

# ACQUISITION OF VOCABULARY BY DINT OF UNIQUE STRATEGIES: INDISPENSIBLE FOR FOSTERING ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

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## ABSTRACT

*Vocabulary is the gateway to knowledge that unlocks the doors of sublime ideas to the readers. The competency on the lexical items of language plays a significant role in learning a new concept. Any learner who has excellent command over the use of vocabulary excels in his/her study of different subjects. Vocabulary learning is one of the important features of language learning and language use. In fact, it is what makes the essence of a language.*

*Learning vocabulary is a natural and lifelong phenomenon. Throughout the life span, individuals develop their vocabulary effectively and almost effortlessly as long as they see words in meaningful contexts. Children in school will encounter plethora of words in their reading. In schools they may continue to learn vocabulary without much direct and explicit help from Teachers. For the most part, vocabulary growth in school occurs informally and incidentally rather than formally and intentionally. Students should be helped to understand the meaning of each word both contextually and non-contextually. The teachers teaching second language must follow varieties of effective strategies for teaching vocabulary. As the strategies are very easy, interesting and effective, learning of any word retains in the memory of the students for a long-term. Only innovative strategies will enable the students enrich their power of vocabulary. This article highlights unique strategies for learning vocabulary in the ambiance of Indian English classrooms.*

*Keywords: Vocabulary Acquisition, Unique Strategies, Fostering English Language Skills.*

## INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is the gateway to knowledge that unlocks the doors of sublime ideas to the readers. The competency on the lexical items of language plays a significant role in learning a new concept. Any learner who has excellent command over the use of vocabulary excels in his/her study of different subjects. Vocabulary learning is one of the important features of language learning and language use. In fact, it is what makes the essence of a language. He argues for the fact that vocabulary learning is at the heart of any language learning and language use. Without vocabulary, speakers cannot convey meaning and communicate with each other in a particular language Laufer (1997). There are two categories of vocabulary: active (productive) and passive (receptive) vocabulary. Passive vocabulary consists of those words that the student may recognize and understand when they occur in the context, but which he/she may not produce or use in different contexts. The active vocabulary consists of those words which the student understands, recalls at a will, writes

with correct spellings, pronounces correctly, and uses constructively in speaking and writing.

Vocabulary can be defined as "the words we must know to communicate effectively: words in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary)" (Neuman & Dwyer, 2009:385). Vocabulary learning is a continual process of encountering new words in meaningful and comprehensible contexts (Harmon et al., 2009).

### 1. Rationale for the Study

Vocabulary is critically important because a word is an instrument for thinking about the meanings which it expresses. Since then, there has been an "ebb and flow of concern for vocabulary" At times, interest in vocabulary has been high and intense, and at other times low and neglected, alternating back and forth over time (Berne & Blachowich, 2008). According to Allen (1983), teaching of vocabulary was neglected during 1940-1970 due to some reasons because some educationists believed that the

focus of the language learning must be on grammar instead of vocabulary. It is essential to know how the words work together in English sentence. Secondly, it was also believed by some of the linguists that the meanings of the words cannot be adequately taught, so, it is better to avoid teaching them. Third, some specialists were of the view that being exposed to too many words might lead the students to make mistakes in sentence construction. However, different studies revealed that lack of command on vocabulary frequently interfere with communication, and as a result become the cause of communication breakdown. It is, therefore, an increased interest in vocabulary learning as a component of every language.

## 2. Need for Acquiring Vocabulary

A strong base of vocabulary knowledge is indispensable for fostering the language skills which are the four pillars of English language. Developing the learner's vocabulary skills ultimately facilitates richer listening speaking and writing abilities. Even though the learner is competent in achieving the rules of grammar and pronunciation he or she cannot be so proficient in communication without sufficient vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary learning has been considered as an integral and significant area of language teaching as "words are the basic building blocks of language, the units of meaning from which larger structures such as sentences, paragraphs and whole texts are formed" (Read, 2000:1). Vocabulary is more complex than knowledge of words and word meanings in both oral and print language and it is related to their reading comprehension and academic success (Baumann, Kame'enui, & Ash, 2003).

