

# English Vocabulary Teaching from the Perspective of Project Approach

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**Abstract:** In order to improve the quality and effect of current English vocabulary teaching, the project-based teaching method is combined to innovate and optimize the English vocabulary teaching mode. Firstly, the common problems and characteristics in the current English vocabulary teaching process in China are analyzed. According to the investigation and analysis results, the optimization and improvement are carried out in combination with the project teaching principles. A perfect English vocabulary teaching structure is designed and the teaching content is improved, thus realizing the optimization of English vocabulary teaching methods from the perspective of project teaching method. Finally, the experiment proves that the effect of English vocabulary teaching method from the perspective of project teaching method is obviously improved compared with the traditional vocabulary teaching method.

**Keywords:** Project teaching; English education; Vocabulary teaching

## 1. Introduction

In the process of English teaching, the importance of vocabulary is first reflected in that it is the basic form on which natural language depends. Vocabulary is the basic unit of language and the cornerstone of human communication. It can be said that without specific vocabulary, language will lose its material basis for survival. Vocabulary teaching is an important part of language teaching. Vocabulary is indispensable to the improvement of learners' language ability and the development of their communicative competence[1]. However, the importance of vocabulary teaching in language teaching has not been paid enough attention, and vocabulary teaching is also accused of "time-consuming and inefficient" activities. The root cause of this situation is the lack of systematic vocabulary teaching theories and effective vocabulary teaching strategies[2]. Therefore, it is of great theoretical and practical significance to study vocabulary teaching. Because vocabulary is not as systematic as pronunciation and grammar, the rules system of vocabulary teaching has not been completely established, especially the research on vocabulary teaching for Chinese English major learners whose mother tongue is Chinese is almost blank. This paper uses the project teaching theory of project teaching method as a methodological weapon, in order to establish a systematic mode of vocabulary teaching and provide solutions to many problems existing in vocabulary teaching for English majors.

## 2. English Vocabulary Teaching from the Perspective of Project Approach

### 2.1. Features of English vocabulary teaching

Language plays an extremely important role in people's life. It is everywhere, everywhere, everywhere, everywhere, everywhere, everywhere, everywhere and everywhere. We can use it to bargain, deal with daily life, exchange ideas, express emotions, and persuade others. It is everywhere. Try to find it in vegetable markets, work units, love scenes and sports fields[3]. Language is used everywhere, from the elderly to the newborn babies, they use this cognitive tool to convey information consciously or unconsciously. Speaking and listening to others are the two easiest things to do in the world. However, this fast blurted-out language contains a highly complex process of language information processing. The generation, understanding, expression, application and cognition of language are inextricably linked and are part of human cognitive ability. Vocabulary belongs to the core knowledge field of language. It is directly related to the conceptual system. Vocabulary is the door to knowledge, which opens the door for learners to rich ideas, theories and principles[4]. Therefore, we can explain the important role of vocabulary in language learning in this way. In the field of scientific research, knowledge is power in language learning, vocabulary is power, and vocabulary is the key to the rich field of human knowledge. The rapid development of foreign language vocabulary teaching research in the past 20 years has its own reasons and academic background of related disciplines.

Within the discipline of English teaching, the fundamental motivation is that scholars have realized more and more clearly in teaching practice and theoretical research that vocabulary is crucial to the development of learners' language ability. Vocabulary learning has its own rules and characteristics. Vocabulary teaching needs to be sys-

tematically arranged according to certain principles. Only in this way can better results be achieved, instead of focusing on grammar and pronunciation teaching as in the past, vocabulary can be left to students to learn. This is a very important change in vocabulary teaching, because the important position of vocabulary in language is gradually recognized by the academic community. The implementation of vocabulary teaching should follow certain principles and methods, and it is necessary to conduct in-depth research[5]. However, the actual situation of English teaching in our country is that the vast majority of vocabulary teaching is based on new word lists to explain the sound, form and meaning of new words. There are some common problems in teaching.

