

# Implementation of Contextual Vocabulary at the Tertiary Level: Learner and Instructor Perspective

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DOI: [10.55559/sjahss.v2i10.169](https://doi.org/10.55559/sjahss.v2i10.169)

Received: 30.08.2023 | Accepted: 02.10.2023 | Published: 06.10.2023

## Electronic reference (Cite this article):

Khan, A., & Roy, S. (2023). Implementation of Contextual Vocabulary at the Tertiary Level: Learner and Instructor Perspective. *Sprin Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(09), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.55559/sjahss.v2i10.169>

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## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to assess the different methods for students to implement newly acquired vocabulary in an academic context, while simultaneously discussing the strategies teachers can follow to guide them, by exploring the driving theories behind contextual learning in SLA. Both qualitative and quantitative data were obtained in order to ensure optimal results. For the primary data, a survey containing a series of inquiries was given out to tertiary-level students and for the teachers, a series of one-to-one interviews were held from three differently ranked universities, in order to collect adequate data. For the secondary data collection, a staggering number of peer-reviewed journal articles were used. The results show that learners can overcome the challenges by self-motivating themselves to practice implementing retained vocabulary in the context of their ongoing academics, cooperating with their peers, and using technology within or outside the classroom. Additionally, the teachers should better facilitate their students by identifying the best teaching methodologies based on the pre-existing background knowledge and skill level of each of the students.

**Keywords:** *vocabulary development, contextual learning, SLA, learning theory*

## Introduction

Vocabulary refers to the collected range of words, available within a learner's intellectual arsenal, which they can freely use to express or communicate thoughts and emotions. Humans begin to collect words from a very young age cognitively and as they grow up, with the addition and navigation of new vocabulary their language capabilities also increase. Hence it is at the tertiary level that students are introduced to a series of challenging

scholarly terms and vocabularies. The more vocabulary a learner is able to acquire and appropriately use to express complex theories and studies in the context of academia, the more their proficiency in L2 increases. This is why in order to achieve academic growth and intellect a wide range of vocabulary is absolutely necessary. This is not only true for personal language development but also academically as well. To pursue even higher levels of academia, tertiary-level learners should be more self-motivated to develop their own vocabulary and not be content with their current skill sets. Teachers should also put more emphasis on the importance of vocabulary development and develop new strategies to help guide the learners to implement the new vocabulary they come into contact with through their selected courses.

A person's vocabulary is often a conscious choice made to make the speaker or writer appear in a certain way, usually to please a certain number of people. This situation can concur both in academic and personal settings. During a student's ventures at the tertiary level, they often come across a plethora of foreign vocabulary they till then were unaware of existing. This can indeed be somewhat overwhelming to come across multiple sets of academic vocabulary in the contents of various courses. Some are able to cognitively comprehend the meaning and usage of the words while others simply ignore them and opt for simpler synonyms. A general lack of academic vocabulary leads the students to be unable to accurately portray the knowledge they have acquired, which ultimately leads to unprofessionalism. This phenomenon often leads to the conclusion that a short vocabulary range indicates a person's low intelligence or cognitive thinking capacity. This will cause difficulties, not only in their general lives but in their academics as well. So, to prevent this from happening, this paper aims to identify the challenges that the learners are facing in implementing intricate vocabulary within the context of academic studies and how teachers can better help them overcome them.

According to Mehring (2006), even though it was unjustly overlooked in the past, within the last few years, vocabulary has become viewed as an important aspect of second language learning, in fact, he stated that many believe it is just as important as the main skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Vocabulary comprehension and application is a life-long continuous process that requires a staggering amount of revision and discipline. Sometimes learners are not even consciously aware when the comprehension of vocabulary is happening after repeated exposure to certain words in day-to-day life. Hall (2022) claimed that we learn a variety of vocabulary from the streets. With the passage of time, learners are introduced to a huge amount of new vocabulary both in academic and social settings. Just like every other aspect of life, language also gets complicated, and more profound and complex vocabulary is needed to correctly comprehend these complex academic topics and identify a person's intellectual capability. For the purpose of completing their academic education, while competing with their national and international peers at the graduation and post-graduation levels, a learner must develop their command over their vocabulary especially while writing and speaking.

