

Vocabulary Enhancement: Towards Precision in Expression

Dr (Mrs.) J.M.Moholkar

Abstract: Vocabulary is the range of words that are to the credit of an individual. Every age group has its own range of vocabulary. This range widens with age, knowledge and learning. Some words acquire significance, some lose their importance, some become obsolete in the course of time. Efforts should be taken to widen the range of vocabulary.

Key words: Correct, clear, consistent, concrete, concise

Date of Submission: 01-01-2022

Date of Acceptance: 12-01-2022

Vocabulary is the first thing to think about in the languages learning process. In language, as in human activities, a man's reach exceeds his grasps. Thus a pupil's or a learner's comprehensive knowledge of English, his passive vocabulary, both as words and in usages exceeds his power to express himself in the language. Passive vocabulary of an individual, words stored in his memory, words with which he is familiar or which he partially understands but which he does not require in his daily or regularly communication. Thus it is clear that when a learner starts familiarizing himself with new words, it is wisdom on his part if he starts thinking of the right occasions to use them and then keep regularly using so that the vocabulary which was initially passive for him, now starts becoming active.

Vocabulary- derived from the Latin, Medieval vocabularies, means words used in a language, list of words that are to the credit of an individual. Thus, in short, vocabulary means a range of words, the longer the list of active vocabulary, the better the chances of acquiring fluency. After all, even when a learner has learnt and mastered the general rules of subject, verb-agreement, he has to have a good range of vocabulary to be able to speak, express himself. How pathetic it is for an aspirant to let go all the occasions to speak because of shortage of words, just because he doesn't have a good stock of words. Such a person becomes embarrassed. The widening of vocabulary stock leads to the natural widening of social circle. Learners of any language are first introduced to alphabets. Vowels and Consonants are differentiated, their function in a word is made known to the learner. In a word a particular alphabet could also be silent as in the word Psychology, P the consonant sound is silent. The process of word formation starts with a syllable. A syllable is formed as a CVC pattern. A consonant, a Vowel and a Consonant. In the word Word, there is W as a Consonant, O is the Vowel and R and D are Consonants. In a word there is a minimum one CVC, more than one if the word is long. Vowels and consonants are after all sounds. All words do not have a CVC pattern it is also VCV pattern like in the word Animal. Thus a session of familiarization of CVC, VCV pattern starts.

..The CVC is made known to them..with the help of examples of different words like Animal, Fish, Bird, Tree etc. If pictures are shown then it does the work of cement. They are then told about single and then multisyllabic words and then they proceed to inserting those words in the frame work of sentences. As K Bromley rightly says "word learning is a complicated process. It requires giving students, a variety of opportunities to connect new words to related meanings and use words actively in authentic ways and a variety of situations. The goal of vocabulary instruction should be to build structures, understand multiple meanings and use words actively in authentic ways.

There are many professions that require a lot of study of the power of expression before a good, well informed audience. that However, it is open secret that many such professional people who have a very poor stock of words to their credit, make a poor show in public and in spite of sound knowledge of their subject, their speech does not adequately and favorably reflect the true intellectual caliber. They suffer from poor or mediocre vocabulary or an acute shortage of active vocabulary. The problem with them is not that they do not know their subject but unfortunately, in spite of knowing it very well, give the impression to the world that they do not know because of insufficient words and accompanying this problem is the associated problem of not knowing where and how to use which words. This is because passive vocabulary was not really made active. The passive information remained hopelessly passive. At a very young age itself students should be encouraged to cultivate this as a hobby.

Vocabulary enrichment means adding to the existing stock of active words. It is a never ending process. Every day, some new words are to be learned. This process cannot happen by chance or accidentally. It is an exercise that must be done by an individual learner, voluntarily. It cannot be imposed on the learner by the teacher. The guidelines, and the advantages can be told but the actual immersion in the process is a self-imposed task, a good command over vocabulary and the awareness as to use it as and when an occasion demands it, has a lot many advantages.

1. It drives away the initial fear.
2. It helps to start conversation quickly, effortlessly.
3. It helps fight diffidence.
4. It takes away the stammering.
5. It encourages the user of the language to carry forward the conversation communication and look forward to many more such occasions.
6. What was allowed to go is now being seized. The opportunity which was a fearful and frightening matter is now being seized as a platform to shine.
7. The importance of vocabulary is very aptly illustrated by George Orwell in his 1984- the dystopian. In this novel, Orwell picturises a world ruled by an authoritarian government that controls every citizen, no one escapes being watched by video cameras but even more effective than the cameras is the official language newspeak.

Newspeak is rigidly controlled by the government and it's the only language whose vocabulary gets smaller and smaller every year, symbolic of the small mind of the higher authority. In newspeak, words distort the meaning of those words and thus removes those words from people's minds and people are not even aware of it. It thus becomes easy for the government to control such people now because without the strength of words they are truly powerless.

