

Psychological and Linguistic Factors In The Process of Teaching the English Vocabulary

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Abstract:

This article describes the psychological and linguistic factors that determine the process of learning vocabulary. There is also information about the use of words in various situations, performing various exercises using memory, correct pronunciation of words and learning words.

Key words: vocabulary, words and sentences, psychological and linguistic factors, individual language learning and linguistic material.

Introduction

To know a language means to master its structure and words. Thus, vocabulary is one of aspects of the language to be taught in the educational institution and school. The problem is what words and idioms learners should retain. It is evident that the number of should be limited because learners have only 2-4 times a week; the size of the group is not small enough to provide each learner with practice in speaking; schools are not yet equipped with special laboratories for individual language learning. The number of words that pupils should acquire in school depends on syllabus requirements. The latter are determined by conditions and method used. For example, experiments have been proved that the use of programmed instruction for vocabulary learning allows us to increase the number of words to be learned since pupils are able to assimilate them while working independently with the program.

The vocabulary, therefore, must be carefully selected in accordance with the principles of selecting linguistic material, the conditions of teaching and learning a foreign language at school and universities.

Scientific principles of selecting vocabulary have been worked out. The words selected should be:

- 1.frequently used in the language (the frequency of the word may be determined mathematically by means of statistic data);
- 2.easily combined (a nice room, a nice girl, a nice weather);
3. Unlimited from the point of view of style(oral, written);
4. Included in the topics the syllabus sets ;
5. Valuable from the point of view of word-building (use, used, useful, useless, usefully, user, usage).

The first principle, word frequency, is an example of purely linguistic approach to word selection. It is claimed to be the soundest criterion because it is completely objective. It is derived by counting the number of occurrence of words appearing in representative printed material such as comprising novels, essays, plays, poems, newspapers, manuals, textbooks and magazines.

Modern tendency is to apply this principle depending on the language activities to be developed. For developing reading skills, it is obligatory to learn “reading vocabulary“ , thus various printed texts are analyzed from the point of view of word frequency. For developing speaking skills, pupils need “speaking vocabulary“. In this case the material for analysis is the spoken language recorded. The occurrences of words are counted in it and the words more frequently used in speaking are selected.

The other principles are didactic value, they serve teaching aims.

One of the utmost difficult aspects of language learning is vocabulary. Vocabulary learning has been of prime importance for over two decades. A wide vocabulary is essential for effective and useful communication. Therefore, understanding the strategies that language learners use to learn vocabulary is a matter of great importance. This study was carried out on a group of 40 learners of English to determine their preferable vocabulary learning strategies. Finally, more than half of the students said that the tasks and activities in which they participated corresponded to their interests and motivated them to learn vocabulary, moreover the pleasant atmosphere in class helped them to concentrate more, thus giving them better retention. Based on the analysis of our results, it could be confirmed that the integration of activities has a statistically significant effect on retention capacity.

Learning a new language entails various challenges, one of these is grasping the vocabulary of the language. A significant way to tackle the problem is to motivate students to become independent learners during the progression of second language (L2) vocabulary learning. Thus, this study intended to explore the use of different vocabulary learning strategies among adult English as foreign language learners and investigated the various vocabulary learning strategies and found the benefits and drawbacks associated with each strategy. It was able to select the most frequently and least frequently used VLSs by learners who have completed the language program and those who are continuing the course. Further, it found effective strategies that could be used in teaching vocabulary to students. The research used a quantitative method approach with 53 participants.

The choice of methods and techniques is a very important factor as it influences learners' assimilation of words.

Pupils are recommended to get to know new words independently; they look them up in the word list or the dictionary. The teacher shows them how to consult first the vocabulary list at the end of the book, then the dictionary.

Once dictionaries have been brought into use, the teacher should seldom explain a word, he should merely give examples of its use or use it (as if the class already knew it) in various speech patterns. This is the case at the senior level.

The choice of method for conveying the meaning of a word depends on the following factors.

- I. Psychological factors: (1) pupils' age: the younger the pupils are the better is the chance for the use of the direct method; (2) pupils' intelligence: the brighter the child the more direct the method.
- II. Linguistic factors: (1) abstract or concrete notions; for conveying the meaning of abstract notions the translation method is preferable; (2) extent(range) of meaning in comparison with that of Russian language; in cases where range of meaning of a word does not coincide in the native and target languages, interpretation should be used (e.g. education). Whatever method of presenting a new word is used pupils should be able to pronounce the word correctly, listen to sentences with the word, repeat the word after the teacher individually and in unison both as a single unit and in sentences. However, this is only the first step in approaching the word. Then there is assimilation which is gained through performing various exercises.

Words are elements of the language used in the act of communication. They are single units, and as such cannot provide the act of communication by themselves; they can provide it only when they are combined in a certain way. Sometimes separate words may be used in the act of communication, however, for example:

- You have relatives, haven't you?
- Yes, an uncle.
- The word uncle is used instead of the sentence pattern Yes, I have an uncle.

