies explode with typically hundreds of new words a year, and they demonstrate their ability to use language for different functions. By the time they begin school, most children are producing well-formed simple, compound, and complex sentences to communicate their ideas and to accomplish many different communicative functions. (Webb, S.A. and Chang, A.C.S. ,2012, pp. 113)

New words are learned through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. They provide labels for our ideas and emotions. We know from research and from our own experience that children's interactions with others in the early years impact their language growth. In particular, the word base children build up prior to school entry sets the stage for reading success (Hart & Risley, 1995). Readers need to understand what words mean and make connections between words and concepts in order to make sense of their reading. They also need to know a variety of word- learning strategies to apply in context.

Vocabulary is learned from repeated exposure to words in a variety of contexts. The largest gains in vocabulary and reading comprehension are made when a variety of word-learning experiences and strategies are available to students.

Another point of considerable importance is that learners have their own preferred learning styles. This necessitates that teachers should provide opportunities for all different types of learners to learn vocabulary according to their own preferences.

The Concept of Teaching Vocabulary:

In the case of teaching of vocabulary, students are not expected to learn pronunciation of characters only, but they are required to learn the meaning and how to form the derivations as well. The standard of efficiency in the education of vocabulary is that learners should be able to know all this in addition to being able to use the appropriate word in the right place.

The criteria of efficiency in the education of the vocabulary is described by Nina Gonzalez, Marla Hunt, and Corinne Eisenhart., 2010 as follows:

- Students can identify the characters from the vocabulary.
- The students understand the meaning of the independent vocabulary or in context.
- Students know the method of derivation of vocabulary.
- Students use the appropriate word in the right place.

Thornbury (1997) states that vocabulary or lexis in English is frequently used interchangeably. The definition of vocabulary relates to various views about the nature and use of vocabulary. In the Longman dictionary (1995); vocabulary is defined as all the words that someone knows, learns or uses. The Oxford Dictionary (2002) defines vocabulary as the body of words used in a particular language. Todd (1987) argues that there is an orthographic, morphological, lexical and semantic aspect of the word. The orthographic word has a space on both sides of it. A morphological word considers the form only. A lexical word considers all the forms a word can take and which are clearly related by meaning. A semantic word considers the distinction between items that may be morphologically identical but differ in meaning.

The Importance of Teaching Vocabulary

Appeared in the last few decades, gradual shift markedly resulted in more focus on learning and learner rather than on education and teacher. It has become a teaching based on a LEARNER, who, in turn,

has become depending on himself in the study of the language.

Many studies have been conducted in the field to verify the effective language learning strategies. They are generally known as ideas and attitudes used by individuals to help them to understand and learn and retain new information. Dorneyi gardner, 2002 linked the use of learning strategies to increase learner motivation to learn the English language. Studies of Ahari, et al, 2012 and 2010 Cosken indicated a strong positive relationship between training on the use of learning strategies and the improvement of vocabulary. (Shahila Zafar, 2012, p642)

Words are the building blocks of languages. Without them no one can express what they want. The importance of vocabulary in education is defined by Grabe, W. & Stoller, F. 1997, pp. 98-122 as follows:

- Vocabulary is a fundamental requirement for learning English.
- Vocabulary helps people understand the language.
- Knowing vocabulary makes it easy for learners to learn English.

This indicates that learning the vocabulary is necessary because it consists of the elements of the language to be learnt.

How Do We Plan for Vocabulary Instruction?

A comprehensive vocabulary program includes opportunities that encourage extensive reading and expose students to new words in a variety of contexts through direct, explicit instruction in the meaning of individual words and independent word-learning strategies. Setting reasonable goals and expectations for learners at various stages of reading development and appreciating the wide differences in students' vocabularies promotes an interest and value in building vocabulary. Active engagement in learning vocabulary should be part of daily vocabulary instruction.

Here are a few principles to guide vocabulary instruction, as suggested by ALI A. ALSAAW, 2013, p130-146:

- Provide multiple opportunities to expose students to rich oral and written vocabulary through conversations, content area discussions,

read-aloud experiences, and independent reading time.

