TEACHING VOCABULARY COMMUNICATIVELY

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Successful students in learning English will depend on what ways or how English teachers organize the teaching and learning process. The result of the students’ success can be seen from the students’ ability to use English in their communication. It means that the students are able to master the four skills of language: listening, speaking, reading and writing, and of course, this ability must be related to the level of the students.

The teaching and learning process is also supported by the ways of English teachers to manage the process. In this case, the English teachers should be considered the atmosphere of the teaching and learning process which can describe the communication activity. Now a day, our government actively applies the system of teaching English communicatively. The policy of our government can be found in the curriculum which emphasizes on communicative competence. According to Savignon (1983) in Murcia 2001: 17. communicative competence consist of grammatical compe-

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tence, discourse competence, sociocultural competence and strategic competence. Then he added that the basic principle involved is an orientation in a process of use and discovery achieved by cooperation between individual learners as well as between learners and teachers. It means that good communication between learners and teachers should be built up.

Regarding of this matter, the competence of vocabulary mastery is a requirement to communicate well. Facts show that students have learned English for many years but they can not use English in their daily activities. The problems could be caused by the teaching and learning process in the classroom or from the students themselves like the readiness to practice to use the vocabulary they have learned in their activity. The main problems in teaching learning process is concerning what strategies the English teachers use and how the material of vocabulary to be selected.

Teaching vocabulary communicatively is a way of teaching which focus on communicative competence, the students become the center of teaching learning process. In this matter, the English teachers have a major influence on determining what vocabulary could be learned from such tasks, how well it be learned and what strategies to be used. The teacher role, in this case, is one way to encourage the students to learn vocabulary well. A strong motivation is a must to support the students to be success. The students motivation could be seen from their activities to follow their English teachers’ instruction in teaching and learning process, for example, they always practice and do their tasks with a deep enthusiasm.

This paper focus on discussing the strategies could be used to teach vocabulary communicatively. This aspect should be considered as a main point in teaching and learning process by the English teachers because strategies can be assumed to help the teachers facilitate the students to be able to use the vocabulary in appropriate place. Another points that the English teachers should pay attention in teaching vocabulary, is how to select the material in order to be useful for the students (authentic material).

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The main point should be considered in teaching and learning process is the appropriate the material to the students and
the interaction happened in the classroom. The interaction could be teacher to students, students to students, students to teacher and students to their environment. In this case, the writer wants to describe the process of teaching vocabulary occurred in the classroom.

According to Wilkins (1978: 145) “the process of teaching by taking the description and ordering the elements in it according to criteria of simplicity, frequency, difficulty, methodological convenience and pedagogic effectiveness”. Wilkins focused on the teacher as a designer in teaching and learning process without considering the role of environment. Then, Duffy (1972:19), the teacher’s prime responsibility is to act as a connector between children and learning by knowing what to teach and by controlling the conditions that lead the child to make the appropriate response. In the first case, the teachers know what response the learners want to make, and in the second case, the teachers control the conditions that lead the child’s successful accomplishment of response. Wilkins and Duffy emphasize on the teachers’ interference to the students activity. But Dwyer (1982:133) states that “teacher’s task, then is not to teach skills but to transfer skills.” In this case, Dwyer wants to express that the students need to be independent in learning based on the teacher’s instruction. It can be concluded
that not only the English teachers teach the students vocabulary material but also transferring the skills to the students in order that they are able to be independent learning. It means that the students are able to use the words they have known in their daily communication without any help from others.

THE TECHNIQUES OF TEACHING VOCABULARY

Gaims and Redman (1986) Moras (2001) in Zainil (2006:1) state that the need to be taken into account when teaching Vocabulary:

a. Boundaries between conceptual meaning: knowing not only what lexis refers to, but also where the boundaries are that separate it from words of related meaning. Example: cup, mug, bowl

b. Polysemy: distinguishing between the various meaning of single word form with several but closely related meaning. Example: head: of a person, of a pin, of an organization).

c. Homonymy: distinguishing between the various meaning of a single word from which has several meanings which are not closely related. Example: a file: used to put papers in or a tool

d. Homophyny: understanding words that have the same pronunciation but different spellings and meanings. Example: flour, flower

e. Affective meaning: distinguishing between the attitudinal and emotional factors (connotation and denotation), which depend on the speakers attitude or the situation. Sociocultural associations of lexical items is another important factor

f. Synonymy: distinguishing between the different shades of meaning that synonymous words have. Example: extend, increase, expand.

g. Style, register, dialect: being able to distinguish between different levels of formality, the effect of different contexts and topics, as well as differences in geographical variation

h. Translation: awareness of certain differences and similarities between the native and the foreign language. For example: false cognates
i. Chunks of language: multi-word verbs, idioms, strong and weak collocations, lexical phrases

j. Grammar of vocabulary: learning the rules that enable students to build up different forms of the word or even different words from that word. Example: sleep, slept, sleeping; unable; disability

k. Pronunciation: ability to recognize and reproduce items in speech.

