

What is Involved in Learning a Word? The Receptive/ Productive Scale of Vocabulary Knowledge

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Abstract

Words are not isolated units of the language, but fit into many interlocking systems and levels. Because of this, there are many things to know about any particular word and there are many degrees of knowing and learning words. This paper explores the following: First, it looks at these questions: What is a word? What is the learning burden of a word? What could be known about a word? What features make learning a word difficult? The answer to the above questions all have direct implications for teaching and learning lexis. Second, the paper explores the productive-receptive scale and how it applies to each aspect of vocabulary knowledge. The distinction between them is certainly essential for teaching and learning purposes.

المستخلص

المفردات ليست وحدات متفرقة في اللغة لكنها تنطبق وتناسب الكثير من المستويات والانظمة المتشابكة ولذلك هنالك الكثير من الاشياء التي يمكن معرفتها تخص الكلمة وهنالك ايضا الكثير من المستويات لمعرفة وتعليم المفردات. تكشف هذه الدراسة عن ما يلي: اولاً. الاجابة على الاسئلة التالية: ما هي المفردة؟ ماذا يعني مصطلح صعوبة فهم الكلمة؟ ما امكانية معرفة ماهية الكلمة؟ ما هي الخصائص التي تجعل من عملية تعليم الكلمة صعب؟ الاجابة عن هذه الاسئلة تحتوي على مضامين او معاني مباشرة في تدريس وتعليم المفردات. ثانياً: تكشف هذه الدراسة ايضاً عن المقياس الانتاجي الاستقبالي وكيفية تطبيقه على كل جانب من جوانب المعرفة المفرداتية. الاختلاف بين المقياس الاستقبالي والانتاجي هو بالتأكيد ضروري للأغراض التدريسية والتعليمية.

Introduction

Word learning is one of the core components of language acquisition . It is a fundamental building block in the acquisition of language, and has often been identified as one of the ' special components of language' (e-g. Hauser et al, 20023 Pinker and Jackendoff, 2005)-Humans phenomenally good at learning words, far exceeding the capabilities of other primates in this respect.

In the last few years, research on word learning has advanced and diverged in several ways. Developmental research investigating children's learning remains at the core, but researchers in adult psycholinguistics have become more interested in vocabulary acquisition, from the point of view of first and second language learning. Moreover, over the recent years, there has been a revival of interest in the role of vocabulary in language,

teaching and learning, and it is widely accepted that activities aimed at the learning and appropriate use of vocabulary have a central part to play in any language curriculum or syllabus, whether for general or for specific purposes (Cartery 1984: 1). This increased interest is also viewed by commercially materials (Meara, 1997:7).

What is a Word?

Criteria for drawing the boundaries between words have an important effect on learning. It is in the learner's and teacher's interest to define words so that the amount of learning is reduced. Carroll et al (1971: 22) distinguish words entirely on the basis of form. Even the presence of a capital letter is sufficient form to be counted as a different word. So, (societies, Societies, society, Society, and Society's) are counted as five different words. Similarly, (book, booked, booking, and books) are counted as four different words.

Dictionaries try to distinguish several meanings of a word rather than show the common features running through various users. For instance, 'root' is given the meanings:

1. part of plant which is normally in the soil,
2. part of a hair, tooth, tongue, etc., which is like a root in position or function,
3. that from which something grows,
4. form of a word,
5. quantity which multiplied by itself.

To decide if a learner is dealing with one word or more than one, he/she has to see if extra learning is required. For instance, can '**branch**' (of a tree) be taught in such a way that '**branch**' (of a bank or business) necessitates no additional learning? If it can, then '**branch**' (of a tree) and '**branch**' (of a bank) are the same word. Are 'polite' and 'politeness' the same word or different words? If the learners are already familiar with **(-ness)**, and are familiar with the **(-y)** becomes **(-i-)** spelling rule, then 'happiness' requires no additional meaning. It is in the teacher's and learner's interest to make use of the semantic patterns and other regularities in the language to reduce the amount of learning and teaching effort needed' (Nation, 1982:33).

