

THE IMPORTANCE OF VOCABULARY IN THE CLASSROOM AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE EFFECTIVE WAY OF ENGLISH VOCABULARY TEACHING IN ELT

Arafat Useini, page 81-111

ABSTRACT

Vocabulary is a crucial component in language learning and of critical importance to the typical language learner. If the student lacks the vocabulary, he will be unsuccessful to function in any particular communication. Of course, we do not insist that the vocabulary is the whole story. Also the grammar or structure of a language is important. The need to teach system of the language is obvious, as grammatical knowledge allows us to generate sentences. However, we must have words that we wish to express ourselves in any particular. Unfortunately the importance of vocabulary teaching and learning in EFL has been neglected. Teachers assume that their students will learn words incidentally. It is thought that the vocabulary expansion will happen through the practice of other language skills. Therefore, teachers need to balance vocabulary teaching with grammar and other language skills so they will make sure that they are not neglecting any aspect of language learning. Teachers need to be aware of and expand vocabulary teaching techniques. This article deals with some of the ways the vocabulary is taught at schools. It also provides with some of the favorable vocabulary teaching activities and techniques for the students of English Language. Some teachers give their native language translation of the new words when teaching vocabulary. But there are teachers who use a variety of techniques to communicate meaning of new words without recourse to the native language. The best way of developing any learner's vocabulary acquisition is to help the students encounter it in situations and contexts which are as authentic as possible, without causing the learners to be overwhelmed and frustrated by the quantity and difficulty of the new material. This study will be carried out with questionnaire administered to 20 English language teachers who have been teaching at different high schools in North Macedonia. Techniques used by teachers should provide creative ways for students to use the new vocabulary in meaningful and interesting context. So the purpose of vocabulary teaching techniques will be to develop the learner's command of target language vocabulary.

Keywords: Vocabulary, Vocabulary Teaching Techniques, implications, ELT, words.

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INTRODUCTION:

The importance of vocabulary teaching is neglected by most of the language teachers. Gairns and Redman (1986:1) state that “in recent years, vocabulary has not received the recognition it deserves in the classroom”. Morgan and Rinvulcri (1986:3) state that “it is curious to reflect that so little importance has been paid to how L2 learners learn words”. Its neglect is in part due to the prior emphasis given to grammatical knowledge about the language. Vocabulary is given to students when learning structures, but is frequently not a main focus for learning itself. The method used in vocabulary teaching in Macedonia is not very effective so the aim of this study is to present teachers with a variety of teaching techniques and activities which can be used appropriately in teaching vocabulary to the students of intermediate level. This study aims to describe the current status of vocabulary .

A language teacher needs to find systematic ways of helping learners in building vocabulary. Scrivener (1994:75) states that “vocabulary is very important and needs to be dealt with systematically”. Celce-Murcia and Rosensweig (1979:256) state that “it is the teacher’s ability to arouse in his or her students a genuine interest in vocabulary”. Teachers have a responsibility to find out how well they have taught vocabulary or how much improvement their students have made in learning. In order to teach vocabulary successfully, teachers should spare enough time and make use of a variety of techniques and materials, which will meet their students’ needs and expectations .

Concept of learning can be defined as permanent change in a behavioral tendency resulted with reinforced practice. Brown (1994:7) defines learning as “acquiring or getting of knowledge of a subject or a skill by study, experience or instruction”.

Another concept which should not be kept apart from learning is ‘teaching’. Teaching can be defined as guiding and facilitating learning, enabling learners to learn, setting the conditions for learning. Brown (1994:7) defines teaching as “showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instructions, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand”.

Methodology

This study is concerned with assessing teachers’ attitudes toward vocabulary teaching. It deals with some of the ways the vocabulary is taught at schools. As recommendation the author will provide some of the favorable vocabulary teaching activities and techniques for the English

learning students. The data provided from the questionnaire represent the present status of vocabulary teaching.

In this study, the procedure has been conducted step by step. First, the related literature on the importance of vocabulary teaching has been reviewed. Next, the questionnaire is administered to the teachers consists of thirteen questions.

Scope of the Study

This study will be carried out with questionnaire administered to 20 English language teachers who have been teaching at different high schools in North Macedonia. The data provided from the questionnaire represent the present status of vocabulary teaching in North Macedonia.

Vocabulary and Language Skills

Reading has the most efficient role in vocabulary learning. Coady and Huckin (1997:2) confirm that “vocabulary learning has had a long synergistic association with reading”. If we do not understand the text’s vocabulary, we will not be able to comprehend it. Reading comprehension is affected by textually relevant background knowledge and application of general reading strategies, such as predicting the content of the text, guessing unknown words in context, making inferences, recognizing the type of text, and text structure and grasping the main idea of the paragraph. Reading comprehension is strongly related to vocabulary knowledge than to the other components of reading . Chall (in Nation,2001;144) confirms that “vocabulary knowledge can help reading and reading can contribute to vocabulary growth”.

Teachers need to use reading texts that it is not easy for them in order to teach words effectively. Carver (in Nation, 2001;148) argues that “for learners to use reading to increase their vocabulary size, they need to read material that is not easy for them, otherwise they will meet few unknown words”.

The major way in which vocabulary knowledge is increased is by learning through context. Nation and Coady (1988:102) defines context as “morphological , syntactic and discourse information in a given text which can be classified and described in terms of general features”.

