THE METHOD OF EDUCATING VOCABULARY IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Annotation
The article illustrates the important features of vocabulary in receiving knowledge in foreign language. The author of the article analyses the core hypothesis of vocabulary, crucial strategies, vital techniques, variety instruction and various approaches (methods) theoretically and practically.

Keywords: vocabulary, strategy, planning, knowledge, form, semantic, hypotheses, language, aptitude, theory, lexical, technique, target

Introduction

Learning a second or foreign language, vocabulary serves an important role, since words are beneficial while we utilize all our four skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. A reader or a listener needs to figure out words correctly; an author or a speaker has to use vocabulary stock in order to convey his points. Target or foreign language learners with restricted vocabulary will come across with difficulties and challenges in expressing and understanding ideas. Teachers should be aware of these difficulties, and try to facilitate the task for their learners and students, especially at the very start levels of learning English, in order to build a strong and rich vocabulary stock.

Anderson and Freebody (1979), in Vocabulary Knowledge and Reading, discussed the place of vocabulary in reading comprehension. In their work, they focus mainly on knowing the meaning of a word rather than its form and use. Three different

hypotheses have been suggested to highlight the core of vocabulary. First, the instrumental hypothesis sheds light on the quantity of acquired words which leads to successful reading comprehension. Whereas the second one is called the aptitude hypothesis, its major point is that what leads to comprehend a text is the good brain that one can possess i.e., "the mental lexicon". While the third one, called knowledge hypothesis, looks at the culture as an indispensable factor to comprehend any given text. These three hypotheses have been put in instructional implications for better vocabulary building. Furthermore, Anderson and Freebody dealt with "The Standard Theory of Semantics" in which they tried to provide adequate answers to the crucial question: "what does it mean to know the meaning of a word?" Moreover, breadth and depth vocabulary have been strongly discussed in this work. The former is defined as «the number of words for which a individual knows at least part of the meaning" (Anderson and Freebody 17); while the latter concerns "the quality of vocabulary understanding" (Anderson and Freebody 15).

Moving from theory to practice, Krashen (1982) provided a theory of second language acquisition. This theory describes some very vital hypotheses:

1) the acquisition and learning hypothesis,

2) the natural order hypothesis,

3) the monitor hypothesis,

4) the input hypothesis, which is considered the most important one since it attempts to provide further explanations about how language is acquired at different levels; and lastly

5) the affective filter hypothesis, which correlates the affective variables with second language acquisition.

Concerning vocabulary learning and teaching, these hypotheses provide both learners and teachers with useful information in order to handle the difficulties which face them to fulfill their goals. Three main linguistic topics, semantics, lexicon, and vocabulary, have been discussed by Hatch and Brown (1995) in their book"Vocabulary, Semantics and Language Education". One can not teach or learn a word without knowing its meaning and form, so that the authors have talked about these concepts following such order. These three terms has been defined as follows:

Semantics refers to the study of meanings and the systematic ways those meanings are expressed in languages...lexicon refers to the overall system of word forms...and the way forms might be systematically represented in the brain ... Vocabulary refers to a list or set of words for a particular language(Hatch and Brown 1).

In the last part of their book, after developing more insights into semantics and lexicon, Hatch and Brown went on to deal with vocabulary learning and teaching. On

the one hand, concerning vocabulary learning, they have reviewed the findings of Brown and Payne's analysis (1994) on determining the effective strategy used by learners while learning vocabulary. The results fall into five essential points: 1) having sources for encountering new words; 2) getting a clear image, either visual, auditory, or both; 3) getting the word meaning; 4) consolidating word form and meaning in memory; 5) using the word. In addition, intentional and incidental learning have been discussed as well. On the other hand, what teachers do and what they should do to help their learners have been also widely described, focusing on unplanned and planned vocabulary adjustments and teaching.

Dealing with a wide range of issues related to teaching and explaining vocabulary, Nation (2001), in his book "Learning Vocabulary in Another Language", has covered a number of theoretical and practical issues. The eleven chapters of this book have dealt with what it means to know a word, the importance of vocabulary and its relation with the four skills, vocabulary knowledge and use, learning strategies, and other related topics. Furthermore, he went on to discuss common classroom issues such as using realia (objects) and pictures, word translation, what teachers should do to help their learners master vocabulary appropriately, and the time allocated for that task.

