

TEACHING AND LEARNING VOCABULARY

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ABSTRAK

Pembelajaran kosa kata telah mengalami beragam perlakuan dimana kadang dianggap penting kadang pula diabaikan bergantung pada metode, pendekatan atau paradigma pembelajaran bahasa yang dominan dari zaman ke zaman, hingga saat ini kembali mendapatkan posisi penting di bawah kerangka pendekatan komunikatif. Pembelajaran kosa kata disarankan agar berbasis frekuensi pemakaian, karena sebagian kata lebih sering muncul/dipakai daripada yang lain. Seal membagi proses pembelajaran kosa kata kepada tiga tahapan yang disingkat 3C: *Convey*, *Check* dan *Consolidate* yang sedapat mungkin menjamin penguasaan siswa atas kata-kata yang dipelajari. Sedangkan strategi belajar kosa kata terbagi atas: *Determining*, *Memory*, *Social*, *Cognitive* dan *Metacognitive* yang bisa dipakai untuk berbagai kondisi dan tujuan belajar, sekaligus memberikan kebebasan yang lebih besar kepada siswa untuk mengembangkan jumlah kosa katanya tanpa proses pembelajaran di kelas.

Kata-kata kunci: *Vocabulary*, *Teaching Techniques*, *Learning Strategies*

A. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is group of words that a person or a group of people know and regularly use in their language, which is commonly categorized in a few ways. It is the total number of words known in a particular², used in a particular way by a certain group of people regarding their language³. Contextually, Jobrack divides vocabulary into two categories: 1) academic vocabulary, words which are critical to understanding concepts taught in schools, and 2) high frequency words which are words commonly used in daily communication⁴. Then linguistically, vocabulary categories commonly known as part of speech: verbs, noun, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction and so on.

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²*Collins Cobuild Dictionary on CD Room*, (England: Harper Collins Publisher, 2006), p. 122.

³Ansarin, A. A., M. Zohrabi and S. Zeynaldi, "Language Learning Strategies and Vocabulary Size of Iranian EFL Learners. Theory and Practice in Language Studies", Vol. 2, No. 9, September 2012, p. 1841

⁴Jobrack, Beverlee, *Developing Academic Vocabulary*, STEM White Paper, 2011, p. 2.

In academic texts, words are used to present theories regarding certain field of studies. They provide more specific categories of words such as business, chemistry, and medical and so on, and then their meanings more widely presented in specific dictionaries such as dictionary of business, dictionary of medics and healthcare, dictionary of linguistics and so on. In daily communication words are used to express feelings, ideas and messages concerning our daily activities and needs, and texts in the society such as: magazines, newspaper, novels and short stories contain words with common meanings. Part of academic vocabulary can be not used in daily communication or if they are used, they usually have different meanings from the sense that people usually understand in the society. Appearance frequency of academic vocabulary is lower than common words.

It is generally agreed that vocabulary be the most fundamental component of language, communication and acquisition. It plays a significant role for communication⁵ and acquisition primarily in the initial stages of learning⁶, copes the central role in contextualized meaningful language⁷, provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read and write⁸, and labels objects, actions, and ideas without which people cannot convey the intended meaning⁹. Moreover, communication will stop if people hear or read words that people fail to¹⁰. In conclusion, vocabulary is undeniably the fundamental component for language mastery and communication.

Furthermore, researches have recently supported the urgency of vocabulary mastery in learning language and communication. Ansari, Zeynaldi and Mohrabi¹¹ from University of Tabriz, Iran, had found that vocabulary size related to students English

⁵Yagoub Zahedi and Mortaza Abdi, *The Impact of Imagery Strategy on EFL learners' Vocabulary Learning*, (Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 69, 2012), p. 2264.

⁶Richards, Jack C. and Willy A. Renandya, *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2004), p. 255.

⁷Brown, Douglas H, *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents, 1994), p. 365.

⁸Richards, Jack C. and Willy A. Renandya, *Op. Cit.*, p. 255.

⁹Ghazal, Lofti. *Learning Vocabulary EFL Context through Vocabulary Learning Strategies*. Novitas-ROYAL, Vol.: 1(2), pp.84-91. 2007., p. 84.

