

Techniques of Vocabulary Competency in English Language Learning

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Abstract

In this paper I present an approach for effective ways of learning vocabulary. I apply relational learning for defining the context-free grammar including leaning active and passive vocabulary. I introduce various methods of leaning vocabulary. In the context of hand on-based learning captures multiple approaches for the efficient parsing of word parts are introduced. Various means for defining of the syntax of sentence structures have been proposed. It is brought to distinguish the approaches by functional English unification-based grammars, and specifications based on the definition of context-free learning.

Keywords: Vocabulary, Words, technique, and contextual learning.

Significance of leaning vocabulary in ELL has been widely questioned for years; vocabulary instruction has not been in vogue most of language classroom. "Vocabulary knowledge is fundamental to reading comprehension; one cannot understand text without knowing what most of the words mean" (Nagy, 2003, p. 1). Anderson and Freebody, vocabulary researchers, hypothesized that there are three reasons that vocabulary knowledge is a good indicator of reading success:

1. Understanding words enables readers to understand passages.
2. Verbal aptitude underlies both word and passage comprehension.

3. Vocabulary knowledge may be related to a person's store of background information (1981, p.115).

Vocabulary instruction becomes difficult task of teaching and learning because it is deductive knowledge. The present paper is an attempt to enrich vocabulary of the students at the advance level. A few words may be familiar to learners at basic level but it need further be taken repeated exposure to come to know for common use. Vocabulary of a language is just like bricks of a high building. Despite quite small pieces, they are vital to the great structure. Wilkins rightly says, "Without grammar very little can be conveyed....but without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (p.111, quotes in Lewis, 2000).Therefore the study of vocabulary is at the

center while learning a new language. English being a second language or foreign language, one needs to learn vocabulary in the systematic way.

As students progress in school, active vocabulary becomes more specific to classroom studies. To support vocabulary instruction, academic vocabulary is often highlighted in instructional materials. These highlighted words are considered key to understanding the content of a particular passage or chapter. To support vocabulary instruction efforts further, several academic vocabulary word lists have been generated by publishers, academics, and curriculum boards of education.

Literature Review

Research clearly points to the importance of making connections from known vocabulary to new vocabulary as well as activating readers' experiential and conceptual background in vocabulary development (Rupley, Logan, and Nichols, 1999, p. 338). The best method to learn this vocabulary is to have discussions with students in small groups, brainstorming concepts surrounding the new words and utilizing a variety of concept and mind mapping are effective in activating and sharing knowledge. In fact, without vocabulary communication in a second or foreign language is not possible in a meaningful way. McCarthy (1990) argues 'No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way'. In order to make meaning of vocabulary more interesting for students, I'd recommend a more inductive approach, i.e. students should be allowed to work out on their own to get some material to the classroom and discuss the meaning by the context without help of dictionary first, then provide literary meaning for that. Traditional vocabulary instruction for many teachers involves having students look words up in the dictionary, write definitions, and use words in sentences (Basurto, 2004). Word lists, teacher explanation, discussion, memorization, vocabulary books, and quizzes often are used in an effort to help students learn new words. But these methods ignore what research and theory tell us about word learning and sound vocabulary instruction. Vocabulary is a principle contributor to comprehension, fluency, and achievement.

Richards (1976) list the different things teaching need to know about a word before we can say that they have taught it. These include:

1. The meaning(s) of the word
2. Its spoken and written forms
3. What "word parts" it has (e.g., any prefix, suffix, and "root" form)
4. Its grammatical behavior (e.g., its word class, typical grammatical patterns it occurs in)
5. Its collocations
6. Its register
7. What associations it has (e.g., words that are similar or opposite in meaning)
8. What connotations it has
9. Its frequency

There are some other methods which can help the learner to grasp quickly.

1. Provide a context

In order to know the target language, get the students really interested in, for example, a conversation, and a situation. Use language with advance vocabulary. Make the situation clear enough for the students to hazard a guess about the target language. And do make it clear that you want the students to come up with the target language. Finally, clear all their misunderstanding.

2. **Learning by Listening:** Some people learn more easily by listening than by reading. Try improving your vocabulary by tuning in to radios, songs, or native speakers' speeches. Then make your own podcast about something you're an expert in, whether comic books, cooking or baseball, using some of the specialized vocabulary associated with that field.

