

Cultivation of Vocabulary by Exploiting Reading Skill in Teaching and learning English as a foreign Language.

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## **Cultivation of Vocabulary by Exploiting Reading Skill in Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language.**

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### **Abstract**

To cultivate vocabulary and its role in the reading process, is the ability to recognize word parts such as prefixes, word stem, etc; the ability to recognize parts of speech and how they relate to word meaning; fluent and automatic word recognition; a large recognition vocabulary; the ability to project meaning by using clues within the context; and a knowledge of how the world works.

### **Introduction**

Readers cannot develop all their vocabulary skills overnight. The vocabulary workouts need to be part of an overall reading improvement programme. Knowing a lot of words doesn't mean that you can read. Adding a regular, steady study of vocabulary to your reading improvement can provide consistent development and growth toward your goal of increasing your knowledge of words and how they work. Vocabulary is the fuel that ignites the fire of reading and comprehending what one reads (William Grabe, personal communication)

This study aims at discovering an approach to cultivate vocabulary which requires careful thought and reflection. As a result, attempts to help teachers of English as a foreign language especially to cultivate vocabularies through reading skill and to enrich their teaching and solve some of their problems.

### **Why studying vocabulary ?**

Before doing anything else, we need to decide what should be considered as vocabulary in a language course. Words are clearly vocabulary, but what about groups of words like absolutely fantastic, at once, in a minute, portable computer.. etc. If speakers want to use language fluently and want to sound the native speakers, they need to be able to put words together quickly in typical combinations (Pawly and Syder, 1983). Research on very large collection of language use like the British National corpus show that although there are many possible ways of putting words together, language users have preferred ways of doing this (Kennedy, 1992). That is typically say there's no answer rather than there isn't an answer.

Levine and Reves (1990) have found in their research that " it is easier for the reader of academic texts to cope with special terminology than with general vocabulary (p. 37)

McNeil (1984) recommends that vocabulary learning techniques "emphasize concern for active processing of new vocabulary so that vocabulary development enhances reading comprehensions, not just word knowledge " (p. 123)

### **Possible Classroom activities to cultivate vocabulary**

These theoretical threads lead naturally into the possible classroom applications. Nation (1990) recommends that language teachers " make a distinction between direct and indirect vocabulary learning " (p. 2). To do this, he provides four ways that vocabulary instructions can be integrated. These four principles are listed as follows : (1) Explicit preparation of language learning materials through controlling the vocabulary. (2) Discussion of unfamiliar vocabulary as it naturally comes up. He indicates that this is perhaps

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the most common method of vocabulary instruction. (3) Teaching vocabulary in connection with other language activities. He also suggests that prior to reading a passage or listening to a text, learners could be provided with essential vocabulary. Vocabulary exercises may also follow language activities. The thrust of Nation's suggestion is that the vocabulary is learned as part of language activity. (4) Teaching vocabulary independent of other language activities.

Learners see vocabulary as being a very important part of language learning and one of the difficulties in planning the vocabulary components of a course is making sure that it does not overwhelm other essential parts of the course. The best way to avoid this is for the teacher and course designer to have a set of guiding principles that can be applied in a variety of teaching and learning situations. these can be applied in courses where there are parts of the course deliberately set aside for vocabulary development, or in courses where vocabulary is dealt with as it occurs in skill-focused or content-focused lessons.

1. Focus on the most useful vocabulary first. some words can be used in a wide variety of circumstances. Others have much more limited use, the word help\* can be used to ask for help, to describe how people work with others, to describe how knowledge, tools, and materials can make people's work easier and so on. The word advertise has much more limited usefulness, it is still a useful word to know, but there are many more useful words to learn before this one. Teaching useful vocabulary before less useful vocabulary gives learners the best return for their learning effort.

The most useful vocabulary that every English language learner needs whether they use the language for the basic skills: Listening, speaking, reading, and writing whether they use language

in formal and informal situations, is the most frequent 1000 word families of English. This vocabulary is so useful that it covers around 75 percent of the running words in academic texts and newspapers, over 80 percent of the running words in novels, and about 65 percent of the running words in conversation besides 176 function words. After this, the most useful vocabulary depends on the goals of the learners. (Seen Anderson, 1999, P. 21-36)

2. Focus on the vocabulary in the most appropriate way.

The first principle looked at what words to teach and learn. This principle looks at how they should be taught and learned. Here we will look at the four most important vocabulary learning strategies of using word parts, guessing from context. Using word cards, and using dictionaries. We will see that teachers of English language need to clearly distinguish the way they treat low frequency words.