- Teach children new words through direct instruction involving defining the word, using the word, and providing repeated exposure to the word over an extended period of time.
- Carefully select words that are important and useful for understanding the concepts and encourage students to make connections between new words and new concepts.
- Teach students how to identify word meaning by listening or looking for context clues (definition, restatements, examples, or descriptions) embedded in oral or written language.
- Teach students how to use dictionaries and other reference materials to learn new word meanings and deepen their understanding of vocabulary and concepts. Materials should be developmentally appropriate and easily accessible.
- Teach students how to use structural analysis to learn the meaning of new words. Students can understand new words more quickly if they can identify how new and familiar words are related by examining the word parts, such as affixes and commonly used Greek and Latin roots.

Some common vocabulary teaching strategies include semantic mapping, discussion webs, and structural analysis. Semantic mapping is a type of graphic organizer that resembles a spider web. Students use these visual cues to help learn new words as well as concepts. If the instructor is interested in the students' deep understanding of a set of central terms, then using a word map is useful.

Discussion webs help students to focus on many sides of an issue, using the web as a graphic guide to help them draw a conclusion. The students work in pairs or groups to debate their views and come to a consensus.

Structural analysis is another extremely valuable word-learning strategy. Use word sorts or word games to provide practice with prefixes, suffixes, base words, and common Greek and Latin root words.

The Place of Vocabulary in the Major Teaching Methods:

The aim of this historical overview is to gain a better understanding

of the place of vocabulary in the different teaching methods and approaches advocated, and to look at the major language teaching approaches and methods that have been used up to now.

For Brown (2000), there have been a lot of methods in language teaching each of which is more or less discarded in due course as a new method takes place. The Grammar translation method, the Direct method, the Audio-Lingual method, the Communicative method and the Lexical Approach.

To begin with, language teaching in the 16th century had as its target the traditional Grammar Translation method. This method was developed to teach Latin, a language which was no longer used for communication. Harmer (2007) maintains that the Grammar-Translation method introduced the idea of presenting students with abstract grammatical rules, and word lists, and then translation exercises in which they had to make use of the same rules and words. The goal was to develop the writing and reading skills. The speaking aspect was neglected, and oral practice consisted only in reading aloud the translated sentences. The sentence was considered as a basic teaching unit, and its accurate production was emphasized. In short, knowledge of the grammatical rules was regarded as more important than communication and the focus was on teaching about the language rather than learning to use it in actual situations. Because of the criticism addressed to this method, new methods emerged. (Annisa, A, 2013, p11)

There was an increasing demand for the ability to communicate orally in a F.L. throughout Europe. Contemporary schools respond to that change through what came to be known as the “Reform Movement”. It was strengthened by the revitalization of Linguistics which highlighted the oral aspect of language. Gouin (cited in Richards and Rodgers, 1986) was one of the 19th century reformers whose initial attempts was to teach language in context, and to use paralinguistic and non-verbal means of communication in the language class.

According to Larson-Freeman, D. (1986), the Direct method is triggered by Berlitz by the twentieth century. The core principle was that S.L. learning is like the first language learning. Students learnt words by referring to pictures / realia or actions. In this method, no

translation is permitted, only the exclusive use of the target language is allowed.

The Direct Method was reported to have many shortcomings. First, the use of L1 was strictly forbidden though it is sometimes needed to aid gain time and save effort. Second, this method over-emphasized the similarities between L1 acquisition and L2 learning and failed to consider the practical realities of the classroom. Third, the Direct Method lacked the strong theoretical foundation. It suggested innovations at the level of teaching procedures which were not underlined by rigorous methodological principles.

According to Decarrico, the American Structuralism in linguistics had been dominant throughout the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. It was highly influenced by Charles Fries' book which was published in 1945 entitled 'Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language'. Fries highlighted the importance of syntax by considering it as a starting point in language learning. Audio-Lingualism marries grammatical patterns with behaviourist theories of learning. These theories suggested that much learning is the result of habit formation. The audio-lingual method downgraded lexis to secondary position in the field of teaching and learning a Foreign Language. At that time, the teaching of vocabulary was restricted and also contextualized.

