Transcript: Learning and Teaching Vocabulary

Length of Talk: 48 minutes

Presenter: Robert Woore

# Slide 1 (0.41):

Hello everyone, it’s Robert Woore again here from Oxford University Department of Education. In this video, I am going to give a short overview of some of the research that underpins the NCELP approach to teaching and learning vocabulary in a foreign language. We are going to look at what it means to know a word, how many words learners of a foreign language need to know, should know, ought to know? Which words they need to know? Then look at some approaches for how we can effectively teach and learn foreign language vocabulary. I hope it is useful.

# Slide 2 (0.43):

On this slide, you can see a list of what we are going to cover in the presentation. The slides that we present here are basically a copy of the ones that we shared with Hub teachers at the initial TRG (Teacher Research Group) meetings and so this is a way of catching up for any of those who missed those or those who might be new to the project. What I am going to do is provide a voiceover for some of the slides just to give a bit of commentary and context and background. Then after that please just move onto the next slide when you are ready to do so.

# Slide 3 (0.26):

What we did next in the TRG was ask people in groups or pairs to think about this question: “what is it to know a word?” In other words, we wanted people to reflect on all of the different aspects involved in word knowledge but if you just go onto the next slide…

# Slide 4 (0.32):

..we wanted to make the task a bit more concrete so we suggested that people take a specific word and we think “fish” is quite a good one to try this with. Stick it in the middle of a sheet of paper and then write on there all of the different things that you can think of that you know about this English word “fish”. Obviously, people did this in groups or pairs but it might be interesting just to take a few moments with a blank sheet of paper to try this exercise.

# Slide 5 (2.06):

To borrow the Blue Peter phrase, “here is one I prepared earlier”, and it shows and this exercise was designed to show just how much we know about a given word beyond what we might initially think of. I know the word and its meaning but beyond that, as well as the meaning and the written form and the spoken form of the word, we as a native speaker of English, I know a lot more about the word than that. I know how to use it, “he fishes”/ “he is fishing” or as the noun, “there are two fish.” I know the plural form and in this case, it is irregular. I know various derived forms of which there are a few at the top there “fishing, fishermen, fishing rod”. I know the adjective “fishy” and I know that that has a particular register, it is attached to a particular register, so it is a colloquial term it is not something I’d put in a formal essay. I might know facts about fish, types of fish. I might know something about the etymology of the word and its links to other words which in turn I can link to other words I know, like ‘pescatarian’ for example. I know some translations of the word and it’s interesting that as shown here sometimes the translations will differ depending on the specific meaning I am translating. I might know synonyms. I know metaphorical uses, I know that I can “fish for fish” but I can also “fish for complements”. We could keep going, couldn’t we? We could end up with an enormous mind map emanating out from that word. This exercise problematizes for us what we mean by knowing a word, it is clear that it is not just a simple “yes I know that word” or “I don’t know that word”. There are layers of knowledge about words.

# Slide 6 (0.46):

Just before moving on, I forgot to say and I meant to say in relation to the previous slide that that exercise might be one that is appropriate to do with children in class to raise awareness of that question: “what is it to know a word?”. I think we need to take even a further step back at this point, we have been asking “what it is to know a word?”, but we also actually need to ask: “what do we mean by a word in the first place?” As a further exercise, we would invite you to look at the text below in the box and just think about how many words it contains. In the process of doing that, think about any issues that this raises in terms of defining what a word is.

# Slide 7 (1.45):

Hopefully that was an interesting exercise. At one level, we could just say there are seventy words in that text, I just copied and pasted it into Word and it said that the word count was seventy. That is counting the individual tokens, the individual words that are in the box, but we quickly run into questions don’t we? for example the word “the” occurs six times in there and the word “children” occurs three times, so do I count those as the same word or separate words? I’ve got “asked” in the beginning there as a verb, but then I’ve got “a big ask” with “ask" as a noun. Is that the same or different? I’ve got the verb “to read”, firstly is “to read” one word or is that two words “to” and “read”. Later on, I’ve got “read”, obviously that is part of the same verb. Do I count that separately or differently? I’ve got various words derived from read, like “readers” and “readable”. They clearly have a relationship with each other which simply counting them all as separate words doesn’t quite capture. Further down, I’ve put in green “help each other out”, so “help out”, that’s interesting because the words are separated, they are several words apart but clearly they are a phrasal verb “help out”. So, do I count that as “one” or “two”? Also “had begun” in the mauve colour, do I count “had” as a separate word even though it is part of the verb form there of the verb “begin”? Those are sorts of the kinds of questions you might have encountered.