Learners guess the meaning of a new word from context. “Students must be told not to panic when they encounter a new word and they must be encouraged to develop skill in guessing the meaning of new vocabulary from context.”(Twaddel, 1973;61). In order to make good guesses, students “should know about 98% of the words in a text, for this a student/learner would need a sight vocabulary

of about 5.000 word families (8.000 lexical items)”(Coady and Huckin, 1997;2). Laufer (in Coady and Huckin,1997;2) concludes that “a large sight vocabulary is indispensable to good L2 reading and vocabulary guessing”.

Nation and Coady (1988:102) clarify the meaning of sight vocabulary need in context as “...a good reader has a sufficient command over the language so that words are recognized automatically—sight vocabulary-or recognized in context”.

Vocabulary learning from interviewing, speaking, and writing has received much less attention than learning through reading, but vocabulary is obviously necessary for listening, speaking, and writing skills as well.

In the teaching of writing many teachers focus on the grammatical correctness of a composition. But it looks like that lexis may be the element requiring more attention. Ellis (in Schmitt, 2000;155) states that “lexical errors tend to impede comprehension more than grammatical errors, and native-speaking judges tend to rate lexical errors as more serious than grammatical errors”. Santos (in Nation, 2001;177) supports that “lexical errors were rated as the most serious in EFL students’ writing by university professors”. Students or learners during writing often use basic vocabulary whereas a good native speaking writer would use more precise lower frequency words. Nation (2001: 178) states that “comparisons between native speakers’ and second language learners’ writing show not surprisingly that native speakers use a much wider range of vocabulary”.

Vocabulary Teaching Techniques

Learning vocabulary is seen as the crucial component for foreign language learner. Uno (2000:34) states that “learning vocabulary is an essential part of language learner”. Bowen and Marks (1994:106) state that “words are the basis of language and thus the basis for communication”.

Teachers should help learners develop their vocabulary and also improve their vocabulary use. Funk and Lewis (1970) state that “if your vocabulary is limited your chances of success are limited”. Thus, teachers should present new words systematically so that the learners can build or develop their vocabulary they need to express themselves in foreign language. To do this, teachers should remember that students learn by being actively involved in the lesson.

Some teachers give their native language translation of new words when teaching vocabulary and some other teachers use a variety of techniques to communicate meaning of new words without recourse to the native language. The best way of developing any

learner's vocabulary is to encounter it in situations and contexts which are as authentic as possible, without causing the learners to be overwhelmed and frustrated by the quantity and difficulty of the new material. Techniques used by teachers should provide creative ways for students to use the new vocabulary in meaningful and interesting context. So the purpose of vocabulary teaching techniques will be to develop the learner's command of target language vocabulary.

The teacher should develop techniques for different words so that learning words can be easy. Celce-Murcia and Rosensweig (1979:247) state that "it seems logical that different techniques are needed for teaching different item types: e.g, idioms, sets of related words, abstract words". Therefore, you will be advised not to rely on just one narrow technique which you have chosen but you might better employ two or more techniques for the same word or employ a single word teaching technique which will be rich enough so that different learners can respond or react to it in their own ways .

Several vocabulary teaching techniques for intermediate level will be viewed since this study is dealt with the students of intermediate level. Intermediate level is the level that the student's different needs to be taken into consideration. Students reaching this level are expected to have acquired quite a few vocabulary and developed some skills in order to express themselves in communication. There are techniques which the teacher can use in their classes with their explanations for intermediate level taken from various sources and experts. Using these techniques will depend on the cooperative spirit in the class. Our main expectation as the teacher is to see that all students make progress in learning and remembering words. The suggested activities are as follows.

Using Pictures and Flashcards

Using pictures and flashcards are very useful in conveying meaning and a very successful technique a teacher can try in her/his class. Pictures are very flexible teaching materials since they are imaginative. Pictures and flashcards are very fruitful for teaching concrete items of vocabulary such as, food or furniture, and certain areas of vocabulary such as places, professions, descriptions of peoples' actions and activities. They often involve student interaction. For example, a set of pictures illustrating sporting activities could be used as a means of presenting items such as skiing, sailing, climbing etc.

Using Realias (Real objects)

Realias are also very important in teaching vocabulary because they help learners retain the meaning of a word since they see and touch them and since they associate the sounds with the objects they see and touch. Celce-Murcia (in Pakkan,1997;314) suggests some of the used realias:

- large maps: to teach English names of the countries, regions, continents ,etc.
- puzzles: to reinforce vocabulary; interesting pictures puzzles for group work and oral discussion centered on guessing what the finished picture will look like.
- menus: to talk about food and how one orders food and plays for it in restaurant.
- a suitcase full of clothing: to teach the clothing vocabulary for common items and to practice certain count and noncount nouns.
- postcards, letters and stamps: to teach the vocabulary of correspondence and the post office.
- travel posters and brochures: to discuss means of transportation and travel vocabulary.
- money: to learn the vocabulary of currency, giving change, counting money, etc.
- a table setting: to discuss the vocabulary involved in the table ware and the eating habits of the people of the target language community.

Mime and Gestures

Mime and gestures are helpful and are used to supplement other ways of conveying meaning. When teaching an item such as ‘to swerve’ a teacher may build a situation to illustrate it, making use of the blackboard and gesture to reinforce the concept. Teachers are considered to be actors. They really need not to be great actors or actresses to make themselves into useful visuals but they do need self confidence and imagination. For example, if the learner wants to know the meaning of the word ‘agony’, the teacher, instead of giving unhelpful definition, can collapse on the table and roll around in exaggerated agony.

