

Enhancing the Vocabulary Skill to the English Second Language Learners Through Learning Approaches

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Abstract-This research paper intends to improving of ESL students' language learning proficiency through learning vocabulary. In country Myanmar, since, English is the second language for all students, they often feel insecure with new vocabularies, technical terms, idioms, phrasal verbs and collocation, etc. They have difficulties in learning new words in order to acquire their second language learning. Sometimes, these problems impede the students' reading, writing, speaking and listening. Based on the author's teaching experience and collecting questionnaires, this research paper is conducted to cover the students' needs and remedy for their weakness. To investigate the actual needs and difficulties, need analysis questionnaires and some group activities are given to the students. This paper is hoped to be useful and able to learn the language without worrying about vocabulary for the students and teachers.

Keywords: vocabulary proficiency, approaching, teaching, remedy

I. INTRODUCTION

For the students, learning a new language can bear many distractions like vocabulary, grammar, structure, organization or style and so on. Everything is new for them. The important thing for the students is that they need to acquire enough exposure for their understanding. It is needless to say for all learners that understanding the vocabulary items is the foundation of language learning. It is worth understanding for all input like reading, writing, listening and speaking. If the learners have confidence in using vocabulary fluently and accurately, it is a good success of effective communication. Moreover, if they use it extensively, it is a great success for them. Therefore, the achievement of language learning can be measured through a very high frequency word measurement of respective situation.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

If language structure is a stem of tree then, vocabulary items may be main root and branches of that tree. A capability to control grammatical structure does not have any potential for expressing meaning unless words are used for language learners. Structural accuracy seems to be the prevalent focus. In practice, if the students are competent in choosing correct vocabulary, it can ignore structural

inaccuracy. The students' grammatical knowledge allows them to come up with sentences. The learners should have accumulative knowledge for expressing their feelings, actions or situations, etc. Vocabulary, as one of the knowledge areas in language, plays a great role for learners in acquiring a language (Cameron 2001). Therefore, this research has shown that second language readers rely heavily on vocabulary knowledge. If they are poor in vocabulary knowledge, they can face with obstacle in language learning. Moreover, having a limited vocabulary in second language learning impedes successful communication to the students because, for second language learners, vocabulary knowledge is often seen as a critical tool.

A. Kinds of Vocabulary

In second language learning, nevertheless, English or others there are many words to be learned. However, not all them may be taught at directly, the reason is that the students must know the words which are necessary in his field of study. Vocabulary can also be classified from a different angle. However, there are two kinds of vocabulary. They are active or productive vocabulary and passive or receptive vocabulary. What number styles of vocabulary may be, the learners need to learn and master at that language. Once they speak or write, they employ active or productive vocabulary, passive or receptive vocabulary is employed when they hear or read something in context. The learners will not be ready to be skillful if they do not know or unable to use words/ vocabularies properly. The important thing is that after teaching learning process was done; the students are able to use them in a various situation in their lives.

B. Approaches for Learning New Words

Students need to have approaches in building their vocabulary competence effectively. The following tips can grantee the students' developing vocabulary skills and by expanding them, they will improve their own learning style. 1) *Reading Voraciously*: Firstly, the learner, himself or herself need to have enthusiasm for learning. Most students and teachers accept; it is undeniable that reading is the only thank to get new vocabulary. By reading more and more texts, they get more awareness the words which are getting used in content. If the learners understand the overall text, they have a good chance to guess each new word with the help of context information surrounding it. It is the natural way of learning by finding out the meaning

of words and reading provides the best opportunity to get exposure to this natural way of learning. As there are too many unknown words in the text, the students are not able to infer the meaning of new words in their reading. The most important thing for the students is to get appropriate reading material of their level.

2) *Making Friend with the Dictionary*: Using a dictionary is the first indispensable resource to enhance learner's vocabulary. By looking up a word in a dictionary, they are able to learn its precise meaning, spelling, alternate definitions and find much more useful information about it. The learners can check their vocabulary in a thesaurus in which they can find the connections between words like synonyms or antonyms.

3) *Enumeration the Word*: An enumeration is a collection of items that is a complete, ordered listing of all of the items in that collection. In this way, the students can learn about vocabulary by classifying 'general' and 'specific' words. It can be used to present meaning. In other words, this technique helps when any word is difficult to explain visually. The word 'clothes', 'vegetable' or 'furniture' can be explained by enumeration or listing various items.

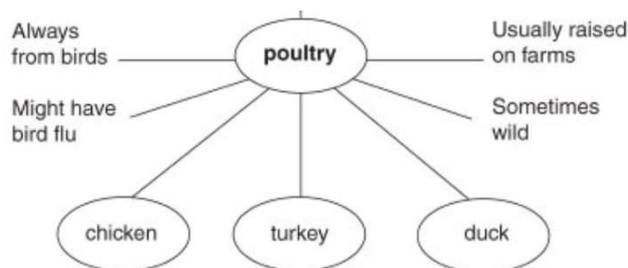


Fig. 1 Example of word map

4) *Using it or Losing it*: For the students, they should not stop their learning after they had learned a new word by reading it or looking it up in the dictionary. Then, they should expand the words they have learned. By using the new words they had learned, they need to practise them for their long-term memory.

