

***Vocabulary Learning:
This could take a while***

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Jaberwocky

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe...

.....

Lewis Carroll



N. Schmitt

Horst

Zimmerman

Hulstijn

Carter

D. Schmitt

Folse

Huckin & Coady

Sanaoui

Nation

Meara

Gardner

Brown

Laufer

Cobb

Nagy

Paribakht

Wesche

Elley

McCarthy

Jiang

Beck

Coxhead

Haastrup

Barcroft

Ellis

Hinkel

Nygren



Getting started

- Rate of learning
 - How quickly can you learn enough words to begin functioning in a language?
 - How do communicative language use and direct instruction affect the rate of learning?



The part that takes a while

- Ultimate vocabulary knowledge
 - How many words can/should you eventually know?
 - How can you learn all these words?



L1 vocabulary learning

- Children know 3000-6000 words before they start school.

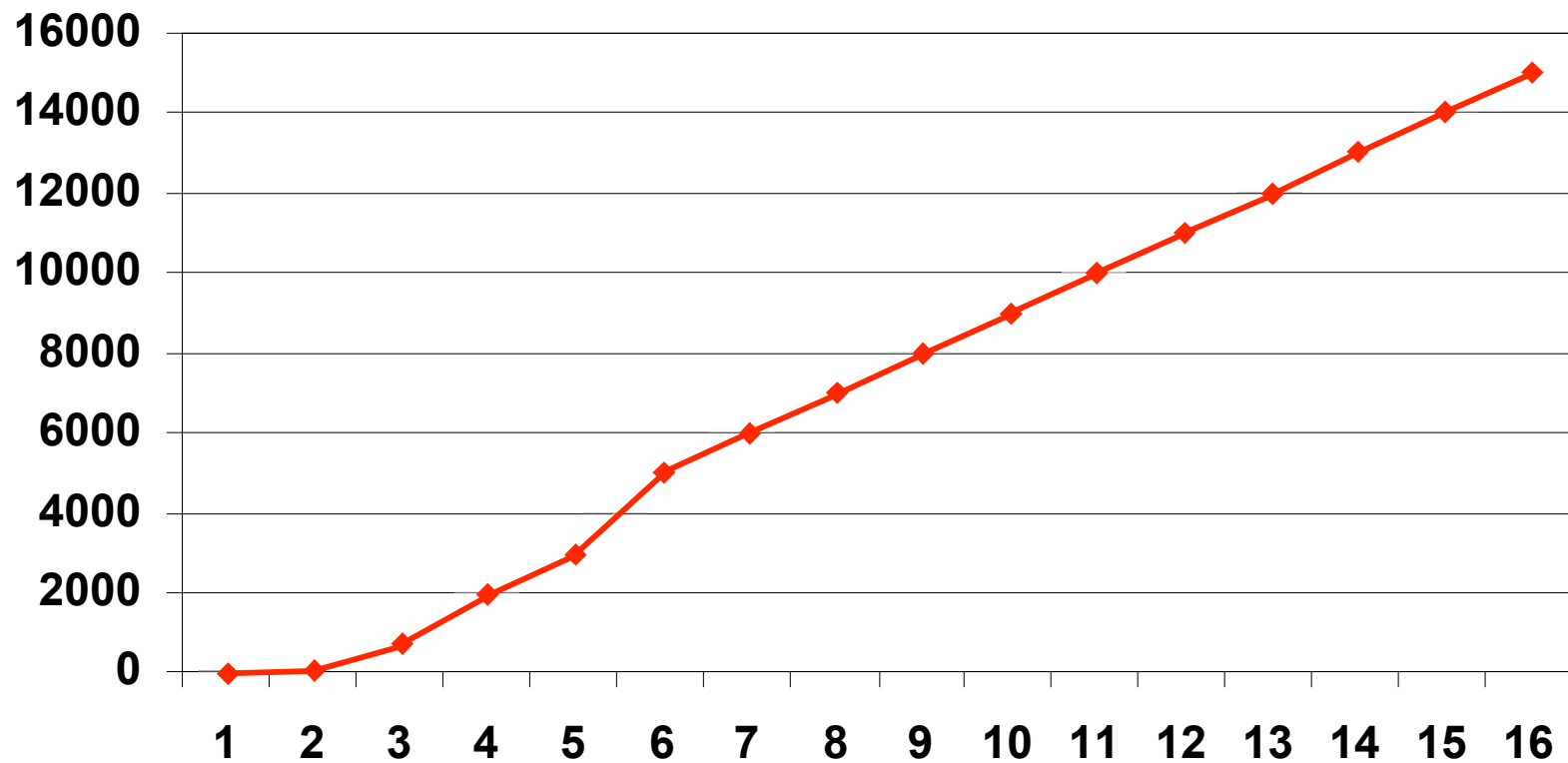


School Years

- By the end of high school, L1 speakers may know $>15,000$ words.



L1 Vocabulary Growth



Pre-school years

- The amount of language *addressed to the child* predicts language growth.



Pre-school years

- Being *read to* is a major source of vocabulary development.



6-8 years

- Literacy changes the way words are perceived and learned



6-8 years

- Being read to is still a good thing!



How do L1 learners do it?

- By age 6 years
 - > 20,000 hours of language experience
- From 6 to 16 years (Grades 1-12)
 - > 50,000 hours (15,000 in school)



How do L1 learners do it?

- *Reading* is a primary engine of vocabulary growth.
 - Important to read in a variety of genres



L1 vocabulary growth

- Vocabulary: lifelong learning
- Educated adult native speaker knows more than *20,000 word families*.
- The total number of English words?
 - 100,000?
 - One million?