What is the Learning Burden of a Word?

The learning of a word is the amount of effort required to learn it. Different words have different learning burdens for learners with different language backgrounds. Each of the aspects of what it means to know a word can contribute to the learning burden of a word. The general principle of learning burden is that 'the more a word represents patterns and knowledge that the learners are already familiar with, the lighter its learning burden' (Nation, 1990:30). These patterns and knowledge can be learned from the first language from knowledge of other languages, and from previous knowledge of the second language. So, if a word uses sounds that are in the first language, follows regular spelling patterns, is a loan word in the first language with roughly the same meaning, fits into roughly similar grammatical patterns as in the first language with similar collocations and constraints, then the learning burden will be very light. The word will not be difficult to learn. For learners

whose first language is closely related to the second language, the learning burden of most words will be light. For learners whose first language is not related to the second language, the learning burden will be heavy (ibid).

Teachers can help reduce the learning burden of words by drawing attention to systematic patterns and analogies within the second language, and by pointing out connections between the second language and the first language. Teachers, moreover, should be able to estimate the learning burden of words for each of the aspects of what is involved in knowing a word, so that they can direct their teaching towards aspects that will need attention and towards aspects that will reveal underlying patterns so that later learning is easier.

What Could Be Known About a Word?

What does a learner need to know in order to "know" a word? There are two answers to this question. If the word is to be learned only for receptive use (listening or reading) then there is one set of answers. If the word is to be learned for receptive and productive use (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) then there will be an additional set of answers. Table (1) lists the questions we should be able to answer (consciously or unconsciously) if we "know" a word or "about" a word. The table is organized using the four general classification criteria (see George, 1983:73). The section headed Spoken Form in the table, is divided into two parts, one dealing with receptive knowledge(R)and one dealing with productive knowledge (P). These terms of productive and receptive vocabulary need explanation and the distinction between them is undoubtedly highly significant for learning and teaching purposes.

Table (1)
Knowing a Word

Form

Spoken form	R	What does the word sound like?
	P	How is the word pronounced
Written form	R	What does the word look like?
	P	How is the word written and spelled?

Position

Grammatical patterns	R	In what patterns does the word occur?
	P	In what patterns must we use the word?
Collocations	R	What words or types of words can be expected before or after the word?

P What words or types of words must we use with
 this word?

Function

Frequency

R How common is the word?

P How often should the word be used? Appropriateness

R Where would we expect to meet this word?

P Where can this word be used?

Meaning

Concept

R What does the word mean?

P What word should be used to express this meaning?

Associations

R What other words does this word make us think of?

P What other words could we use instead of
this one?

The Receptive/ Productive Distinction

The terms of receptive and productive vocabulary are part of the folklore surrounding vocabulary acquisition. The distinction between them is rarely questioned (Melka, 1982:27). Rarely do we see researchers or theorists working within pedagogy or language acquisition examine or investigate of what is actually meant by receptive vocabulary and by productive vocabulary or even the relationship between the two. These terms on closer examination are extremely difficult to detect, despite the average teacher and language researcher being able to come up with a 'good enough' definition or description (Melka, 1997:88).

The validity of the receptive/ productive distinction in most cases depends on its resemblance to the distinction between the receptive skills of listening and reading, and the productive skills of speaking and writing (Crow, 1986: 245). Receptive carries the idea that we receive language input from others through listening or reading and try to comprehend it. Productive carries the idea that we produce language forms by speaking and writing to convey messages to others.

Simply speaking, native speakers and foreign learners alike recognize and understand more words than they actually use, The words they recognize but do not use are the items by which their receptive vocabularies exceed their productive ones. The native speaker normally hears or sees a word many times in many slightly differing contexts and collocation before he/she begins to use it. It is recorded in his mind before it comes to the tip of his tongue or pen (Bright and McGregor, 1970:19).

