

The Importance of Teaching Vocabulary

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Annotation: This article outlines that vocabulary knowledge is not something that can ever be fully mastered; it is something that expands and deepens over the course of a lifetime. The purpose of the article is to find out the appropriate principles and methods for teaching vocabulary. It is devoted to the theory of vocabulary teaching and present techniques in the classroom using different approach for teaching vocabulary. The main goal is to assess the relationship between teaching approach and students’ final knowledge, focusing on vocabulary load.

Keywords: Teaching vocabulary, Word cards, Word association, Visual techniques, Brainstorming, Matching columns, Matching columns;

Introduction The basic reason for learning foreign languages that all people have in common is communication - communication in any mode. It is a two-sided process, which requires the ability to understand each other, to be able to code a message that someone wants to convey to someone else in a way, which will be comprehensible to the receiver and also appropriate to a concrete situation and status of all participants. Vice versa the person should be able to interpret a message that someone else is conveying to them. To acquire a good skill of communication in foreign language it is necessary to be familiar not only with vocabulary but also with language structures and above all with strategies for using them in right context according to concrete situations. Learners can generally communicate well, having learnt all the basic structures of the language. However, they need to broaden their vocabulary to express themselves more clearly and appropriately in a wide range of situations. Students might even have a receptive knowledge of a wider range of vocabulary, which means they can recognize the item and recognize its meaning. Nevertheless, their productive use of a wide range of vocabulary is normally limited, and this is one of the areas that need greater attention. At this stage we are concerned not only with students understanding the meaning of words, but also being able to use them appropriately, taking into account factors such as oral / written use of the language; degree of formality, style and others. Vocabulary is the knowledge of words and word meanings. "Vocabulary knowledge is knowledge; the knowledge of a word not only implies a definition, but also implies how that word fits into the world." Vocabulary knowledge is not something that can ever be fully mastered; it is something that expands and deepens over the course of a lifetime. Instruction in vocabulary involves far more than looking up words in a dictionary and using the words in a sentence. Vocabulary is acquired incidentally through indirect exposure to words and intentionally through explicit instruction in specific words and word-learning strategies. There are four components of an effective vocabulary program: - wide or extensive independent reading to expand word knowledge -instruction in specific words to enhance comprehension of texts containing those words -instruction in independent word-learning strategies, and -word consciousness and word-play activities to motivate and enhance learning Nowadays it is widely accepted that vocabulary teaching should be part of the syllabus, and taught in a well-planned and regular basis. Some authors argue that vocabulary should be at the center of language teaching, because ‘language consists of grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalized grammar’.

The importance of teaching vocabulary. New words have to be introduced in such a way as to capture the students’ attention and place the words in their memories. Students need to be aware of techniques for memorizing large amounts of new vocabulary in order to progress in their language learning. Vocabulary learning can often be seen as a laborious process of memorizing lists of unrelated terms. However, there are many others much more successful and interesting ways to learn and teach vocabulary in the ESL classroom.

Discussion and recommendation. If vocabulary is taught in an uninteresting way such as by drilling, simple repetition and learning lists, then the words are likely to be forgotten. Teachers need to teach vocabulary so that the words are learned in a memorable way, in order for them to stick in the memory of the student. Indeed, learners need to retain large amounts of vocabulary in their long-term memory.

Teaching vocabulary – the basis for forming four main skills to know a language means to master its structure and words. Thus, vocabulary one of the aspects of the language to be taught in school. The problem is what words and idioms pupils should retain. It is evident that the number of words should be limited because pupils have only 2-4 periods a week; the size of the group is not small enough to provide each pupil with practice in speaking; schools are not yet fully equipped with special laboratories for individual language learning. The number of words pupils should acquire in school depends wholly on the syllabus requirements. The later are determined by the condition and method used. For example, experiments have proved that the use of programmed instruction for vocabulary learning allows us to increase the number of the words to be learned since pupils are able to assimilate them while working independently with the programme.

We know the following fact that:

- words used in reading;
- words used in listening;
- words used in speaking;
- words used in writing.

