

# Role of Technology Building Vocabulary

**Dr. Reena Mittal**

M.A. (Eng.) Ph.D. M.B.A.

Department of English, DAK Degree College, Moradabad

Mail Id: [mittal.reena23@gmail.com](mailto:mittal.reena23@gmail.com)

## Abstract

*Why is vocabulary learning so important? To understand a text, one must understand the words that represent the ideas or concepts. The role that vocabulary knowledge plays in second and foreign language acquisition has long been neglected. However, vocabulary is currently receiving increased emphasis in the language teaching curriculum. Vocabulary should be ubiquitous in our instruction. Vocabulary is central to English language teaching because without sufficient vocabulary students cannot understand others or express their own ideas. Students often instinctively recognize the importance of vocabulary to their language learning. It has to underlie and infuse every sphere of learning, including every element of literacy (reading, listening, discussing and writing) and every content domain. Words give power of speaking and writing. They give the ability to share thoughts and ideas. Written words can help tune in*

*to the thoughts of people who lived long ago or far away. Words also help to imagine anything, never had and events far into the future. The purpose of this article is to highlight use of eVoc for improving vocabulary learning and that to employ digital tools and resources that are readily available and feasible to implement in institutes and colleges.*

**Keywords:** Vocabulary, eVoc, Dictionary, Technology, Learning.

**“Words, so innocent and powerless as they are, standing in a dictionary; how potent for good and evil they become in the hands of one who knows how to choose and combine them.”**

— Nathaniel Hawthorne

## Introduction:

Many modern linguists think the human brain is hard-wired for

language. Actually ability to speak and understand words is instinctual, meaning it comes naturally. Words enabled people to talk about things they could not see or touch. Vocabulary grows along with us. Print materials (books, magazines, and newspapers) and TV and radio continuously bombard us with new words. So, vocabulary is an important measure of verbal abilities. One of the ways one can learn is by listening, writing the word and its definition; then say aloud to oneself. One can make new sentences using the word in context, and listen to oneself. Listening reinforces learning. So, always try to make special effort to use new words when write and speak. When teachers teach vocabulary to build students' knowledge of words and phrases, helping them learn any and all of these different components assists them in enhancing their English vocabulary knowledge and use.

A writer or a speaker has a toolbox which continuously grows with tools like grammar, punctuation, rhythm, rhyme and vocabulary above all. Just as a mechanic keeps all tools ready to use, similarly a writer has to make himself ready with all components of

language. We use spoken and written words every day to speak, think and write. Sometime we communicate successfully and sometimes we lack in expressing our feelings. I teach undergraduate students coming from urban and semi-urban background whose mother tongue is not English. So, I experience them not replying up to the mark but feeling sorry not to express themselves. I personally experienced that student's struggle and experience, literary difficulties in learning and speaking just because of lack of vocabulary.

### **Second language learning and Strategy:**

Over the past years, many researches have taken place for the literary development and progress of students when they are learning second language other than Mother Tongue. In India, English is learnt as second language and students, who did their schooling from Hindi or Regional language medium, face many difficulties in higher education and technical education where it is mandatory to be proficient in English. When I see my students struggling with words while speaking, writing, or giving answers I feel an urgent need of

vocabulary enhancement. It's my every year start up amongst my new entrants, to give them tasks for vocabulary enhancements. But traditional way of teaching and learning make 'jack a dull boy'. So my paper is based on new and innovative ways to enhance vocabulary with a special focus on "eVoc". An eVoc strategy is an electronic or technology-based strategy that teachers can use to develop students' vocabulary learning and interest in words. We can use the term eVoc both to highlight that the strategies rely on digital tools and resources and to suggest the evoking of learning potential that is possible when technology and media are part of the instructional mix.

### **Vocabulary Development:**

Vocabulary development is a process in which a person or a student is asked to increase his knowledge of number of words which he uses for speaking and writing. People use Dictionary, Google, and Internet to improve vocabulary and for search of words but literal development need careful study, learning and formation of words. Vocabulary needs careful

learning not only of the words, but its spelling, meaning and correct use in correct context. An Important part of learning SL is becoming acquainted with the particular vocabulary of target language. In the early phase, the learner begins to build and collect store of words in the target language. This phase is innovative and easy because the students learn each word as a new word. But the secondary stage is little challenging as the student search for simultaneous words, suggestion in that phase. In this phase, increasing vocabulary gives lots of benefits as he become familiar with many new words. Our vocabulary has four variants actually; reading, writing, listening and speaking. A person's knowledge of words has two faces; Active and Passive. Active is what he speaks whereas Passive what he listens. Both faces need perfection in the understanding of vocabulary. Similarly, as a teacher I can say, a good vocabulary is an indispensable tool when we talk about written assignments. There are some words which we use while speaking but they sound bad while writing. Those words do not give the reader a good sense of

meaning. Use of proper verb gives a good impression.

### Case Study:

In order to assess how English language classroom students can take benefits of technology to learn English as a second language and how important vocabulary is, a questionnaire form has been used for this purpose which form was given to arbitrary samples of students at the department of English, DAK Degree College, Moradabad. The collected results show the following:

50% of the students use technology in their daily life.