## **Review of Literature**

A great amount of self-discipline along with motivation goes into developing a wide range of vocabulary and requires gradual practice over a long period of time. Each tertiary-level student comes with a previously established base knowledge which they tend to fall

back on. Hence, Shanahan (2016) stated past researchers were not enamored with the idea of teaching vocabulary especially not at the tertiary level. As times progressed so did the mindset of the scholars regarding the necessity of increasing one's diction and thus the study of vocabulary acquisition and development began. The initial way to start teaching would be to build a strong foundation based on their base knowledge of words. Students with previous work knowledge, morphological awareness, and lexical competence are capable of representing unfamiliar (i.e., newly discovered) words in their academic studies, McKeown (2018). However, vocabulary is not a one-trick pony, each student, especially those at the tertiary level is different in terms of what methods and strategies work best for them. Depending on the base level of the student's skills, a costume blended method may be needed. According to Lu (2013) in an experiment where students were asked to read alone, they were not able to retain the meaning. Then they were asked to read and complete a worksheet of fill-in the banks which they were able to properly complete however the next week they could not redo the worksheet. Another group of students was asked to read and then make sentences with their unfamiliar vocabulary and a week later they were still able to obtain the meaning. By obtaining and cognitively comprehending the meaning of the word it becomes possible to use it in an academic context. The approach of directly teaching learners a selected group of vocabulary, in an active way, is called the direct method which is considered the most traditional way of learning and teaching vocabulary. Grumann (1917) claimed that teachers should teach it so thoroughly that it cannot be forgotten readily.

However, researchers argue that the problem with this strategy is that the learners are forced to rely solely on memory, leading them to not understand the meanings, purpose, or contextual usage of the words. This method may show signs of working for short-term memory functions but ultimately cannot ensure it will be retained in a learner's long-term memory deposit. Mehring (2006) directly argued that by stating, vocabulary acquisition is not something a student can spend time learning or memorizing, like grammar, and be successful. This offers a fresh perspective on an ongoing teaching or learning concept. Mehring (2006) continued his argument by stating that vocabulary is an ongoing process that takes time and practice. This method suggests a new way of teaching, one where the words are understood and cognitively comprehended by rotating the meaning to the context of the subject. This leads the learners to rely less on their memorizing skills, making them less likely to cause unnecessary errors.

Thus, the learner is able to implement their newly acquired vocabulary in an academic context. This is further backed by LaBrozzi (2020) who stated that working memories interact with visual enhancement to recall language and vocabulary. Assuring that once a student has visually related a word in a real-life scenario or has any visual recognition of implementing it in either an academic or social context, the likelihood of retaining that word increases. They continue by stating that working memory capacity shows no correlation with vocabulary. The main purpose should be to find exciting and unconventional ways to facilitate learning. Similarly, Yukselturk (2018) goes so far as to state that using technological game-based learning activities should be integrated into foreign language courses, this is especially applicable to adult SLA learners. Galindo (2022) claimed that even though to this day some higher education levels (i.e., Tertiary level), in some institutes still apply more traditional methodologies, research shows us modern concepts such as the "Flipped Classroom," which is a methodology that focuses on practical learning and problem-solving may be more

beneficial for the students in comparison. A prime example of this sentiment is the “Project-based learning” (PBL) method which has been aiding EFL classrooms for recently Tseng (2019). Here students acquire their knowledge by hands-on practical work. They depend on the content and expertise of the facilitator for guidance and instructions.