The terms passive (for listening and reading) and active (for speaking and writing) are sometimes used as synonyms for receptive and productive. A lot of current thinking about vocabulary is based on the idea that vocabulary learning can best be described as a 'continuum' between passive/ receptive and active/ productive vocabulary (Meara, 1990 : 103). Meara (ibid) sees the distinction between active and passive vocabulary as being the result of different types of association between words. Active vocabulary can be activated by other words, because it has many incoming and outgoing links with other words. Passive vocabulary consists of items which can only be activated by external stimuli. That is, they are activated by hearing or seeing their forms, but not through associational links to other words. Thus, Meara sees active and passive as representing different kinds of associational knowledge. One criticism of this view might be that language use is not associationally driven, but more basically is meaning driven.

Similarly, Corson (1995: 44-45) uses the terms active and passive to refer to productive and receptive vocabularies. Passive vocabulary, according to Corson, includes the active vocabulary and three other kinds of vocabulary-words that are only partly known, low frequency words not readily available for use, and words that are avoided in active use. These three kinds of vocabulary overlap to some degree. Actually, Corson's description of active and passive vocabulary is strongly based on the idea of use and not solely on degrees of knowledge. Some passive vocabulary may be very well known but never used and therefore never active. Some people may be able to curse and swear but never do. From Corson's point of view, the terms active and passive are more suitable than receptive and productive. He occasionally uses the term unmotivated to refer to some of the passive vocabulary.

The Scope of the Receptive/ Productive Distinction

The terms receptive and productive apply to a variety of kinds of language knowledge and use. When they are applied to vocabulary, these terms cover all the aspects of what is involved in knowing a word. It is also possible to show the aspects of what is involved in knowing a word using a process model, which emphasizes the relation between the parts (Crow, 1986:244). At the most general level, knowing a word involves form, meaning and use (see Table 1).

From the point of view of receptive knowledge and use, knowing the word underdeveloped involves:

- * being able to recognize the word when it is heard
- * being familiar with its written form so that it is recognized when it is met in reading
- * recognizing that it is made up of the parts under-, -develop- and -ed and being able to relate these parts to its meaning.
- * knowing that underdeveloped signals a particular meaning.
- * knowing what the word means in the particular context in which it has just occurred.

* knowing the concept behind the word which will allow a understanding in a variety of contexts.

* knowing that there are words like overdeveloped, back-word and challenged.

* being able to recognize that underdeveloped has been used correctly in the sentence in which occurs.

. * being able to recognize that words such as territories and areas are typically collocations.

* knowing that underdeveloped is not an uncommon word and is not a pejorative word.

From the point of view of productive knowledge and use, knowing the word underdeveloped involves:

- being able to say it with correct pronunciation including stress.
- being able to write it with correct spelling.
- being able to construct it using the right word parts in their appropriate forms.
- Being able to produce the word to express the meaning underdeveloped.
- being able to produce the word in different contexts to express the range of meaning of underdeveloped.
- being to produce synonyms and opposites for underdeveloped.
- being able to use the word correctly in an original sentence.
- being able to produce words that commonly occur with it.
- being able to decide to use or not use the word to suit the degree of formality of the situation (At present developing is more acceptable than underdeveloped which carries a slightly negative meaning).

It is to be stressed that(see Table1) and the accompanying example of underdeveloped give an indication of the range of aspects of receptive and productive knowledge and use (Corson, 1995: 548). It should be clear from this that if we say a particular word is part of someone's receptive vocabulary, we are making a very general statement that includes many aspects of knowledge and use, and we are combining the skills of listening and reading. In general, it seems that receptive learning and use is easier than productive learning and use.

Features that Make Learning a Word Difficult

The learning burden of a word is the " amount of effort needed to learn and remember it" (Nation, 1990: 33). This depends on; first, aspects of knowing a word. These involve: spoken form, written form and word parts. Second, the way in which the word is learned and taught. These involve: collocations, frequency, appropriateness, meaning. associations, and unteaching. Third, the intrinsic difficulty of the word. Each of these three classes and ways of reducing the learning burden will be closely looked at and examined in detail.