98% of the students believe that the computer can improve their English vocabulary.

90% of the students believe that using computer in the classroom increases students' interaction with learning.

70% of the students assure that their teachers sometimes encourage them to use technology for learning English language.

92% of the students believe that using computer will help them to develop their writing skills.

33% of the students assure that their college has a good computer lab for learning English language.

83% of the students believe that the use of computer will improve their listening skills.

76% of the students prefer using technology to learn English language.

93% of the students believe that using technology will help them to learn English language faster than other ways.

90% of the students believe that using technology can help them to improve their speaking skills.

### Some Tips for Vocabulary Enhancement:

There are more than 250,000 words in the Oxford English dictionary. This number does not include slang or technical words. However, a good English speaker would normally use only 15,000 to 20,000 of these words. If we want our students to improve their vocabulary, they must follow some underlying tips:

1. **Make reading the newspaper a daily habit:** Students may be comfortable reading a particular section but they should make an effort to read different articles on every page. The editorial page is highly recommended not only

- for vocabulary but also for writing.
- 2. Make a habit to read a new book every month:** It is true that who read a lot develop a good vocabulary. Students should become a member of the local library. Read different books and Make a list of words that are new and look up their meanings in the dictionary.
  - 3. Watching English movies and television shows is important for improving English and learning new English words:** The best part about watching English movies and shows is that, students can learn the correct pronunciation as well.
  - 4. Use of vocabulary cards:** Vocabulary cards are used by students who are trying to learn many words in a short period of time. It is a convenient tool to learn new words in free time.
  - 5. Use of internet:** The internet is an unlimited resource for reading material. Students should pick up a topic of their choice and search for articles about it. It will also introduce new words. Be sure to look them up in a dictionary.
  - 6. Use the new words:** The best way to ensure that you never forget the new words you learn is to start using them in your day to day conversation. Do not try to force them into a conversation but do use them if you think they are appropriate.
  - 7. Learn pronunciation each time:** Most dictionaries provide us with pronunciations of words using phonetic symbols. It is important to learn the sounds that correspond to these phonetic symbols, in order to become comfortable pronouncing new words.
  - 8. Learning in groups is always rewarding:** If students have friends who also want to improve their vocabulary, then they can form a group and share new words with each other. They can meet at regular intervals and measure progress.
  - 9. Learn the root words first:** Root words are words which words grow with the addition of prefixes and suffixes. For

example: The word vocabulary is derived from the Latin root word 'voc', which means 'word' or 'name'...

#### 10. **Keep revising new words:**

While it is important to read and learn new words, it is equally important to revise what they have learnt. Fix a particular day of the week to revise all the words they have learnt in that week and add them to daily vocabulary.

One resource that teachers may explore to model and teach English words and phrases is the Web site, <http://freerice.com/>, which calls itself "the world's only vocabulary game that feeds the hungry." Teaching vocabulary is not just about words; it involves lexical phrases and knowledge of English vocabulary as literacy educators, we need to use the tools that 21<sup>st</sup>-century technologies demand.

### **Rule of Vocabulary**

#### **Enhancement:**

The beginning of vocabulary can be easily understood with simple rule of ABCD. This mnemonic of words is really easy to understand:-

**Words:** Words which describe Academic language content Area, I mean the words which tell glossary and genre. They are must to know words and difficult to learn initially.

**B words:** Basic words they are, which are the base of any language. Students read learn and understand them easily.

**C words:** They are connectors. They come in overlap of B words and connect them with main area.

**D words:** They are difficult words – difficult in pronunciation and spelling. They have more than one usage and meaning. Students need to focus on them once they learn Basics. As a teacher, we must encourage with innovative practices to our students for learning these words.

There is one uncommon group of words which can be categorized as X words mean extra words having some literal and figurative meaning.

### **eVoc and Vocabulary Learning**

An eVoc strategy is an electronic or technology-based strategy that teachers can use to develop students' vocabulary learning and interest in words. We use the term eVoc both to highlight that the strategies rely on digital tools and resources and to suggest the evoking of learning

potential that is possible when technology and media are part of the instructional mix.

The purpose of this article is to highlight eVoc strategies that hold promise for improving vocabulary learning in intermediate grades and that employ digital tools and resources that are readily available and feasible to implement in modern institutes. Given the fast pace of technology innovation, not all of these eVoc strategies have direct research evidence; however, they are all supported by research on effective vocabulary instruction, much of it carried out with print materials (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000; Pearson, Hiebert, & Kamil, 2007), and multimedia learning (Fadel & Lemke, 2008; Mayer, 2001).

Teachers should select one or more of these eVoc strategies to try out and adapt to their particular students, curriculum, and teaching context. We hope that they share their successes and limitations with their colleagues and with the broader literacy community on the Internet. For English learners (ELs), academic language may represent the task of

learning a third language. Thus, special care must be taken to give them every advantage in learning academic language, particularly in content areas. For example, research suggests that Spanish-speaking students can be taught to recognize cognates (i.e., words with similar meanings that look and sound alike in two languages, such as operation [English] and operation [Spanish]) and use cognate information to comprehend English texts (Lubliner & Grisham, in press; Proctor, Dalton, & Grisham, 2007).

