



Vocabulary

Sources: Alan Maley , Brian Tomlinson

Background

Some important movements;

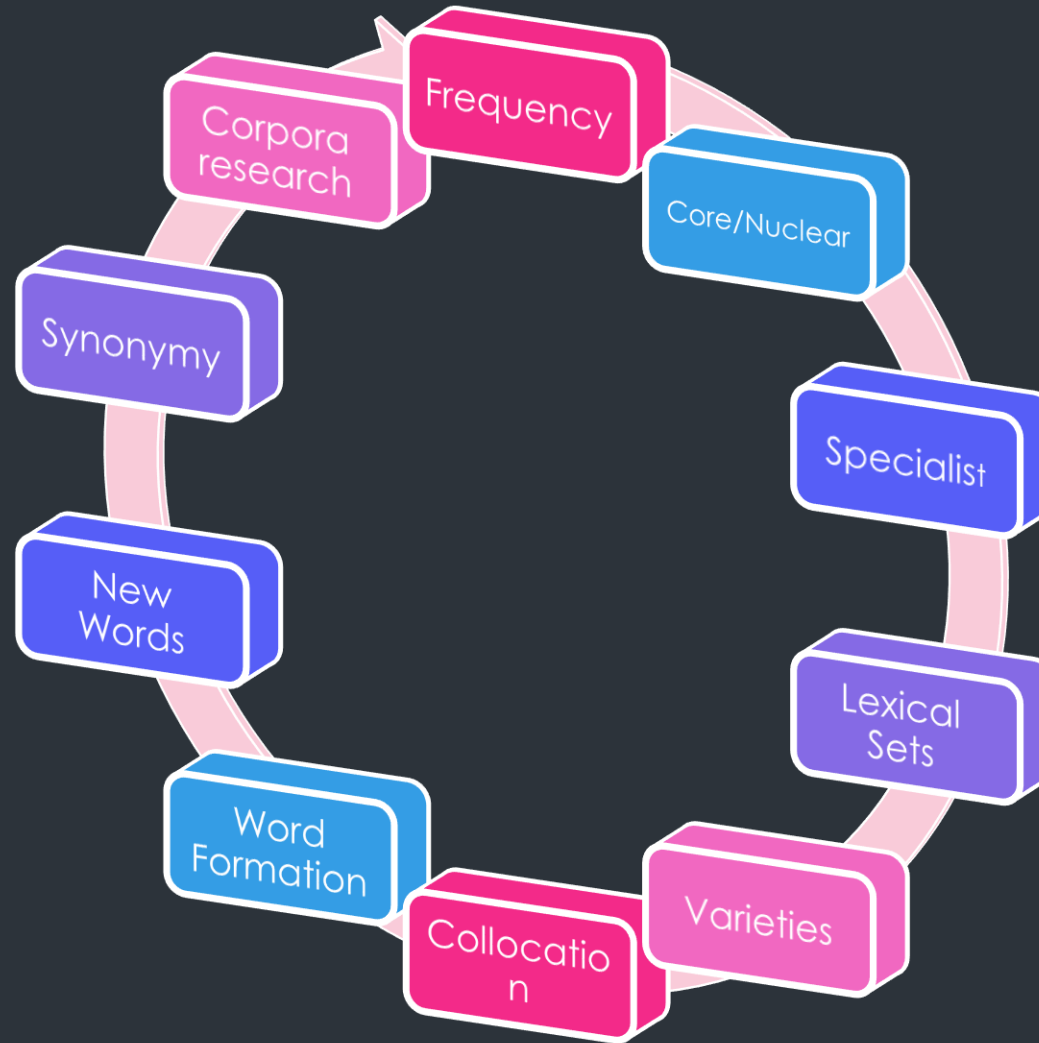
1. **West, Palmer and Hornby** in 1930 → Focused on **Word Frequency**
General Service List of English Words, Advanced Learners' Dictionary

2. **Sinclair** in 1987 → **COBUILD corpus**



It became possible to base our statements about language on large samples of running words drawn from naturally occurring texts.