3. **Battling Cliché: This is another method widely used while taking about sports.** Listen how do sports reporters keep descriptions of games, teams and athletes gig. For instance, cricket-commentary identifies a list of the different verbs or phrases commentators have used to mean "to win" or "to

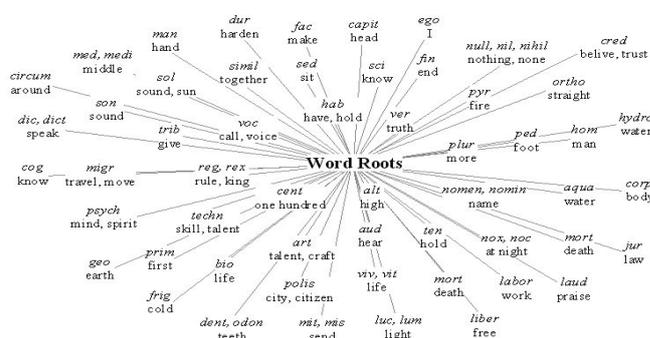
lose.” Further note them and contextualize the same vocabulary. This is active learning of vocabulary.

4. **Test Yourself Daily Quizzes:** Try to solve puzzles and cross word puzzles from the newspapers. Usage of Bingo is popular among young children.
5. **Greek and Latin Roots:** Most vocabulary words are derived from Latin or Greek etymologies. Phobias (fears, terrors, and dreads), manias, and many other words listed in thematic units of English vocabulary words. The etymology of a word traces its existence and development throughout history and usually through multiple languages. Simply put, etymology can be seen as the study of word origins. You can study word origins to gain a better understanding of language in general. For instance, Anesthesia, Bankrupt, Biometrics and words end with -archy.
6. **Engage in conversations:** Simply talking with other people can help you learn discover new words. As with reading, once you hear a new word, remember to jot it down so that you can study it later -- and then slowly add the new word to your vocabulary.
7. **Keep a dictionary and thesaurus handy:** Use of dictionary in any form has tremendous impact on vocabulary boosting. You may use whatever versions you prefer in print, software, or online. When you discover a new word, look it up in the dictionary to get both its pronunciation and its meaning(s). Next, go to the thesaurus and find similar words and phrases -- and their opposites (synonyms and antonyms, respectively) -- and learn the nuances among the words.

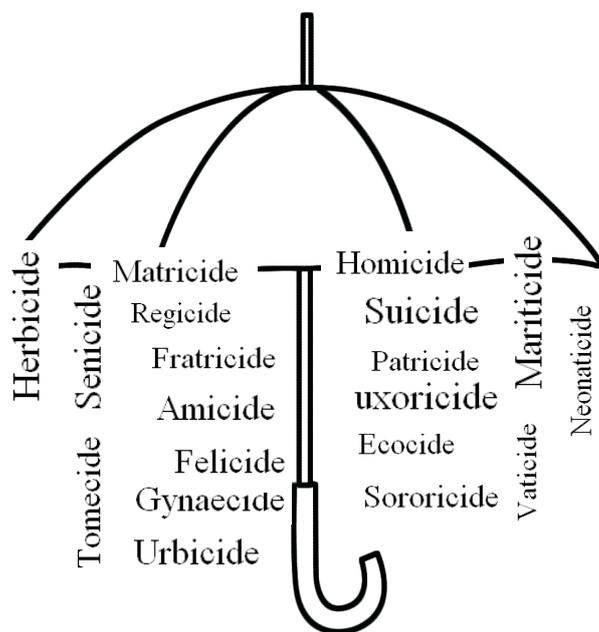
The Most effective Way to Teach Vocabulary

1. **Root Analysis:** While root analysis is taught explicitly, the ultimate goal is for readers to use this strategy independently. Many of the words in the English language are derived from Latin or Greek roots.

PORT
IMPORT
EXPORT
TRANSPORT
PORTABLE
DEPARTING
TRANSPORTATION
IMPORTANT



2. Using Umbrella Terms (One word substitutes)



3. **Incidental Learning:** Incidental vocabulary learning occurs all of the time when we read. Based on the way a word is used in a text we are able to determine its meaning. While you may not know what a specific word means, many times you can determine its meaning based on what the rest of the sentence focuses on. Adults should model this sort of incidental vocabulary learning for children to help them develop their own skills.
4. **Janus (Auto-antonyms):** An auto-antonym, or contronym is a word with a homograph (another word of the same spelling) that is also an antonym (a word with the opposite meaning). Janus word (after the Roman god), it is a word with multiple meanings, one of which is defined as the reverse of

one of its other meanings. This phenomenon is also called antilogy.