Using Drawings

Using drawings is effective and useful in conveying meaning and practicing new vocabulary and in reviewing newly learnt words. A teacher may not have enough skill in drawing but even a teacher without too much skill can represent objects on the board. If he/she

draws badly, a guessing game will ensure to determine what he actually has drawn. The teacher can stick drawings containing in itself words on the wall of the classroom. The students may not recall words, so the drawings on the wall may ensure him/her to remember it and keep these words in long term memory .

Using Tapescripts

Using tapescripts is another effective technique which can be used both in conveying meaning of new words and practicing new vocabulary. Tapescripts are an invaluable aid to the language learner and teacher and after blackboard, tapes are of most commonly used pieces of equipment in the classroom. Effectiveness of tapes are in that it makes possible for the learners to listen to English spoken words produced by a native speaker. In addition, it has function of taking words off the textbook page and let students hear how they sound in the mouths of native speakers.

Opposites

A word can be defined if the students know its opposite. ‘A brave man isn’t afraid’, ‘An ugly girl isn’t pretty’, ‘A plain girl isn’t pretty or ugly’ etc. So using this technique helps students produce opposites from given words. ‘**Diagonal opposites**’ activity is suggested by Morgan and Rinvulcri (1986:77).

Translation and Explanation

Translating a new word is in itself a useful technique. It is the simplest and clearest way of showing what a word means. But if we only give direct translation, students cannot see how the word is used in an English sentence. To show this we need to give explanations . This is a technique that is in fact often used by native speakers when they cannot think of the best word in a particular situation, they will approximate to it by giving a synonym or an explanation of it.

Using Dictionaries

Dictionaries are among the most readily available, widely used and cheapest learning resource that find their way into the classroom . Harmer (1991:175) states that “there is no better resource for the learner”. Summers (1988:111) states that “ dictionary use is valid activity for foreign learners of English”.

Learners who use dictionaries become more independent of the teacher, in which they continue learning outside the classroom and provide them considerable autonomy about the decisions which they make about their own learning.

Instead of using bilingual dictionaries, teachers should encourage their students to use monolingual dictionaries because usually as Harmer (1991:174) states “they do not provide sufficient information for the students to use”. Nation (2001:289) confirms that “monolingual learner’s dictionaries contain much more information about each word than bilingual dictionaries do, and some teachers recommend that bilingual dictionaries be used in conjunctions with monolingual dictionaries”.

Students Guess the Meaning of the Words by Form

The students can often guess the meaning of a word from its form. Many words are formed by adding prefixes and suffixes to the base word: root. Prefixes come at the beginning of the word and suffixes come at the end. If the students know the root, they can guess the meaning of longer words with the same root by identifying prefixes and suffixes.

Example : un **break** able

If the students know the meaning of the root **break**, the meaning of the prefix **un** (not), the meaning of the suffix **-able** (having the ability), thus will find the meaning of the whole word: “cannot be broken”.

Students Guess the Meaning From Context

Guessing from the context is the most important and widely technique used with which they increase their vocabulary. Teaching words alone is not recommended because students will have problems in figuring out its meaning. Wilf (1988:108) states that “it is hard to figure out the meanings of words when they stand alone”. Therefore, teachers need constantly put words in full sentences. Larsen-Freeman (1986:23) states that “vocabulary learning will become more naturally if students use it in full sentences, rather than memorizing word lists”.

Context can help us to guess the meaning of unknown words. Harmer (1991:156) states that “when we come across a word, then, and try to decipher its meaning we will have to look at the context in which it is used”.

Parts of the Body

This activity is suggested by Harmer (1991:164) and is for intermediate students. This activity is very effective since this is very useful for revising the vocabularies. Students in this activity are shown with a picture of a human body and they have to find the words for different parts of the human body. Harmer states that “they have

to find them from their own memories or from their peers”. It may be advantageous if the students are working in pairs for this activity. In this way, an unknown word will be known by other students.

Problem Solving

Problem solving is an activity which can be applied at intermediate and above level. It involves presenting the class with a problem that must be solved through small group discussions. The students are given a problem that requires them to rank a list of alternatives in terms of criteria given in the problem. Certain vocabulary items will be needed in order to talk about the problem. Before the students solve the problem, the teacher presents the necessary vocabulary. This activity is not a way to introduce the vocabulary, it is rather a way to allow the students to use it in a natural context after it has been explained. The actual method of presentation of the words is the general approach previously outlined.

Role Plays

The use of role plays are very important and can be extremely efficient in practicing vocabulary because they motivate student's interest. Role play is the dramatization of real-life situation in which students assume roles. They are asked to take on a particular role and to imagine themselves in that role in a particular situation. Briefly, it presents the students with a situation that must be interpreted and acted out by them. In doing the role playing, the students are likely to need certain vocabulary. These words can be introduced by the teacher before the dramatization and will subsequently be used during the role playing, in the context of the situation.

Creating Context

We can teach the meaning of words by showing or including them in context or situation which the students deduce its meaning. Haycraft (1978:48) confirms that “the only way to teach the meaning of many abstract words is by creating a context or situation from which the students can then deduce the meaning”. For example, we can teach the meaning of ‘brave’ by creating a character who is brave: ‘There was a house on fire and he went in and saved a girl on the top floor’. The teacher can also use a character known to his or her student, from a newspaper or from history.

