

TEACHING VOCABULARY AS AN IMPORTANT WAY OF LEARNING LANGUAGE

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Abstract: The learning of vocabulary is an important part in foreign language learning. Vocabulary is considered as central in language teaching and is of paramount importance to a language learner. Teaching vocabulary can be deemed as problematic, as some teachers are not really sure about the best practice in the teaching and sometimes not really aware how to start forming an instructional emphasis on the vocabulary learning. Here was written about the effective teaching vocabulary in English lessons, importance of structural method to teach vocabulary.

Keywords: Vocabulary, techniques, method, teaching vocabulary, teaching English, perspective

INTRODUCTION: Words are gateway to knowledge that unlocks the doors of sublime ideas, theories and principles to the readers. The competency and grip on the lexical items of language plays an important role in learning of new concepts. States that vocabulary learning is one of the important aspect of language learning and language use. In fact, it is what makes the essence of a language. Without vocabulary, speakers cannot convey meaning and communicate with each other in a particular language. It is divided into two main categories: active and passive vocabulary. Passive vocabulary consist of those words that the students may recognize and understand when they occur in the context, but which he/she cannot produce or use correctly in different contexts. The active vocabulary consists of those words, which the student understands, recall at a will, write with correct spellings, can pronounce correctly, and use constructively in speaking and writing. As far as mastering a foreign language is concerned, none of the language properties is to be ignored. Among the language properties mentioned above, "vocabulary acquisition is central to language acquisition, whether the language is first, second, or foreign" (Decarrico, 2001, p. 285). If learners lack vocabulary knowledge, they soon discover that their ability to comprehend or express themselves clearly is limited¹ (Decarrico, 2001; Nation, 2001).

¹ Decarrico, J. S. (2001). Vocabulary Learning and Teaching. Celce-Murcia, M. (ed.). Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language, pp. 285-299. Boston: Heinle&Heinle.

Vocabulary learning: Vocabulary skill is often considered as a critical aspect of foreign language learners as limited vocabulary in a second language, impedes successful communication. Considering the importance of vocabulary acquisition, Schmitt (2000) emphasizes that lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language². It describes the correlation between vocabulary knowledge and language practice as complementary: The skill of vocabulary enables language use and conversely. Language use leads to an increase in vocabulary knowledge. The importance of vocabulary is demonstrated daily in and out of campuses. In classroom, the achieving students possess the most sufficient vocabulary. Learning vocabulary items plays a vital role in all language skills (eg. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. ³Alqahtani (2015), furthermore, argued that the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for successful foreign language use because without an extensive vocabulary, a language learner will be unable to use the structures and functions we may have learned for comprehensible communication. Some research has shown that second language readers rely heavily on vocabulary knowledge and the lack of that knowledge is the main and the largest obstacle for readers to overcome. However, different studies revealed that lack of command on vocabulary frequently interfere with communication, and as a result become the cause of communication breakdown. It is viewed as a significant component of standardized language tests; and methodologists and program planners to the most effective ways to promote the command of vocabulary among learners are giving attention. The teachers teaching second language follow varieties of techniques and methods for teaching vocabulary. They include rote rehearsal, the use of visual aids, role-playing, vocabulary learning in a specific cultural context etc. Different techniques and methods are effective in different contexts and situations. It is, therefore essential to find out the effectiveness of different methodologies used for teaching of vocabulary and help the students and teachers to accelerate the learning process. The objectives were the followings:

- 1) To find out the comparative effectiveness of structural and definitional methods of vocabulary teaching at secondary level
- 2) To find out the effectiveness of structural and definitional methods of vocabulary teaching on the performance of high, average and low achievers
- 3) To find out the retention rate of high, average and low achievers taught with the structural and definitional methods of vocabulary teaching

To achieve the objectives of the study following null hypotheses were tested:

² Schmitt, N. (2000). Vocabulary in language teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

³ Alqahtani, (2015). The importance of vocabulary in language learning and how to be taught. International Journal of Teaching and Education, III(3), pp. 21 - 34.