The teachers teaching second language do not follow any techniques or methods for teaching vocabulary. They even do not know how vocabulary is taught through rote rehearsal, visual aids, role-playing. Strategies or techniques are vital for teaching vocabulary effectively in varied contexts and situations. It is, therefore essential for teachers to find out the effectiveness of different strategies for teaching of vocabulary and help the students accelerate their learning process (Malik and Hukam, 2010).

## 3. Process of Vocabulary Acquisition

One of the research implications about the importance of

vocabulary states that "lexical competence is at the heart of communicative competence" (Meara 1996:35), and can be a "prediction of school success" (Verhallen and Schoonen 1998: 452). Plethora of words is needed for effective communication. Traditionally, when an individual talks about knowing a word, he/she means knowing its definition (Cook, 2001: 60- 61). However, knowing a word by sight and sound and knowing a word's definition are not the same as knowing how to use the word correctly, as well as being able to use that word in speech and writing, and understanding it when it is heard or seen in various contexts (Miller & Gildea, 1987). There have been two differing perspectives about L2 vocabulary acquisition: implicit learning and explicit learning. The implicit vocabulary learning theory holds that subconscious vocabulary acquisition during reading is more effective than learning words through purposeful vocabulary exercises because the learner's conscious focus is on the story, not on the items to learn (Krashen, 1987). Vocabulary learning through extensive reading is most effective when the reader's L2 proficiency level is advanced because the reader should know when and how to use contextual clues and be aware of word families and affixes for analyzing words (Folse, 2004). Successful vocabulary learners should make use of efficient learning strategies to expand their vocabulary power and the learning of English.

## 4. When and how does Learning Vocabulary Occur?

Learning vocabulary is a natural and lifelong phenomenon. Throughout the life span, individuals develop their vocabulary effectively and almost effortlessly as long as they see words in meaningful contexts. Amazingly, individuals learn new words "without conspicuous effort or organized instruction and without any forgetting" (Smith, 1998:14). Children in school will encounter overabundance of words in their reading. Active reading enhances acquisition of vocabulary. However, students' vocabulary learning not only occurs in school but also in the environment where they dwell. Even before formal schooling children possess vocabulary. In schools they may continue to learn vocabulary without much direct and explicit help from teachers (Carey, 1978). For the most part, vocabulary growth in school occurs informally

and incidentally rather than formally and intentionally (Nagy, Perman, & Anderson, 1985). Students learn vocabulary best in classrooms in which teachers read to them and highlight important and interesting words. Informal and incidental vocabulary learning is quite efficient and effective (Nagy et al., 1987). Stahl, Richek, and Vandevier (1991) say that students are able to learn a significant number of vocabulary words from reading, discussing their reading, and listening to orally presented passages. Collectively, these findings indicate that vocabulary growth occurs when we “immerse students in words in a variety of ways and get them personally and actively involved in constructing word meanings” (Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003, p. 182).

### 5. Pronunciation and Spelling for Word Power

To learn a new word, one must learn three things: Meaning, Pronunciation, and Spelling. Learning the exact pronunciation of the new word is very important for L2 vocabulary acquisition (Celce-Murcia, 2001; Laufer, 1998). Lower-level learners may especially benefit from perceiving acoustic and orthographic similarities in words (Hennings, 2000). Many simple words are mis-spelled because they are mispronounced. English is not an easy language to spell. The differing spellings are the result of the complex linguistic history since English was not created at one time or from one source (Crystal, 2002). When learners get in the habit of pronouncing words with care and acquire the habit of looking closely at the word, as they read the word or write it down, their spelling is bound to improve. Taking into consideration that the relationship of spelling to sound of the English language is quite irregular, the importance of learning exact pronunciation with vocabulary needs to be highlighted.

### 6. Strategies for Teaching Vocabulary

Seal (1991), for example, classified vocabulary teaching strategies as planned and unplanned activities in classrooms. Seal proposed a three C's method, which may start from conveying meanings by giving synonyms, anecdotes, or using mime. Then the teacher checks the meanings to confirm that students understand what has been conveyed. Finally, the meanings can be consolidated by practising them in contexts.

According to Ruitmets (2005) vocabulary learning strategies are a subcategory of language learning strategies and constitute knowledge about what students do to find out the meaning of new words, retain them in long-term memory, recall them when needed in comprehension, and use them in language production. They are classified into

- a) strategies for understanding the meaning of words, such as making deductions from the word-form, linking to cognates, guessing from the context and using dictionary, and
- b) strategies for acquiring words, such as repeating the word over and over again, organising words in the mind, linking to background knowledge (Griva, 2009).