¹⁰Yagoub Zahedi and Mortaza Abdi, *Op. Cit.*, p. 2264.

¹¹Ansarin, A. A, M. Zohrabi and S. Zeynaldi, *Language Learning Strategies and Vocabulary Size of Iranian EFL Learners*. Theory and Practice in Language Studies, Vol. 2, No. 9, pp. 1841-1848, September 2012.

proficiency level. Besides, Noor and Amir¹² from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia had found that the higher vocabulary mastery of the students, the higher is their reading comprehension achievement. In short, mastery of language and communication ability is closely related to the amount of vocabulary that someone possesses.

Linguists believe that communication cannot be satisfied without mastery of words, at least the most useful groups. Pawley and Snyder (in Nation)¹³ indicate that if learners want to use language fluently and want to sound like native speakers, they need to be able to put words together quickly in typical combinations. Additionally, Palmer (1925, in Nation)¹⁴ has suggested that the most fundamental guiding principle (for) those who are anxious to be proficient in foreign language conversation ... is 'memorize perfectly the largest number of common and useful word-groups'. In brief, foreign language learning posits mastery of vocabulary in the prominent place, and it is suggested that words must be graded based on commonness, usefulness and frequency of use.

A number of measurements are made to explore words' size related to accomplishment of communication. Nation states that it is estimated that the average native speaker with a university education knows at least 20,000 word families. To cope well in English, a second language learner would need around 5,000 words and preferably 10,000 words¹⁵. Besides, Laufer (1992, in Hunt and Berglar)¹⁶ had found that knowing a minimum about 3000 words was required for effective reading at the university level, whereas knowing 5000 words indicated likely academic success. In short, vocabulary size determines the extent of one's communicative proficiency in learning second or foreign language.

Even though it is agreed that vocabulary possesses prominent position in language and communication, it has experienced emphasize and deemphasize periods due to the difference of methods and philosophy of language teaching dominating over

¹²Noor, Noorizah Mohd. And Zaini Amir. *Exploring the Vocabulary Learning Strategies of EFL Learners*. Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

¹³Nation, I. S. P., *Vocabulary*. In David Nunan (Ed). *Practical English Language Teaching*. Mc Graw Hill, Boston, 2003., p. 130.

¹⁴Nation, I. S. P., *Loc. Cit.*

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 137.

¹⁶Hunt, Alan and David Berglar. *Current Research in Teaching Vocabulary*. In Richards and Renandya (Ed). *Methodology in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004., p. 259.

time. From many centuries ago until the first decades of the last century, GTM provided balance diet of vocabulary and grammar¹⁷. After that, Reading Method also placed vocabulary teaching in a prominent position as means of reading¹⁸. And then, although Direct Method possessed almost similar principles to ALM, it gave emphasis on vocabulary mastery¹⁹. Contrary, when ALM dominated language teaching in late 1940s until 1960s, vocabulary teaching was kept into minimum size²⁰, which shifted the focus on the acquisition of the basic grammatical patterns and neglected vocabulary instruction²¹.

When ALM lost its popularity in the beginning of 1970s, attention to vocabulary as part of language instruction rose again under communicative paradigm. The Lexical Approach emerged in 1990s is generally more likely to be an extended approach for vocabulary instruction. For the beginning level, The Natural Approach in 1980s, also focuses on vocabulary acquisition. The shift to communicative methodologies which emphasis on contents, tasks or interaction by using language rather than formal study of it led to the development and empowerment of students' ability in communication. It is believed that one effective way to enhance it is by increasing students' vocabulary mastery²². Once again, we are giving vocabulary the attention that it deserves²³. Accordingly, this paper is directed to give an extended presentation of strategies for teaching and learning vocabulary.

