

TEACHING MEDICINE VOCABULARY THROUGH TPR METHOD FOR ESP LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

Teaching specialized vocabulary in the context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a crucial aspect of university-level English language instruction. The aim of ESP courses is to equip university students with the skills needed to communicate effectively in their future workplaces and during clinical practice abroad. The first section of this paper offers a theoretical foundation for a range of exercises focused on teaching Medical English. In the second section, the authors share examples of activities they designed and implemented in their ESP classes. These exercises are effective in aiding students' acquisition and long-term retention of scientific vocabulary pertinent to their fields of study.

KEYWORDS

English for Specific Purposes (ESP), The Total Physical Response (TPR), medical textbooks, grammar and vocabulary, teaching Medical English, patients, communicate medical terminology.

INTRODUCTION

In the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), particularly within medical education, vocabulary acquisition plays a fundamental role in ensuring effective professional communication. Medical students are required not only to recognize and understand specialized terminology but also to apply it accurately in both spoken and written contexts. The nature of medical discourse demands the ability to shift between registers, depending on whether communication is directed toward patients or fellow healthcare professionals. As vocabulary knowledge is widely regarded as a critical component of second language competence, its development is often prioritized in ESP curricula. Saville-Troike emphasizes this by stating that “vocabulary knowledge is the single most important area of second language competence” in relation to academic success. Consequently, effective vocabulary instruction within ESP programs must address semantic relationships, grammatical functions, and contextual appropriateness of terms to fully equip learners for real-world usage. This paper explores the centrality of vocabulary development in medical ESP courses and the pedagogical strategies that support it.

METHOD

Vocabulary is defined as the total number of words in a language and is an important part of mastering English. There are two types of vocabulary: active vocabulary which students can use constructively, and passive vocabulary which students understand but don't use. Teaching medical vocabulary entails educating learners typically medical students, healthcare professionals, or those studying English for Specific Purposes about the specialized terms utilized in the medical field. This encompasses terminology associated with anatomy, illnesses, treatments, procedures, and medical devices. The objective is to enable learners to comprehend, utilize, and effectively communicate medical terminology in professional environments like hospitals, clinics, or research facilities.

The Total Physical Response (TPR) method is recognized as an effective approach for enhancing students' vocabulary acquisition. However, to maximize its

effectiveness, it is important to focus on teaching both the pronunciation and the written forms of words, as well as considering the individual learning speeds of students. A limitation noted in qualitative research is that the TPR method can be challenging to implement in large classrooms. Additionally, it was found that class size and student proficiency levels were linked to success in both categorical moderator analysis and meta-regression. Furthermore, the length of time spent on the experimental procedure (in weeks) was identified as a significant predictor of the effect size related to success. Upon reviewing the primary experimental studies, it was noted that the application duration of the TPR method varied from 1 to several weeks.

RESEARCH

The acquisition of vocabulary is a rather complex and lengthy process, and as such, it has earned immense research priority in second or foreign language acquisition. An entire division of second language acquisition is dedicated to learning strategies and taxonomies in ESL/EFL to enable students to recognize and take advantage of a variety of options for vocabulary acquisition. Students are diverse, and their needs are diverse. In the field of medicine, many professionals are internationally trained, and to express ideas clearly in English, they need to be proficient in language. Thus, they need appropriate ESP jargon and vocabulary. To serve these diverse needs of students to the fullest, teachers need to be equipped with the latest methods of teaching vocabulary acquisition. The present study aims to present the already established learning strategies for vocabulary acquisition from specialized English books related to Medical English and explore what medical books offer in terms of vocabulary acquisition, and present students' opinions regarding vocabulary acquisition and learning strategies. Finally, to propose and give some new insight and ideas to scholars for curriculum development of English for medicine. Based on data collection, students' questionnaires, the results showed that the ESP textbooks for medicine should be interactive and precise and not overwhelm students with general notions and ideas. As a crucial tool of instruction and curriculum design, needs analysis should be performed

to give instructors and administrators an exact idea of what students want and need to succeed in their future professions. Computer-assisted vocabulary acquisition is a very likeable element of ESP medical textbooks. Thus, it should be a dominant part of ESP materials for medicine and other ESP fields. Medical English vocabulary teaching has problems, such as being too theoretical and unable to combine specific clinical knowledge because of inadequate course/curriculum. It was revealed that limited professional medical textbooks are provided for medical English learners and the English courses offered are unrelated to the students' academic needs. The teaching arrangement is unreasonable, and medical students have little chance to learn medical English before entering university. It is found that medical English vocabulary teaching applied practically the same method as general English, which is absolutely unsuitable because medical English cannot be taught using the same method as general English. Hence, the medical English curriculum needs to be improved to better meet learners' needs. It urgently needs to perfect medical English vocabulary course/curriculum comprehensively in all-round perspectives, such as course design, text materials, teaching time, teaching methods.

DISCUSSION

Therefore, they need appropriate medical English terms. In order to fully meet these diverse needs of students, instructors need to have the latest methods of teaching vocabulary. It is known that keeping pace in medical English teaching with the times is the top priority to improve teaching quality. In today's society, learning foreign languages has become essential for effective intercultural communication and interaction. As a result, various teaching methods and techniques for foreign languages have been developed. Throughout history, different approaches have been employed in language instruction. Traditional methods primarily emphasize the language's structural aspects and focus on teaching grammar rules, with the Grammar-Translation Method being the most commonly used. This approach often prioritizes memorization. However, in contemporary education, where communication is paramount, there is a

shift towards practical language use in real-life situations, promoting speaking skills both inside and outside the classroom. Consequently, multiple methods are utilized, leading to an eclectic approach that fosters authentic learning environments. The key is to actively learn the language in the most effective manner. Vocabulary plays a crucial role in language acquisition, as active engagement with words and their meanings is essential for effective communication. A sufficient vocabulary is necessary to express oneself in a language, making it vital to acquire enough words for understanding and usage. Wilkins highlighted the significance of vocabulary with the statement: "Little can be achieved without grammar, but nothing can be achieved without words". In summary, vocabulary learning is a fundamental aspect of language education. Additionally, Larsen-Freeman noted that "grammar" and "vocabulary" are core language skills, alongside "speaking," "listening," "reading," and "writing." In this regard, the Total Physical Response Method, which incorporates voice, words, commands, and body language, emphasizes students listening to and responding to the teacher's instructions. Richards and Rogers describe the Total Physical Response Method (TPR) as a language teaching approach that combines speech with physical actions, aiming to teach language through motor activities.

CONCLUSION

Teaching medical vocabulary to ESP learners through the Total Physical Response (TPR) method proves to be an effective and engaging approach. By integrating physical movement with language input, TPR helps learners retain complex medical terms more easily and enhances their comprehension in real-life medical contexts. This method supports active participation, reduces learner anxiety, and fosters long-term memory retention. As a result, TPR not only improves vocabulary acquisition but also contributes to building learners' confidence and communicative competence in medical settings. Therefore, incorporating TPR in ESP classrooms, especially for medical English, can significantly boost the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction.

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