



Importance of Dictionary in the Development of Communication Skills

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Abstract

Acquiring vocabulary is a difficult task because students whose mother tongue is not English find some difficulties in the understanding of words. To reduce the difficulty of learning vocabulary, students must search the meaning of the words in the dictionary. By using a dictionary, the students can enhance their understanding and enrich their communication skills. The present paper tries to prove the effects of the dictionary in developing students' vocabulary and the corresponding development of communication skills. Learning vocabulary is a very good way to help the students, especially those students whose mother tongue is not English.

Keywords: *Vocabulary, dictionary.*

The age of artificial intelligence has arrived. Luckily, the prophecies of doom predicting the death of printed dictionaries following the advent of digitalisation have not come true. Millions of copies of various dictionaries of the English language are bought and sold every year all over the world.

Advanced Learner's Dictionary of English has become one of the bestselling books of all time. What Dr. Johnson said of his own dictionary in 1755 holds good even today: "The value of a work must be estimated by its use: It is not enough that a dictionary delights the critic, unless at the same time it instructs the learner". Clearly, the value of a book is estimated by its usefulness for learning. There is general consensus among teachers that dictionary is one of the most important tools of language learning. Terminology in language learning is very crucial and therefore it is required to be taught to every student. When people learn vocabulary, they automatically increase their communication and other skills because vocabulary is a weapon to connect with all other skills. According to Viera, "vocabulary awareness is an indispensable tool for acquiring any language skills" which can be used to understand both written and oral text. By means of vocabulary our perceptiveness of the writing and speaking becomes clear and we are able to comprehend things in a better way. The fact remains that writing and speaking skills always require words. Vocabulary centers on the words and that is why it has an important role in acquiring all language skills. However, vocabulary is not only about to learn about the meaning of the words but it also teaches us about the function of words. It awares us when to use the words in a given situation and scenario. If we understand the meaning and the purpose of the words it can make us enjoy to express our opinions and ideas. On the other hand if the students are confused and have a limited vocabulary, it will create big problems in their writing and speaking. Students with good vocabularies possess better knowledge, their communication is smooth and they excel in their language skills.

If someone is confused about vocabulary and word meanings then it will surely affect their speaking and writing skills. Speaking and writing skills are always needed in every activity that are undertaken by the students. Not only that, if the vocabulary is felt to be difficult by the students then also they can

not be made confident with that particular language. Every student possess a different vocabulary knowledge in his mind since every students has is own limitations. As far as students whose mother tongue is not English will have limited vocabulary. English language poses two kinds of difficulties to the students: one with regard to meaning and the other with regard to the function of words. These are the common problems that are faced by students in learning English especially its vocabulary. According to Dellar H. and Hocking D, Innovations, "if you spend most of your time studying grammar, your English will not improve very much. You will see most improvement if you learn more words and expressions". There are a number of students who feel afraid when they start learning English as they think English is basically acquired by learning grammar although it is not true. In fact English can learnt by enhancing our vocabulary and for it the students must consult a good dictionary.

Dictionary plays a very vital role in all the situations of human life. A dictionary is a treasure trove of words and their meanings. It also tells us how words are pronounced. Thus the dictionary promotes communication in speech and writing. A good dictionary may carry information on the history and development of a word besides notes on grammar-words are invariably classified and designated as parts of speech-usage (often illustrated with example sentences). While headword holds the spot light on the primary word, subsequent entries may throw interesting sidelight on idioms and phrases, synonyms and opposite words.

Clearly a dictionary is not merely a list of inert words in isolation. More importantly the dictionary shows how words can be used in different contexts and collocations. As we speak and write phrases and sentences, we often go beyond the meanings of individual words as meaning also emerge from the interaction of words. It follows that rote learning-cramming a daily dose of words -would be poor approach to expand vocabulary. Looking up a new word in the dictionary carries with it the thrill of discovery. The learner's patience in retrieving the desired information in the dictionary is likely to be rewarded through exciting revelations which come as bonus to the ever hungry seeker. The slow process contextualized learning helps the learner in the imaginative possession of words.