Causes or Effects

Causes or Effects suggested by Sökmen (in Nation, 2001;105) is an effective vocabulary practice activity that teachers can use in their

classes. In this activity learners are given words or phrases which they have to see as ‘causes or effects’. They have then to think of causes for the effects or effects to go with the causes. For example learners could be given a phrase like **medical consultation** and they could think of the causes *illness, pain, tiredness*, and the effects *medicine, hospital* and *reassurance*.

Semantic Feature Analysis

The teacher may use an activity suggested by Nation (2001:103) which is called “semantic feature analysis” and can be used in practicing and in revising the vocabulary items at intermediate level. This activity can be used to show the relationships of words and helps students in revising words. Therefore, this activity can be used when learners are already familiar with most of the items being compared. Here is an example from Rudzka (in Nation, 2001;103) where the learners have to mark the boxes in the grid where the element of meaning relates to the particular word:

	Because Unexpected	Because difficult to believe	so as to cause confusion	so as to leave one helpless to act or think
Surprise	*			
Astonish		*		
Amaze			*	
Astound				*
Flabbergast				*

Using Collocation Activity

Using collocation activities in the classroom is essential in teaching vocabulary since they encourage students to learn words in combinations rather than as a single items. Usually, collocation activities get learners to match collocates with given items. For example, the learners have two lists of items that they must match up. Collocation activities can be done as a group or class activity with learners drawing on their differing experience to suggest collocates for a given word. Wright (1998: 81) suggests an activity

which is called “**words that go together**” in which its aim is to raise awareness of collocations to encourage students to learn words in combinations rather than as single items. To start this activity, the teacher makes a copy of the ‘words that go together’ worksheet for each student. The students are given copies of the worksheet and have to complete it in pairs. For example: They are to match one adjective from list A with a noun from list B to make logical combinations with the instruction ‘How many combinations can you make: You can use the words more than once’.

A close cold milky mild free good long
B hair memory country curry weather
 coffee friend

Finally they are asked which combinations they found in the dictionary and where -under the noun or adjective or both. Students should be encouraged to record new words in collocation in their vocabulary books.

Spot the Odd Word Out

This activity which is called “spot the odd word out” is suggested by Nunan (1998:131) “are designed to develop learners’ sensitivity to semantic networks”. The students are presented a handout with groups of words. There are four words in each group. Then they are asked to spot the odd word out in the following words, for example: tourist, visitor, traveler, student. Thus, in this example, ‘student’ is the odd word because tourist, traveler, visitor, have something in common among them.

Process

This activity suggested by Gairns and Redman (1986:154-155) can be found very interesting and can motivate students of intermediate level. Students, in this activity, are provided with five or more sentences of any situation or event. The teacher writes these sentences on the blackboard in random order. Next, students working in pairs have to discuss the ‘correct’ order for the given activities. When a pair has finished, they are asked to find another pair and compare answers. Finally, the teacher asks one pair to tell the class the order they have arrived at. To illustrate this we can give an example from Life Cycle:

- you get married
- you fall in love with someone
- you get to know someone
- you have a baby

- you go out with someone
- you get divorced
- you get engaged

Differences

This activity is suggested by Morgan and Rinvoluceri (1986:71) that students of intermediate level can find it very interesting. The teacher prepares a list of ten or twelve words which refer to very similar but nevertheless distinct objects. Here is an example of such a set :

pen telescope bullet scroll cigarette
telegraph pole bicycle pump log car aerial pencil
rolling pin lipstick

To start this activity, the teacher puts each word on a separate card. Each student is given a word card. Working individually they write two or three sentences on a separate sheet of paper, describing the object on the card, but not its use. As they are writing, teacher takes their cards and sticks up the complete set(s) round the walls. Then he/she takes in the student's sheets and shuffles them. He/she gives them out to his students, making sure that no one receives his or her own sheet. The students are asked to match the descriptions they have with the words round the walls. Next, students circulate and read the matched words and their descriptions. Finally, the students grouped in three are asked to choose three or four items from the word set and then to discuss the differences between these words.

Suggesting Associations

In this activity, which is suggested by Nation (2001:105), learners are given four or five words. They work in small groups to list associates for those words. They then scramble the associated words and give them to another group who have to classify them under the same words. Then the two groups compare and discuss their classifications.

Finding Examples

This activity is suggested by Woodward (in Nation, 2001;105) which can be useful for learners working out with words. Before activity begins, learners are given a list of categories like, *food*, *household objects*, *numbers*, *jobs* etc. Each learner chooses or is given one category. The learner then has to write as many words as possible

under the category heading on a piece of paper. After a set of time, the learners pass their papers to the next learner who then tries to add words not already listed. The learner has to check the spelling with a dictionary and then these sheets become a class dictionary that is added to as new words are met .

Semantic Mapping

Teachers who use semantic mapping technique can achieve a success in teaching vocabulary because as Zaid (1995:6) states “students who use semantic mapping manifest considerable improvement in vocabulary development”. Semantic mapping can be defined as “a visual representation of knowledge, a picture of conceptual relationships”(Antonacci, 1991:174). Semantic mapping involves the teacher and the learners working together to build up on the blackboard a visual framework or diagram of connections between ideas. In this activity, learners work in groups or with the teacher to make a semantic map based on a target word. Its importance is in that the teacher enters into a dialogue with the learners, encourages them and supports their participation in the dialogue .

