

Teaching and Learning English Vocabulary

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to present the teaching and learning English vocabulary. English, the most vital communicational tool for people around the world, has been taught in Thailand for many decades. It is really necessary for Thai students to learn English for their education. Vocabulary is a heart of a language. It is the most important element of language. Vocabulary is the main part which supports learning English skills comprising writing, reading, speaking and listening, especially for non-native learners. Anyway, even knowing that English vocabulary is necessary, many Thai students still have problems with learning vocabulary; they forget the old words that they have studied. This study reveals the vocabulary learning approaches, function of vocabulary.

Keywords: Teaching and Learning; English Vocabulary

Introduction

First, the researcher will start with vocabulary learning as well as its sub-sets, including word and vocabulary, the importance of vocabulary, the importance of vocabulary learning goals, vocabulary learning approaches, vocabulary and the four language skills, what is involved in knowing a word, and which word needs to be learned. This is followed by vocabulary learning strategies proposed by different researchers. Finally, the available research works on vocabulary learning strategies will be presented. “When we speak of a person’s vocabulary, we mean the words he or she knows and is able to use” (Nandy 1994:1). It is generally accepted that vocabulary is the heart of language learning. Rubin and Thompson (1994:79) point out, “One cannot speak, understand, read or write a foreign language without knowing a lot of words.

Therefore, vocabulary learning is at the heart of mastering a foreign language”. Moreover, Taylor (1992:30) states that “Vocabulary permeates everything language learners or language teachers do in an English language class, whichever skill or language point is being practised”. It is commonplace to say that understanding any language is impossible without knowing words whether in the spoken or the written forms (Hall, 2000; Schmitt 2000; Hill, 1997). Language learners with large and rich vocabulary are believed to improve their listening, reading, speaking, writing, and thinking abilities (Smith 1998:xv). On the contrary, language learners with a limited vocabulary are likely to be handicapped in the educational progress.

That is to say, vocabulary is a key indicator of both one's language learning and one's ability to learn language.

1. Vocabulary Learning

Even though vocabulary is the sub-skill of a language, it plays a very important role in language learning and teaching. There are many important aspects in vocabulary learning, such as the distinction between word and vocabulary, how important vocabulary is, why a language teacher needs to set the vocabulary learning goals, what are vocabulary learning approaches, etc. This section aims to discuss and review vocabulary learning in different aspects mentioned.

1.1 Defining Word and Vocabulary

“All languages have words, a vocabulary or lexicon” (Foley and Thompson 2003:10). However, before discussing the importance of vocabulary and other issues concerning vocabulary learning, a clear distinction between the terms word and vocabulary should be made. Some scholars (e.g. Bowen et al., 1985; Jackson and Amvela, 2000; Read, 2000; Trask, 1995) indicate that ‘word’ may be easy to perceive, but is hard to define. Trask (1995:46-51) points out that “there are the difficulties in the definition of the word because words do not have meanings in isolation, but they are related to the meanings of other words in ways that may be simple or complex”. Moreover, “a word, at least, relates to the fields of morphology, semantics, etymology or lexicology” (Jackson and Amvela 2000:48).

Since the term ‘word’ is difficult to define, and the main purposes of the present investigation emphasise vocabulary learning strategies used by language learners to learn or acquire vocabulary items; therefore, the researcher does not look into the history of words or any aspects related to a word except defining the terms ‘word’ and ‘vocabulary’ in this section. Instead, the researcher attempts to distinguish particularly the term word and vocabulary that best suit the context of the present investigation with the hope that it may result in a better understanding of the term ‘vocabulary learning’.