Spoken Form

Knowing the spoken form of the word includes being able to recognize the word when it is heard and at the other end of the receptive-productive scale being able to produce the spoken form in order to express a meaning. Producing the spoken form of an English word includes being able to pronounce the sounds in the words as well as the degrees of stress of the appropriate syllables of the word if it contains more than one syllable. Research on vocabulary difficulty indicates that an important factor affecting learning is the pronounceability of a word (Ellis and Beaton, 1993: 561). Pronounceability depends on the similarity between individual sounds and suprasegmentals like stress and tone in the first language and second language, the ways in which these combine with each other (called phonotactic grammaticality) (Scholes, 1966: 62), and the relationship between the spelling and sound systems. Numerous contrastive analysis have shown that predicting the pronunciation difficulty of individual words is not a simple process (see, for example, Hammerly. 1982: 19). Second language sounds that are only slightly different from first sounds may be more difficult than learning some sounds that do not occur at all in the first language.

In the early stages of learning English it is wise to introduce difficult sounds and consonant clusters gradually. In this way new words will contain not too many difficult sounds. Research with native speakers of English shows that even children are aware what combinations of sounds are acceptable and what are not (Messer, 1967: 610). This knowledge can gradually be built up for second language learners and will help their pronunciation and memory of words.

Written Form

One aspect of gaining familiarity with the written form of words is spelling. The ability to spell is most strongly influenced by the way learners represent the phonological structure of the language. Studies of native speakers of English have shown strong effects on spelling from training in categorizing word according to their sounds and matching these to letters and combinations of letters (Brown and Ellis, 1994: 17).

Comparison of spelling of English speakers with speakers of other languages shows that the irregularity in the English spelling system creates difficulty for learners of English as a first language. Poor spelling can affect learners' writing in that they use strategies to hide their poor spelling. These include using limited vocabulary, favouring regularly spelled words and avoiding words that are hard to spell. Although there is no strong relationship between spelling and intelligence, readers may interpret poor spelling as a sign of lack of knowledge(ibid: 17-18).

There is a strong link between spelling and reading. Some changes in spelling strategy are related to changes in reading strategy. Skill at reading can influence skill at spelling •

Learners can represent the spoken forms of words in their memory in a variety of ways: as whole words, as onsets (the initial letter or letters) and rhymes (the final part of the syllable), as letter names, and as phonemes (Nation, 1990: 36-37). The learning burden of the written form of words will be strongly affected by first and second language parallels (Does the first language use the same writing system as the second language?), by the regularity of the second language writing system, and by the learners' knowledge of the spoken form of the second language vocabulary (Winjk, 1966: 37).

According to Nation (1990), 'most low-frequency words follow regular patterns; high-frequency words are not so regular' (p.37). Teachers can reduce the learning burden of written forms by choosing words with regular spellings whenever possible, by showing learners how the spelling of new words is similar to the spelling of known words. Actually, this use of analogy as a way of drawing attention to spelling patterns is the basis for several useful teaching techniques..

Word Parts

The learning burden of words will be light if they are made of known parts, that is, affixes and stems that are already known from the first language or from other second language words. Some affixes and stems change their form when they are joined together, for example, (in- + legal= illegal).

Knowing a word can involve knowing that it is made up of affixes and a stem that can occur in other words. There is evidence that, for first language users of English, many low frequency, regularly formed, complex words are rebuilt each time they are used. That is, a word like (unpleasantness) is not stored as a whole unanalyzed item, but is formed from (un, pleasant, and ness) each time it is used. This does not necessarily mean that the word is learned in this way. It may be that for some words their whole unanalyzed form is learned initially, and it is later seen as fitting into a regular pattern and is then stored differently.

