THE PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY

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Abstract:

The importance of vocabulary, its types, selection criteria, size and depth, and teaching principles were found unclear. The present article seeks to respond to such challenge. To achieve the mentioned goals, we did a systematic review to previously related studies and theories. The results showed that the vocabulary was found to be more functional as a basis for communication, a reflection of social reality, emotion booster, and academic ability predictor. It also revealed that its contribution to the basic language skills varied. Finally, the principles of teaching vocabulary, size and depth, and teaching and learning vocabulary materials appeared to be associated with student's vocabulary mastery.

Keywords: vocabulary teaching; principles; vocabulary importance; breadth and depth, skills, mastery, research, communication.

Introduction

The insufficient teaching materials and principles, and the confusing theories of vocabulary, which are more likely to decrease the vocabulary mastery and study, appear to be influenced by material complexity (Rosa & Eskenazi, 2011), media inappropriateness, teaching attractiveness, and evaluation objectivity (Prastiyawati, 2008). To respond to them, the present article aims at providing a description of the importance of vocabulary, types of vocabulary to teach, selection criteria of teaching and learning vocabulary materials, size and depth of vocabulary, and principles of vocabulary teaching. A review of previous studies and related theories was systematically conducted to accomplish the objectives. Using a concept-centric review and matrix (Murniarti, et al. 2018), it applied some steps, namely identification, comprehension, application, analysis, and synthesis. With three significances, the current systematic review is expected to gain access to the information of previous vocabulary teaching practices, researches, and development.

MAIN PART

The maximum of quantity is normally achieved when the message being delivered is definitely informative, giving intended words. The maxim of quality is obtained when the Journal of English Teaching, Volume 5 (1),February2019 17 speakers' word is truthful. It is expected to inform the real thing. In contrast, the maxim of relevance is more likely to be gained through the appropriateness of given vocabulary. Finally, the maxim of manner is theoretically met as long as the words are clearly, briefly, and orderly used.

Having believed that the language is symbols representing human thoughts and feelings, the meaning—the reality of the human thought, seems to be only grasped through the language. Such argument is in line with Can's (2008) opinion about reality and the symbols. It was stated that the reality can only be received through the symbols. The symbols refer to the words of language, and its choice is an accumulation of human social background and feelings when they are communicating. This indicates that the word choice in our communication is definitely determined by our experience. Children with limited experience will have limited number of vocabularies expressing his or her thought. As a consequence, a politician's diction will be always associated with political issues and social problems. Interestingly, the vocabulary also constructs the human reality. It forms the reality of the world, or even can change the world of human thought, for which language listeners' attitude and action are developed. With a more philosophical tone, Searle (1995) emphasized it by saying human institutional reality was developed by the linguistic representation.

Vocabulary as an Academic Ability Predictor

Believing science and technology are widely spread using academic discourses and academic discourses are composed by the string of structured words, it can be concluded that vocabulary is tightly related to the spread ofscientific findings. This is Journal of English Teaching, Volume 5 (1),February2019 18 due to the fact that research articles are formed by the words, a substantial function of the word in academic discourse. To know its features and categories, linguists believe that, linguistically, the used words in academic discourses are always academic and specific. Moreover, the size and understanding of vocabulary knowledge are more likely to predict the academic ability. Though different effects and research designsvary, they are still in the same direction supporting the vocabulary usefulness. Taken for example, Roche and Harrington's (2013) finding showed that vocabulary was associated with both academic writing and GPA (or Grade Point Average). Similarly, vocabulary knowledge has been viewed as the prior ability that had to be mastered to increase the other language abilities. Active Vocabulary vs. Passive Vocabulary With reference to a word frequency use, it is more likely to group the vocabulary into active and passive vocabularies. The active vocabulary is the words by which listeners and writer usually use as they are completely understood. They are the words that are recalled and used at will when a situation of speech and writing requires them. Practically, the active words are those we can automatically use when writing and speaking without stopping and forcing ourselves to remember. Yet Laufer (1998) in his research divided them into two subgroups, namely controlled active and free active. In contrast, the passive vocabulary is meant as the words that are not completely understood, so that they are infrequently used when writing and speaking. Related to this, therefore, it can be concluded that the passive vocabulary is a precondition of the active vocabulary. It is, of course, an optionalstepas people have different abilities and words have different degrees of comprehensibility, which has to be acquired anterior to the active vocabulary mastery.

As for the growth of the passive and active vocabularies, Laufer (1998) explained that both passive and controlled vocabularies increased and mutually correlated. Yet passive vocabularies increased more than the controlled active ones. The free active vocabulary was found unrelated to the two types. Laufer and Parabakht (2008) accentuatedthat the passive

vocabulary were acquired more than the active ones. They argued that free the active vocabulary developed more slowly and less predictably than did passive vocabulary.