And just when you think you're done...

Unfriend

Tweet

Green collar

Truthiness

Chillax

Frenemy

Locavore



Getting started in L2

- How many words can L2 students learn?
 - Beginner texts target 600 - 1000 words.
- Can you learn more?



Some simple arithmetic indicates that a vocabulary of 2000 words could be learned in 11 months if new words were acquired at a rate of six per day.

Meara 1980



The *time* it takes

- One year of EFL = 50 - 200 hours
- Ten years = 500 - 2000 hours
- ESL learners get more hours
 - But the language may not be adapted to their needs
 - And their classmates' vocabulary keeps on growing!



The first 1000 words



How many words are needed?

- *1000* most-frequent words “cover” about 80% of most texts, but
 - *Unaided comprehension* requires 98% coverage, and
 - *learning new words* “from context” requires even more.



How many words are needed?

- Conversations -- *1000 - 2000 words*
- *Shrek* -- *6000 words*
- Television programs -- *7000 words*
- Literary novels -- *8000 words*



Academic Vocabulary

- The University Word List
- The Oxford 3000
- Coxhead's Academic Word List
- Discipline-specific technical terms



Academic Vocabulary

- For young English Language Learners, “academic vocabulary” begins in first or second grade.
- At first, L1 cognates may not be helpful.



Early “academic” words

- DEEP/SHALLOW
- LEAF/STEM
- ONCE/TWICE
- CLOUD/STORM
- SPILL/WIPE
- OPEN/SHUT
- PULL/PUSH
- ENOUGH/TOO MUCH
- ABOVE/BELOW
- MORE/LESS
- SCIENTIFIC
- PRESSURE
- COMBINE
- DISTANCE
- TEMPERATURE
- MATHEMATICS
- SUBTRACTION
- REPETITION
- EXPERIENCE
- INDICATE



When do you “know” a word?

- Awareness/recognition
- General meaning
- A sense of associated words
- Knowledge of word parts
- Usage and constraints
- Idiomatic and metaphorical uses
- Other meanings



How can you learn all those words?