Despite the shift to Chomsky's Transformational Generative Grammar in 1960s which brought considerable challenges in linguistic theory, Chomsky spoke about one's ability to produce an infinite number of sentences with finite means and he stressed grammatical rules at the expense of lexis. His theory did little to challenge the view that vocabulary was inferior to grammar. Language learning approaches based on this theory saw learning as rule acquisition not habit formation, and stressed grammatical rules. (2001; Cited in Celce-Murcia , 2001)

Hymes, while not rejecting Chomsky's mode, extended it and gave greater emphasis to the sociolinguistic and pragmatic factors governing effective use of language. Hymes was especially concerned with the concept of communicative competence, which emphasized using language for meaningful communication, including the appropriate use of language in particular social contexts. Communicative language

teaching supported the teaching of vocabulary in relation with contexts and situations. It promoted fluency over accuracy and consequently shifted the focus from sentence-level forms to discourse-level functions. (Cited in Celce- Murcia , 2001), Harmer (2007) claims that in more recent years, interest has been given to vocabulary. In the 1990s, there was considerable discussion about the lexical approach developed by Michael Lewis who suggested that we should structure our curriculum around lexical chunks rather than grammar functions or other units of organizations. The lexicon is seen as playing a much more central role in language organization, learning and teaching.(Cameron, L. 2001, p21)

Strategies for Teaching Vocabulary

In the past fifteen years, the field of second language acquisition has seen renewed interest in vocabulary learning and acquisition. Vocabulary learning and teaching focused initially on current issues in teaching such as: deciding which items to teach and how to teach them, implicit and explicit learning and vocabulary learning strategies. One way to investigate the overall task of vocabulary learning / acquisition is through the distinction between knowing a word and using it.(B. Anuthama, 2010, p9)

In other words, the aim of vocabulary learning should include both recalling words and the ability to apply them automatically in writing.

There are three approaches to vocabulary instruction and learning. These three approaches -- Incidental Learning, Explicit Instruction and Independent Strategy Development --are presented in seven teaching principles. (B. Anuthama, 2010, p10-11)

The first principle deals with providing opportunities for the Incidental Learning of vocabulary. Nagy, Herman and Anderson (1985) observe that learning vocabulary from context is a gradual process. The Incidental Learning of vocabulary through extensive reading can benefit language curricula and learners at all levels. According to Coady (1997), the role of graded readers is to build up learners' vocabulary and its related structures until they can graduate to more authentic materials. Low proficiency learners can benefit from graded readers because they will be repeatedly exposed to high

frequency vocabulary.

The second principle investigates the diagnosis of the 3,000 most common words learners need to study. This is discussed under the second approach; Explicit Instruction. For second language learners entering university, Laufer (1992) found that knowing a minimum of about 3,000 words was required for effective reading at the university level, whereas knowing 5,000 words indicated academic success.

The third principle deals with providing opportunities for the intentional learning of vocabulary. Intentional learning through instruction, significantly contributes to vocabulary development. Explicit Instruction is particularly essential for beginners whose lack of vocabulary limits their reading ability. Coady calls this the beginner's paradox. He wonders how beginners could learn enough words to learn vocabulary through extensive reading when they do not know enough words to read well. His solution is to have learners supplement their extensive reading with the study of the 3,000 most frequent words until the forms and meanings of words become automatically recognized, that is, "sight vocabulary" (words recognized immediately while reading).

The fourth principle deals with providing opportunities for elaborating word knowledge. Nation (1990) identifies various aspects of word knowledge such as knowing related grammatical patterns, affixes, common lexical sets and typical associations and how to use the word receptively and productively. Receptive knowledge means being able to recognize one of the aspects of word knowledge through reading and listening. Productive knowledge means being able to use words in speaking and writing.

The fifth principle focuses on providing opportunities for developing fluency with known vocabulary. Fluency partly depends on developing sight vocabulary through extensive reading and studying high frequency vocabulary. Fluency exercises include timed and paced readings. In timed readings, learners may try to increase their speed by sliding a 3x5 card or a piece of paper down the page to increase their speed while attempting to comprehend about 80% of a passage. In

paced readings, the teacher determines the time and pushes learners to read faster.

The sixth principle of guessing from context comes under Independent Strategy Development. To guess successfully from context, learners need to know about 19 out of every 20 words (95%) of a text, which requires knowing the 3,000 most common words. However, even if one knows these words, Kelly (1990) concludes that unless the context is very constrained, which is a relatively rare occurrence or unless there is a relationship with a known word identifiable on the basis of form and supported by context, there is little chance of guessing the correct meaning. As guessing from context fails to direct attention to word form and meaning, relatively little learning occurs.

