



SOME TECHNIQUES OF TEACHING VOCABULARY THROUGH INTERACTION

Ismatullaeva Iroda Izatullaevna
Tashkent State Transport University

Abstract

This article discusses some ways of teaching vocabulary through two-way communication between a student and a teacher. The new vocabulary should always complement the previously acquired vocabulary of the student.

Keywords: vocabulary, communication, learning, perception, grammar.

Introduction

It is necessary to begin this paper describing vocabulary itself. All languages have words. Language emerges first as words, both historically, and in terms of the each of us learned our first and subsequent languages. Vocabulary is defined as “all words known and used by a particular person” [7; 21]. The word “vocabulary” generally represents a summary of the words or their combinations in a particular language. Vocabulary knowledge is not something that can ever be fully mastered; it is something that expands and deepens over the course of a lifetime. The coining of new words never stops, nor does the acquisition of words. Even, our first language we are continually learning new words, and learning new meaning for old ones. Vocabulary usually develops with age, and serves as a useful and fundamental tool for communication and acquiring knowledge. Vocabulary is an essential component for successful communication. While grammar is important, a lack of vocabulary may result in complete failure to convey a message. Vocabulary is a necessary ingredient for all communication. Language learners encounter vocabulary in a daily basis, and must be able to acquire and retain it. Vocabulary functions as a cornerstone without which any language could not exist. Speaking would be meaningless and perhaps impossible having only structure without vocabulary.

In mental lexicon words are stored, categorized and interconnected in many ways, according to their features such as meaning, form, collocation, syntactic properties, cultural background etc. Consequently, a word being retrieved is looked up through several pathways at once, which is extremely economical in terms in time needed.

And it goes without saying that vocabulary can also be divided into four: reading, listening, speaking and writing.





Reading vocabulary:

A literate person's vocabulary is all words he or she can recognize when reading. This is generally largest type of vocabulary simply because a reader tends to be exposed words by reading than by listening.

Listening Vocabulary

A person's listening vocabulary is all words he or she can recognize when listening to speech. People may still understand the words they were not exposed to before using cues such as tone, gestures, the topic of discussion and the social context of the conversation.

Speaking vocabulary:

A person's speaking vocabulary is all words he or she uses in speech. It is likely to be a subset of the listening vocabulary. Due to the spontaneous nature of speech, words are often misused. This misuse- though slight and unintentional- may be compensated by facial expressions, tone of voice.

Writing Vocabulary:

Words are used in various forms of writing. Many written words do not commonly appear in speech. Writers generally use a limited set of words when communicating: for example: if there are a number of synonyms, a writer will have his own preference as to which of them to use.

Besides explaining the meaning in vocabulary presentation, it is also important to focus on forms, since the sound of words is one of the aspects influencing the organization of the mental lexicon. This is arranged by various drilling activities. From experience, songs and chants are very suitable for drills, providing rhythm, catchy rhymes and an element of fun. As Thornbury suggests, introducing the written form of the word should follow not long after the presentation of the pronunciation [4; 86]. After presentation, learners should be provided with plenty opportunities to practice the newly gained language in accordance with the principles, since it is crucial for successful remembering. This is done by various forms of practice activities. In the first stage, usually mechanical practice is applied "in the form of some of kind of oral repetition" [2; 93]. Furthermore, as Thornbury claims, it is necessary to integrate new vocabulary into existing knowledge in the mental lexicon, which is done by types of activities, where students make judgments about words, e.g. matching, comparing etc. This mechanical practice is then followed by more open and communicative activities "where learners are required to incorporate the newly studied words into some kind



of speaking or writing activity.” This is often provided by various pair-work or group-work activities [2; 93].

Using Games

Many experienced textbook and methodology manuals writers have argued that games are not just time-filling activities but have a great educational value. W.R. Lee holds that most language games make learners use the language instead of thinking about learning the correct forms. He also that game should be treated as central not peripheral to the foreign language teaching program. A similar opinion is expressed by Richard Amato, who believes game to be fun but warns against overlooking their pedagogical value, particularly in foreign language teaching. There are a lot of advantages of using games. Games can lower the anxiety, thus making the acquisition of input more likely.

Drawing Pictures

It is an easy and quick technique of introducing vocabulary to the learners. For students, drawing can be a fun medium to explain vocabulary. It is not necessary that teacher must be an expert in drawing pictures accurately. Pictures in foreign language teaching As Hill pointed out [1; 78], “the standard classroom” is usually not a very suitable environment for learning languages. That is why teachers search for various aids and stimuli to improve this situation. Pictures are one of these valuable aids. They bring “images of reality into the unnatural world of the language classroom” [1; 14]. Pictures bring not only images of reality, but can also function as a fun element in the class. Sometimes it is surprising, how pictures may change a lesson, even if only employed in additional exercises or just to create the atmosphere. Pictures meet with a wide range of use not only in acquiring vocabulary, but also in many other aspects of foreign language teaching. Wright demonstrated this fact on an example, where he used one compiled picture and illustrated the possibility of use in five very different language areas. His example shows employing pictures in teaching structure, vocabulary, functions, situations and all four skills [2; 6]. Furthermore, he pointed out that “potential of pictures is so great that only a taste of their full potential can be given” in his book [5; 6]. To be more specific, beside lessons where pictures are in the main focus, they might be used just as a “stimulus for writing and discussion, as an illustration of something being read or talked about, as background to a topic and so on” [6; 2]. However, “pictures have their limitations too” [14; 115]. For example, in teaching vocabulary, pictures are not suitable or sufficient for demonstrating the meaning of all words. It is hard to illustrate the meaning of some words, especially the



abstract ones such as ‘opinion’ or ‘impact’ [4; 115]. Therefore, in some cases, other tools are used to demonstrate the meaning, or alternatively pictures might be supplemented by other tools. There are many reasons for using pictures in language teaching. As Wright pointed out [5; 2], they are motivating and draw learners’ attention