Persuasion

This activity is suggested by Malley and Duff (1982:171) which can be used at intermediate level. Each person writes down a single word on a slip of paper. The slips are folded, collected and mixed together. The teacher divides them into pairs and each person is given a slip of paper. The pairs now start up a free conversation, in which each partner tries to get the other to say the word written on his or her own slip of paper. That is, if A has the word glacier and B has the word warnish, A will try to get B to say glacier and B will try to get A to say warnish. This exercise continues until each partner has been introduced to say the word of the other.

Adverb Brainstorm

This activity which is suggested by Morgan and Rinvoluceri (1986:75) is useful in practicing vocabulary and helps students brainstorm their ideas in working with words. In this activity, students are asked in groups of three to write down all the ways they can think of that people talk, e.g. *grumpily, softly, cheekily*. To do this they have three minutes. The teacher has three groups of three come together and enrich each other’s list. The teacher must say **Hello !** as flatly as he can. Then the students are asked how many different ways it could be said. The student is asked to choose a particular way of saying **Hello !** and to say it that way to the rest of the group, who should then guess the appropriate adverb. This exercise

can be done with many different verbs, e.g. walk / listen / bake / sit / eye .

Using Reading Texts

Using reading texts in class is the most widely used and one of the most important source in which language learners at any level can learn and practice vocabulary. So teachers should use reading texts extensively in language teaching situation. Texts have the great advantage of contextualizing new vocabulary items for the learner and an interesting reading text makes the language more memorable. "Vocabulary growth can be provided if learners read large quantities of comprehensible texts" (Nation ,2001:149).

Look, Remember and Complete the Set

This creative activity is suggested by Morgan and Rinvolucri (1986:22) and can be used at any level. For preparation, the teacher selects twenty five or thirty words from a text which he wishes the class to read. He has to set out words he has chosen as a word jumble and prepares sufficient copies for each person in the group. To start this activity, the teacher gives out the word jumbles face down to each member of the group. The students are told that they will have 15 seconds to look at the jumbles and then to turn over their sheet and read. When the time limit is up, they are told to turn the jumbles face down again . Then they are asked, working individually, write out all the words they remember. Then they are asked to write down more words they think fit the scene or action suggested by the words they have remembered. Then they have to discuss in pairs the words they have written down and the text that they imagine contains them. Finally, the teacher gives out copies of the text.

Predicting and Activating Vocabulary

This activity is given by Gairns and Redman (1986:119-120) and can be used at intermediate level, too. The teacher pre-teaches the '**fringe benefits**' and then writes the following fringe benefits on the blackboard. The teacher asks the students to explain or guess what they are, any new item can be explained:

1. Staff canteen
2. Cash incentives e.g. bonus payments , overtime opportunities
3. Pension scheme
4. Longer holidays

5. Flexible working hours

The teacher puts the students into small groups and asks them to decide on their order of priority for these benefits. When they have reached a consensus, they read the text and answer the given questions.

Please Do Not Read This Notice

This activity is proposed by Morgan and Rinvolutri (1986:41) and can be used at any level. For preparation the teacher chooses and makes copies of a text that is a little harder than the students are accustomed to reading. He/she must be sure that his/her students have supply of coloured pencils. To start this, the teacher gives out the copies of the text. They are asked to look through the text and to cross out any words or phrases that are unfamiliar or are being used in an unfamiliar way. To do this, they should use a colour coded scheme , e.g.

black : words I don't know
 green : words I recognize, but still don't understand
 red : words my teacher probably didn't know yesterday

Finally, the students in groups of two or four are asked to compare their crossed-out words. Aim of using this activity is to get the gist or to make sense of what is left of the text.

Teaching Vocabulary With Songs

Songs often provide good pronunciation practice and unconscious repetition of useful words and phrases. Students often want to know the words of English pop songs and to study these in class can be highly motivating. Singing produces a lot of laughter and enjoyment. Thus, the teachers introduce songs in the classroom from time to time. An example which the teacher can have his/her learners practice vocabulary with song is suggested by Scrivener (1994:107). The teacher chooses a song and makes a copy of the text with a number of missing words. In class, the students listen to the song and attempt to fill in the missing words.

Teachers should choose a song according to their student's level, needs, and interest.

Teaching Vocabulary With Games

Using vocabulary games in the classroom is an effective teaching technique because students can learn words easily and

joyfully as they are playing a game. Vocabulary games have become very important because games are associated in student's mind with fun and relaxation, so playing games in class is welcomed by most students and due to the emphasis on the importance of real communication. Therefore students are more motivated if they are playing vocabulary games. McCallum (1980:IX) states that:

Students, in the informal atmosphere of game play, are less self-conscious and therefore more apt to experiment and freely participate in using the foreign language. In addition, games automatically stimulate student interest: a properly introduced game can be one of the highest motivating techniques.

According to McCallum (1980:IX) the reason for including games in the language class is that they focus student attention on vocabulary items. Dawson (1984:53) states that "many games involve concentration, repetition, and a good memory – three good ingredients for learning". So teachers often use this important technique in their classes, so that their learners can learn effectively by practicing words with fun and relaxation. The games presented below can be used by the teachers in their classes.

