AUTHENTICITY IN FLL AS A VOCABULARY BOOSTER

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Rezumat. *Articolul se focusează pe procesul de dobândire a cunoştinţelor de vocabular. Cercetări recente arată că predarea vocabularului este problematică, deoarece mulţi profesori mai întâmpină dificultăţi în predarea lui. Cercetarea încearcă să rezume aspecte importante ale proiectării activităţilor de predare-învăţare a vocabularului, cum ar fi modele de prezentare a cuvintelor şi câteva direcţii despre cum să construieşti strategii eficiente în timp ce se asimilezi un vocabular nou. Autencitatea cuvintelor este văzută ca un aspect care sporeşte motivaţia elevilor. Tema acestei lucrări este relevantă, deoarece predarea vocabularului va fi întotdeauna un aspect important al predării limbilor străine; şi parte a unui act de comunicare de succes, lăsând în acelaşi timp un număr mare de întrebări referitor la studiul său pentru profesori şi studenţi.*

Abstract. *The article aims to highlight the process of acquiring vocabulary knowledge. Recent research shows that teaching vocabulary is problematic, as many teachers are unsure of the best practices of teaching vocabulary. The research tries to summarize important aspects of designing activities while teaching-learning vocabulary like, models of words presentation and some guidelines on how to build effective strategies while acquiring new vocabulary. Authenticity of the words is seen as a fact that increases pupils motivation The topic of this work is relevant, since teaching vocabulary will always be one of the main part of foreign language learning and teaching; and part of a successful communication act, while leaving a huge number of questions in its study for teachers and students.*

Cuvinte cheie: *vocabularul, autencitatea, motivaţia, modele, strategii, competenţe.*

Keywords*: vocabulary, authenticity, motivation, models, strategies, competences.*

Introduction

Vocabulary teaching and learning can be one of the most challenging aspects of the teaching learning process. Students have to deal with vocabulary activities at all levels, that is why the lexical knowledge of language learning has gained further development and interest among researchers. Good vocabulary achievement support students in mastering the other language competences. Both receptive and productive skills need good vocabulary knowledge as a pre-requisite in the communication process.

Theoretical Framework

Many methodologists and scientists paid special attention to this problem, for example, J. Harmer, S. Thornbury, Ur Penny, I.S.P. Nation, whose scientific works and research are the theoretical basis of the work.

Schmitt (2000) emphasizes that "lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language" [5].

Nation (2001) further describes the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and language use as complementary: knowledge of vocabulary enables language use and, conversely, language use leads to an increase in vocabulary knowledge [2].

On the other side, unlike syntax and phonology, vocabulary does not have some specific, clear rules to follow in its acquisition. In other words, there are not some clear rules to guide us in words acquisition regarding the which vocabulary words should be learned first. In this regard, Oxford (1990) says that vocabulary is "by far the most sizeable and unmanageable component in the learning of any language, whether a foreign or one's mother tongue, because of tens of thousands of different meanings" [7].

Different approaches of studying vocabulary in a foreign language have been developed over the years. Some of these approaches involve the of investigation of strategies learners use specifically for vocabulary acquisition, which is our focus of attention. There are different divisions of strategies in learning vocabulary, the most well-known strategy is step-by-step discovery the word meaning that starts with new word presentation, spelling, pronunciation and application. Besides this there are social, discovery and consolidation strategies. Different studies have revealed that metacognition strategies are most preferred by adult students that are able to be better autonomous learners, they are able to self-initiate the learning process, so these strategies suppose planning, monitoring, and evaluating learning experiences that learners need to develop additional efforts when acquire vocabulary (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

Furthermore, Nation (2001) has developed three general classes of strategies which are "planning", "source" and "processes". In "planning", learners have to decide on where, how and to what extend that they should focus on their vocabulary items that they learn. "Sources" refers to items used in learning for instance like dictionaries, textbooks or other resources to help them acquire the second language vocabulary, and "Processes" include the establishing of words knowledge through noticing and generating strategies.

It was curious to know what types of strategies are the most frequently used by students and what are the most efficient way they try to remember the words and it was stated that students prefer less to use dictionary especially printed one, in case of strong need they use online dictionaries, or prefer to ask their teachers, class mates for meaning of new words. A little number prefer to look for a meaning in their notebooks. Many of them tend to have an autonomous approach they read books, watch movies or videos, and listen to the songs and learn the new words, usually from guessing the meaning, before asking or looking in the dictionary, they remember the words by remembering the sentences that they saw or listened in a passage. This characteristic is a new one specific to 21-st students who are visuals and spend more time online. However, was recognized that well designed on step by step vocabulary activity that supposes note-taking and memorizing spelling, with repetitive actions can be very efficient.

