

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Chapter I Learning words by communication .....	6
1.1 How words are learned .....	6
1.2 Factors making words difficult to learn .....	8
Conclusion on Chapter I .....	9
Chapter II Classroom sources of words and the ways of presenting vocabulary	
2.1 Sources of words .....	10
2.2 The ways of presenting vocabulary .....	23
Conclusion on Chapter II .....	26
Chapter III Teaching word formation and word combinations .....	28
3.1 Teaching lexical chunks and word grammar .....	28
3.2 Teaching phrasal verbs and idioms .....	37
3.3 Ways of testing vocabulary .....	42
Conclusion on Chapter III .....	59
Conclusion .....	61
List of used Literature .....	64

## INTRODUCTION

Teaching foreign languages in Uzbekistan has become very important since the first days of the Independence of our country, which pays much attention to the rising of education level of people, their intellectual growth. As our first President I. A. Karimov said: “Today it’s difficult to revalue the importance of knowing foreign languages for our country as our people see their great prosperous future in the cooperation with foreign partners.” [1, 47].

All languages have words. Language emerges first as words, both historically, and in terms of the way each of us learned our first and any subsequent languages. The coining of new words never stops. Nor does the acquisition of words. Even in our first language we are continually learning new words. With hundreds of thousands of words in the English language, teaching vocabulary can seem like a very daunting prospect. Remember though that the average native speaker uses around only five thousand words in everyday speech. Moreover, your students won't need to produce every word they learn, some they will just need to recognize. Selecting what to teach, based on frequency and usefulness to the needs of your particular students is therefore essential. Once you have chosen what to teach, the next important steps are to consider what students need to know about the items, and how you can teach them. This makes the problem of investigation very actual.

The scientific novelty of the research work is the investigation of various communicative methods of teaching English vocabulary, finding out effective ways of presenting new words, as it is vital to get across the meaning of the item clearly and to ensure that your students have understood correctly with checking questions. Students need to know if it is a verb/a noun/an adjective etc to be able to use it effectively.

The aim of this research work is to describe new effective communicative methods of teaching English vocabulary.

The research work carries out the following duties:

- to survey the principles underlining the acquisition of vocabulary in a second language and to sketch some possible implications for teachers;

- to identify all possible sources of vocabulary for learners;
- to define best way of presenting new vocabulary;
- to investigate different ways of testing vocabulary.

The subjects of investigation are the methods of presenting and testing vocabulary.

The methodological ground of the research work is the complex of scientific works, articles and thesis of scientists and methodists in the methods of foreign language teaching.

The following methods are used in the work: descriptive method, method of comparative analysis.

The points to be defended:

- five main sources of vocabulary input for learners are: lists, course books, vocabulary books, the teacher, other students.

- in teaching words, learners need to learn both the meaning and form (F-P) at least. These two aspects should be presented in close conjunction so that the students will be able to make connections between these two. The more the space between presenting these two aspects, the less the chance for students to make connections.

- testing needs to take account of factors such as: validity, reliability, practicality, face validity.

The theoretical value of the research work is seen in the presentation of brief information on the ways of presenting and testing of new vocabulary, which can be concluded into the lecture materials on Methods of Teaching English Language.

The practical value is the possibility of usage of the written work at the lessons and seminars, in class out clubs and in the professional lives of the graduates of the institute.

The structure of the work. The research work consists of Introduction, 3 chapters, Conclusion and Bibliography. Introduction has information about general view of the theme, reveals the aim, duties, methods, theoretical and practical value of the work. Each chapter consists of smaller parts and paragraphs and is dedicated to defining modern communicative methods of teaching English Vocabulary. Conclusion combines the main and significant results of our investigation. Bibliography shows the scientific works, articles and thesis used for the work.

## **Chapter I Learning words by communication**

### **1.1 How words are learned**

Learning the vocabulary of a second language presents the learner with the following challenges:

- making the correct connections, when understanding the second language, between the form and the meaning of words ( e.g. mouthful, grippy), including discriminating the meanings of closely related words ( e.g. lush and plush)
- when producing language, using the correct form of a word for the meaning intended (i.e. nose not noise)

To meet these challenges the learner needs to:

- acquire a critical mass of words for use in both understanding and producing language
- remember words over time, and be able to recall them readily
- develop strategies for coping with gaps in word knowledge, including coping with unknown words, or unfamiliar uses of known words

#### **Identifying words**

In order to address the above issues, it may pay to start at the beginning, and to attempt to define what exactly a word is. Here is a sentence that, at first glance, consists of twenty of them:

I like looking for bits and pieces like old second-hand record players and doing them up to look like new[13,23].

Of course, there are not twenty different words in that sentence. At least two of those twenty words are repeated: and is repeated once, like three times: I like looking for bits and pieces like ... look like new. On the other hand, the first like is a verb, and the other two are prepositions – so is this really a case of the same word being repeated? And then there's looking and look: are these two different words? Or two different forms of the same word? Then there's second-hand: two words joined to make one? Probably – the hyphen suggests we treat second-hand

differently from, say, I've got a second hand. But what about records player? Two words but one concept, surely?

It gets worse. What about bits and pieces? Isn't this a self-contained unit? After all, we don't say pieces and bits. Or things and pieces. A case, perhaps, of three words forming one. (Like bits and bobs.) And looking for: my dictionary has an entry for look, another for look for, and yet another for look after. There different meanings – three different words? And, finally, doing them up: although doing and up are separated by another word, they seem to be so closely linked as to form a word-like unit (do up) with a single meaning: renovate. One word or two?

The decision as to what counts as a word might seem rather academic, but there are important implications in terms of teaching. Is it enough, for example, to teach to look and assume that learning to look for and to look after will follow automatically? Do you teach look, looks, looking together? Should you teach record and player as separate items before introducing record player? And how do you go about teaching to do something up when not only is the meaning of the whole more than the sum of its parts, but the parts themselves are moveable? You can do a flat up or do up a flat. Finally, how do you assess how many words a learner knows? If they know bits and they know pieces, can we assume they know bits and pieces? Does the learner who knows bits and pieces know `more` than the learner who knows only bits and pieces?

Let's take a closer look at these different aspects of what constitutes a word. In so doing, we will attempt to cover the main ways in which words are described and categorized. Knowing how words are described and categorised can help us understand the decision that syllabus planners, materials writers and teachers make when it comes to the teaching of vocabulary[18, 89].

#### Word classes

We can see from our example sentence that play different roles in a text. They fall into one of eight different word classes:

nouns	bits, pieces, record, player
pronouns	I, them

verbs	like, looking, doing, to look
adjectives	old, second-hand, new
adverb	up
prepositions	for, like
conjunction	and
determiner	-

Like, like many words in English, can belong to two or more word classes. The unrepresented class are the determiners – words like a, the, some, this, last.

## 1.2 Factors making words difficult to learn

Anyone who has learned a second language will know that some words seem easier to learn than others. Easiest of all are those that are more or less identical, both in meaning and form to their L1 equivalents. When this is due to the fact that they derive from a common origin, they are called cognates. The global spread of English has also meant that many English words have been borrowed by other languages they are called loan words[25, 76].

Other factors that make some words more difficult are:

- **Pronunciation:** research shows that words which are difficult to pronounce are more difficult to learn. Potentially difficult words will typically be those that contain sounds that are unfamiliar to some groups of learners- such as regular and lorry for Japanese speakers.

- **Spelling:** Sound spelling mismatches are likely to be the cause of errors, either of pronunciation or of spelling, and can contribute to a word's difficulty. While most English spelling is fairly law-abiding, there are also some glaring irregularities. Word which contain silent letters are particularly problematic: foreign, listen, honest, etc.

- **Length and complexity:** Long words seem to be no more difficult to learn than the short ones. But as a rule of thumb, high frequency words tend to be short in English, and therefore the learner is likely to meet them more often.

- **Grammar:** Also problematic is the grammar associated with the word, especially if this differs from that of its L1 equivalents.

- **Meaning:** When two words overlap in meaning, learners are likely to confuse them. Make and do are a case in point: you make breakfast, but you do the house work. Words with multiply meaning such as since and still, can also be troublesome for learners. Having learned one meaning of the word they may be reluctant to accept the second, totally different, meaning.

- **Range, connotation and idiomacity:** Words that that can be used in a wide range of contexts will generally be perceived as easier than their synonyms with a narrower range. Thus, put is very wide-ranging verb, compared to impose, place, position etc.

### **Conclusion on Chapter I**

In this chapter we have surveyed the principles underlying the acquisition of vocabulary in a second language, and sketched some possible implications for teaching. The most important points to be emphasized are these:

- Learners need a critical mass of vocabulary to get them over the threshold of the second language;
- Achieving this critical mass requires both intentional and incidental learning
- The first language is a support but can also be a potential block to the development of a second language lexicon;
- Vocabulary learning is item learning, and it is also network building;
- Vocabulary learning is a memory task, but it also involves creative and personalized use, i.e. learning and using;
- Learners have to take responsibility themselves for vocabulary expansion.



## **Chapter II Classroom sources of words and the ways of presenting vocabulary**

### **2.1 Sources of words**

In order to achieve the kinds of learning targets mentioned in the last chapter (i.e. a threshold of 2,000 to 3,000 words), vocabulary learning requires a rich and nourishing diet. Some of these words will be learned actively. Others will be picked up incidentally. So this diet will need to consist of words that have been selected for active study (i.e. for intentional learning) and it will also need to be a source for incidental learning through exposure. Traditionally, words targeted for active study were supplied to learners in the form of lists. On the right, for example, is a list of words' from. Here are some ways of exploiting word lists in class:

- The teacher reads words from the list in a random order. Learners show they can match the sound with the written form by ticking the ones they hear. They can then do this with each other in pairs.

- Learners cover the LI translation (if they have a bilingual list); the teacher gives translations and learners tick the English equivalents.

- Both the preceding activities can be turned into a form of Bingo! Ask learners each to write down, say, twelve words (from a list of twenty). Read out twelve words from the master list in random order, or read out their LI translations. Alternatively, if the words can be illustrated, show pictures of the words. Learners tick off each word as it occurs - the first learner to have ticked all twelve of their words shouts out Bingo!

- From a random list of words, ask learners to make connections between words and explain them to their classmates: the more connections the better, no matter how far-fetched. For example, using the list on page 32 where the words to copy and to shave appear, a student might produce: I learned to shave by copying my father.

- Students construct a story from the list: they can do this by choosing twelve words from a list of twenty, and working them into a narrative. Or they take turns

to make a sentence that includes the next word in the list so as to continue the story.

- Ask learners to make their own list from the words that come up in the lesson (see below under Other students) and to bring their lists to class for the next lesson. At the beginning of the following lesson, pair students up to test each other on their word lists.

- Learners can also make lists of words that have appeared in previous units of the course book, and test each other by, for example, asking How do you say ... in English? or What's the English for ...? Or, they could prepare gapped sentences to be completed by words from their lists[25, 89].

### **Course books**

Course book treatment of vocabulary varies considerably. For example, one study of nine beginners' courses showed that the number of words introduced ranged from just over a thousand to nearly four thousand. Nowadays, it is customary to make explicit reference to the lexical content of a course in the syllabus description. What factors determine the choice of words for inclusion in the lexical strand of a course book syllabus? Briefly, they are: usefulness, frequency, learn ability and teach ability.