First, there is still a lack of in-depth and systematic research in the field of vocabulary teaching and research, a lack of guidance on vocabulary learning strategies, the tendency of "de-contextualization" in vocabulary teaching still exists, and the task of vocabulary learning is left to the learners to deal with themselves, with great randomness[6].

Second, influenced by the traditional view of language, English learners have a superficial understanding of vocabulary. They look at vocabulary in isolation and ignore the relationship between vocabulary. The vocabulary learning method of "dictionary grammar book" is widespread. It puts too much emphasis on the accumulation of vocabulary and ignores the improvement of vocabulary quality. In the teaching process, the goal of vocabulary teaching is mainly realized through teachers' explanation and students' memorization of the corresponding Chinese meanings of vocabulary [7].

Third, the understanding of vocabulary teaching process is still not deep, vocabulary ability and vocabulary awareness is not high, think vocabulary learning either learn, or not, make vocabulary related language knowledge and encyclopedic knowledge separated.

Fourth, the scope of vocabulary selection and application is narrow. Teachers believe that the standard of vocabulary selection is to deal with various English tests. They lack understanding of the rich content of vocabulary knowledge, do not understand the division of different vocabulary knowledge, and do not fully realize that vocabulary learning should combine their own knowledge and cognitive ability. Vocabulary learning is "time-consuming and inefficient", resulting in a great waste of time and energy.

Therefore, the current situation of vocabulary teaching needs to be changed. With the development of project-based teaching method, context research has undergone a cognitive turn. It advocates that vocabulary teaching should be carried out in combination with the cognitive field pointed out by vocabulary. In vocabulary theory and application, attention should be paid to the cognitive subject as a learner and vocabulary knowledge should be

constructed. Project-based teaching theory is one of the core contents of project-based teaching method research, summarizing the main contents of English vocabulary research in the past 100 years. The main points are: vocabulary knowledge is one of the best indicators of language ability; vocabulary knowledge helps to cultivate children's phonemic awareness; phonemic awareness helps learners' vocabulary cognition; vocabulary knowledge in childhood indicates future reading comprehension ability; vocabulary difficulty limits the readability of texts; vocabulary teaching plays a role in promoting the reading ability of English native speakers and non-native English learners; learning English vocabulary is one of the most important tasks in English learning; vocabulary shortage is a key factor that directly leads to learning difficulties[8]. No matter from the aspect of language system development or individual language occurrence, vocabulary is the basis of basic language learning, that is to say, the early form of language existence is characterized by the way of vocabulary, which is the original form when an individual learns language in the early stage[9]. Therefore, vocabulary is the core component of language. Vocabulary teaching should be one of the important parts of language teaching. Accordingly, English vocabulary teaching is an important part of English teaching and should be paid attention to.

## **2.2. Application principle of project teaching method**

Project teaching can operate in both horizontal and vertical dimensions. Project teaching is to organize things with the same degree of abstraction. It examines the internal structure of English teaching. The factors of learners and learners play an important role in vocabulary teaching, because the success of vocabulary teaching depends not only on teachers' guidance in class, but also on learners' own factors. Teaching activities should give full play to the learner's own subjectivity[10]. The contemporary cognitive learning theory has reached a basic consensus that learning is not a passive process, but a process in which learners actively process information. The effect of learning depends not only on teachers' classroom teaching, but also on learners' active use of learning strategies.

Traditional mainstream linguistics has made breakthrough achievements in the scientific process of language research, freeing language research from philosophical speculation and becoming a specialized field of knowledge. However, from its concept of context, it is mainly confined to the internal relations of the language system, and context analysis has a strong color of grammatical analysis. The research of functional linguistics and classics broke through the interface of language, analyzed the function and meaning of language from the perspective of social culture, and got rid of the limitation of the inherent context of language.