Mixed Letters

This activity is helpful to students with spelling difficulties. Teams are given letters card, each card containing one letter of the target word thus: **R E C E I V E**. The letters-cards are given out in random order and the players have to rearrange them in the correct order. The first team to do this correctly wins.

I Went Into Town

This is very useful game for revising vocabulary and is especially good for work on countable and uncountable nouns. In this example, the teacher specifies 'food' as the vocabulary area. For example, the first learner says *I went into town and I bought an apple*. The next learner must repeat the sentence and add a second item beginning with the next letter of the alphabet, e.g. *I went into town and I bought an apple and a banana*. The third then says *I went into town and I bought an apple, a banana and some carrots*, etc. The rest of the rules can be made by the teacher.

What Do You Remember

Students are provided with a variety of objects to observe, without being told why, after which they are asked to write down

the names of as many objects as they can recall. The teacher uses a colored slide or wall-chart in order to display the objects which the students are to observe .

After the students have compiled their lists, the teacher shows the slide or pictures again and the student have to check their work as a part of a whole–class activity.

Connections

This has to be played quickly. Each player in turn says a word which he associates with the word given by the previous player. Sometimes the teacher or another player may ask the person who has just spoken to explain the connection he has made. For example :

Player 1 : Water

Player 2 : Tap

Player 3 : Shoulder

Teacher : Why did you say shoulder ?

Player 3 : Because I thought of the phrase , ‘A tap on the shoulder!’

Key Word

The class is divided into two teams and two students are chosen to represent each team (Team A and Team B). So there are four players: A1 and A2 ; B1 and B2 . The players are at the front of the class. For example, we may use the word ‘shoe’. The players facing the teacher have to help their partners facing the class to guess the target word by calling out a word associated with the target word. So the game might go like this :

Teacher : holds up a shoe

Player A1 : foot

Player A2 : walk (wrong guess)

Player B1 : wear

Player B2 : stocking (wrong guess)

Player A1 : leather

Player A2 : shoe (wins the point)

Obviously, as the number of association builds up, it becomes easier to guess the target word.

Intruder

This game can be played individually or in small teams. The teacher puts groups of words in the same semantic field on the

blackboard, but in each group there is one which does not belong, for example :

table , chair , cup , sofa , bed

Cup is obviously the ‘intruder’, because it is not a piece of furniture. The players must spot the intruders and explain why they do not belong.

The Preposition Game

For this game the teacher prepares ten cards , each bearing one of the following prepositions, for example: *at , by , for , in , on , of , with , after , to , about*. Then he/she prepares cards which bear incomplete sentences such as:

*Are you afraid _____ dogs ?’
I agree _____ you .*

*I’m bad _____ tennis .
We were sad to hear _____ your illness.*

There should be at least three sentences for each preposition used in the game. The cards are distributed to students who have two minutes to choose the correct preposition for their sentence. They should go and stand next to the appropriate student.

Evaluation of Questionnaire Administered to English Language Teachers

A questionnaire has been administered to 20 teachers who have been teaching English Language in Gostivar, North Macedonia.

Item 1 . Importance of Methods and Approaches

Table 1 .

	Number out of 20	%
Yes	20	100.0
No	0	0.0

According to the responses to **Item 1**, all of the teachers believe that teachers should know the use of methods and understand what they stand for.

Item 2. The Use Of Methods and Approaches
Table 2.

	Number Out of 20	%
a. Never	0	0.0
b. Rarely	7	33.3
c. Occasionally	6	30
d. Often	5	25
e. Almost always	2	10
f. Always	3	15

In this item, teacher participants are asked whether they make use of methods and approaches that they have learnt as teacher trainees and apply them in their classes. According to the responses, 7 teachers 'rarely' make use of methods and approaches whereas 6 teachers 'occasionally', 5 teachers 'often', 2 teachers 'almost always' and 3 teachers 'always'.

Item 3. Vocabulary is important for language
Table 3.

	Number out of 20	%
a. Yes	18	90
b. No	2	10

18 participants believe that vocabulary is important for any language situation whereas 2 participants do not think so.

Item 4. Vocabulary teaching is neglected at secondary schools
Table 4.

	Number Out of 20	%
a. Yes	15	75
b. No	5	25

According to the responses, 19 teacher participants believe that vocabulary teaching is neglected at high schools, whereas 5 participants do not.

Item 5 Coursebooks containing sufficient vocabulary teaching exercises

Table 5.

	Number Out of 20	%
a. Quite sufficient	2	10.0
b. Sufficient	8	40.0
c. Insufficient	9	45
d. Rather insufficient	1	5

In this item, teacher participants are asked whether they think that the coursebooks used at secondary schools contain sufficient vocabulary teaching exercises. The number of respondents who answered for this item are distributed as 2 'quite sufficient' responses, 8 'sufficient', 9 'insufficient' and 1 'rather insufficient' response .

Item 6. Sparing enough time to teach necessary vocabulary while teaching other language skills

Table 6 .

	Number Out of 20	%
a. Never	1	5
b. Rarely	4	20
c. Occasionally	5	25
d. Often	5	25
e. Almost always	4	20
f. Always	1	5

In this item, in search for finding whether the teacher participants spare enough time to teach necessary vocabulary while teaching other language skills, they responded 1 'never', 4 'rarely', 5 'occasionally', 5 'often', 4 'almost always' and 1 'always' responses .

Item 7. Number of selected words that needs to be taught in a class hour

Table 7 .