Examples:

adumbrate <i>verb</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to clarify to cast a shadow over
bill <i>noun</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> invoice (e.g. in a restaurant) money; banknote
bolt <i>verb</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to secure in place to dash away suddenly
bound <i>adj./verb</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> restrained (e.g. by rope) to spring; leap
buckle <i>verb</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to fasten to come undone; give way; collapse
cleave <i>verb</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to adhere; stick together to cut apart; divide
clip <i>verb</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to fasten together; hold tightly to cut apart; cut off (e.g. with shears)
comprise <i>verb</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to contain; include to be composed of; consist of
custom <i>adjective</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> usual; normal special; unique
dust <i>verb</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to remove fine particles from (e.g. when cleaning) to sprinkle fine particles onto
fast <i>adverb</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fixed firmly in place moving quickly; speedy

Difference between Vocabulary and Word

According to Collins English Language Dictionary (1989:1629), ‘the vocabulary of a language is the total number of words in it’ and someone’s vocabulary means total number of words that he or she knows. Michael Wallace in his work *teaching vocabulary* calls content words and structure words. Content words are nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs which carry a meaning in isolation where as structure words are prepositions, articles, conjunctions, and considered a part of the grammar of a language (Wallace 1988:18). The term ‘words’ refer to expressions made up of one or more terms used in conversation. Most often language classrooms focus on teaching grammar, nevertheless, vocabulary is paid less attention when we consider teaching vocabulary it is evident to know what kind of vocabulary to be learnt and how to learn words. There are certainly other elements of learning vocabulary as they change in the meaning due to grammar,

stress, and intonation. These are kinesthetic and polemic feature of language can also suggest meaning through context. Teaching words in the context

Many people agree that vocabulary ought to be taught in context (Nilsen 1976; Chastain 1976; Rivers 1968). Words taught in isolation are generally not retained. In addition, in order to grasp the full meaning of a word or phrase, students must be aware of the linguistic environment in which the word or phrase appears. Setting a good context which is interesting, plausible, vivid and has relevance to the lives of the learners, is an essential prerequisite for vocabulary teaching as it helps in both engaging the attention of the learners and naturally generating the target vocabulary. Maintaining the context and making sure the language surrounding the context is easy to comprehend, the teacher should start eliciting the target vocabulary.

Therefore, in selection of vocabulary, the teacher must be sure that the words or phrases chosen can be immediately incorporated into the students’ linguistic range. Stahl (2005) stated, “Vocabulary knowledge is knowledge; the knowledge of a word not only implies a definition, but also implies how that word fits into the world.”

Learning vocabulary is complex process as words possess different meanings sometimes. It is better suggested that always learn vocabulary through the context. It is also important to note the distinction between productive/active vocabulary and receptive/passive vocabulary.

According to Linda Taylor (1990:1-3) knowledge of the word depends on the acquisition of information that one possess. There different kinds of learning vocabulary as are follow:

- 1. Frequency of occurrence :** Some lexical items in English are far more likely to appear in speech than in writing, such as

Spoken	Written
In fact	Indeed
Before	Ago
Answer	Response
After	Later
Think	Consider
But	However

- 2. Register:** Registers are varieties of language defined by the topic and context of use, e.g. different fields of profession

- (a) Insolvent (banking term for penniless),
 (b) Resister (electrical), (c) Mouse (Computer) et al.
3. **Dialect:** It refers to differences in geographical variation, e.g. American, and British English etc. E.g. elevator (US) – lift (GB) G’day (Australian) – Hello (GB)
 4. **Semantics:** Words have to be used consciously without leading to confusion.
 For e.g. thin (neutral) as opposed to slim/slender (positive) and skinny/bony (negative)
 5. **Pronunciation:** English, sometimes, lacks correspondence between spelling and pronunciation. The sound /t/ in the following words varies as table, pot, action, picture, ballet, mute, etc.

It is estimated that students can be taught explicitly some 400 words per year in school (Beck, McKewon and Kucan, 2002).

Significance and types of vocabulary in the text:

1. Words that will be frequently encountered in other texts and content areas.
2. Words that are important to understanding the main ideas.
3. Words that are not a part of your student’ prior knowledge.
4. Words unlikely to be learned independently through the use of context and/or structural analysis.

Adapted from Cooper, J.D. (1997). *Literacy: Helping children construct meaning* (3rd ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

It is necessary to know the clear meaning and multiple meanings of words in. An important advantage of teacher-produced materials is contextualization to use words in different situations.

In developing new special method of improving one’s vocabulary organization of mind mapping to build up sentences using vocabulary rigorously that had already been registered passively in the brain. It is a constant practice of

digging deeper into the brains to excerpt words to reuse them in the suitable context.

Vocabulary improvement is one of the sub skills of any language. However, there are no any teaching methods of vocabulary in isolation. Its importance can not be ignored in language learning. The real proficiency of language lies primarily in use of amount of words that one possesses which can also be judged in communication orally. When it is examined the methods, the substantial way of learning is role-plays and dramas are the effective away of retaining good number of words because these words are learnt by enacting the roles which lead them not to forget.

Recently I had an experiment in our English laboratory with first year graduates on the topic of teaching vocabulary through role-plays. Sixty students were participated in the role-play amalgamating different levels of students. The whole class is divided into ten groups and each group is given a role-play. There was a tremendous response from the students who acquired vocabulary earlier through synonyms, antonyms, definitions, and translation on the basis of mother tongue and now that they perform the play with the passive vocabulary and they said that they never forget the new words they used in the role-play.

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