

Vocabulary Learning: More Than Memorization

A summary by Allison Bill (Jeonju University) of her Oct. 2nd presentation at the Suncheon Outreach Workshop.

What strategies do English learners in Korea use for learning vocabulary? Do they write a word on a page twenty times? Do they use a *VocaPower* book filled with thousands of words that are rarely used by native English speakers? Many teachers and scholars would question these vocabulary learning strategies.

“Knowing” a Word

What does learning a word entail? According to Norbert Schmitt, to “know” a word, the learner must understand the meaning of the word; they must recognize both its written form and its spoken form; and they must be aware of how the word behaves grammatically. The learner must also be aware of the collocations that a word has (e.g., *blonde hair* is okay, but *blonde hair-brush* isn’t), as well as its denotation and connotation (e.g., *thin* and *skinny* have the same denotation, but only “skinny” has a negative connotation). To know a word, is to know if it is used in a formal register (e.g., *pass away*) or a more informal register (e.g., *kick the bucket*), and to know how frequently the word is used.

To learn all of these facets of a word obviously takes time. It takes many encounters with a word to completely “know” it. Paul Nation has found that it often takes up to 16 encounters with a word to learn just its meaning and use. It is very difficult for a teacher to structure lessons to provide this many exposures to a class for each new word introduced, but we should try to repeat the use of a word in a variety of situations. We must next try to help our students move words from their receptive vocabulary to their productive vocabulary. That is, rather than just have students be able to recognize written and spoken words, we need to aid

them in speaking and writing these words, moving the words from their passive to their active vocabulary.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Who is responsible for vocabulary learning, and how should vocabulary be learned? The learner should be made aware that they are mainly responsible for their vocabulary learning, while the teacher can facilitate this learning by introducing students to a variety of vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs). There are two ways to learn vocabulary: incidentally (e.g., by meeting them unexpectedly while reading an English magazine or listening to someone talk to you) or explicitly (e.g., by meeting them in a vocabulary-building book or having your teacher introduce them to you).

VLSs fall into five different types: determination, social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive. If you encounter *Monte Cristo* in a sentence like “That Monte Cristo is the most delicious sandwich I have ever had,” and try to guess what a Monte Cristo is by associating it with contextual content (*sandwich* and *delicious*), you are using a determination VLS.

If you ask a friend the meaning of a word, study and practice words in a student group, or interact with native speakers, you are using social VLSs. If you learn words using word lists, you are using a cognitive VLS. If you connect a word to a previous personal experience, such as dropping an *egg plant* at E-mart, you are using a memory VLS. Reviewing the words you have encountered repeatedly over time is a metacognitive vocabulary learning strategy. Finally, I would like to challenge you to select one vocabulary learning strategy and introduce it to your students this week.

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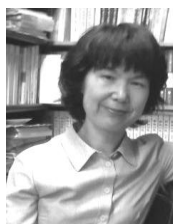
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- Bank transfer to **KOTESOL**, Korea Exchange Bank account number: 630-006952-841
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Teaching English with Songs and Chants

A summary of Sara Davila's presentation given at the October 2nd Chapter Outreach Workshop at Suncheon.

Why Songs and Chants?

Language students, especially students one works with in Korea, are not always comfortable speaking in the target language. Fear of failure, fear of mispronunciation, fear of incorrect vocabulary, and fear of public speaking are among the many factors that contribute to a lack of interest in speaking by students. By bringing songs and chants into the classroom teachers create opportunities to promote speaking and new language acquisition that will reduce fears. Younger students are very musically tuned and motivated by the sounds of music and the rhythms of chants. Children also have an amazing ability for memorizing complete songs long before speaking in complete sentences. Adolescent and adult learners can also benefit from the ease with which language can be acquired through music; while enhancing the experience by learning new culture, history, vocabulary, idioms, phrases, and grammatical concepts. Music is a natural addition to the language classroom as a means to promote engagement, performance, and acquisition.

Addressing Skills with Music

Music in the classroom is not merely a means for fun and games. A number of useful language skills can also be addressed by using music with students of varying ages. While music can be an excellent warm-up activity, the benefits of using music to enhance other content teaching should not be overlooked. The following address several skills that can be improved by breaking away from a traditional presentation method.

Word Formation: A tricky challenge for many students is how to properly form the words with the mouth to make the correct sound. Using music as a means to present language allows teachers to model mouth shapes and letter formation for students. Teaching word formation through music gives teachers the freedom to over-exaggerate formations, which can make learning proper word formation far more interesting than by demonstration or repetition.