Nation (1990: 31) proposes the following list of the different kinds of knowledge that a student must master in order to know a word:

- the meaning(s) of the word,
- the written form of the word,
- the spoken form of the word,
- the grammatical behaviour of the word,
- the collocations of the word,
- the register of the word,
- the associations of the word, and
- the frequency of the word.

Teachers can make the students learn interesting and important words that come from texts they read in the classroom. They can also focus attention of the students on learning new words at both the literal level (i.e., dictionary or glossary definition) and the conceptual level; help them use new words in their Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing (Dixon- Krauss, 2001); get them actively engaged in interactive word-learning experiences (Rosenbaum, 2001); focus their attention on learning clusters of words that share a common element or origin (Hennings, 2000); demonstrate to them how to learn vocabulary before, during, and after reading (Greenwood, 2004); and stress to them that learning new words is not an end in itself but a tool to enhance reading comprehension (Harmon, Wood, Hedrick, & Gress, 2008).

Teachers should keep four factors in mind when they consider strategies to teach vocabulary:

- the students they are teaching,
- the nature of the words they decide to teach,
- their instructional purposes in teaching each of those words, and
- the strategies they employ to teach the words (Flanigan & Greenwood, 2007).

They describe eight research-based instructional strategies teachers can use to teach vocabulary across the curriculum: Alphaboxes, Word Questioning, Linear Array, Polar Opposites, Story Impressions, Word Sorts for Narrative and Expository Texts, and Anticipation Guides.

### 6.1 Alphaboxes

Alphaboxes (Hoyt, 1998) is a strategy that uses the 26 letters of the alphabet to record important concepts about a specific topic or theme. Here is adopted a unit from 'After the Storm' presently prescribed by the state government for the 8<sup>th</sup> Standard English. Throughout the unit, the students have to read a variety of texts and record important concepts on the theme in their alphabox- sheet. An example for an Alphabox is shown in Figure 1.

### 6.2 Word Questioning

Word questioning (Allen, 1999) is a strategy that teaches vocabulary and promotes critical thinking. It challenges students to define, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate target words in their readings.

### 6.3 Linear Arrays

Focusing on word relationships is one of the most frequently cited successful instructional strategies for teaching

A-Aside	B-Blow	C-Crawl	D-Dragging
Abrupt	Bare	Clung	Desolate
E-Enormous	F-Flash	G-Giant	H-Howl
Exploded	Foraging	Gesticulate	Horried
I-Influential	J-Jeep	K-Knew	L-Lofty
Impassioned	Jerked	Knock	
M-Moderate	N-Native	O-Oak	P-Peculiar
Muttered	Nervously	Outburst	Pines
Q-Quickly	R-Rage	S-Storm	T-Tremendous
	Resin	Stretched	Thudded
		Stunned	Triumphantly
U-Uncle	V	W-Wiry	X Z Y
		Wrench	

(Alphabox Strategy Adapted from Hoyt, 1998)

Figure 1. Alphabox

vocabulary (Berne & Blachowich, 2008; Nilsen and Nilsen, 2003). Linear arrays are a strategy that illustrates “visual representations of degree that depict gradations between related words” (Allen, 1999: 52). They help students make connections between words, see subtle distinctions between words, and realize that all words have shades of meanings (Nilsen and Nilsen, 2002).

### 6.4 Polar Opposites

A companion strategy to linear arrays is polar opposites (Yopp & Yopp, 2009). This strategy helps students analyze and evaluate characters in a text by rating them on a variety of dimensions along a three-, five-, or seven-point continuum. After reading, students place a check mark on one of the blanks along the continuum to indicate their understanding and interpretation of a character based on a particular dimension.

### 6.5 Story Impressions

The story impressions strategy (McGinley & Denner, 1987) arouses students' curiosity and enables them to use “clue words associated with the setting, characters, and events in the story to help them write their own versions of the story prior to reading” (Vacca & Vacca, 2008:189). Clue words and phrases taken directly from a story are arranged in a list in the order in which they appear. The intent of the list is to trigger an overall impression of the story. Students use this impression to write a story prediction that anticipates the major events in the story. After reading, students compare their versions with the original story.