B. DISCUSSION

1. Vocabulary Teaching Techniques

3C activity is recommended by Seal²⁴, to teach vocabulary in unplanned situation, when students are stuck in a certain vocabulary while learning. He asserts that the steps must be conducted completely in order to assure the students'

¹⁷ Nunan, David. *Language Teaching Methodology*. Pearson Education Ltd: London, 2000., p. 117

¹⁸ Seal, Bernard D. 1991. *Vocabulary Learning and Teaching*. In Celce-Murcia, M. (Ed). *Teaching English as Second or Foreign Language*. New York: Newbury House., p. 297

¹⁹ Richard, Jack C. and Theodore Rodgers. 2001. *Op cit.*, p. 40

²⁰ Seal, Bernard D. 1991. *Op cit.*, p. 297

²¹ Nunan, David. 2000., *Op cit.*, p. 117

²² Seal, Bernard D. 1991. *Op cit.*, p.298

²³ Brown, Douglas H. 1994., p. 365

²⁴ Seal, Bernard D. 1991. *Op cit.*, p. 299-300

understanding about the words. It consists of three steps of teaching (3C): 1) Convey meaning: building concept of the term through definition and exemplification, 2) Check understanding: taking the concept into meaningful/context to confirm student's comprehension, and 3) Consolidate: taking the concept into student-student communication. An example of the use of 3C for presenting word 'boring' is as follows:

“Step 1. Convey meaning. Teacher: (To class) when you go to the movies sometimes the movie is not very interesting, it makes you want to sleep. (The teacher puts a hand to his/her mouth and yawns). The movie is very boring. Or sometimes you have a teacher who speaks very slowly and who never makes you laugh, and whose lessons make you go to sleep. The teacher is so boring.

Step 2. Check understanding. Teacher: (To student 1) Do you like boring teachers? (To Student 2) Is this lesson boring? (To student 3) Is this book boring? (To student 4) Am I a boring teacher?

Step 3. Consolidate. Teacher: (To class) Turn to the person next to you and ask them if they had a boring weekend. If they say 'yes,' find out why. (A general hubbub) Now ask the person next to you what shows on television they think are boring. (Murmuring).²⁵

The presentation above shows that implementation of this approach to teaching of words' depends on nature of the meanings itself. The 3C steps are modified as closely as possible to students' knowledge and experience.

1. Planned vocabulary teaching

A number of popular techniques for intended vocabulary teaching recommended by Seal²⁶, Kruse²⁷ and Nunan²⁸ are selected, extracted and merged by using Seal's 3C steps as follows:

Step 1. Conveying meaning.

- a. Visual aids. It covers all kinds of visual media to convey meanings such as: objects, pictures, picture series, cartoons, models, replicas, puppets, situational pictures, brochures, catalogs and so on.

