

# The Substance of Business English Vocabulary

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## Abstract

This documentary analysis was specifically concerned with how vocabulary acts as a fundamental element in an English as a second or foreign language education setting, and also, as a vital language element that supports the learning of the four primary language skills. Asgari and Mustapha (2011) stated that vocabulary appears to be a significant point of target language acquisition. Jahan and Jahan (2011) indicated that with adequate knowledge of vocabulary in the target language, the learners were able to overcome many problems in comprehending the target language, and difficulties associated with the production of the target language. Hence, Boonkongsaen and Intaraprasert (2014) established that exposing a learner to a variety of authentic Business English vocabulary learning experiences better prepared the learner to comprehend the use of the new Business English vocabulary.

**Keywords:** business English, vocabulary, acquisition, corpus, lexicon



## Introduction

The conventional definition of vocabulary is the body of words in a particular language used by or known to a particular group of persons. According to Liu (1995), a person's vocabulary is the set of words within a language that is familiar to that person. Jiang (2015) stated that business vocabulary, in likeness, is a list or collection of the specific words or phrases within the general vocabulary that apply to the technical field of business. Liu (1995) continued that a vocabulary typically develops with experience, and serves as a useful and fundamental tool for communication and acquiring knowledge. Likewise, the acquisition of specific business vocabulary occasionally takes place within a specific instructive setting encompassing the use of real-life situations.

Business English vocabulary taught in a group setting offers a unique scope of learning with the

use of authentic business materials and occupational sceneries where specific industry jargon can be utilized within an English as a Second or Foreign Language classroom environment. Boonkongsaen and Intaraprasert (2014) found that authentic English language-learning experiences had a greater effect on the learners' production of the target language in major fields of study as Business English, Aviation English, Tourism English, and Medical English. They further found that limiting a learner to a formal classroom instruction setting hampered the development of necessary skills associated with the learning of new vocabulary. Therefore, utilizing a Business English lexicon in language education would make learning terminology more efficient by exposing the learner to an extensive collection of specific Business English terminology, and would offer an opportunity for

a more systematic, prearranged and structured approach to the target language.

## **Literature Review**

Marzano (2004) demonstrated that increasing a learner's target vocabulary directly within the classroom affects their overall achievement. They recognized that growing the learners' corpus of vocabulary produces a significant increase in the comprehension of content area material. Marzano (2004) further suggested that acquiring an extensive vocabulary is one of the greatest challenges in learning a target language.

Acquiring appropriate Business English vocabulary likewise proves to be challenging for some learners because the lexicon greatly differs from the general English lexicon. Determining and acquiring specialized technical terminologies within the areas of finance and banking, for instance, tend to prove more challenging for Business English learners. Ha and Hyland (2017) stated that the identification of appropriate technical text to be used in teaching subject-specific terminology was a challenge for educators. They found that categorizing technical terms into an industry-specific lexicon for traditional English for Specific Purpose curriculum development proved to be a greater task for there is technical terminology which can be applied to both specific business elements and general elements.

Kuo (2016) found that differentiating between English words that take on specialized meanings in particular contexts proved to be a more straightforward task for native English speakers and a more perplexing task for non-native or near-native English speakers. They stated that there is a necessity to build cognitive awareness by the acquisition of explicit knowledge to differentiate between English vocabulary for a particular business use and general English vocabulary for non-native or

near-native English speakers. Kuo (2016) continued that supporting learners in managing the current demands of various professional fields is the ultimate goal of educators. Therefore, they found that learners who focused categorically on vocabulary for business use showed a greater degree of acquisition in contrast to those who absorbed an intensified quantity of general vocabulary.

## **Challenges In Business English Vocabulary Instruction**

Challenges often arise in producing a target language, especially when learners use general vocabulary that is appropriate for the desired business context. Tangpijaikul (2014) stated that business vocabulary must be compiled from authentic business related materials that are relevant to business activities rather than limited to a formal classroom instruction setting and that this corpus should be incorporated into Business English vocabulary exercises. To better facilitate Business English vocabulary acquisition, most educators resort to utilizing an already existing corpus to assist in the acquisition of the target language. Ellis (2002) states that general vocabulary instruction encompasses instruction in the meaning of the terminology along with implicit instruction of the terminology. The implicit instruction should provide the learners with both the contextual understanding and strategies to assist the learners in connecting their prior knowledge with the new concepts associated with the new vocabulary. An educator, incorporating the previous guidelines in Business English vocabulary, will offer more significant solutions to experiences typically encountered in Business English vocabulary comprehension.

