

TEACHING VOCABULARY IN A CONTEXT

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Annotation

The given article is devoted to the issues of teaching vocabulary and efficient learning of it. The methods and techniques of teaching vocabulary and the theoretical views are considered in the article. The authors give their own views on teaching vocabulary in EFL context, efficient ways of teaching vocabulary.

Key words and expressions: vocabulary, word, interactive, context, technique, method, teaching.

Introduction

In relation to vocabulary teaching, researchers suggest that teaching new vocabulary should begin by presenting the new items in context and then the learners should be given the opportunity of dealing with words out of context. It is important to provide learners with strategies for inferring the meaning of unknown

vocabulary from the context in which it occurs instead of getting them to memorize long lists of words or look up unknown words in a dictionary which would make the reading process slow and tedious and which would probably not contribute to the actual learning of vocabulary [5]. Honeyfield makes many suggestions for improving learners' skills in inferring meaning from context such as cloze or gap exercise in which words are deleted from a text, words-in-context exercises and context enrichment exercises[3].

Literature review

Although choosing to teach vocabulary in context has plenty of reasons, the real value of context lies in its authenticity, the benefits of which are of three different sorts.

As it is suggested by Monsell, first of all, assessing the meaning of a word in context obliges students to develop strategies like anticipating and inferring, which become highly beneficial as learning progresses because they instill an attitude of self-reliance that is the distinctive feature of proficiency[4]. Secondly, systematically meeting new vocabulary items in context emphasizes the fact that the words are actually used in discourse for purposes of communication. Lastly, all the factors mentioned above can be said to contribute to a learner’s L2 autonomy and to facilitate the transfer of knowledge that accompanies it. Moreover, they underline the fact that the mental presentation of a word’s meaning improves together with successive encounters in different contexts. Thus, it may be subjected to modification because new and finer semantic distinctions are added.

Being one of the most important themes, the fact that language reflects the contexts in which it is used and the purposes to which it is put is of great value. As Nunan puts it, since language is best encountered and learned in context, this has particular implications for practice. Firstly, this would argue against the idea of learning of lists of decontextualized vocabulary items. In addition, the emphasis in class would be on encouraging students to develop strategies such as inferring the meaning of new vocabulary items from the context in which they appear and teaching them to make use of both verbal and non-verbal cues to determine meaning.

Mainly, there are five suggestions by Kruse for teaching written vocabulary in context[2]. Word elements such as prefixes, suffixes and roots: Recognizing component parts of words, words families is of great value because it is one of the most significant vocabulary skills the students may need. It also decreases the number of new words they will encounter and increases their control of the English lexicon.

Results and discussions

All over the world the issue of interactive methods of teaching foreign languages is essential and worth special considerations. Using interactive methods in teaching vocabulary increases the pupils' interest to foreign languages, in particular English. Therefore, we observed some techniques of teaching vocabulary for secondary schools.

Approaching to the theoretical views of the abovementioned methodologists we are suggesting the list of the techniques to teach the vocabulary:

Pictures, diagrams, charts: Students may relate the illustration with the item that is difficult to understand. Using pictures, diagrams and charts the teacher can concentrate on the logical abilities of pupils. Learners can fill the diagrams and charts, thus simultaneously they acquire a new vocabulary and learn to summarize and show the main gist of the text. Furthermore, the teacher can involve different learning styles of learners.

Clues of definition: Students must be taught to notice many types of useful definition clues like parenthesis or footnotes, synonyms and antonyms. In this activity learners can learn the words through semantic or thematic sets. They will also learn synonymous groups and antonymic rows.

Inference clues from discourse: Students can benefit from example clues, summary clues and experience clues to infer the meaning from the context. In this activity learners learn the words meaningfully from the context. Pretending that there are many polysemantic words in English learners will know different usage of polysemantic words, their collocations.

General aids: This includes the function of the word such as noun, adjective, etc.

Being another suggested way, teaching vocabulary by definition simply requires providing students with the explanation provided by monolingual dictionaries. In this activity learners better acquire the words in relation to grammar. Realizing that the words can belong to different parts of speech, the words can change the parts of speech

if the affixes are added is useful in teaching students grammar issues in integration with vocabulary teaching.

Techniques for vocabulary teaching include filling the gaps, matching phrases, completing the table, true or false statements. **Matching** is a format when students are given a list of items, which they have to match with the other list of words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs or visual images. The disadvantage of it is that once the test-takers have successfully made sufficient amount of matches, the remaining pairs can be guessed more easily and the last pair will be correct by default.¹ Filling in the gaps make students think over the vocabulary and choose the correct words. There are also many techniques in teaching vocabulary. The teacher can choose the techniques according to the aim and conduct the lesson in interactive way.

Conclusion

This article has been written upon revealing the methods and techniques related to teaching vocabulary in context. It has been studied whether knowing only the definition of a word is enough to know a word or it also requires the semantic knowledge of the word when encountered in speech or print. In addition, contributing to our learners' vocabulary has been a basis while deciding on this study. Some implications of the purpose can be explained as follows:

-A language learner continues to expand his vocabulary in all levels of proficiency contrary to a native speaker who makes up his vocabulary mainly in childhood.

-For many words, we also need to know the sort of words most likely to be associated with the word.

-Knowing a word implies knowing the limitations imposed on the use of the word according to the function and situations.

¹Alderson, Ch., C. Clapham and D. Wall. 1996. Language Test Construction and Evaluation. CUP.P.51-52.

-Knowing a word includes knowing the semantic function of that word.

-Knowing of the words and connecting it with grammar issue.

It should be said that teaching vocabulary in context indicating the use and function of the word is comparatively more effective than teaching vocabulary by providing only the dictionary definitions of words.

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