English is a language that has been affected by other languages. The core of the English language is the Germanic words from Anglo Saxon and Norse which make up most of the function words like (the, a, because, home, cut, instead, iron.) around 60 percent came into English from French (through conquest), Latin (through religion) or Greek (through Scholarships). These French, Latin, and Greek words are typically made up of prefixes, stems, and suffixes: as /soci /ation, de /fin /ition, col /loc /ate, con/ tain, un / in /form /ative. This means that using word part knowledge is a very useful way of learning low frequency words. The most common word parts (prefixes and suffixes) occur in a very large number of different words.

Because high frequency words cover a large proportion of the running words of a text, they provide a helpful context to allow learners to guess the meaning of the low frequency words. This

means that if learners develop skills in reading and, along with that, skill in guessing from context, they will have an effective strategy for copying with the many low frequency words that they meet in their reading and pronunciation.

Using words parts to help remember words, and using guessing from context are two very important strategies for dealing with low frequency words. There are two more very important strategies using word cards for deliberate learning, looking up words and their transcription in dictionaries.

In every vocabulary learning experiment where deliberate and incidental learning is compared, deliberate learning always achieves faster and stronger vocabulary learning results. This should not be interpreted as saying that deliberate learning should be part of a well-balanced course. Deliberate learning and meaning focused learning complement each other. (Ibid)

3. Give attention to the high frequency words across the four strands of a course.

High frequency vocabulary needs to occur in all four strands of a course. It should take a deliberate attention through teaching and study and should be met and used in communication messages in listening, speaking, reading and writing. High frequency vocabulary should also be fluently accessible for receptive and productive use.

4. Encourage learners to reflect on and take responsibility for learning.

So far we have looked at principles that relate to choosing what vocabulary to teach and the conditions needed for learning it. There is an important principle that lies behind choosing and learning, and that is that learners need to realize that they must be

responsible for their own learning. Taking this responsibility requires (1) knowledge of what to learn and the range of options for learning vocabulary. (2) skill in choosing the best options and (3) the ability to monitor and evaluate progress with those options.

Learners often find it difficult to take on this responsibility, partly because of the way they have learned in the past. (Ibid)

### **Fluency development**

Vocabulary must be not only known, it must be readily available for use. The fluency development strand of a course aims at helping learners make the best use of what they already know. It is important to see fluency as being related to each of the four skills, with fluency reading to be developed independently in each of these skills :listening, speaking, reading and writing. Fluency development activities should involve only known language items (there should be no unknown vocabulary or grammatical features), should be message –focused, should involve substantial quantities of input and output, and should involve some pressure to perform faster than usual. Positive impact on vocabularies and their pronunciation. For people beginning to learn a language Palmer (1925) noted that " the most fundamental guiding principle [for] those who are anxious to be proficient in foreign conversation ...is this : Memorize perfectly the largest number of common and useful word-groups.

As away of quickly developing, Fluency and of picking up native –like expressions, groups of words should be learned as units. It is made easier in most cases of the meanings of the single words that make up the multiword units are also understood. It is thus useful to see vocabulary as also including multiword units. A useful

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starting point for learning such units is Grabble and Nation's survival vocabulary (Grabble and Nation, 1991).

**Conclusions :**

First, speakers might consider how cultivation of vocabulary skills will be addressed within a reading programme. It would be advocate that it not simply be a fade. Second, vocabulary study could be integrated throughout the reading process and not something that is done all at once. Third, using both of these study strategies may be helpful for foreign language readers who are developing vocabulary skills. Studying alone at times is a very appropriate strategy and studying with a friend and or group of friends may also beneficial. vocabulary study may be viewed as a regular part of reading instructions. It is part of a larger context, not an activity that is done in isolation from other reading skills, likewise, vocabulary study may be viewed as a skill that foreign language readers see as being part of their study of language today and in the future. Finally, One of the strategies I use as a teacher is to have a print- rich environment with posters and charts on the walls with words and phrase on the walls with words and phrase on them. I have books, magazines, phone books, menus, newspapers, cookbooks and other reading materials around the room to encourage students to read extensively.

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