The seventh principle involves examining different types of dictionaries and teaches learners how to use them. Bilingual dictionaries which provide L1 synonyms have been found to aid vocabulary learning. Due to this factor, a bilingual dictionary helps lower proficiency learners in reading comprehension more because their lack of vocabulary is a significant factor in their inability to read (Knight, 1994).

Bilingualized dictionaries essentially do the job of both a bilingual and a monolingual dictionary. Whereas bilingual dictionaries usually provide just an L1 synonym, bilingualized dictionaries include L2 definitions, L2 sentence examples as well as L1 synonyms. A further advantage is that, they can be used by all levels of learners. Advanced learners can concentrate on the English part of the entry and beginners can use the translation. Electronic dictionaries with multimedia annotations offer a further option for teachers and learners. Unfamiliar words are most efficiently learned when both pictures and text are available for learners. Learning vocabulary through Incidental, Intentional and Independent Approaches requires teachers to plan a wide variety of activities and exercises. As learners' vocabulary expands in size and depth, extensive reading and the use of independent strategies may be increasingly emphasized. Extensive Reading and Listening, Translation, Elaboration and Fluency Activities, Guessing from Context and Using Dictionaries, all have their own roles to play in systematically developing

vocabulary of learners. .(B. Anuthama, 2010, p11)

Strategies for Teaching and Learning Vocabulary:

Language Learning Strategies include strategies for identifying the material that needs to be learned and distinguishing it from other materials. In our current research for example, we grouped vocabulary by category into nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and so forth, to pave the way for easy teaching of vocabulary. Then, committing the material to memory when it does not seem to be acquired naturally, applying a spelling strategy to acquire a large vocabulary background that will have a direct impact on the students' writings. Adult learners may have a keen sense of just what it is they may need to commit to memory (for example: certain complex vocabulary or grammatical forms) and what they can leave to more automated language learning, often referred to as acquisition. (Harmon, J. M., Wood, K. D., & Keser, K. ,2009, 58-63)

The term learning strategies refers to the steps taken by the students to help the acquisition of, storage, retrieval of information. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) specified that language-learning strategies are special thoughts or behaviours that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain information. Whereas, Faerch and Kasper (1980) point out that learning strategies are the particular techniques which learners use when trying to handle the SL/FL input so as to enhance the linguistic background.

Oxford (1990) defines strategies as operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval and use of information. Brown (2000) says that; "strategies are specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information, they are contextualized "battle plans" that might vary from moment to moment or day to day or year to year".

Applying strategies that would be within the students' sphere of consciousness whether the students were giving them peripheral or focal attention at that time can have a direct payoff on the students outcomes (if spelling is systematically introduced and reinforced it can help students to improve their performance).

Methods of Teaching Vocabulary:

Literature in education provides a vast amount of information about methods of teaching vocabulary, but we will mention only a few.

Direct modus Vivendi

This method is popular among teachers. It was the name of the direct method. Some of the most important features of this method of teaching the English language (Schmitt, N, 1997) are as follows:

- giving priority to the speaking skill instead of reading and writing.
- the native language has no place in the teaching of a foreign language.

Richards and Rogers summarize the principles of the direct method as follows:(Stahl, S. A., & Kapinus, B. ,2001, 42-44)

- Education in the classroom should be the goal.
- Build oral communication skills in a step-by-step sequence.
- Provide new elements orally.
- Emphasis on correct PRONUNCIATION and grammar.

Audio Visual Interpretation Method:

Named this way, this method combines a synthetic way to listen to the language first, and then give oral response and the visual component of the label such as picture or drawing helps the learner to develop a realistic picture of the meaning of the language being learned.

The Method of Photography:

Photos and graphics help students to discriminate words and ideas. They also make it easier for learners to link the words with the meaning. The instructor can help students to develop reading through the use of simple linear graphics. (Schmitt, N, 1997)

If the teacher decides to draw pictures himself, this will help to save time for students. The instructor must leave enough space on the board to write the basic words and expressions on the aspects of the images or beneath it.

The Sequence Method:

The Sequence method is a method of direct education. It is composed of a series of sentences associated with ease to understand.