Then, Nation (1983) in Zhihong (2000:81) gives a good model how to guess unknown words:

a. Look at the unknown word and decide its part of speech: is it a noun, a verb, an adjective, or an adverb?

b. Look at the clause or sentence containing the unknown word. If the unknown word is a noun, what does this noun do, or what is done to it? and what adjectives describe it, what verb is it near? if it is a verb, what nouns does it go with? Is it modified by an adverb? if it is an adjective, what noun does it go with? if it is an adverb, what verb is it modifying?

c. Look at the relationship between the clause or sentence containing the unknown word and other sentences or paragraphs. Sometimes this relationship will be signaled by conjunctions like but, because, if, when, or by adverbs like however, as a result. The possible types of relationship include cause and effect, contrast, time, exemplification, and summary

d. Use the knowledge you have gained from step 1 to 3 to guess the meaning of the word

e. Check if your guess is correct:

1) See that the part of speech of your guess is the same as the part of speech the unknown word. If it is not the same, then something is wrong with your guess

2) Replace the unknown word with your guess. If the sentence makes sense, your guess is probably correct

3) Break the unknown word into its prefix, root, and suffix, if possible. If the meanings of the prefix and the root correspond to your guess, it is good. If not, look at your guess again, but do not change anything if you feel reasonably certain about your guess.
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According to Decarrico in Murcia (2001:288) emphasizes that it is important that new vocabulary items be presented in context rich enough to provide clues to meaning and that students be given multiple exposure to items they should learn.

Besides that, Nation in Zainil 2006:271, guessing from context focuses on the particular reference of a word as determined by the context rather than its underlying meaning. There are various effects of guessing from the context, the main effect should be to raise learners’ confidence in guessing from context, to make them sensitive to the range of clues available, and to help them avoid strategies—such as focusing too quickly on the form of the world—that will reduce their chances of guessing accurately.

Another technique suggested by Fox (2002:11), offered the way to master the vocabulary, using Mapping. Mapping is a process of reorganizing and rearrange (moving) the most important ideas and information from your reading or textbook and converting it into a diagram with your own words to help you understand and remember what you read. Then, Fox added that there is type of map to be used, namely:

1. Use charts or matrixes to compare and contrast qualities, examples, description, and facts
2. Use stars or spiders to show themes, examples, descriptions, and definitions
3. Use trees or hierarchies to show categories, classifications, analysis, structures, descriptions and example
4. Use chains to show processes, sequences, causes, and effects, chronological order, and steps
5. Use flowcharts/venn diagrams to show relationships between diagrams, points of overlap, and points of distinction
6. Use sketches to show physical structures, visual imagines, concrete objects, spatial relationships, and descriptions of places

PROBLEMS & DISCUSSION

There are main problems could be found in teaching vocabulary:
a. The material of vocabulary which prepared by the English teachers do not fulfill the students need (real life or authentic material)
b. Many English teachers teach vocabulary monotonously, so the students are not interested in learning English and the result they are bored
c. To understand the meaning of the unknown words, the English teachers translate the words directly or ask the students to look up in the students’ dictionaries. In this case the students are not active to develop their knowledge
d. The English teachers teach the vocabulary words in abstract form. Consequently the students can not organize the words in their mind.

To overcome the problems above, the writer wants to discuss the strategies as mentioned previously as a standard of teaching vocabulary communicatively

1. **How the material to be selected**
   a. The English teachers find the vocabulary which are relevant with the students’ experiences or authentic material
   b. The English teachers find the vocabulary which have the most frequent in the students need

2. **How to teach the vocabulary**
   a. The English teachers ask the students to find the part of speech of the unknown words whether the word is adjective, noun, verb, or adverb, then guess the meaning
   b. The English teachers ask the students to find the boundaries from related meaning, ex: Cup, mug, bowl
   c. The English teachers ask the students to find the various of a single word form with several but closely related meaning, ex: head: of a person, of a pin, of an organization
   d. The English teacher ask the students to find the various meaning of a single word from which are not closely related, ex: a file: used to put of papers in or a tool
   e. The English teachers ask the students to find the similar meaning (synonym words), ex, extend, increase, expand
f. The English teachers say the word, write it on the board, asking the students to say it and write it and defining the term with pictures, demonstrations and examples familiar to students

g. The English teachers focus on appropriately 4 – 7 words core vocabulary per lesson

h. Use mapping to process of reorganizing and rearrange the most important ideas and information from the material (reading)

i. Use the prefixes and suffixes of a word, ex. Unpleasant, treatable

j. Encourage the students to experiment with writing different kinds of word information

k. Provide the opportunities for the students to speak frequently

CONCLUSION

The English teachers sometimes complain that their students are not interested in learning English vocabulary. Some of the reasons might be the lack of motivation from students or might be the unavailable of facilities, including English books. However, the English teachers never make introspection for themselves in teaching vocabulary. A wise teacher should ask himself, what have I done for my students to teach vocabulary? or it might be only to blame the students who are not able to study English well, in this case without considering the students’ ability.

In teaching vocabulary, the English teachers should consider the selection of the material of vocabulary words. The material should be interest and fulfill the students’ need. If the material does not fulfill the students’ need, the students will be bored and will not study well. Another aspect that should be considered by the English teachers, namely, the strategies. The strategies which used by the teachers should encourage the students’ activity. The English teacher not to teach the skills but the English teachers transfer the skills for the students

Teaching vocabulary in context is a good strategy because it can arouse the students attention to study well, but however it needs a good preparation from the English teacher. The students
should be trained and guided them to apply in their own learning. Consequently, the students are independent in learning vocabulary.

REFERENCE


