

VOCABULARY TEACHING

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Abstract

By the time students get to upper intermediate level or beyond, we can be sure that some of them will know some of the words we are asking them to focus on. The more the students master the vocabulary the better they performances in all aspect of English language. Having a limited vocabulary is also a barrier that prevents students from learning a foreign language. Vocabulary is the stock of words used in language. Vocabulary as a means of thought, expression, interpretation and communication. Vocabulary also basic to communication, when someone wants to follow in the conversation, so he or she must understand the words used by the speakers. As language teachers, we must arouse our students' interest in words, especially in the early stages of learning, is a prerequisite for later proficiency in the language.

Keywords: Vocabulary and teaching.

Mengajar Kosakata

Abstrak

Ketika siswa sampai pada level yang lebih tinggi ketika belajar bahasa, maka mereka akan memiliki kosakata yang lebih dibanding siswa pada level di bawah. Semakin tinggi penguasaan kosakata yang dimiliki oleh siswa maka penguasaan pada aspek bahasa lainnya akan makin tinggi pula. Memiliki keterbatasan dalam kosakata adalah salah satu hambatan bagi siswa untuk belajar bahasa. Kosakata adalah simpanan dari kata yang digunakan dalam bahasa. Kosakata adalah alat pikir, ekspresi, interpretasi, dan juga komunikasi. Kosakata adalah dasar dalam komunikasi, ketika seseorang ingin terlibat dalam suatu perbincangan, ia harus mengerti dengan apa yang dikatakan oleh pembicara lain. Dan sebagai guru, kita harus menarik perhatian siswa akan pentingnya kosakata, yang merupakan prasyarat bagi kecakapan dalam pembelajaran bahasa..

Kata kunci: Kosakata dan mengajar.

A. INTRODUCTION

When we introduce new vocabulary, there is always a chance, of course, that is not new to some of the students in the class. By the time students get to upper intermediate level or beyond, we can be sure that some of them will know some of the words we are asking them to focus on. The more the students master the vocabulary the better they performances in all aspect of English language. Zhihong (2000:18) states that words are the basic unit of language, without a sufficient vocabulary, one cannot communicate effectively or express ideas.

Having a limited vocabulary is also a barrier that prevents students from learning a foreign language. Vocabulary is the stock of words used in language. Vocabulary as a means of thought, expression, interpretation and communication, as Kufaishi (1988:42) states, is a vehicle for thought, self-expression, interpretation and communication. Vocabulary also basic to communication, when someone wants to follow in the conversation, so he or she must understand the words used by the speakers. As Krashen and Terrell (1983:155) state, vocabulary is essential for communication. If the students do not recognize the meanings of the key words used by those who address them, they will be unable to participate in the conversation. Based on the above explanation about vocabulary, the focus of this writing will be in one of this specific area, namely, teaching vocabulary.

B. DISCUSSION

Toward the end of the twentieth century, there is a big attention to vocabulary learning across a number of proficiency levels and context. One of the hot topics of the last decade in vocabulary teaching is whether learners are better served in the long run with incidental exposure to lexical items that is, as a by-product of communicative activities, or with intentional, explicit focus on

vocabulary. A further development in vocabulary teaching is the rapid growth of corpus linguistics and the volumes of raw data that are now available in corpora that encompass spoken and written language, genres of each, as well as data from a number of varieties of world English's.

With literally hundreds of possible guidelines for the communicative treatment of vocabulary instruction, as mentioned by Brown (2007:436)

1. Allocate specific class time to vocabulary learning.

In the hustle and bustle of our interactive classroom, sometimes we get so caught up in lively group work and meaningful communication that we don't pause to devote some attention to words. After all, words are basic building blocks of language; in fact, survival-level communication can take place quite intelligibly when people simply string words together without applying any grammatical rules at all. So if we're interested in being communicative, words are among the first.

2. Help students to learn vocabulary in context.

The best internalization of vocabulary comes from encounters (comprehension or production) with words within the context of surrounding discourse. Data from linguistic corpora can provide real-world actual language that has been printed or spoken. Rather than isolating words and/or focusing on dictionary definitions, learners can benefit from attending to vocabulary within a communicative framework in which items appear. Students will then associate new words with a meaningful context to which they apply.