Besides what has been presented by the previous experts, Carter (2002) has proposed extra reliable data associated with vocabulary. Carter's book, "Vocabulary", has been divided into three parts: foundations, reviews, and case studies. He has discussed a number of points such as what is in a word, core vocabulary, word patterns, lexical issues, and vocabulary learning and teaching. Beyond that, he has reported and compared the process of vocabulary acquisition in L1 and L2; and has mentioned a crucial issue considering the retention and recall of words i.e. memorization. Various techniques have been suggested in order to make words easier to remember. Giving synonyms in the target language, translate it to the mother tongue, or using pictures' representations are among these techniques (Carter 193). Repetition, furthermore, is also considered as one of the useful techniques. He has pointed out that large amount of words are learned through repetition. Extra techniques have been also mentioned in Carter's work such as guessing from the context and keyword technique.

Recently, the interest on vocabulary was widely progressed. Hiebert,H. and L. Kamil (2005) are among the experts who have studied deeply vocabulary acquisition and instruction.

In their book, "Teaching and Learning Vocabulary", they have summarized the findings of scholars, in which they have provided answers to the following questions: 1) How one can learn and teach vocabulary? 2) How can vocabulary learning and teaching influenced by age and culture? 3) What words should be more emphasized

in instruction? Consequently, the work clusters around three parts: the first part considers the perspectives on how vocabulary is learned, focusing more on the correlation between vocabulary and reading comprehension; the second part consists of the instructions that enhance vocabulary; the third part presents perspectives on which words to choose for instruction. Still within the same context, Jim Scrivener (2005) has collected numerous strategies and approaches which might help teachers in their classrooms. His book, "Learning Teaching", is considered as a guide to classroom teaching methodology. Exclusively, the author has suggested what he called "toolkits" of possibilities and guidelines useful for teachers. The book is divided into seventeen chapters, ending with helpful appendices and useful indexes. The first chapters dealt with general issues in teaching: classroom activities, classroom management, lessons and courses, and also the four skills (receptive and productive ones). Interestingly, the eleventh chapter dealt with common issues in lexis: what is lexis? How to present lexis in classroom? How to know and remember lexical items? This chapter goes importantly with our main topic. Then, in the chapter before the last, the author suggested a number of instructional tools and aids used in classroom, these aids could be visual like flashcards and pictures, or audio like songs and music, or both, audio-visual like DVDs and computers.   Skimming over these previous books has been very satisfying for us. They have shed light on major points in our research. Mainly, all the works have emphasized the subject of vocabulary teaching and learning. The works of Anderson and Freebody (1979), Hatch and Brown (1995), Nation (2001), Carter (2002), H. Hierbert and L. Kamil (2005) have discussed deeply many theoretical foundations and practical implications related to vocabulary instruction. Beyond that, they have provided lots of strategies and techniques useful in classroom, such as: repetition, guessing from context, and using games…etc. In our research, we are going to highlight, importantly, the use of these technological materials, in vocabulary teaching and learning.

The book of Krashen (1982), "Principles and Techniques in Second Language Acquisition", is of a great help to any research related to second or foreign language teaching and learning at all levels.

The hypotheses provided in this theory may enrich our research to find solutions to problems related not only to vocabulary instruction, but rather to all aspects of language. Concerning our research, we are putting more focus on the affective filter hypothesis. What is new in our research is investigating the correlation between using audio-visual aids and the affective variables.

We are going to prove that the use of these aids in classroom, especially, in our case, third year middle school classes, can lower and omit the barrier made of fear, tension,

anxiety, boredom, and lack of motivation in order to create a more relaxed atmosphere for both teachers and learners.

At the same level, the book of Jim Scrivener (2005) has covered many points on learning and teaching English for EFL learners. In his work, Scrivener has discussed vocabulary issues and the use of audio-visual aids, but each subject has been mentioned in a separate chapter. Our work is to combine the vocabulary learning and teaching with the application of audio aids, so that to solve some problems facing learners.