Words are useful if they can be put to immediate use - a case for teaching classroom vocabulary {pen, board, door, notebook, etc.) very early in an elementary course. However, for learners studying the language but with few opportunities to put it to use, it becomes harder to predict what words they are likely to need. Accordingly, the notion of a core vocabulary was devised. Core words are those that - all things being equal - are likely to be more useful than non-core words. Core words are typically those words used when defining other words. For example, the definition of both giggle and guffaw involves using the word laugh: A giggle is a kind of laugh, etc. But the opposite is not true: we don't use giggle or guffaw to define laugh. Laugh, therefore, is more of a core word than giggle. Another test of 'core-ness' is whether the word collocates widely. Thus, *bright* collocates with *sun*, *light*, *idea*, *smile* and *child*, whereas its synonym

*radiant* has a much narrower range of collocates. *radiant idea* and *a radiant child* are unlikely (although, of course, not impossible). Super ordinate words (see page 10) are also good candidates for a core vocabulary: *flower* being more useful than either *rose* or *geranium*. And a word is less useful if it is used in a narrow register. Thus *spud* (colloquial) is less useful than *potato* (neither colloquial nor formal), *medical practitioner* (formal) less useful than *doctor* (neither colloquial nor formal)[24, 126].

The relative **frequency** of a word is another key factor in determining its inclusion in a syllabus. The argument for teaching the most frequent words in the language is a powerful one. It is claimed that the most frequent words express the most frequent meanings in the language. Factors that make some words easier to learn than others - such as their similarity to words in the learner's mother tongue e.g. *telephone* and *telefono*. This is a good indicator of how learnable they are. Choice of words to include in a syllabus, especially for beginner students, will be determined in part by their learn ability. It is now common to find a section at the beginning of many courses which directs attention to English words (such as *taxi*, *cinema*, *restaurant*) that are likely to be loan words or cognates in the student's mother tongue, as in the example overleaf from *The Beginners' Choice*.

Learnability is not to be confused with **teachability**. Words are more easily teachable if they can be demonstrated or illustrated - by the use of pictures or real objects, for example (see page 78). It is easier to teach a word like *blackboard* than a word like *though*, even though *though* is much more frequent, and probably more useful, than *blackboard*. As a rule of thumb, nouns are more easily taught than verbs or adverbs, and concrete nouns are more easily taught than abstract nouns.

How, then, is the course book vocabulary syllabus realized in the actual content of the book? Normally, vocabulary input is incorporated in three ways: in segregated vocabulary sections integrated into text-based activities Incidentally, as in grammar explanations and exercises, task instructions, etc.

Introducing words in lexical sets would seem to make good sense, it

seems to reflect the way that words are stored in the mind. Moreover, the meanings of the words can be made clearer by contrasting them with closely related words in the same set. And, if the words are being introduced to support a specific grammar structure, words belonging to the same lexical set are more easily slotted into the structure than words chosen more randomly.

However, evidence suggests that words that are too closely associated tend to interfere with each other, and can actually make the learning task more difficult. Words that can fill the same slot in a sentence are particularly likely to be confused:

I took the *car* to Switzerland.  
*train bus coach plane*

One research study, by T Tinkham, compared the rate of learning of words organized into lexical sets (*apple, pear, nectarine, peach*, etc.) with sets of unrelated words (*mountain, shoe, flower, mouse, sky, television*). The study showed a better learning rate for the latter organisation than for the former. What's more, the learners themselves thought that the lexical sets were more difficult to learn. This suggests that the fact that words are stored together does not mean that they should be learned together. It also explains why learners often confuse the days of the week, colours, or such seemingly easy words as *hot* and *cold*.

Nevertheless, most course books still favour a lexical set approach. It is important, therefore, to present the sets in such a way as to reduce the chances of confusion. One way of doing this is to emphasize the differences (rather than the similarities) of words in a set. This means avoiding using them interchangeably, as in *it's hot, it's cold*, or *hot water, cold water*. Better to introduce them along with their commonly associated collocates, such as *hot coffee, hot and dry*, and *hot summer*, but *cold beer, cold and wet* and *cold winter*.

Easier to learn are words that are thematically linked but have a looser relation than lexical sets. In the unit on leisure activities (in *Look Ahead*), the following words are introduced in order to talk about *bungee jumping*:

to jump      bridge      rope to hang      boat

to wear      harness      ankle      to help      river

Because these words do not substitute for each other, there is less chance of interference. Moreover, because they can be threaded into a narrative they are more easily and naturally practised. Also, they may be more easily recalled. It is easier to remember a narrative with words embedded in it, than to recall a list of de-contextualized words. So, even if presenting words in lexical sets, it may pay to put them into some kind of context as quickly as possible:

Piet went to Geneva by *plane*, then he rented a *car* to drive to Meiringen. On the return journey he took the *train* to Geneva, flew back to Barcelona, and caught the airport *bus* ...

Perhaps more important, though, than the manner of presentation is the kind of follow-up practice that is provided. As we saw in Chapter 2, the more decisions the learner has to make about a word, the more chance there is of the words being remembered. Here is a sequence from a coursebook that requires students to make several decisions about both the meaning and form of a lexical set of 'character' words [11, 23].

Another way of dealing with vocabulary in segregated activities is to focus on the rules of word formation. Rather than grouping words together because of similarities in meaning, the focus here is on their formal properties, such as affixation or the way that words combine to form compounds. Here, for example, is a section on adjective formation:

Finally, segregated vocabulary tasks can be aimed at developing particular vocabulary learning strategies, such as guessing words from context. In Chapter 9 we will look more closely at some examples of strategy training tasks.

Vocabulary work in course books is often integrated into text-based activities. This can take the form of pre-teaching of vocabulary in preparation for a text-based task, whether for understanding (as in listening and reading) or for production (as in speaking and writing). Words selected for pre-teaching are those that are likely to be both unfamiliar to learners and crucial for the performance of the task. Note that this means that not all unfamiliar words in a text need to be pre-

taught. Often course books leave it up to the teacher to decide which words to pre-teach, on the assumption that the teacher's familiarity with the students will be the best guide. Research has shown that, in fact, teachers generally have fairly reliable intuitions as to which words will cause their learners difficulty. Sometimes, however, particular words are singled out by the course book writers and included in the instructions in the Teacher's Book or in the course book itself. For example:

E.g. You are going to read an extract from a book of fascinating facts. First check the meaning of the following words and phrases in your mini-dictionary:

to ban

plumbing and drains

smelly

a vehicle

a jury a slave

traffic congestion welfare

The value of extensive pre-teaching of vocabulary is debatable. It is obviously difficult to make an accurate prediction as to which words students won't know, or even which ones will be essential for understanding the text. One way is to use concordance software to identify the keywords in the text - that is the words that occur with a significant degree of frequency (see the next chapter under Corpus data). And teaching isolated words out of context is time-consuming work. It may often be a better idea to get into the text as soon as possible, and either encourages learners to guess the meaning from context, or to explain words as the need arises.

Another way of preparing learners for a text-based task is to begin with some discussion on the general theme of the text. This can have two purposes: to trigger recall of known words, and to create the need for learning new, theme-related, words. The assumption is that at least some of the words elicited from such a task will help in the processing of the text. On the page opposite, for example, are two tasks (also from Cutting Edge Intermediate) designed to prepare learners for a listening activity:

Television

1. Discuss the following questions in groups.

How much television do you watch?

What are your favourite programmes?

Are there any programmes that you particularly dislike?

2. Below is a list of things we can watch on television. If necessary, check the meaning of the words and phrases in bold in your mini-dictionary. Then mark them as follows:

\*\* if you think there are too many of these on television in your country.

\*\* if you think there are about the right amount of these.

\*\* if you think there should be more of these.

\*\* if you don't have these in your country at all.

A) advertisements that use attractive people to sell products like cars or perfume

B) government advertising campaigns against things like drink-driving

C) programmes with live sports coverage

D) children's programmes which include violence

E) long complicated murder mysteries or thrillers

Finally, course books provide learners with a lot of incidental vocabulary embedded in task instructions, grammar explanations, and so on. This often takes the form of metalanguage - that is, the language that is used to talk about language. Grammatical terms such as verb, preposition, present tense and linker are examples of metalanguage. So, too, are functional terms, such as inviting, refusing, apologizing and complaining. Understanding task instruction language (sometimes called process language) is particularly important for learners working without the assistance of a teacher. Here, for example, is an activity designed to introduce distance learners to the language they will meet in an Internet-mediated course.

**Vocabulary books.** There is a wide selection of supplementary vocabulary books now available. This reflects the revival of interest in vocabulary teaching over the last twenty years or so - coupled with the need to supplement the often unsystematic treatment given to words in course books. Sometimes vocabulary

books are targeted at specific needs, such as business or technical English, or are designed as preparation for public examinations. Books on phrasal verbs have been particularly popular. More often, vocabulary books cover a wide range of general English needs.

Of course, books aimed specifically at vocabulary development are not an entirely new thing. The tourist's phrase book is as much a collection of words as it is a collection of phrases. In fact, the recent recognition of the important role of chunk learning (see page 115) suggests that the combination of phrases and words, organised semantically - i.e. according to meanings - may be an ideal learning aid.

Typically, supplementary vocabulary books are organised thematically, as in this extract from the contents page of The Heinemann English Word builder.

Names

Age

Family relationships

Marital status

Countries, Nationalities

Location

Build

From the neck up

From shoulder to fingertips

From the bottom down

Inside and outside the torso

Compound adjectives about the body

etc.

Sometimes a focus on word formation (such as compounding) or on lexical relations (such as antonyms) is interwoven into this thematic organisation, often creating an apparently haphazard effect:

1	Things in the home 1	6	Phrases 1
2	Synonyms - adjectives	7	Things in the home 3
3	Countries and nationalities	8	Guess their jobs



4	Things in the home 2	9	Synonyms - verbs
5	Quantities	10	Name the sport

Nevertheless, such books are very popular, not least because they allow learners to work independently on vocabulary areas that they are interested in. As the title of this last example implies, many of these books are designed to test vocabulary knowledge, rather than to teach it. Teachers need to think of creative ways of developing an activity to ensure memorability. Here, for example, are some tasks that could accompany the unit on Things in the home (from Test Your Group the items into at least three different categories (of your own devising). With a neighbor compare and explain your categories[14, 69].

- Use your dictionary to add different words to these categories. Teach your neighbor the words you have added.
- Who would you give these items to as birthday presents? Write a list of the items and names. Explain your list to a neighbor.
- Rank the items in terms of usefulness. Compare rankings.
- Imagine you and your classmate are sharing a flat. Decide which of the items you will buy, and in which order.
- Write definitions (or descriptions) of three of the items. Can your neighbor guess which ones they are?
- Write the first paragraph of a story. Include at least five items in your paragraph. Exchange with your partner. Continue your partner's story. Can you include more items?
- Tell the story behind any of the items that you yourself own. Where did you get it? How long have you had it? How often do you use it?

Of course, it would be a bit much to do all these activities, especially since the list of vocabulary items includes such low frequency words as gravy jug! Nor do all groups of words lend themselves to all these activities. But the extra speaking and writing practice students are getting justifies at least some of these activities, even if the targeted words are of a fairly low priority.

Some vocabulary books have imaginative tasks that are directed not so much at cognitive depth as at affective depth - that is, the emotional associations attached to words. Strong emotional associations can aid memory.

**The teacher.** The teacher is a highly productive - although often undervalued - source of vocabulary input. Learners often pick up a lot of incidental language from their teachers, especially words and phrases associated with classroom processes, such as

Let's see ... Now then ... Whose turn is it? Is that clear?

What we're going to do now is ... Have you finished yet?

The teacher is also the source of a lot of useful interpersonal language, especially in the more conversational stages of the lesson:

Did you have a nice weekend?

Oh really?

That's amazing!

Could you close the window?

Nice tie.

Whoops!

Never mind. etc.