On the contrary, Grumann (1917) argued that a large group of words that cannot be connected to other sections without making them monotonous and silly should be mastered. Suggesting that students should obtain or memorize complex vocabulary without knowing the contextual use of the word. Trying to master any word without context or understanding the meaning can be detrimental to not only a learner's vocabulary development by their language development in general. Mehring counters the previous statement by arguing students can retain the vocabulary they find useful and relevant to their subject matter by learning it through context, cooperation, and using technology (2006). Blindly trying to memorize something without being able to relate it to any context allows the learner to get confused and make many mistakes. Not understanding the proper usage of words and still using the language for speaking or writing causes the learners to make errors. Severino and Deifell (2011) calculated that the enormous number of errors, which can be divided into a few types, which are “wrong word” for mistaking the contextual meaning of a word, “sound-alike” which is when the learners mistake one word for a similar sounding word, and “count/noncount” when the learner is confused by the singularity or plurality of a word. These errors are easily avoidable if the learner can first learn the words and then relate them to a context where they can relate the words to their unique situations. By learning to retain words according to their connection to other words in a sentence, it is less likely the learner will misuse or misinterpret the meaning or usage of those words.

Therefore, without fixing the vocabulary errors language fluency can never be obtained because Nation and Warning (1997) described that, vocabulary knowledge enables language use and language use increases vocabulary knowledge. Even though it was established pretty early on that vocabulary is an important key feature of the language, according to Mehring (2006), only within the last few years, vocabulary has become viewed as an important aspect of second language learning, many only now believe just as important as the main skills. Vocabulary development has not been given the same amount of attention as the other four basic skills, up until recent years, when the competitive market demanded more skilled language usage. Vocabulary is a stylistic aspect of language, in which learners can demonstrate their keen skills and knowledge. This neglect of one of the primary skills leads the learners to be content with the limited vocabulary skills they already had and be content with. According to Mehring (2006), learning vocabulary is an ongoing process that requires systematic repetition to help students learn, especially the vocabulary that is low context. In order for learners to add a new word to their vocabulary they must come across it several times. According to Nation (2005), it is known that the frequency distribution of vocabulary occurs more frequently than others. Nation (2005) defines high-frequency words as words that occur quite regularly in a language. The higher the frequency of the word the faster learners pick them up and freely use them in SLA. Since high-frequency words are repeated so regularly in day-to-day communications most learners, especially tertiary-level students acquire these words quite easily and are able to use them to write and speak astoundingly well in a second language. The challenge most learners face is retaining low-frequency words. Low-frequency words are words that are typically used in academia but are

not commonly used in day-to-day communication. Words that deal more with academic studies are more difficult for learners to understand.

However, at the tertiary level, it is inevitable for learners to acquire them. According to Yongqi Gu (2003), learning new vocabulary through context is a step student can use, and students should try to meta-cognitively learn new words within the context of where they appear in their lessons, which is impassibly true for low-context words. So waiting for random contact with foreign words is no longer an option and learners need to be actively searching for ways to seek out new words and retain them. In this context, learners should ask for guidance from the teachers. Since learners respond well to high-frequency words because of how often they interact with them on a general level, it can be concluded that by taking low-frequency academic words and creating a lesson plan that allows the creation of different situations where the learners are forced to interact with them on a regular basis, we can help them acquire those words more effectively. They must help guide learners by using whatever teaching strategy the individual learners feel comfortable with. For instance, Murphy and Aro (2001) noticed that students felt more relaxed and learned more from their peers because it was easier for them to feel mistakes were acceptable around them. Irgens (2022) claimed that we should design programs that reflect the values and values of the youth. The youth these days are more technologically advanced compared to pre-existing generations. As they speak the digital language Chang (2019) claimed that it would be more beneficial for the students to introduce technology-integrated instructions while providing guidance.

Logically, this approach may work for some students but in the context of developed countries, it may be a challenging task to achieve. When learning, no two learners have the same needs and requirements. An expert teacher can usually identify the foundational knowledge and skill sets of the students to identify which methodology of teaching or teaching strategies to follow. However, novice and untrained teachers simply cannot achieve that. For inexperienced teachers, Schall-Leckrone (2018) claimed that they can monitor the students by preparing to use scaffolding practices to identify the students intellectually. Just like how all teachers may not be acquitted for mentoring, not all have the same drive for success or motivation either, a learner's growth depends on the amount of work they put into themselves, especially in vocabulary development. Yongqi Gu (2003) argued that as vocabulary development is a very learner-centric activity, the effectiveness of learners' strategies depends on their attitude and motivation. The process of vocabulary development is a self-motivated process where the learner must be excited to try and better himself or herself. However, If the learner is not motivated to learn, no amount of teaching strategies, custom curricula, or selective syllabi can help them develop their vocabulary skills.