This way of dealing with complex words suggests that there are reasonably regular predictable patterns of word building. Bauer and Nation (1993: 260) have attempted to organize these into a series of stages based on the criteria of (frequency, regularity of form, regularity of meaning, and productivity). Lying behind this series of stages is the idea that learners' knowledge of word parts and word building changes as their proficiency develops. For example, knowing the word (mend) can also involve knowing its forms, meanings and uses as (mends, mended, and mending). At a later stage of proficiency, knowing (mend) may also involve knowing (mender, mendable and amendable).

There is value in explicitly drawing learners' attention to word parts. In particular, an important vocabulary learning strategy is using word parts to help remember the meaning of a word. This strategy requires learners to know the most frequent and regular affixes well, to be able to recognize them in words, and to be able to re-express the meaning of the word using the meanings of its word parts. The learning burden of a word will depend on the

degree to which it is made of already known word parts and the regularity with which these fit together.

Collocations

Knowing a word involves knowing what words it typically occurs with. It is more usual, for instance, to say (we ate some speedy food, quick food, or fast food). Pawley and Syder (1983: 193) argue that the reason we can speak our first language fluently and choose sequences that make us sound like native speakers because we have stored large numbers of memorized sequences in our brain.

Collocations differ greatly in size (the number of words involved in the sequence), in type (function words collocating with content words (united and states), in closeness of collocates (expressed their honest opinion), and in the possible range of collocates (commit murder, a crime, suicide...).

Collocations are part of the shadowy area between grammar and meaning. Teaching vocabulary in collocations is in some ways a reaction against teaching words in lists and is an attempt to learn words in context while keeping the flexibility of list meaning. Taylor (1983: 101) describes the reasons for studying words in collocations:

- a) Words which are naturally associated in text are learnt more easily than those not so associated;
- b) Vocabulary is best learned in context;
- c) Context alone is insufficient without deliberate association;
- d) Vocabulary is a distinct feature of language which needs to be developed alongside a developing grammatical competence.

Collocations are only one of a wide range of relationships that relate to the appropriate interpretation and productive use of vocabulary. Miller (1999: 62) shows that a very important aspect of knowing a word is having a cognitive representation of the set of contexts in which a given word form can be used to express a given meaning. This contextual knowledge can involve situational context, topical context, and local context. Collocations are largely local context information provided by words in the immediate neighbourhood of a word. Topical context information comes from knowledge of the topic that is being written or spoken about. Thus understanding the meaning of (ball) could at least partly depend on what topic is being dealt with, (dancing, football, golf or partying).

Frequency

A learner can get three clues to the frequency of a word, one from the frequency with which it occurs in the English lessons, one from the frequency of its translation equivalent in

the mother tongue, and one from its form. If a teacher spends a lot of time on a word and overuses it, this affects the learners' use of the word.

Nation (1990:38) states that overusing low-frequency words has a comical effect, and if time is given to words according to their usefulness in English then this effect can be avoided. Learners may have difficulty with low frequency words in knowing whether to use them productively or to prefer a more frequent word.

According to Zipf (1935: 93), the most frequent words in English are usually monosyllabic. That is, they are short because they consist of only one syllable. Thus, if a learner is faced with a choice between words, it is usually better to choose the shortest. The shortest is likely to be the most frequent. This idea of using simple words rather than complex ones is not easy for some learners to accept. 'Sometimes in their mother tongue complex words are more polite or respectful than simple words' (Nation 1990: 39).

The typical frequency of a word acts as a constraint on its use. If a teacher spends a lot of time on a word and overuses it, this affects the learners' use of the word. Constraints on use may differ across cultures- For example, adjectives like 'fat' and 'old' have to be used with care in English when describing someone who is present. In some cultures to say someone is 'fat' is a compliment indicating that they are (well off) and (well cared for). To say someone is 'old' carries with it ideas of (wisdom) and (respect).

Frequency adds to the learning burden of a word when learners want to use an infrequent word very often when a more frequent item would be more suitable. Often it is sufficient to tell learners that the particular item is not commonly used.

