

A GUIDE ON HOW TO IMPROVE VOCABULARY SKILLS

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Annotation: This paper explores the problems and tips on how to improve vocabulary skills in any language. Emphasis is placed on different methods of learning words that are both helpful and easy to comprehend. Additionally, it provides recommendations on specific materials aimed at training and learning new vocabulary.

Key words: *Crucial, Sufficient vocabulary, Basis, Wide range, Understanding.*

It has been studied that vocabulary plays a crucial role in each and every language. It can also be defined as a basis of all language. A wide range of vocabulary can be beneficial in terms of expressing and stating an opinion more precisely and concisely. Without sufficient vocabulary, it might be challenging to speak, write and read in order to grasp the following concept. However, while this section can be a double-edged sword which means that a good vocabulary would help to express ideas more accurately, the excess of complex words can make you sound unnatural.

Success in this section requires from the learner an understanding of meaning, use, motivation and curiosity.

Difficulties with which a learner can struggle in vocabulary learning:

- Absence of language environment.**



Language environment is everything that surrounds a learner while he is learning a foreign language: what he sees, listens to, reads, observes, writes. Such conditions help a person to explore the subject fully and get used to it.

2. Pronunciation.

Pronunciation is an essential part of language learning since it directly affects a person's speech and the possibility of being understood properly and conveying a message. Without it even a rich vocabulary will not help achieve effective communication. Later you will see the importance of transcription.

3. Polysemy and similar words.

In every language some words can be written and pronounced similarly, but they have different meanings according to the context. Moreover, there are some words which might seem to tell a person what it means and it is not always right. For example, **magazine – a journal**, but a person whose native language is Russian can misunderstand it and think that it is a shop, but not a journal. It happens because magazine [магазин] in Russian means **a shop**.

4. Different forms of words.

In many languages, especially in English, there are “**word families**” which can include one word, but in different forms.

For example:

Noun: sadness

Adjective: sad

Adverb: sadly

Such changes in words also have particular rules and words can alter only according to those rules, otherwise there would be a mistake in spelling and pronunciation.

5. Problems with translation and thinking.

Every language is unique and has some special words and collocations which are fixed only in a certain language and cannot be translated directly. Such a feature can make the process of learning words more challenging and sophisticated.



How to overcome such difficulties: tips and advice.

1. Grouping words.

Grouping words that are similar in meaning and topic can provide associations either to the words or the topic. Such an approach can ease the process of learning words and understanding both the context and concept.

For example:

Topic: houses

Words: bungalow, detached house, semi-detached house, studio apartment, terraced house.

or

Meaning: happiness

Words: happy, joyful, glad, delighted, cheerful.

2. Making examples.

As mentioned above, learners can struggle with the context of words and making examples will be advantageous in this case because it triggers thinking and forces the brain to remember the word. Moreover, with this strategy a learner will understand when and where the use of the word will be appropriate.

For example:

The word which needs to be learnt: consequence.

Example: The managers of our company should think ahead since the consequences can be catastrophic.

Here the word “consequences” means *results, outcomes, aftermaths*.

3. Master specific sounds.

In English, for example, there are dozens of sounds which can be challenging for non-native speakers. In order to be fully understood and feel confident when a learner is speaking or writing, he should grasp the concept of special sounds.

For example: the *schwa* sound.

This sound is considered one of the most challenging for learners to understand because it consists of two actual sounds that are combined: (ə) = [a] and [e], like [æ].



4. Understand the transcription.


Many dictionaries, especially e-ones, provide transcriptions with words, and a learner can even hear them. Knowing how transcription is read which sound each symbol ([ʃ],[ð],[ŋ]) represents can be beneficial in terms of pronunciation.

Here is an example from the Cambridge Dictionary:

skyscraper

noun [C]

UK  /'skaɪ,skreɪ.pə/ US  /'skaɪ,skreɪ.pə/

Add to word list 



a very tall modern building, usually in a city

Advice: if the word is difficult to repeat from the first time, then dividing it into syllables and trying to pronounce them separately can increase the chances of success.

Conclusion: The key features of gaining a good and sufficient vocabulary consist of tips which can be done easily but have great results. Some of them, for example, transcription and mastering special sounds may require additional attention from the learner.

Experiment: the influence on the outcome in terms of enhancing vocabulary using the tips.

Objective: Evaluate how strategies on learning foreign words can improve the result.

Method: Fourteen students participated in online poll (created via Google Forms)

The questions were related to use of the tips which were demonstrated in this paper.



The answers were divided on three categories:

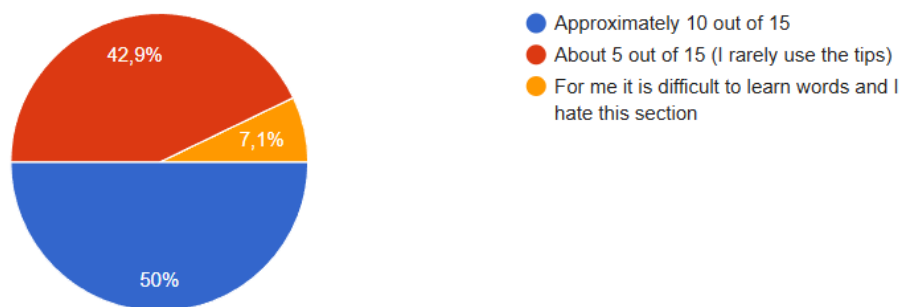
Blue – the participant uses the tips and they are helpful.

Yellow – the participant rarely uses the tips, but he has his own methods.

Red – the participant does not use the tips at all.

*The last question was related to the number of words per day the participant can learn.

Results:



The list of used literature

1. **Vocabulary for IELTS by Pauline Cullen.**
2. **Word Power Made Easy by Norman Levis.**
3. **Solution Intermediate 3rd edition by Tim Falla and Paul A Davies.**
4. **Complete IELTS 6.5-7.5 by Brook-Hurt Guy and Jakeman Vanessa.**
5. **Website: <https://textinspector.com/vocabulary-in-language-learning/>**

