

Techniques for Teaching/Learning Vocabulary: A Brief Study

Phani Kumar (phaniece9@gmail.com)
Research scholar, JNTU, Hyderabad, India

Dr. N.S.R. Murthy (nsrcmurthy1948@gmail.com)
Professor, Nava Bharat College of PG studies, Secunderabad, India

Abstract

English is only the unique language for communication worldwide. English language skills or proficiency is a key factor for employment success and advancement. English has the richest vocabulary of any language. Vocabulary learning is at the heart of language learning and language use. Teaching vocabulary of English covers the cultural, grammatical, lexical and phonological aspects which are essential to the language learning. Schmitt (2000) highlights the importance of vocabulary acquisition, as lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language. Thus, students should be aware of different techniques for learning vocabulary.

Keywords: English Language Skills, Techniques for Teaching Vocabulary

Introduction

In the present business and competitive world, English is only the unique communicative language can make the students accomplish their goals. “English language skills or proficiency is a key factor for employment success and advancement. Communication skills in English have been identified as indispensable workplace tools for success in business,” (Hynes & Bhatia, 1996, as Durga cited). To get command over English, which is regarded as ESL (English as a Second Language), ESP (English for Specific Purposes) or EFL (English as a Foreign Language), students should learn and acquire a good knowledge of rich vocabulary that helps them in the development of their language skills- listening, speaking, reading and writing. Thus, students should be conscious of various techniques or strategies for learning vocabulary. They are the conventional memorization techniques, bilingual vocabulary lists or other traditional vocabulary learning techniques, including the modern vocabulary teaching techniques.

At the time teaching vocabulary of English as foreign language, the instructor should consider the cultural, grammatical, lexical and phonological aspects essential to the language. As indicated by Morra & Camba (2009), vocabulary learning is one of the critical elements both of acquisition of one’s native language and of learning a foreign language. In ELT, teachers focus on the teaching of vocabulary from a different perspective and pay attention to a word's function, pronunciation and basic meaning. (Rao, C S, 2018)

Definition of Vocabulary

Merriam Webster Dictionary defines, “a sum or stock of words employed by a language, group, individual, or work or in a field of knowledge.”

“A vocabulary is a set of familiar words within a person's language. A vocabulary, usually developed with age, serves as a useful and fundamental tool for communication and acquiring knowledge. Acquiring an extensive vocabulary is one of the largest challenges in learning a second language,” (Wikipedia).

Here are the definitions of vocabulary given by some prominent authors.

Laufer (1997) defines, “Vocabulary learning is at the heart of language learning and language use. In fact, it is what makes the essence of a language. Without vocabularies, speakers cannot convey the meaning and communicate with each other in a particular language.”

Neuman&Dwyer(2009) defined Vocabulary as " words we must know to communicate effectively; words in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary)."

Hornby (1995) states, “vocabulary is 'the total number of words in a language and a list of words with their meanings.”

“Vocabulary is the stock of words which is used by a person, class or profession,” (Burns, 1972).

The knowledge of Vocabulary is frequently regarded as a vital tool for the learners of second language. With a limited knowledge of vocabulary one cannot communicate successfully specifically in a second language. Schmitt (2000) highlights the importance of vocabulary acquisition, as “lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language.” Furthermore, Nation (2001) illustrates the connection between vocabulary knowledge and language use as complementary: knowledge of vocabulary enables language use and, on the other hand, language use enhances the knowledge of vocabulary.

English has the richest vocabulary of any language. The knowledge of vocabulary is the single most significant area of language proficiency. English vocabulary is intricate, with three main features such as, *form, meaning and use*, and the layers of meaning related to the roots of independent words (Nation & Meara, 2010). Students have to acquire the knowledge of vocabulary such as: Word Roots, Word Formation, Prefixes and Suffixes, Synonyms and Antonyms, Homonyms, Homophones, Homographs, Study of Word Origin, One-Word Substitutes, Idioms and Phrases, Collocations, analogy, Words Often Misspelt- Confused/Misused, Business Vocabulary, Technical Vocabulary.

Business Vocabulary

The word business regularly alludes to an occupation or a specific trade. Business can likewise depict an undertaking's money related objective, as in, a store that utilizes promoting to pull in business, or its action. To turn into a fruitful businessperson one should know business jargon or vocabulary. There are many business words which can be joined into business terminology. In business the language ought to consistently be genuine, plain and clear.

Technical Vocabulary

Technical vocabulary is a particular jargon that is utilized generally in a particular field of work or occupation. Students or individuals of science and technology need to gain a decent jargon of technical terms that are regularly utilized for study and work purposes. They must be acquainted with complete information on specialized terms and their definitions. They should know their use and working in specialized circumstances. Each field of science and technology has its own rundown of terms and expressions.

