

## SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH NEW WORDS FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

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**Abstract.** This article explores the pivotal role of vocabulary acquisition in language learning, emphasizing its significance in effective communication and linguistic proficiency. While implicit and explicit approaches remain subjects of debate, empirical evidence suggests that vocabulary learning is most effective when learners consciously engage with targeted strategies. The research advocates for direct instruction in vocabulary acquisition techniques, including mnemonic devices, word analysis, and spaced repetition. These strategies enhance comprehension, retention, and independent learning, ultimately fostering sustained academic achievement and language mastery.

**Keywords:** Vocabulary acquisition, language learning, explicit strategies, implicit learning, lexical competence, mnemonic devices, word analysis, spaced repetition, independent learning, linguistic proficiency.

Vocabulary is a fundamental part of any language and is highly important for learners. Words are the basic units of language, expressing objects, actions, and concepts. Without them, people cannot communicate their intended messages. Experts and researchers have recently acknowledged the key role of vocabulary in learning a second or foreign language. As a result, many different methods, strategies, exercises, and practice activities have been developed for teaching vocabulary [4]. Some argue that vocabulary instruction should not just focus on teaching individual words but should also help learners develop strategies to grow their vocabulary knowledge [5].

It would be more beneficial to impart strategies for managing unfamiliar words to learners. A strategy itself, as stated in dictionary of Collins, is a general plan or set of plans intended to achieve something, especially over a long period, as well as, it is the art of planning the best way to gain an advantage or achieve success, especially in war or in a long-term process. The significance of strategies in learning vocabulary lies in their ability to empower learners to effectively navigate and comprehend unfamiliar words. By employing various strategies, such as context clues, word analysis, and mnemonic devices, learners can enhance their vocabulary acquisition skills, thereby facilitating better understanding and retention of new words. These strategies provide learners with tools to independently tackle unfamiliar vocabulary encountered in reading, writing, and communication, ultimately fostering overall language proficiency and academic success.

As the majority of vocabulary acquisition occurs beyond the classroom environment and typically involves solitary efforts at home, it would be advantageous to provide students with instructions on the most effective ways to tackle this task independently. If our goal is for students to sustain effective learning

beyond the classroom and confidently handle tasks without relying on teacher support, it is essential to provide them with the necessary skills for independent learning. As it is stated in the research of Cohen [3] and Oxford [7], providing direct instruction to students in vocabulary learning strategies is acknowledged as a means to empower them, enabling them to assume control of and responsibility for their own learning. The significance of employing strategies in individual vocabulary learning, without the guidance of a teacher, lies in the ability of these strategies to facilitate autonomous and effective learning. By utilizing various techniques such as contextual inference, word analysis, mnemonic devices, and spaced repetition, learners can navigate unfamiliar words and concepts independently. These strategies empower learners to take ownership of their learning process, enabling them to expand their vocabulary repertoire, improve comprehension, and enhance language proficiency without constant supervision or direction from a teacher. In addition to this, mastering effective vocabulary learning strategies fosters self-reliance and lifelong learning skills, enabling individuals to continue expanding their linguistic abilities beyond formal educational settings. From my own perspective, employing effective vocabulary learning strategies independently cultivates self-confidence and resilience in learners. When individuals develop the ability to decode and understand new words on their own, they feel more empowered and motivated in their learning journey. These strategies enable learners to adapt to various learning environments and circumstances, enhancing their overall language proficiency and academic success.

Certain students may employ strategies, albeit often unconsciously. The efficacy of vocabulary learning strategies is heightened when their application is intentional and purposeful, rather than being carried out inadvertently. It is commonly admitted that language learners may have been using any type of vocabulary learning strategies even without realizing it in the process, while lacking the possibility of defining and improving the learning efficiency at the same time. The learning process throughout the years gives the opportunity to acquire certain types of strategies which then becomes a crucial and inevitable part of the vocabulary learning.

Another research work by Ahmed [1] points out that some strategies do not possess inherent effectiveness, and even those acknowledged as beneficial require deliberate practice for efficient utilization. The acquisition of an extensive lexicon is a cognitive endeavor intricately linked to neuroplasticity and memory consolidation. Scientific literature consistently underscores the pivotal role of practice and repetition in optimizing vocabulary learning outcomes. Repetitive exposure to linguistic stimuli facilitates the establishment of robust neural connections, promoting the encoding of lexical information into long-term memory reservoirs. Employing strategic methodologies, such as spaced repetition and mnemonic devices, augments the efficiency of vocabulary acquisition by capitalizing on cognitive mechanisms like the spacing effect and associative memory. This empirical synthesis underscores the neuroscientific underpinnings of

language learning, elucidating the significance of deliberate, repetitive practice in the intricate tapestry of vocabulary expansion.