### 6.6 Word Sorts for Narrative Text

Word Sorts for Narrative Text (Allen, 2007; Hoyt, 2000) is a before-, during-, and after-reading strategy in which the teacher creates a collection of important words and phrases from a story on index cards. This collection is prepared in advance of the lesson. Students arrange the cards in an order and then use the cards to tell the story to the class. After this step, the teacher reads the story aloud, stopping at two or three points so students can rearrange their cards to reflect their ongoing understanding of the story. They use the new arrangement to retell the story up to that point. This procedure continues until the story is completed.

### 6.7 Word Sorts for Expository Text

Word sorts for expository text act as a companion to the word sort strategy used with nonfiction text (Hoyt, 2002). This strategy involves a collection of words and phrases from an expository text with each word or phrase written on an index card. Students review the cards, develop possible categories, name each category, and rearrange cards in the appropriate categories. The teacher should remind students that categories need to reflect relationships between words and phrases and those students need to explain these relationships. Students then use categories to make predictions about the expository text. Students can ask themselves: What might be the title? What might be the theme? What will this text be about? Students then read the selection and, after reading, rearrange the cards and create new categories so they can more accurately retell and discuss the selection.

### 6.8 Anticipation Guides

An anticipation guide is also a before-, during-, and after-reading strategy. It is particularly suited for use with non-fiction and reference texts, such as textbooks (Merkley, 1997). This strategy highlights the importance of anticipating meanings of a text before reading, thinking and rethinking these meanings during reading, and reflecting and taking a position on confirmed meanings after reading. Word knowledge is an essential component of communicative competence (Seal, 1991), and it is important for both production and comprehension in a foreign language. Knowing a word involves (Richards, 1976):

- a great deal about its general frequency of use, syntactic and situational limitations on its use,
- its underlying form and the forms that can be derived from it,
- the network of its semantic features and,
- the various meanings associated with the item.

Knowing a word is defined as knowing its Spelling, Pronunciation, Collocations (i.e. words it co-occurs with), and appropriateness (Nation, 1990). Therefore, lexical competence is far more than the ability to define a given number of words and covers a wide range of knowledge

which in turn requires a variety of strategies to gain the knowledge. Gu and Johnson (1996) list vocabulary learning strategies as metacognitive, cognitive, memory and activation strategies. Metacognitive strategies consist of selective attention and self-initiation strategies. Cognitive strategies entail guessing strategies, skillful use of dictionaries and note-taking strategies. Learners using guessing strategies draw upon their background knowledge and use linguistic clues like grammatical structures of a sentence to guess the meaning of a word. Memory strategies are classified into rehearsal and encoding categories. Word lists and repetition are instances of rehearsal strategies. Encoding strategies encompass such strategies as Association, Imagery, Visual, Auditory, Semantic, and Contextual Encoding as well as Word Structure (i.e., analyzing a word in terms of prefixes, stems, and suffixes). Activation strategies include those strategies through which the learners actually use new words in different contexts. For instance, learners may set sentences using the words they have just learned. All these suggested strategies can be followed by teachers in their classroom.

### 6.9 Word-Part Strategy

Knowing how to use prefixes, suffixes and roots appropriately is helpful to learners learn and remember many words. Words can be composed of affixes –prefixes and suffixes- and roots. Using word parts can be mainly useful strategy in reading content-area texts. For an instance, same word parts such as bio- in biosphere, biochemical, biodegradable, biology and bioluminescence. This particular root will help students learn across content areas. For example language art students may encounter words such as 'biography'. Word parts affect word meaning For example, prefixes such as un-, super-, anti-, mis-, and sub- change the meanings of the roots they precede in predictable ways. The strategy of using word parts is probably most effective when combined with other ways of acquiring words such as context clues.

### 6.10 Repetitive Drill

Any word can be retained in the memory of the learners when it is taught repeatedly. Repetitive drill is one of the



most important exercises helps them learn plethora of words in English. Both oral and written drill can be administered to the learners for cultivating vocabulary.

