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ENGLISH VOCABULARY – A MATTER OF WORD BUILDING AND  
WORD USING

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ABSTRACT

Real teaching of English depends upon the acquisition of all the four skills. But in today's global community, developing effective communication skills in English is essential. Vocabulary building is the most important aspect of language learning. In reality without the knowledge of vocabulary, nobody can speak or write that language correctly. This paper is an attempt to research different approaches of vocabulary building through teaching.

**Key words** – vocabulary, precognitive, Passive, Lexical, Syntactical, Morphological, Intonational, Function words, Word compounding, Semantic mapping.

Introduction

Language is the most outstanding product of human mind. Language enables people to express their feeling, ideas and wishes. It is the medium through which a child acquires the cultural, moral, religious and other values of society. Language fluency is oral expression of facts ideas attitudes etc in speech. It is the ability to speak independently with ease and spontaneity. A set of linguists who based their assumptions of language on psychology made claims that language is nothing but habit formation According to them language is learnt through practices

English Language

Of all the languages in the world today, English deserves to be regarded as a world language. It is adorned as the queen of languages. The development of English as a global language is one of the most remarkable phenomena of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. For the first time in the history of human society a single language is used as a global lingua franca for communication between speakers of many languages. In today's global community developing effective communication skills in English is essential.

Aims of Teaching English in India

Regarding aims of teaching English Thompson and Wyatt says, it is necessary that the Indians should not only understand English when it is spoken or written but also that he should himself be able to speak and write it. Real teaching of English depends upon the acquisition of all the four skills

- i. To be able to speak English fluently and accurately
- ii. To think in English and then speak
- iii. To be able to compose freely and independently in speech and writing
- iv. To be able to read books with understanding
- v. To acquire a vocabulary of 25000 words
- vi. To have ability to use of reference material such as encyclopaedia dictionary etc

The Kothari Education commission Report quotes English would play vital role in higher education. No student should be considered as qualified for a degree in particular a Masters degree unless he has acquired a reasonable proficiency in English.

Though the Educational Board of India has endorsed a lot of systems to improve the communicative skill of English among Indian students the position of English is still pulled down to the third place. The expected improvement is still not possible for Indian students. To them English is very complicated to learn as a second language

### **Vocabulary building through teaching**

Just like grammar, vocabulary – building is another most important aspect of language learning. In reality without the knowledge of vocabulary, nobody can speak or write that language correctly. Without a good vocabulary, a person is not able to express himself successfully. Therefore along with grammar, teaching of vocabulary should also go simultaneously.

Besides, one of the aims of teaching English in India is to enable students to use it as library language. For this they need to know a large vocabulary which includes:

- (1) Active or precognitive vocabulary and
- (2) Passive or respective vocabulary.

### **Some characteristics of words**

For a good teaching of vocabulary, the teacher must know the characteristics of words which are as follows:

- (1) A word can have more than one meaning.
  - (a) Lexical – that which is given in the dictionary
  - (b) Syntactical – that which is conveyed by the word order.
  - (c) Morphological – that which is conveyed through the forms of words.
  - (d) Intonational – that which is conveyed by the way the word is pronounced.
  - (e) Cultural – that which is related to some culture.
- (2) Words convey their meanings in context.
- (3) There are no exact synonyms for many in a language.

### **Kinds of words**

Words are mainly of four kinds.

- (1) Function words – these are the words with which we speak. Such as auxiliaries, adverbs, conjunctions, interrogatives etc.,
- (2) Substitute words – these are the words which are used to substitute other words, eg., I, he, she, they, we, anybody, everybody, none.
- (3) Content words – these are the words we talk about. They are
  - (a) Words for things like book, pencil, table etc.,
  - (b) Words for qualities, eg., honesty, beauty., etc.,
  - (c) Words for action, eg., departure, arrival., etc.,
- (4) Distributive words – the words having affirmative and negative distributions are called distributive words., eg., too, any etc. eg., (i) I bought a basket and Sita purchased too. (ii) I shall not give you any of these books.

### **Vocabulary building activities**

#### **Vocabulary expansion**

The knowledge of the structure of words is one of the most effective ways of expanding vocabulary and helps in inferring to guess the meaning of words by explaining the prefix/suffix such as like – unlike – likely.

#### **Matching**

Half of the students in a class can be given strips with definitions of words, and the other half can be given the actual words. Students circulate to match words and definitions. For example

Road — beautiful

Money – straight

Rose - save

**Word compounding**

Sometimes new words can be formed by pulling two or more words together which is called 'compounding'. For eg., letter – box, Safety – valve etc.,

**Word chains**

The teacher writes the word 'ship' and the student writes the next word beginning with the last letter of the preceding word. These words are frequently used so they can also be written together.

**Semantic mapping game**

A topic is selected, for example 'computer' is written on the board. Students are asked to give lot of information that would like to include on the topic. Then a discussion is started, using the words as a guide like computer, a programming system, process of information, memory chips, changes information etc.,

**Word finder**

In this game, students are given a word and they have to make as many words as they can from the letters in it. For eg., 'beautiful'. Such vocabulary games make learning enjoyable and to revise the known words.

**Multiple meaning awareness activities**

Students can be asked to make use of a dictionary and a thesaurus to refer to a word. For eg., if we take the word 'walk', it refers to walking, moving forward, march, pace, step, stride, trek etc.,

**Learn a word a day**

Use a word-a-day calendar or Website like dictionary.com's Word-of-the-day. This is a great technique to learn new words.

**Engage in conversations**

Talking with students can help them to discover new words.

**Suggestions to the Teachers**

1. Teacher can employ variety of techniques like pair work, group or collaborative, activities discussions language games, self activities co operative learning etc, which give ample scope for learning without any anxiety.
2. Students should be encouraged to keep a vocabulary notebook and meaning of difficult words should be noted in it.
3. Teachers can also do arrangements for listening to the native speakers. Listening to conversations and speeches can give more effect on this.
4. Teachers should make the students read not only their text but also library books.
5. Creating a low anxiety classroom climate is an important pre-requisite to successful language learning.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, words are our most boundless source of magic. Understanding of what we read and hear is, to a very large degree determined by our vocabulary, so we should improve our vocabulary daily. We can't build up a vocabulary if we never meet any new words and to meet them we must read. Read, read and read. The more we read, the more words we will be exposed to.

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