A few researchers, such as Jackson and Amvela (2000); Richards et al. (1992); and Hornby et al. (1984), have viewed word and vocabulary in a comparative way. Word is “an uninterrupted unit of structure consisting of one or more morphemes and which typically occurs in the structure of phrases. The morphemes are the ultimate grammatical constituents, the minimal meaningful units of language”, while vocabulary (which is synonymous with ‘lexis’, or ‘lexicon’) is viewed as “a collection of words” or “a package of sub-sets of words that are used in particular contexts”. Richards et al. (1992:406) define the term word as “the smallest of the linguistic units which can occur on its own in speech or writing”, but vocabulary, as “a set of lexemes which includes single words, compound words and idioms”. Besides, word is defined as “sound or combination of sounds forming a unit of the grammar or vocabulary of a language”, whereas vocabulary as “the total number of words which make up a language; and a range of words known to, or used by a person” (Hornby et al., 1984). In addition, regarding the definition of word and vocabulary, a word is “a unit formed of sounds or letters that have a



meaning" (Sheeler and Markley 2000:2), while vocabulary is defined as "total number of words we know and are able to use" (Nandy 1994:1; Sesnan 2001:123).

We can see, based on some scholars' view points of word and vocabulary, that word is the smallest meaningful unit of language used for making phrases and sentences that usually represents an object, idea, action, etc. Vocabulary is seen as "a set of lexemes - the study of vocabulary items – which includes single words, compound words and idioms". In other words, a word is a form which can occur in isolation and have meaning, or a sound or combination of sounds forming a unit of the grammar or vocabulary of a language, and so act as 'a part of vocabulary' in a language. Therefore, vocabulary consists of more than just single words (Read 2000: 20; Richards 2000:xi), and more than this, vocabulary concerns not only simple words in all their aspects, but also complex and compound words, as well as the meaningful units of language (Jackson and Amvela 2000:1-2). Regarding vocabulary learning, there is no question that vocabulary learning is referred to as learning "a collection or the total stock of words in a language that are used in particular contexts". To be precise, vocabulary learning means learning a package of sub-sets of words as well as learning how to use strategies to cope with unknown or unfamiliar words.

1.2 The Importance of Vocabulary

Of all the language skills, it is widely acknowledged that vocabulary is a very important part in English language learning that no one can communicate in any meaningful way without vocabulary. Bowen et al. (1985: 322) and McCarthy (1990:iiix) indicate that the single, biggest component of any language course is vocabulary. This is consistent with Nation (1990:2) who affirms that learners also see vocabulary as being a very, if not the most, important element in language learning. Learners feel that many of their difficulties, in both receptive and productive language use, result from the lack of vocabulary knowledge. However, many scholars in the fields of vocabulary learning and teaching (e.g. Allen, 1983; Carter and McCarthy, 1988; Hedge, 2000; Long and Richards, 1997; Maley, 1986; Richards, 1985; Zimmerman, 1997) indicate that vocabulary has long been neglected in the language classroom.

Consequently, the main purpose of this section is to study and review the importance of vocabulary in language learning so as to look at what we know about English vocabulary as well as to reflect on how this has been applied in language teaching and learning.

Words are the tools learners use to think, to express ideas and feelings, as well as to explore and analyse the world around them. A limited vocabulary keeps them from expressing their thoughts and feelings. On the other hand, a large, rich vocabulary gives them the right words to use at the right time. Kitajima (2001: 470) affirms that without words that label objects, actions, and concepts, one cannot express intended meanings. "The more words one is able to use correctly, the better one will be able to express oneself easily and with self-confidence and to understand the world one lives in" (Nandy 1994:1).

There is no question that in a good language learning classroom, both vocabulary and grammar are essential, but when compared vocabulary with grammar, vocabulary is much more important and should receive more attention than grammar. Allen (1983:5) indicates that in the best classes, neither grammar nor vocabulary is neglected, but vocabulary is more essential and should be taught before grammar. Likewise, Flower (2000:5) states, “Words are the most important things students must learn. Grammar is important, but vocabulary is much more important”. This is consistent with Lewis (1993:115) who also views the importance of vocabulary as the centre of language teaching and learning since language consists of ‘grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalised grammar’ and ‘grammar, as structure, is subordinate to lexis’. That is to say, these scholars see that the words are preceded by the grammar. This confirms what we know from our own experience that one can understand others even if they pronounce words badly, and make grammatical mistakes, but without the mediation of words, any meaningful way of communication is rather impossible. To be precise, vocabulary seems to be the key to language learning, and thus, is accepted to be more important than grammar.