The main aim of teaching vocabulary is assimilation of the meaning, form of the words and its usage in oral and written speech – that is formation of lexical habits. People can have many aptitudes, but without a large and precise English vocabulary to express them, they cannot take full advantage of these abilities. Unlike aptitudes, vocabulary is not a natural ability; it can be improved if one is willing to make the effort to do so. Building vocabulary is a powerful way to enhance your life and career. Learning how to build a better vocabulary can be a pleasurable and profitable investment of both your time and effort. At least fifteen minutes a day of concentrated study on a regular basis can bring about a rapid improvement in your vocabulary skills, which in turn can increase your ability to communicate by writing, conversing, or making speeches. Acquiring a large vocabulary can benefit you in school, at work, and socially. It will enable you to understand others' ideas better and to have the satisfaction of getting your thoughts and ideas across more effectively. Of course, you already know thousands of words, and you will continue to learn more whether you work at it or not. The fact is that many of the words you know were probably learned simply by coming across them often enough in your reading, in conversation, and even while watching television. But increasing the pace of your learning requires a consistent, dedicated approach. If you learned only one new word a day for the next three years, you would have over a thousand new words in your vocabulary. However, if you decided right now to learn ten new words a day, in one year you would have added over three thousand to what you already know, and probably have established a lifetime habit of learning and self-improvement.

Vocabulary is a vital part of language teaching. *Word cards* – Teachers can use devices for vocabulary teaching such as simple flash-cards or word-cards. The teacher writes the English language word on one side of the card and a sentence containing the word, its definition, its synonyms and pronunciation on the other. Word cards can be excellent methods of memory aid. This is also a handy way for students to carry their new vocabulary around with them to look at whenever they have the opportunity.

Word association – Another successful method of vocabulary teaching is the word association technique. If words are stored individually, they are more difficult to remember as they have no context. But if the words are stored together in commonly used phrases and sentences, they are more readily absorbed. Putting words with collocation partners in this way helps the students to relate connected words together.

Visual techniques – Teaching vocabulary can become easier with the use of cards with pictures, diagrams and liberal colour coding for grammatical clarity. In this way, words are remembered by their colour or position on a page or their association with other words, pictures or

phrases. Images can link to a word; words can also be linked to other words, for example, a student might link the word 'car' with 'garage' and with 'mechanic'. This idea of engaging the other sense can also help with developing a kind of semantic map where words are listed which relate to each other, which creates a situation where one word reminds the student of another.

Brainstorming – When teaching new vocabulary, the method of delivery needs to be fresh and interesting for the students or else they will not remember the words. Ways in which to liven up the introduction of new vocabulary could include brainstorming around an existing word in the students' vocabulary knowledge. This key word should be written up in the middle of the board and the new vocabulary relating to it can be written around it. Use colourful pens if writing on a whiteboard to emphasize different words.

Matching columns – Once the new vocabulary has been taught, a useful way to test if students have understood the meanings of this new vocabulary is to ask them to match new words from one column with definitions from another column. The new words are numbered in column one and the definitions are mixed up and lettered in column two. Students can also make up sentences using this technique, matching the beginning of the sentence or phrase from column 1 with the end of the sentence or phrase from column 2.

The techniques of teaching vocabulary in the classroom. Perhaps the most important factor in a successful vocabulary-building program is motivation. It will be very difficult for you to study words month after month without a strong feeling that it is worth doing, that a larger vocabulary will help you in school and on the job, and that it can well lead to a more exciting and fulfilling life. For the first according to the topic of our research paper we identify four basic steps to a better vocabulary:

- ❖ Be Aware of Words;
- ❖ Read;
- ❖ Use a Dictionary;
- ❖ Study and Review Regularly;

While there are not any magic shortcuts to learning words, the larger your vocabulary becomes, the easier it will be to connect a new word with words you already know, and thus remember its meaning.

Be Aware of Words – Many people are surprised when they are told they have small vocabularies. "But I read all the time!" they protest. This shows that reading alone may not be enough to make you learn new words. When we read a novel, for instance, there is usually a strong urge to get on with the story and skip over unfamiliar or perhaps vaguely known words. But while it is obvious when a word is totally unknown to you, you have to be especially aware of words that seem familiar to you but whose precise meanings you may not really know. Instead of avoiding these words, you will need to take a closer look at them. First, try to guess at a word's meaning from its context—that is, the sense of the passage in which it appears; second, if you have a dictionary on hand, look up the word's meaning immediately. This may slow down your reading somewhat, but your improved understanding of each new word will eventually speed your learning of other words, making reading easier. Make a daily practice of noting words of interest to you for further study whenever you are reading, listening to the radio, talking to friends, or watching television.