Appropriateness

Inappropriate usage occurs when a second language learner uses an old-fashioned word instead of the more usual one, an impolite word instead of a polite one, American usage where British usage would be more appropriate, or formal language when more colloquial usage would be more suitable (Read, 1988: 16). The clues for appropriate usage come from the way the word is translated into the mother tongue or from the context in which the word is used. Some of the most difficult words for second language learners in this area are words describing parts of the body and body functions.

When teaching words which might be used inappropriately, the teacher needs to teach the situations for using the words as part of their meaning. For example 'chuck' (throw), 'nick' (steal), 'kid' (child) are more appropriate in speech than in writing, and they are very colloquial. 'silver' in New Zealand can mean (coins); in the United States it refers to the (metal). Words like 'tummy', and suitable only speaking to (children). Some words also reflect the attitude of the speaker, for example, 'slim' is a neutral, possibly positive word, 'skinny' may have a negative meaning. Teaching words like those just described is a good

opportunity for the teacher to give some understanding of the values held by some English speakers.

Meaning

The learning burden of the meaning of a word is light when the meaning of the word is predictable from its form, when its meaning corresponds to the meaning of a mother-tongue word, and when the various uses of the word are all related to an underlying concept (Nation, 1990: 39).

The meaning of a word can be predictable from its form for three reasons: because its form and meaning are similar to those of a mother-tongue word, because it is made up of known parts, or because its form sounds like its meaning. Because borrowing is a common source, European languages like English, French, and Spanish share a lot of vocabulary. The French speaker learning English, for example, will find the learning burden of words such as 'table', 'elementary', and 'dentist' very light because the words 'table', 'elementaire', and 'dentiste' exist in his/her language (ibid: 40).

Many English words are derived from other English words. 'Ungovernable', for example, consists of the parts (un-, govern, and -able). If these parts are known then the learning burden of 'ungovernable' is very light. Actually, there are other words like this which have a light learning burden because their meaning can be predicted from the meaning of their known parts; (centralization, certainty, procedure, precedence, unwillingness, uphold). Where possible, teachers should explain the meanings of words by using the meanings of their parts. It is unusual for the meaning of a word in one language to correspond exactly to the meaning of its equivalent in another. Similarly, words which are similes in one language rarely have exactly the same meaning. However, if there is a large amount of overlap in meaning between an English word and a mother-tongue word, the learning burden will be light. For English, French learning the English word 'feminine' will find that the meaning of the word corresponds quite closely to the meaning of a word in their mother tongue. A French learner will find it even easier because it corresponds to their word 'feminine'. Importantly, the learning burden associated with the concept of a word depends to a large degree on how it is taught. For instance, the word 'drag' can be divided into the following uses (see West, 1953: 137)

Drag, v.

1. (pull a heavy thing along)
 Dragging a great branch along
 Dragging his foot
2. (figurative) There is no need to drag me into the quarrel.
 Why must you drag me out to a concert on this cold night?
3. (intransitive, lag behind, move slowly and laboriously)
 He dragged behind the others.

The meeting dragged on. The play dragged a bit in the third act.

4. (cause to move slowly)

Drag out the meeting by long speeches

Drag out his high notes

The above uses of the word 'drag', however, are clearly related to each other, In the first use, ('drag a branch'), the important features are 'pull and 'a heavy object In the second use, 'drag me into the quarrel', the idea of 'pull' is still there but the heaviness has become 'reluctance', 'unwillingness'. In the third use, 'the meeting dragged on the idea of 'pull' has become 'to make longer and 'unwillingness' or 'reluctance remains. The fourth use has a similar meaning but different grammar, By drawing attention to the presence of all these features of meaning in whatever use of the word is being taught, the other uses of the word will be more readily learned, So, when teaching 'drag a branch', it is useful to point out how it is pulled and how the branch is heavy and 'reluctant to be moved along easily. If it is not easy to show how the various uses of a word are related to ideas that apply to all uses, then the learning burden of the word is heavy. If the various uses can be related to common ideas the learning burden is lighter.