# Slide 8 (1.31):

Fortunately, we have some more precise terminology that can help us to address these dilemmas. Sorry about that pun. First, we have “lemma” meaning the dictionary form so “to read” and we might look that up in a bilingual dictionary and find “lesen” or “lirer”. Then we have the term “lexeme” meaning the abstract unit of meaning which includes all of the different forms of a given word so the lemma plus all its inflected forms such as “reads” “he reads” “she is reading” “she has read” and obviously being able to form those depends on the learner’s knowledge of inflectional morphology but if I have that knowledge and I look up a regular verb then I can create or recognise those different inflected forms without needing to learn them as individual units. Thirdly, we have the term “word family” which consists of a base word and all its derived and inflected terms which can be understood by a learner without having to learn each form separately. Again, that does depend on the learner’s knowledge of the morphology. In that previous passage, the word “readable” for example, if you know the word “read” and you know what the suffix “-able” does then you can understand that word “readable" and you could understand “unreadable”.

# Slide 9 (0.58):

Having said all that, we think it is useful to think in terms of three core components of word knowledge: the meaning; the orthographic form, or written form, and that is conventionally represented inside those angled brackets; and thirdly the phonological form or spoken form, conventionally represented between slashes and written there using the IPA or International Phonetic Alphabet. For each of those we need to think about both receptive knowledge and productive knowledge. In other words, take the orthographic form <fish> for example. Receptive knowledge of that means I see it written there and I recognise it and I can access the meaning from that and productive knowledge would be I’ve got the meaning “fish” in mind and I want to convey it in written form, can I write it? Can I type it or write it?

# Slide 10 (1.17):

Yet another way in which people have tackled the question of “what is it to know a word?” is to think about three dimensions of vocabulary knowledge: breadth, depth, and fluency. On the horizontal axis here we have breadth, which is how many words you might know irrespective of how well you might know them or what you know about them. Then we have depth on the vertical axis, which is what we were getting at with the fish example earlier when we thought of all the different things we knew about the word, different things to do with register, synonyms, derived forms, etymology perhaps, etc. Then we have the third axis which is fluency which is also really important which is how readily we can access words when we need them, either for language comprehension or production. Of course, ultimately, we want that to be really fluent, automatic, so that our working memory is not spent, used up, in the process of trying to recall words, that we’ve got them at our fingertips in other words. Then we can focus on communicating, comprehending, and producing the meanings we want to communicate.

# Slide 11 (0.48):

Paul Nation, who is a well-known researcher in the field of vocabulary knowledge, has also tacked this question of “what is it to know a word?” and has come up with this grid, this typology of different aspects of word knowledge. It has been said that this is the nearest thing we have to a definitely list of “what is means to know a word”. I won’t read it all out, I’ll leave you to read through it but you can see that it is broken down into these three large categories: form, meaning, and use. And each of those is broken down into a further three categories. On the right, you can see these pairs of questions, “R” and “P”, in each case “R” and “P”. They stand for receptive and productive knowledge which we looked at earlier, I think it was slide 9.

# Slide 12 (1.23):

Finally, and unfortunately, we don’t have time to go into this in any depth, but we just wanted to mention formulaic sequences or chunks of words that hang together, that colocate together and which, as you can see in this definition here, appear to be prefabricated, that is learners appear to store them as wholes and retrieve them as wholes from their memory. For example, “how are you” probably isn’t constructed each time from the three separate lexical items “how” “are” “you”. It is just stored and retrieved as a unit. In a sense, we could say that is like a word: “how are you”. This applies also to idioms and obviously sometimes the meaning of an idiom is not transparent, for example “raining cats and dogs”. You many know all of those four individual words “raining” “cats” “and” “dogs” and yet you may not understand the meaning of that idiom as a whole so we just have to bear these things in mind, so actually in a text full of idioms—“raining cats and dogs”, for example—knowing the individual words themselves isn’t necessarily enough, it is also knowing how they hang together and function as a unit.