The study pages of some dictionaries include a useful section on formal and informal-letter writing. The model letters carry the latest information on how to write an application for a job, the correct form of a resume (CV) etc. This makes the dictionary an effective resource in learning communication skills. The dictionary thus becomes a standard reference book that allows the learner to use English with confidence and clarity. Communication involves an exchange of ideas and for information between two or more persons/groups. Its success lies in the clear and correct transmission of the message from the sender to the receiver. Theoretically, some form of communication is possible even without the medium of language. The pitfalls inherent in such communication are obvious. For example, meaning may get muddled with error and ambiguity. As we move on to higher levels of sophistication, the importance of accuracy and precision in communication becomes evident. A properly drafted resume (CV) or a polished performance in the interview may be passport to a good job. In the highly competitive corporate culture, the interview is designed as a test of knowledge and personality. A pleasing personality is an asset any day. Here, again, communication skills rule the roost. In fact, communication skills are an integral part of a pleasing personality.

How to choose a dictionary? Many types of dictionaries are available in the market. Going by Dr. Johnson's advice, the usefulness of dictionary is determined the learner's needs. The young leaner may keep his level of attainment in mind. They may seek their teacher's help in making a proper choice. Generally speaking, the prime quality of a good dictionary is that it is learner friendly;

information should be easy to find and use. In view of difficulty encountered by some learners in decoding the symbols used in phonetic transcription, selecting a bilingual dictionary may be useful. Oxford English-English-Hindi Dictionary may be a good option.

For both teachers and students a **good** dictionary is one of the most important books that should be their on our study table. If one wants to buy a dictionary then the best approach is to compare different dictionaries and then to pick up the right one. The following points can be kept in mind while buying a dictionary:

Monolingual or Bilingual: This must be the first consideration while buying a dictionary whether the students wants a monolingual or a bilingual dictionary. A monolingual dictionary is in English only; a bilingual dictionary translates English words into other languages. For learners of English, as a general tenet, a bilingual dictionary is most handy. However it should also be kept in mind that in the long run only the monolingual dictionary will be fruitful and helpful. For teachers also a monolingual dictionary is perhaps most useful. One can use it to search unknown words and also for preparing the lessons.

Learners or Native Speakers: A learner's dictionary always possesses simpler explanations and meanings. This is helpful to the students not only in the classroom but it also help them in creating new sentences on their own. If there are students who use a monolingual dictionary for native speakers there's a possibility that they are not going to understand the explanation they read.

Grammar and Phonetic Information: Another feature of a good dictionary is that it should provide extra information other than the basic definitions or meanings. It should have a pronunciation guide (either in the IPA or the dictionary's own system) and can also incorporate some basic grammar information as well. If it also provides etymological information, then such dictionary has an additional advantage.

Words and Words: One must buy a dictionary that's latest and up to date. Up to date means that it must include latest and new words. We know that technology is moving ahead all the time. The dictionary should also move with the present times be it a British, American, Australian or Canadian or any other variant. As far as teachers are concerned the dictionary should include both British English and American English words and spellings. If the dictionary have idioms, phrasal verbs and so on, then also it is really useful.

Compare the Words: One should pick up a particular word and then look for its meaning and explanation in several different dictionaries. The dictionary that gives the best meaning of that particular word is the best dictionary. One should make list of words that one don't fully understand and then that list should be probed through a good dictionary.

Size of a dictionary is also helpful as it adds to the convinience of it's users. A pocket dictionary may well have just 2,000 or so entries whereas a large single volume dictionary could possess about 300,000. If one is using a dictionary for teaching then the pocket dictionary will be too small and the larger dictionary too big perhaps. If the dictionary is meant only for the students then it must have definitions and examples of the words used in a particular context. The dictionary should also provide reference materials such as verb tables, metric conversions etc. Specialized dictionaries like Business English, scientific English etc are also the variants of dictionaries.



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