## **Methodology**

This research was conducted using a mixed-method research system that combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods, with semi-structured questionnaires, surveys for the students, and one-on-one interviews for the teachers. Two types of data were collected for this research. One is the primary data which is the collective data derived from the surveys and interviews. The other is the secondary data which was derived from peer-reviewed journals and articles. This research paper was designed to include elements of both qualitative and quantitative research elements to ensure as accurate results as possible. All the participants in the surveys are students currently at the tertiary level from different

universities. There are a total of forty-four participants involved who took part in the online survey. Three teachers appointed at three different universities took part in the interview and graciously provided answers to the interview questions. The 1st teacher is a professor at an A-ranked university, 2nd teacher is from a B-ranked university and the 3rd teacher is from a C-ranked university. All the questionnaires for the survey and interview are attached to the appendix part of the paper.

### **Research Questions**

1. What challenges do students at the tertiary level face implementing newly acquired contextual vocabulary in their academic studies?
2. How can teachers help their students to implement contextual vocabulary at the tertiary level?

### **Data Analysis**

#### ***Quantitative Data***

The aforementioned online survey was conducted by presenting the participating students with a series of questions in order to collect concrete quantitative data (see Appendix B). One of the main objectives of the survey was to identify just how frequently tertiary-level students came into contact with unfamiliar vocabulary in the context of their curriculum and what attitude they have towards integrating the newly acquired vocabulary with their current bank of knowledge. Another key objective of this questionnaire was to identify the underlying factors that lead the students to repudiate the implementation of new vocabulary in their academic studies, as well as their personal lives (i.e., reject the notion of turning acquired vocabulary into production vocabulary). This quantitative data collection process also focused on monitoring the primary challenges a student faces in developing their vocabulary skills while simultaneously discussing the solutions to overcome them.

When students are questioned about the challenges, they are facing implementing or learning new contextual vocabulary, they claim that they face no issues at all, indicating that they are satisfied with their current range of vocabulary and have no motivation to venture out and develop their vocabulary skills. The students claim they do not have the time and interest to go out of their way to develop their vocabulary. The lack of self-motivation causes a state of fossilization in their vocabulary development process.

The data from the survey claims that learning new vocabulary is too difficult for them because they are bad at communicating in English. They say they either have memorization issues, or speaking issues, or that they feel too embarrassed to use complex vocabulary because they might make a mistake either by using a word in an incorrect context or misinterpreting the actual meaning completely. Another factor is the anxiousness that comes with trying to implement new vocabulary especially while speaking, as they state they are "mispronouncing the words in public". The lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes is petrifying students from implementing new vocabulary in both academics and in person.

Furthermore, the data shows that some students want to develop their vocabulary and implement more complex words to improve their overall knowledge of the English language. However, they were not given a guideline on how to develop their vocabulary skills

at the primary or secondary level, they don't know where to start and they need some sort of guidance or helping tool.

### ***Quantitative Data***

As mentioned above the quantitative data was collected by conducting three one-to-one semi-structured interviews with three individual teachers appointed to three different universities. The teachers were asked five open-ended questions (see Appendix A) for the purpose of collecting authentic quantitative data. The purpose of these questions is to identify the teacher's perspective on the importance of implementing contextual vocabulary at the tertiary level and to find out how students can implement that advice in their own vocabulary development journey.

When asked the ratio of students that the ratio of students they witness actively implementing the sophisticated vocabulary they come in contact with the duration of a course (See Appendix) the 1st and second teachers stated that the majority of the students tend to avoid those words and instead opt for more simple and less impactful synonyms which ultimately makes their writing and speaking lackluster as well. The 1st teacher mentioned that a phenomenal catastrophe they noticed is the shortening of the world to signify the "texting culture" of students these days are a part of. The 2nd teacher also mentioned that there has been a noticeable increase in informal diction and language. The 3rd teacher, however, mentioned that he in fact does see the students employing the vocabulary he teaches during exams.