Charles Fries says: "It is not the meaning of the words themselves but an intricate system of formal features which makes possible grasp of what we generally call "meaning". Train, boy, house, take- conveys no meaning. "The boy takes a train to his house" is full of meaning." He concludes, "The meaning is not in the words themselves but in the words as a pattern".¹ [Fries Ch. The Structure of English. Longmans. London, 1957, p.183.]

Rule 1 for the teacher:

While teaching learners vocabulary, introduce words in sentence patterns in different situations of intercourse. Present new words in keeping with the structures to be taught.

Information is composed of two kinds of elements: simple (words) and complicated (sentences).

A word may be both a whole which consists of elements (speech sounds) and at the same time an element which is included in a whole (a sentence). In teaching words attention should be given both to a word as an element (in sentences) and a word as a whole (isolated unit) with the purpose of its analysis.

Rule 2 for the teacher:

Present the word as an element, i.e., in a sentence pattern first. Then fix it in the memory of the students through different exercises in sentence and phrase patterns.

In teaching learners' vocabulary both the ear and the organs of speech should take an active part in assimilation of words. Learners should have sample practice in hearing words and pronouncing them not only as isolated units but in various sentences in which they occur.

Rule 3 for the teacher:

While introducing a word pronounce it yourself in a context, ask pupils to pronounce it both individually and in unison in a context, too.

Any word in the language has very complicated linguistic relations with other words in pronunciation, meaning, spelling and usage.

Rule 4 for the teacher:

In teaching words, it is necessary to establish a memory bond between a new word and those already covered.

For instance: see – sea, too-two, one-won (in pronunciation), answer-reply, answer-ask, small-little (in meaning), bought-brought, caught-taught, night-right (in spelling), to fight somebody-kimqadir qarshi kurashish, to doubt something- nimadandir shubhalanish, to mention something-nimanidir eslatish (similar word combination).

The process of learning a word means to the learner: 1. identification of concepts, i.e., learning what the word means; 2. learner's activity for the purpose of retaining the word in using this word in the process of communication;

Accordingly, the teacher's role in this process is:

- 1) to furnish explanation, i.e., to present the word, to get his pupils to identify the concept correctly;
- 2) to get them to recall or recognize the word by means of different exercises;
- 3) to stimulate learners to use the words in speech.

“The true art of teaching is not the application of the” best “system, but the ability to stimulate learners to worthwhile activity”. (Morris, The teaching of English as a second language).

Hence there are two stages in teaching vocabulary: presentation or explanation, retention or consolidation which are based on certain psycholinguistic factors.

Presentation of new words. Since every word has its form, meaning, and usage to present a word means to introduce to learners its forms (phonetic, graphic, structural and grammatical), and to explain its meaning and usage.

The techniques of teaching learners the pronunciation and spelling of a word are as follows: 1) pure or conscious imitation, 2) analogy, 3) transcription, 4) rules of reading.

Since a word consists of sounds if heard or spoken and letters if read or written the teacher shows the learners how to pronounce, to read, and write it. However, the approach may vary depending on the task set. For example, if the teacher wants his pupils to learn the word orally first, he instructs them to recognize it when hearing and to articulate the word as an isolated element (a book) and in a sentence pattern.

Retention of words. To attain the desired end pupils must first of all perform various exercises to fix the words in their memory. Constant use of a new word is the best way of learning it.

For this purpose, it is necessary to organize pupils' work in a way permitting them to approach the new words from many different sides, in many different ways, by means of many different forms of work. The teacher can ensure lasting retention of words for his pupils provided he relies upon pupils 'sensory perception and thinking, upon their auditory, visual and kinesthetic analyzers so that pupils can easily recognize the words while hearing or reading and use them while speaking or writing whenever they need. To use a word the pupil should first search for it in his memory, choose the very word he needs, and then insert the word in a sentence, i.e., use it properly to express his thought. Thus, correct usage of words means the correct choice and insertion of the words in speech. [Жинкин Н.И. Механизмы речи. М., 1958, гл. VI.]

There are two methods of conveying the meaning of words: direct method and translation. The direct method of presenting the words of a foreign languages brings the learner into direct contact with them, the mother tongue does not come in between, is establishes links between a foreign word and the thing or the concept directly. The direct method of conveying the meaning of foreign words is usually used when the words denote things, objects, their qualities, sometimes gestures and movements which can be shown to and seen by pupils, for instance: a book, a table, red, big, take, stand up, etc. The teacher should connect the English word he presents with the object, the notion it denotes directly, without the of students' mother tongue. Moreover, someone must do it vividly to arouse his or her interest in the work performed and thus to provide optimum conditions for understanding the meaning of words and their assimilation through the foreign language. Besides various accessories (objects, pictures, movements, gestures, facial expressions, etc.) should be widely used.

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