1) There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the students taught with the structural and definitional method of vocabulary teaching

2) There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the high achievers taught with the structural and definitional method of vocabulary teaching.

3) There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the low achievers taught with the structural and definitional method of vocabulary teaching.

4) There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the average achievers taught with the structural and definitional method of vocabulary teaching.

Techniques of teaching vocabulary: Teaching vocabulary is a crucial aspect in learning a language as languages are based on words. It is almost impossible to learn a language without words; even communication between human beings is based on words. Recent research indicates that teaching vocabulary may be problematic because many teachers are not confident about the best practice in vocabulary teaching and at times do not know where to begin to form an instructional emphasis on word learning⁴Berne & Blachowicz, 2008. Teaching vocabulary is considered as one of the most discussed parts of teaching English as a foreign language. When the teaching and learning process takes place, problems would appear to the teachers. They have problems of how to teach students in order to gain satisfying results. The teachers should be concerned that teaching vocabulary is something new and different from student's native language. The teacher should prepare and find out the appropriate techniques, which will be implemented to the students. The followings are some techniques of teaching vocabulary as proposed by some experts.

1. Teaching vocabulary using Objects

This technique can help learners in remembering vocabulary better, because memory for objects and pictures is very reliable and visual techniques can act as cues for remembering words. Using this technique includes the use of visual aids, and demonstration. In addition, Gairns & Redman (1986) state that real objects technique is appropriately employed for beginners or young learners and when presenting concrete vocabulary. Objects can be used to show meanings when the vocabulary consist of concrete nouns. Introducing a new word by showing the real object often helps learners to memorize the word through visualization. Objects in the classroom or things brought to the classroom can be used.

2. Teaching vocabulary by drilling, spelling, and active involvement

Drilling is employed to make learners get accustomed to the word form especially to how it sounds. To make learners more familiar with the word, drilling should be clear and natural. Drilling is very essential since learners have to say the word to themselves to recall the words from memory. The primary means of spelling is actually

⁴ Berne, J. I. & Blachowicz, C. L. Z. (2008). What reading teachers say about vocabulary instruction: voices from the classroom. *The Reading Teacher*, 62 (4), pp. 314 - 323.

memorizing words. Word spelling needs to be considered since spelling forms of English words is not always inferred by the pronunciation.

3. Teaching vocabulary using drawing and picture

Objects can either be drawn on the blackboard or drawn on flash cards. The latter can be used again and again in different contexts if they are made with cards and covered in plastic. They can help young learners easily understand and realize the main points that they have learned in the classroom. Teaching vocabulary using pictures connect students' prior knowledge to a new story, and in the process, help them learn new words. There are plenty of vocabularies that can be introduced by using illustrations or pictures. They are excellent means of making the meaning of unknown words clear. The list of pictures includes: posters, flashcards, wall charts, magazine pictures, board drawings, stick figures and photographs. Pictures for vocabulary teaching come from many sources. Nowadays many readers, vocabulary books and course books contain a vast number of attractive pictures that present the meaning of basic words. The teacher can use learning materials provided by the school. They can also make their own visual aids or used pictures from magazines. Visual support helps learners understand the meaning and helps to make the word more memorable.

Conclusions and suggestions: This piece of work aims to highlight the importance of vocabulary learning as an essential part in foreign language learning. Lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second/foreign language and a lack of vocabulary knowledge is an obstacle to learning. An attempt is made to review the trends in the area of teaching vocabulary through various techniques EFL teachers use when teaching . Firstly, teachers need to notice the students' age, level of education as well as English proficiency may affect their learning, so teachers need to be aware of these differences when applying their teaching technique. They can further provide their students with vocabulary learning strategies with opportunities to encounter words repeatedly and in more than one context. Vocabulary knowledge should cover dimensions of many aspects such as pronunciation, additional tools, collocation, aspects of meaning, and word formation. From the methods which can be applied to increase learners' vocabulary power, an enthusiastic learner with proper direction by teachers is bound to succeed in language learning process. It is only when teachers dedicate their whole life to English can they achieve success in language learning, and students should be part of it.

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