We know that there is a wide range in students' word knowledge and that as early as age 5, there is a 30-million-word exposure gap between "haves" and "have nots" (Hart & Risley, 1995). The results of this gap are manifested in students' literacy learning, particularly reading comprehension. The discussed recommendations to improve vocabulary by encouraging wide reading, teaching words and word learning strategies, and promoting active learning and interest in words are not new. The purpose of this article is to encourage teachers to apply these research-based

recommendations in new ways, using digital tools, media, and the Internet—that is, to deploy technology in service of vocabulary learning.

#### **Learn from visual displays of word**

Wordle is a free Web application that allows teachers to create a word cloud based on the frequency of words in a particular text. It can be used to stimulate students' thinking about the meaning, importance, and relationship of words as they analyse, create, and publish Wordles. To create a word cloud, paste text into the applet and then manipulate the visual display by selecting the colour scheme, layout, and font. Word clouds can be used to highlight keywords and themes to prepare students for reading, as well as prompt discussion after reading.

WordSift is another free word cloud tool available on the Internet. Like Wordle, a word cloud is created based on text that is cut and pasted into the application. Although WordSift does not support artistic design of the display, it offers important learning supports. Each word can be clicked on to show a collection of related images, a word map, and a listing of sentences from the text that present the word in different contexts. WordSift also sorts

words by difficulty and identifies academic words. Note that both Wordle and WordSift support several different languages, a feature particularly helpful to ELs (Adesope, Lavin, Thompson, & Ungerleider, 2010).

#### **Take a digital vocabulary field trip**

Teachers can create a digital version of a vocabulary field trip using a free online program called TrackStar ([trackstar.4teachers.org](http://trackstar.4teachers.org)). Like the popular WebQuest (Dodge, 1995), TrackStar allows you to collect a series of websites and annotate them so that students follow the online journey.

#### **Connect fun and learning with online vocabulary games:**

We recommend two sites that offer a variety of activities to engage students in playing with words and word meanings: Vocabulary Games and Vocabulary. Games include crossword puzzles, picture-word matches, word scrambles, and 8 Letters in Search of a Word (a game that can draw you in unexpectedly as you race to create as many words as possible from eight letters within the time limit). The games are supplemented with themed



word lists, test preparation items, and activities on prefixes and suffixes.

**Have students use media to express vocabulary knowledge:** Teachers can set tasks and targets for students to act as a journalist and use their language.

**Take advantage of online word reference tools that are also teaching tools:**

Many online word reference tools are also excellent teaching resources. For example, the Visual Thesaurus website complements its fee-based content with free information such as the Behind the Dictionary and Teachers at Work columns and teacher-created themed word lists.

**Conclusion:**

A teacher should always be innovative when we talk about teaching practices. While teaching about vocabulary a teacher should always keep in mind that words should be taught along with their meaning and usage. In my opinion not only language teacher but every teacher is a vocabulary teacher no matter what subject they teach. We have to keep a large number of words in our mind along with their meaning and usage. We use spoken and written words in our daily routine and work

place. We need many words to express our ideas, emotions, feelings and events that happen in our Background. Therefore we always are in a crisis of words and we should always try to grab as much as possible. The best way to grab a good vocabulary is to read with patience. Word to language is like currency to us as we need different breakups of our currency similarly we need lots of words with different meaning and different denominations.

**References:-**

1. Dalton, B. and Grisham, D.L. (2011), eVoc Strategies: 10 Ways to Use Technology to Build Vocabulary. *The Reading Teacher*, 64: 306–317. doi: 10.1598/RT.64.5.1
2. TrackStar ([trackstar.4teachers.org](http://trackstar.4teachers.org)).
3. **Brown, H. Douglas (2000)** Principles of language learning and teaching. Fourth edition, Addison Wesley Longman. Inc.
4. **Folse, Keith S. (2004)**. Myths about Teaching and Learning Second Language Vocabulary, What Recent Research Says, *TESL Reporter* 37(2) 1-13.
5. **Folse, Keith S. (2004)**. Vocabulary Myths: Applying second language research to classroom teaching. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor.

6. **Meare, Paul (2002)**. The rediscovery of vocabulary. *Second Language Research* 18(4), 393-407.
7. **Nation, Paul (1994)**, *New Ways in Teaching Vocabulary*. TESOL.
8. **Nation, Paul (1990)**. *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*. Newbury House. New York.
9. **Nissila, Leena (2011)**. Viron kielen vaikutus suomen kielen verbien ja niiden rektioiden oppimiseen. *Act Univ. Out., Oulu.*, 70-79.
10. **Sanchez, Aquilino & Manchon, Rosa M. (2007)**. Research on Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition and Learning: An Introduction. *International Journal Of English Studies* 7(2), vii-xvi.