Without reoccurrence or repetition or without giving special and discrete attention to particular words in contexts, it is more likely to be difficult in comprehending, retaining, and eventually using target items. Hulstijn, Hollander, and Greidanus (1996: 337), clearly indicate the importance of individual focus after incidental learning from texts. They recommend that extensive reading is conducive to vocabulary enlargement. However, reading for global meaning alone will not do the job. For words to be learned, incidentally as well as intentionally, learners must pay attention to their form-meaning relationships. Learners should therefore be encouraged to engage in elaborating activities, such as paying attention to unfamiliar words deemed to be important, trying to infer their meanings, looking up their meanings, marking them or writing them down, and reviewing them regularly.

### **6.11 Memorisation**

Memorisation is important for vocabulary learning. If words cannot be remembered, few are likely to be produced properly. There is evidence that memorising prefabricated chunks (or lexical phrases) of language may play a central, essential, and creative role in language acquisition (Cowie, 1988). Despite this, some research findings show the positive effect of mnemonic strategies for enhancing vocabulary acquisition. The main claimed benefits of using mnemonics were found in psycholinguistic research studies based on the ways human beings learn and remember words. The keyword method, which has its central element, the imaginative use of student-generative mnemonics, has been regarded as one useful tool to help learners of different target languages. Several research studies have been popularised in L2 learning areas since 1970s (Atkinson, 1975).

### **6.12 Association Strategy**

The applied linguists (Cohen and Aphek 1980) have found that the use of an Association Strategy, especially continuing the same word association, can help learners to recall words in different tasks more successfully than using no association at all. Cohen (1990: 26-28) listed nine types

of association:

- linking the sound of the keyword with L1, L2, or even L3;
- dividing the meaningful part of the word by meanings;
- analysing word structure;
- grouping words topically;
- visualising the word;
- reflecting on word location;
- creating a mental image;
- using physical associations; and
- associating with another word.

Association techniques can be valuable because they allow learners to have a deeper learning process, and the more combinations to assist that deeper process, the better. However, Cohen and Aphek (1980) cautioned that Association Strategies may not benefit every type of learner, because they may not use association successfully.

### **6.13 Knowing the Cultural Context of a Word**

As English language is enriched with a lot of loan words, it is very important to know the cultural context of a word and its origin and why and how it was used in the language from which the word was borrowed. To know a word, students need to see it in context and learn how its meaning relates to the words around it. An approach that includes definitions as well as context can generate a full and flexible knowledge of word meanings. When students are given several sentences that use a word in different ways, they begin to see how a word's meaning can change and shift depending on its context. For example, consider the changes in the word 'got', as it appears in the following sentences:

- Tom got rich.
- Isabella got in trouble.
- Tony got a cold.
- Eliza got a note from Catharine.

## **7. Vocabulary Journal**

Learners can organize their Vocabulary Journal in various styles. They can draw images or create grids and sets to visualize semantic networks of words, which will lead to

better retention. In a Vocabulary Journal, learners can include various pieces of information about the target word such as pronunciation, part of speech (noun, verb etc), lexical and grammatical patterns, register, etc. One feature that learners should include in their Vocabulary Journal is a synonym or antonym of the word, which can greatly increase their ability to use and retain the word (Bromberg & Gale, 1998; Folse, 2004; Nurnberg & Rosenblum, 2005). Learners can also include any personal examples (anecdotes, memories, or feelings) that can help them to develop a feel for the target word and retrieve the word later.

Basically, keeping a Vocabulary Journal provides learners with opportunities to experiment with words. The Journal is a space where they can practice words and expand meaning while they are acquiring new vocabulary, which will ultimately help them develop both their writing and reading vocabulary. Keeping a Vocabulary Journal will also help them become more aware of the interdependence between lexis and grammar, and it can prevent learners from being preoccupied with grammatical rules.

