

# *The Current Situation, Problems and Strategies of College English Vocabulary Teaching*

Jing Zhao<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>College of Education, Arts and Sciences, Lyceum of the Philippines University, Batangas Capitol Site, Batangas City, 4200, Philippines

<sup>2</sup>Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, Hetao College, Bayannur City, Inner Mongolia, 015000, China

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**Abstract:** English vocabulary teaching is the most basic content in college English teaching. From the functional analysis of language, if we want to greatly improve the English level of college students, we must start with English vocabulary teaching, constantly improve students' English vocabulary mastering ability, and improve the quality of English vocabulary teaching is the key. At present, English vocabulary teaching is pursuing more efficient vocabulary teaching strategies, effectively avoiding common problems in English vocabulary teaching, and breaking the bottleneck of English vocabulary teaching affected by factors such as limited vocabulary. Based on this, this paper analyzes the current situation and problems of college English vocabulary teaching, and explores strategies to effectively improve English vocabulary teaching.

## 1. Introduction

Vocabulary is the basis of English learning. The amount of vocabulary determines students' listening, speaking and reading comprehension. However, from the current teaching practice in some colleges and universities, it is not difficult to see that the current situation of English vocabulary teaching in colleges and universities is not optimistic. There are a series of problems and shortcomings, which lead to the low overall teaching level of English vocabulary teaching and the teaching effect is not obvious. In this situation, in order to effectively improve the quality of college English teaching and strengthen students' English vocabulary level, we must analyze the current situation and problems of English vocabulary teaching in detail, and propose effective strategies to improve this situation.

## 2. The necessity of English vocabulary teaching in colleges and universities

As an international language, English plays an indispensable role in promoting students' future growth. On the one hand, it promotes exchanges among countries, on the other hand, it also promotes students' exchanges with the world, gives students opportunities, and lays the foundation for students' higher and further development. Especially nowadays, With the rapid development and blending of

the world economy, culture and science, The learning value of English vocabulary at this time is reflected [1] so as to ensure the effectiveness and accuracy of information transmission in communication. Therefore, it is necessary to attach importance to English vocabulary teaching.

In the process of educational reform, college English teaching has made remarkable achievements, and various cutting-edge technologies, high-tech and innovative ways have begun to be integrated into classroom English teaching. However, English vocabulary teaching is still an important part of college teachers' teaching process, because vocabulary teaching is the basis of English language learning, and the smallest unit of English language learning. It is the cornerstone of students' English learning in listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of English vocabulary teaching in college English teaching [1].

College English vocabulary teaching is not only about the learning of words, but also about the teaching of morphology, parts of speech, and word formation rules of words. The learning of English vocabulary not only refers to the combination of 26 letters, but also involves the scope of word use and word formation rules of words, which is more important for students to master. For example, a compound word is formed by combining two or more morphemes [2], for example, motor+hotel=motor (motel). There are also different parts of speech. For example, the suffix of nouns: know (v. know)+- ability → knowability (n. knowability). In the teaching of English vocabulary, teachers need to teach and explain this series of properties, usages and meanings related to vocabulary to students to promote their digestion and absorption, so as to improve their English level. Therefore, English vocabulary teaching is basic and necessary.

### **3. The current situation and problems of college English vocabulary teaching**

#### **3.1. Common problems of students**

Students have been exposed to English since primary school. It has been at least 9 years since they knew and learned English to college. They have jumped out of the stage of knowing nothing about English. When they know nothing about English, they will adopt extreme learning methods, such as rote learning. However, in college students' learning, they should have a certain understanding of the rules of English vocabulary learning. At this time, English vocabulary learning should be more fluent and skilful. However, from actual learning, it is found that many college students still learn and remember important words by rote in the process of learning English vocabulary, and pay no attention to accumulation in the process of learning new words, that is, learning and forgetting, which leads to slow improvement of English learning efficiency and English level.

