

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING VOCABULARY

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***Abstract:** The article is devoted to the importance of teaching vocabulary and the five aspects of vocabulary which should be taught. Five aspects of vocabulary pronunciation, grammar, collocations, different meanings of words and sense relations between words and word formation are described in details. The article is followed by an activity which can be used in teaching vocabulary.*

***Key words:** participle, collocations, functional, perspective, memorize, linguistics, competence, strategies, theory*

Introduction

Vocabulary is one of the important elements in a language. English language is no exception. The efficiency of vocabulary learning greatly determines the success of language learning. English words are over a million in number and they constitute the core of language learning. The size of one's vocabulary directly affects the development of his/her linguistic competence. Therefore, the first task of vocabulary instruction is to enlarge learners' vocabulary. Thus lots of vocabulary learning strategies have been recommended.[1]

Main part

According to Ur Penny, the following five aspects of vocabulary should be taught: First, pronunciation and spelling. Ur Penny points out that the learner has to know what a word sounds like pronunciation and what it looks like spelling. Only when a new word is pronounced and spelled correctly, can it be recognized, so second language teachers should make sure that both the form and the pronunciation of the word are accurately presented.

Second, grammar. The grammar of a new item needs to be taught if this is not covered by general grammatical rules. A word may have unpredictable change

of form in certain grammatical contexts or may have idiosyncratic way of connecting with other words in sentence, so it is necessary for second language teachers to provide learners with relative grammatical information when teaching the original form of a word, for example, when teaching a verb, second language teachers should introduce its past form and past participle form if that verb is irregular.

Second language teachers should also note whether that verb is transitive or intransitive. In a word, second language teachers should make sure that the information they have provided about a certain word is enough to enable learners to use that word correctly in a certain grammatical context. Only when a word is used conforming to grammatical rules, can it be accepted by standard English.[2]

Third, collocations. According to Firth, collocations are actual words in habitual company. Pawley and Syder claim that in collocations there are expressions for a wide range of familiar concepts and speech acts; if the speaker can retrieve these collocations automatically, he can minimize the amount of clause-encoding work and can have more time to plan larger units of discourse. Frequent and correct use of collocations enables learners to speak more like native speakers. [3]

Fourth, aspects of meaning: different meanings of words and sense relations between one word and other words. From the functional perspective, the role of language is to communicate meanings, so second language learners should acquire the label-meaning relations. Only when the meaning of a word is proper in a certain context, can we say that the word is used appropriately.

Fifth, word formation. Some words are formed according to certain rules. An introduction of word formation roles to second language learners can help them memorize words more easily and even help them guess the meaning of the word according to some form features.

Bingo: Synonyms

10 minutes per game Teacher-led bingo activity based on synonyms adjectives,

with the students working individually (or in pairs in larger classes).[4]

Copy the eight cards on pages and cut them out - one card per student (or per pair if the class is large). If you plan to play the game twice, give each student two cards to start with.

Also make one copy for the teacher. (You will need to cut out the bottom half into small squares.)

Lexical area/Topic Synonyms (various adjectives): awful - terrible; correct - right; enormous - very big; expensive - dear; frightened - scared; good - looking - handsome; happy-glad; impolite - rude; mad - crazy; peculiar - strange; pleasant - nice; sad - unhappy; rich - wealthy; polite - well-mannered; quiet - silent; wonderful – marvelous

Method

- 1 If you think your students already know these synonyms, go on to 2. If not, before starting, choose random pairs and ask them for one of the words on their cards, e.g. *rude*. Ask anyone if they know what the opposite of *rude* is. (*impolite*) Continue like this with the other adjectives. Alternatively, you could write on the board all the words in brackets on your 'Master board'. Then go through them one by one, asking the students to say if they have a word on their card that means the same as the word on the board.

Give out the bingo cards. Allow the students a few minutes to look through.

them before beginning. (If the class is large, students work in pairs.)

- 2 Put the sixteen squares you have cut up into some kind of container (hat, cup, etc.) and draw them out one at a time. Read out the adjective in brackets on the square and place it on your 'Master board'. Do *not* read out the adjective in bold type as this is what the students have on their boards. If the students have a word that means the same as the word you have called out, they cross it out.
- 3 Continue until a student has crossed out every word, in which case s/he shouts out *Bingo*

Now you stop the game and ask the student to read out the six adjectives on his/her card that s/he has crossed out. (You can ask another student to monitor this, to avoid any cheating!) Check on your board. They will be

- 4 the words in **BOLD TYPE** - synonyms of the words you called out.
- 5 If a mistake has been made, continue with the game until someone wins.
- 6 You can then play again with different cards. You might even ask one of the students to be the caller!

Cards

AWFUL (terrible)	CORRECT (right)	ENORMOUS (very big)	EXPENSIVE (dear)
FRIGHTENED (scared)	GOOD-LOOKING (handsome)	HAPPY (glad)	IMPOLITE (rude)
MAD (crazy)	PECULIAR (strange)	PLEASANT (nice)	SAD (unhappy)
RICH (wealthy)	POLITE (well-mannered)	QUIET (silent)	WONDERFUL (marvellous)

Conclusion

To sum up, we can say the standards for good vocabulary learning are: correct pronunciation and spelling; correct use of grammatical form; appropriate use of vocabulary in a given context and the ability to retrieve vocabulary that has been taught.

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