Key Aspects of Vocabulary





Frequency

- ❖ A key component of reading
- ❖ Formed the basis for controlling vocabulary in graded readers and teaching materials.
- ❖ Lists of frequency are based on accurate information from computer corpora.
- ❖ Paradox of frequency is that the more frequent a word is, the greater its range.

Core/nuclear vocabulary

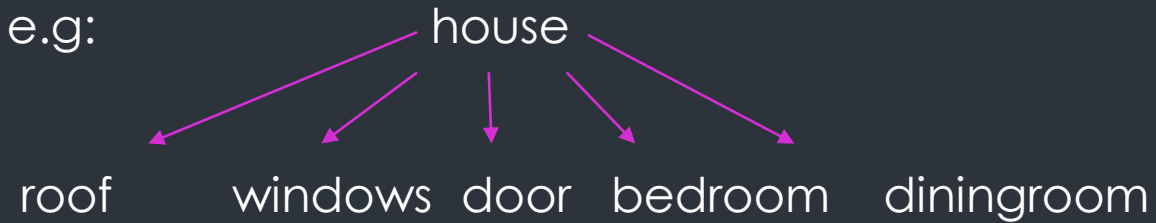
There are a number of tests which determine whether a word is a nuclear one or not;

- Syntactic substitution: Some words can replace with each other.
- Antonymy: The more core a word is, the easier it is to find an antonym for it.
- Collocability: The more core an item, the more words can collocate with it.
- Extension: Core words are more likely to be extended into “compounds...”
- Superordinateness: Hyponyms are core, e.g., flower
- Culture free: words without specific culture connotations will be core.
- Associationism: Core items are in the center of scales, e.g., formal/informal
- Neutral field of discourse: Core words don't belong in any special register.
- Neutral tenor of discourse: Core words are neutral in emotive tone.
e.g: “complain” / “whine”

Lexical sets

- Grouping items of vocabulary is under semantic relationships

e.g:



- Hyponymy is a related concept.
- Basis for “lexical sets” is more psychological than linguistically related.



varieties

Language has a tendency to develop varied forms in response to;

- ✓ Geographical : Such varieties have developed phonological,lexical,... individuality.
- ✓ Historical :mostly evidenced in written texts ,where there are possible misinterpretation of words which have changed their meanings since they were first coined.
- ✓ Social : shows itself through “class,age,and gender”.
- ✓ Occupational : when there’s a need for specific terminology.

Collocation → colligation, lexical chunks, and idioms

collocation	colligation	Lexical chunks	Idiom
The likelihood of words occurring together, because of repetitions in the mouth of people over time.	The same process of collocation but applied to grammatical words. e.g: case A case of, a case in, ...	When combinations of words resulted from collocation and colligation become <u>fossilized or fixed</u> , we refer to them as "chunks".	They are a subcategory of chunks.



Word formation

An essential part of knowing a word is to know the grammatical particles that can be attached to it;

Derivation



- Prefixes : e.g im-,re-,un-,....
- Suffixes : e.g -tion,-ful,...



Language change and new words

New words are constantly entering the language, every year sees something like 900 new words. The reason would be development of new technologies, media, finance,

- Borrowing
- Blending 2 words into one
- Making new compounds
- Using prefixes and suffixes
- Giving an old word a new meaning
- Adopting a proper noun
- Abbreviation
- Changing part of speech
- Using acronyms



Implication for teaching vocabulary

1. Focus should be on high-frequency words.
2. 25% of teaching time in class should be devoted to explicit formal instruction.
3. Arrange some activities to ensure that students have seen word frequently enough.
4. Help students to go through some outside of the class activities.
5. Help students to develop their own personal relationship with words.

Procedures for teaching vocabulary

In-class activities

- ▶ Explicit instruction, e.g., word formation, affixes, ...
- ▶ Actively using words, e.g., language games, retelling stories, ...
- ▶ Vocabulary used repeatedly as an incidental part, e.g., extensive reading, performance, ...

Out-of-class activities

- ▶ Extensive reading
- ▶ Creative writing
- ▶ Learner training



“

Without grammar very little
can be conveyed, without
vocabulary nothing can be
conveyed.

”

David Wilkins, 1972, p. 111

Prepared by Mitra Lotfali