

Vocabulary Acquisition:

From Meeting to Using

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Outline

- Introduction
- Words words words – how many are there? How many do we know?
- What does it mean to “know” a word?
- Sources of input – reference works
- Approaching a text
- Research
- CPE coursebook analysis
- Activities

Words, words, words....

- How many words are there to know? (and why is the word “word” not always helpful?)

OED 20 volume version – 171,476 headwords

47,156 obsolete

9,500 derivations

Shakespeare invented around 1,700 words

Spanish – 100,000 words

Portuguese – 390,000 words

Dutch – 430,000 words

EXEMPTION-EXERT

- exemption
- exencephalus
- exenterate
- exenteritis
- exequy (exequial, exequious)
- exerce
- exercise
- (exercisable, exercisable, exerciser)
- exercitation
- exercite
- exercitor
- exergue (exergual)
- exert

(Oxford Shorter English Dictionary)

Word counts

- Educated adult NS 18,000-20,000 productive, maybe up to 40,000 receptive
- 5 year old – 5,000
- 8 year old – 10,000
- FCE: 2,500 active head words
- CAE 3,500
- CPE 4,500-5,000 (CEFR)

What does it mean to “know” a word?

Meaning, spelling, pronunciation

Word grammar, derivations

Connotations and register

Use – according to context

Frequency

Idiomatic use

Multiple meanings

Dictionaries and other references

- learner dictionary
- thesaurus
- collocation dictionary
- corpora
- chat rooms...

Learner dictionary - information

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• meaning• spelling• pronunciation – sound and stress• part of speech• collocations• word grammar• patterns e.g. n + prep• punctuation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• derivations• compounds• use• different forms of word – inflections• sentence grammar• phrasal verbs• language portraits• syllabification | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• usage and style labels – formal, slang, technical, humorous, approving, etc.• US/UK/Australia etc.• false friends• thematic boxes• illustrations | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• idioms• frequency – written and spoken• defining vocabulary• pragmatics• synonyms• antonyms• guide words |
|--|--|---|--|

utter

- **utter**
- [only before noun] used to emphasize how complete something is *That's complete and utter nonsense! To my utter amazement she agreed. He felt an utter fool.*
- utter something (formal) to make a sound with your voice; to say something: *to utter a cry. She did not **utter a word** during lunch (= said nothing). My mother hardly uttered a word the entire afternoon. He uttered a great cry of anger.*

Look at these dictionary entries and answer the following questions:

- What 2 meanings are given for *utter*? Which is the most common meaning?
- Can you use *utter* after subject + to be?
e.g. The destruction was utter
- What about *complete*?
- What's the most common word found next in the following expression?
That man is a complete _____

Is the verb *utter*

- regular?
- transitive or intransitive?
- What's the connection between *utter* (vb) and silence?
- What's the noun form of *utter*?

Word frequency

- The first 25 words are used in 33% of everyday writing
- The first 100 words appear in 50% student / adult writing
- The first 1,000 words make up 89% of student / adult writing
- 3,000 words make up 95% of common texts

Approaching a text

- Alexander Frater – Chasing the Monsoon 1990
p138

He had left me outside a colony of squatters' shacks, small ephemeral dwellings made from scavenged materials. This was garbage-dump architecture, its constituent parts abandoned by the affluent world outside but put to good use here. I noted packing-crate timber, rusting corrugated iron, bits of polystyrene insulating materials, lengths of piping and plastic sheeting.

Research

- Frequency alone does not determine the likelihood of acquisition. Exposure is not enough.
- Motivation, relevance, interest.
- Affective factors. The words they need, the words they like. Idiolects
- Discrete steps, stages, or input-intake-output continuum – able to understand vague, general meaning----- free use of lexis enters active vocabulary
- Learners avoid words they perceive as difficult. Prefer to use general, frequent words rather than infrequent, specific ones.

NS lexicon continues to expand, whereas syntactical knowledge remains stable.

CPE coursebook Unit 1A Contents

- vocabulary connected with the performing arts
- word formation
- (open) cloze
- (reading) word check
- nouns + prepositions
- collocations
- compound words

Some of my words.....

- columpio
- potro
- abedul
- notorious – well-known for some bad quality or deed. *a notorious criminal*
- notorio – que es importante y conocido. *La belleza de sus composiciones es notoria*
- sleaze
- bling

Collocations

- My colleagues _____ congratulated me on my promotion.
- He thanked her _____ for her help.
- The bank _____ denied having made a mistake with my account.
- I _____ advise you to seek legal advice.
- I promise _____ to pay you back next week.

5 Principles

- Cognitive Depth
- Retrieval
- Associations
- Re-contextualisation
- Multiple Encounters

(Scott Thornbury 2013)

So, can we help?

- Talk about vocabulary! Create an affective link
- Integrate skills – writing and speaking tasks

Recycle:

- Anagrams / Crosswords / Sopa de letras
- Synonyms and antonyms: permeate – seep
- Derivatives / Prefixes and suffixes
- Hypernyms & hyponyms / Lexical sets
- Collocation / chunking
- Write a story / poem / etc.
- Story: So at last the opening night arrived.....
- Songs for phrasal verbs –up/down; on/off

References

Carter R. & McCarthy M. Vocabulary and Language Teaching (1988) Longman

Gairns R. & Redman S. Working with Words (1986) CUP

Meara P. - Many excellent articles and books

Schmitt N. Vocabulary in Language Teaching (2000) CUP

Thornbury S. <https://scotthornbury.wordpress.com/2013/06/02/v-is-for-vocabulary-teaching/>

<http://eflmagazine.com/beginners-guide-to-the-lexical-approach/>

- Learner dictionary – on-line – pronunciation Am/Brit. E.g. OALD, Cambridge, MacMillan, Longman
- Thesaurus – connotations not available. Oxford Learner's Thesaurus
- Collocation - Online Oxford collocation dictionary. Ozdic.com. Prowritingaid.com/Free-Online
In print: MacMillan, Cambridge, Oxford
- Corpus – British National Corpus – Xaira software no longer available. British Library offers a free simple search service. <http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/> - BNC with Brigham Young University
- Chat rooms e.g. Babel
- Longman Communication 3000

The End.....

Thank you!

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