It is worth drawing learners' attention to this language from time to time. One way of doing this is simply to ask them: What did I just say? and What other ways are there of saying the same thing? And, if the class is a monolingual one, How would you say that in (your language)?

The teacher's own stories can also serve as a vehicle for vocabulary input. One way of doing this is for the teacher to tell the class a short anecdote while at the same time recording it on cassette. Having told the story, the teacher asks the learners to write down any words they remembered, comparing in pairs or small groups. The teacher then replays the recorded anecdote one or two times, each time letting the learners top up their list of words, and asking the meaning or spelling of any unfamiliar items. Using these words, the learners can then work in small groups to reconstruct the story as closely as possible to the original. The teacher

then replays the cassette so that they can check, and edit, their written texts. This technique is a good way of introducing, in context, words that are often difficult to teach on their own - such as phrasal verbs. Here, for example, is a story one teacher told her class (the phrasal verbs are underlined):

'I had to fly to Glasgow last week. As we were taking off, there was a loud bang in one of the engines. We had hit a bird. We had to turn round and come back to Barcelona. It turned out that the bird had damaged the engine. So we had to get off, and hang around for three hours, while another plane was sent out to pick us up. By this time I had missed my connecting flight, so I was held up another three hours in Luton. By the time I got to Glasgow, it had taken me fifteen hours!'[25, 105].

**Other students** in the class are a particularly fertile source of vocabulary input. Learners often pay more attention to what other learners say than they do to either the course book or their teacher. The researcher Assia Slimani who studied secondary school classrooms in Algeria found that, on the whole, the students remembered many more of the words related to the topics that other students had risen in the lesson, than words coming from any other source. Unfortunately, in many classrooms, the learners are not given many opportunities to raise their own topics. Apart from any other benefits, the vocabulary spin-off would seem to be justification enough for allowing learners more control of the topic agenda in the classroom.

It is easy to underestimate the combined strength of a class's shared lexicon'. It is the nature of vocabulary knowledge that no two learners' mental lexicons will correspond exactly. Between them they will have a surprising number of words. One way of sharing these words is by means of brainstorming activities. Here are a few ideas:

- Organise the class into groups of three or four, and set them a time limit to come up with as many words as they can that are related to the theme (e.g. school, cooking, crime). When they have finished, appoint a 'secretary' from each group to write their group's words on to the board (at the same time, if there is room).

Alternatively, appoint a 'class secretary' to board all the words. You can make this a competition by allocating one point for each word that none of the other groups has. Allow groups to challenge any word that they think is 'off topic'.

- For a very large lexical field, such as food items, clothing, jobs, nationalities or animals, choose letters of the alphabet (B, S, A, M, etc.) for each 'round' of the game. In their groups students have to come up with only items that begin with that letter. Avoid infrequent letters of the alphabet (J, K, X). Play several rounds, choosing different letters, allocating points to the group with the most words in each round.

- Set different topics (or different aspects of a topic) to different groups. For example, if the general theme is music - set one group the task of brainstorming musical instruments, another types of music, and another adjectives that collocate with music {loud, soft, etc). Re-group the students so that they can teach one another the words that they have brainstormed.

- Provide the class with pictures to prompt brainstorming activities. A collection of different magazine pictures (of, for example, people, interiors, landscapes or meals) distributed amongst groups can act as a productive focus for eliciting vocabulary. After learners have come up with sufficient words, a representative of each group can stick their picture on the board, and write their group's words underneath. Encourage other students to ask each group's representative the meaning of any unfamiliar words, using the formula What does mean?

Any of the above activities can be done with or without the use of dictionaries.

One way of giving learners at least temporary control of the topic agenda is to encourage them to prepare short class presentations on a topic of their choice. This is similar to the 'show-and-tell' type of activity common in primary classrooms. As they are giving their presentation, the teacher can keep a running record of new or interesting vocabulary that comes up. Or the students who are listening can note down words that they consider worth recording. After the

presentation, this vocabulary can form the basis of a follow-up activity. For a list of keywords which are distributed, or written up, in advance of the example, the teacher writes the topic-related words on the board, and students, in pairs or groups, write a summary of the presentation, incorporating the new vocabulary. Alternatively the student giving the presentation can be asked to prepare presentation itself [27, 136].

Another way of capturing' classroom vocabulary as it occurs is to appoint 'word secretaries' during group work. When students are engaged on a group work task, the word secretary simply listens and notes down any new, unusual, or otherwise salient words, which are then shared with the class as a whole.

Many teachers keep an area of the board sectioned off in order to record words that crop up during classroom talk. It is relatively easy to write up words as they occur, without disturbing the flow of talk. At the end of the activity - or at the end of the lesson - time should be spent in running through these words. If the class is a monolingual one, the teacher can challenge students to provide translations of the words. Alternatively, they can attempt definitions, or at least try and recall the context in which the word emerged.

In order that this 'emergent class vocabulary' is not lost from one lesson to the next, some teachers keep a word box (or word bag) in their classrooms. New words are written on to small cards and added to the word box. At the beginning of the next lesson, these words can be used as the basis for a review activity. For example, the teacher can take words out of the box and ask learners to define them, provide a translation or put them into a sentence. The words can also form the basis for peer testing activities, in which learners take a number of word cards and test each other in pairs or small groups. Periodically the word box should be 'purged' of words that the class agrees no longer need recycling.

## **2.2 The ways of presenting vocabulary**

There are two main categories of words usually taught/presented in a language classroom: incidental (thrown up unfamiliar vocabulary from discussions, mini-talk, videos ...) and intentional (pre-selected and in-text) vocabulary.

Decisions, which should be made for successful presentation of words, include:

1. The number of words to be taught
2. Sequencing of presenting form and meaning
3. Means of presentation – the type and the order: in written or spoken form – how soon – amount of learner involvement.

Discussion:

In deciding on the number of intentional words to be taught in a lesson the following issues should be taken into account:

1. Learners' level
2. Learner's level of familiarity with the words
3. Difficulty of the words (abstract/concrete, pronunciation, ...)
4. Teachability
5. Words to be used for production (speaking, writing) / recognition (listening/reading)

In teaching words, learners need to learn both the meaning and form (F-P) at least. These two aspects should be presented in close conjunction so that the students will be able to make connections between these two. The more the space between presenting these two aspects, the less the chance for students to make connections. Both sequences of presentation, a) first meaning then form, b) first form then meaning is valid and depends on the situation. One may stick to one for ease of habit formation.

The following methods can be used to present meaning:

- Translation: which is least admired by experienced teachers yet widely used by teachers in monolingual classes. While I, myself, use this method at times to explain meaning for certain abstract and hard-to-explain words, I try my best to

keep it at minimum. Relying so much on translation has certain demerits: a) learners fail to develop an independent L2 lexicon and are highly relying on their L1 for remembering the words, b) since students make less effort to learn the meaning through L1 accordingly they forget the L2 word more easily. I think this method should be that last resort for the teacher. Just imagine that you are in an ESL class and your students are multinational. Are you going to translate the meaning a word they don't understand for each one of them?

- Prompting the meaning by giving full definitions, synonyms and antonyms, providing example situations, several example sentences or subordinate terms: in using these techniques, it is important to keep the definition simple and within the learners' current range. Of course, this may take longer to convey a meaning, but it is worth as the learners are exposed to extra speaking and listening practice. In using situations, teacher can share their own or their students' experiences, for example, they can provide a variety of sentences read to the students so that they can induce the meaning. In case of the latter, the advantages are that students encounter the new words a couple of times in various contexts which increase the chances of better retention, getting a feel of the word's different uses, form and grammar. A variant to full definition approach is to present a layered definition – that is, one that is segmented into several short statements, each one including the target word. In this way, the learners hear the target word not only in context, but repeated.

Learning a word and its meaning is a matter of approximation. Several studies indicate, English words seem to be stored and accessed primarily according to their overall syllabus structure and stress. This suggests highlighting the stress and general shape of the words is a useful aid to retention and deserves as much attention as the individual words [26, 97].

- While working on form the following issues should be addressed:
  - Pronunciation: individual and choral drills. Before doing drills, it's very effective if you give your students a chance for mumble drilling, which in turn prevents interruption of articulatory loop.

- Word stress: asking students (where is the stress?), through drawing circles / finger presentation

- Function: using different contexts

- Part of speech: indicated in parentheses, e.g. (n) (v)

- Register: formal, informal, slang ...

With regard to question when the learners should be exposed to the written form of a newly learned word, the suggestion is that as soon as possible as the irregularities in words spelling and sounds in English words exists all over, therefore it seems illogical if it be postponed to a later time. One technique, which can be used in this regard is to ask students to spell the word when exposed to spoken form first or do the opposite if first exposed to the pronounce. The other justification is that being introduced to the written form of a new word as soon as possible provides the learners with the crucial clues to meaning, often easier to identify in the written form than in the spoken form of the word.

How to involve the learners in learning process:

1. Elicitation: it shouldn't be overused. Also it causes frustration if students don't know the answer. You may some real questions for elicitation rather than simple "what is ..?" question, e.g. instead what is waterfall? ask what is the biggest waterfall you know?

2. Ask your students to personalize the words they learn.

Some useful advice:

1. Always pre-teaching some of the blocking vocabulary before teaching reading or listening. You can leave some for learners self-induction.

2. In an EFL setting it is very hard to expect your students to elicit the meaning in a vacuum. However, don't stop trying it!

3. You can always refer back your students to the sentences in which they come up with a new word and challenge them to make guesses on the meaning rather than easily provide them with the meaning.

4. "Teaching a new word" phase should ALWAYS follow with "put into work" phase.



5. Force your students as well as YOURSELF form the habit of going through MFP (meaning, form, pronunciation) stages while doing new words.

6. Only use phonemic scripts for showing pronunciation if you are sure your students are already familiar with them. If not this over-learning load will be daunting for them.

7. To make your students to put into work the newly learned vocabulary ask them to write personalized sentences or questions, draw association networks using the words or rank them in case of family words.

8. Don't forget to ask students to teach one another the new words! (peer teaching)[25, 104].

## **Conclusion on Chapter II:**

We have looked at five possible sources of vocabulary input for learners:

- lists
- coursebooks
- vocabulary books
- the teacher
- other students

We noted that:

- lists are an economical way of organising vocabulary for learning, and that it doesn't matter a great deal if they are put together in a rather random way. It will help, though, if list learning activities are integrated into the lesson.
- coursebooks select vocabulary for active study on the grounds of:
  - usefulness
  - frequency
  - learnability
  - teachability
- coursebook content includes both segregated and integrated vocabulary work

- segregated activities typically present or practise lexical sets, or word formation rules, or recycle or test words introduced previously, or target specific vocabulary-learning strategies
- vocabulary is also integrated into skills work, typically in the form of a pre-task or post-task vocabulary focus
- some coursebook vocabulary is incidental, such as that included in instructions and grammar explanations
- supplementary vocabulary books are usually thematically organised, but cover a range of vocabulary skills.

## Chapter III Teaching word formation and word combinations

### 3.1 Teaching lexical chunks and word grammar

A lexical approach to language teaching foregrounds vocabulary learning, both in the form of individual, high frequency words, and in the form of word combinations (or **chunks**). The impetus for a lexical approach to language teaching derives from the following principles:

- a syllabus should be organised around meanings
- the most frequent words encode the most frequent meanings and
- words typically co-occur with other words
- these co-occurrences (or chunks) are an aid to fluency

A syllabus organised around meanings rather than forms (such as grammar structures) is called a **semantic syllabus**. A number of theorists have suggested that a syllabus of meanings - especially those meanings that learners are likely to need to express - would be more useful than a syllabus of structures. For example, most learners will at some time need to express such categories of meaning (or **notions**) as *possession* or *frequency* or *regret* or *manner*. Simply teaching learners a variety of structures, such as the *present simple* or the *second conditional* is no guarantee that their communicative needs will be met. The present simple, for example, supports a wide range of meanings (*present habit, future itinerary, past narrative*, etc), some of which may be less useful than others. Wouldn't it be better to start with the more useful meanings themselves, rather than the structure?