# Slide 13 (1.58):

We’ve spent awhile exploring some of the background to vocabulary knowledge and we’ve thought about the question “what is it to know a word?” and we want to move on now to think about how many words a learner actually needs to know. In the blue box here we have a simplified model of communicative competence where communicative competence is what you can do with the language in a given skill, for example reading comprehension or communicating through speaking and so on. We see that here, albeit in this simplified model, as compromising two things. On the one hand, your linguistic knowledge and that includes vocabulary knowledge so what you know of the language. Secondly, your self-regulated behaviour so essentially what you do with the linguistic knowledge you’ve got and how effectively you use it, that would include communication strategies. If you think of when you are reading something and you come across a word or a string of words you don’t know, can you use strategies to work out the meaning of the missing words? When you are speaking and you can’t think of a word, you get around it by perhaps using paraphrase or some other kind of strategy. If anyone knows the board-game Taboo, it’s that sort of idea, you are not allowed to say certain words so can you think of strategies to get around those words, other ways of saying what you are trying to say. Because in this model we do have strategic behaviour, that model helps us to understand that actually vocabulary knowledge isn’t everything. If we don’t know a given word there are things we can do to get around it, to cope, to manage to communicate anyway. But vocabulary knowledge is clearly vitally important.

# Slide 14 (1.10):

How many words do learners need to know in a foreign language? Can we put a figure on it? Fabio Capello in 2011 when he was England manager he said this: “If I need to speak about the economy, I can’t speak. But when you speak about tactics you don’t use a lot of words. Maximum 100”. It’s quite an interesting quotation actually because it makes clear that the answer to the question, “how many words do you need to know?”, depends on what you want to do with them. He did put a figure on it here, when talking about football tactics 100 words will do. Obviously, it is a light-hearted example and a way into this question but what we would encourage you to do now if you have time is to spend a few moments thinking about the question, “how many words do you think a learner needs to know in a foreign language?” Can you put a figure on it? What are you aiming for with your own learners. A secondary question is, “do you think vocabulary knowledge is more important for some skills than others?” We invite you to just pause there and try to come up with an answer to those questions.

# Slide 15 (1.57):

To help us answer these questions then beyond our own intuition we are going to turn to Professor Jim Milton from Swansea University who wrote a paper called “Measuring the contribution of vocabulary knowledge to proficient in the four skills”. If you would like to read a summary of that paper, there is a publicly available summary in the OASIS database. If you google “[oasis-database.org](http://oasis-database.org)" or if you type that into your browser, you should get to the OASIS website and if you search “Milton” “2013” you should find the summary of this paper, it is an interesting paper to read and the summary, like all the OASIS summaries, is just a single-side so quick to read and digest. But what Milton talks about in that paper is that a) there is a significance correlation between vocabulary size and proficiency level, in other words the higher proficiency you are as a language user, the higher your vocabulary will be, the more words you know. B) vocabulary knowledge is a strong predictor of performance in all four skills so it explains up to around 50% in variance in the performance of all the skills, it is important for reading, for listening, for speaking, for writing. Also, breadth (we looked earlier at these three-way, three axises, on that diagram) so breadth, depth and speed or fluency or automaticity are all important in predicting language performance.

You can sum it up, as one might expect to sum up: “generally speaking, the more words a learner knows, the more they are likely to know about them, and the better they are likely to perform, whatever the skill” (Milton 2013: 71).

# Slide 16 (1.33):

This table here is taken from that Milton (2013) paper drawing on data from a previous study by Milton (2010) in which a very large sample of learners of English, I think there were around 10,000 learners of English as a foreign language in Greece. He took both a vocabulary size measure, the vocabulary breadth measure—that is the XLex in the right-hand column, and they took exams linked to the CEFR levels (that’s the Common European Framework levels). We can see that the more proficient the learners are, as we move down the table from A1 towards C2, the more proficient they are the more vocabulary they know, until we get to the C2 level we’ve got learners who are estimated to know 4,500 to 5,000 of the 5,000 most frequent English words. I guess in fact they could have known more because the test only measures up to 5,000. It is interesting to think about where GCSE learners might be in here so if the GCSE at higher grades is intended to map onto around A2 level then that is suggesting that learners should be knowing around 1,500 to 2,500 words. So it is interesting to reflect on whether we think that currently our GCSE students know that number of words in a foreign language.

# Slide 17 (2.27):

The table in this slide is taken from another one of Jim Milton’s studies (2006), this time the study was done in a UK MFL context. Here we have got a table showing the relationship between A-level grades and vocabulary sizes again as measured by the XLex test. Obviously you can see from the number column that the number of participants was much much smaller than in that previous study. Nonetheless, we can see that there is a positive correlation between vocabulary size and and A-level grades. In other words, the higher the grade a student achieves, the higher their vocabulary, the more words they know, the higher their vocabulary size. It is noteworthy that the levels of vocabulary knowledge here are rather low compared to, if we think about that previous study, you’ve got someone here achieving a top grade at A-level with 2,500 words in vocabulary size.

