

**VOCABULARY TEACHING STRATEGIES USED BY TESL TRAINEES
DURING TEACHING PRACTICE**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BM – Bahasa Melayu/ Bahasa Malaysia

TESL – Teaching English as a Second Language

KBSM - Kokurikulum Baru Sekolah Menengah (New Secondary School Curriculum)

SPM – Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia

LP – Lesson Plan

LIT – Literature

COMP – Comprehension

FREQ- Frequency

ABSTRACT

Vocabulary Teaching Strategies used by TESL Trainees during Teaching Practice

Esther Litad Padan

Increasing vocabulary is one part of language skills. This project seeks to find the Vocabulary Teaching strategies used and frequently used by the TESL Trainees during Teaching Practice. It also tries to look into the strategies frequently used in teaching comprehension text and literature text. The method used for the data collection is a checklist that to find out the vocabulary teaching strategies from TESL trainees lesson plan. They have no teaching experience during their Teaching Practice.

ABSTRAK

Strategi-strategi yang digunakan dalam Pengajaran Kosa-kata oleh Pelatih TESL semasa Latihan Mengajar

Esther Litad Padan

Menambah kosa-kata Bahasa Inggeris merupakan salah satu kemahiran pembelajaran bahasa yang amat penting. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyiasat tentang strategi-strategi pengajaran kosa-kata Bahasa Inggeris di kalangan pelatih TESL dalam mengajar Bahasa Inggeris. Kajian ini juga bertujuan menyiasat strategi yang digunakan oleh pelatih TESL dalam mengajar teks pemahaman dan teks kesusasteraan. Maklumat akan dikumpul dengan menggunakan senarai strategi yang disediakan dan akan dilaporkan dengan menggunakan nilai peratusan dalam membuat perbandingan. Pelatih TESL tidak mempunyai pengalaman pengajaran semasa latihan mengajar.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

It has been said, "There is one English word that is known everywhere. The word is **cowboy**." This remark has a certain amount of truth. Such as **rock star** and **cowboy** seem to be known by almost everyone (by almost every young person, at least). Indeed, such English words are usually learned without being taught, without being explained or drilled in class. All too often, however a student who has easily acquired cowboy and rock star seems unable to master the words in the textbook, even after the teacher's explanations and drills. This is unfortunate, as experienced teachers know. **Much of the vocabulary in textbook must be learned. Without it, no one can speak or understand the language.** The question is what can teachers do while presenting the textbook words, so that students will learn them as well as **rock star** and **cowboy**.

Adapted from Allen (1983)

From the statement above, it is clearly stated that vocabulary is very important in learning English as a Second Language (Allen, 1983). It is true that some of the English words can be learned easily especially for something that they can see, hear and touch. As stated by Allen (1983), when students can touch something, in addition to hearing and seeing the word that names it, there is a stronger chance that the word will be learned especially in the classroom.

However, teachers of English as a Second Language cannot expect most of their students can learn vocabulary easily (Allen, 1983). According to Thornbury (2002), learning the vocabulary of a second language is considered as challenging job in order to be proficient in the target language because the learners need to produce the language itself using correct forms of words. In order to meet these challenges the students need to acquire a mass of words to be used in producing the language.

Apart from being able to produce the language, learners need to remember words over time and to be able to recall them readily. Hence, the responsibility lies on the teachers' shoulders to help students develop strategies for coping with unknown or unfamiliar uses of words of the target language.

In order to address the above issues, this study intends to find out the teaching strategies that used and frequently used by TESL trainees in teaching vocabulary in secondary school during teaching practice. Moreover, the study intends to find out which strategies frequently used in teaching comprehension text and literature text.

1.1 Background of the study

The teaching of vocabulary should be given due emphasis because research indicated that negligence in vocabulary acquisition brings negative effect on language communication in general (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 1991). Teachers think that teaching vocabulary is not so important and believe that students can learn vocabulary explicitly. According to Allen (1983) he also mentioned that the teaching of vocabulary was neglected in teacher-preparation programs during the period 1940-1970 because it had been emphasized too much in the language classroom during the years before that time. He also affirmed that some specialist in methodology seemed to believe that the meanings of words could not be adequately taught, so it was better not to try to teach them. However, this statement opposite with (Nation, 1990) where he stated that, it was very important to teach vocabulary in order to learn the second language.