A semantic syllabus - i.e. one based around meanings - is likely to have a strong lexical focus. The following sentences, for example, all involve the present simple, but they express different notions. These notional meanings are signalled by certain key words (underlined):

Does this towel belong to you? (possession) How often do you go to London? (frequency) I wish I'd done French, (regret) Exercise is the best way of losing weight, (manner).

Words like *belong, often, wish* and *way* carry the lion's share of the meaning in these sentences: the grammar is largely padding. A lexical approach argues that meaning is encoded primarily in words. This view motivated two course book writers, Dave and Jane Willis, to propose that a **lexical syllabus** might be the best way of organising a course. Willises believed that a syllabus based around the most frequent words in the language would cover the most frequent meanings in the language. Accordingly, they based their beginners' course around the 700 most frequent words in English. They used **corpus** data (i.e. computer banks of naturally occurring text — see page 68) to find out how these words 'behaved' - that is, the kinds of words and structures that were associated with these high frequency words[25, 115].

### Teaching lexical chunks

So far we have been talking about lexical chunks as if they were a single undifferentiated category. But, there are different types of chunks and different degrees of 'chunkiness'. Of the different types, the following are the most important for teaching purposes:

- collocations — such as *widely travelled; rich and famous; make do with; set the table*
- phrasal verbs - such as *get up; log on; run out of; go on about*
- idioms, catchphrases and sayings - such as *hell for leather; get cold feet; as old as the hills; mind your own business; takes one to know one*
- sentence frames - such as *would you mind if... ?; the thing is ...; I'd... if I were you; what really gets me is ...*
- social formulae - such as *see you later; have a nice day; yours sincerely*
- discourse markers - such as *as frankly speaking; on the other hand; I take your point; once upon a time; to cut a long story short...*

Within these categories further distinctions can be made in terms of **fixedness** and **idiomaticity**. Fixed chunks are those that don't allow any variation: you can say *over the moon* (to mean *ecstatic*) but not *under the moon* (to mean *not ecstatic*). Nor *over the full moon, over the sun*, etc. Many chunks are semi-fixed, in

that they allow some degree of variation. *Nice to see you* is semi-fixed in that it allows *lovely, good, wonderful*, etc. in the *nice* slot, and *meet, talk to, hear from*, etc. in the *see* slot.

Some chunks are transparent in that the meaning of the whole is clear from their parts, as in the case of *as old as the hills* and *to knock down*. Others are much more idiomatic: *to spill the beans* and *to knock off* (meaning *to steal*). Neither fixedness nor idiomaticity are absolute values, however. Rather there is a cline from very fixed to very free, and from very idiomatic to very transparent. Phrasal verbs are a case in point. Some phrasal syntactically flexible: *I'll bring up the paper* or *I'll bring the paper up*. Others are not: *leant tell the twins apart* but not *leant tell apart the twins*. Moreover, the combination *bring up* has a range of meanings, some literal (*I'll bring up the paper*), some semi-idiomatic (*Don't bring that subject up again*) and some very idiomatic (*They brought their children up to speak Italian*)[21, 146].

The ability to deploy a wide range of lexical chunks both accurately and appropriately is probably what most distinguishes advanced learners from intermediate ones. How is this capacity developed? Probably not by learning rules - as we saw with word formation, the rules (if there are any) are difficult to learn and apply. A lexical approach is based on the belief that lexical competence comes simply from:

- frequent exposure, and
- consciousness-raising

To which we could perhaps add a third factor:

- memorising

Classroom language provides plentiful opportunities for exposure to lexical chunks. Many learners are familiar with expressions like */ don't understand* and */ don't know* long before they have been presented with the 'rules' of present simple negation. By increasing the stock of classroom phrases, teachers can exploit the capacity of chunks to provide the raw material for the later acquisition of grammar. Many teachers cover their classroom walls with useful phrases and insist on their

use whenever an appropriate opportunity arises. A sampling of phrases I have noticed on classroom walls includes:

What does X mean?

How do you say X?

What's the (past/plural/opposite, etc.) of X?

Can you say that again?

Can you write it up?

How do you spell it?

I'm not sure.

I've forgotten.

I left it at home.

I haven't finished yet.

It's (your/my/his) turn.

You go first.

Here you are.

Pass me the...

Let's have a break.

etc.

The repetitive nature of classroom activity ensures plentiful exposure to these chunks. This is vital, because occasional and random exposure is insufficient. Many learners simply aren't aware if a combination is one that occurs frequently (and is therefore a chunk) or if it is a 'one-off. Nevertheless, there is more chance of encountering instances of chunking in authentic text than in text that has been 'doctored' for teaching purposes.

This is yet another argument for using authentic texts in the classroom, despite the difficulties often associated with them.

Here, for example, is an extract from a fairly well-known authentic text:

Yo, I'll tell you what I want what I really really want,

So tell me what you want what you really really want,

I'll tell you what I want what I really really want,

So tell me what you want what you really really want  
 I wanna I wanna I wanna I wanna I wanna really really really wanna  
*zigazig* ha  
 If you want my future, forget my past,  
 If you wanna get with me, better make it fast  
 Now don't go wasting my precious time  
 Get your act together we could be just fine...  
 If you wannabe my lover, you gotta get with my friends  
 Make it last forever, Friendship never ends  
 If you wannabe my lover, you have got to give,  
 Taking is too easy but that's the way it is.  
 What d'ya think about that? Now you know how I feel.  
 Say you can handle my love, are you for real?  
 I won't be hasty, I'll give you a try  
 If you really bug me then I'll say goodbye  
 (from *Wannabe* by the Spice Girls)[9, 114].

Like many pop songs, the lyrics of this song are rich in lexical chunks, including sentence frames *{I'll tell you what I...; what I really [really] want [is ...]; If you wanna ... better ...; If you really, then I'll ...}*, collocations (*wasting my precious time; last forever; taking it... easy; give you a try*), and catchphrases (*better make it fast; get your act together; that's the way it is; are you for real?*).

How could you use the above song text? Essentially, the approach need not be very different from the approach to the legal English text. That is:

- check understanding of text (for example, by eliciting a paraphrase or translation of the text)

- using transcript, set tasks focusing on features of words in combination

Examples of such tasks might be:

- Underline all contractions. Deconstruct them (i.e. *wanna* = *want to*)
- Find examples of these sentence patterns in the song: ... *tell... what...*

*If you ... imperative ... If you ... you have got to ... If you ... then I'll...*

- Write some more examples, using these patterns that would fit the theme of the song.

- Use examples from the song to show the difference between *tell* and *say*.

- Find the verbs that fill these slots: *it fast; my precious time; \_\_\_\_\_your act together; \_\_\_\_\_forever; it easy; goodbye.*

Their repetitiveness, combined with their tendency to incorporate a lot of spoken chunk-type language, make pop songs a useful resource for vocabulary work. And not only do they recycle many current idioms and catchphrases, they are often responsible for introducing new ones into the language, such as *What I really really want ...* Advertising has a similar effect: *think of finger-licking good, it's the real thing* and *it reaches parts that other [...]'s don't reach*.

But it is not just informal language that is rich in lexical chunks. As we saw earlier, legalistic language is richly patterned in this way. And so is the language of business. In fact, increasingly the teaching of business English recognizes the importance of raising awareness about collocation.

Notice that the focus is not just on noun + noun collocations (*sales volume*) but on verb + noun + noun combinations (e.g. *boost our sales volume*). Chunks of this size require the addition of only a little real grammar to provide much of the substance of typical business text: *We need to boost our sales volume*.

Here are some more ideas for teaching **collocation**:

- Learners sort words on cards into their collocational pairs (e.g. *warm + welcome, slim + chance, golden + opportunity, lucky + break, mixed + reception*, etc). Use the same cards to play pelmanism . Or they sort them into **binomial pairs** (pairs of words that follow a fixed sequence and often have idiomatic meaning such as *hot and cold, to and fro, out and about, sick and tired*). Or into groups, according to whether they collocate with particular 'headwords': e.g. *trip (business, day, round, return, boat), holiday (summer, family, public, one month, working)* and *weekend (long, every, last, next, holiday)*. Follow up by asking learners to write sentences using these combinations.



- Read out a list of words: learners in groups think of as many collocations or related expressions as they can. Set a time limit - the group with the most collocations wins a point. Good words for this include parts of the body (*face, head, back, foot, hand*), colours (*red, green, blue, black*, etc.) and opposites, such as *weak/strong, narrow/wide, safe/dangerous, old/young*, etc.

- In preparation for writing or speaking activities, learners can spend some time searching databases for useful collocations. Ask them first to brainstorm any nouns and verbs they are likely to need, and then to check for common collocates, using a concordance program such as the COBUILD corpus on the Internet or a collocation dictionary (such as the *LTP'Dictionary of Selected Collocations*), or simply a good learners' dictionary; Here, for example, are collocates and compound words for keywords selected in preparation for a composition on the subject of *flying*. They were all found using entries in the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*:

**fly:** fly direct, fly on to, fly economy class, fear of flying

**flight:** an hour's flight, my flight's been called, charter flight, flight attendant, flight path, flight recorder

**air:** by air, airborne, airbus, aircraft, aircrew, airfare, air hostess, airline, airplane, airport, airsick, air traffic controller

**travel:** travel by train, car etc, travel widely, travel around, travel light, travel the world; well-travelled, widely travelled

- Ask learners to prepare 'collocation maps' of high frequency words and their collocates. Words like *have, take, give, make* and *get* lend themselves to this kind of treatment. They are often used in combination with nouns to form an expression which has a meaning of its own, as in *have a look, take a break, give advice, make an appointment*, so that the verb itself has little or no independent meaning. For this reason, they are called delexical verbs[25, 126].

Learners can either create their own maps using dictionaries, or add to an existing map, as this task (also from *Cutting Edge Intermediate*) suggests:

a) Add the phrases below to the correct section of the diagram.

have a broken leg   have a party   have fun   have a lot of energy  
have a holiday   have a meeting   have a strange feeling   have a wash  
b) With which uses can you also use *have* *got*? What do you notice?

- Teachers can exploit the fact that many film and book titles and names of pop groups are common collocations. Think of *Fatal Attraction*, *Desperate Measures*, *Deep Impact*, *the Usual Suspects* (all films) or *Dire Straits*, *Take That*, *Primal Scream* and *Public Enemy* (all names of groups). A search of the Internet quickly revealed that all the following collocations of *last* are names of bands: *Last Call*, *The Last Dance*, *Last Free Exit*, *Last in Line*, *Last Laugh*, *The Last Resort*, *Last Supper* and *Last Tuesday*. Learners can do the same - search for band names and check, using a dictionary, if they are common collocations or not. Alternatively, they could consult a dictionary, or a dictionary of collocations, in order to invent band names or film titles of their own.

Because of the two-part nature of collocations, any matching activities lend themselves to work on them. Similarly, odd one out tasks are useful.

**For example:**

What is the one word in each row that does *not* usually go with the word on the left?