“Without grammar, very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed” (Wilkins 1972:111). This is consistent with Ellis (1994) who affirms that lexical errors tend to obstruct comprehension more than grammatical errors. Besides, Harmer (1991:153) asserts that choosing words carefully in certain situations is more important than choosing grammatical structures because language learners cannot use structures correctly if they do not have enough vocabulary knowledge. This means that vocabulary is more important than grammar, and it is vital for comprehension in language skill in any situation.

Regarding vocabulary in communication, it is apparent that vocabulary is basic in learning to communicate effectively while listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This is asserted by many scholars. For example, Lewis (1993:iii) views the importance of vocabulary as being a basic for daily communication. He indicates that if language learners do not recognise the meanings of the key words used by those who address them, they will be unable to participate in the conversation, even if they know the morphology and syntax. Krashen and Terrell (2000:155) indicate that if language learners wish to express some idea or ask for information, they must be able to produce lexical items to convey their meaning. Besides, Richards’ preface in Schmitt’s (2000:xi) “Vocabulary in Language Teaching” indicates that vocabulary is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language.

Vocabulary and lexical items are at the core of learning and communication. No amount of grammatical or other type of linguistic knowledge can be employed in communication or discourse without the mediation of vocabulary because vocabulary is shown to focus much more than knowledge of single words.

In communication situations, Davies and Pearse (2000:59) also point out that vocabulary is often more important than grammar. It is frustrating for language learners when they discover



that they cannot communicate effectively because they do not know many of words they need. This is also affirmed by McCarthy (1990: iix) who points out the importance of vocabulary that, “No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful ways”. Since learners not only communicate in words but also they do most of their thinking in words because words are the tools they use to think, to express ideas and feelings, as well as to explore and analyse the world around them; therefore, wrong vocabulary frequently interferes with communication, and communication breaks down when learners do not use the right words (Allen 1983: 5; Smith 1998:xv).

To summarise, we can see the importance of vocabulary in that language learners with vocabulary knowledge can achieve a great deal of success in their classroom, their social life, and in their continuing acquisition of the target language. A large, rich vocabulary gives language learners the right words to use at the right time, and also enables them to express their real thoughts, ideas, and feelings. From the scholars’ statements mentioned, we can see that vocabulary plays a dominant role in learning and understanding a language as well as in communication situations.

1.3 The Importance of Vocabulary Learning Goals

Vocabulary plays an important part in learning, understanding, and communicating in a language. It is useful if language learners understand the importance of vocabulary in successful communication and comprehension. This section specifically deals with the importance of vocabulary learning goals.

In a language classroom, language learning goals are very important since they are objectives or intended learning for particular learners working on particular tasks, made specific from the general learning aims of book or syllabus. Learning goals help language teachers in planning lessons and adapting tasks for their students.

Goals will result in learning achievement in the target language (Cameron 2001: 28-29). Therefore, in a language classroom, language learning goals and sub-goals must be set that are clear and appropriate because they help ensure success and achievement at each learning step, and of the task as a whole.

Similarly, in vocabulary learning, the main goals should be focused on why language learners particularly learn vocabulary both in isolation and in context. For example, students need to hear a new word in isolation as well as in context, so that they can notice the sounds at the beginning and end, the stress pattern of the word, and the syllables that make up the word. They will need to hear the word spoken in isolation several times to catch all this information.

Additionally, the method of vocabulary instruction, both in isolation and in context, is normally based on learners’ educational level: beginner, intermediate or advanced. To begin with, teachers must clarify their main goals of what they want their students to obtain for

learning vocabulary items. However, possible objectives of vocabulary teaching and learning have been proposed by different scholars:

- Nandy (1994:1) states, “an extensive vocabulary is most desirable, not in order that the possessor may display his sophistication by the use of a very large number of unfamiliar words, but in order that he may have at his stock exactly of the right word for every occasion”.

- Ooi and Lee (1996:7) propose that “the main focuses in teaching vocabulary should be to make the learner more discriminating of word form, word meaning, and word use”.