### 7.1 Learning Vocabulary by its Forms

In schools teachers do not pay much attention on teaching Vocabulary and Pronunciation simultaneously. Teachers teach vocabulary so casually and so their children learn it effortlessly. While they read the text, plethora of words comes across their mind, but they may not know their synonyms or antonyms or their different forms. Similarly, they neither learn pronunciation (either contextually or non-contextually) nor the spelling of every word. When students learn a word, they must also learn its various forms and their pronunciation. Students should be helped to understand the meaning of each word both contextually and non-contextually. It will be easy, interesting and effective and so it will retain in their memory for a long-

FORM	VERB	NOUN	ADJECTIVE	ADVERB	MEANING
Word	Beautify	Beauty	Beautiful	Beautifully	Pretty
Pronunciation	/'bju:tɪfaɪ/	/'bju:tɪ/	/'bju:tɪfl/	/'bju:tɪflɪ/	
Word	Wonder	Wonder	Wondrous	Wonderfully	Surprise
Pronunciation	/'wʌndə/	/'wʌndə/	/'wʌndrəs/	/'wʌndəfəli/	
Word	Please	Pleasure	pleasing	Pleasingly	Gratify
Pronunciation	/'pli:z/	/'pleɪə/	/'pli:zɪŋ/	/'pli:zɪŋli/	
word	Nationalize	Nation/	National	Nationally	Make public
Pronunciation	/'næ nəlaɪz/	/'neɪ n/	/'næ neɪ/	/'næ nəli/	

(New strategy invented by the author himself)

Figure 2. Rex Vocabulary Learning Strategy

term. This new strategy will enrich students' power of vocabulary. In order to learn unknown words, students can access a dictionary with various look-up options such as pictorial and verbal cues (Laufer & Hill, 2000). With regard to vocabulary retention, target vocabulary items are retained significantly longer when their meanings were correctly inferred than when explained by their synonyms. Hence, teachers may enable their wards learn vocabulary in the following way.

### 7.2 Collocation

The term collocation generally refers to the way in which two or more words are typically used together. For example, we talk about heavy rain but not heavy sun, or we say that we make or come to a decision, but we don't do a decision. So, heavy rain and make a decision are often referred to as collocations and we say that heavy collocates with rain, or that heavy and rain are collocates of each other. With collocation software we can search for all the collocates of a particular word, that is, all the words that are used most frequently with that word and especially those with a higher than anticipated frequency (McCarten, 2007: 3).

This is particularly useful for finding the collocates of verbs like have, get, make, and do, which are often referred to as delexical verbs. These are verbs which don't have a (lexical) meaning of their own, but take their meaning from the words that they collocate are used with. For example, the verb make has a different meaning in each of the expressions make a cake, make a decision, and make fun of, so it is sensible to teach verbs like these in expressions, as collocations, instead of trying to identify and distinguish basic meanings, which is difficult and, in many cases, almost impossible (McCarten 2007 : 3).

Here are some of the most frequent collocates of the words do and make. They include words that come immediately after the word (make sure) and words that come two or more words after it (make a difference, make a huge mistake).

DO: *anything, something, things, job, well, nothing, work, whatever, aerobics, gardening, stuff, homework, laundry*

MAKE: *sure, difference, sense, decision, mistakes,*

*decisions, money, judgments, mistake, reservations, copies, effort*

### **7.3 Vocabulary Card Game**

Any learning that occurs through games creates curiosity, interest and exhilaration and makes the learner involve whole heartedly. This is a kind of game played with two teams namely Team –A and Team-B. Prior to the start of the game, the teams go over the words with the assistance of their teacher and get an idea of what the words are and how they can act when they play the game. The teacher is supposed to give synonyms, definitions or whatever other linguistic device to inform his teammate of the word which is on the card. After a short rehearsal, the game starts. One of the students in the class is assigned to take on the responsibility of keeping track of the time available for each team. Each team is given one minute. A set of cards will be placed on the table. Team-A will pick up a card concealing the word written on it and give the Team-B a major clue of the word. The Team-B may ask five questions based on the clue and finally say the answer. If not, the team will lose one mark. Eventually, the team will reveal the word with proper meaning. Then Team-B will get the chance. The teacher will facilitate both the teams and award appropriate marks to them. In this way both the team members learn each word playfully. The positive aspect of the game is that it creates the element of competitiveness among the different teams.