That in fact is one of Milton’s arguments in this article, that students in the UK seems to have rather low level of vocabulary knowledge given the intended CEFR equivalents of their exams. It is an interesting paper to look at and again I think there is a summary, a publicly available summary, on the OASIS website. The other thing to note is that there is actually quite a big range, so although the mean vocabulary size for students getting a grade ‘A’ was roughly 2,500 actually it ranged from 2,100 to 3,250 so that is fairly big range, that perhaps makes us think of that diagram we had earlier where communicative competence, what you can do with the language, depends not only on your linguistic knowledge but how effectively you deploy that knowledge. Of course, there may be some other factors in here like exam technique and all kinds of other factors. Nonetheless, the principle point we wanted to make through this table was that there is, again, a positive correlation between vocabulary size and performance in the A-level exam.

# Slide 18 (3:46):

There has been lots of research looking into what levels of vocabulary you need in order to comprehend written text. Actually, findings in this area have converged on a fairly well-known figure which is that you need to know roughly 95% of the words in a written text in order to comprehend that text adequately. We call this your lexical coverage of the text, in other words the proportion of words in a text that you know. Of course, it all depends on your definition of adequate and that does differ from study to study. But assuming we take 95% coverage as the level needed for adequate comprehension and we are taking about general academic kinds of texts then that equates to knowing around about 4-5,000 word families. If we think back to what we said earlier about word families that actually obviously adds up to a much larger number of individual words. People have also suggested that rather for ‘adequate’ for ‘optimal’ comprehension which might be seen as the ability to read something independently and understand it then the figures are 98% coverage which equates to 8,000 word families. That always strikes me as such an enormously high figure however we have to bear in mind a few things, first of all you can compensate for gaps in knowledge using strategic behaviour, dictionaries and so forth and we talked about that earlier. Secondly, all words are not equal you get a lot of bang for your buck, a lot of text coverage with higher frequency words because by definition they are the words that recur, that come up frequently in texts. If we start with the high frequency words then we will be left with a smaller number of lower frequency words to look up or to work out through strategies.

I would also add another point in here, I don’t think that these 95% and 98% figures should put us off working with more challenging texts with learners because there is a difference between saying “go away and read this independently” and “let’s work on this together in class”. So, I think we can immediately expand our horizons in terms of texts by providing appropriate support and scaffolding and modelling and working together but that’s not for this presentation. Point 3 here, for spoken language, less vocabulary knowledge is needed, less of a breadth of vocabulary, and that is because spoken language tends to not use as many low frequency words, it is less formal, there is more repetition and so you have been found to need less breadth of vocabulary to get the same level of coverage as spoken text. On the other hand, of course, actually there are serious challenges in listening to spoken language—in segmenting the speech stream, in recognizing the words within this flow of speech that is coming towards us and speeding past us—at least in written language the words are frozen on the page, they are isolated between spaces, and then we have time to look them up, to think about them, to strategize, and try and work out the ones we don’t know.

# Slide 19 (3.12):

In this interesting diagram, we can see some of those points from the previous slide made visual and made concrete. So what the graph shows is the percentage of coverage of a given text, that’s the y-axis, which is achieved by knowing words of given frequency bands. So here you’ve got the 500 most frequent words of the language, from here left-wards the 1000 most frequent words of the language and so on. So, there is sort of an interesting threshold here, if we picked 2000 words, you can see that if we rule upwards we get up here, we are getting towards 90-95% coverage of the kinds of texts that occurs in general conversation. The middle one with the squares is more formal speech and then the triangles is written language. You can see actually with 2000 words we are still only getting around 70% coverage of written texts but as we said with written texts you do have more time and leisure to look at the words, try and work out the ones we don’t know, look them up and so forth but I think one of the reasons we wanted to show this slide is that if you look down the left-hand side here how quickly, how steeply the curves rise, so by moving up within the first hundred, 200, 300 words you quickly get a lot of text coverage and that is what we meant by covering the highest frequency words you get a lot of bang for your buck. One of the things we have been concerned about is that up until now some MFL courses have taught children various words for different topics but many not cover and have secure knowledge of some of the highest frequency words in the language.