	Number out of 20	%
a. 1-7	6	30
b. 8-10	10	50
c. 11-20	3	20
d. 21-30	2	10.0

The number of respondents who choose 1 –7 words that needs to be taught in a class hour is 6 . However, 10 of them choose 8-10 words, 3 of them 11-20 words and 2 of them choose 21-30 words .

Item 8. Using First or Target Language
Table 8.

	Number out of 20	%
a . I always explain words' meaning in their first language .	9	45
b . Sometimes I make use of the first language but I keep it under tight control .	6	30
c . I don't make any use of their first language. I present the new word in the target language .	5	25

As observed from the table above, 9 teacher participants explain the meaning of words in their students' first language. However, 6 participants make use of the first language but they keep it under tight control and 5 participants state that they do not make any use of their first language, they present the new word in the target language.

Item 9 . Importance of Using Dictionaries
Table 9 .

	Number out of 20	%
A . Yes	18	90.0
B . No	2	10.0

According to the responses in this item, 18 teacher participants believe that dictionaries are very helpful learning resources for a foreign language learner whereas 2 teachers do not think so.

Item 10 . Using Bilingual or Monolingual Dictionaries
Table 10 .

	Number out of 20	%
a. Bilingual	16	80.0
b. Monolingual	4	20.0

According to the findings in this item, while there are 16 teacher participants whose students use bilingual dictionaries, there are only 4 teachers whose students use monolingual dictionaries in the classroom.

Item 11 . Ways of Teaching Vocabulary
Table 11.

	Number out of 20	%
a. I don't employ any special vocabulary activities	12	60
I don't rely on just one technique	9	45
b. The students learn words by inferring from context	15	75
c. The students are interested in learning words via visuals	11	55

Because the teacher respondents could tick more than one choice, a b and c has been calculated separately.

Among the teacher respondents, 12 of them do not employ any special vocabulary reinforcement activities and 9 of them do not rely on just one technique, they use different vocabulary teaching techniques.

15 participants believe that their students learn best when words are presented in texts and when their meanings are inferred from context.

11 teachers believe that their students are interested in learning words via visuals.

Item 12 . Vocabulary Teaching Techniques
Table 12.

	Number Out of 20	%
a. pictures and flashcards	18	90
b. realias	6	30
c. mime and gestures	9	45
d. drawings	5	25
e. tapes	9	45
f. opposites	13	65

g. translation and explanation	19	90
h. dictionaries	14	70
i. guessing the meaning by the form of the word	6	45
j. guessing from context	19	95
k. problem solving activities	9	45
l. role plays	9	45
m. causes or effects	5	25
n. semantic feature analysis	4	20
o. processes	6	30
p. associations	9	45
q. collocations	13	75
r. semantic maps	5	25
s. brainstorming activities	9	45
t. reading texts	17	85
u. songs	5	25
v. vocabulary games	5	25

Because the teacher respondents could tick more than one choice, each point has been calculated separately .

In search for finding how many techniques teacher participants make use while teaching vocabulary, 7 techniques have been received which are above %50 and 15 techniques which are below %50 (see also Table 12). Those which are above %50 are the following techniques : using pictures and flashcards, using opposites, using translation and explanation, using dictionaries, guessing from context, using collocations and using reading texts. Those which are below %50 are the following techniques : using real objects, using mime and gestures, using drawings, using tapes, guessing the meaning by the form of the word, using problem solving activities, using role plays, using causes or effects, using semantic feature analysis, using processes, using associations, using semantic maps , using brainstorming activities , using songs and vocabulary games.

Item 13 . Comment on the Appropriateness of the Present Vocabulary Teaching

Table 13.

	Number Out of 20	%
a. Excellent	1	5
b. Good	4	20
c. Satisfactory	5	25
d. Fair	7	35
e. Poor	3	15

In this item, the teacher respondents were asked to make comment on the appropriateness of the present vocabulary teaching situation at secondary schools. According to the responses, only 1 commented for 'excellent'. However 4 of them marked 'good', 5 'satisfactory', 7 'fair' and 3 teacher participants commented as 'poor'.

Interpretation of the Results

There seem to be some inconsistencies in the results interpreted from the questionnaire administered to the teachers. It may be because teachers have selected options from the questionnaire by having their own perceptions in mind rather than facts.

According to the data gathered from teachers of English language some interpretation can be stated as the following:

Although all of the participants believe that teachers should know the use of methods and understand what they stand for, the number of teachers who always make use of methods and approaches which they have learnt at university and apply them in their classes is small. This eye-catching part shows an important lack of use of methods and approaches on the side of teachers in the classrooms. Maybe the reason is that during in-service training they had forgotten about what the principals of methods and approaches are and which of those methods can be used where or when appropriate. Maybe English language teachers do not organize meetings and at least share knowledge for instance, about the use of methods and approaches.

Another eye-catching part shows that, although nearly all of the respondents think that vocabulary is important for any language situation, again most of them agree that vocabulary teaching is neglected at secondary schools. This proves the evidence that vocabulary teaching is not receiving the importance it requires.

%50 of teacher respondents think that the coursebooks which are being used at secondary schools are insufficient at teaching vocabulary which reveals another negligence of vocabulary use in the coursebooks. Maybe they think that coursebooks should be supplemented with additional vocabulary exercises and activities.