**win**   *match*   *war*   *salary*   *election*   *race*   *lottery*

**earn**   *money*   *degree*   *living*   *salary*   *interest*   *place*

**gain**   *weight*   *advantage*   *access*   *support*   *wages*   *experience*

But there is a limit to the number of collocations that can be dealt with in activities like the ones above. The amount of time spent on targeting particular isolated collocations has to be balanced against time spent engaged in real language use, such as reading and speaking. It may, in fact, be in the context of real language use that the best learning opportunities will occur. A lot of work on collocation (and vocabulary generally) may happen in response to learners' errors. This reactive approach is described by Morgan Lewis:

Imagine a student produces *He's a strong smoker*. You could simply supply the student with the standard collocation - *heavy* - and move on. But an ideal

opportunity to activate language on the edge of the student's lexicon has been missed. It requires very little extra time or explaining to add: *occasional*, *chain* and *none* as more collocates of *smoker* [25, 130].

Finally, as a general approach to the teaching of lexical phrases and collocation, the following advice is sound:

- Become more aware of phrases and collocations yourself.
- Make your students aware of phrases and collocations.
- Keep an eye on usefulness and be aware of overloading students.
- Feed in phrases on a 'little but often' basis.
- Introduce phrases in context, but drill them as short chunks.
- Point out patterns in phrases.
- Be ready to answer students' questions briefly.
- Keep written records of phrases as phrases.
- Reinforce and recycle the phrases as much as you can. (from *Cutting Edge Intermediate Teachers' Book*, Longman)

### **Teaching word grammar**

It may seem out of place to be talking about grammar in a book on vocabulary. However, there is only a thin line - if indeed there is a line at all - between these two areas of language. As we saw in, knowing a word means knowing its associated grammar. What exactly is the associated grammar of a word? It is those patterns of words that typically co-occur with it. For example, a word like *say* has a different grammar from a word like *tell*. You can *tell someone something* but you can't *say someone something*. The grammar of *say* and *tell* can be represented like this (where *V* means verb, and *n* means noun group):

*say*: V that (as in *She says (that) she is cold*)

*tell*: V n that (as in *He told me (that) he was broke*)

Words that are related in meaning to either *say* or *tell* tend to fall into one of these two patterns. Thus, verbs following the *V that* pattern and having a similar meaning to *say* include *admit*, *explain*, *report*, *state* and *suggest*. Verbs like *tell*, on the other hand, which follow a *V n that* pattern, include: *convince*, *inform*,

*persuade, promise, remind* and *warn*. Confusing the two patterns results in errors like the following:

***My friend suggested me to go to Madrid for a weekend.***

***The agency said me it wasn't their problem.***

***I want to explain you something about the tour*** [7, 205].

Helping learners identify word grammar is basically the same as helping them identify collocations: a case of providing them with rich data and focusing their attention on the patterns. As an aid to teachers, reference books are now appearing which organise words according to their grammatical characteristics. Here, for example, is an extract from one such book:

Some verbs are followed by a noun group and a *that*- clause. For example, in */ told her that there had been an accident*, the verb *tell* is followed by the noun group *her* and the *that*-clause *that there had been an accident*. This pattern is V n *that*.

After most of these verbs, the word *that* is often left out, especially in speech. *We are pleased to inform you that we have been able to accept your application.*

*I reminded her that on several occasions she had remarked on the boy's improvement.*

### **3.2 Teaching phrasal verbs and idioms**

Phrasal verbs are another instance of the fuzziness at the boundary between words and grammar. They are particularly problematic for learners both because of their lexical meanings (which are often idiomatic) and their grammatical form. Here is how phrasal verbs are often grouped, according to their grammar:

1. There are four types of phrasal verb.

*Type 1*: intransitive e.g. *come to* (recover consciousness)

These don't take an object.

*Type 2*: transitive inseparable e.g. *look into* (investigate)

These must take an object which always comes after the verb.

*Type 3*: transitive separable e.g. *put off* (postpone)

The object can either come between the verb and the particle or after the verb. If we use a pronoun then it must go between.

*Type 4: three-pan, e.g. put up with (endure)*

These are always transitive inseparable.[naunton].

Traditional approaches to the teaching of phrasal verbs have tended to focus on these rules. Hence, when phrasal verbs are presented they are categorised according to whether they are Type 1, Type 2, etc. They are also often grouped according to their lexical verb (that is, the word that carries the major share of the meaning): *get up, get back, get off, get over*, etc, and exercises are designed to test the learner's knowledge of the difference. For example:

**Ex.** Use phrasal verbs with *get* to complete these sentences:

1. I can't \_\_\_\_\_ how much Julia has changed: it's amazing!
2. Excuse me; I want to \_\_\_\_\_ at the next stop.
3. The concert was cancelled so I'm going to see if I can \_\_\_\_\_ my money .

Typical exercise types used in the teaching of phrasal verbs include:

- sentence gap-fills (as the example above)
- re-phrasing: e.g. changing the verb in the sentence (e.g. *depart*) to a phrasal verb that has a similar meaning (e.g. *set off*)
- matching: e.g. matching the phrasal verb with its synonym

More recently, exercise types have focused on the meanings of the particles - a particle being the adverb or preposition component of the phrasal verb (*in, back, off, around*, etc). A focus on particles aims to sensitise learners to the shared meanings of a group such as *carry on, drive on, hang on, go on* and *come on*.

The systematic approach to the teaching of phrasal verbs reflects the rule-driven approach to the teaching of word formation. But there is no reason to believe that a rule-driven approach is any more effective with phrasal verbs than it is with composite words. Often the rules are so daunting that learners tend to avoid using phrasal verbs for fear of making mistakes — not a good basis for mastering an important area of language. It may be the case that phrasal verbs are best learned on an item-by-item basis, and preferably in short contexts that demonstrate

their syntactic behavior. The following passage, which comes from a guide to the Cambridge First Certificate in English examination, offers some good advice to students:

1 Whenever you read a book, newspaper or text in English, get into the habit of *identifying* and underlining phrasal verbs ...

2 Write down in a special notebook the sentences in which they appear.

3 Use your English-English dictionary to look up the meaning, and write this after your sentence.

4 Try to write your own sentence using the same phrasal verb in a different context.

5 Get an English teacher or friend to check that your sentences are correct.

6 Limit the number of new phrasal verbs you collect to, say, two or three each day; if you do five or ten minutes' good work with each, you will quickly build up a useful stock of words which you have actually seen used in the English you have read[from Naylor H and Hagger S, *First Certificate Handbook*, Hulton Educational].

This approach is self-directed and text-based, and, admittedly, assumes a high degree of motivation on the part of the learner. Nevertheless, the approach can be adapted to the classroom. For a start, the teacher can increase the probability of learners coming across phrasal verbs by providing texts that are likely to have a high frequency of phrasal verbs in them. Because phrasal verbs are often idiomatic they tend, like other idioms, to cluster together - where you find one, you are likely to find others. Here, for example, is a short text from a magazine with the phrasal verbs underlined:

Next time you go rushing off to sign up for an exercise class, consider first what you want to get out of it. If you really want to de-stress, set an hour or so aside afterwards to go home, listen to music and have a leisurely shower or bath. Working out, having a shower and then dashing back to work or rushing on to meet friends just doesn't allow you enough time to benefit fully from the relaxing after-effects of exercise.

Some books on phrasal verbs present theme-related sets of verbs in specially written texts. Thus, a text about relationships may include such phrasal verbs as *go out with*, *get on with*, *fall out*, *split up*, *make up*, *get back together*, etc. As with lexical sets, however, there is a danger that words of too similar a meaning will interfere with each other - especially if they have a similar form (e.g. *go out with*, *get on with*).

1., Complete these sentences by using each phrasal verb once.

1 He is still unconscious; I'll call you when he .....

2 She was so unhappy at home that she just had to .....

3 If you late, you won't be allowed into the concert.

4 We'll have to really early to catch the ferry.

5 Just use a cheque if your cash

6 A flu epidemic has at work; I hope I don't catch it.

Note that the occurrence of phrasal verbs in the text is fairly natural and that they are highlighted in order to promote noticing. Moreover, the tasks in this sequence move from recognition to production and the exercise is not encumbered with complex explanation or categorization. All of these ingredients are conducive to successful vocabulary learning.

Finally, teachers should also try and include phrasal verbs in their classroom language as much as possible - and draw attention to these from time to time. Common classroom expressions incorporating phrasal verbs are *sit down*, *put your hand up*, *turn your papers over*, *write this down*, *cover the page up*, *look it up*, *hurry up* and *calm down!* By this means, exposure to a rich diet of phrasal verbs can begin on Day 1 of the course [25, 128].

### **Teaching idioms**

We've seen that many phrasal verbs are idiomatic - in that their meanings are not easily unpacked from their component parts. Knowing the meaning of: *put up* allows us to interpret the sentence *I put up a shelf in the kitchen*. But this knowledge is not much help in unpacking either *I put Luke up for the weekend* or *I put up with Luke for the weekend*. Both these last examples are idiomatic.

Idiomaticity exists at both the single word and multi-word level. Individual words can be used figuratively, as in *This plan doesn't grab me; The kitchen is a pigsty; I can't **unpack** the meaning of this idiom.* More typically, idioms are formed from collocations, and vary from being both very fixed and very idiomatic (*smell a rat, the coast is clear*) to being both less fixed and less idiomatic (*explode a myth/theory, etc; run a business/theatre, etc*).

Idioms present problems in both understanding and in production. They are difficult to understand because they are not easily unpacked, and they are difficult to produce because they often allow no variation. Few errors sound more comical than an even slightly muddled idiom (e.g. *I don't want to blow my own horn*, instead of *I don't want to blow my own trumpet*). Moreover, many idioms have a very narrow register range, being used only in certain contexts and for certain effects. They therefore need to be approached with a great deal of caution, and most teaching guides recommend teaching them for recognition only.

Traditional teaching approaches tend to group idioms together according to some category, and present them in sets. But, as with phrasal verbs, teaching a set of idioms that are notionally related - such as idioms associated with parts of the body (*down at heel, put your feet up, foot the bill, toe the line, etc.*) - would seem to be a sure recipe for confusion. It's not difficult to imagine what could go wrong: *put your heels up, toe the bill, etc.* More typically, idioms are grouped by theme. For example, the expressions *under the weather, off colour, run down* and *out of sorts* are all synonymous with *ill*. But again, if these are being taught for production, the potential for confusion is high.

As with phrasal verbs, a more effective and less perilous approach might be simply to teach them as they arise, and in their contexts of use. That is, to treat them as individual lexical items in their own right, without making a *song and dance* about them. Since idioms tend to cluster together, certain text types are often very rich in them. In this extract (from *Sugar*) idioms (including idiomatic phrasal verbs) are underlined.

Eastenders



Martin gets a big wake-up call this month when Mark is taken seriously ill. How will he cope knowing his big bro's days could be numbered and will Nicky stick by him through thick and thin?

Home and Away

Tom offers to pay for Justine's courses in the city with the money he earned from acting in the commercial. What a sweetie, eh? However, Justine isn't that impressed, and feels that Tom's cramping her style. How can she let him down gently?

Coronation Street

The Mike, Mark and Linda triangle's still going strong, and sparks are beginning to fly between Linda and Mark's new girlie, Claire. Eeek! Things aren't too good over at the Piatt's either.

Emmerdale

Mark is annoyed when neither of his parents make it to the parent's evening ... how embarrassing! Richie lends Sarah a shoulder to cry on after yet another bust-up with Jack Will those two ever get on?

To use a text like this in class, learners could be set the task of working out the underlined idioms from either their form or their context. For example, *going strong* is easily unpacked from its components. *Sparks are beginning to fly* is less obvious, but its negative connotation can be deduced from what follows (*Eeek! Things aren't too good...*). Showing learners how to work out idiomatic meaning from these kinds of clues can not only contribute to passive vocabulary knowledge but can improve reading skills as well.