All three teachers agree that vocabulary development is a crucial part of SLA and without a vast knowledge of vocabulary. They all stated that they try to help students by exposing them to repeated contact with more advanced level vocabulary within the context of their class materials or books, students can relate the context of their curriculum with the new vocabulary they are introduced to in class. By cognitively comprehending the words in such a relatively comfortable and pace by paced way students are able to retain that vocabulary by storing it in their long-term memory. The 1st teacher familiarizes students with new vocabulary by assigning academic reading and having them write a report regarding their findings. He claims that "reading is the ultimate form of acquiring vocabulary". The 2nd teacher prefers to include entertainment in the acquisition process and encourages students to read for fun and watch movies with subtitles. They advise the students to "have fun with the words". They focus on the class lessons and have them learn and apply the newly acquired vocabulary for their class work and academic endeavors. The 3rd teacher said they provided the students with a synonyms sheet and asked them to memorize the words. In the next class the teacher reviews and monitors the previous words and monitors if the memorization process is complete or not. Their approach to vocabulary learning is "memorizing is needed" allowing students to gather a bundle of acquisition vocabulary which the teacher theorizes will perhaps become production vocabulary.

The 1st teacher is from an A ranking university private university and the students there even before starting classes possess a strong command over the English language. In some cases, due to their economic backgrounds, they were able to acquire the English language as bilinguals, thus in a way that sometimes rivals the linguistics capabilities of a C-rank university teacher. Thus, they do not feel the need to challenge themselves and stick to what they already know. This is why they are pressured to maintain a higher standard than the

average L2 user. The B-rank university is representative of an average SLA classroom participant. Though the students are freely able to communicate using English, they typically make a lot more grammar mistakes and need to be self-aware in order to prevent themselves from making mistakes. Hence, they are reluctant to speak publicly or implement new vocabulary they are not absolutely certain of. Lastly, the 3rd university is a C-rank university residing outside of the capital city. Due to the slow economic growth, they lacked the opportunity to interact with the English language during their Primary and Secondary level education. Thus, it takes a staggering amount of cognitive comprehension and self-motivation to learn a foreign language. However, as they are taught a hang full of vocabulary at a time it is easy for them to implement them during their exams.

## **Discussion**

Having a wide range of vocabulary is essential for academic success and even more essential for tertiary-level learners, as it is at this stage students begin to reach higher levels of education. Nation and Waring (1997) stated that a 5-year-old English native speaker would have 4000 to 5000-word families and gradually add 1000 per year as they continue to go to school until they graduate from their university with around 20000-word families. The average tertiary-level university student in Bangladesh is nowhere near that level. In a comparative field where students have to compete with not only their peers but international students as well, vocabulary development should be on every student's priority list. Students simply cannot comprehend the contents of the lessons without increasing their vocabulary range. When asked the question "Do you come across new vocabulary in your curriculum?" in the survey, 93.2% of the students claimed they still come across new vocabulary even at this stage and all 3 of the interviewed teachers confirmed this claim.

When asked "Do you try to use the new vocabulary you come across, in your curriculum, in your daily life?" A total of 88.6% of students confirmed that they use the new vocabulary they come across in their curriculum, however, the Teachers 2 out of 3 teachers debunked that claim. The 1st teacher claimed that they simply do not see students use complex vocabulary, the 2nd teacher confirmed they hardly see the students repeat the new vocabulary they come across in class, and finally, only the 3rd teacher states that they do notice his students using new vocabulary in class. Academic studies generally consist of low-frequency words which are typically not repeated for day-to-day activities but are crucial for Tertiary level students to acquire as they express the contents of the lesson with more accuracy. When asked "Do you try to use easier synonyms for complex words/vocabulary?", 86.4% of the students claim that they use easier synonyms for complex words, which defeats the purpose of higher-level education. This behavior can be attributed to the lack of practice and revision which is needed for vocabulary development and is one of the 3 main challenges students face in vocabulary development.

