

## LEARNING VOCABULARY AND SPEAKING ACTIVITIES

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*Такие виды деятельности, как мини-лекция, проблемная ситуация, ролевая игра, как правило, не являются непосредственно заданиями, направленными на обучение лексике. Обучение лексике является важной частью учебной программы и должно быть продуктивным и соответствовать потребностям обучающихся. В статье рассматриваются приемы, способствующие формированию лексических навыков студентов, которые могут быть также эффективными и при обучении говорению.*

**Ключевые слова:** лексика, ролевая игра.

*Speaking tasks such as mini-lectures, role playing and problem solving discussion are not usually thought as having learning goals. One of the reasons for this is that it seems difficult to plan vocabulary learning as a part of a syllabus using activities that are largely productive, unpredictable, and subject to the whims of the people who happen to be in the discussion group. This article shows that such activities are in fact a very useful means of vocabulary learning. Although this article focuses on vocabulary learning, this may be accidental goal in speaking activities.*

**Keywords:** vocabulary, role playing.

The sources for information about the words, mainly the words' meanings can come from the textual context provided on the worksheet and from the learners in the group.

Getting the meaning of the unknown word is not the same as remembering the meaning. Although the learner may discover the meaning through the written context, through hearing it used, or through the explanation of other members of the group, this is no guarantee that the word and its meaning will be remembered. There are three important processes that may lead to a word being remembered. The first

process encouraging learning is attention. This means that learners need to notice the word – to be aware of it as a useful language item. This noticing may be affected by several factors, including: 1) the salience of the word in the textual input or in the discussion of the text; 2) previous contact the learners have had with the word; and 3) the learners realization that the word fills a gap in the knowledge of the word.

The second process that may lead to a word being remembered is retrieval if the word is retrieved either receptively or productively during a task, then the memory of that word will be strengthened. Teachers can design retrieval into speaking activities by making it necessary for the learners to reuse the words that occurred in the textual input. This can be done by: 1) making the task involve retelling of the textual input; 2) by making the task involve a procedure whereby the same material has to be discussed or presented several times through a change in group membership; or 3) making solution to the task involve considerable discussion of the information as in a problem solving discussion.

The third process that may lead to a word being remembered is generation. Teachers can encourage generative use by: 1) requiring retelling of the written input from a different focus; 2) distributing the information in a way that encourages negotiation; and 3) requiring learners to reconstruct what was in the text rather than repeat it.

We have looked at the processes that can help the learning of vocabulary through speaking.

Activities for learning vocabulary through speaking.

Retelling. As we shall see, retelling activities can take many forms. What is common to all of them is that the learners read a text (usually about 100 to 200 words long), and retell it. The retelling gives learners the chance to productively retrieve the vocabulary and ideally make use of it.

Role play activities can involve a written text on which the role play is based. It may involve the written instructions to the role players. The Say it! Activity combines these features and serves a simple introduction to role play. In the Say it! activity the learners read a short text such as newspaper report containing the target vocabulary.

There are numerous other speaking activities which make use of written input. These include split information tasks, interview activities and information transfer activities. Thoughtful design of the worksheets and careful observation of their use can maximize the opportunities for the incidental learning of useful vocabulary while the learners are involved in meaning focused speaking task.

Let us look at a task how it can be redesigned to create favorable opportunities for vocabulary learning.

The learners work in groups to solve the following problem.

You have just seen one of your friends stealing things from a local shop. What will you do?

1. Inform the shop owner immediately.
2. Tell your friend to put it back.

3. Discuss it with your friend later to discourage him from doing it in the future.
4. Just ignore it.
5. Discuss it with your parents.

The following words in the written input are unknown to many of the learners: local, inform, discourage, ignore. Inform and ignore are important ideas in the text and the likelihood of them being noticed, discussed and used in the activity is very high. Local and discourage may not get the same attention.

There are several important ways in which the activity could be improved for vocabulary learning. First, the numbers in front of the choices should be removed. If they are left there, then the learners will say things like “*I think 4 is the best choice*” instead of saying “I would just ignore it” which makes use of the target word *ignore*.

Second, the written input is quite short and does not contain a lot of useful new vocabulary. The written input thus needs to be increased in quantity and additional useful words to learn should be included. This can be done in several ways, by increasing the amount of description about each choice, by giving more description of the background to the task (more information about the friend and what was stolen, for example), or by adding more choices. Probably the most effective way will be to turn the activity into a role play.

Third, some changes could ensure that the target vocabulary will be used. The activity could be made into a ranking activity rather than a choosing activity. This might produce discussion that is more evenly spread among the choices. Each learner in the group could be given responsibility for a different choice.

Fourth, some changes could be made to give the target vocabulary a greater chance of being used often during the activity. These could include getting learners to report back to other groups on their discussion and reason for that decision, and moving through a pyramid procedure from pairs to fours to the whole class.

The aim of all these changes to the activity is to increase the opportunities for vocabulary learning. Their effectiveness may be seen by testing the vocabulary learning directly coming from the activity, or more informally by observing whether the learners are negotiating and using the wanted vocabulary during the activity.

The main theme of this article has been to suggest that the teachers who are serious about planning vocabulary learning should give careful attention to the design of speaking activities. Without compromising the communicative nature of spoken activities it is easily possible to increase the opportunity for planned vocabulary learning.

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