Big Picture Flashcards

Big picture flashcards are very helpful tools in presenting and drilling forms of new words, since they draw learners’ attention and make these often boring activities more enjoyable. And that is exactly what teachers need when presenting new language – to catch their learners’ full attention, to raise their interest in the presented subject and hence also their motivation. At the same time flashcards (as well as other forms of pictures and visual aids in general) enable students to link the meaning of the words with real-world images immediately. When using flashcards in presentation, it is easy to involve learners actively and to combine the presentation with controlled practice. The presentation of vocabulary with flashcards can be done in lots of various ways, for example in telling a story or just simply based on a set of vocabulary for a particular topic.

Word Flashcards

Word flashcards are perhaps worth mentioning at this point, even though they are not actually pictures. However, being used in a similar way as picture flashcards, they can often enrich the lesson. On top of that, those two can be indeed combined and applied together, e.g. in a matching or labeling activity. As Wright pointed out, word flashcards are most typically used in teaching reading and writing [7; 59].

Nevertheless, they will find their use in teaching vocabulary too, offering valuable help mainly in teaching the spelling of newly learnt words, which definitely should not be neglected as it often is. A plenty of variations of these cards are typically applied in communicative activities in pairs or small groups of students, thus finding a meaningful role in reviewing and practicing vocabulary. In a closer look, we will find one-side-only cards, both-sided ones and sets of pairs (antonyms or synonyms, a picture and the corresponding word or phrase) or sets of cards connected e.g. by their meaning. Being flexible in their way of use, these cards offer teachers and their students a large amount of possibilities in applying them in a number of activities and games such as ‘domino’ or various forms of word matching activities. Moreover, they are fit for a range of sorting or ordering activities, e.g. creating a story. These cards can also be used for games based on asking each other questions and exchanging them





while searching for a set. On top of that, they might be helpful in individual practice of vocabulary, e.g. looking at a picture and guessing the meaning written on the other side.

Collocations

It's 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. Nattinger in Carter and Mac McCarthy, "It teaches students expectations about which sorts of words go with which ones. Students will not go about reconstructing the language each time they want to say something" The term collocation generally refers to the way in which two or more words are typically used together [1; 56].

For example, we talk about heavy rain but not heavy sun, or we say that we make or come to a decision, but we don't do a decision [3; 111]. So, heavy rain and make a decision are often referred to as collocations and we say that heavy collocates with rain.

Collocations Include:

- • Verb + Noun (e.g. break a code, lift a blockade)
- • Verb + Adverb (e.g. affect deeply, appreciate sincerely)

- • Noun + Verb (e.g. water freezes, clock ticks)
- • Adjective + Noun (e.g. strong tea, best wishes)
- • Adverb + Adjective (e.g. deeply absorbed, closely related)

The meaning of words such as the months of the year, the days of the week, the parts of the day, seasons of the year, ordinal numbers, cardinal numbers, etc. that form part of well-known series can be made clear by placing them in their natural order in the series. If you have several gradable words to introduce at the same, you can introduce them together on a scale. For instance, you can use frequency, such as always-often-occasionally or emotions in this way, with cheerful-happy-joyous-ecstatic.

Role Play

Role-play is to create 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. The language applied in this activity is varied according to the student's status, attitudes, mood, and different situations. Blachowicz speaks, "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.”

Using Video

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 of the 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. Teacher can also show a short film without sound and asking pupils to discuss what dialogue they would expect to hear. Showing a scene from a film without sound and asking pupils to use the facial expression to determine emotion.

To sum it up, learning vocabulary is a crucial issue when learning a language because it is an essential for communication. When we want to communicate something or with someone if we don't have the needed vocabulary we will be unable to achieve our goal. So vocabulary is a necessary ingredient for all communication. Language learners encounter vocabulary in a daily basis, and must be able to acquire and retain it. Vocabulary functions as a cornerstone without which any language could not exist. Speaking would be meaningless and perhaps impossible having only structure without vocabulary. Vocabulary teaching is one of the most important components of any language class. The main reason is the fact that it is a medium, which carries meaning; learning to understand and express the meaning is what counts in learning languages. Vocabulary of a language is just like bricks of a high building. Despite quite small pieces, they are vital to the great structure. Wilkins rightly says, “Without grammar very little can be conveyed but without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” [6; 25]. Therefore, the study of vocabulary is at the center while learning a new language. English being a second language or foreign language, one needs to learn vocabulary in the systematic way.

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