Types of Vocabulary

Vocabulary has been divided into two kinds: active and passive vocabulary. Harmer (1991) recognizes these two sorts of vocabulary. The first type of vocabulary alludes to the one that the students have been instructed and that they are required to have the option to use. In the interim, the subsequent one alludes to the words which the students will perceive when they meet them, yet which they will presumably not have the option to pronounce. Haycraft, cited by Hatch and Brown (1995), shows two sorts of vocabulary such as, *receptive vocabulary* and *productive vocabulary*.

Receptive Vocabulary

Receptive vocabulary is words that students perceive and comprehend when they are utilized in context, yet which they can't create. It is vocabulary that students perceive when they see or meet in understanding content yet don't utilize it in speaking and writing (Stuart Webb, 2009).

Productive Vocabulary

Productive vocabulary is the words that the students comprehend and can utter accurately and use valuably in speaking and writing. It includes what is required for receptive vocabulary in addition to the capacity to talk or compose at the proper time. Along these lines, productive vocabulary can be tended to as an active process, in light of the fact that the students can produce the words to communicate their musings to other people (Stuart Webb, 2005).

Techniques for Teaching Vocabulary

Generally, there are a number of techniques regarding the teaching of vocabulary. But, the teachers of English have to remember a few things while they are presenting a new vocabulary or lexical items to their students. It implies that the English educators need students to recollect new terminology or vocabulary. Then, it should be learnt, rehearsed, and improved to keep students from overlooking. Techniques utilized by instructors rely upon certain variables, for example, the content, time availability, and its value for the learners (Takac, 2008). So, instructors have a few motives in using certain methods or techniques in introducing vocabulary. In introducing one arranged vocabulary item, the instructor normally consolidated more than one technique, rather than utilizing one single strategy. Teachers, furthermore, are suggested to employ planned vocabulary presentation as various as possible (Pinter, 2006).

Brewster, Ellis, and Girard (1992) presented some techniques of teaching vocabulary such as:

Using Objects: Objects and material from everyday life are used as teaching aids and visual aids;

Drawing: Objects are drawn on the blackboard or on flash cards so that students can easily understand and grasp the major points;

Using Illustrations and Pictures: Pictures draw out students' prior knowledge to a new story and help them in learning new vocabulary;

Contrast: learners should be elucidated various words by contrasting with their opposites, such as "long" contrasted with "short".

Enumeration: an enumeration is a collection of items in complete list that is helpful to know meanings.

Mime, Expressions and Gestures: according to Klippel (1994), "mime or gesture is useful if it emphasizes the importance of gestures and facial expression on communication;

Guessing from Context: Guessing from context is a technique to deal with unknown vocabulary;

Eliciting: In this technique students are given a list of words to learn that is more interesting and outstanding.

Translation: in some conditions translation might be successful for teachers, for example, dealing with incidental vocabulary;

Conclusion

Vocabulary is the stock of words which is used by a person, class or profession. Teaching vocabulary of English covers the cultural, grammatical, lexical and phonological aspects which are essential to the language learning. English has the richest vocabulary of any language. English teachers should focus on

the teaching of vocabulary from a different perspective and pay attention to a word's function, pronunciation and basic meaning. There are two kinds of vocabulary such as: *active* and *passive*. The knowledge of vocabulary is frequently regarded as a vital tool for the learners of second language. With a limited knowledge of vocabulary one cannot communicate successfully specifically in a second language. Schmitt (2000) highlights the importance of vocabulary acquisition, as lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language. Thus, students should be aware of different techniques or strategies for learning vocabulary, such as, the conventional memorization techniques, bilingual vocabulary lists or other traditional vocabulary learning techniques as well as the modern vocabulary teaching techniques.

References

Alqahtani, M (2015). The Importance of Vocabulary In Language Learning And How To Be Taught. International Journal of Teaching and Education, Vol. III, No. 3 / 2015.

Durga, V. S (2018). The Need of English Language Skills for Employment Opportunities. Journal for Research Scholars and Professionals of English Language Teaching, ISSN: 2456-8104, Issue 7, Vol. 2, 2018.

Pinter, A. (2006). Teaching Young Language Learners. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rao, C S (2017). A Brief Study of Words Used in Denotation and Connotation. Journal for Research Scholars and Professionals of English Language Teaching, ISSN: 2456-8104, Issue 1, Vol. 1, 2017.

Rao, C S (2018). The Importance of Collocations in Teaching of Vocabulary. Journal for Research Scholars and Professionals of English Language Teaching, ISSN: 2456-8104, Issue 7, Vol. 2, 2018.

Takac, V. P., & Singleton, D. (Eds.). (2008). Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Foreign Language Acquisition. Canada: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vocabulary>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vocabulary>