For the question "Do you try to seek out new vocabulary to improve your academic knowledge?" 86.4% of the students claim that they actively seek out vocabulary for academic knowledge however the teachers claim that students do not show interest in doing so. Furthermore, they claim that one of the challenges learners face in vocabulary development is the lack of motivation. When they were questioned "Do you tend to stick to the vocabulary you are already familiar with?", 50% replied that they prefer to stick to the already known words which coincides with the teachers' claims that "some do try while most others don't".



When questioned “Do you struggle with learning new vocabulary?”, 50 % of the students said yes, they did. The students' statements regarding the previous two questions directly contradict the data collected from the previous statements. This indicates that the learners themselves do not realize how far behind they are in vocabulary development or simply aren't aware of its necessities in real-life academic succession. Without a wide range of vocabulary, all human communication through the use of language is limited, and as a consequence of this notion, the speaker or writer is thought of as a less intelligent or mentally intellectual individual. This is further backed up by the fact that some students say they face no challenges at all and are content with their current skills, meaning they lack the motivation for further development. This notion contradicts the teachers' beliefs because all 3 of the teachers claim that vocabulary development is an essential part of learning.

When questioned “Do you shorten your words/vocabulary when you text or speak?”, 61.4% in fact, shorten their words. This causes learners to miss out on the practice and repetition needed to master certain words. It is because they don't practice the full words, they face the 2nd category of challenges where they lack the confidence to be able to pronounce or properly use it contextually in a sentence without making a mistake, and feel embraced. When asked Do you try to use more challenging vocabulary than easy ones?”, 56.8% claim that they use challenging vocabulary which contradicts the previous answers and data ratio of the other questions. This can be attributed to both the motivation challenge and confidence/ skill challenge as students falsely believe they are in a good enough place and don't need to further develop their vocabulary or that the words they are currently using are advanced enough. Regarding this issue, the 1st teacher says that it does not matter if the student is using high vocabulary levels or not as long as they are able to convey the message properly. However, in order to do that vocabulary development is indeed needed.

When asked, “Did you receive any guidance on how to develop your vocabulary skills at the tertiary level? “63.6 % claimed that they had not received any sort of guidance from the teachers, which directly contradicts the teachers as all 3 of them claim they encourage their students to learn more vocabulary. When asked “What are the challenges you face in developing your vocabulary skills?”, they expressed a plethora of reasons, but it can be boiled down to their lack of motivation to learn, and inadequate support structure from the faculty or institution. The 1st teacher and 2nd teacher both state that they encourage their students to read more, the 2nd teacher goes further stating that they even tell tier students to read for fun not just academically, and finally, the 3rd teacher tells his students to memorize a list of synonyms. The 3rd teacher's method of memorizing vocabulary only works to a certain extent to build up a good foundation of vocabulary. For vocabulary development a certain level of memorization may be needed however, over-memorizing without cognitively comprehending the meaning or sentence relation of the word causes unnecessary errors. Designing a lesson plan with a good book that already contains the words the teacher wants to teach is a good alternative to a list of words. Here the learners can learn the words by relating them to the context of the story, this will help them to retain the words for much longer and with a much deeper understanding of their usage as well, which ultimately helps them develop their vocabulary skills. The 1st and 2nd teachers also talked about the importance of reading for vocabulary development however at this academic level they need a little bit more than that.

As we know tertiary-level students have more academic experience than they are already familiar with a high number of high-frequency or easy words which is why 86.4% of

them try to use easy synonyms for advanced-level or low-frequency words and 56.8 try to avoid challenging words. Not only that 50% straight up said that they face difficulties learning new vocabulary, meaning traditional teaching metaphors do not work on them. So, a new lesson plan needs to be created so that the students can freely interact with the low-frequency words that are most commonly used in academics. By being exposed to repeated contact with more advanced level vocabulary in their lessons or books, students can relate the context of their studies with the new vocabulary they are learning. By acquiring words in such a relatively comfortable and slow-paced way students are able to retain that vocabulary by storing it in their long-time memory. The 3rd teacher's methods of teaching may seem redundant, but it is important to remember that the goal is to find a method or strategy that works for each and every individual pupil. It is recommended by modern scholars to follow mixed method-based teaching pedagogies in a blended classroom as not all learners start off with the same base or basic vocabulary knowledge.