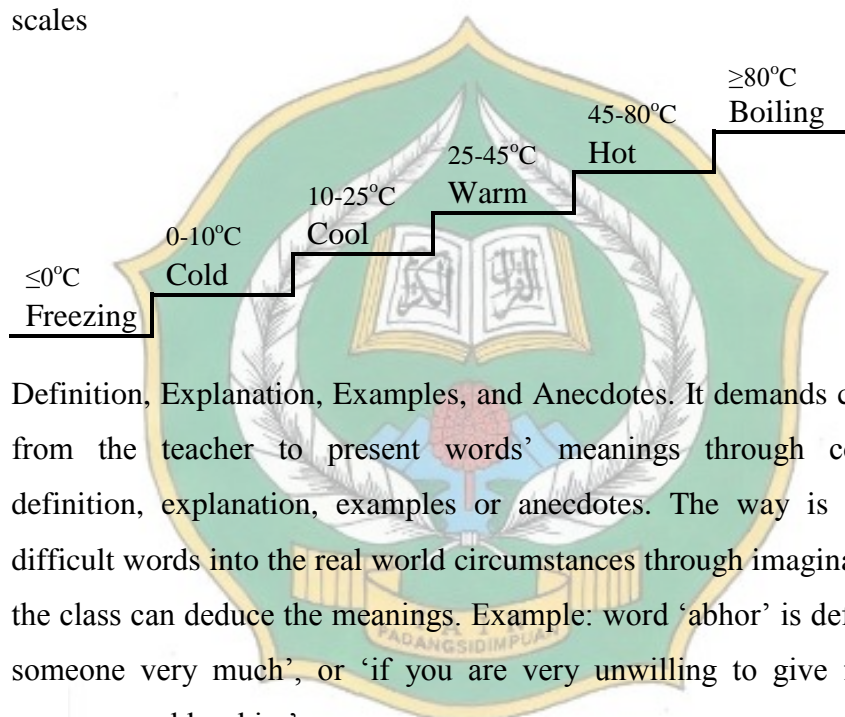
²⁵ Ibid., p. 300

²⁶ Ibid., p. 301-304

²⁷ Kruse, Anna Fisher. *Vocabulary in Context*. In Long, Michael H., and Richards Jack C., (Eds). *Methodology in TESOL: A Book of Readings*. Newbury House: London., 1987., p. 367-368.

²⁸ Nunan, David, *Op. Cit.*, p. 134-136.

- b. Word relations. This technique takes benefit of words that students have already known as starting point for explaining meaning of other words. The teacher relates the words to other new words through synonymy (e.g. known: notorious, branded, recognized), antonymy (e.g. main vs. minor, negligible, unimportant, insignificant) and class of items (e.g. flower: rose, jasmine, carnation, orchid).
- c. Pictorial schemata. This technique presents relationship between or among words which is enhanced by using graphic visuals, which may include Venn Diagrams, grids, tree diagrams, or stepped scales. Example: Temperature scales



- d. Definition, Explanation, Examples, and Anecdotes. It demands creative efforts from the teacher to present words' meanings through comprehensible definition, explanation, examples or anecdotes. The way is by taking the difficult words into the real world circumstances through imagination by which the class can deduce the meanings. Example: word 'abhor' is defined as hating someone very much', or 'if you are very unwilling to give forgiveness, it means you abhor him'.
- e. Context. Presenting a word meaning through context requires the teacher to put the word within a number of related sentences, by which students can guess the meaning. Example: the Old Lady 'soothed' the crying little girl, she said: "Calm down, honey. It's just fine. Calm down...."
- f. Collocation. This technique correlates a word to other words or contexts in which it is commonly used. For example:
- to pull back the troop.
 - to fertilize the plant.
 - to switch of the lamp.

g. Roots and affixes. This technique is facilitated by roots, developed into other kinds or class of words with different meanings by adding prefixes or suffixes. Building vocabulary by using this technique is recommended to make use roots that students have been familiar with. Conveying words' meanings by using affixes commonly consists of two steps as follows:

i. Affix recognition, example:

- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| - notify | - remake |
| - goodness | - prehistory |
| - careful | - contradict |

ii. Meaning notification, example:

- note + ify = notify (N + ify = V)
- good + ness = goodness (Adj + ness = N)
- care + ful = careful (V + ful = Adj)

h. Word families. It is an extension of root and affixes. The family is developed from a single root by examining the use of affixes on the root. For example: 'part', partly, partner, partition, participant, participles, depart, particular, and particles.

i. The Total Physical Response (TPR). This method is commonly used to teach words through body movement. TPR steps for conveying meaning of words are as follows:

- i. Introducing things involved in the lesson
- ii. Model actions to or by using the things

Step 2. Check understanding

a. Fill in blank. This technique is having the students fill in the blanks in a passage or sentences with appropriate words. Example:

"I am so (1)_____ and a need a drink. Please give me some (2)_____."

b. Matching pair. Matching activities commonly involve of two columns of words: at the left side and the right side. There are a list of words on the left side, and another list of words on the right side which are synonyms, antonyms, or families each other. In more extensive manner, the pair can be between words and pictures.