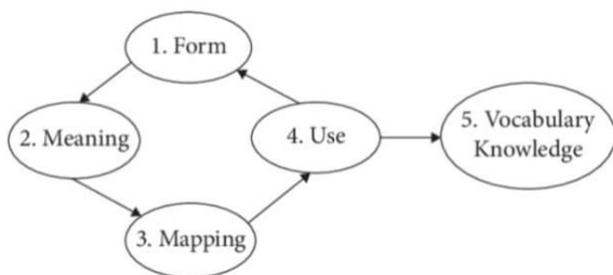


Fig. 2 Process of learning vocabulary

The students should have creation and try to use their newly learned words as many ways as possible. First of all, they must write them down repeatedly and say them aloud for accuracy and fluency. Then, they must create sentences with them, mentally or in writing. They will be able to use them in a conversation, too. After doing like that, they must discuss them with friends.

In those ways, the students can expand their language skills as well as improve their fluency and accuracy in vocabularies.

5) *Learning one New Word a Day*: In Japan, kaizen is the popular strategy to start something. In the same way, if they learn only one new word a day, they will soon notice themselves that they recognise and possess a lot of words. This way makes them enjoy growing vocabulary by committing themselves to learning at least one new word each day.

6) *Playing and Having Fun Activity*: There are many games to improve learners' vocabulary like quiddler, scrabble and boggle or kahoo. For second language learners, playing games and engaging in group activities are useful and effective kinds of learning especially language related learning. If they do not have time or do not want to engage in group activities, there are numerous options of words games in the Internet. They can either play them when they are bored or they can play a quick game after having lunch.

7) *Searching for Learning Resources*: In this IT age, the Internet is a good resource for vocabulary building. The learners may have a time to give up learning by their enthusiasm, then their curiosity leads them to search information for learning and they will never run out of resources to learn from.

8) *Diversify*: Students should do something different from their daily routine; hunting, fishing or blogging- any activity that is not a part of their normal life can become a great way to learn new words. This is because every niche has its own jargon and unique way of communicating. They should read different books and magazines as well as watch foreign language movies than the ones they are used to. With these ways, they will not only improve their vocabulary but also make their lives much more interesting.

9) *Guessing from Context*: This way is the most vital of the vocabulary attack skills. Students must be made conscious of the amount of language clues available to them when they are stopped by an unfamiliar word. They must realize that they will usually continue reading and acquire a general understanding of the items. For instance,

- **Synonym in apposition**: Our uncle was a nomad, an incurable wanderer who never could stay in one place.
- **Antonym**: While the aunt loved Marty deeply, she absolutely despised his twin brother Smarty.
- **Cause and effect**: By surrounding the protesters with armed policemen, and by arresting the leaders of the movement, the rebellion was effectively quashed.
- **Association between an object and its purpose or use**: The scientist removed the treatise from the shelf and began to
- **Description**: Tom received a new roadster for his birthday. It's a sport model, red with white interior and bucket seats, capable of reaching speeds of more than 15 mph.
- **Example**: Mary can be quite gauche; yesterday she blew her nose on the new linen tablecloth.

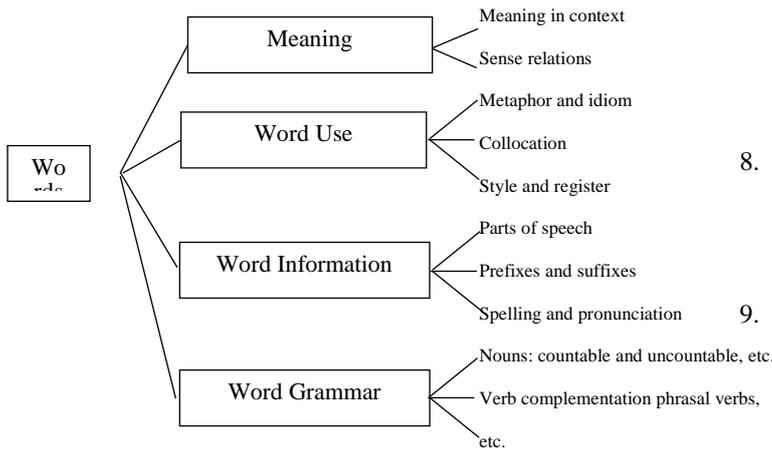


Fig 3. Knowing a word

III. NEED ANALYSIS QUESTIONNAIRE

Through the provided questionnaires to the third year students at TU (Mandalay), their strength and weakness are found out.

Please fill it in as completely as possible. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Please mark (✓) in the appropriate boxes.