From the above information some conclusions can be shaped regarding the "planning, sources and processes" strategies while teaching-learning vocabulary.

Considering the fact that most of students learn words out of the classroom context reading books, watching their favorite movies or video channels, listening or playing online, and they take it as an effortless process, we suppose that Authenticity in foreign vocabulary learning can become an essential factor. What is meant through authenticity in learning new words:

-the language produced by native speakers for native speakers in a particular language community (Little, Devitt, & Singleton, 1988; Porter & Roberts, 1981);2.

-the language produced by a real speaker/writer for a real audience, conveying a real message (Benson & Voller, 1997; Morrow, 1977; Nunan, 1989; Porter & Roberts, 1981; Swaffar, 1985).

Another great definition outlined by Tomlinson and Masuhara (2010, p. 400) says that

authentic materials are "designed not to transmit declarative knowledge about the target language but rather to provide an experience of the language in use".

The authentic text becomes a valuable didactic tool in the interconnected development of linguistic, pragmatic, cultural and sociocultural competences at students while learning a foreign language. The formative qualities of the authentic text depend mostly on the way these sources are selected. The formative value of authentic texts is increased and a dynamic of students' competences can be seen in case when their selection is done according to linguistic and psycho-didactic principles; building an adequate methodology of the learning experience. (meu)

According to above conclusions and many studies from the foreign language education field can be figured out that by authentic sources (news, videos, movies, anime, books) students can learn, discover culture, social events, phenomena, that are close to their interests, memorizing and saving them for long terms. When students use authentic sources, they discover the real world and ca be admitted that they are using real language and they apply different strategies like guessing, asking, discovering, negotiating, skills, so it can help them in coping with real situation outside of the class, this help them to use real context into real world being prepared to use the actual vocabulary acquired through the use of authentic materials.

Also, an important factor that determine teachers to use authentic sources is motivation. It is supposed that exist a direct connection between motivation and authentic materials. The advantage of being culturally loaded, rich in contextual means of giving possibility to anticipate the meaning of unknown words lead to a very formative activity where the learners are engaged in the process of unlocking meanings. In this case context becomes a key to discovering the unknown vocabulary. Many researchers (Little, Devitt & Singleton 1989; Morrison 1989, consider that authentic sources are a motivational factor that increases the learning results. Motivation is a driving force that keep connected and active our students while learning.

Let us think about some difficulties that can arise while working with the new vocabulary. Considering all possible scenarios that teachers meet in the classroom the difficulties that shadow the

teaching joy can be: use of non-specific words – using fillers, word finding difficulties; difficulty following instructions; difficulty understanding conversation; difficulty with comprehension tasks; difficulty learning new words; using limited vocabulary – use of mostly tier 1 vocabulary.

Students have the task to learn new vocabulary at home but many of them won`t. That is why it`s important to introduce a lesson routine that supposes vocabulary learning or vocabulary repetition. Sometimes the simple routine with lists of words with their definitions can become boring stages of lessons. To avoid the boredom, the teachers should vary the habitual vocabulary activities with interactive activities or games and focus on authenticity.

Speaking about learning routine or habitual vocabulary learning activities teachers should routinely supply students with opportunities like:

-a variety of exposure to new words

-use different word games or games that facilitate vocabulary learning

-offer different opportunities for extensive reading to build vocabulary-

-individual work to plan and work with different learning strategies

-pre-reading or pre-listening vocabulary activity to develop guessing, or negotiating skills

-listening to read aloud, listening authentic sources to hear correct pronunciation

-collaborative work in learning vocabulary, skills exchange.

Over time have been outlined more models of vocabulary acquisition. Theorists and practicians sat out different methodologies to help teachers and students find the easier path in vocabulary learning. The most of them admit that it is not enough just to know the meaning of a word. Students also need to know which words it is usually used with; its grammatical characteristics; how it is pronounced; whether it is formal, informal or neutral.

So when teachers teach a word they should make sure that they:

• Learn new words in phrases not in isolation.

• Notice how words commonly go together. These are called collocations and include:

adjectives + nouns, e.g. rich vocabulary, classical music, common sense;

verbs + nouns, e.g. to express an opinion, to take sides;

nouns in phrases, e.g. in touch with, a train set, a sense of humor;

words + prepositions, e.g. at a loss for words, in particular.

• Notice special grammatical characteristics of new words. For example, note irregular verbs,

e.g. undertake, undertook, undertaken; uncountable nouns,

e.g. luggage; or nouns that are only used in the plural, e.g. scissors.

• Notice any special pronunciation problems with new words.

• Check if the word is particularly formal or informal in character, in other words if it has a particular register.

let us see some models of teaching new vocabulary one very traditional but in the same time very efficient is the strategy of using 8 steps while teaching vocabulary.