The first lesson consists of a series of 15 Inter Next: walking to the door. He approached the door. More approached from the door. Out of the door. I stand at the door. Long arm. Grasp the handle. Adair of the handle. Open the door. Pull the door. The door moves. The door to the hinges. The door Revolves. Open the door wide. Release the handle.

These include the Camel - as is apparent - a large number of vocabulary words, grammatical phenomena and it is not an easy lesson but the language used by the close understanding linked to reality.

Indicative method:

This method will return to the idea of the Bulgarian psychologist (Lozanov) that the human mind can handle the huge amount of information when there are appropriate conditions for learning, including relaxation and lack of control of the instructor. Music plays an essential role in this way.

It has been applied on the teaching of vocabulary, reading, and other aspects of the activity in the classroom. The curriculum is not totally different. The only difference is in two things: (B. Anuthama, 2010, p10-12)

- The lesson is in the context of calm music.
- The learners sit in soft and comfortable seats.

(Lozanov) describes a scene of teaching in this way: start the meeting without any talk, but the silence of the duration of 2 minutes, the teacher plays a tape concert, , and then starts reading the text, and then a

period of silence, to arouse the desire of the LEARNERS.

All this may be the way you need to motivation. Motivation is the incentive and the excitement in learning a foreign language. There are many educational, individual and social factors which affect the increase or decrease of motivation. Among these factors is the intelligence, preparedness, perseverance and strategies of self- Learning. It is therefore, up to the teacher to think of ways to increase learners' motivation and keep them involved and engaged in their own learning.

Practical Ways to Present Vocabulary

There are lots of ways of getting across the meaning of a lexical item. Here, we are going to highlight a few practical classroom activities to help teachers present new vocabulary items in a more efficient way.

- **Illustration**

This is very useful for more concrete words (dog, rain, tall) and for visual learners. It has its limits though, not all items can be drawn.

- **Mime**

This lends itself particularly well to action verbs and it can be fun and memorable.

- **Synonyms/Antonyms/Gradable items**

Using the words a student already knows can be effective for getting meaning across.

- **Definition**

Make sure that it is clear (maybe check in a learner dictionary before the lesson if you are not confident). Remember to ask questions to check they have understood properly.

- **Translation**

If you know the students' L1, then it is fast and efficient. Remember that not every word has a direct translation.

- **Context**

Think of a clear context when the word is used and either describe it to the students or give them example sentences to clarify meaning further.

Of course which method you choose will depend on the item you are presenting. Some are more suitable for particular words. Often a combination of techniques can be both helpful and memorable

Conclusion

This paper has discussed some of the innovative strategies that can be employed in teaching vocabulary. We understand from the discussion that the meanings of a word are often related. There is always a core meaning with all the other meanings extending from it. Imagination and association are techniques to link the meanings together. Many learners consider learning vocabulary as a tedious job. They come to rely on incidental learning, finding intentional studying boring and inefficient. Teachers develop various mnemonic (aiding the memory) strategies employing action, music, drawing and fantasy. One such strategy is developing vocabulary with the help of colour. The Word Wall approach helps learners build their vocabulary and vocabulary- learning strategies. The versatility of the approach makes it attractive for teachers in a range of instructional settings. In all cases, the Word Wall can assist learners in building their vocabulary, thereby improving their language proficiency and ability to function in the target language. (Webb, and Chang, A.C.S. ,2012, pp. 115)

As for the methods applied in the teaching of vocabulary enabling instructors to increase the capacity of learners' mastery of vocabulary, we summarize the following points:

- Hearing the word: in this first phase, giving the opportunity for students to hear the words from the teacher who reads it repeatedly.
- Uttering the word: after giving the opportunity for students to hear the vocabulary, give them the opportunity to say the word

that they have heard.

So far, we have introduced a wide range of teaching strategies and resources for teachers to vary their own practice. They should rely on them in order to provide learners with a safe learning environment which guarantees exposure to different types of contexts in which students can acquire vocabulary and try various learning strategies. Acquiring vocabulary, as discussed above, is the first step in learning a language. The more effective the teaching is at this stage, the better chances there will be that learners will complete their studies with success and ease. We also discussed that many theorists favoured grammar to vocabulary, but the most recent ones have come to agree on the power of vocabulary over grammar.

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