We’ve got another quotation down here from Milton (2009) where he says that knowing less than a 1000 words of a foreign language is probably insufficient for comprehension even in spoken language unless communication is of the most formulaic kind, such as greetings, or lacking in any specific or specialized content. A thousand is roundabout here. So, if we take the graph together with that quotation we are saying that we really want learners to know more than about 1000 words and we are saying that you are getting quite a long way with knowledge of about 2000 words, certainly when you bare in mind that you can also compensate for gaps in your knowledge with effective strategic behaviour.

# Slide 20 (0.40):

What have we covered so far? If you have time we would invite you to think over, think back over, what we’ve covered up until now and just try and summarize some of the key points that stood of for you as important or as worth of note. And in a second when you click onto the next slide you’ll see the summary that we’ve suggested of the key points so far and we’ve come up with a set of six key points. When you are ready have a look at our summary so far on the next slide.

# Slide 21

No audio.

# Slide 22 (1.26)

So we come now to our next question: “which words do learners need to know?” We’ve begun to address this question as we’ve gone alone, as we’ve been making the case for the importance of pupils mastering the highest frequency words of the language which are central to communication. For example, we could think back to that slide in particular with the graph that showed that the highest frequency words of the language give a lot of bang for buck in terms of text coverage for example. But do pupils currently know, do they thoroughly master those high frequency words? Well of course it may be the case that some do, yes, but we would be worried that many traditional topic-based courses may not really promote mastery of that high frequency vocabulary because they might instead focus on some fairly unusual, some infrequent, specialised terms such as words for particular pets, or free-time activities, or what have you. So, there are a couple of quotations to read through on this page that make this case, the first one is from the pedagogy review by the teaching school council and the second one from this article by Häcker (2011) with the really memorable title “Eleven pets and twenty ways to express one’s opinion” so if you just have a read through of those and move on when ready.

# Slide 23 (0.51):

Just to make that point a little bit more concrete, you’ll find that on this slide the pictures of six animals which might feasible come up when doing the topic of pets. We would just invite you to take a few moments to just reflect on how frequent the words for these animals are in the French language. In particular, we’ve been talking about the importance of the 2000 most frequent words of the language. So, do you think any of the names of these animals fall within that top 2000 most frequent words? If not, where do you think they might fall? Just have a think about those questions and then on the next slide we will reveal the frequency of those words according to this frequency dictionary by Lonsdale and Le Bras (2009).

# Slide 24 (1.14):

Here are the answers. I’m not sure how well they match what your intuitions were but you can see here that actually based on this reference source (Lonsdale and Le Bras) the only one of those words that is in the 2000 most frequent words of French is “chien". Then the next one which often surprises people is “cheval” then we’ve got “chat” “souris” “lapin” and “serpent” being pretty low frequency. If we are having as a target the 2000 most frequent words to actually go up to words that are getting on towards 6000, they are pretty infrequent words and so they are probably not going to come up very often. Of course, they would be important if you are someone who owns a “lapin” or a “serpent” as a pet because you may well want to talk about it. Actually, that is important to those particular pupils and that is something that they can be encouraged to find out about or look up, but you can teach them without making it a real focus of vocabulary learning and testing for the whole class.

# Slide 25 (1.42):

Again, we haven’t got the time to spend long on this but we just wanted to show you this quite interesting tool. If you go to this web address [here](http://www.lextutor.ca) you’ll find this tool for analysing the frequency of words in a particular text and we think that is quite useful because it just helps us to be aware of the frequency of words contained in the materials we are using with our pupils. It is quite quick and easy, you can just copy and paste. So if you took this text which I can’t actually remember now where that came from, but if you copy and paste this text you can see (we are not counting the word “Poitiers” because that’s a proper noun). If you copy and paste the text into this website it will analyse for you the frequency of the words it contains. By K-1 words it means the words that are in the 1000 most frequent words of French and they are in blue and if you go down here you can see these are the ones that are written in blue. Then you’ve got the words between 1000 and 2000 most frequent words, those are in green, we’ve got “habite” “cafés” “stade”. Then we’ve got the 2000–3000 frequency band. And actually the least frequent word in this text is “loisirs”, it is in the 3000-4000 word band. So that is actually quite an interesting tool to play around with and I think quite illuminating often to see what kind of, what the frequency is of the vocabulary is in texts we are using with classes.