- c. Sorting exercises. In this activity, students are asked to sort a certain amount of words based on certain categories. Example: Categorize the following animals based on the diet:

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| - pig | - dog | - cricket |
| - buffalo | - dragonfly | - toad |
| - fox | - cat | - chicken |

- d. Pictorial schemata. This activity requires students to identify targeted words based on the presented characteristics. Example:

<i>Directions:</i> Complete this chart by putting tick (✓) next to the description of each word.	abacus	abet	abattoir	etc'
1. A frame used for counting				
2. A place where animals are slain for meat				
3. Encouraging someone to do something				
4. Etc'				

- e. Word formation practice. This activity is the ongoing of Root And Affixes, and Word Families techniques. In the process, students are asked to add and to subtract affixes from roots as well as determining meanings of the derivations or inflections caused by the process.
- f. Demonstration. This is the ongoing of TPR in which students are asked to perform actions and to name actions performed by the teacher. A more extended manner, students can be asked to write down actions conducted by the teacher or a performer.

Step 3. Consolidation

- a. Problem solving tasks. This activity requires the teacher to set out a situation in which a group of vocabulary is used. The students are exposed to perform the settled activities or task, by which they will use the targeted vocabularies repeatedly. Example: For making students learn about names of foods and beverages, they are asked to make a schedule of menu for a week from breakfast to supper which will be delicious and nutritious.
- b. Values clarification. In this activity students are asked to put into order the qualities they believe from the highest to the lowest concerning a certain context.

For example: the students are asked to list criteria of an ideal spouse based on their own values.

- c. Write a story or dialog. The teacher gives a list of words (from 10 to 15) and then asks them to make a dialog or a story in which the words must be used. In a more advanced level, the story or dialog made must contain the words in an order of sequence.
- d. Discussion and role play. In a discussion, students are given a topic and then asked to share their knowledge and experience related to it. The topic of discussion is designed in such a way that the targeted vocabulary will be used. For example: the students are asked to discuss about the 'drugs abuse' which will cover the health and legal law consequences. Similarly, a role play activity can be made to have the same vocabulary items used in dialogs. For example: we can employ role play theme such as 'visiting a doctor' and 'interviewing a policeman' which will discuss about the consequences of drugs' abuse.

2. Vocabulary Learning

Despite the importance of vocabulary in language and communication, the teaching of vocabulary in the classroom may not be sufficient to equip students with the amount of words that will enable them to communicate well in English. At this point, vocabulary learning becomes part of the students themselves. Undeniably, the teacher must equip the students with strategies to learn vocabulary and to become more independent learner to accomplish the need of the teaching of language and communication (Ghazal)²⁹, (Brown)³⁰ and (Hulstjin, 1993, in Zahedi and Abdi)³¹. The strategy is thus considered as 'investment' (Brown)³², for student to develop their mastery without being dependent with teacher's instruction. Useful vocabulary learning strategies and the teaching of them in the classroom are as follows.

1. Vocabulary learning strategies

Oxford defines VLS as powerful mental tools" for language learners to deal with vocabulary learning difficulties, because they "make learning easier, faster,

²⁹ Ghazal, *Op. Cit.*, p. 1.

³⁰ Brown, *Op. Cit.*, p. 190.

³¹ Yagoub Zahedi and Mortaza Abdi, *Op. Cit.*, p. 2265.

³² Brown, *Op. Cit.*, p. 190.

more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations³³, and the myriad ways in which learners strategically engage encoding processes and successfully accommodate memory queries to the task at hand, as well as how the products of memory are flexibly aligned, recombined, and operated upon in the service of behavior and action (Benjamin)³⁴, for acquiring vocabulary into their mind. Schmitt and McCharty³⁵ categorize VLS as: Determining (DET), Social (SOC), Memory (MEM), Cognitive (COG) and Metacognitive Strategies (MET), as follows:

Strategies for the Discovery of a New Word's Meaning

- (DET) Analyze part of speech.
- (DET) Analyze affixes and roots.
- (DET) Check for L1 cognate.
- (DET) Analyze any available pictures or gestures .
- (DET) Guess from textual context .
- (DET) Bilingual dictionary.
- (DET) Monolingual dictionary.
- (DET) Word lists.
- (DET) Flash cards.
- (SOC) Ask teacher for an L1 translation.
- (SOC) Ask teacher for paraphrase or synonym of new word.
- (SOC) Ask teacher for a sentence including the new word.
- (SOC) Ask classmates for meaning.
- (SOC) Discover new meaning through group work activity.