- Aebersold and Field (1997:139) affirm that the three main goals of vocabulary teaching and learning are to help students 1) to know the vocabulary in the text, 2) to recognise vocabulary to make sense of the text, and 3) to consider vocabulary students need to know to function in the L2/FL in the future.

- Baker and Westrup (2000:38) suggests that teachers need to teach students what the word means, its pronunciation and how to use the word.

- Krashen and Terrell (2000:157) assert that one goal of vocabulary learning is to provide enough vocabulary to allow language use outside the classroom, and to place the students in a position to continue second language acquisition.

- Moras and Carlos (2001:1) highlight the most important objective of vocabulary teaching for advanced learners is to foster learners independence so that learners will be able to deal with new lexis and broaden their vocabulary. Learners not only understand the meaning of words, but also are able to use them appropriately, both in oral and written use of the language.

- Catalan (2003:56) proposes the vocabulary learning goals as: 1) to find out the meaning of unknown words; 2) to retain them in long-term memory; 3) to recall them at will; and 4) to use them in oral or written mode.

- Intaraprasert (2004:9) emphasises in his study that the main goals of vocabulary learning are: 1) to discover the meanings of a new words; 2) to retain the knowledge of newly-learned words; and 3) to expand the knowledge of English vocabulary.

- Salazar (n.d.,:2) proposes that the purpose of vocabulary teaching and learning is to make students become independent readers. This means that students need to connect words to existing knowledge and use them in listening, reading, speaking and writing.

To summarise, vocabulary can be taught or learned effectively both in context and isolation. Some language teachers have focused on teaching their students to discriminate words. Some encourage their students to be advanced learners or independent learners. Some focus on teaching their students an extensive vocabulary stocked with a very large number of unfamiliar words. However, teaching students vocabulary all share some common goals, i.e. assist and guide students in how to learn, retain, and use words. In terms of word form, students have to focus on how to pronounce and spell words correctly and clearly. For word meaning, they need to learn how to discover and retain word meanings. Based on word use,



students need to know how to practise or use them to express their real thoughts, ideas and feelings in a wide range of appropriate situations. They need to learn how to expand their vocabulary so that they can improve their language skills.

1.4 Vocabulary Learning Approaches

Since vocabulary is the heart of mastering a foreign language, it is necessary to discuss vocabulary learning approaches. Before starting this section, however, it should be made clear that there is no ‘right’ or ‘best’ approach for vocabulary learning (Schmitt 2000:142). The best practice in any situation will depend on the type of student, the words that are targeted, the school system and curriculum, and many other factors. According to Nation (1990:2); Rubin and Thompson (1994:79); Richek et al. (1996:203), there are two general ways in which learners learn vocabulary: the direct vocabulary learning approach, and the indirect vocabulary learning approach. This section concentrates on learning approaches which language learners can make use of to decode for themselves the meanings of words, using both direct and indirect learning approaches.

“Direct or ‘explicit’ vocabulary learning is concerned with conscious learning processes when language learners learn vocabulary explicitly, either in context or in isolation, through direct instruction in both the meanings of individual words and word-learning strategies” (Laufer and Hulstijn 2001:1). In direct learning, learners are systematically taught specific words and language structures (Richek et al. 1996:203).

This approach of vocabulary learning is necessary for learning the core vocabulary -basic and important vocabulary that is used and serves in most situations. This is particularly true for the learning of basic lexical and semantic knowledge, particularly for beginner-level or less successful language learners (Nation, 1990). The learning of single words explicitly should be emphasised at an early stage of second language learning. After the language ability is developed, indirect vocabulary learning through contexts is essential to be emphasised to language learners (Coady and Huckin, 1997).