It is necessary to note that not every learner is going to be able to use a higher frequency level of complex vocabulary overnight or at the same time. For different students, different levels of practice and perseverance are needed, and traditional memorization allows a student to reach their desires. For these types of learners, the teacher must level with them and encourage them in a way that they understand the context of the words so that they do not feel overwhelmed. Kellogg (1922) claimed that during an experiment, students felt embarrassed because the teachers and visitors used words they could not understand. However, being too relaxed is also not an option because Kellogg (1922) also states that one of the reasons the students had low vocabulary development was due to them speaking with tiny tots. For this experiment in order to help advance their vocabulary the students were advised to read more books they were individually interested in, which is also the advice the 2nd teacher gave to her students. The experiment ended up being a success as students are able to retain words better when they are taught in the context of something.

So, to motivate the students and help guide them, teachers should create new lesson plans so that students can relate various vocabularies according to the context of the lesson. But in order for this to happen the students must be self-motivated to learn otherwise the teacher cannot forcefully teach. Mehring claims that when done in collaboration with peers' students enjoy the activity more and thus learn more vocabulary in the end (2006). So along with teaching vocabulary while relating it to the context of the lesson, teachers should design the lesson plan in a way that allows the students to participate in the class and practice the newly learned vocabulary with their peers, by doing so even if they make mistakes, they won't feel embarrassed and have fun. By being able to practice more students can retain the newly acquired knowledge for a long time in their long-term memory. Vocabulary development is a long-term process that requires a lot of practice and revision to retain and freely use vocabulary. To help the student progress in vocabulary development various technologies such as different devices, computers, and software can be used. Severino and Deifell (2011) suggested that it would be more consistent, appropriate, and reliable to have online feedback rather than face-to-face feedback. Depending on the teacher's and students' comfort levels using technology, using a digital platform is a great way to monitor the progress of the student. By using indicative software teachers can point out mistakes or comment on which things they believe to be more important for the student to work on. Students can also practice their vocabulary together on their own without the fear of maintaining a level of perfection;

after all, making mistakes initially is also a necessary step for learning as well. So teachers need to create an opportunity for the students to try and fail as long as they are motivated to learn from their mistakes and learn to overcome them.

### **Recommendations**

Vocabulary development plays an important role in second language acquisition. The main agenda of this study was to navigate how Learners can implement the vocabulary they come into contact with in real-life scenarios and how teachers can guide them. As no two learners are the same, same teachers should identify their unique learning patterns and base their own teaching metaphors on them. A teacher should set the teaching strategy only after confirming the learned learning skills, intellect, and what strategies or methods they respond to. Additionally, learners also need to be conscious of the time and effort they need to spend in order to gain optimal results. Vocabulary development is a lifelong process and students should be self-motivated to learn, acquire, and implement intricate vocabulary in order to possess a good command over the English language and make themselves linguistically intelligent. Tertiary-level students must not get demotivated and give up learning new vocabulary out of convenience, they need to aspire to learn as much as they can to improve their overall command of language. Since students can retain better information when it is contextual to their studies, this approach can also be taken in order for teachers to help them grow. Teachers cannot rely on their students to acquire the needed vocab and play just by interacting with the language on a daily basis. Lessons should be better planned so students can acquire the necessary vocabulary while relating it to the context of the lesson. This allows the students to retain the words so that they can implement them in their scholarly pursuits and outside of academics for intellectual growth. Practicing with each other allows students to be more comfortable and less likely to be nervous about making a mistake in front of a teacher. As it has been proven that students respond to high-frequency words, teachers can help students retain words better by planning them in a way that low-frequency words get repeated multiple times. This allows the students to be more accustomed to using low-frequency words outside of an academic setting, which encourages students to interact with and use advanced vocabulary in their daily lives. Creating opportunities to allow the students to use the newly learned vocabulary during or after the lessons amongst each other is a great way for them to add the new vocabulary to their long-term memories. This process can be digitized by using computers and the internet so that the students can practice complex word implication and teachers can monitor what words need to be practiced more or what the student's progress is like.