Result. Read – When you have become more aware of words, reading is the next important step to increasing your knowledge of words, because that is how you will find most of the words you should be learning. It is also the best way to check on words you have already learned. When you come across a word you have recently studied, and you understand it, that proves you have learned its meaning. What should you read? Whatever interests you—whatever makes you want to read. If you like sports, read the sports page of the newspapers; read magazines like Sports Illustrated; read books about your favorite athletes. If you are interested in interior decorating, read a magazine like House Beautiful—read it, don't just look at the photographs. Often people with very low vocabularies don't enjoy reading at all. It's more of a chore for them than a pleasure because they don't understand many of the words. If this is the way you feel about reading, try reading easier things. Newspapers are usually easier than magazines; a magazine like Reader's

Digest is easier to read than The Atlantic Monthly. There is no point in trying to read something you simply are not able to understand or are not interested in. The important idea is to find things to read you can enjoy, and to read as often and as much as possible with the idea of learning new words always in mind.

Use a Dictionary – Most people know how to use a dictionary to look up a word's meaning. Here are some pointers on how to do this as a part of a vocabulary-building program:

Have your own dictionary – Keep it where you usually do your reading at home. You are more likely to use it if you do not have to get it from another room. At work, there may be a good dictionary available for your use. At home, most people do not have a big, unabridged dictionary; however, one of the smaller collegiate dictionaries would be fine to start with.

Circle the words you look up – After you have done this for a while, your eye will naturally move to the words you have circled whenever you flip through the dictionary. This will give you a quick form of review.

Read the entire entry for the word you look up – Remember, words can have more than one meaning, and the meaning you need for the word you are looking up may not be the first one given in your dictionary. Even if it is, the other meanings of the word will help you understand the different ways the word is used. Also, the word's history, usually given near the beginning of the entry, can often give a fascinating picture of the way the word has developed its current meaning. This will add to the pleasure of learning the word as well as help you remember it.

However, if half an hour a week is all the time you have to spare, start with that. You may find more time later on, and you will be moving in the right direction. Teaching a word does not cause its automatic learning by the students. That is one of the first things teachers realize when they start teaching. It would be wonderful if finishing a unit of the course book meant that the students master all the words in it. Unfortunately, a lot of work (recycling, vocabulary notebooks keeping, memory techniques ...) has to be done before students thoroughly know a word. The activities which follow have been tested on students and provide a practical suggestion for a systematic approach to vocabulary learning.

Working alone – Super memo – Students use the cards to learn the verbs systematically, at fixed time intervals, using boxes. Taking into account the forgetting curve, Ss have to plan their learning and relearning in such a way that the forgetting is minimized. They can use small boxes, or a box with different slots in it. You put all the verbs you have to learn in slot number 1. When each verb is learnt it goes to slot number two and so on until the last slot. All forgotten verbs are returned to the start.

Working in groups – Playing cards – Two packs. One pack is English face up, a pile on the table. The other is given out to all the players. In turn, they take one card from the pack and keep it, if they have the matching one. Then they discharge the matching pair. If they don't have the matching one, they leave it on the table for someone else to match. They can pick a card either from the table or from the pack.

Working in pairs – One pack of cards. Ss spread the cards on the table, English face down. In turn they keep one and translate. They check by reading and saying the verb. They keep the card if it is correct. If they don't know any of them they say "pass». Winner is the one with the most cards. Use your transparent folder. Ss keep all these cards in transparent folders. They place one – empty, without cards - on the desk. Aim of the game is to go from top to bottom and vice versa, or from left to right or vice versa by placing verbs and saying them (if they place the L1 they have to say the English).

Working with the whole class – Bingo. Students choose 9 cards; put them down in a sort of bingo grid, English face up. Teacher with a list calls them out. Teacher can call either L1 or L2. Bingo with definitions. Ss choose 9 cards; put them down in a sort of bingo grid, English face up. Teacher gives definitions.

Conclusion. Vocabulary is an important part of the English teaching process. It is supposed to be a very effective communicative device as it carries the highest level of importance within peoples' verbal interaction. However, language itself is not only individual lexemes put together, but it is necessary to follow a set of grammar rules to assure correct comprehension of speaker's

intention. Therefore, vocabulary together with grammar rules acquisition plays significant role in foreign language teaching. Language with problems to integrate it within context, - conscious learning of rules does not lead to language acquisition, - communicative approach prepares students for real communication, students are not anxious about experiments with language and they are able to respond the context well.

Conclusion.

In conclusion, first, teachers should prepare themselves for the following principles and methods of teaching vocabulary in FLTL, because foreign language training will be more efficient.

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