



COVID-19 VOCABULARY: LEARNING AND UNDERSTANDING

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ABSTRACT

Vocabulary represents one of most important skills necessary for teaching and learning a foreign language. It is the basis for the development of all the other skills: reading comprehension, listening comprehension, speaking, writing, spelling and pronunciation. Vocabulary is the main tool for the students in their attempt to use English effectively. Both teacher and students in this era have to provide their ability to update and enlarge new vocabularies, especially in. pandemic Covid -19 era. The coronavirus pandemic has brought not only serious disruption and change to countries across the world but also a new range of terminology to help describe the disease. The era will not be under control until there is at least a working vaccine. The writers have tried to enlarge the English vocabulary related to Covid-19 matter.

Keywords: learning, understanding, vocabulary, covid-19

1. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is the main tool for the students in their attempt to use English effectively. When confronted with a native English speaker, when watching a movie without subtitle or when listening to a favorite English song, when reading a text or when writing a letter to a friend, students will always need to operate with words. In what follows, the focus of this introductory chapter will be on why vocabulary is important, on what makes words difficult, on the main reasons for which students often forget the words they learn and on some techniques which help them remember the vocabulary.

Discussing about vocabulary, the linguist David Wilkins argued that: “without grammar little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.” Indeed, people need to use words in order to express themselves in any language. In the fact that students usually find it difficult to speak English fluently. They usually consider speaking and writing activities exhausting because they keep on using the same expressions and words and very soon their conversation is abruptly



interrupted due to missing words. And the main reason for such communication problems is the lack of vocabulary.

The most important and crucial in every language is the vocabulary. In communication, especially in verbal communication, the word is the unsure which should be use for speakers. We can combine the word into phrase, clause, sentence, and paragraph grammatically. The sentence will create an idea. So, vocabulary is an unsure that is important in communication. Vocabulary learning strategy is the language learning strategy than can be defined as “Specific action taken by the learners to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations.” (Oxford, 1990:8). According to Fank and Lewis (1974:4), the vocabularies are the parameter to measure the person’s intelligence. Language is a system that has a pattern. Understanding the vocabularies are the good concept for learners for the first. All learners have many obstacles for understanding word by word in English text or conversation. It is because those learners have vocabularies yet to support their English. In the other hand, the English learners sometimes forget about the context for understanding English text and conversation.

The shortcut for this problem, the learners can take and open the dictionary for knowing the meaning of each word, but it will take their time. For avoiding this situation, the learners have to know about the learning strategies especially in vocabulary problem.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF VOCABULARY

Vocabulary knowledge is often viewed as a critical tool for second language learners because a limited vocabulary in a second language impedes successful communication. Underscoring the importance of vocabulary acquisition, Schmitt (2000) emphasizes that “lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language” p. 55) Nation (2001) further describes the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and language use as complementary: knowledge of vocabulary enables language use and, conversely, language use leads to an increase in vocabulary knowledge. The importance of vocabulary is demonstrated daily in and out the school. In classroom, the achieving students possess the most sufficient vocabulary. According to Steven Stahl (2005), “Vocabulary knowledge is knowledge; the knowledge of a word not only implies a definition, but also implies how that word fits into the world.”



We continue to develop vocabulary throughout our lives. Words are powerful. Words open up possibilities, and of course, that's what we want for all of our students.

Using vocabulary strategies has revealed differences among learners in terms of their strategy use. The successful vocabulary learners were found to be active strategy users who were found to be active strategy users who were conscious of their learning and took steps to regulate it, whereas poor learners displayed little awareness of how to learn new words or how to connect new words to the knowledge.

The importance of vocabulary as a very essential unsure of any language as well as the core point of language and communication learning. Richards et al (1992:406) defines that vocabulary as a set of lexemes which includes single words, compound words, and idioms. Vocabulary concerns not only in simple words in all their aspect but also complex and compound words as well as the meaningful units of language. Vocabulary often seems to be the least systematized and the least well-catered for of all the aspects of learning a foreign language for example the listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, or pronunciation.

The grammatical or other type of linguistics knowledge can be employed in communication or discourse without the meditation of vocabulary because vocabulary is shown to focus much more than knowledge or single words. Hedge (2000:110) affirms that there is a lack of attention to vocabulary. Since vocabulary learning is a part of language, it is worth mentioning in the present investigation that strategies should be indispensable parts of vocabulary learning. In learning vocabulary items, it is useful in order that they can learn how to discover them by practicing and expanding their vocabulary. The meaning of vocabulary depends on the context absolutely, for example:

- (1). Cancer is her zodiac.
- (2). There are many different options when it comes to treating cancer.