1. How important is vocabulary work in your learning?
 - a. critically important
 - b. very important
 - c. somewhat important
2. What difficulties do you face when learning a text?
 - a. unfamiliar new words
 - b. grammar structure
 - c. figurative language: simile, metaphor
3. What type(s) of activities is one of the most effective ways to learn new vocabulary?
 - a. watching English TV series/ movies
 - b. playing video/ computer games
 - c. reading English books/ magazines
 - d. using online dictionaries
4. When you encounter unknown English words in reading, which is the most preferred techniques?
 - a. using dictionary
 - b. online dictionary
 - c. asking a teacher/ a peer
 - d. guessing the meaning from the context
5. When you come across new English words, do you ever write them down in order to remember them?
 - a. always
 - b. sometimes
 - c. never
6. In learning vocabulary fast and effectively, which ways are effective for the students?
 - a. reading as much as possible and practicing with sample sentences
 - b. memorization
 - c. watching English movies and listening songs

- d. playing online vocabulary games
7. How efficient are you in reading skill and vocabulary knowledge?
 - a. good
 - b. excellent
 - c. fair
 - d. poor
8. Do you think using a mobile app to test vocabulary knowledge is more fun and less stressful?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
9. What tools or techniques do your teacher use in class to help learners with learning new vocabulary?
 - a. group work
 - b. pair work
 - c. translation method
10. Specify any other information you feel is relevant to the aim of this questionnaires.

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IV. SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

A. Activity 1

For question 1-5, which word is the odd-one-out?

1. (a) comfortable (b) stylish (c) fashionable (d) annoying
2. (a) hard sell (b) could calling (c) efficient (d) advertising
3. (a) calculator (b) biros (c) brand (d) scissors
4. (a) advertising (b) flying (c) photocopying (d) reporting
5. (a) disloyal (b) convenient (c) insufficient (d) unbelievable

B. Activity 2

Choose the best word or phrase a, b, or c to complete.

1. My workare great fun, but the boss is an idiot.

(a) staff (b) colleagues (c) experience
2. Nike trainers are so.....to wear that your feet will feel warm and relaxed all day.

(a) healthy (b) comfortable (c) stylish
3. One superstore is.....same as another.

(a) as (b) from (c) to
4. She..... coffee for us all this morning.

(a) sent (b) did (c) made
5. I like listening to the music while I am..... some photocopying.

(a) making (b) doing (c) receiving
6. Kyaw Kyaw's...his ankle when he was getting off.

(a) scratched (b) twisted (c) sprained

7. Searching for a book in this library is like looking for a needle in a.....

- (a) mountain (b) river (c) haystack

C. Activity 3

Complete each sentence with one of the words given.

appliance component equipment gadget manual
automation contraption experiment machinery overhaul

1. What a peculiar.....! What on earth is it for?
2. A washing- machine is probably the most useful household.....
3. We will have to order a new.....to replace the damaged one.
4. The noise of.....filled the factory and nearly deafened me.
5. I can't make this computer work. Let's read the.....again.
6. Scientists in this laboratory are conducting an interesting.....
7. When.....is introduced, the number of workers will be reduced.
8. Do you like this new..... I bought for peeling potatoes?
9. Every six months the nuclear reactor needs a complete.....
10. My brother has a shop selling photographic.....

D. Activity 4

Choose the most appropriate word in each word.

1. The hair-drier is fitted with a three point cable/ plug/ socket.
2. Don't touch that wire! It's live/ lively/ living.
3. This small vacuum cleaner is motivated/ powered/ run by batteries.
4. The set wouldn't work because there was a faulty connection/ joint/ link.
5. I can't use my drill here. The lead/ plug/ wire isn't long enough.
6. Turn off the mains first in case you get a/ an impact/ jolt/ shock.
7. Oh dear the lights have gone off! The cable/ fuse/ safety must have gone.
8. Can you lend me that cassette? I want to record/ transcribe/ write it.
9. The appliance is powered by a small electric engine/ machine/ motor.
10. Jim has just started work as an electric/ electrical/ electricity engineer.

V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In order to investigate the actual needs for improving the vocabulary skill of engineering students through learning approaches, questionnaires are given to 70 students. They have positive attitude towards this survey questions. They are adult learners (17- 20). The students

have been learning English in their early age. According to survey, they have difficulties in reading and understanding text due to unfamiliar new words. They are in favour of memorizing and using dictionary for new word. Most students are also interested in online vocabulary test. However, some students like guessing meaning from context.

For the students, it is very important to refresh their learned words. By doing like that, they can recall the words and its uses or sample sentences. If they understand the words deeply, they can make their vocabulary grow exponentially. In learning vocabulary, the students need to set a habit for improving vocabulary knowledge in their daily life.

VI. CONCLUSION

The author would like to help the students' learning vocabulary in effective ways. Therefore, this research paper is conducted. Some teaching and learning steps are presented in this paper. Moreover, the learners should know the importance of vocabulary learning as an essential part in foreign language learning. The teachers should have a peer consideration for the learners' level and characteristics and the value of the techniques for the learners before they start a new area. Learners' age, level of education as well as English proficiency, etc. may affect their language acquisition. The learners should be equipped with the idea of what vocabulary is and how to achieve comprehensive acquisition. For English teachers, it is not an easy way to increase students' vocabulary competence in the classroom. By reviewing their responses, the teacher should consider many strategies of teaching. The strategies that are used should be able to make students feel comfortable and enjoyed in the classroom and also should be able to encourage and motivate them to learn.

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