# Slide 26 (0.53):

We do have another concern about topic based approaches, as well as the fact that they may lead us to focus upon relatively low frequency words at the expense of higher frequency words, and that relates to the word classes of the vocabulary that is taught. Through analyses of textbooks and schemes of work we think that there is evidence that there may be a predominance of nouns and adjectives, lists of nouns and adjectives, and rather less attention being paid to verbs. We think that it is really important for pupils to build a strong verb lexicon which then lays the foundation for them to manipulate language and to create sentences of their own. There is a quotation here again from the pedagogy review for you to read through which again summarizes that point.

# Slide 27 (1.32):

This slide expands a little further on some of the problems of topic-based teaching. I won’t read through this whole slide but fairly characteristic of the topic-based approach might be, as identified in the first slide, having lists of nouns that fit a particular slot so if we look at this German example here: “Ich spiele gern Fußball…Ich spiele gern Tennis” and so forth. In those sentences only the noun is changing so that is what is likely to be salient and attractive to the learner’s attention whereas they might be less likely to focus on the really important first two words, the pronoun and the conjugated verb, which is something we really want them to attend to and to focus on. There is also the problem that vocabulary can remain penned in silos, topic-based silos, pupils learn words associated with a given topic and that’s it, those words remain in that topic. They move onto a new topic but they leave the words behind in the old topic as it were. So they either don’t think to, or perhaps don’t have much opportunity to, transfer those words to a new topic. To address some of these problems, the NCELP’s scheme of work tries to introduce lists of words which contain varied word classes, so not simply lists of nouns and adjectives, but actually a mixture of different word classes.

# Slide 28 (1.40):

The final question we said we’d address is: “how can learners best learn vocabulary and how can teachers best teach vocabulary?” There is another quotation here from our friend Jim Milton which says: “current methods and approaches to language teaching fail to consider how vocabulary should be systematically built into the curriculum.” We think that is a useful quotation to bear in mind when looking at a scheme of work. We can think about how is vocabulary systematically being built into that scheme of work. Some key questions are: “which words are being introduced and why?” So we have already looked at what we think is important which is a focus on high frequency words, words of different classes but secondly, how is the vocabulary knowledge being consolidated through planned and spaced repetition so in other words it is not enough to cover the words once but we have to make sure they are effectively recycled regularly throughout the curriculum.

There is another quotation here from Robert Schmitt which says: “most vocabulary tasks focus their attention almost solely on introducing the meaning of new words.” We looked earlier at all the different dimensions and aspects of word knowledge and actually given that, it is not surprising that different tasks may be needed to promote those different aspects of word knowledge so different tasks may be needed for developing breadth (learning new words), depth (consolidating and extending word knowledge) and fluency (in other words getting learners to use words more quickly and more automatically).

# Slide 29 (1.03)

Norbert Schmitt, who like Nation and like Milton, is a big name is second-language vocabulary research suggests that there are four learning partners in pupil’s endeavour to learn foreign language vocabulary and it is obviously a big endeavour, we’ve talked about 2000 words while that is a lot of words to learn. He says it is important that all of these four partners are actively engaged in that lexical learning task, so the task of developing pupil’s vocabulary knowledge. We’ve actually added a fifth partner, parents. We think that is also important, parental engagement if possible and we’ve also added here, technology, because actually we think there is a strong role for technology platforms like ‘Memorise’ or ‘Quizlet’ to assist in vocabulary learning, particularly in terms of spaced repetition of vocabulary and so NCELP would encourage the use of that kind of platform to assist with vocabulary development.

# Slide 30 (0.50)

On this slide, there are a few ideas for developing each of those aspects of word knowledge: breadth (that’s the initial form meaning mapping), depth (consolidating and extending) and thirdly, fluency. I’ll just let you read that through because I think it is clear enough without me reading it all out but we would just like to focus on this first bullet-point here, we would just like to amplify that a little bit. So, we think for the initial form meaning mapping that L1 translation can be a very efficient way of doing this, rather than excluding the L1 from the classroom, using pictures and so forth, actually it can be very quick and unambiguous just to tell pupils the translation of the word.