The development of project-based teaching method has led to a cognitive turn in language research. Firstly, it holds the following concepts about language. Secondly, grammatical structure and grammatical process in mind are concrete manifestations of general cognitive ability. Secondly, they are symbolic structures. Thirdly, meaning is an important part of grammar. Thirdly, it is different from semantics of formal, logical and truth-valued conditions. Project-based teaching method takes meaning as the center and emphasizes the encyclopedic knowledge view of meaning. That is, vocabulary understanding

needs to refer to the knowledge field it points to and pay attention to the knowledge and experience of language users. Fourthly, meaning involves the cognitive process of conceptualization. Similarly, in the framework of project teaching method, the cognitive attribute of context is fully reflected, avoiding the all-encompassing enumeration of context factors in traditional context research. All knowledge and experience can be helpful to the understanding and application of language only when they enter the experience horizon of language users or learners.

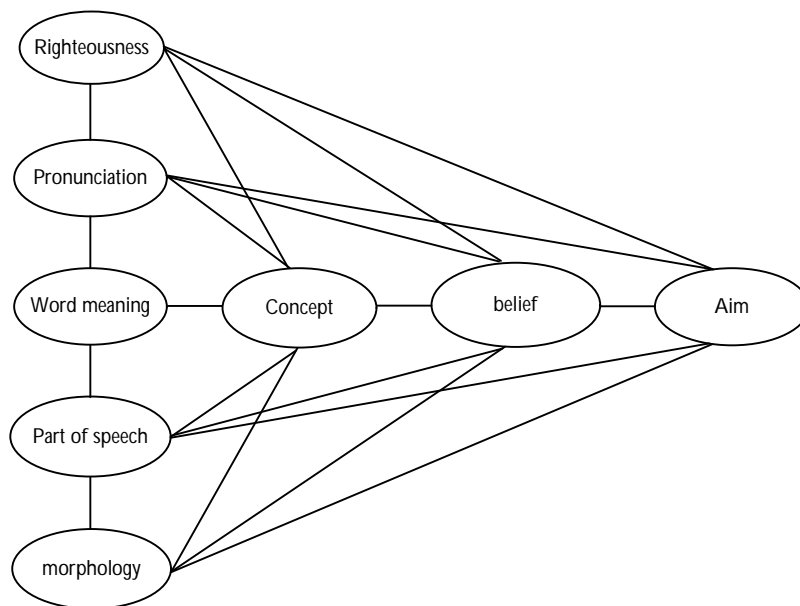


Figure 1. Vocabulary teaching structure based on project teaching method

Project teaching is characterized by schema, framework, prototype category and other forms, which are closely related to vocabulary understanding and application. Therefore, the way of vocabulary teaching is to construct its project teaching through vocabulary. Project teaching mainly consists of vocabulary knowledge and encyclopedic knowledge, i.e. logical information. On the basis of traditional context, project teaching is formed through the cognition of language context, situational context and cultural context. To effectively understand and use vocabulary, learners need to establish the relationship between vocabulary and project teaching, thus enriching vocabulary knowledge. Entering the new century, both primary and secondary schools, universities and English major teaching fields have put forward higher requirements for vocabulary teaching, not only in terms of vocabulary quantity, but also in terms of vocabulary quality. However, the field of English vocabulary teaching is mainly influenced by traditional teaching methods and has not received enough attention. The new round of curriculum reform emphasizes that the goal of English

curriculum is to cultivate students' comprehensive ability to use English. In teaching, students' cognitive subject status should be highlighted, different individual differences should be respected, learning process should be emphasized, and experience participation should be advocated. It is emphasized that the curriculum starts from students' learning interest, life experience and cognitive level. The introduction of project teaching into English vocabulary teaching just reflects this new teaching concept.