Secondly, the problem of the separation between sound and form caused by rote learning also exists. There is a corresponding relationship between the letter composition and the pronunciation of words. In the process of learning English words, students can accurately read the pronunciation of a strange word according to the letter composition of the word. However, with the prevalence of rote learning, students cannot completely and accurately read out unfamiliar words and only recognize words. However, they did not master the rules of pronunciation, and were unable to recognize correctly. In the pronunciation of vocabulary, they could not know which letters are pronounced and which letters are not pronounced, they could not fully master the pronunciation of letters, which directly affected students' vocabulary learning.

Finally, students' cognition of vocabulary is one-sided, and the language and culture are broad and profound, especially in English, many English words often have multiple meanings, and there are large differences between different meanings. In the learning the meaning of English words, students usually identify the most common one. To understand and understand English words, it is necessary to know the overall meaning of words. The understanding of the comprehensive meaning of vocabulary can help students to read and understand meanings[5]. However, students usually only

recognize the main meaning in their daily learning and ignore the understanding of other meanings. When reading, they find that the original understanding is difficult to understand, which deepens their incomprehension of English.

### **3.2. Teachers' problems**

Teachers despise vocabulary learning in reading materials [5]. Vocabulary learning is the most important foundation of learning a language, and also the beginning of learning a language. If vocabulary cannot be quickly mastered and used, then students cannot read and write normal English materials. However, in most current college English teaching classes, when English teachers explain and translate new words that are difficult for students to understand in the course of English reading materials, they usually only translate the new words stiffly, and do not expand and explain the application of the word and the context of the word meaning, resulting in students' understanding of the new words simply staying on the surface level. When they meet this new student's vocabulary next time, because of different contexts, students still have difficulty understanding and translating the word, which leads to deviation or incomprehension of the whole reading material.

## **4. College English vocabulary teaching**

### **4.1. English vocabulary teaching objectives in college**

In order to promote college English vocabulary teaching, it is necessary to set clear goals and contents. First of all, to set up the goal of vocabulary teaching. In college English teaching, the goal of vocabulary should be clear at different levels. There are three levels of goals, namely, general goals, advanced goals and top goals. The general goal is to require students to master about 4200 words and 800 phrases. According to statistics, when language learners have about 5000 words, their accuracy in use can reach 59.6%. The advanced goal is to require students to master 5400 words and 1100 phrases. According to statistics, when language learners have 6400 words, their accuracy in use can reach 64.1%. The top goal is to require students to master 6400 words and 1700 phrases. According to statistics, when language learners' vocabulary reaches 7000, their accuracy in use can reach 70.3%. This shows that there is a positive correlation between vocabulary size and students' English proficiency and English application ability [2].

### **4.2. The content of English vocabulary teaching objectives in college**

The teaching content of students' vocabulary goals can be divided into four aspects, including the use of vocabulary, the meaning of vocabulary, the information of vocabulary, and the occasion of vocabulary. The use of vocabulary mainly refers to the use of vocabulary, which is the focus of vocabulary learning. The purpose of language learning is to use. In vocabulary learning, we should focus on the use of vocabulary [3]. For example, the part of speech of the learned words is nouns. For example, breadwinner (n. breadwinner) whose part of speech is nouns can be used as both subject and object or predicative. The meaning of a word, which includes both the essential meaning and the denotative meaning, should not only enable students to understand the specific application of the word, but also enable students to understand other different meanings of its denotation. The occasion of vocabulary refers to the corresponding collocation, phrases and usage scenarios of vocabulary. The meaning of words may vary in different occasions. For example, hot refers to attractive people in hot man, while hot weather means the temperature is very high. Lexical information refers to a series of incidental information related to vocabulary, including parts of speech and pre suffixes of words, such as the common pre suffixes dis -, un -, - less, - ous, etc.

## 5. Strategies for English vocabulary teaching in colleges and universities

### 5.1. Establishing a student-centered teaching model [3]

We should break the traditional classroom teaching mode of English learning, jump out of the teaching circle solidified by the idea of exam oriented education, and try to avoid students' passive learning, thus forming a situation of rote learning, memorizing words before and forgetting words after. Therefore, a new teaching mode should be formed in English vocabulary teaching, with students as the main body to guide students to carry out English vocabulary learning.