According to these sentences, there are different meaning in 'cancer'. In the first sentence 'cancer' is a name of zodiac in astrology for someone who born in June to July. In the second sentence, the 'cancer' is a medical term that is disease caused by the uncontrollable growth of cells.

- (3). Megan Fox is a cast of Transformer movie.
- (4). My leg was is a cast for graduation.

With the same word 'cast' for these sentences, it still has a different meaning. The 'cast' in the first sentence is the actress who act in a movie. In the second sentence the 'cast' is one of the medical terms that is a hard bandage that is wrapped around a broken bone to keep it in place.

- (5). Sting will perform in the biggest concert tonight.
- (6). It may sting when I insert the needle.



‘Sting’ in the first sentence is the name of singer and in the second sentence ‘sting’ is sharp and temporary pain for medical vocabulary.

These examples of the sentences and conversations prove that vocabulary learning is not a simple matter, and in recent years, there is a renewed interest in the role of vocabulary in English as a second language. Be careful with the words especially for learners who are in medical field. Generally accepted that vocabulary is the heart of language learning. Rubin and Thompson (1994:79) point out, “One cannot speak, understand, read or write a foreign language without knowing a lot of words. Therefore, vocabulary learning is at the heart of mastering a foreign language.” Moreover, Taylor (1992:30) states that “Vocabulary permeates everything language learners or language teachers do in an English class, whichever skill or language point is being practiced.”

Understanding any foreign language is impossible without knowing words whether in the spoken or the written forms, Hall (2000:43). The language learners with large and rich vocabulary are believed to improve their listening, reading, speaking, writing, and thinking abilities. That says, vocabulary is a key indicator of language learners.

2.2 THE VOCABULARY STRATEGIES

Here are some strategies for learning vocabulary:

A. Contextualization

This means putting new vocabulary words in to sentences to help you remember them and to test if you are using them correctly. You can use these sentences when talking to an English speaker to see if they understand.

B. Elaboration

This means relating new information to information you already know. For example, if you know the meaning of information, it is easy to remember that the verb is to inform, and that informative is an adjective, and that an informant is someone who gives information.

C. Inferencing

This means using available information to predict or guess the meaning of; for example: new vocabulary items, if you know that you are reading about football and you know that a field is often a large area covered in grass, than you can guess that a football field is a large, grassy area for playing football.

D. Translation



You can read a story in a newspaper in your own language first, then read the same story in an English newspaper. Most of the story will probably be the same, so the story in your own language will help you to prepare for reading in English. For example, it will give you vocabulary and when you read the English story and there is some vocabularies that you do not know, then you can use your knowledge of the story to guess what the new vocabulary meaning.

E. Personalization

You can write down the vocabulary item, for example word or phrase are important for you, where you first saw it, and when you used it, for example you may have heard that item in a movie you liked and used the item when you talked about the movie with your friends.

F. Keeping your own dictionary

Writing entries for the dictionary will help you to learn words and using your own dictionary can be faster than a normal dictionary.

G. Grouping

You can group words into different areas, such as words in the different courses you study. For example, medical students can group the vocabulary into:

- Computing term vocabulary
- Software/Hardware system vocabulary
- Program vocabulary
- Computing equipment vocabulary

H. Practice, practice, practice

Learning a word will not help you very much if you promptly forget it. Research shows that it takes from ten to twenty repetitions to really make a word part of your vocabulary. It helps to write the word both the definition and a sentence you make up using the word perhaps on an index that can later be reviewed. As soon as you can learn a new word, start using it. Review your index periodically to see if you have forgotten any your new words.

These are the learning strategies that can adopt for learning vocabulary. A limited vocabulary keeps the ideas and feeling from expressing the learners thought and feelings. On the other hand, a large number and rich vocabulary give the learners the right words to use at the right time. Both vocabulary and grammar are essential but when we compared vocabulary and grammar, vocabulary is much more important and should receive more attention than grammar.



Regarding vocabulary in communication, it is apparent that vocabulary is basic in learning to communicate effectively while listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The importance of vocabulary as being a basic for daily communication. If language learners do not recognize and understand the meanings of the key words used by those who address them, they will be unable to participate in the conversation, even if they know the morphology and syntax.

2.3 VOCABULARY KINDS

Some experts divide vocabulary into two types: active and passive vocabulary. Harmer (1991) distinguishes between these two types of vocabulary. The first type of vocabulary refers to the one that the students have been taught and that they are expected to be able to use. Meanwhile, the second one refers to the words which the students will recognize when they meet them, but which they will probably not be able to pronounce. Hay craft, quoted by Hatch and Brown (1995), indicate two kinds of vocabulary, namely receptive vocabulary and productive vocabulary.