Different methods have been applied in language teaching: grammar translation, direct, audio-lingual, and CLT method. Each of these methods has treated vocabulary teaching differently. First, Richard and Rodgers argue that "Grammar Translation method is a way of studying a language through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge to the task of translating sentences into and out of the target language" (3).

In the phase of vocabulary instruction, this method relies on bilingual lists of words to be memorized. The teacher provides learners with lists of words translated to the L1 and asks them to memorize them.

These words are arranged Grammar Translation Method, The Direct Method does not use L1 translation, but it combines word's learning/teaching with pictures, realia or actions (Krashen 135).

Third, The Audio-Lingual Method supports the mastery of structure and puts the focus on vocabulary instruction after dealing with the structural patterns. Lastly, the CLT Method emphasizes the role of contexts and learner's previous knowledge in vocabulary instruction. These all methods provide useful techniques for instructing foreign language lexis, they can be used exchangeable and they all aim at having successful vocabulary teaching/learning.

Moving to practice, Scrivener suggested a technique called 'Presentation-Practice Route' (235). This technique undertakes the process of vocabulary teaching through two strategies.

In the presentation, the teacher offers first some information and pictures about the new items. While in the practice, the teacher involves learners into practice by using certain techniques. Scrivener lists almost the different techniques in the examples below:

Vocabulary	Actions
Gloves	Mime putting them on.
Disgusting	Mime (e.g. smelling old food) and make a facial expression.
Swimming	Translate it.
Café	Draw a quick sketch on the board or show a flashcard or picture in abook.
Often	Draw a line. Mark never at one end and always at the other. Markpoints along it: usually, rarely, etc.
Chase	Get two or three students to act it out.
Frightened	Tell a personal anecdote.
Crossroads	Build a model with Cuisenaire rods or toy construction bricks.
Window Sill	Point to the object.
Exploitation	Explain the meaning (with examples).
Reduction	Draw a diagram or graph.
Stapler	Bring one into class to show them.
Put Your Foot Down	Act out a short conversation.
Hope	Read out the dictionary definition.

In the left side, Scrivener listed a number of words as examples of vocabulary items, whereas in the right side, he proposed techniques for presenting them. The combination of these strategies may lead to the invention of other useful techniques. Nation has also suggested two main techniques (51): first, using demonstrations or pictures (an object, a gesture, a blackboard drawing, a photograph, a diagram...etc.). Second, using verbal explanation (definition, contextualization, translation...etc.). This meets Gairns and Redman's view (73-75) who classified the teaching techniques into two major types: visual techniques and verbal techniques.

Visual Techniques

Many techniques derived from the Direct Method are used to illustrate the meaning ofwords, Thornbury summarizes them "using real objects (called realia) or pictures or mime" (78).

Visuals

Research shows that 80% of learning occurs through seeing. In parallel, Anderson states that "At present, up to 65 percent of our students can be classified as visual learners" (1). Therefore, it is important to plan visual aids in teaching vocabulary. This helps to improve the learners' vocabulary learning. Visual techniques include the application of all objects that can be seen in classroom, and can be used as prompts to serve the vocabulary teaching/learning. Hence, audio and audio-visual aids are concerned as well. Moreover, Wright stated that "many media and many styles of visual presentation are useful to the language learner" (1).

Considering the proverb that says: "seeing is believing", teachers should frequently apply these teaching aids in classroom. These materials can make learners feelcomfortable and involved; they can increase their motivation and lower the affective variables in classroom. According to Arabic researchers KhermaNayef and Hajaj Ali, the teaching aids play a vital role in classroom activities and vocabulary instruction.

They have argued that numerous tools were created to serve teaching and learning process, and they have suggested some of them:

Instructors can use them in cases of vocabulary presentation, practice, and production. Briefly, we are going to present the application of these aids in vocabulary instruction:

Visual Aids
Such as: pictures, photographs, flashcards, posters, charts, comic strips, and picture-book can be useful in different ways to serve vocabulary mastery. Their use attracts learners and increases their curiosity.

Picture N°1: Instructional vocabulary picture (Adopted from Scrivener 239).