The proponents of the communication approach that comes about in 1980's also points out that vocabulary should be taught in the early stages together with the other language areas rather than grammar. Thus, giving equal importance of vocabulary teaching and learning means that students should encounter words in context where teachers need to prepare appropriate text for the students based on topic given in the syllabus. For example, teacher uses comprehension text or literature text in teaching vocabulary where the selected words were taken from the text itself.

1.2 Research problem

Vocabulary knowledge is fundamental to reading comprehension; one cannot understand text without knowing what most of the words mean (Nagy, 1988). From this strong statement, it can be summarized that vocabulary knowledge links to students' academic success as having good repertoire of target language vocabulary will enable the students to do well in their study.

In vocabulary teaching, TESL trainees must know the role of First Language (L1) is very important in second language learning (Schmitt, 2008). He also stated that the used of L1 translation in Malaysian secondary schools was more effective than providing L2-based meanings as cited in (Ramachandran & Rahim, 2004). However, he also stated that it can be argued that using the L1 may be appropriate at some stages along the vocabulary leaning process, but not others, which suggests using different teaching methods at different stages of vocabulary learning.

According to Allen (1983), there are many teaching strategies designed for educators especially teachers in teaching vocabulary. The question is concerned on which strategies are effective in teaching vocabulary (Schmitt, 2008). He also mentioned that although it is impossible to say that any strategies or activities are better than any other activities in all cases, vocabulary research has suggested a number of principles for selecting or constructing effective learning tasks. This can be affirmed by Nagy (1988), that teacher needs to prepare variety of strategies in teaching vocabulary for the learners in order to teach them to learn new words in English.

Furthermore, according to Phillips, Foote & Harper (2008) even though there are strategies designed specifically for teaching vocabulary, many teachers fail to stimulate and engage students in the teaching and learning the vocabularies. Moreover, (Phillips, Foote & Harper, 2008) stated that too many teachers choose to give the meaning directly as the strategy in vocabulary instruction. When asked why they use this method, teachers respond that it saves time and enables them to progress to the actual content in a more efficient manner. According to Phillips, Foote & Harper (2008), a student-centered focus on learning would counter this response suggesting that time is actually wasted when students are not actively and mentally engaged in language study.

This study attempts to find out the vocabulary teaching strategies used and frequently used by TESL trainees during teaching practice through the analysis of their lesson plans. In order to have an understanding of how the TESL trainees teach vocabulary, there is need to carry out what teaching strategies that been employed.

1.3 Research objectives

The objectives of the study are to find out the following:

- i. To find out the strategies that used and frequently used by the TESL trainees in teaching vocabulary during teaching practice.
- ii. To find out the strategies that frequently used in teaching comprehension text and literature text.

1.4 Research questions

This study is guided by the following questions:

- i. What are the strategies used and frequently used by the TESL trainees in teaching vocabulary during teaching practice?
- ii. What are the strategies frequently used in teaching comprehension text and literature text by the TESL trainees during teaching practice?

1.5 Significance of the study

The study serves to show the ways or strategies used by TESL trainees to teach and expand the students' vocabulary. It can benefit the students in the long run. It is also hoped that this study could educate TESL trainees and let them see the importance of vocabulary development. It will also help them in the field of linguistic that could expand vocabulary in ESL learning. Suggestion will be made and the benefits of using the various vocabulary teaching strategies would be the main aim in bringing meaning across to the students. It would serve as a guide to TESL trainees on how they can teach vocabulary effectively in their ESL classroom. This study hopes to contribute to the knowledge on ESL vocabulary teaching strategies.

1.6 Operational Definition of Terms

1.6.1 Teaching strategies – Strategies refer to specific actions or techniques that are usually pre-planned teaching techniques by the teacher. A particular teaching strategy or technique can benefit language learning as it enhances learners' retention on what they are learning. Some of these strategies are observable such as asking a question or unobservable such as making a mental observation (Wenden and Rubin, 1987). Strategies are often used to facilitate the acquisition, storage, retrieval or use of information. Strategies also refer to language learning behaviours that contribute directly to learning or language learning behaviours that contribute indirectly to learning. In this study, it focuses on strategies that frequently used by TESL trainees in teaching vocabulary.