## **Resources For Effective Business English Vocabulary Instruction**

Tangpijaikul (2014) found that educators who teach Business English have introduced various

multi-media methods of vocabulary instruction into the formal classroom instruction setting which includes audio recordings of authentic business conversations about words to build word consciousness, vocabulary lists with individual word knowledge to develop comprehension, and computer-based games designed to facilitate the use of the target word strategies. Jiang (2015) established that these methods had been used to grow the corpus of the learner, so they may effectively facilitate Business English vocabulary instruction skills.

Tangpijaikul (2014) continued that incorporating various forms of multi-media into Business English vocabulary instruction supports the learners in realizing how to connect new words to their background knowledge of the target vocabulary, and assists the learner in grasping more than just a definition. Miller (2011) explained vocabulary instruction; that it is like any other part of instruction, combining proven practices for a balanced approach to building vocabulary, and vocabulary comprehension work best. Miller (2011) further pointed out that a balanced approach to vocabulary instruction with learners will contribute to the educator more efficiently by instructing the learner in building vocabulary, and in the impacting of vocabulary comprehension.

### **Business English Vocabulary Teaching Tips**

Ellis (2002) stated there are several vocabulary expansion techniques that appear to be compelling ways to implement better comprehension, and memory of new specific terms for the learners. Ellis (2002) continued that evidently teaching new terminology to the learner in the context of an authentic and meaningful subject-matter lesson, and facilitate the learner's discussion that centers on the use of the new term seemed to be an instrumental vocabulary teaching technique whereby the learner will be able to

use the newly learned terminology within the context of discussing broader topics. Ellis (2002), in describing another valuable vocabulary teaching technique, said an educator should facilitate paraphrasing of definitions of new terms so that learners can identify additional features of the target vocabulary. In addition, Stahl (1996) stated that educators should make background knowledge connections to the new terms while instructing the learner on new terms in the context of a subject-matter lesson is an essential instructional method. An equally important elaboration technique is for a learner to relate the terms to something with the learners are already familiar.

Ellis (2002) indicated that assisting the learner in identifying examples or applications related to a new term's meaning would lead to a substantially enhanced comprehension. This technique, according to Boonkongsaen and Intaraprasert (2014), should result in the learner being able to accurately identify examples of the words or ways the new words can be appropriately applied within the context of discussing a particular field of study.

Lastly, Ellis (2002) discussed that creating multiple formats for which learners can elaborate on the meaning of new terms will allow educators to utilize many various vocabulary teaching techniques within the context of a class discussion.

Silver (2012) stated there are three distinct ways to cultivate a target vocabulary. First, he said that one way to nurture a vocabulary is through wide reading. A commonly held explanation of wide reading is that learners fundamentally independently read books, magazines, and newspapers related to the target vocabulary. Several minutes of sustained silent reading each day is said to be an efficient use of wide reading instructional time. In addition, Jahan and Jahan (2011) further established that wide reading exposes learners to more words, thereby increasing word

recognition and reading fluency, resulting in the facilitation of word learning and, as a result, helps learners gain a greater knowledge base. Secondly, vocabulary grows through experience. Apparently, we acquire vocabulary as we communicate, and interact in many natural paths of life. Finally, Silver (2012) stated that direct vocabulary instruction helps expand the learner's vocabulary development. Direct vocabulary instruction is commonly recognized as where the educator assigns specific vocabulary words and guides the learners in finding the definition whereby the attention of the learner is focused on the target vocabulary they will need to succeed.

## Conclusion

Vocabulary is the knowledge of words and meanings of words. Stahl (1996) said that vocabulary knowledge is not merely knowledge of a definition of a word but also how that word will fit into our world. Kuo (2016) acknowledged that business English vocabulary knowledge is not something that can ever be fully mastered. The knowledge of Business English vocabulary is something that expands and deepens over the course of a learner's' professional lifetime, so educators must recognize that Business English vocabulary instruction and applying authentic materials involves far more than learners finding words in a dictionary and utilizing the phrase in a sentence.



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