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## LEARNING PROCESS OF VOCABULARY

**Annotation:** This article is related to concrete vocabulary teaching with the use of realia because it is important to know the right pronunciation and spelling considering that if the students make a mistake in form they can change the meaning of the word.

**Key words:** vocabulary, aspect, explicit, lexical items, pronunciation

Ellis (1994) mentions that there are some aspects which influence the vocabulary learning process. Those aspects are important because they stimulate explicit learning. It means that concrete vocabulary teaching and realia can be associated at the moment of teaching because the students can make conscious efforts to notice new lexical items and selective attending. Nevertheless, there are other features that influence the vocabulary learning process. For example, enthusiasm, attitudes towards vocabulary learning, fear of failure and the same attitude to learn a foreign language. So, the learning of new items in English is pulled by the aspects mentioned before.

Moreover, it is necessary to remark what Penny Ur (1996) states at the moment of teaching vocabulary. She points out some features as form and aspects of meaning which are relevant when teaching concrete vocabulary using realia. Therefore, they are going to be explained in the following paragraphs.

Ur (1996 p.60), says “form” is the first relevant feature, at the moment of teaching vocabulary. Form is related to pronunciation and spelling; the students have to know the correct pronunciation of the items in mind. Moreover, if there is any similarity in the pronunciation and the spelling, it is necessary to teach it. For example: red/read, four/ for, meat/meet and so on.

Those words are similar in sound but they are different in meaning. The same happens in spelling, if learners make a change or omit one letter the meaning will change. This part is related to concrete vocabulary teaching with the use of realia because it is important to know the right pronunciation and spelling considering that if the students make a mistake in form they can change the meaning of the word.

So, pronunciation and form are going to be present when learning English, so those characteristics of a new item are going to be perceived by the learner when meeting the item for the first time. In teaching, “teachers need to make sure that both these aspects are accurately presented and learned” (Ur, 1996 p.60).

The second important point considered by Ur (1996) when teaching concrete vocabulary is called “aspects of meaning”. It is divided in three parts: first, denotation, second connotation, and appropriateness. First of all, “denotation refers to the meaning of a word in the real world”, it means that the definition is related to everyday life and sociocultural aspects. Denotation is often the sort of definitions which are given in a dictionary. For example, dog denotes a kind of animal; more specifically, a common, domestic carnivorous mammal; and both damp and moist mean slightly wet.

To continue, connotation is the second aspect of meaning. It refers to the meaning given inside a group of people with some influence of culture. Connotations are associated to the positive or negative feelings the word evokes, most of the time this meaning is not indicated in a dictionary definition. For example, the word “dog” is understood by most British people with positive connotations of friendship and loyalty; nevertheless, most people in Arab countries understand this word with negative associations of dirt and inferiority (Ur, 1996 p. 61).

Another aspect of meaning mentioned by Ur (1996) is appropriateness. When students are learning vocabulary, it is necessary to teach if a particular item is the appropriate one to use in a certain context or not. Thus, it is useful for a learner to know that a certain word is very common, or relatively rare, or „taboo’ in polite conversation, or tends to be used in writing but not in speech, or is more suitable for formal than informal discourse, or belongs to a certain dialect. For example, “you may know that weep is virtually synonymous in denotations with cry, but it is more formal, tends to be used in writing more than in speech, and is in general much less common” (Ur, 1996, p.61)

Additionally, there are other ways of associating meaning that are useful in teaching. The teacher can, for instance, relate parts to a whole. For example, there is a relationship between apple, banana, grapes, cherries; all those fruits belong to a group which is fruits (Ur, 1996 p.62).

In addition, Penny Ur (1996, p. 63-64) identified some ways to present new vocabulary.

Those ways to present vocabulary can be associated with teaching concrete vocabulary considering realia. Therefore, Ur called them “ideas for presenting items”. The first idea is to choose an item from the vocabulary taught. Then, think how the item teachers select could be offered considering it is the first time the students see the item.

The second idea is “studying further techniques”. There are different techniques of giving the significance of new vocabulary. One is a concise definition as it appears in the dictionary. For example, a dog is an animal which..., the second is meticulous description, it refers to appearance and qualities: examples (hyponyms), designs (image, object) demonstration (performing, role play mime), context (story or sentences in which the item happens), synonyms, (similar), antonyms (opposites), translation, connected thoughts, collocations; or a combination of the two. This idea for presenting vocabulary can be used for teaching concrete vocabulary because the meaning of a new item can be demonstrated from the abstract meaning to concrete meaning. It happens when students describe the objects' qualities, design, and perform in a real context with real materials (Ur, 1996, p. 63).

The third idea is called “application and comparison”. As the teacher selects some ideas to present the new vocabulary, it is essential to find which one or more of the procedures were used in the original idea for presentation. In other words, could the teacher use other techniques instead of the original idea? Therefore, the teacher can have more ideas to present vocabulary to the students (Ur 1996, p.63).

The fourth point is “discussion”. Considering the previous facts in the third idea, it is essential to debate verbally or in writing about the helpfulness of the dissimilar techniques. Ur (1996) recommends some questions to reflect on this point because some techniques are more general than others. Those questions are: 1. What are they, and can the teacher account to their popularity? 2. Are there techniques that are particularly suitable for the demonstration of certain kinds of words? 3. Are there techniques which are likely to be more or less suitable for particular learner population (young/adult, beginner/advanced, different contextual cultures)? (Ur, 1996, p.64)

In addition to the information about how to present new vocabulary, Ur (1996) points out that there are different ways to test vocabulary learning such as multiple-choice, matching, odd one out, writing sentences, dictation-translation, gap-filling with a pool of answers, translation and sentence completion