Steps to Teaching Vocabulary

1. Read passage
2. Provide context - "They hang from the ceiling of the cave so that they are out of reach of predators"
3. Repeat the word - "predator"
4. Student friendly definition - 'an animal that kills and eats other animals'.
5. Teacher example – "I saw predator birds at the beach as they flew into the water to catch fish for their dinner".
6. Student example – students may model their answers around yours or other students.
7. Interact with word –true or false questions/identifying different situations.
8. Repeat the word one last time. "what is the word that means "an animal that kills and eats other animals?".

Another model that is commonly accepted by the teachers is Bob Marzano Model. It is a six step process that includes direct instruction, linguistic and nonlinguistic definitions, recording word learning in a notebook or journal, talking about words, and playing with words. Multiple exposures are at the heart of the process. The six-step process includes the following steps:

- The teacher provides a description, explanation, or example of the term. Linguistic definition – students restate the description, explanation, or example in their own words.
- Nonlinguistic definition –students construct a picture, pictograph, symbolic representation, or act out the term.
- The teacher extends and refines understanding of the word by engaging students in activities that help them add to their knowledge of the terms in vocabulary notebooks.
- Periodically ask students to discuss the terms with one another.
- Involve students in games that enable them to play with the terms and reinforce word knowledge.

The learning environment is a key place to support and encourage word learning. New standards – whether Common Core or individual state standards – call for an increase in the amount of nonfiction and informational text that students read. A learning environment must support speaking, listening, reading, and writing in a variety of authentic ways – through print & digital media.

A learning environment that is literacy-rich is not only important for early literacy but supports content-specific learning as well. Depending on student level and the content area, elements of a learning environment that supports interaction and exposure to words includes: • classroom libraries that include a variety of genres and text types, • content posters, • anchor charts – teacher-made and

co-created with students, • word walls, • labels, • literacy workstations, • writing centers, • computers/laptops/tablets, • displays of student work, • displays of books and information, • bulletin boards, and plenty of opportunity to read, write, listen, and speak.

Word walls offer a rich vocabulary resource for students and serve as a teaching a learning tool within the classroom. Word walls are an important component in a language-rich environment that fosters and supports word learning for every student.

They serve as an important support for vocabulary and word learning across grade levels and content areas. Words walls will look different depending on the grade you teach, the content area for which you are responsible, and may include different words if you're teaching

There are a lot of interactive activities to increase student vocabulary:

Vocabulary activities

Vocabulary Headbandz is a fun game that students love. Simply print off your vocabulary words onto these free editable vocabulary cards. Each student attaches a vocabulary word card to their headband. The youngest participant takes the first turn. Then play passes to the left. When it's the pupil turn, just he flips over the timer and asks each of the players a question that will help you figure out what the picture is on your head. Once you've asked each player a question, simply begin another round and then another. If you guess the vocabulary word before the timer runs out, simply take another card and put it behind your headband. Continue to ask questions until the timer runs out. For each vocabulary word that is guessed correctly, you get a point. The player with the most points at the end of the game is the winner.

Vocab Short Stories. Writing stories is the ultimate determination of whether or not a student truly understands the meaning of his/her vocabulary words. The teacher writes the vocabulary words that he/she would like the students to use when writing their short stories before making copies. Students need to use all the vocabulary words in context all while forming a short story. This activity comes with templates for 8 words, 10 words, or 12 words as well as with or without space for drawing a picture to match the story.

Collocation activity. Do your students have difficulty deciding which words go together in English? Than I will try to suggest some activities to make learning collocations fun.

Students frequently have problems with collocations for a number of reasons; the most common being direct translations from their native tongue. An example I come across regularly while teaching English is problems with <u>do</u>/make collocations due to the fact that, in Romanian, the verb 'a face' is used for both. Or I have sixteen years old.' you'll find students up to proficiency level still have the odd lapse when use of verb to be when speaking about age. But never fear, there are fun and memorable ways to learn and revise these types of collocation both in the classroom and at home.

Post-it hunt. Before the class, write the two parts of the collocations on individual post-its and stick them in different parts of the classroom: under tables/chairs, on the door, on your back, on the back of the TV etc. Then, when students enter, put them in pairs and assign them a section of the board each. Students must find as many matching collocations as they can and stick them on their part of the board.

Collocation Pictionary. Put students into teams of three or four, write a load of collocations on scraps of paper, and give them 90 seconds to draw as many as they can for their team to guess. The team with the most correct guesses wins.

In conclusion, vocabulary is seen as a very important chain of Foreign language achievement and many useful, formative strategies are applied in the language education. Effectively supporting students to enrich, deepen, and extend their vocabulary is (so much more) than identifying academic vocabulary, creating lists of words, worksheets, and even direct instruction. It requires a strategic and purposeful approach to support student while learning the new words.

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