



***Teaching and Learning Vocabulary:
Bringing Research to Practice***
**Elfrieda H. Hiebert and Michael L.
Kamil**

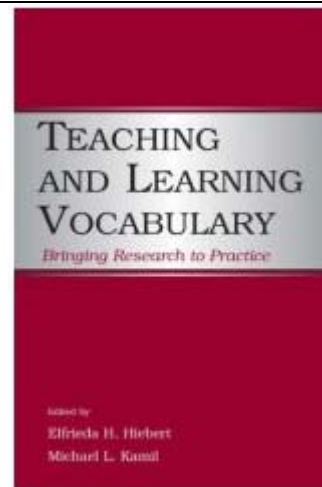
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Reviewed by Fariba Haghighi
Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran
Far_haghighi@yahoo.com



In *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*, Hiebert and Kamil bring a collection of valuable pieces of research to practice. The book provides learners, teachers, materials developers, researchers, and curriculum designers with an informative compilation of articles in three distinctive sections. The sections are designed in three main categories such as: How vocabulary is learned, how vocabulary is enhanced by the instruction, and finally how words are selected for instruction. In all chapters, an attempt is made to bring different researchers to a common idea of the effect of vocabulary enhancement on the reading comprehension. The book is designed in 12 chapters with chapter 1, as an overview to the theme of the book, and chapter 12 as a conclusion by the editors themselves seeking an effective vocabulary curriculum for elementary students. Each chapter is reviewed as follows.

Hiebert and Kamil, in Chapter One provide readers with an overview to themes that run throughout the book. The chapter addresses the reader to the importance of vocabulary in reading text and continues with different research and statistics to bring evidence to the relationship between oral language and word recognition perspectives on vocabulary teaching. This relationship is also evidenced by findings of the National Reading Panel (NRP) such as the need for direct instruction of vocabulary items, repetition, and multiple exposures to vocabulary depending on a variety of methods for vocabulary instruction. Finally the chapter goes to the end with focusing on persistent issues requiring additional attention by researchers. The size and type of words to teach are included in this section.

Chapter Two generally deals with perspectives on how vocabulary is learned and mainly brings reasons to necessitate teaching comprehensive vocabulary in the long term. Also the importance and complexity of the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension is emphasized. The chapter starts with exploring some characteristics of an effective vocabulary instruction. The researcher introduces the reading comprehension through three aspects, such as: Causal, Reciprocal, and Indirect links. Focusing on a rationale for effective vocabulary

instruction, the researcher believes that in the case of understanding the links between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension, the way of thinking about vocabulary instruction will be changed. As a whole, the chapter introduces an effective vocabulary instruction as a kind of long-term and cumulative, multi faceted, and generative instruction which aims not just at teaching new words, but at helping students learn to talk and think about that language.

Anne E. Cunningham specifies Chapter Three to factors influencing vocabulary growth in children and focuses on independent reading and exposure to written language as two main factors which contribute to children's vocabulary development. The first pages report an estimation of vocabulary need for learning in different ages through the results obtained from different studies. Direct vocabulary instruction is not denied by suggesting the importance of independent reading. It is mentioned that Direct vocabulary instruction provides an important foundation for future exposure to written language. However, the influence of reading volume and the ways of reading are emphasized.

Following the focal point of the previous chapters, Chapter Four deals with the importance of acquiring words from text. It provides a review of a piece of research regarding word learning through text with a discussion of the implications of the study for teachers, publishers, and researchers. The author, Judith A. Scott, believes in the role of context as local and global in learning new words through discussing the result of different studies. As she mentions, local context is specified by two factors: within-words factors, and sentences and texts that is word presentation in text which along with the factors of global context affect the opportunity to learn new word meanings from the text. Then Scott provides some reasons for informational texts being central to success in getting information and learning words. Finally, some gaps in research knowledge, some principles for effective vocabulary instruction, and some additional principles to enhance word learning from informational texts are introduced to researchers.

Chapter Five is devoted to four problems dealing with teaching word meanings. An introduction goes to vocabulary knowledge that the author believes not only implies a definition, but also implies how that word fits into the world. Furthermore, Stahl distinguishes between sight vocabularies and different types of vocabularies including concept vocabularies, content area vocabularies, and so on. The researcher states that each type has a different demand and should be taught in different ways. Giving evidence from different studies and examples, the author presents the four problems of teaching word meaning. At the end, Stahl provides some solutions to the problems and develops several characteristics for programs that make word learning part of an integrated knowledge curriculum. Then the author concludes that integrating word meaning with world knowledge requires a rich, intensive, and full of information way of teaching vocabulary.

Chapter Six, "*Bringing Words to Life in Classrooms with English Language Learners*", surveys an experimental study examining the evaluation of an intervention for children transitioning from Spanish to English reading. The study has been conducted based on current understandings of how to build vocabulary, decoding skills, and comprehension in a second language. The importance of the study lies on providing a first evaluation of a promising strategy to enhance Spanish to English

transition. Finally, the researchers conclude that explicit instruction on word knowledge should occur in the context of teaching reading and using texts. Then the procedures of the study are provided in detail in the appendices at the end of the chapter.