Visuals prove their effectiveness in creating relaxed classroom environment, and revealed that learners' vocabulary levels, especially beginners, have shown development through the integration of these materials. Wright highlighted the role of visuals in all aspects of language "potential of visuals is so great that only a taste of

their full potential can be given" (6). For example, a teacher can ask his/her pupils about a fruit which they like while s/he is holding a number of fruit pictures, the instruction may go like this:

Teacher: Do you like banana? (Showing its picture).
Pupil 'A': Yes, a lot.
Pupil 'B': No, I hate it.

Audio Aids

Such as: tape recorder, music, and songs. According to research, 65% of acquired knowledge comes from listening. These acoustic aids can help teachers introduce new terms and define them. Listening to stories, songs, plays can clarify more the meaning of new items, since they are presented in context. Furthermore, these materials do not only provide the meaning of a word, but also its correct pronunciation. Thornbury focused on the importance of word's sound, he suggested that providing songs, rhythms, rhymes are among the best techniques (7-86). Pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening are three main stages teachers and learners go through while using an audio material and each stage has its related activities. Teachers draw their vocabulary objectives at each level of listening.

Audio-Visual Aids

Such as videos, computers, and OH Projectors. They are more reliable since they serve the two important senses: auditory and visual one. In this case, learners can see and hear the new words put in context or isolated. The integration of such aids may increase learners' interest and motivation; and help them to memorize new words easily.

Similarly, teachers also use three different stages while integrating the audio-visual materials: pre-viewing, while-viewing, and post-viewing. In each one, teachers use appropriate activities concerning vocabulary.

Mime and Gestures

Teachers intend to apply this technique for different purposes. They can use gestures and miming to elicit vocabulary from learners. Also, it is useful to associate words with gestures to help learners retain them. Additionally, hand, body and facial expressions can help in practicing the learned words through a funny way. If the lesson is about 'feelings', the teacher chooses one volunteer to perform a feeling –chosen from a list- while the rest of class tries to guess it. Reviewing her findings, on The Effects of Gestures on Second Language Memorization by Young Children, Marion Tellier

concluded that "… gesturing enables children to memories vocabulary better in L2, as they get physically involved in their learning" (11).

Verbal Techniques

Using visuals and gestures is exclusively worth in teaching/learning concrete items such as: a car, fat, sunny… etc. However, words like: freedom, responsibility can be taught neither by using pictures or other visuals, nor by gestures. Visuals have limitations when explaining concepts (McCarthy 115 and Thornbury 81). Verbal techniques such as: using definitions and illustrative sentences, synonyms and antonyms, definitions and translation can offer adequate teaching/learning.

Using Synonyms and Antonyms

Sometimes, to explain a new item, teachers can use the synonym or the opposite of this item. For example, to explain the meaning of "cheerful", teachers can use the synonym "happy". However, this technique couldn't be successful only if the teacher determines the appropriate context under which they fit together.

Using Definition

Providing the word's definition is seen as unacceptable technique. Nagy argued that applying such technique in classroom can not considered as a successful way to teach vocabulary (6-7). This is because of two main reasons: on one hand, it limits the description of various situations in which the word or expression is used; in the other hand, it does not convey new meaning. Concerning this technique, teachers can depend on monolingual dictionaries as a tool for gaining L1 word's definition.

Using Contexts

Memorizing vocabulary items through word lists is seen as a non-proficient way, because such technique lacks the identification of the situation in which the word occurs. Instructors can present a new item in different context to help learners guess the meaning. According to Thornbury, this technique has numerous benefits (82). It makes learners get attached with the word several times, and also, they can generalize its use in other different contexts.

Translation

Translation is a clear-cut technique to give the precise word's meaning. However, it is the most unsupported technique. "Translation may be legitimate for items possessing a clear mother-tongue equivalent, but it should otherwise be avoided" (Gairns and

Redman 75). Using this technique frequently, may not help learners reach successful levels in mastering the language, it should be used with caution. Bilingual dictionaries are useful within this technique. They may provide a clear translation, with some examples to illustrate the word's different usage.

To conclude, teaching/learning vocabulary is one of the most crucial and difficult tasks in the field of foreign language teaching/learning. Learning a new word is considered as a challenge to foreign language learners. Different strategies are suggested to handle the learning process. So that, teachers should consider that they are responsible to help learners use the most appropriate strategies, and carry on strategies they lack. Teachers should be aware of almost issues related to this linguistic phenomenon.

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