First of all, we should establish the consciousness of independent learning before class. Before the classroom teaching of English vocabulary, the meaning, usage, pronunciation and other vocabulary teaching contents that will be explained in the classroom will be sent to the student group in the form of PPT or micro class to remind students to use their spare time after class to preview the vocabulary content to be learned in the class in advance. When students begin to preview the vocabulary lesson for the first time, the teacher should introduce the main contents of the preview to students in detail, provide guidance for students to preview, and make students know their main tasks of preview after class, in order to ensure the efficiency of students' preview after class. In the vocabulary preview, students are required to think about and look up materials for specific words, understand the multiple meanings and usages of words, and related derivatives, antonyms, synonyms, etc., such as restrict, transitive verbs, limit, hinder, restrict, and bind. The noun is restrictor, and analyze the meaning of words with the word limit and confine. The word "limit" only determines the limit of space, time, and quantity in advance. The word "confine" focuses on imposing insurmountable restrictions, while the word "restrict" refers to limiting someone or something to a certain range.

Secondly, put the main position in the classroom and communicate with students more [3]. Teachers can design a variety of teaching activities to help students communicate with each other. At the same time, they can also check the preview effect of students' preview before class. For example, they can carry out word selection and filling in the blanks, word pair collisions, crossword puzzles and other interesting teaching activities, which can not only activate students' learning mood, but also help students digest and absorb knowledge points, deepen students' impression of words, and strengthen the use of words, Improve students' language application ability. For example, the vocabulary disorder n. confusion and disorder, dis (negative prefix)+order (order), let students find words similar to their structures, such as discomfort, disagree, discontinue, etc., invite students to share their understanding of the vocabulary and interesting resources for extracurricular investigation of the vocabulary, which can be some funny film and television resource fragments, or short videos made by themselves, to strengthen students' dominant position in the classroom. At the same time, it also enhances students' learning initiative.

Finally, we should review the guidance in consolidation after class. In English vocabulary teaching, the review and consolidation after class is definitely not a simple memorization of words. It should be extended to the application of words. Learning tasks can be set up after class. Students can be divided into different English learning groups. The vocabulary content learned in class can be used to form a play script. After class, it can be used to form a short play, which can be shot into small videos and sent to the teacher's mailbox. At the same time, students are encouraged to learn,

### 5.2. Learning vocabulary with the help of reading materials and material context [4]

First of all, during vocabulary teaching, teachers will extract the key sentences and words that are of learning value from the reading materials, and give detailed explanations and training to the key contents of the articles in the extracurricular reading materials, so that students can quickly understand the content of reading after class, they can quickly understand in a short time after class, and achieve

effective and efficient reading. For example, taking the food making process of Thanksgiving Day and the corresponding traditional festivals as the reading topic, students are required to master such words as "Thanksgiving, pepper, over, plate, gravity, traditional, audit, traveler, celebrate, mix, fill, cover, sever, temperature", and can express the process of making food for a traditional festival smoothly through reading materials, select sentence components such as "... is a time to give something for food in the autumn." "Here is a way to make turkey for a thanksgiving dinner."

Secondly, most English words, with different language contexts, express different meanings. Students are required to master vocabulary skillfully, so that they can fully understand the meaning of vocabulary in different contexts during reading [5]. Therefore, teachers can bring vocabulary into the corresponding context for practice, and practice repeatedly to consolidate students' understanding of the vocabulary and help students understand vocabulary and long-term memory. For example, in English learning, there are several words with different meanings in different contexts, such as "lie", whose example sentences are "He lay down for a rest" and "He lied about his age". "Lie" usually means lying, but in the first context, it is obviously not lying, but lying down, such as "leave", whose common meaning is to leave and go, such as "He left for Beijing yesterday". He went to Beijing yesterday. But it can also mean to stay. For example, "I left my book here yesterday and it is gone now". Combining context to learn the meaning of words makes language understanding more fluent.

## 6. Conclusion

To sum up, English vocabulary teaching in universities is the basic content of students' English learning. From the current teaching situation, it is not difficult to see that English vocabulary teaching is a heavy task and a long way to go. It is necessary to actively change teaching ideas and learning strategies from both students and teachers, so as to improve and optimize the current English vocabulary teaching and ensure the effectiveness of English vocabulary teaching.

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