### 3.3 Ways of testing vocabulary

Why test anything? The obvious answer is that, *without* testing, there is no reliable means of knowing how effective a teaching sequence has been. Testing provides a form of feedback, both for learners and teachers. Moreover, testing has a useful backwash effect: if learners know they are going *to* be tested on their

vocabulary learning, they may take vocabulary learning more seriously. Testing motivates learners to review vocabulary in preparation for a test. It also provides an excuse for further, post-test, review - when, for example, *the* teacher goes over *the* answers in class. In this way, testing can be seen as part of the recycling of vocabulary generally. In *fact*, the only difference between many recycling exercises and tests is that only the latter are scored. Here, for example, is a review activity from a coursebook that could just as well form an item in a test:

#### 4. Vocabulary

a) Make *six lists of the words in the box*: 1 The body;. 2 travel; 3 The country; 4 Illness; 5 Jobs; 6 Food.

field hurt luggage builder steak rice electrician cough face  
delay wood fish businessman path mushrooms toe flight finger  
platform arm mountain aspirin backache

b) Mark the stress on the correct syllable of words of more than one syllable.

Informal testing of this type is best done on a regular basis. Ideally, in fact, vocabulary covered in the previous lesson should be tested at the beginning of the next one. If not, the chances of retaining the new vocabulary are greatly reduced. The principle of **distributed practice** argues that the spacing of these review phases should gradually be increased. This requires a certain discipline on the part of teachers to keep track of their vocabulary input, and to schedule tests at the optimal times. One informal way of testing is to get the learners to test each other, using their vocabulary notebooks or the class word box[25, 134].

More formal testing may be required at certain strategic stages in a course. Tests of vocabulary knowledge sometimes form a part of **placement tests**, or as a component of a **diagnostic test** in advance of planning a course programme. Such tests usually involve some attempt to measure extent of vocabulary knowledge. Tests of **achievement** at the end of a course, and of overall **proficiency**, as measured by external examinations such as the Cambridge First Certificate or TOEFL, typically include a vocabulary testing component. Vocabulary knowledge

is sometimes targeted in tests of **reading ability**, since there is a strong correlation between the two. Finally, learners' developing vocabulary knowledge, and their use of vocabulary learning strategies, may be the subject of testing for **research** purposes -especially the kind of research that teachers themselves can carry out in their own classrooms.

### **What to test?**

In Chapter I we concluded that knowing a word means knowing:

- the word's form - both spoken and written
- the word's meaning (or meanings)
- any connotations the word might have
- whether the word is specific to a certain register or style
- the word's grammatical characteristics - e.g. part of speech
- the word's common collocations
- the word's derivations
- the word's relative frequency

Furthermore, all these aspects of word knowledge can be realized receptively (in listening and reading) or productively (in speaking and writing). Any vocabulary test, therefore, needs to take into account the multi-dimensional character of word knowledge.

Most vocabulary tests target only one or two aspects of word knowledge. For example, the following items (1-3) focus on spelling, meaning and collocation respectively:

1 Teacher: 'Write down these words. Number 1, *confident*. Number 2, *independent*. Number 3, *expectant*. Number 4, *reluctant*', etc.

2 Write the English word that means: 1 a place where you go to buy meat; 2 the person who repairs your kitchen tap if it leaks; 3 the thing that you buy at a post office if you want to post a letter; etc.

3 Choose the best word to complete each sentence:

1. The flight attendant asked the passengers to .....attention to the safety demonstration.

a) give    b) devote    c) pay    d) lend

2. The delegates blamed each other when the peace talks broke .....

a) off    b) up    c) on    d) down etc.

Note that in tests 1 and 2 no context is provided, whereas in the third the targeted language is (minimally) **contextualised**. Of course, contexts can be added. In the case of test 1, the teacher could dictate whole sentences. In the case of test 2, learners could be asked to put the words into sentences.

Note also that tests 1 and 2 require learners to **produce** the correct form - i.e. to recall them from long-term memory. On the other hand, the collocation test (test 3) is receptive in that it simply tests the learner's ability to **recognise** the correct form. This is a limitation if the aim is also to test a learner's ability to produce these forms. However, it could be made productive if the multiple choice answers were removed:

4 Choose the best word to complete each sentence:

1. The flight attendant asked the passengers to..... attention to the safety demonstration.

2. A severe hurricane in the South Pacific has ..... many lives.

Whether to test with or without a context, or to test for recognition or for production, are issues that are best resolved by taking into account the purpose of the test and also its likely effect on teaching. If the purpose of the test is to predict the learner's reading ability, for example, then a receptive test will be sufficient. But it should also be a contextualised text, because reading involves using context clues to help work out word meaning. A de-contextualised word test might not be a valid test of reading ability. Moreover, it has been argued that de-contextualised tests encourage learners simply to learn long lists of words. On the plus side, de-contextualised tests are usually easy to compile and mark, so they are therefore very practicable.

To sum up, there is bound to be a trade-off between issues of **validity** (does the test assess what I want it to assess?), of **practicality** (is it easy to administer?), and of **backwash** (will the test have a positive effect on learning?). Also at issue is

the question of the test's **reliability**. For example, will it give consistent results, regardless of who marks it, and will it give the same result for students of the same ability? The following test task assesses productive, contextualised word knowledge, so it is a valid test of the learner's command of vocabulary for a 'real life' purpose. But, since it is scored somewhat impressionistically, it may not be a very reliable test:

Write a letter of about 200 words to a friend, explaining that you have recently moved house and why, and inviting the friend to a housewarming party.

Scoring: Rate the range and accuracy of the writer's vocabulary knowledge on a scale from 4 (excellent) to 1 (very poor)[7, 25].

The reliability of the test can be improved by providing more explicit criteria for marking. Nevertheless, applying such criteria effectively is liable to slow marking down, and thus reduce the test's practicality.

Considerations of validity and reliability are less of an issue in informal testing, however, where the main objective is to motivate review and recycling. More important, perhaps, is that the learners accept it as being a valid test - that it has what is called **face validity**. Beyond that, it doesn't really matter what the test is like, so long as it encourages review.

### **Types of test**

We have already seen an example of a **multiple choice** test. Multiple choice tests are a popular way of testing in that they are easy to score (a computer can do it), and they are easy to design (or seem to be). Moreover, the multiple choice format can be used with isolated words, words in a sentence context, or words in whole texts. Here, for example is a 'word only' example:

*Tangle* means

- a) a type of dance
- b) a tropical forest
- c) a confused mass
- d) a kind of fruit

Here, on the other hand, is a contextualised multiple choice test:

Someone else is [*a playing; b calling; c singing*] the tune and for the moment you're quite happy to go [*a along; b around; c away*] with what seems like a reasonable idea. Hobbies [*a make; b use; c take*] up far too much time and children could need support with a new activity. Feelings are [*a going; b running; c climbing*] high so ensure you're getting the affection you need...[25, 135].

On the negative side, multiple choice tests have been criticized because

- learners may choose the answer by a process of elimination, which hardly constitutes 'knowing' the right answer
- depending on the number of possible answers (called distracters), there is a one-in-three (or one-in-four) chance of getting the answer right
- they test recognition only - not the ability to produce the word
- they are not as easy to design as might appear. On what basis are the distracters chosen, for example? Synonyms? Words commonly confused? Words of a similar sound or spelling? False friends?

An alternative to multiple choice is some form of **gap-fill**. Gap-fill tests require learners to recall the word from memory in order to complete a sentence or text. Thus they test the ability to produce a word rather than simply recognise it. The best-known example of this test type is the cloze test. In a cloze test, the gaps are regularly spaced - e.g. every seventh, eighth, or ninth word. In this way, knowledge of a wide range of word types — including grammar words as well as content words - is tested. Moreover, the ability to complete the gaps depends on understanding the context, as in this example, in which even- sixth word has been deleted:

### **Tumbu fly**

In Africa south of the Sahara, another (1) ..... the traveller may encounter is (2) .....tumbu or mango fly, which (3) ..... its eggs on clothing laid (4) ..... on the ground to dry. (5) ..... larvae hatch and burrow their (6) ..... into the skin, causing boil-like (7)..... . These can be avoided by (8) that clothes, bedding, etc., are (9) ..... spread on the ground to dry.

(from Dawood R, *Travellers'Health*, OUP)

The successful answer to item (9) above depends on learners having understood the gist of the passage. Is it *always* or *never*, for example? In fact, cloze tests were originally designed as tests of reading. It is arguable; therefore, whether they are really vocabulary tests at all.

A variant of the cloze test is one in which, rather than every *n*th word, specifically chosen words are deleted. In this way, the test can be steered more towards content words, and hence become a more valid test of vocabulary. Most teachers will be familiar with tests of this selective (or open) cloze type, although it is more often used to test grammar than vocabulary. The problem with gap-fills, however, is that there is often more than one possible correct answer, which makes scoring difficult. Thus, for item (1) above, the words *problem*, *parasite*, *danger* or even *thing* are all acceptable. One way of controlling this is to **provide** the first letters of the word:

Tumbu fly

In Africa south of the Sahara, another problem the traveler may e .... is the tumbu or mango fly, which l..... its eggs on clothing laid out on the ground to dry. The larvae h ..... and burrow their way into the s....., causing boil-like s..... . These can be a..... by ensuring that clothes, bedding, etc., are not s..... on the ground to dry.

A variety of this approach is called the **C-test**. In a C-test, the second half of every second word is deleted as shown overleaf:

Tumbu fly

In Africa south of the Sahara, another prob.... the trav.... may encou....  
Is t... tumbu o.... mango fl...., which la.. its eg.. on cloth.. . laid o..... on  
t.... ground t.. dry. T.. larvae hat... and bur..... their w..... into t... skin, caus  
..... boil-like swell..... . These c.... be avoi..... by ensu.... that clot....  
,bedding, et... are n... spread o.. the gro... to dr.... .

At first sight, this looks even less like a vocabulary test than does a cloze test. However, researchers have shown that success at doing C-tests correlates with

success at other kinds of vocabulary test. Hence, it has been argued that C-tests are valid tests of overall vocabulary knowledge, and thus can usefully serve as placement tests. They are not, however, of much use to teachers as informal tests of progress, since they cannot be tailored to test specifically targeted words.

Another variety of gap-fill tests learners' knowledge of word formation, by asking them to convert words from one form to another so as to fit a context. Here is an example:

Change the word on the left into a suitable form to fill the gap:

1 *compose*    On one occasion the opera was conducted by the .

2 *place*        Have you seen my keys? I seem to have        them.

This kind of task tests learners' knowledge of derivations (*composer* and *misplaced* as opposed to, say, the incorrect *compositor* or *displaced*). It also tests their ability to interpret the surrounding context, in order to make the correct choice among several possible derivations (not *composure* or *displaced*, for example).

Even if sometimes the contexts are only a single sentence, one of the strengths of gap-fills is that they provide contexts for the words that are being targeted. This is consistent with the view that language should be both taught and tested in context. In fact, words like *compose* or *place* would be difficult to test out of context, given that they have multiple meanings. However, gap-fills require only minimal production on the part of the learner, and so it is arguable whether they really test the learner's ability to use the targeted words in contexts of their own creation. The following test types attempt to remedy this weakness.

One way is simply to ask learners to write sentences of their own that show the meaning of targeted words. However, as experienced teachers know, it is often difficult to assess learners' word knowledge on the basis of their own sentences. For example, while three of the following five sentences are well-formed, only the last displays a sound grasp of both the form and meaning of the word *sleep*:

Tony slepted.

Tony slept.



Tony slept for ten hours.

Tony was so tired he was slept for ten hours.

Tony was so tired he slept for ten hours [136, 196].

