

TEACHING VOCABULARY AT PRE-INTERMEDIATE LEVEL IN LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL

“Learning is not about proving what they already know, but about asking questions to change what they don’t know into what they do know” (Willis 2008:87). This statement shows what school is all about. If children and teenagers already knew everything there would be no point in them going to school every day. Learning a second language, in this case English, is important not just in order to get a good grade but also when it comes to learning for life. Being able to communicate in English both in written and spoken form has many advantages. When communicating, some might say that a rich vocabulary is needed but it is possible to make yourself understood with a limited vocabulary by using body language or by trying to explain with the help of paraphrasing. However, in certain situations and within certain topics, a rich vocabulary is needed in order to take part in the conversation. Therefore, learning vocabulary can be highly important.

In this paper we investigated three different areas within vocabulary in second language learning. Firstly, it was studied what words learners should learn. A conclusion has been drawn from the survey that the focus should be on high-frequency words since these words occur frequently in different contexts. However, low-frequency words should not be forgotten as they are still a part of the L2. In addition, it is important that pupils feel they learn useful words. Otherwise, their motivation might decrease as they see no use in the words they learn. Pupils should be able to select what words to learn since this increases their motivation. Finally, it might be a good strategy to choose words after pupils’ interests or future careers as the pupils feel they learn useful words.

In addition, we investigated what techniques and strategies pupils use when they learn new vocabulary. It is important to recognize that no strategy is better than another. Pupils are all different and therefore they also use different strategies. The

focus should be on acquiring the knowledge necessary. I believe it is important that pupils acquire knowledge of different learning strategies and it should be the teacher's responsibility to make sure the pupils have this knowledge. Therefore, teachers should introduce different strategies. It should not be an excuse that the pupils are in upper secondary school and therefore they should already have this knowledge. Since these pupils come from different schools it is highly important to make sure that they study on equal terms.

As a final goal for this study, an investigation was conducted to find out how teachers teach vocabulary. The number of words can be significant regarding what kind of words are chosen. If the words are difficult for instance when it comes to their grammar or spelling, a lesser amount of words per occasion might be in favor. Then the pupils can concentrate on those words which bring difficulties. Integrating teaching different learning strategies when introducing new words makes the teaching more effective as two important elements are treated at the same time. Teachers can also add words similar to the word found in, for example, a text to help the pupils enrich their vocabulary. Other strategies teachers can use are to give examples or synonyms to show how the word can be used; present similarities with other words in the target language or even words in the mother tongue. A final strategy could be to present the word in different contexts. The pupils will get a more profound understanding of how to use the word which clearly is positive. Finally, repetition is highly important when trying to learn vocabulary. Repeating the word over and over again helps the word stick in your memory. One way of repeating words could be through spaced repetition. If the words are treated during a longer period of time they most likely will be remembered for a longer time. However, the number of repetitions does not have to increase; they only take place further apart. If further studies were to be conducted within this subject, in-depth interviews could be carried out with a few pupils, which would result in a deeper analysis of how they approach and work with vocabulary. Finally, it could also be interesting to study how the memory functions when working with vocabulary. A study could be carried out with a number of pupils to test if spaced repetition is the best strategy when it comes to and learning