In Chapter Seven, the authors describe an instructional intervention that addresses the English instructional needs of English language learners. Illustrating different examples, Carlo, August, and Snow attribute reading difficulties to a lack of familiarity with a high proportion of the vocabulary in text and unfamiliarity with less frequent meanings of words with multiple meanings. They also distinguish two kinds of vocabulary difficulties of English-Language Learners (ELL) as the lack of breadth and depth of English vocabulary. The researchers believe in a short term intervention and offer interventions that strengthen the ELLs ability to apply strategies for independent vocabulary learning as well as providing direct instruction in word meaning. Finally, they come to a fact that sustained direct vocabulary can enhance ELL ability in word learning. Additionally they found that some aspects of ELLs' knowledge about words require a long-term commitment to instruction to develop this knowledge.

Chapter Eight is devoted to an assessment of vocabulary enhancement in pre kindergarten through a developed program called PAVeD for success which stands for Phonological Awareness and Vocabulary Enhancement. In this research, scholars worked on an assumption that young children's vocabulary has a large impact on early reading achievement. To achieve the purpose of the study that is assessing the implementation, sustainability, and effectiveness of the PAVeD program, the scholars distinguished between implicit and explicit practices to enhance children's vocabulary. As a matter of fact, the vocabulary intervention was part of a larger preliminary intervention whose primary goal was to focus on the use of research-based practices to improve the preliterate skills of young children. The researchers practiced systematic approaches through two methods of CAR Talk and Building Bridges. As the result of the research, most teachers in sustainability stage continued to use CAR Talk and they expressed more concerns about small-group reading. Also the results reveal that preschool teachers prefer an explicit focus on vocabulary. According to the researchers, the findings have direct implications for policy makers attempting to improve the pre literacy skills of young children.

In Chapter Nine, a group of four researchers investigates using word-part and context-clues to expand reading vocabulary. In this study Baumann and his colleagues explored the effectiveness of teaching middle-grade students to use root words, prefixes, and suffixes to derive word meanings. Putting the readers in a clear context of the study, the researchers illustrate 3 sample lessons each including verbal explanation, modeling, guided practice and independent practice along with teaching charts of prefix and suffix families and context clues. Finally, the researchers emphasized three crucial points: First, different instructional goals require different teaching strategies. Second, the presented instructional content needs to be expanded across time. Third, the sample lessons are just examples from which teachers might develop their own lessons that match their students' needs and their own instructional goals. Then they stated that effective vocabulary instruction is highly context-dependent.

Part three of the book is devoted to the perspectives on the selection of appropriate words for instruction. Chapter Ten specifically deals with choosing words to teach. Beck and her colleagues divide useful words into three levels of utility, such as Tier one, Tier two, and Tier three. They, for example, claim that Tier one words consist of the most basic words. The researchers believe that words do not need to be completely unfamiliar to students in order to be included in instructional programs, but they can be selected from among those texts whose concepts fit in the text. As a whole, Beck and her colleagues believe that "As long as a word can be explained in known words and can apply to what students might talk or write about, it is an appropriate word to teach."

Chapter Eleven starts by illustrating the relationship between basic reading skills and vocabulary through giving evidence and discusses the number of root word meanings children acquire in different grades. The researcher in this chapter emphasizes the fact that words are learned in the same order even in different populations with different methods of assessments. Biemiller points out a number of studies comparing open-ended and context sentences versus multiple choice method of testing. In addition, she clarifies her findings with the help of figures and tables and addresses two strategies to identify words for instruction. Biemiller believes that words are acquired in a predictable order and reviews a number of studies in order to support his claim. Finally she suggests designing an effective vocabulary curriculum by implementing his findings. In her view, "without knowledge of appropriate target words, it will be extremely difficult to run a program that is worth using classroom time."

Chapter Twelve actually covers the concluding part of the book. Hiebert, in this chapter, seeks an effective, efficient vocabulary for elementary students with the use of the findings obtained from studies in previous chapters. The author focuses on three principles of a vocabulary curriculum for grades one through four, and aims at identifying them as "effective and efficient component" of a vocabulary program. In this process he proposes two phases such as: choosing the overall corpus and identifying words within these overall corpora and illustrates the details through various tables. Then the study presents implications for scholars, policy makers, publishers and teachers. At the end, the researcher recommends further studies on the efficacy of differing amounts of extended reading and direct instruction in students' understanding of the complex vocabulary.

To conclude, the book "*Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*" is a valuable collection of studies coming from a conference sponsored a focus on the US Department of Education which has attracted many researchers in the vocabulary field. It presents many investigations regarding the role of vocabulary in text comprehension. The book is admired for its effective organization of the chapters. Moreover, interested academic group of people in studies on words including graduate students, teachers, researchers, syllabus designers, and material developers will find the book as a rich source in the field of vocabulary studies.

Fariba Haghghi is an MA graduate of TEFL in the Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran. She teaches undergraduate courses in Teaching English as a Foreign Language and English translation courses as well as General English courses at Azad University and the University of Applied Science and Technology (UAST). She has presented some pieces of researches on Teacher Training and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in conferences in Iran and Turkey. She is the coordinator of a project on the development of EAP materials for Iranian university students sponsored by SAMT. Her research interests include second language acquisition, ESL teacher education, ESP, and translation.