

## WHAT IS IT? 21st CENTURY LEARNERS TO BUILD VOCABULARY

SHABREEN SULTHANA SHAIK

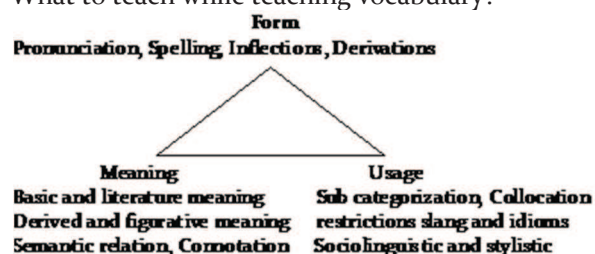
**Abstract:** English is an international language which is essential need for everyone in the present day scenario apart from our mother tongue. English language is realized as a link language with global significance and also the most spread language in the world. A second or Foreign Language Learner (FLL) of English is required not only to focus upon the sentence structures but also upon the acquisition of words. Vocabulary plays a pivotal role in the acquisition of a language. Second or Foreign Language Learners have to learn a large quantity of vocabulary in order to function in the target language. According to Zimmermen (1997) "Vocabulary is central to language and of critical importance to the typical language learners". Therefore the study of vocabulary has occupied the central place in teaching-learning activities. Thornbury (2002) opines that "if you spend most of your time studying grammar, your English will not improve very much. You will see most improvement if you learn more words and expressions. You can say very little with grammar but you can say almost anything with words". This speaks about the significance of vocabulary in learning, developing and enriching English.

David Wilkins summed up the importance of vocabulary for language learning:

"Without grammar very little can be conveyed, but without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed".

One of the most important responsibilities of every teacher is to help students to develop a strong working vocabulary. Vocabulary is needed for expressing meaning and in using the receptive (listening and reading) and the productive (speaking and writing) skills. It should be considered as an internal part of learning a foreign language since it leads the way to communication. Nation and Waring (1997) mentioned "vocabulary knowledge is one of the components of language skills".

What to teach while teaching vocabulary?



Innovative techniques of building vocabulary: The prominent role of vocabulary knowledge in second or foreign language learning has been recently recognized by the theorists and researchers in the field. Nation states that

"teaching vocabulary should not only consists teaching specific words but also aims at equipping learners with strategies necessary to expand their vocabulary knowledge".

**Using Regalia/objects:** The word realia means using real items found in the world around us help to teach vocabulary. Objects such as pencil, bag, leaf, flowers, and pebble etc can be taught in the classroom. Realia stimulates the mind and makes the words memorable. Learners can touch, smell and with a

food item, taste it. By having realia in the classroom, young learners can develop their multi – sensor function by experiencing the learning:

"Through seeing, hearing and touching and manipulating items" (Rivers (1983) and Smith (1997)). This is a very effective technique to teach new vocabulary items.

**Demonstrating/Miming:** Teacher can perform some words. It will be fun and frolic. It is a student-centered. Teacher demonstrates and learners try to imitate it. For example jump, cry, smile, happy, sad, dance can be demonstrated. Miming technique works well. Emotions and everyday activities can be acted out in front of the class to teach new words. It helps to L2 learners to learn and understand new vocabulary items.

**Using Pictures:** Another effective technique to learn words is through the use of pictures. Charts, pictures, maps can be used to develop students' understanding of a particular concept or word. Pictures from magazines and Sunday news papers can be used as input for teaching vocabulary. For example using a picture of a "bird", words related to the bird such as head, neck, back, rump, tail, wings, leg, bill, chin, flank, auriculars etc. can be taught. Zebrowska (1975) states

"learners remember better the material that has been presented by means of visual aids".

**Technique to teach the Etymology:** Etymology deals with the origin or derivation of words. When students know the meaning of a root or base word, they can understand better and easily remember all the words built on this root. For example, learn anthropos (Greek word – man kind) and the students will quickly understand and never forget the words like anthropology, philanthropy, etc. if the students learn how to deal with etymology, they will feel comfortable with words.

**Teaching words in the context:** Vocabulary teaching becomes meaningful when it is done in context. A

word gets its meaning from the context. Nilsen 1976; Chastain 1976; Rivers 1968 state that “most people agree that vocabulary ought to be taught in context”. Setting a good context which is interesting, plausible, vivid and has relevant to the lives of the learners, is an essential prerequisite for vocabulary teaching. Stahl (2005) states, “vocabulary knowledge is knowledge; the knowledge of a word not only implies a definition, but also implies how that word fits into the world”. This awareness can be brought by doing task-based dictionary work, which will help learners to learn and consolidate commonly used words, phrases, idioms and proverbs. A set of sentence is given and learners try to find the exact meaning of the underlined word using a dictionary. As the examples of study the word ‘charge’ is given below: a. The bank charges are 10 b. Who is in charge here? c. The battery is on charge.

Drawing pictures: Drawing can be used to explain lots of words i.e. name of countries, cities, rivers etc on a map; body parts; animals; action words; prepositions (on, in, beside, above) qualities and relations. It is an easy and quick technique of introducing vocabulary to the learners. Drawing can be a fun medium to explain new words.