# Slide 31 (1.52):

So, we’ve already mentioned this but recycling is very important, not only for the environment, but also for vocabulary learning, in other words it is crucial that there is systematic re-visiting, recycling, reusing of words that have already been covered, that those words are nurtured and that that knowledge grows rather than just being covered once and the disappearing off into the learner’s past. It is unlikely that a textbook can really do that justice so it is a really important feature of the scheme of work and of the teachers’ teaching that there is that revising and recycling of vocabulary. So, the NCELP’s scheme of work does build in that careful planned repetition on a principle of repeating stuff roughly within a week, then within in a month, and then within a term, and then within a year as a rough rule of thumb. I think this quotation at the bottom, again from Robert Schmitt is really memorable especially these last few lines: “Recycling has to be consciously built into vocabulary learning programs, and teachers must guard against presenting lexical items once and then forgetting about them, or else their students will likely do the same”. I think that is a really useful and important quotation. Of course, it is also likely that if there is a classroom where there is plenty of rich spontaneous interaction in the target language or the use of authentic interesting texts, beyond the sort of texts simply designed to practice particularly topics then it is likely that there will automatically be a recycling of higher frequency words because by definition there the words that occur in everyday language.

# Slide 32 (2.16):

We also think it is really important to remember that vocabulary knowledge develops incrementally so we saw earlier near the beginning of the presentation that there are many different aspects to vocabulary knowledge, for example the spoken form, the written form, the receptive and productive knowledge, depth, and of course, fluency which will take many uses of the word, many encounters with the word, to develop. In other words, we can’t think of word knowledge, of knowing a word, as an all-or-nothing phenomenon, it’s not binary. It is not like when you learn a word you flick a light switch and the light comes on, we could say it is more like that gradual increase in sun that happens when the sun rises in the morning. It means we can think in terms of a continuum of word knowledge ranging from the very minimal end from “ooh I think I’ve seen that word before” so that does indicate some knowledge of the word or “ooh I think I’ve heard that before” to the other end of the continuum “I can use this word accurately, spontaneously and fluently” in my speech or writing. And, of course, there is a whole range of positions in between these two poles.

We suggested here that being able to use a word appropriately either in speech or writing is a useful rule of thumb for mastering that word, though of course development may continue to develop as you become more and more fluent in using it and increasing your depth of knowledge of that word. We have to, I think, try to bear that in mind when we are assessing pupil’s vocabulary knowledge, it has implications for testing because if you imagine you gave a test where you asked pupil’s to translate a word—“what is the French for this word?”—maybe they can’t do that so they get zero, they leave it blank and they get zero points. But actually, they may well have some knowledge of that word perhaps just a bit further down the continuum and so I do think it is useful to try to think about ways that that partial knowledge of words, that developing knowledge of words, can be rewarded and validated.

# Slide 33 (0.20):

Thinking about receptive versus productive knowledge, there is some evidence that developing receptive knowledge doesn’t in its self automatically, necessarily, lead to the development of productive knowledge so that means that some structured productive practice is going to be helpful for improving language production.

# Slide 34 (0.14):

Here you will find list again taken from Norbert Schmitt of factors that he believes will facilitate vocabulary learning. Again, I won’t read all of those out I’ll just let you read through that list.

# Slide 35 (0.54):

We can summarize that whole list rather neatly, or rather Norbert Schmitt summarizes it for us rather neatly. In this first bullet point here where he says that overall, it seems that virtually anything at all that leads to more exposure, more attention, more manipulation, or more time spent on lexical items adds to their learning. And in the second bullet point, also important, he says the variety of factors which affect vocabulary learning, and actually also if we think of the many different aspects of word knowledge which we looked at earlier, that means there will never be one best teaching methodology but that means we can take this to meta-principle as our guiding principle, we want to maximize sustained engagement with words, with new words, and with consolidating words that learners have already met. And he says that appears to underlie all effective vocabulary learning.

# Slide 36 (0.30)

That brings us just about to the end of the presentation, so at this point if you have the time and the inclination we would invite you to think back and reflect on the key points of all that we’ve covered. On the next couple slides, when you are ready, you’ll find the list that we came up with so we distilled what we’ve covered into 15 key points and you’ll find those on the following two slides.

# Slides 37-38

No audio.

# Slide 39 (0.43):

In this presentation, we sought to explore the research underpinning and the rationale for the NCELP approach to vocabulary teaching and in particular we set out to address four key questions which were:

* “what is it to know a word?”
* “how many words do pupils need to know?”
* “which words do they need to know?”
* “how can we best promote pupils’ vocabulary learning?”

I hope you feel we have addressed those questions adequately and we leave you here on this final slide with some questions to reflect on in your own context. We hope that the presentation has been interesting and useful and thank you very much for listening.