- Nation's *FOUR STRANDS*
- The essential elements of language learning/teaching



Nation's Four Strands

- Meaning-focused input
- Meaning-focused output
- Language-focused learning
- Fluency development



Meaning-Focused Input

- Listening and reading
- Both known and unknown words and structures
 - *Mostly* known words and familiar structures
- The input is *of interest to the learner*
- *Large quantities* of input are necessary



How to make input *meaningful*

- Context
- Pre-reading (listening) activities
- Gesture
- Illustrations



How to enhance learning from Meaning-Focused Input

- Manipulate frequency of vocabulary or language structures
 - E.g., by choosing *themes*
- Make certain features salient
 - E.g., by underlining or bolding
- Use priming techniques
 - Pre-reading & pre-listening



Meaning-Focused Output

- Speaking and writing “about things that are largely familiar”
- Main goal is communication
- Only a little *new* language is needed
- Learners use whatever strategies permit communication
- *Many* opportunities to practice



Activities that engage learners in Meaning-Focused Output

- Pair or group interaction
 - Absolutely essential to increase practice time
- Presentations, reports
- Asking/answering questions on subject matter content
- Interviews



Language-Focused Learning

- *Deliberate* attention to language
- *Effortful* processing
- Spaced/repeated opportunities to focus on language features
- Features are within learner's developmental level
- *Studied features must be available for practice in the other three strands*



Activities that engage learners in Language-Focused Learning

- Explanation, targeted practice
- Structured input/input processing
- *Intensive* reading
- Cloze texts & guided reading
- Careful pronunciation practice
- Vocabulary cards & notebooks
- Dictation? Dictogloss?
- Feedback on error



Language-Focused Learning

- The effect is indirect.
- Increases the chances that the learner will
 - *Notice* features in Meaning-Focused input
 - *Retrieve* newly learned features for Meaning-Focused output
 - *Monitor* features that have been made salient through instruction



Fluency Development

- Doing something
 - Faster
 - More accurately
 - More “automatically”



Fluency Development

- *Only* known language
- Focus on meaning (*understand* what you're saying, reading, writing, hearing)
- Some kind of pressure to perform faster
- *Many* opportunities for practice



Activities that contribute to Fluency Development

- Task repetition
- Reading easy texts (“100%” known words)
- “10-minute writing”
- “4/3/2 speaking”
- Timed listening
- Performances, skits, songs, poems
- *Memorizing chunks of high-frequency language*



The importance of fluency

- Confidence-building
- Facilitates interaction
- Facilitates comprehension
- *Preserves cognitive resources for new learning*



According to Nation

- A balanced course in second language teaching requires all four strands
 - Meaning-Focused Input
 - Meaning-Focused Output
 - Language-Focused Learning
 - Fluency Development
- In *equal* measure!



Learning *begins* in the classroom.



Independent learning

- Kojic-Sabo & Lightbown (1999)
 - ESL/EFL students' out-of-class vocabulary-learning activities
 - Cluster analysis



Independent learning

- Cluster analysis: More than one profile was associated with success.
- What successful learners had in common:
 - *time*
 - *independence*



Independent learning

- Reading
 - Graded readers -- fiction *and* non-fiction
 - Adapted and authentic newspapers



Independent learning

- Entertainment media
 - Movies, television -- including programming for children
 - Internet resources



- Tom Cobb's [lex tutor.ca](http://www.lex tutor.ca)
- My Word Coach
- Paul Nation's web site
- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary site
- Paul Meara's *lognostics*
- Gerry Luton's AWL exercises
- Eli Hinkel's UWL exercises
- <http://freerice.com/index.php>



Tom Cobb www.lex tutor.ca/

My Word Coach (now a commercial site)
<http://mywordcoach.us.ubi.com/>

Paul Nation's web site www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation.aspx

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary site
www.oxfordadvancedlearnersdictionary.com

Paul Meara's lognostics
www.lognostics.co.uk/

Gerry Luton's AWL exercises
www.academicvocabularyexercises.com

Eli Hinkel's UWL exercises www.elihinkel.org



Conclusion

- Classroom activities help learners
 - Learn to learn
 - Grasp the tools
 - Experience success



Conclusion

- Learners must
 - *Develop independence*
 - *Take the time*



Questions?

References?

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