It should be clear from the above discussion of the learning burden of meaning that the teacher can play an important part in reducing the learning burden. This can be done by making use of lists of loan words, by drawing attention to word parts, and by drawing attention to the underlying concepts of words.

Associations

The associations attached to a word affect the way that it is stored in the brain, and this will affect the availability of the word when it is needed, Psychologists investigate word association by asking people to suggest other words that a certain word brings to mind. For example, they say the word table and see what other words it makes people think of. The most common associate of 'table' is 'chair'. The most common associate of boy is 'girl'. This does not mean that these words necessarily are common used together. It means that they are commonly associated in people's minds (Nation. 1990: 42)

The types of associations between words will affect whether it will be helpful or harmful to teach associated words together (Higa, 1963:173). Miller and Fellbaum (1991: 199) describe the semantic relationships between a very large number of English words. They show that it is necessary to distinguish between parts of speech to describe the organizational structure of all lexicon. The most pervasive and important relationship is **synonymy**, but nouns, adjectives and verbs each use preferred semantic relations and have their own kind of organization. Understanding these relations is useful for explaining the meanings of words and for creating activities to enrich learners' understanding of words. Understanding how the lexicon might be organized is also useful for the creation of limited vocabularies for defining words and for the simplification of text, Other relationships, in addition to synonymy, include (hyponymy, meronymy, antonymy, troponymy, and entailment). These are very useful starting points for making classification activities with words that learners already know. Classification activities can involve distinguishing and grouping similar items in various ways, justifying the distinguishing and grouping by explaining the relationship, and using the relationship to produce or change text, such as suggesting cause-effect chains, expressing the opposite of a statement, making a

generalization from a particular piece of evidence, or restating something in a precise way (see Sokmen, 1992:17, for some examples).

Learners can be helped in explaining relationships by the teacher providing descriptive phrases to use such as, X is a part of Y, X is a kind of Y., X come in a certain way, X is the opposite of Y, X is like Y, and X

Unteaching

The learning burden of a word can be affected by the way it is taught. This means that as a result of bad organization the difficulty of learning a word is increased. Unfortunately, this 'unteaching' is common, The causes of this difficulty can be looked at under two headings: repetition and attention and exceptions.

Repetition and Attention

Some psychologists (Craik and Lockhart, 1972; Craik and Tulving, 1975) believe that repetition is not an important factor in vocabulary learning. They believe that it is the type of attention that is given to an item which decides whether it will be remembered or not. Oral repetition of a word form is not an effective way of learning compared with having to recall the form of the word. Seeing the word form and a definition of its meaning is not as effective as having to make an effort to recall its meaning before being shown the definition as feedback. If the teacher does not use challenging ways to draw the learners' attention to a word then learning will be poor. If the learning is poor, the word will need to be repeated for learning to occur.

Kachroo (1962: 68) counted the number of repetitions of words in an English course book. He found that words that occurred seven or more times in the course book were known by most of the learners. Over half of the words occurring only once or twice in the books were not known by most of the class.

Salling (1959: 27) found similar results, and he concluded that at least five repetitions were needed to ensure learning. Crothers and Suppes (1967:66) found six or Seven repetitions necessary. Saragi et al. (1978: 73), using a reading text where learners did not know that they had to learn the new vocabulary, found that sixteen or more repetitions were necessary.

It is important for teachers in countries where English is not used much outside the classroom to know whether they can rely on a course book to provide enough repetition for vocabulary learning to be possible. If the course book does not provide enough repetition it will be necessary to add to the number of repetitions provided by the book. Teachers can work together to check the repetition of vocabulary in their textbook and find the density index (the ratio of different words to total words). The density index of a passage or a lesson or a book is the proportion of different words to the total number of words. If this proportion is high, reading is relatively easy. This is because in order to get a high density index many of the different words must be frequently repeated.

A course book with a large number of words occurring less than five or six times cannot be efficient. If the course book does not provide enough repetition it may be necessary for teachers to keep their own word register of useful vocabulary. An efficient course book for

the first year should have a density index of around (1:20). In later years a density index of (1:10) or (1:12) might be enough.