A. Receptive Vocabulary

Receptive vocabulary is word those learners recognize and understand when they are used in context, but which they cannot produce. It is vocabulary that learners recognize when they see or meet in reading text but do not use it in speaking and writing (Stuart Webb, 2009).

B. Productive Vocabulary


Productive vocabulary is the words that the learners understand and can pronounce correctly and use constructively in speaking and writing. It involves what is needed for receptive vocabulary plus the ability to speak or write at the appropriate time. Therefore, productive vocabulary can be addressed as an active process, because the learners can produce the words to express their thoughts to others (Stuart Webb, 2005).

The success in widening the vocabulary mastery requires their own motivation and interest on the words of a language. From the definition above, we can conclude that vocabulary mastery is an individual's great skill in using words of a language, which is acquired based on their own interests needs and motivation. vocabulary mastery plays an important role in the four language skills and it has to be considered that vocabulary mastery is one of the needed components of language.



3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION : COVID-19 VOCABULARY

An accurate information is key to understanding how (and why it's important) to prevent the spread of COVID-19. But that can be difficult when faced with the increasing amount of complicated terminology that has developed, seemingly overnight, around the coronavirus outbreak. Here are the following vocabularies:

asymptomatic (adjective): showing no symptoms of a particular disease
carrier (noun): a person or animal that transmits a disease to others, whether suffering from it themselves or not
contact tracing (noun): identification and monitoring of people who may have had contact with an infectious person
coronavirus (noun): any one of a large family of viruses that can cause disease in the breathing and eating systems of humans and animals (respiratory and digestive systems). Coronavirus diseases can range from the relatively harmless common cold to more severe and potentially fatal diseases such as SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome). Seen through a microscope, coronaviruses appear circular with spikes, like crowns  , and are named from the Latin for crown, which is <i>corona</i> . Coronaviruses normally originate in animals and usually cannot be passed to humans. But very occasionally a coronavirus mutates and can then be transmitted from animal to human, and then from human to human.
COVID-19 (noun): official name for the novel coronavirus disease that emerged in China in 2019. COVID-19 = CO rona VI rus D isease-2019
droplets (noun): the spray produced when people cough or sneeze, and which can spread diseases like COVID-19
epidemic (noun): occurrence of a particular disease in a large number of people in a particular area.
herd immunity (noun): an indirect protection from a disease resulting from a large percentage of the population gaining immunity (either through vaccination or through recovering from the disease)
incubation period (noun): the time from a person's first exposure to a disease to the time when symptoms develop
isolate (verb): keep an infected person away from healthy people
isolation (noun): separation of infected people from healthy people for serious contagious diseases like COVID-19
mask (noun): a piece of fibre or cloth that fits over the nose and mouth to protect other people from the wearer's germs and/or the wearer from germs in the air
outbreak (noun): a sudden occurrence of a disease (or other unpleasant thing).
pandemic (noun): occurrence of a particular disease throughout a whole country or the world



PCR test (noun): test that detects viral particles in blood or other body fluids. (PCR = polymerase chain reaction)

quarantine (noun): isolation and monitoring of people who seem healthy but may have been exposed to an infectious disease to see if they develop symptoms

SARS-CoV-2 (noun): Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome CoronaVirus 2; final official name for the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

social distancing (noun): practice of encouraging people to minimize contact and closeness, whether by banning large or even small groups/meetings (football matches, nightclubs), or by maintaining a minimum distance between people (for example one metre or two metres)

test negative | test positive (verb): if you take a test for an infection and you test negative, that means you do not have the infection.

vaccine (noun): a substance used to protect humans and animals from a disease

virus (noun): a living thing, too small to be seen without a microscope, that causes infectious disease in animals and humans

Source: <https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/coronavirus-covid19.php#disease>

4. CONCLUSION

The biggest component of any language course is vocabulary. A large and rich vocabulary give language learners the right words to use at the right time and also able to express their real thoughts, idea, and feeling. Expanding the vocabulary is one of the main goals of vocabulary learning strategy. The large vocabulary in medical especially will achieve success both inside and outside language ability. This piece of work aims to highlight the importance of vocabulary learning as an essential part in foreign language learning. Although it has been neglected for many decades, during the 80s it became a 'hot' topic for researchers. Lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second or foreign language and a lack of vocabulary knowledge is an obstacle to learning.

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