Using Dictionary: Dictionary is an important tool in the teaching and learning of vocabulary. It has the status of a little God to Foreign Language Learners (FLL). Teacher should encourage learners to search words in dictionaries. Gonzalez (1999) states that dictionary work is laborious but necessary and ESL students need to be taught practical use of the dictionary. Allen (1983:82) perceives, “Dictionaries are passport to independence and see them as one of the student – centered learning activity.

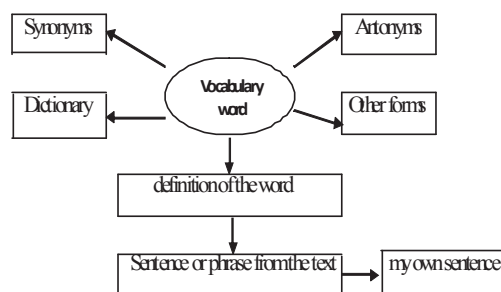
Collocation: It is a widely accepted idea that collocations are very important part of knowledge and they are essential to non – native speakers of English in order to speak or write fluently. The term ‘Collocate’ (col=together, loc=place, and ate=a suffix) refers to the way in which two or more words are typically used together.

Synonyms and Antonyms: Synonyms and antonyms are used to help the student to understand the different shades of meaning. Instructional procedure: a. Students are asked to bring daily five new words which are not familiar to them from the text-book. b. At the end of each session they are asked to tell the word, its spelling and its meaning and opposite in English. c. They are banned to see the notebook where these words are written. d. If they are not able to give the correct word its spelling and meaning, they are asked to bring new ten words next day. Such an exercise is fruitful for the learner.

Homonyms / often confused words: Homonyms are words of the same language that are pronounced

alike even if they differ in spelling, meaning, or origin, such as "pair" and "pear". Homonyms may also be spelled alike, as in "desert" (go away from) and "dessert" (course of fruits). The long list of homonyms words should be selected from the text in the class and students are asked to use them in sentences. Teacher should provide the meaning of such words, if necessary.

Using Word Map: Word map is a visual organizer that promotes vocabulary development. Why use word maps? Word maps are useful for helping students to develop their new concepts and understanding of a word. How to use word maps? Introduce the vocabulary word and the map to the students. Encourage students to use synonyms, antonyms and a picture to help and illustrate the new target word.



Games and activities for building vocabulary: Word games are generally engaged as a source of entertainment, but have been found to serve an educational purpose as well. This entertaining nature of vocabulary games such as crossword puzzles, riddles, hangman, and gildograms etc reinforces the words with the learners and they often do not realize that they are learning.

Role play: Role-play creates the presence of a real life situation in the classroom. It is important in the classroom communication because it gives students an opportunity to practice communicatively in different social contexts and in different social roles. Blachowicz et al. (2006) says,

“Teachers can introduce some of the words which provide both definitional and contextual information about the words to be learned by making up a dialogue for students so that students can understand a further meaning and usage of the words.”

Use video to build target vocabulary: Select a video segment that contains a series of actions or visual detail. Provide the learners with a list of target vocabulary words and ask them to construct a paragraph that incorporates as many words as possible. This activity is best done after the learners have seen the video. As they learn how to use more vocabulary properly, you will see an improvement in their writing and speaking.

Methodology: The researcher conducts the pilot test

at the beginning. It includes pre-test and post-test. Pre-test is to find out how conscious they are regarding word meaning. After giving them training for a month a post-test will be conducted to check the students' improvement. The result of the pre-test and the post-test will be compared in order to find out whether the students are benefited from the special training. Different techniques and methods of teaching new vocabulary will be followed to make the teaching effective and interesting, after knowing the students' problem in the pre-test. They are given special training for one month to enrich their knowledge of vocabulary. The foregoing analysis reveals that students are largely benefited from the experiment. The present study, therefore, has significant pedagogic implications. It is hoped that the valuable insights and statistical information will substantially help the teachers, course designers and researchers.

Data for the present study: Description of the tool (Questionnaire): The 'pre-test' and 'post-test' consists

of thirteen questions. This questionnaire serves as the data for the present study. The students are familiar with different types of questions. The time given to the students is one hour. To conclude, greater attention to vocabulary learning by teachers and students will result in greater overall language progress. Powerful and easy techniques for vocabulary growth should be explored. So, the language learners will be able to make their way easier to their proficiency goal. Vocabulary is strengthened by use. The more the new words are used, the more they are solidified in mind. Corder (1973:223) observes,

"The more words one knows, the easier it is to 'learn' new words, because one has more associative link available".

Life is short but vocabulary is long and acquiring it takes time, even in one's own language. There is no sure. It is hoped that this suggestion will help both the learners and the teachers to strengthen their vocabulary.

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Ph.D. Research Scholar  
Department of English, Acharya Nagarjuna University  
Guntur, Andhra Pradesh – India  
E-mail ID: Shabreen.sulthana@gmail.com