A more revealing test of productive vocabulary knowledge is to set learners the task of writing a whole text that includes the selected vocabulary items. This is feasible only if the words themselves are likely to co-occur. Here is an example where this is the case:

Write a paragraph of about 100 words to include at least six of the following ten words. You can change *die* form of the word, if necessary - e.g. *work* -\**worked*:

voucher	stain	sale	unwrap
store	rug	couch	refund
torn	complain		

When scoring such a test, marks can be allocated for both correct form and appropriate use of each of the selected words.

The above tasks target pre-selected words - words that may have been covered in preceding lessons, for example. A more global assessment of learners' vocabulary knowledge can be gained from an evaluation of their writing and speaking overall. Many tests of learners' production, such as the writing component of the Cambridge First Certificate examination, include an assessment of the candidate's vocabulary knowledge, both its range and its accuracy. Usually this is assessed qualitatively - that is, a general impression is made on the learner's vocabulary knowledge according to criteria such as the following:

- Wide range of words appropriately and accurately used; good use of idiom and collocation; appropriate style - 4
- Adequate range, with only occasional errors of spelling, word form, style, collocation, or word choice; meaning clear overall - 3
- Limited range of words, with some repetition; frequent errors of spelling, style, collocation, or word choice, leading to occasional difficulties in understanding meaning - 2

- Very narrow range, highly repetitive; frequent spelling and word form errors; little or no awareness of collocation or style; meaning frequently obscure - 1

However, without considerable standardization, such criteria are often difficult to apply. Different examiners will have different opinions as to what constitutes an 'adequate range' of words [7, 26].

### **Measuring word knowledge**

An alternative approach is to evaluate the data quantitatively - that is, using objective and measurable criteria. Three aspects of vocabulary knowledge that are measurable quantitatively are:

- lexical density
- lexical variety
- lexical sophistication

**Lexical density** is a measure of the proportion of **content words** in a text. Content words - as opposed to function words - are words that carry a high information load, such as nouns, adjectives and verbs (see page 4). Written text that contains a high proportion of such words is characteristic of proficient writers. **Lexical variety**, on the other hand, is a measure of the different words in the text. Again, a high proportion of different words is an indicator of an extensive vocabulary knowledge - what is often called range. Finally, **lexical sophistication** is assessed by counting the number of relatively infrequent words in a text - such as the number of words that fall outside of a list of the top 2,000 most frequent words.

*I'm writing to you as I have just finished moving to a new house, it was very tiring days. I left my old house because there were some things I didn't like, such as it was quite so little rooms. Not only were there little and dark rooms but there were also little sunlight; it was always in the shade. Moreover, I asked to the owner of the house to paint it, as it was very dirty, but he turned down what I had asked so I decided to leave the house.*

*I have moved to a brand-new building so there are no problems with the painting and other things at all. That house is very comfortable and it has also large windows to pass through the sunlight. By the way, my new neighbors are very nice, they helped me with moving my furniture and all my things.*

*I have moved to an area near lots of parks, it is a beautiful place.*

*Well, to sum up I'd like you to come to my housewarming party to open that pretty place I've got. So wishing to hear from you soon [25,139].*

The lexical density of this text - i.e. the number of content words as a percentage of the total number of words - is something like 35 per cent. For the purposes of this calculation, content words are considered to be nouns, verbs (but not auxiliary or modal verbs), adjectives, and adverbs derived from adjectives (e.g. *quickly*). The lexical variety - the number of different words as a proportion of the total number of words - is almost exactly 50 per cent (94 out of 189). For this calculation, the different forms of a verb, such as *left* and *to leave*, are counted as one word type, while lexical chunks, such as phrasal verbs (*turned down*) and discourse markers (*to sum up*) are counted as single items.

Finally, the number of words falling outside the top two frequency bands, as indicated in the *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary*, is exactly ten: *tiring, sunlight, shade, moreover, dirty, brand-new, comfortable, neighbor, furniture* and *housewarming*. This represents about 10 per cent of the total number of different word types, and provides a measure of the lexical sophistication. To sum up, the student has a score of 35, 50 and 10 for lexical density, variety and sophistication respectively.

Of course, such a calculation needs to be balanced against a measure of the **accuracy** of vocabulary use. However, this is notoriously difficult to measure using quantitative means. Some errors are less serious than others (is *my old house* an error?). Others spread over more than one word (e.g. *to pass through the sunlight*). Still others are difficult to distinguish from grammar mistakes (*quite so little rooms*). An assessment of accuracy is likely to be somewhat impressionistic therefore.

## **Assessing the vocabulary size**

Sometimes it is useful to assess size of a learner's vocabulary. For example, as a factor in determining a learner's readiness to sit a public examination, the number of words they know may be crucial. It is estimated that a recognition vocabulary of at least 4,500 words is necessary for the Cambridge First Certificate examination. There is little point in a learner entering for the exam if his or her vocabulary size is barely 2,000. How, then, do you go about assessing vocabulary size?

One fairly crude measure is to use a dictionary and choose a random selection of words - say every tenth word on every tenth page - and incorporate these into a test. The test could take the form of multiple choice questions, or a multiple matching task, such as the following (which has the advantage of testing several words at once):

Match the following words with their meaning (there are more meanings than words): crowd, gull, pester, sculptor.

1 tall narrow building

2 annoy

3 type of artist

4 small sailing boats

5 sea bird

6 a lot of people

Or learners could simply be asked to translate the words into their first language. The proportion of words correctly known represents the proportion of words in the whole dictionary. So, if the learner knows thirty out of a hundred words randomly chosen (i.e. 30 per cent), and there are 10,000 headwords in the dictionary, then a very rough estimate of the learner's vocabulary size is 30 per cent of 10,000, or 3,000 words.

Another approach is to ask learners themselves to assess the number of words they know by giving them a representative sample of words in the form of a list and asking them to tick the words they are familiar with. A more sophisticated

self-assessment test takes into account the fact that word knowledge involves varying degrees of depth. Rather than / *know this word* vs / *don't know this word*, candidates can be asked to rate their knowledge according to the following categories:

I don't remember seeing this word before.

I recognize this word but I don't know what it means.

I think this word means .

I can use this word in a sentence. For example: \_\_\_\_\_.

The test can be made more accurate still by selecting the words to be tested from different frequency bands. This can be fairly easily done, using the coding system in the *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary*, for example, which discriminates between five different frequency bands:

- the 700 most frequent words. For example: *other, family, week, start, available*
- the next 1,200 most frequent words. For example: *imagine, justice, reform, cash, agreement*
- the next 1,500 most frequent words. For example: *sensible, fancy, lucky, weigh, beauty*
- the next 3,200 most frequent words. For example: *relevant, intake, neutral, hockey, drawer*
- the next 8,100 most frequent words. For example: *pickled, congregation, jut, craftsman, scourge*

This gives a sample from a total of nearly 15,000 words overall. If, say, thirty words are tested at each level (using, for example, the multiple matching task illustrated above), the results should give a fairly accurate indication of the learner's vocabulary size. Thus, if the test demonstrates that the test taker knows twenty-eight first band words, eighteen second band words but only four third band words, it is safe to assume that their vocabulary size is within the first two bands, that is to say, within 1,900 words.

Other, often ingenious, ways of assessing vocabulary size have been devised. However, given the complexity and intricacy of the mental lexicon, and the difficulty of establishing what exactly constitutes a word, any estimate of vocabulary size is only ever going to be approximate, at best. Nevertheless, even an approximate measure may be better than none, when it comes to deciding, for example, how much preparation may be necessary for an exam.

### **Doing action research**

Testing, we have said, is a way of getting feedback on the teaching-learning process. In that sense, it is a form *at* small-scale research. Research itself is part of a cycle of inquiry and experiment that characterises the working life of professional practitioners. Most teachers are in a constant state of 'trying something out', to see if it has any noticeable effect on learning outcomes. It may be a new book, or a new technique, or simply a new way of organising the classroom furniture. Vocabulary teaching lends itself to this kind of experimentation, since, unlike grammar, vocabulary knowledge is more readily itemized, and hence more easily measurable. It is easier, for example, to assess whether twenty words can be recalled a week after they have been introduced, than assess a learner's command of the present perfect over the same period of time

Small-scale classroom research implemented by teachers and directed at improving learning outcomes is called action research. Action research does not need to meet the same rigorous standards as, for example, the more elaborate 'scientific' research carried out by academics. This does not mean that it lacks rigour entirely. The same principles that relate to effective testing - such as validity and reliability - apply equally to action research. But above all, action research should be practicable - it should not place undue demands on either teachers or students, and it should have practical outcomes.

Below are detailed some possible lines of inquiry regarding the teaching of vocabulary that practicing teachers could pursue in their own classrooms. They are directed not so much at measuring learners against each other (as in an examination), as assessing the effectiveness of the learning-teaching process in

general. They all involve some kind of experimental teaching and/or learning activity (the treatment) and then a post-test of vocabulary recall. Strictly speaking, the results of the post-test are only valid if some kind of pre-test has been conducted in advance of the treatment, although this is not always practicable.

- **To investigate different learning styles:** Some learners prefer to see new words instantly, others are happy simply to hear them and run them through their articulatory loop. To find out what works best with your own learners, teach the class ten new words by repeating and drilling, but not writing, them. In a subsequent lesson, teach another ten words, by writing them on the board, and repeating them, but not drilling them. Allow the same time interval (e.g. a week) between each presentation before testing each batch of ten words to see which batch is recalled best. Note any major differences between different learners. You can vary this procedure by adjusting the order and combination of hearing, seeing, and repeating the words. You could also combine this experiment with a short questionnaire about learning styles: *Do you prefer to see a new word instantly? Do you prefer to hear a new word before you see it?* etc. Note any correlations between learners' preferred styles and the results of the experiment.

- **To investigate the effectiveness of different mnemonic techniques:**

Explain to learners that you are going to present, say, twenty new words, and that you will test them on their recall of these words in a week's time. Suggest that they think of ways of remembering these words. Present the words - using any of the approaches suggested. Test the learners a week later - using any of the testing methods suggested in this chapter. Compare results and then ask learners to report on the way that they went about remembering the words, paying particular attention to any memory techniques that the more successful students used. Then present another set of new words, asking learners to apply the memory techniques used by the successful learners. Test again in a week's time, and see if there is any overall improvement in recall. A variation of this experiment might be to teach one half of the class a mnemonic technique, such as the *keyword technique*, teach all the class a set of words, and see if the experimental group (i.e. those instructed in

the keyword technique) show noticeably better recall. They can then explain to their classmates how they applied this technique.

- **To investigate different ways of selecting words for presentation:** In

It was suggested that presenting words in closely related lexical sets might be counterproductive, as the similarities in meaning might cause cross-interference. To test this view, teach three batches of, say, ten words in successive lessons and in subsequent lessons test for recall. The first batch of words should all belong to the same lexical set; the second should be randomly chosen; and the third should have a loose relationship - e.g. words that might co-occur in the same text. (One way of compiling this last batch is simply to select ten words from one or two paragraphs of an authentic text.)

- **To investigate the effect of extensive reading on vocabulary acquisition:** Provide learners with a graded reader or, at an advanced level, an authentic novel or book of short stories. Set regular tasks to encourage out-of-class reading, and programme discussions of the reading material during class time. Meanwhile, select words from the material that are likely to be unfamiliar to learners. If possible, try to note how many times the selected words are repeated in the reading material. Do not draw any special attention to these words before the testing stage. At the end of the reading phase, test learners on their recall of the words by, for example, using the four 'word familiarity' categories mentioned earlier in this chapter (see page 138). See if the results of this test correlate in any way with the number of times the words were repeated in the text.

