

**PEK**

for English Language Teachers

英语教师专业素养丛书

丛书主编

顾永琦

Peter Yongqi Gu

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Guoxing Yu

Teaching and Learning Vocabulary in EFL

# 外语词汇教学的方法

Paul Nation (新西兰) Peter Yongqi Gu (新西兰) 著

外语教学与研究出版社  
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## Series Editors' Preface

*Pedagogical Content Knowledge for English Language Teachers* is a series that aims to provide a comprehensive knowledge base for busy classroom teachers. As the name suggests, the series covers issues related to the nature of language competence and how this competence is best taught, learned and assessed. It is hoped that, armed with this broad range of pedagogical content knowledge, ESL/EFL teachers will be able to meaningfully interpret the targets of teaching, learning and assessment, diagnose and solve problems in the teaching process, and grow professionally in the meantime.

The series includes the following seven broad areas:

- 1) Principles of language teaching
- 2) Curriculum and targets of teaching
- 3) Teaching language skills and knowledge
- 4) Teaching methodology and teaching tools
- 5) Testing and assessment
- 6) Language learning
- 7) Teacher as researcher

Unlike other books that aim for a similar knowledge base, this series attempts to be a digest version that bridges between theories and practice. It also aims to offer easy reading and inexpensive texts that teachers will find easily accessible and applicable. To achieve these aims, all books in this series are written in simple English or Chinese. Each book in this series is authored by an acknowledged authority on the topic. It includes a brief introduction to theories plus a brief review of major research findings. The main text, however, focuses on how the theories and research can be applied to the ESL/EFL classroom.

In addition to the print copy for each book, an e-book version will also be

available. Short videoclips may also be made available at the publisher's website where some authors introduce their books.

Besides English language teachers who teach ESL/EFL at secondary and primary schools, target readership of this series also includes trainee teachers on short and intensive training programmes. Preservice teachers who are studying for their MA TESOL/Applied Linguistics and Year 3/4 English majors who aspire to be English language teachers should find the series very useful as well.

In this book, *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary in EFL*, Paul Nation and Peter Gu draw on their extensive research experience and present to readers concise and practical guidance on three interrelated topics that are of interest to teachers – what vocabulary learners need to know, how vocabulary should be taught and learned, and how learners' vocabulary knowledge should be assessed. With prereading questions, examples of tasks, and suggestions for further readings in each chapter, teachers will find their guidance informative, practical and easy to implement in teaching and assessing vocabulary. The questions listed in the section "What a teacher should do after reading this chapter?" as well as those highlighted in Chapter 9 provide readers an important checklist for action. This is a research-based checklist for teachers' professional development, for reflecting on their own practice in teaching, and most importantly for engaging their learners in the activities recommended.

*Peter Yongqi Gu and Guoxing Yu*  
Series Editors

## **Acknowledgments**

- Nation, P. (2019) Fast Track Book 1. Sachse, Texas: Seed Learning.
- Nation, P. (2019) Fast Track Book 2. Sachse, Texas: Seed Learning.

# TO THE READER

## Who is this book for?

This book is aimed at teachers of English as a foreign language, particularly those teaching beginners and intermediate level learners of English. It is also useful to EFL teachers who use a theme or topic-based approach to their teaching of English, or who teach English through the curriculum.

## What is this book about?

This book looks at the teaching and learning of vocabulary for learners of English as a foreign language.

This book deals with three major topics:

- the vocabulary learners need to know
- how this vocabulary should be learned
- how learners' vocabulary knowledge can be assessed.

There has been a long history of research and discussion on the nature of vocabulary and vocabulary learning and, over the last thirty years, there has also been enormous growth in research into the teaching and learning of vocabulary. This book draws on this research and interprets it for teachers and learners.

## An overview of the book

Chapter 1 looks at the five levels of vocabulary and the roles that vocabulary can play in understanding texts.

Chapter 2 looks at how vocabulary is learned and examines the conditions of repetition and quality of processing. It provides a range of suggestions for making sure these important conditions occur in a course.

Chapter 3 explores a framework called "the four strands". Using this framework ensures that learners get a proper balance of learning

opportunities. This chapter also looks at principles important for the design of the vocabulary component of a language course. These principles are explained further in the following chapters as they are applied to learning the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Chapters 4 and 5 look at how students can learn vocabulary through the receptive skills of listening and reading, and the productive skills of reading and writing. These chapters use a framework of tasks which involves three major kinds of learning tasks:

- guided tasks, where the teacher has designed activities that support the learners while they do the tasks
- shared tasks, where learners can do the tasks because of the help of others
- experience tasks, where learners do tasks that are well within their previous experience or that have been brought within their experience.

Chapter 6 discusses vocabulary learning strategies and their role in vocabulary learning.

Chapter 7 looks at the assessment of vocabulary knowledge, both for the measurement of vocabulary size and for measuring progress in learning vocabulary.

Chapter 8 looks at how learners and teachers can use computer programs and electronic collections of texts to gain information about vocabulary. The computer tools now available are very powerful resources for language teachers, and language teachers should know how to use them. Most of these tools can also be used by learners and there is increasing research on the effect of such learning activities.

Chapter 9 responds to ten commonly asked questions about vocabulary. Some of these questions draw together or highlight issues raised in this book and a few focus on topics not covered earlier.

### **How to use the book**

The chapters in this book are designed to be read in sequence. However, you may want to focus on a specific chapter because it relates to a segment of your training course or to an issue of particular interest to you. For this

reason, each chapter has been designed as a self-contained unit with cross-references provided to other relevant chapters.

\* \* \*

### **Prereading questions**

Each chapter includes several prereading questions which provide a focus for your reading. It is useful to spend some time thinking about these questions and, if possible, make some notes in response.

\* \* \*

### **Tasks within chapters**

Within a chapter you will find a series of tasks. You may be asked to think about your own views on something before you read on, or to read a particular text and respond to it, or to reflect on issues in relation to your own students. Although you may be tempted to skip the tasks, you will find that doing them helps clarify ideas and, we hope, makes your reading more enjoyable.

\* \* \*

### **Summaries**

All chapters, except Chapter 9, conclude with a brief summary of the main topics and ideas. We recommend that you read the summary as you complete a chapter and consider what you have learned from the chapter.

\* \* \*

### **What should a teacher do after reading this chapter?**

This book is meant to have very practical messages for teachers and to make sure that these practical messages are clear, each chapter ends with direct suggestions about what teachers should do to include the ideas in the chapter in their teaching. Sometimes these suggestions focus on particular teaching techniques. Sometimes these suggestions focus on course planning (The number one job of a teacher is to plan). Sometimes the suggestions include doing a little more reading to increase understanding but this is always followed by a practical application in a

course.

Keep looking at Paul Nation's website. This has many free resources for teachers and in 2019 there will be a link to a website containing free short videos of the most useful teaching techniques. They are all described in this book, but soon you will also be able to see them in action.

To get the most value out of this book, apply the ideas in each chapter to your teaching.

\* \* \*

### References and Further reading

References are provided at the end of each chapter and after some of the questions in Chapter 9. As you are using the book you may come across a reference that is especially relevant to your work. Make a note of it so that you can retrieve it when you have access to a library or catalogue. All of Paul Nation's articles are available free under the heading Publications on his website. As this resource is intended as an introductory text, we recommend that you follow the suggestions for further reading in the areas that are of special interest to you.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## VOCABULARY LEVELS AND KNOWING A WORD

### PREREADING QUESTIONS

Think about a recent lesson.

- What vocabulary caused difficulty for the learners?
- What did you do about the vocabulary?
- What principles guided you when deciding what to do?