1.6.2 TESL trainees - For this research, trainee English teacher is considering as University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) students. They are in the Teaching English as Second Language (TESL), education programme which have undergone for teaching practice for two months during their third year of their semester. They were doing their teaching practice which supervised by selected English teachers in the secondary schools. In this study, researcher will try to find out on what classroom tasks that they used in teaching vocabulary their teaching practice.

1.6.3 Vocabulary- ‘A word is a microcosm of human consciousnesses by Vygotsky in *How to teach vocabulary* by (Thornbury, 2002). It is also a list of words with their meanings, especially in a book for learning a foreign language as stated in the Oxford Advanced Learner’s dictionary. In this study, it only focuses on English vocabulary.

1.6.4 Lesson plan- Organization for instruction for a particular lesson or period (Arends, 2004). In this study, it is focuses on ‘TESL trainees’ daily lesson plan during their teaching practice.

1.6.5 Teaching practice- A teacher education programme designed to foster teacher efficacy must include training experiences enabling pre service teacher to develop the human relations skills essential for establishing and maintaining trusting relations with and encouraging autonomy in students (Ashton, 1984). In this study, TESL trainees have been sent to government schools for two months for their teaching practice.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study only covered the vocabulary teaching strategies used and frequently used by TESL trainees during the teaching practice. It also focuses on the strategies that frequently used in teaching both comprehension and literature text. This study did not focus on the reasons of the strategies being used in teaching vocabulary instead of what vocabulary teaching strategies used by TESL trainees in teaching vocabulary.

1.8 Chapter Review

This chapter discussed a broad field of the research topic, then to a specific are of the study which was the background of the study. Secondly, it discussed on the research problem of the study. Next, it moved to the research objectives and research questions, followed by operational definition of terms and significance of the study. Finally, the explanation was on the scope of the study.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the review of related literature on the teaching of vocabulary. The aspects reviewed in this study are: the acquisition of vocabulary in English Language, promoting vocabulary development and followed by the strategies in teaching vocabulary. Vocabulary teaching in Malaysian school syllabus is also highlighted with reference to the strategies in teaching and preferences for teaching. The chapter will also include some relevant research in relation to the vocabulary teaching strategies. Finally the last section will present the summary of the chapter.

2.1 The importance of vocabulary acquisition

Many people think of vocabulary as lists of words. There is no definite definition for the term vocabulary because a single word, vocabulary includes numerous multi-word items. Thonbury (2002) describes the term “lexeme” which he defines as “a word or group of words that function as a single meaning unit.” The words or group of words are necessary if one wants to be proficient in the language especially as words collocate with one another.

It is necessary for learners to know the multi-word units if they want to be proficient in the language. For instance, in order to use the language appropriately, learners need to understand their form, their meaning and their use. Larsen-Freeman (2001) stated that knowing the form of a word includes knowing whether it is followed by an article, preposition and what stress they use. Learners should also be aware that knowing the words on the other hand encompasses the literal, figurative and multiple meaning. Consequently knowing the use of words also implies knowing the collocation of words in which it occurs in speech or in writing.

Knowing a word implies knowing its collocations that is the words with which it is most likely to occur to speech and in writing. In other words, the term collocation refers to the combination of words. Hasbun (2005) contends that a good knowledge word collocations will give learners power as it helps the learners power as it helps the learners from making mistakes and being able to use the language appropriately. This means that learners should not be taught any meaning of words in isolation because meaning of words comes from the connection between words in a context (Read, 2000; Nation, 2001; Meara; 2002). Hence, to be proficient and functionally literate in a language learners need to distinguish the form and function of the language (Bachman, 1990).