- **To investigate vocabulary recording strategies:** Ask learners to let you borrow their vocabulary notebooks overnight. Note down the way they record vocabulary - whether they simply list words randomly, whether they gloss them with translations, or definitions, whether they include contextualized examples, etc. Choose a selection of words that are common to all notebooks (if possible) and test the class on these words in a subsequent lesson. Compare individual results to determine whether there is any correlation between vocabulary recording strategies



and recall. Use the results of the experiment to discuss the best ways of recording vocabulary (see the next chapter for more on ways of recording vocabulary).

- **To investigate the effect of guessing- from-context.** Prepare a reading text for the class that includes a number of words known to be (or likely to be) unfamiliar. For one half of the class, provide a gloss of these difficult words, e.g. in the form of a translation or definition. For example, here is part of a text with glosses in Spanish:

#### A DAY IN THE LIFE OF CABLN CREW

4.00am

I'm on early shift<sup>1</sup> today, so it's still dark when the alarm<sup>2</sup> goes off. When you're getting up at the crack at dawn<sup>3</sup>, you need to be organised, so I checked my rosters<sup>4</sup> and prepared my uniform and cabin<sup>5</sup> bag last night. Today I'm doing what's known in the trade<sup>6</sup> as 'a double Amsterdam'...

1) Turno, 2)despertador, 3) al romper el alba, 4) listas, 5) programas 6) cabin, 7)oficio

The other half of the class has no such help, and has to guess the meaning of the unfamiliar words from context. Ask comprehension questions about the text that requires learners to engage with the unfamiliar words. Allow them to collaborate on answering the questions, but avoid giving any definition or translation of the unfamiliar words. Simply encourage them to try to work out the meaning from the context. In a subsequent lesson, test recall of the words in the text. See if there is any difference between the two halves of the class - those that did not have to do much cognitive 'work', and those that did [7,125].

- **To investigate the effect of dictionary use:** Follow the same steps as in the previous experiment, but this time allow the group with no glosses to consult dictionaries (rather than relying on context). Again, see if recall is enhanced by the decision-making involved in consulting a dictionary. A further variant of this experiment would be to allow one half of the class to look up unfamiliar words in a dictionary, while restricting the other half to using context clues, and then comparing the results of a recall test.

The above list of research ideas by no means exhausts the possible lines of inquiry open to the teacher when exploring the teaching of vocabulary. Even if the results of these experiments are inconclusive, sharing your findings with the class can generate discussion of different vocabulary learning strategies. This in turn will raise awareness as to how vocabulary might best be learned and this can only be of benefit to all.

### **Conclusion on Chapter III**

There is more to words than simply 'words'. In this chapter we have seen:

- how parts of words combine in systematic ways to form whole words
- how whole words combine in systematic ways to form chunks

But, the fact that these combinations are systematic does not mean that the teaching of word formation or of word combination should necessarily be rule-based. The systems may be too complicated or too irregular to be of much use to learners, either for receptive or productive purposes.

Instead, an approach that combines frequent and contextualised exposure with consciousness-raising may work best. This is recommended for the teaching of:

- composite words
- collocations
- phrasal verbs
- idioms

So far we have been concerned with teaching and learning. But, for various reasons and at various stages in the process, the learning of vocabulary needs to be measured. In the next chapter we look at ways of testing vocabulary knowledge - both before, during and at the end of instruction

In this chapter we also have looked at different ways vocabulary learning can be tested. Testing needs to take account of factors such as:

- validity - are you testing what you want to test?
- reliability - will the test give consistent results?
- practicality - is it easy to administer and mark?

- face validity - will the learners take it seriously?

Testing can be both informal (as in regular progress tests) and formal (as in end-of-course achievement tests). Sometimes, e.g. for placement purposes, it is useful to test for vocabulary size.

Good tests have a positive backwash effect - for example, they encourage good learning strategies.

Vocabulary tests can be divided into tests of:

- recognition
- production

They also divide between tests where words are tested:

- out of context
- in context

Finally, vocabulary knowledge can be assessed:

- qualitatively - by using assessment scales, for example
- quantitatively - by doing word counts to test for lexical density, for example

Testing is one way of assessing learning outcomes - the products of learning. One way of assessing the processes of learning is by means of action research. An action research cycle typically includes:

- a pre-test
- an experimental treatment
- a post-test

One of the benefits of action research is that it can help raise awareness, on the part of both teacher and learner, of the best ways of going about learning vocabulary. In the next and final chapter, we explore the subject of vocabulary learning strategies in more depth.

## **Conclusion**

The acquisition of vocabulary is arguably the most critical component of successful language learning. Until recently, however, it has been difficult to determine the most important words and phrases needed to establish a suitable vocabulary for conducting conversations most effectively. The Corpus' massive collection of texts has given us access to a wealth of information regarding spoken and written English that was previously unavailable. The task at hand, therefore, is to take this new information and apply it in the classroom. Since there are so many things to learn about each piece of vocabulary (meaning, spoken/written forms, collocations, connotations, grammatical behavior, etc.) it is important that we as teachers only introduce a little at a time, starting with the most frequent, useful, and learnable vocabulary, and returning later to more difficult vocabulary and less frequent uses of previously learned items. We need to repeat vocabulary often, because students must work with a word or phrase many times before acquisition takes place, and we must offer variety to keep the exercises fresh and to cater to different learning styles.

We have looked at five possible sources of vocabulary input for learners: lists, course books, vocabulary books, the teacher, and other students.

We noted that: lists are an economical way of organising vocabulary for learning, and that it doesn't matter a great deal if they are put together in a rather random way. It will help, though, if list learning activities are integrated into the lesson. Segregated activities typically present or practice lexical sets, or word formation rules, or recycle or test words introduced previously, or target specific vocabulary-learning strategies. Vocabulary is also integrated into skills work, typically in the form of a pre-task or post-task vocabulary focus. Some course book vocabulary is incidental, such as that included in instructions and grammar explanations.

There is more to words than simply 'words'. We have seen:

- how parts of words combine in systematic ways to form whole words
- how whole words combine in systematic ways to form chunks

But, the fact that these combinations are systematic does not mean that the teaching of word formation or of word combination should necessarily be rule-based. The systems may be too complicated or too irregular to be of much use to learners, either for receptive or productive purposes.

Instead, an approach that combines frequent and contextualized exposure with consciousness-raising may work best. This is recommended for the teaching of: composite words, collocations, phrasal verbs, idioms.

So far we have been concerned with teaching and learning. But, for various reasons and at various stages in the process, the learning of vocabulary needs to be measured.

In this chapter we also have looked at different ways vocabulary learning can be tested. Testing needs to take account of factors such as: validity, reliability, practicality, face validity.

Testing can be both informal (as in regular progress tests) and formal (as in end-of-course achievement tests). Sometimes, e.g. for placement purposes, it is useful to test for vocabulary size.

Good tests have a positive backwash effect - for example, they encourage good learning strategies.

Vocabulary tests can be divided into tests of: recognition and production.

Finally, vocabulary knowledge can be assessed:

- qualitatively - by using assessment scales, for example
- quantitatively - by doing word counts to test for lexical density, for example

Testing is one way of assessing learning outcomes - the products of learning. One way of assessing the processes of learning is by means of action research. An action research cycle typically includes:

- a pre-test
- an experimental treatment
- a post-test

One of the benefits of action research is that it can help raise awareness, on the part of both teacher and learner, of the best ways of going about learning

vocabulary. In the next and final chapter, we explore the subject of vocabulary learning strategies in more depth.

Finally, we need to help learners understand that learning is a gradual process that takes place in small, manageable increments over time, and to encourage them to seek additional information on their own, personalizing the learning experience and tailoring it to their own specific needs.

## LIST OF USED LITERATURE

1. Каримов И.А. Гармонично развитое поколение – основа прогресса Узбекистана. Речь на девятой сессии Олий Мажлиса Республики Узбекистан // Собр. соч. Т.6.- Ташкент, 1998. – 312 с.
2. Ахманова О. С. Словарь лингвистических терминов. - Москва: Наука, 1969. - 245 с.
3. Беляева Т. М., Потапова И. А. Английский язык за пределами Англии. Ленинград: ЛГУ, 1961. - 128 с.
4. Гальскова Н.Д. Современная методика обучения иностранным языкам. Пособие для учителя. - 2-е изд., перераб. и доп. - М.: АРКТИ, 2003. - 192 с.
5. Пассов Е.И. Основы коммуникативной методики обучения иноязычному общению М.: Русский язык, 1999. - 276 с.
6. Atkinson D. (ed.) Alternative Approaches to Second Language Acquisition, Longman, 2011. - 203 p.
7. Bachman Lyle F. Language Testing in Practice: Designing and Developing Useful Language Tests. Oxford University Press, 1996. - 684 p.
8. Bailey R., Robinson J. Varieties of Present-day English. N.Y.: New York Press, 1973. – 243 p.
9. Barnes Annette, Hines Jean, Weldon Jeannie, Watcyn-Jones Peter. Penguin English Photocopiables: Have Fun with Vocabulary! - Penguin Books Ltd., 1999. - 160 p.
10. Bowler, B. Cunningham, S. Moor, P. Parminter, S. New Headway Pronunciation Course, OUP, 2000. - 168 p.
11. Bolton David. The Secrets of Successful Language Learning. N.Y.: New York Press, 2011. – 69 p.
12. Burns Anne, Richards Jack C. Cambridge Guide to Second Language Teacher Education. Cambridge University Press, 2009. – 334 p.
13. Ceranic Helena. English Teacher's Handbook. – Longman, 2009. – 160 p.

- 14.** Cooze Angella. 100 Ideas for Teaching English. – Continuum Press, 2006.- 138 p.
- 15.** Dunne Richard, Wragg Ted. Effective teaching. - Longman, 2005. - 41 p.
- 16.** Elfrieda H. Hiebert, Michael L. Kamil. Teaching and Learning Vocabulary: Bringing research to Practice. - Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers, 2005. -288 p.
- 17.** Galperin I. R. Stylistics. M.: Higher School Publishing House, 1977. – 343 p.
- 18.** Harmer J. How to Teach English, Longman, 2009. - 189 p.
- 19.** Jack C. Richards, Thomas S.C. Farrell Professional Development for Language Teachers: Strategies for Teacher Learning, Cambridge University Press, 2005.- 212p.
- 20.** Janet Allen. Words, Words, Words: Teaching Vocabulary in Grades 4-12. - Stenhouse Publishers, 1999. – 156 p.
- 21.** Kenworthy, J. Teaching English Vocabulary, Longman, 2007. - 196 p
- 22.** Nation Paul. New Ways in Teaching Vocabulary, Tesol, 1994. – 96 p.
- 23.** Patel M.F. English language teaching: methods, tools & techniques, Sunrise Publishers & Distributors, 2008. – 191 p.
- 24.** Ruth Gairns, Stuart Redman. Working with Words: A Guide to Teaching and Learning Vocabulary for Language Teachers, Cambridge University Press, 1996. – 208 p.
- 25.** Thornbury S. How to Teach Vocabulary. Longman, 2002. – 186 p.
- 26.** Watkins P. Learning to Teach English. Delta Publishing, 2005. - 144 p.
- 27.** Woodward T. Planning Lessons and Courses: Designing Sequences of Work for the Language Classroom. Cambridge University Press, 2001. - 266 p.
- 28.** Internet: <http://www.eduplace.com>
- 29.** Internet: <http://www.eslflow.com/vocabularylessonplans.html>
- 30.** Internet: <http://www.rand.org/multi/achievementforall>
- 31.** Internet: <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/9943/>
- 32.** Internet: <http://suite101.com/article/teaching-vocabulary-in-context-a38469>



**33.** Internet: <http://www3.telus.net/.../teachingvocabulary.html>