Strategies for Consolidating a Word Once it has been Encountered

- (SOC) Study and practice meaning in a group.
- (SOC) Teacher checks students' flash cards or word lists for accuracy
- (SOC) Interact with native speakers

³³ Oxford, R., *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*, (New York: Newbury House, 1990), p. 98.

³⁴ Benjamin, Aaron. *Memory is More than Just Remembering: Strategic Control of Encoding, Accessing Memory, and Making Decisions*: in Benjamin and Ross (Ed). *Skills and Strategy in Memory Use*. (Oxfors: Elsevier, 2007), p. 175.

³⁵ Schmitt, N., & Mc.Carthy, M. (Eds), *Vocabulary, description, acquisition, and pedagogy: Vocabulary learning strategies*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 11-12

- (MEM) Study word with a pictorial representation of its meaning
- (MEM) Image word's meaning
- (MEM) Connect word to a personal experience
- (MEM) Associate the word with its coordinates
- (MEM) Connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms
- (MEM) Use Semantic maps
- (MEM) Use 'scales' for gradable adjectives
- (MEM) Peg method
- (MEM) Loci method
- (MEM) Group words together to study them
- (MEM) Group words together spatially on a page
- (MEM) Use new word in sentences
- (MEM) Group words together within a storyline
- (MEM) Study the spelling of a word
- (MEM) Study the sound of a word
- (MEM) Say new word aloud when studying
- (MEM) Image word form
- (MEM) Underline initial letter of the word
- (MEM) Configuration
- (MEM) Use Keyword method
- (MEM) Affixes and Roots remembering
- (MEM) Part of Speech remembering
- (MEM) Paraphrase the words meaning
- (MEM) Use cognates in study
- (MEM) Learn the words of an idiom together
- (MEM) Use Physical action when learning a word
- (MEM) Use semantic feature grids
- (COG) Verbal repetition
- (COG) Written Repetition
- (COG) Word Lists
- (COG) Flash Cards
- (COG) Take notes in class

- (COG) Use the vocabulary section in your textbook
- (COG) Listen to tape of word lists
- (COG) Put English labels on physical objects
- (COG) Keep a vocabulary notebook
- (MET) Use English language media (songs, movies, newscasts, etc.)
- (MET) Testing oneself with word tests
- (MET) Use spaced word practice
- (MET) Skip or pass new word
- (MET) Continue to study word over time

3. Teaching vocabulary learning strategies

Teaching learning strategies in general consist of exemplifying the use of the strategy, ask students to practice and examine the practicality and usefulness of the strategy and then expand to use the strategy for more materials and contexts of use. In the next turn, the students are expected to use the strategy to increase their mastery. Adapted from O'Malley and Chamot (1994, in Jurkovic)³⁶, the following is procedure for teaching vocabulary strategies in the classroom.

- 1) Preparation—activating students' background knowledge related to the vocabulary learning strategy.
- 2) Presentation—presenting the learning strategy in term of concept and procedure, and then demonstrating its use for a number of examples.
- 3) Practice—students practice using the strategy for a number of materials usually used in the classroom.
- 4) Evaluation—students evaluate how well the strategy is helping them to learn vocabulary
- 5) Expansion—students attempt to extend the examined language learning strategy to new given vocabulary learning tasks

C. CONCLUSION

Vocabulary instruction has experienced emphasize and deemphasize periods due to the dominant approach, method or language teaching paradigm over time, until today

³⁶Jurkovic, Violetta. *Vocabulary Learning Strategies in ESP Contexts*, (Ph.D Dissertation University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2006), p. 28

it gets attention again in the frame of communicative approach. Teaching and learning vocabulary should be staged by the frequency use of the words. It has been found that a part vocabulary from the whole corpus dominating the running words in texts in the language. Besides, vocabulary size relates to students ability in communication in the target language.

There are many techniques of teaching vocabulary in the classroom, but that vocabulary teaching in the curriculum can be insufficient to make students master enough words for communication in target language, they must be taught strategies for learning words. Strategies for vocabulary learning consist of determining, memory, cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies. Mastering the strategies will enable students more independent from teacher's instruction.

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