Indirect or ‘implicit’ vocabulary learning, on the other hand, involves learning the meaning of new words implicitly when language learners hear or see the words used in many different contexts, for example, through daily opportunities, through conversations with others and through reading extensively on their own (Read 2000: 39; Laufer and Hulstijn 2001:1). Indirect vocabulary learning is concerned with unconscious processes of learning through reading or listening without language learners necessarily being aware of the goals of learning. In this type of learning, new words are learned incidentally while reading or learning from listening to stories, films, television or the radio (Anderson and Nagy, 1991; Nation, 1982; 2001; Sternberg, 1987). Moreover, learners absorb meaning vocabulary, grammatical structures, and concepts simply from being exposed to rich language (Richek et al. 1996:203). Learning vocabulary indirectly via guessing from context is widely accepted as the most important of all sources of learning vocabulary (Nation 2001:232). This approach should be emphasised for further lexical

and semantic development of the words learned through explicit learning and for learning additional vocabulary.

Since, there are too many words to learn, so it is impossible to teach language learners all words. Many researchers (e.g. Carter, 1998; Gu, 2002; 2003; Hulstijn, 1992; Nation, 1990; Schmitt, 2000; Sökmen, 1997; Sternberg, 1987) have maintained that guessing the meaning of words presented in context is an effective strategy for vocabulary learning, and most vocabulary can be learned from context by means of strategies of inferences. When language learners become advanced or independent learners, they acquire the meanings of new words by using more ‘inferential’ or ‘implicit’ vocabulary learning strategies. Regarding the role of teachers at this stage, they may help learners with vocabulary directly or ‘explicitly’ by means of word lists, paired translation equivalents, and in related semantic sets. They may also help learners by more indirect or ‘implicit’ means, such as exposure to words in the context of reading authentic texts. That is to say, learners may learn vocabulary incidentally through explicit or/and implicit learning.

We can see that language learners may learn vocabulary incidentally through direct or/and indirect vocabulary learning; however, it is impossible to teach everything learners may face. Since learners not only learn vocabulary intentionally as part of the course requirements but also gain knowledge of words incidentally through their reading and listening; therefore both direct and indirect vocabulary learning approaches are very useful and essential for them to learn and acquire vocabulary items. Learners also learn vocabulary items when vocabulary items are explicitly taught, not only individual words but also vocabulary learning strategies. Some vocabulary should be taught directly even though a great deal of vocabulary is learned indirectly.

To sum up, although there is evidence that indirect vocabulary learning is found to be beneficial, in recent studies of L2 learners, a combination of both direct and indirect vocabulary learning approach is evidenced to be superior to either direct or indirect vocabulary learning alone. Both types of vocabulary learning approaches improve learners’ language abilities, and thus should be emphasised in FL learning, so that language learners know how to maximise the effectiveness of learning, using, coping with and storing newly-learned vocabulary on their own.

2. Vocabulary and the Four Language Skills

The researcher discussed vocabulary learning approaches. This section concentrates on vocabulary and the four language skills, including types, meanings, and functions of vocabulary as well as how many words a language learner needs to know for the four language skills.

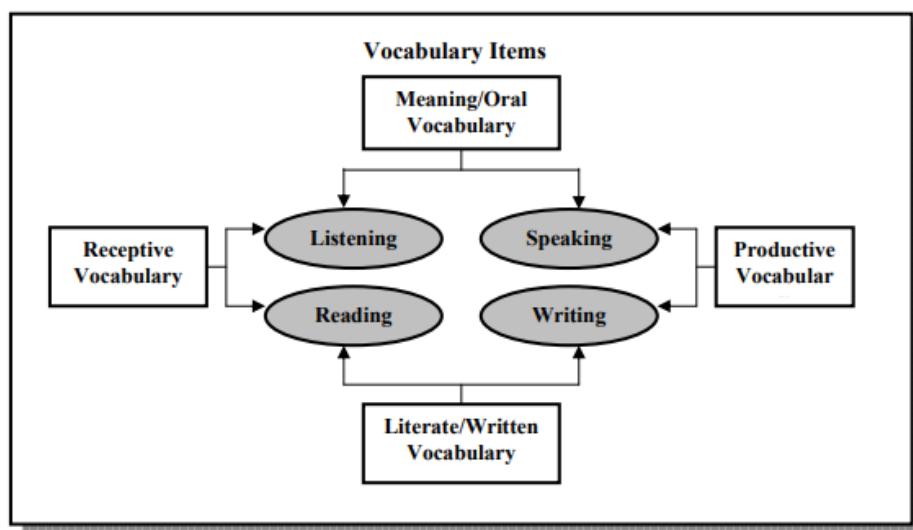
2.1 Type of vocabulary

In order to understand how vocabulary items work or relate to the four language skills, it will be helpful to make clear first by grouping the skills into two pairs. There are two ways in so doing:

Firstly, listening and speaking are the skills necessary in oral communication, they can be grouped together. For some learners, this is the main focus of their interest. Reading and writing can be grouped together since they are the skills necessary in written communication, and this may be the main focus or motivation for other learners. Alternatively, we can group listening and reading together, since they both are used to understand language which was produced by other people. To this extent, listening and reading are known as receptive skills, and speaking and writing are productive skills.

Based on type of vocabulary in general, there are four categories of vocabulary learning: listening vocabulary, speaking vocabulary, reading vocabulary, and writing vocabulary. Listening vocabulary refers to words learners use to understand what they hear. Speaking vocabulary is known as words they use when they speak. Reading vocabulary concerns words in prints that they recognise and use to understand what they read, and writing vocabulary involves words they use in their own writing. Pikulski and Templeton (2004:2) have produced a diagram that may make a better understanding of the relationship between vocabulary and the four language skills:

Figure .1 Vocabulary and the four language skills



(Source: Adapted from Pikulski and Templeton 2004, p. 2)

Figure 1. proposed by Pikulski and Templeton (2004:2) demonstrates that vocabulary items play a dominant part in learning to communicate effectively while listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Vocabulary items in the diagram above can be classified in terms of types, meanings, and functions. Based on the diagram, vocabulary is categorised into four main groups as meaning/oral vocabulary, literate/written vocabulary, receptive vocabulary, and productive vocabulary. However, it is obvious that all vocabulary items are overlapped in meanings and functions.

2.2 Meanings and Functions of vocabulary

Regarding meanings and functions of each vocabulary, let us now discuss meanings and functions of each vocabulary type concerned with the four language skills in details:

1) Meaning/Oral vocabulary refers to words language learners use in order to understand what they hear in speech, and words they use when they speak. This involves both receptive and productive vocabulary. For listening, if they lack meaning/oral vocabulary knowledge, they would have difficulties in what they are hearing in authentic situations or from authentic texts. That is, they probably miss the points of what they are listening to. For speaking, Nation (1990:93) suggests that in order to speak English, it is necessary to have a large vocabulary. In developing learners' spoken English vocabulary, it is best to give learners practice in being able to say a lot, using a small number of words. Pikulski and Templeton (2004:3) affirm that language learners who have large speaking vocabulary generally tend to have large listening, reading, and writing vocabulary, and vice versa.

2) Literate/Written vocabulary refers to words language learners use in order to understand what they read, and words they use in writing. This, again, includes both receptive and productive vocabulary. Receptive vocabulary involves being able to recognise it when it is seen. When one reads, he or she needs a number of vocabulary items to understand texts he or she is reading. Likewise, when one writes, he or she needs a number of vocabulary items to produce his or her ideas in the writing texts.

3) Receptive vocabulary concerns words language learners use in order to understand what they hear in speech, and words used to understand what they read. It is generally acknowledged that language learners need receptive vocabulary for their listening and reading. The better one's vocabulary knowledge, the easier one would find it to understand the conversation or a large amount of reading. However, when compared vocabulary learning from listening with vocabulary learning from reading, Read (2000:47) points out that vocabulary learning from listening has received much less attention than learning vocabulary items through reading.

Based on vocabulary and reading, Nation and Coady (1988:98) point out that vocabulary is likely to be a predominant causal factor for reading comprehension. Laufer (1997:20) emphasises that no text comprehension is possible, either in one's native language or in a foreign language, without understanding the text's vocabulary. Besides, Rubin (1993:1) stresses, "A good vocabulary and good reading go hand in hand. Unless language learners know the meaning of words, they will have difficulties in understanding what is read. And the more one reads, the more words one will add to one's vocabulary". That is to say, a rich vocabulary is essential to successful listening and reading comprehension.

