

SCHOLARS' POINTS TO TEACHING VOCABULARY IN ESP CLASSES

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Abstract. The presented thesis is devoted to identify the scholars' views on the importance of teaching and learning vocabulary in ESP classes. There given points on vocabulary selection, types of vocabulary and techniques in teaching vocabulary.

Key words: academic vocabulary, English for Specific Purposes, technical terminology, meaning, form, usage.

The learning of vocabulary, having some amount of words is fundamental in the English learning process, especially in the English for Specific Purposes classes, because students can easily get into communication if they domain a huge number of terminology. Therefore, it is important to build academic vocabulary because students can use the vocabulary in their field of interest [1; 14]. So, what can the students do with the vocabulary? According to Jordan [6;17], knowing new words means to recognize a word in a spoken or written form and the ability to relate it to an appropriate object. In the case of ESP, the learners learn specific words related to their discipline and use them in their reading, listening, speaking and writing activities. ESP students should be familiar with technical terms, semi-technical terms or academic words. In addition, Lexis is related to the creation of patterns of language and to the ability to construct new sentences out of words and their combinations in order to express meaning.

According to Scrivener (2005), it is necessary to teachers to encourage the students to remember about the lexical items they have learnt relying on certain procedures in their memory such as putting into storage, keeping in storage, retrieving and using the learnt vocabulary [9: 61]. ESP learners focus on academic vocabulary. In this context, Dudley-Evans and St Johns (1998) argues that academic vocabulary should be given priority in teaching because this type

of vocabulary is used with high proportion in general contexts and has a higher frequency in scientific and technical contexts. [2:75]

According to Hatch and Brown, "special lexical items are present in nearly all professions, and each branch has special vocabulary to cover abstract concepts." [4: 56]. Kennedy and Bolitho distinguish these word categories for teaching technical vocabulary:

- Technical Abbreviations, Symbols and Formulae – they partly cause the problems. Teachers' role is to explain patiently their form and meaning, and students should practice them in spoken and written exercises.
- Sub-technical vocabulary – words which are not directly a part of specific technical branch, but they occur generally in scientific and technical texts – e.g. *derivation, conversion, dense and isolation*.
- Highly technical vocabulary – words that have a close thematic relationship and belong to the specific technical field. [7:90]

The first task for teachers and materials designers in teaching ESP vocabulary is to identify which words and special terms in fact to teach. Gairns and Redman [3:59] emphasize especially cultural reasons and the principles of need and level. Both materials designers and teachers should take into consideration also the criteria of learnability and teachability. According to Harmer, one of the most common principles of vocabulary selection is to teach at first concrete words and gradually abstract words. [5:154]

After selecting the words for teaching purpose teachers should decide what to teach about each naming unit. According to Harmer and Thornbury, knowledge of a word involves knowing its:

- Meaning - meanings in context, sense of relation (synonyms/antonyms),
- Form – spelling and pronunciation, affixes, parts of speech,
- Grammar – plurals, countability, past simple/participle forms,
- Usage – collocations and appropriate register. [8:78]

The main aim of presenting vocabulary is to give the correct form, insert the meaning, and appropriate usage of the new word into the student's memory. There are quite lots of methods and techniques how to present the form and meaning of new lexical items. It depends on teachers, which form of presentation is the most suitable for the particular topic. According to Gairns and Redman (73), there are some traditional methods and techniques used to present new vocabulary: [2: 73]

Visual techniques:

- Visuals – photographs, flashcards, blackboard drawings, pictures, videos, wall charts, pictograms and real objects; they are useful for teaching concrete words.
- Demonstrating: mime/facial expression and gesture – useful for teaching action verbs.

Verbal techniques:

- Illustrative situations (oral or written) – this technique is helpful when the words are more abstract.
- Synonyms and antonyms – using the words students have already known to teach them similar words.
- Definitions and explanations – appropriate for intermediate learners. To make definition of words can be difficult, especially at elementary levels.
- Scales – if students know 'big' and 'small', for example, other steps could be to teach 'short' and 'long' etc.
- Examples of the type – give examples of words you want to introduce.
- Translation – it has been the most widespread activity used for presenting the meaning of a word in classes.
- Guessing from the context, matching/labelling – learners match words to words or sentences or pictures. It belongs to so called discovery techniques: they activate the learner's previous knowledge of a language

and initiate the work with the new vocabulary. Discovery techniques demand the autonomous students with higher knowledge of English.

To sum up, reviewing various literature and scholars' views on the importance of vocabulary and ways of teaching vocabulary we came to the point that all possible means should be tried in order to promote the task of learning vocabulary in an ESP classroom.

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