Another issue to address in vocabulary acquisition is the process of vocabulary learning. Proponents of vocabulary teaching, Anderson (1999) and Nation (2001), stress that learners need multiple encounters with words in order to truly understand and learn them. Knowing a word involves a wide range of understandings and skills related to the form, meaning and use of the words. Consequently, mastering words mean coping with the combination of words into phrases, sentences, texts because meaning emerges from the connection between words within context (Meara, 2002).

In other words, the purpose of vocabulary learning should include both remembering words the ability to use them automatically in wide range of language contexts when the need arises (McCarthy, 1984).

It is widely accepted that vocabulary teaching should be part of the syllabus to enrich learners' vocabulary and it should be taught in a well-planned and regular basis. Nation (1990) also believes that by simply increasing learners' vocabulary without giving attention to putting the knowledge to use may not be effective. For this reason, getting learners to carry out language tasks when their vocabulary is inadequate may not be advisable as it will lead to a frustrating experience for the teachers. Therefore, giving attention to vocabulary learning is unavailable and strategies in teaching vocabulary should be developed.

2.2 How should Vocabulary be taught?

Teachers view vocabulary as a complex process as there are just too many words to teach and the meaning varied in contexts. Therefore, some teachers believe that it is best not to try teaching them explicitly. Ellen and Magubhai (1981, cited in Nation 1990:1) further support that there are “proven experimental evidence that some teachers actually think that vocabulary can be left to take care of itself.” They claim that the teaching of vocabulary would take up too much time from their lesson.

Smith (1997) claims that some language teachers having dilemma on the issue of whether the teaching of vocabulary should be taught directly or indirectly. Teachers cannot decide on whether target words should be taught in language lessons or allow the students to develop them naturally through their readings. Thus answering this dilemma, McKeown and Beck (cited in Smith, 1997) through their investigation concluded that teaching vocabulary explicitly is more effective than allowing learners to learn them incidentally.

Nation (1990) also makes a distinction between direct and indirect vocabulary learning. Direct vocabulary learning requires attention to be given to learning vocabulary either in context or in isolation. For example, by learning a list of words forms and their meaning, by doing vocabulary exercises, or by studying affixes and roots word. Indirect vocabulary learning, on the other hand requires new words to be learnt incidentally while reading or listening, usually as a result of information provided by context. Indirect vocabulary learning can be encouraged by exposure to large amount of reading and listening materials.

More than any other strategies, extensive reading is the key to building sufficient vocabulary. Carroll (as cited in Murcia, 1979) describes on interesting procedures for encouraging students to do extensive reading. She suggested that students should underline the word which they do not know, and look up a word only when it is absolutely necessary. After they have finished reading, they can make a list of these new words. Students should develop a system for recording the meaning of words which they have encountered. Being systematic about how words are encountered will help students enlarge their vocabulary.

Moreover, students should review their records regularly and try to use the words speaking and writing. In contrast, Wallace (1982) expressed the view that learning words through wordlists are harder than what they appeared to be. This is because the words in the list are forms. According to Cross (1991) a form “as a word’s shape, when written, and its sound, when spoken.” As a result, the teaching and learning words from the word list can be discouraged.

It is stated that the students should be given reading materials which are within their vocabulary range (Wallace, 1982). So, teacher need to be well-prepared in choosing good materials in order to avoid frustration among students while learning new vocabulary especially difficult words and too many new words given as stated by Shanklin (2007).

Shanklin (2007) also stated that teachers need to encourage students to do wide reading. The reading materials can be English novels in different genres, short stories, magazines and so on.

Eventhough some of the text may not related to school learning, but it is still a natural exposure into new vocabulary they have learned in order to understand and apply this information in their daily communication or in their writing. According to Pickard (1996), reading novels, newspapers and magazines will expose students to extensive reading which can lead to the improvement of students' vocabulary.

In addition, there are also needs to decide whether the words should be taught superficially or deeply. Superficial understanding of the word means that teachers only teach the meaning in the context they occur in. Deeper understanding of the word means that the teacher needs to teach the concepts of the word. In Scott and Nagy (1994), it is stated that teaching deeper understanding of a word requires the teacher to determine what the students may already know of the word and giving them several exposures of the word they are learning. There is also a need to provide definition, information and usage of the word and reinforce with activities, which promote deeper processing of the concept of the word.