Similarly, Pikulski and Templeton (2004:1) indicate in their study that a large vocabulary is more specifically predictive and reflective of high levels of reading achievement.



4) Productive vocabulary involves words language learners use to express their thoughts and ideas in speaking and writing. Since both speaking and writing are productive skills, Nandy (1994:i) highlights the relationship between vocabulary and expression of speech and writing that “An extensive vocabulary, besides empowering us to give expression to a wide range of thoughts, also enables us to vary our forms of expression, and so make our speech or our writing more pleasing to hear or more interesting to read. No one can ever become an effective speaker or a ready writer if he does not have at his command a wide vocabulary to which he is continually adding.” In terms of vocabulary and the written text, Schmitt (2000:155) indicates that vocabulary knowledge is indispensable since the text involves the use of difficult words to convey more complicated ideas than the spoken one.

All in all, vocabulary items can be generally categorised into four main groups as ‘receptive (or passive)’, ‘productive (or active)’, ‘meaning/oral’ and ‘literal/written’ vocabulary based on their meanings and functions. It is apparent that vocabulary is vital for the improvement of the four language skills. To improve language skills, language learners need to involve receptive and productive, meaning/oral, and literal/written vocabulary. The following section particularly involves how many words a language learner needs for the four language skills.

Knowledge from the Study

Vocabulary in simple terms means the database of words and their meanings which you know and are familiar with in a particular language. This is not a dictionary definition but my own. My father always used to tell me to better my vocabulary. When I was a child I found that boring and didn't understand its significance. But now I decided to make a notebook for the new words I learn from books and here and there. I jot down words and I realize how many words I still don't know. I have understood the importance and benefits of honing my vocabulary. The benefits of a good vocabulary which I have understood are:



1. It Improves Reading Comprehension.

Research has shown that kids need to understand 98% of the words they read to understand what they are reading. Improving vocabulary skills will improve their understanding of novels and textbooks.

2. It's Important to Language Development.

Children who develop a rich vocabulary tend to be deeper thinkers, express themselves better and read more. Improving language and literacy skills early in life will help them be more successful academically and communicatively.

3. Communicating Ideas.

Successful communication or “saying what you mean” is dependent upon a good vocabulary base. Using the right words when talking, makes you a more effective communicator.

4. Expressing Yourself in Writing.

Having a good vocabulary to draw from can help you write more effectively. Students need to use a more formal tone when writing – not conversational language – and to do that, they need a richer vocabulary to tap into those words we don’t use when we speak.

5. Occupational Success.

Researcher Johnson O’Connor found that “a person’s vocabulary level is the best single predictor of occupational success.”* Success in the business place depends on your communication skills.

Conclusion

Vocabulary is an essential part in foreign language learning as the meanings of new words are very often emphasized, whether in books or in classrooms. It is also central to language teaching and it is of paramount importance to a language learner. Teaching vocabulary may be problematic because many teachers are not confident about best practice in vocabulary teaching and don’t know where to begin to form an instructional emphasis on word learning.

Furthermore, vocabulary is a very important mean to express our thoughts and feeling, either in spoken or written form. Indeed, neither literature nor language exists without vocabulary. And, words are the bricks with which the poetry and the literature of the world have been built. It is mainly through using words that we compose and express our thoughts to others. We can tackle our own task through words. It shows words are powerful tools. More importantly, words are the most powerful drug used by mankind. Those who are rich in vocabulary, can speak and write English correctly.



In fact, without vocabulary, communication in a second or foreign language is not possible in a meaningful way. No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way. Indeed, vocabulary should be considered as an internal part of learning a foreign language since it leads the way to communication. Vocabulary knowledge is fundamental to reading comprehension; one cannot understand text without knowing what most of the words mean. Teaching vocabulary well is a key aspect of developing engaged and successful readers.

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