3. Play down the role of bilingual dictionaries.

A corollary to the above is to help students to resist temptation to overuse their bilingual dictionaries. In recent years, with the common availability of electronic pocket dictionaries, students are even more easily tempted to

punch in a word they don't know and get an instant response. It is unfortunate that such practices rarely help students to internalize the word for later recall and use.

4. Encourage students to develop strategies for determining the meaning of words.

Such as guessing vocabulary in context, through games as in words attack strategies, etc

5. Engage in "unplanned" vocabulary teaching.

In all likelihood, most of the attention you give to vocabulary learning will be unplanned: those moments when a student asks about a word or when a word has appeared that you feel deserves some attention. These impromptu moments are very important. Sometimes, they are simply brief little pointers. Sometimes, such impromptu moments may be extended. Make sure that such unplanned teaching however does not detract from the central focus of the activity by drifting into a long and possibly irrelevant tangent.

Traditionally, the teaching of vocabulary above elementary levels was mostly incidental, limited to presenting new items as they appeared in reading or sometimes listening texts. This indirect teaching of vocabulary assumes that vocabulary expansion will happen through the practice of other language skills, which has been proved not enough to ensure vocabulary expansion.

Nowadays it is widely accepted that vocabulary teaching should be part of the syllabus, and taught in a well-planned and regular basis. Some authors, led by Lewis (1993) argue that vocabulary should be at the centre of language teaching, because 'language consists of grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalised grammar'.

If we look into <http://www3.telus.net/linguisticsissues/teachingvocabulary.html> there are several aspects of lexis that need to be taken into account when teaching vocabulary. The list below is based on the work of Gairns and Redman (1986):

- *Boundaries between conceptual meaning*: knowing not only what lexis refers to, but also where the boundaries are that separate it from words of related meaning (e.g. cup, mug, bowl).
- *Polysemy*: distinguishing between the various meanings of a single word form with several but closely related meanings (head: of a person, of a pin, of an organisation).
- *Homonymy*: distinguishing between the various meanings of a single word form which has several meanings which are NOT closely related (e.g. a file: used to put papers in or a tool).
- *Homophony*: understanding words that have the same pronunciation but different spellings and meanings (e.g. flour, flower).
- *Synonymy*: distinguishing between the different shades of meaning that synonymous words have (e.g. extend, increase, expand).
- *Affective meaning*: distinguishing between the attitudinal and emotional factors (denotation and connotation), which depend on the speaker's attitude or the situation. Socio-cultural associations of lexical items is another important factor.
- *Style, register, dialect*: Being able to distinguish between different levels of formality, the effect of different contexts and topics, as well as differences in geographical variation.
- *Translation*: awareness of certain differences and similarities between the native and the foreign language (e.g. false cognates).
- *Chunks of language*: multi-word verbs, idioms, strong and weak collocations, lexical phrases.

- *Grammar of vocabulary*: learning the rules that enable students to build up different forms of the word or even different words from that word (e.g. sleep, slept, sleeping; able, unable; disability).
- *Pronunciation*: ability to recognise and reproduce items in speech.

Teachers can encourage learners to use other techniques, using topics and categories to organise a notebook, binder or index cards. Meaning should be stored using English as much as possible, and also giving indication for pronunciation. Diagrams and word trees can also be used within this topic/categories organisation. The class as a whole can keep a vocabulary box with cards, which can be used for revision/recycling regularly.

There are still many other techniques that a teacher can use and students can employ with, as a teacher we must be able to choose the best technique for the need of our students.

C. CONCLUSION

As language teachers, we must arouse our students' interest in words, especially in the early stages of learning, is a prerequisite for later proficiency in the language. A lot of the vocabulary that surfaces during teacher-student and student-student conversation may in fact be more useful and memorable, simply because it has arisen out of the students' own needs and interest. As a teacher, possibly a learner, and definitely a user of word yourself, you should share your sense of the excitement and fascination of words with your students. Vocabulary learning never stops, even long after the grammar system is firmly in place. New words are being coined daily, and old words are assuming new meanings. Finally, share your own learning experiences and those of other learner, both successful and unsuccessful with your learner.

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