Approaches to Vocabulary Teaching

Explicit vocabulary teaching is a conscious process of mastering the vocabulary. There has to be a direct and systematic procedure and awareness toward the objectives of vocabulary learning. It also requires the leaners to understand the process it has, predict answers of the problem, evaluate and reflect a result. This is more likely to be accomplished by cognitive strategies, note-taking, dictionary, and some other associational learning methods, such as semantic approach and mnemonic method (Dakun, 2000). The explicit vocabulary teaching, according to the natural entity of language, including form, meaning, and use contains three additional techniques, that appears to be functional in learning. They are form-based explicit teaching, meaning-based explicit teaching, and rule-based explicit teaching. The form-based explicit teaching refers to the process by which forms of the vocabulary, like its free morphemes, bound morphemes, and spelling are directly taught to the students. The meaning-based explicit teaching is understood as a procedure where the meaning of an intended vocabulary is taught. Finally, the rule-based explicit teaching is related to a teaching of vocabulary based on the rules of the vocabulary being learned. Yet knowing a better technique in teaching vocabulary is another interesting topic for many scholars. Wang's (2014) work showed that the meaning-based implicit teaching is more beneficial for meaning-based language features, and the rule-based explicit teaching is more beneficial for form-based language features. Such finding means that the vocabulary teaching through the implicit teaching allows the language learners to better understand the meaning of vocabulary. It also indicates that the teaching of the use and rules of vocabulary explicitly is more likely to improve the leaners' ability to master ways to spell and to understand parts of the vocabulary, like root, base, suffix, infix, prefix, and many more.

The Foundation of Teaching and Learning Vocabulary Materials (TLVMs) Vocabulary teaching material, traditionally, is restricted to printed teaching sources, like books, magazines, newspapers, articles, etc. But in a broader sense, the vocabulary material is any sort of tools that are used to accomplish teaching objectives. The Ministry of Education of Ghana (2016) views that the vocabulary materials are all things used in teaching, like chalk, blackboard, papers, pens, books, bottle tops, everyday objects, technology of any kind, environment, and even human body. However, the part of this article only addresses the selection of vocabulary teaching material that has to be prepared by English teacher. It is because considering the criteria of teaching materials is a must for language teachers. Once it is met, the teaching and learning activities will be attractive and make the planned learning objectives achievable. Moreover, it assists English teacher with a presentation and transmission of knowledge, helps leaners master content, and profiles various academic abilities and values (Bušljeta, 2013). More importantly, she or he described six functions of teaching and learning materials, namely (1) motivating students, (2) developing creativity, (3) evoking prior knowledge, (4) encouraging process of Journal of English Teaching, Volume 5 (1),February2019 21 understanding, decoding, organizing and synthesizing educational content, and (5) influencing the growth of different skills. Conversely, it is found that there are still problems on the

availability of teaching materials. Surprisingly, Gogoi (2015) claimed 75% of his participants, teachers at Golaghat District of Assam, India, reported that the teaching materials for early childhood care and educational center were not designed by experts, and more than half of them said that the materials were insufficient and teachers were not well trained to use them. To respond to the aforementioned problem, a more beneficial course book, one of teaching and learning material sources, is obliged to be integrated with other alternative materials. This is in accordance with Johansson's (2006) finding. She reported that all interviewed teachers agreed that the course books were not the only source of teaching materials as it seemed to be boring and did not stimulate the leaners to better learn. Referring to the previous importance and problems, criteria, like in teaching materials in general, selecting vocabulary has to be taken into account. Proposed by Honeyfield (1997), the criteria of vocabulary selection in language teaching comprises availability, familiarity, coverage, and frequency. Additionally, from grounded theory and conceptually-driven data analysis Shi (2009) highlighted five criteria of effective resource selection. She reported that the selected material has to (be) (1) curriculumappropriate, (2) make students interested, (3) balance students' interests and other factors when facing conflicts, (4) student-appropriate, and (5) flexible.

Comparing relationship the vocabulary breadth and depth, and their contribution to reading performance seems to be an interesting issue. To discuss them, we need to consider Qian's (2006), Şen's and Kulelim's (2015), and Schmitt's (2014) works. Qian (2006) reported that the vocabulary size or the breadth, the depth and reading comprehension are highly, and strongly, correlated. Supported by Şen and Kulelim (2015), it wasargued that the vocabulary size and the vocabulary depth were both significantly correlated to the reading performance. However, the vocabulary depth predicted the reading performance better. To better understand the relationship of depth vocabulary and breadth vocabulary according to word frequency level, it is to give credit to Schmitt (2014). He discovered that it seemed to have a low correlation between the vocabulary depth and breadth for students who had higher frequency words and the low vocabulary breadth. On the contrary, it was found a difference between the size and depth of vocabulary for leaners with the lower frequency words and larger vocabulary sizes.

Principles of Teaching Vocabulary

As for principles of teaching vocabulary, an account for what vocabulary forms need to teach and the principles of how they are taught is crucial. Firstly, apart from the vocabulary teaching which in line with its objectives and students' need, it is certain to consider the vocabulary aspects to teach.

Secondly, the principles of teaching vocabulary. There are many theories about teaching vocabulary guidelines and principles. Amongst of them, two writers are thought to be plausible. To Nation (2005), six principles in the teaching vocabulary are (1) keeping teaching simple and clear without any complicated explanations, (2) relating present teaching to past knowledge by showing a pattern or analogies, (3) using both oral and written presentation, (4) giving most attention to words that are already partly known, (5) telling learners if it is a high-frequency word that is worth noting for future attention, and (6) not bringing in other unknown or poorly known related words like near synonyms,opposites, or members of the same lexical

set. Lastly, according to Graves (2006), providing rich and varied language experiences, teaching individual words, teaching word-learning strategies, and building consciousness in readers.

CONCLUSION

It is essential that vocabulary plays an initial role in language use. It is the heart of language skills. More importantly, it appears to function as a basis for communication, reflection of social reality, emotion booster, and academic ability predictor. Besides, receptive and productive vocabularies, and active and passive vocabulary according to previous studies have various contributions to language skill performances. Furthermore, principles of teaching vocabulary, breadth and depth, and teaching and learning vocabulary materials appear to be associated with student's vocabulary mastery.

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