### **7.4 Cross-association**

Cross-association is a common problem in teaching word meaning and it occurs when semantically related words are taught together. Cross-association involves confusion of form-meaning relationships whereby word forms are matched to wrong meanings. Synonyms and antonyms are particularly amenable to such confusion (Nation, 1990: 45). When tall and short, for example, are taught together, learners will have difficulty in remembering which word form (i.e. tall vs. short) referred to which concept (i.e. "above average height" vs. "below average height" respectively), and they might associate tall with "below average height" and short with "above average height". Cross-association is argued to occur because the meanings of tall and short are too similar (i.e. they represent extreme values on the

same scale of length) for the learners to keep them separate. It needs to be empirically shown; however, that cross-association occurs between semantically related words and not semantically unrelated ones. A counter argument can be forwarded such that a word will be cross-associated with any other word taught together since word-form is arbitrary. It could also be investigated if form similarity (Laufer, 1989) also leads to cross association and which type is stronger.

### **7.5 Visual Imaging**

The strategy of visualizing vocabulary words assists learners who are powerful in spatial rather than in verbal intelligence to find or draw pictures that illustrate the definitions of words. Visual Imaging is also referred to as Mind, Mental, or Concept Imagery. Visualization provides opportunities for students to use their imaginations to facilitate both vocabulary development and comprehension across the curriculum. This strategy assists readers in assessing understanding of vocabulary knowledge, learning word meaning, making predictions and inferences, and concept acquisition. When students use Visual Imaging, they think of a word that looks like, or even sounds like, the word they are learning. The more vivid the imagery, the more likely students will be able to connect and mentally recall the vocabulary word to its meaning. Diverse types of art activate different parts of the brain and this sensory connection is the bond for visual learners. Linking verbal and visual images increases students' ability to store and retrieve information.

### **7.6 Pictorial Strategy**

A single picture is more effective than thousand words. Underpinned by Nassaji's (2003) idea of the fallibility of inferring the meanings of unknown words from pictures, and by Plass et al.'s (1998) suggestion of using both pictorial and written annotations, target vocabulary items can be provided with their equivalent pictures and written annotations. Jiang (2004) asserts that adult L2 learners can draw on the mature conceptual and lexical systems of their native languages (L1s), in part because target vocabulary items usually have corresponding words in L1s.

### **7.7 Constraint in Vocabulary Teaching**

Teachers' narrow use of Vocabulary Teaching Strategies



may be because they believe that giving the meaning of words directly can be less time-consuming, or because of their familiarity with certain methods only. Moreover, it has been argued that vocabulary teaching is least likely to be effective, because there is a belief that vocabulary is learnt in a very limited way in classrooms. Students, therefore, have a general feeling that they "were not taught enough words in class", but have to rely on themselves in the learning process by Speaking, Reading or Watching TV (Morgan and Rinvolucris 1986). There is then a strong argument, which Coe (1997: 47) made, that "vocabulary must be learnt, not taught", as learning a word needs a long-term process of encountering it in many experiences. If there is much effect of teaching or giving more exercises to enrich students' knowledge of words: there are simply too many unknown words which are difficult to cover in class. Even though there are constraints to classroom teaching teachers should realise that there is a need to be aware of Vocabulary Teaching and Learning Strategies.

### 8. Recommendations

Teachers with utmost commitment should teach new lexical items by preparing additional challenging and motivating vocabulary activities. Teachers are advised to be eclectic in teaching new vocabulary by choosing the most appropriate strategy; they should vary their strategies according to the difficulty of the word and the level of the class. They can sometimes combine more than one strategy according to the nature of the new words. Teachers are encouraged to focus on intentional as well as accidental vocabulary learning. Teachers must avoid translation as much as possible in teaching new lexical items. Selecting an appropriate strategy is one of the most essential aspects of teaching new and hard words.

### Conclusion

Vocabulary is an important ingredient of language and vocabulary learning is an essential part of second or foreign language learning. Language learners need a wide array of target language words to be able to tackle successfully both production and comprehension activities in the second or foreign language. One way to help learners to enhance their knowledge of vocabulary is through equipping learners with a variety of vocabulary

learning strategies. Learning new vocabulary is a challenge to foreign language students but they can overcome by having access to a variety of vocabulary learning strategies. Learners should then be trained in strategies they lack. To this end, teachers should consider the learners' willingness and readiness to receive trainings and think of the most appropriate way to introduce the strategies. To sum up, learning new vocabulary is a challenge to Foreign Language Learners but they can overcome by having access to a variety of Vocabulary Learning Strategies. Learners should then be trained in strategies they lack. Teachers should consider the learners' willingness and readiness to receive trainings and think of the most appropriate way to introduce the Strategies.

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