Finally, learners frequently lack awareness of alternative strategies beyond those already employed. As we have mentioned above, years of learning new words and grammar structures can assist in forming certain useful principles which are effective and useful for the current student and after some time they get accustomed to utilizing them without even thinking of other options and strategy choice becomes unconsciously on the same one over and over again. Accordingly, it is sanguinely anticipated that the provision of direct pedagogy on strategic utilization will redound favorably upon students, cultivating their metacognitive acumen vis-à-vis a myriad of strategies. This didactic intervention aspires not only to elucidate the adept application of strategies but also to augment the panorama of stratagems accessible to students, thereby affording them a more nuanced spectrum from which to discern and select.

As it is claimed in the work of Wenden [9], “in order to be self-sufficient, learners must know how to learn”. In other words, students, when they are performing self-study at home or independently, should be able to decide which vocabulary learning strategy is the best suitable for their own case and make a choice of the required principles in the complicated learning situations without the guidance of a teacher. The overarching goal is to promote self-sufficiency among learners by facilitating their discernment of contextual scenarios conducive to strategic application. This involves cultivating an awareness of strategies tailored to individual proclivities, empowering learners to deploy these strategies judiciously and with efficacy in the pursuit of cognitive objectives.

The heterogeneity of cognitive profiles and educational contexts precludes the establishment of a universally efficacious repertoire of strategies applicable to all. As a matter of fact, Rees-Miller [8] and others declared the rather prescriptive approach taken by earlier linguists of strategy instruction. A prescriptive approach means placing emphasis on planned and logical thought processes. It proposes the best way to develop and implement strategies whereas the descriptive approach focuses on the need for students to examine the real-life realization of their language learning strategies. The prescriptive approach to language is primarily concerned with the formal aspects of a linguistic system, encompassing both word structures and syntax. Prescriptive grammar adopts a normative stance, dictating the grammatical rules that individuals ought to adhere to, rather than providing a descriptive account of the rules inherent in natural language usage. In practical terms, when an adult endeavors to acquire proficiency in a new language, the prescriptive approach becomes pertinent, as it involves the explicit direction and imposition of grammatical norms for effective language acquisition. While the descriptive approach to language elucidates linguistic phenomena by endeavoring to explicate their actual occurrences. This methodological stance seeks a comprehensive, accurate, and systematic understanding of how language is authentically employed. In contrast to the prescriptive approach, which mandates adherence to specific grammatical rules, the descriptive approach aims to unveil the

inherent patterns and structures in language as observed in natural usage by its speakers. The dichotomy between these approaches lies in their respective orientations one toward normative guidance and the other toward empirical analysis of linguistic behavior. Hence, the objective is not to impart a uniform set of strategies purportedly employed by "proficient" learners or to showcase ostensibly "superior" strategies. Instead, the focus is on assisting students as distinct individuals in cultivating an awareness of their personal strategy utilization and acquainting them with the diverse array of potential strategies applicable to vocabulary acquisition. The profound significance of discerning individualized vocabulary strategies lies in the bespoke nature of cognitive processes and linguistic aptitudes inherent in each learner. Acknowledging and understanding one's unique approach to vocabulary acquisition fosters metacognitive awareness, enabling learners to optimize their cognitive resources effectively. Moreover, as language proficiency is a highly personalized journey, awareness of tailored strategies empowers learners to navigate their linguistic landscape with efficacy. This discernment not only enhances the efficiency of vocabulary retention but also promotes a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the language itself. In essence, recognizing and honing one's unique vocabulary strategies stands as a pivotal cornerstone in the construction of linguistic proficiency, aligning the learning process with individual cognitive strengths and propelling learners toward linguistic mastery.

The outlined set of activities embodies an experiential paradigm in language acquisition, affording students the space to engage in reflective inquiry, experimental exploration, and iterative practice. Through this process, learners are encouraged to actively participate in discovering strategies that resonate with their learning style and perceived effectiveness. By fostering a dynamic learning environment grounded in personal exploration, students can cultivate a repertoire of strategies that not only align with their comfort level but also enhance their linguistic proficiency. This approach underscores the intrinsic value of self-directed learning, empowering students to take ownership of their language acquisition journey and develop a toolkit of strategies tailored to their individual needs and preferences.

It is imperative that they are afforded the opportunity to explore alternative approaches and cultivate the metacognitive awareness necessary for making informed decisions regarding vocabulary strategy selection. By expanding their repertoire of strategies and deepening their understanding of how these strategies impact their learning process, learners can become more autonomous and discerning in their approach to vocabulary acquisition. This emphasis on metacognition empowers learners to navigate the complexities of language learning with confidence, enabling them to adapt their strategies to various contexts and optimize their linguistic development effectively. The advantage of adopting such an approach lies in its recognition of the learner as a unique individual, whose prior experiences and beliefs serve as the foundational framework for learning. By starting from this point of departure, the approach can accommodate a diverse array of individual learning styles and preferences.

This learner-centered approach acknowledges the multifaceted nature of cognition and embraces the inherent variability among learners, thereby fostering an inclusive and adaptable learning environment. By tailoring instruction to align with the individual learner's background, interests, and cognitive predispositions, this approach maximizes engagement and enhances the efficacy of the learning experience. Ultimately, by honoring the learner's autonomy and agency, this approach cultivates a sense of ownership and empowerment, facilitating meaningful and enduring learning outcomes.

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