Majority of them accept that they do not spare enough time to teach necessary vocabulary while teaching other language skills. In this part, it is seen that enough time is given to four language skills, however, the case is not the same to teach necessary vocabulary which also proves that teachers are neglecting its use.

Majority of teachers choose 8 to 10 words that needs to be taught in a class hour which is not appropriate to their students' memorization level. Students may not remember words later which are taught more than seven words in a class hour (Gairns and Redman,1986;87). Therefore, the best number of words to teach is 1 to 7 words in a class hour.

Although the students are at intermediate level, majority of teachers explain the meanings of words in their students' mother tongue. If teachers constantly present words in the first language, students will be bored of memorizing long lists of words, and as a result this will cause difficulty to function in any particular communication. Thus, it is better to keep the first language under tight control and present the word in the target language.

Nearly all of the teachers agree on the importance of using dictionaries as helpful learning resources for a foreign language learner. But bilingual dictionaries are used in most of the teachers' classes, although the students are at this level. Using bilingual dictionaries, students cannot progress effectively at intermediate, because bilingual dictionaries are appropriate for elementary level and monolingual dictionaries are more appropriate to be used at intermediate level.

Each choice (a,b,c,) in **item 11** has been calculated separately since the teacher respondents could tick more than one choice. Majority of them do not employ any special vocabulary reinforcement activities. Their students are learning from their books only. To follow activities which are included in the books only is an inappropriate way of teaching because these activities can be effective for a group of learners whereas ineffective for another group of learners. Therefore, the teacher needs to create other activities or modify and supplement the same activity so that each student will learn effectively. The number of respondents who use different vocabulary teaching techniques is small. Also, more than %50 of teachers think that their students learn best when words are presented in texts and when their meanings are inferred from context; and that their students are interested in learning words via visuals.

Also, in **item 12** each point has been calculated separately since teachers could tick more than one choice. Majority of teachers make use of only 7 (pictures and flashcards, opposites, translation and explanation, dictionaries, guessing from context, collocations, and reading texts) out of 22 suggested techniques and activities. It is seen that the use of vocabulary teaching techniques and activities are restricted which, as mentioned before, can respond only to a limited number of students needs.

In the question about the comment on the appropriateness of the present vocabulary teaching situation at secondary schools, % 50 of teacher respondents stated as appropriate and %50 as inappropriate. It is seen that the teachers are suspicious about the present vocabulary teaching situation, too.

Conclusion

Vocabulary is very important for foreign language learner and for any language situation. With the vital importance of vocabulary, special emphasis should be laid on its learning and teaching. Zimmerman (1997:5) emphasizes this importance as “vocabulary is central to language and of crucial importance to the typical language learner”. In order to express ourselves in any particular communication we need enough vocabulary. Without vocabulary we cannot communicate. Learning vocabulary in long lists are not suggested since they are not advantageous and do not provide any efficient learning of students. Another objection of using such lists, is that, if the learners manage to eye-catch some words from those disorganized lists, they only memorize these words in isolation but they cannot use in context. In such cases learners forget the word and after a period of time can not remember it. It is obvious that the best way of learning vocabulary is by using words in context. Hulstijn (1992:113) suggests that “the new words can be best learnt when presented in texts and when their meaning must be inferred from context by learners themselves”. Learners should know the word meanings appropriately and also should keep in mind the relationship of words. Otherwise, learners will face with problems of using words in context appropriately. They need to learn new words in order to produce something in the target language. Learners possess strategies in learning words. When encountered, they can note down the word, then they can use each word in a sentence. After a period of time they should check whether they are remembered or not. This process of learning is useful since it provides learners with building their own learning systematically. Also this strategy is helpful since it can be done at their leisure at home and will learn words they will need, of course if they have reason to do. The learner’s first language has a crucial importance in learning second or foreign language

vocabulary. If learners know words well in his/her first language, they will learn words in foreign language with ease and enthusiasm.

Suggestions and implications

Teachers of English language should present variety of activities that will improve students with vocabulary growth. Teachers should also attempt to select words which are interesting for their learners and provide them with ideas or guidance of how to learn more effectively. Teaching and learning are interconnected as they operate within the same framework. Teaching and learning vocabulary should always be in harmony. To do this, teachers should find other ways of teaching and should always bear student needs in mind and know how learners learn best.

Good learners of language often possess different techniques which help themselves learning the new vocabulary. Ellis (1995:409) maintains that “good language learners have plentiful techniques to help them learn and remember the forms and meanings of new words”.

Teacher is the language instructor and the instructor’s job is to find out the efficiencies and deficiencies of the course. If the teacher finds that the coursebook fails in teaching vocabulary teaching, they can modify the activities or supplement with additional vocabulary activities.

Language instructor’s can spare more time to teach necessary vocabulary, at least balance vocabulary teaching with other skills.

They should keep in mind the native language under control and often present the word in the target word. When at the intermediate level when present the word in the target language the student’s learning will be more memorable and they will be able to function in communication efficiently.

Teachers should not only depend on using coursebooks in the classroom. They should use supplementary activities to reinforce the learning.

The major way in which vocabulary knowledge can be increased is by learning through context. Therefore, teachers should always encourage their students guess the meaning from context.

Teachers can also explain the relationships between the words to their students. Making sense among words is important because they provide a bone teaching vocabulary.

Finally, their students should be advised and/or helped to discover best ways of storing and retrieving the vocabulary items.

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