

# Vocabulary enrichment through jargon

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Students find it difficult to use the right words at the right place while writing or speaking. There is a paucity of vocabulary among youngsters limited to repetition of words such as “like”, “cool” and “neat”. While teaching rural and semi-urban students, it was found that many words remained dormant in students as passive vocabulary. To overcome this hurdle, the method of jargon recollection, selection and application was practised. Though the results were mixed, some progress was made among learners in bringing the passive vocabulary into an active one.*

*Key words: collaborative work, mnemonic, variety of genre and jargon.*

## **Introduction**

In technical institutions most students originate from rural or semi-urban background. Communication among peers and with their teachers is in vernacular language with English words thrown here and there. Students find it challenging to construct sentences, use right tenses and string words together to make meaningful English sentences. It was found that the most predominant difficulty was that they did not have the right words. Students find conventional methods of learning vocabulary through definition, pronunciation, spelling and grammatical functions, boring and tiresome.

It is a well known fact that people with extensive vocabulary in English are considered good communicators (Denning, et al., 2007). English becomes an elegant

language when appropriate words are used to express what they want to say. This will lead to clarity and brevity of expression. While discussing what causes the learners hesitate to use English in communication, it was found that they do not have the words ready at their command. I wanted to show them that they know the words but they are not using them actively in their daily communication. Hence I conducted the following activities of first recollecting the jargon connected to a particular field.

## **Teaching Procedure**

### **Recollection**

Students were divided into groups of eight. Through pneumonics (association of ideas), learners were asked to recall all the words connected to a game like cricket, a passion among them. They recalled *googly, pitch,*

*spin, pace bowling, wicket keeping, fielder, helicopter shot, mid-wicket, mid-on, off-side*, etc. When conducted as a group activity, many more words were recollected by the students. The words in white circles are passive vocabulary.



Then the students were given an assignment to speak or write about an “Unforgettable Cricket Match Witnessed” or “Cricketing Legend Kapil Dev or Sachin Tendulkar”.

**Selection**

Each group selected words which could be associated with Sachin Tendulkar, namely *excellent batsman, slow bowler, mid-on fielder*, etc.

**Application**

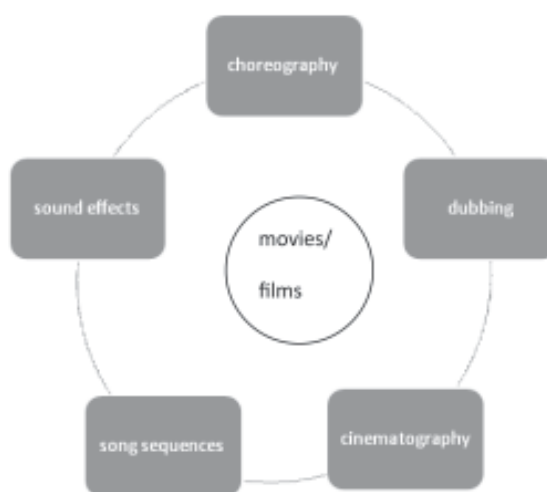
The words were used in their oral or written composition thus bringing the passive vocabulary into active use. Similarly, learners were asked to sit together and jot down all the words associated with films and movies (another burning topic among

students). Passive words like *computer graphics, cinematography, choreography, stunt scenes, sound effects, song sequences, dubbing, directorial efforts*, etc., were bandied about.

**Exercise 1:** A video of a one-day cricket match between India and Australia was played mute. The students were asked to watch the match, take turns and give the commentary.

**Exercise 2:** A video clipping of a recipe was shown and students were instructed to write the ingredients and the procedure for making the dish.

**Exercise 3:** Students were shown a movie and asked to write a review.



Topics like “Usage of Computer Graphics in Cinematography”, “K. Balachander’s Perception of Relationships” and “Shahrukh Khan’s Negative Roles” were given for discussion. Students went through the process of selection and application of words.

Similar exercises can be given using legal, technical, computer/digital, banking/ investment jargon. As the process of learning is collaborative, non-threatening and fun-filled, maximum learning takes place (Chih-Ming & Yi-Lun, 2010). This method also reduces anxiety among Indian learners (Sheorey, 2006). It was found that in some students there was an augmentation of vocabulary acquisition, whereas in others many passive words came into active vocabulary use. I would like to emphasize here that words from different genre and fields should be recalled, selected and applied by students if there is to be an enhancement of their English vocabulary.

### **Conclusion**

Exercises such as those discussed above help students in establishing previously met

vocabulary, and enriching them. They also help the learners in developing vocabulary strategies and developing fluency with known vocabulary. Some students internalized the words making them part of their active vocabulary.

### **References**

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