Thus vocabulary enrichment is an exercise in personality development. It helps impart precision to expression. Precision is the quality of being exact. In language usage, it is the diction or the right choice of words that scores in favor of the user's personality. It is very important to dot the L's and cross the T's for meticulous and planned appropriateness

There are 5 Cs associated with vocabulary enrichment which pave the way for precision: **correct, clear, consist, coherent and concrete vocabulary**, A Precise use of words saves time ,embarrassment and ensures voluntary hearing on part of the audience. A brief but necessary elaboration of the 5Cs or 5 C words will bring out the meaning. Speakers should ensure that their choice of words or their diction is **correct**. For the hearers who value accuracy preciously, use of any incorrect term may score against the personality of the user. **Clarity** helps in conveying the intended message, wherever lucid communication is involved, clarity is the first factor demanded- ambiguity is a discredit. Long-winded lectures, long explanations devoid of clarity are not only easily forgotten but are conveniently ignored. Excessive verbosity, wordiness, use of hyperbolic communication should be strictly avoided. Thus what is not wordy, not hyperbolic, not excessively verbose is positively and certainly **concise**, vocabulary need not be complex but it must certainly be intelligible.

Coherence is bonding. Irrelevant show of unconnected words makes a poor show. Messages or delivery of ideas with a coherence of language and vocabulary are not only happily intelligible but are, in fact, treats to the ears of the hearers .The audience looks forward to such a brilliant presentation. The audience need not be made to chase proverbial rabbits. They should, without being aware of it, pass logically from one idea to another .**Concrete** words or concrete vocabulary is picturesque vocabulary.

The right idea or the exact picture comes before the mind's eye with the use of concrete vocabulary. Words which endanger the meaning should be strictly avoided .Members of respective disciplines should adhere to the rule of five Cs in using their words or while using their own field related matter. A doctor should do the same, a lawyer cannot be different ,a professor or an engineer, an administrative officer---one and all should keep themselves busy in enhancing their own Vocabulary(specific field related) as well as the Vocabulary intelligible to the ordinary audience(lay man)

The most beautiful thing to be remembered about vocabulary is that the more it is enhanced, the more it gives precision and variety and at a minimum fixed expense. A onetime investment on some good dictionaries is far cheaper than thousands of bucks on crash courses on personality development programs through language skills.

Teachers of language can use different methodologies such as going from the familiar to the unfamiliar. That is, making a list of what students know already about a word and what they want to know about it, after the students have read about it, make a list of what they have learnt about the word.

Multiple meanings of words form one group .Euphemism and Transferred Epithets are such figures of speech which should be made known in the same breath to students. For example. Weary road, Fast asleep are examples of transferred epithet and euphemism respectively..Words with prefixes, words with suffixes attached form another. variety. Irresponsible ,Useless are such words, Hare Hair are Homophones which give another

variety. Thus learners develop fondness. Another technique is to make the students guess the words with meanings.

Eg:- Resolution can be written as

R_e_s_o_l_u_t_i_o_n -----Determination.

Thus by supplying the literal meanings learners should be asked to fill up the blanks and have a new word. Such exercises adhere to the memory of the learner.

As Karen Bromley suggests, "The use of the KWL -Strategy (Know, want to know and learned) is of great help in introducing a new word to learners. If the speaker is fumbling, searching for words, stammering making a poor show, it should be only attributed to acute shortage of words.

Abundance of the right words and the sensibility of knowing their usage- that is, when to use them where and how to use them imparts the much needed confidence. When fear goes away, fascination comes.

As Isabel Beck rightly says." Exciting and engaging vocabulary instruction can set students on the path to lifelong fascination with words."

It would be crude and immature in the present century to be using the traditional methods of mastering vocabulary. Vocabulary enrichment programs for achieving precision and grace cannot be done with a taskmaster making students mug up 50/60 words a day. If it is not meant for examination, then it must be willingly done. What is done for the exams is quickly, easily and conveniently forgotten. What is done for life, what is done willingly, what is done for precision-lasts forever. All that is needed is voluntary immersion in the task of vocabulary enhancement. Fondness and love for the language help us pursue the task. Doing it half-heartedly, using half learnt words for the purpose of making a show takes the learner nowhere.. The very important guideline is that the work should be done daily. Consistency being an integral part of the task.

What impression such as activity and an enriched stock of words of the possessor leaves on the audience or the outside world is anybody's guess but it certainly strengthens the possessor. It gives concrete confidence and that comes from within and it comes to stay permanently. Childish fear or buck fever associated with not knowing enough good words or knowing very few, goes away. It is driven away. The sooner it is initiated, the better. Maturity, physical growth and vocabulary enrichment should go hand in hand in fact, as simultaneously as the hearing by the right and the left ear.

As J.Allen rightly says 'Word study is a key component of a balanced literacy program. In a balanced literacy classroom, the teacher explicitly teaches students necessary skills and engages their interest and motivation to learn about how words work'.

Personality of user is understood by his precision and precision comes from a decent and graceful use of vocabulary.

By way of conclusion,, it would be appropriate to quote Karen Bromely.

"Vocabulary instruction should be integrative. To learn new words to really learn them requires students to connect new and existing knowledge. Words are best learned when presented meaningfully with attention to definitions. It should foster word consciousness, awareness of and interest in words".

If the whole activity involving the time and energy of both the teacher and the student has imparted precision to the user there is no reason to doubt that the program is successful.

REFERENCES:

- [1]. K.Bromley : Nine Things Every Teacher Should Know About Words. (2007 SAGE Publication)
- [2]. J.Allen : Words,Words,Words-Teaching Vocabulary In Grades (1999- Port Land M.E.Sten House)
- [3]. Isabel Beck :Bringing Words To Life (2002 New York , Guildford)