If the teacher or course book does not provide opportunity for sufficient repetition or for attention to vocabulary which will result in learning, then the effort spent in dealing with the vocabulary will be wasted (Nation, 1990:45). Pimsleur (1967:74) suggests that repetitions should be spaced with increasing gaps between the repetitions. This means that the first repetitions should occur quite soon after the introduction of a new word, The next repetitions can be a day or more away, and the next a week or more, and so on.

Exceptions

Most rules have exceptions. Words like (**of**, **yacht**, and **blood**) are exceptions to useful spelling rules. Constructions like (**going to school**) and (**road works**) are exceptions to useful grammatical rules. "The effect of teaching exceptions is to make the learning of the rule more difficult" (Nation, 1990: 48). For example, the words '**school**' and are usually '**town**' are most often used as countable nouns. Singular countable noun preceded by (**a**, **the**). or a similar word like (**my**, **this**, **John's** or **each**). Every time learners notice a word which is usually countable but which does not have (a, the) or a similar in front of its singular form, the learning of the very useful rule is made more difficult. So, teaching sentences like (**He is going to town, she is going to school**) is upsetting the learning of the rule about singular countable nouns and is encouraging the production of sentences like:

*- She is going to house

* He is going to cinema

Exceptions are called exceptions because they do not follow the rule. The teacher needs to consider which is more important, the learning of the rule or the learning of the exceptions should not be introduced until the rule has been learned" (ibid: 42). This is simply because the early introduction of exceptions is a clear example of "unteaching".

Intrinsic Difficulty

So far we have looked at how the learning burden can be affected by predictability or regularity of patterning, and by the organization of learning. The learning burden of a word can also be affected by features of the word itself. Rogers (1969: 327) found that the part of speech of a word affected its learning. Nouns were the easiest to learn and adjectives were next. Verbs and adverbs were the most difficult to learn. This finding partly agrees with experience in guessing words from context. Nouns and verbs are usually easier to guess than adjectives and adverbs. Learners discover the part of speech of a word by looking at the part of speech of its mother-tongue translation. Whether words are learned to be recognized (**receptively**) or the be produced (**productively**) affects their difficulty. It is easier to learn to recognize a word form and recall its meaning than it is to learn to produce the word at suitable times. Stoddard (1929; 453) found that learning a word productively is 50 to 100 percent more difficult than learning it receptively. He, also, found that if words were tested receptively, the results were better if the pairs had been learned receptively rather than productively, That is to say, the extra effort involved in learning words productively did not result in better receptive learning. Words which are needed only for listening and reading are best not learned productively.

Teaching can have three effects, positive, neutral, and negative. When its effect is positive, the learners move one step closer to a mastery of English. When the effect of teaching is neutral, nothing is learned. When the effect of teaching is negative, learning occurs, but this learning will upset what has been taught before, what is being taught at the same time, or what will be taught in the future. According to Higa (1965: 169), 'teaching which has a negative effect is far worse than teaching which has a neutral effect. Negative teaching (**unteaching**) can be reduced by careful consideration of the effect one item will have on another. More specifically, opposites and other items which have a close form or meaning similarity should not be taught together, "One should be well learned before the related item is introduced" (Nation, 1990: 49). In addition, careful thought should be given to the introduction of exceptions. Each exception unteaches the rule, To conclude, a teacher cannot do a great deal about intrinsic difficulty caused by the part of speech and the need for receptive or productive learning, except to be aware of these sources of difficulty and to recognize their effect.

Conclusion

The study has aimed to show that explicit instruction vocabulary is highly effective, and to develop vocabulary, students should be explicitly taught both specific words and word-learning strategies. To deepen students' Knowledge of word-meanings, specific word instructions should be robust. The study also concludes that instruction in vocabulary involves far more than looking up words in a dictionary and using words in a sentence, rather, vocabulary is acquired incidentally through indirect exposure to words and intentionally through explicit instruction in specific words and word-learning Strategies.

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