Intonation and Pronunciation: Pronunciation and intonation can also be aided through the use of music. The rhythms that make up the songs help to construct proper pronunciation for many otherwise difficult words. For example the pronunciation of "shoulders" can prove difficult for many beginners. The use of a song like "Head, shoulders, knees and toes" allows for repeated practice with pronunciation and intonation.

Vocabulary Acquisition: Learning new vocabulary is imperative for fluency in any language, and yet for many it is hampered by long hours of memorizing endless lists of words with little or no retention. Introducing vocabulary with music provides a far more exciting medium through which to learn new words. Lyrics can be analyzed with students, songs introduced that contain previously learned vocabulary words; actions and interpretations can be added to a song to help students remember the meanings of words. Students who want to learn a great number of new words can be encouraged to create songs that pair words with meanings to help retain definitions beyond the testing day.

Language Drilling: Drilling for language acquisition is certainly one of the least favorite methods for learning, and yet repetition is an important part of learning for many students. Using music to repeat and drill common language and phrases allows for numerous opportunities for language exposure without the drudgery of a language drill. Music is an easy medium through which to practice and drill commonly used language in an entertaining and memorable way.

Grammar: Understanding grammar and various rules of grammar is certainly important for students. Realistically the emphasis placed on grammar may often drive many students to new heights of frustration and confusion when trying to learn language. Music intercedes as an excellent tool for teaching students grammatical rules and concepts. While examining songs can provide students with solid grammatical practice, songs can also be used for teaching grammatical rules.

Gwangju-Jeonnam KOTESOL Nov. Chapter Meeting

- Time: Saturday, November 13, 2010, 2:00 p.m.
- Place: Chosun University, Main Building, 2nd Floor, CU TESOL Room 2123

Schedule

2:00 pm: Registration and Welcome

2:30 pm: Presentation 1: ***From Writing to Composition***
Timothy Whitman (Chosun University; Chapter Member)

3:20 pm: Refreshment Break

3:40 pm: Presentation 2: ***Tips for Teaching Young Learners***
David Shaffer (Chosun University; Chapter President)

4:20 pm: Teaching Idea & Activity Share-time: Everyone
Bring your activities/ideas to share with us (about 3-5 min. each)

5:00 pm: Chapter Elections
Announcements
Book Drawing
Closing

(Admission is free. Membership is encouraged.)

Upcoming Chapter Events

December 11. Student Symposium

Student Perspectives on ELT in Korea

1. Learning English: The Public School Years
2. Autonomous Learning Practices
3. Learning English from NESTs
4. Teaching English as an English Learner

March 12, 2011.

Chapter Monthly Meeting/Workshop

April 9, 2011.

Chapter Monthly Meeting/Workshop

Upcoming KOTESOL Events

November 27, 2010.

**Daejeon-Chungcheong Chapter
Conference & Thanksgiving Dinner**
Language Teaching in the 21st Century
Hoseo University, Cheonan, Chungnam

March 16, 2011.

Seoul Chapter 8th Annual Conference
Serving Students Through Technology
Call for Presentations Deadline: Dec. 5, 2010.

January 8-9, 2011.

KOTESOL National Leadership Retreat

May 14, 2011.

The 2011 KOTESOL National Conference
Advancing Korean TESOL in the 21st Century
Woosong University (SolBridge), Daejeon
Deadline for Submissions: Dec. 31, 2010.

Upcoming Korea ELT Events

2010 ELLAK Global Conference on Languages,
Literatures, and Cultures of the World in English
December 2-4, 2010; Daejeon Convention Center, Daejeon

KAPEE 2011 International Conference
National Curricular Changes in Primary English Education
January 22, 2011; Korea Nat'l Univ. of Ed., Chungbuk

The 2010 GETA International Conference
English Language Testing: Issues and Prospects
December 4, 2010; Gwangju Nat'l Univ. of Ed., Gwangju

Asia TEFL 2011: The 9th Asia TEFL Intl. Conference
Teaching English in a Changing Asia: Challenges & Directions
July 27-29, 2011; Hotel Seoul Kyoyuk Munhwa Hoegwan
Proposal Submission Deadline: February 10, 2011

2010 ALAK International Conference
Interdisciplinarity in Applied Linguistics
December 4, 2010; Korea University, Seoul

For KOTESOL, Korea, and International ELT Events:
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