### **Conclusion**

Vocabulary Acquisition and implication absolute necessity when it comes to academic advancement, especially for tertiary-level students who aim for higher studies. Without a high vocabulary proficiency range, the primary skills of speaking, writing, speaking, and listening are rendered useless. In the past, memorization-based methods required learners to acquire only a handful of words, which allowed students to pass through life, only being able to conduct simple grammatically correct sentences. This is not acceptable for a tertiary level student as the content they consume is very intricate and heavily relies on semantic sophistication. Vocabulary development, and then vocabulary implementation is a

long-term process that requires patience, practice, and revision, especially for low-frequency words used in academics. Due to their many years of academic experience, tertiary-level learners can retain high-frequency words, which are repeated frequently. This phenomenon, however, according to this study, deludes them into being satisfied with their limited range of vocabulary and rejects the use of low complex or advanced level vocabulary. In the current competitive world, basic skills are no longer enough. The learner needs to be able to command a wide range of vocabulary to display their intellectual and academic superiority, and to differentiate themselves from other competitors. They cannot be content with their current skill sets and must strive to better themselves. At this stage, learners need to stop being afraid of using new and difficult words. The act of finding watered down simpler synonyms for complex words must be stopped. And special cognitive care must be taken to stop the shorting of words and phrases. Students must try to integrate the new vocabulary they come across in their academic books with everyday life. By being patient and actively trying to practice and revise, it is indeed possible to develop a learner's vocabulary at the tertiary stage as well. It is not only the students, but the teachers also simultaneously need to emphasize the importance of vocabulary development and use up-to-date teaching strategies to guide the learners. Since vocabulary development is a lifelong process, a student should not be afraid to make mistakes, what's important is that they motivate themselves to learn from it. Self-motivation is a key factor when it comes to vocabulary, without motivation and the desire to learn no kind of development is possible. As no two learners are the same, neither are their learning strategies. So, the teachers need to identify the needs of their students and select a method or teaching strategy which is perfectly tailored for each group of students. Implementation of accurate vocabulary in the context of one's studies is not only a crucial part of SLA, but also a major part of a learner's intellectual identity as well. Tertiary-level students and teachers both need to comprehend the necessity of correctly implementing vocabulary depending on the context and content, to ensure the learners academic development and linguistic success.

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## Appendix A

### Vocabulary Development in Second Language Acquisition: at the Tertiary level.

#### Interview Questions

### How can students develop their vocabulary skills at the Tertiary level ?

Form description

Why do you think that it is important for students to develop their vocabulary skills? \*

Short answer text

How do you help increase the students' vocabulary skills when you teach a course? \*

Long answer text

How often do the students use the new vocabulary they come across in the curriculum? \*

Long answer text

Why do you think students struggle with learning or implementing new vocabulary? \*

Long answer text

What actions do you suggest students should take to develop their vocabulary skills?

Long answer text

Paragraph

Required

## Appendix B

### Survey Questions

The image shows a screenshot of a survey form with five questions and a text input field. The questions are:

- Do you struggle with learning new vocabulary? \*  
 Yes  
 No
- Do you shorten your words/vocabulary when you text or speak? \*  
 Yes  
 No
- Do you try to use more challenging vocabulary than use easy ones? \*  
 Yes  
 No
- Did you receive any guidance on how to develop your vocabulary skills at the tertiary level? \*  
 Yes  
 No
- What are the challenges you face in developing your vocabulary skills? \*  
Short answer text  
.....

The bottom section of the form contains a question: "What do you think you should do to overcome these changes?" with a "Short answer" dropdown menu and a text input field. The text input field contains "Short answer text" and ".....".

## Vocabulary Development in Second Language Acquisition: At the Tertiary Level

Form description

Do you come across new vocabulary in your curriculum?

Multiple choice

Yes

No

Add option or add "Other"

Do you try to use the new vocabulary you come across, in your curriculum, in your daily life? \*

Yes

No

Do you try to use easier synonyms for complex words/vocabulary? \*

Yes

No

Do you try to seek out new vocabulary to improve your academic knowledge? \*

Yes

No

Do you tend to stick to the vocabulary you are already familiar with? \*

Yes

No