**2.3. Implementation of English vocabulary teaching from the perspective of project teaching**

Learning strategy is an important aspect of learners' cognitive ability. Learning strategies can be divided into macro and micro levels. Macro-level learning strategies are active in the whole learning process and play a role in the overall learning process. They mainly intervene in the whole learning process through macro-planning, evaluation and control strategies. Micro-level learning strategies are the concretization of macro-level learning strategies

and refer to the specific methods and skills adopted. It reflects the learning and problem-solving methods adopted by learners according to certain requirements and situations in information processing activities. At the same time, it is impossible for learners to learn all the necessary vocabulary in class. Independent vocabulary learning after class is a useful supplement to vocabulary learning in class. Therefore, learners' vocabulary learning strategies are also an important part of vocabulary teaching. As far as many words are concerned, we should also know that other words that are most likely to be used together with this word. Knowing a word means knowing the usage limitation of that word due to changes in function and context. Knowing a word means knowing the syntactic behavior of that word. Knowing a word

means knowing the language form of that word and the derived forms that can be derived from this language form. Knowing a word means knowing the semantic network knowledge between that word and other words. Knowing a word means knowing the semantic features of that word. Knowing a word means knowing many different meanings related to that word. In this hypothesis, except that the first hypothesis emphasizes the comparison between native speakers' lexical competence and their grammatical competence, the other hypotheses cover the frequency of word use, the style, syntactic behavior, derivatives, lexical association, semantic features and polysemy of the word, which are important aspects of lexical knowledge. The details are shown in the following table:

**Table 1. Analysis of morphologic features**

Type	Features	Details
Spoken form	Acceptance	What is the vocabulary language
	Productivity	How to pronounce words
Written form	Acceptance	What is the word form
	Productivity	How to spell

**Table 2. Lexical position analysis**

Type	Features	Details
Grammatical structure	Acceptance	What grammatical structure does vocabulary appear in
	Productivity	What kind of grammar should be used
Collocation	Acceptance	What words may appear before and after a word
	Productivity	Which words should be used with

**Table 3. Pragmatic functions**

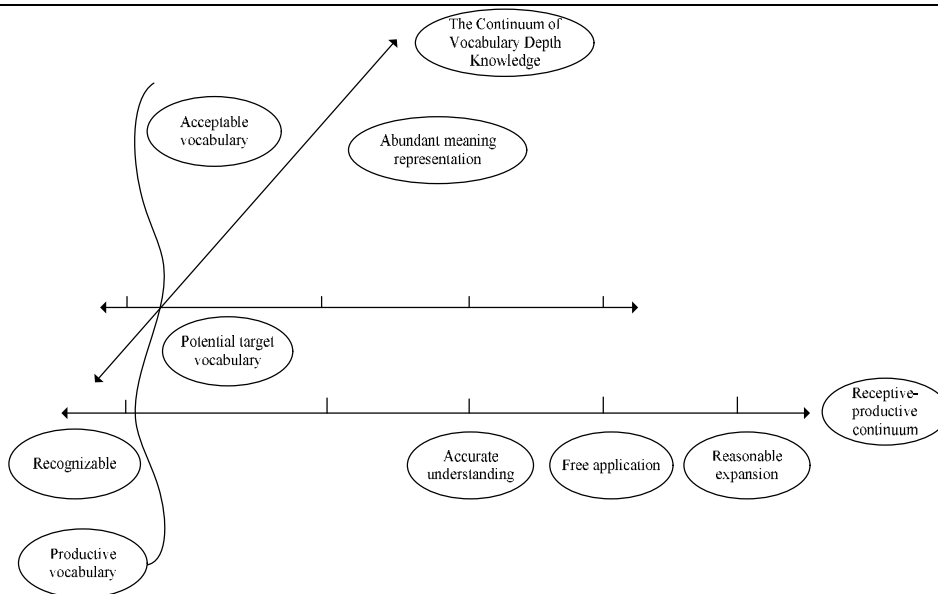
Type	Features	Details
Use frequency	Acceptance	Can words be used normally
	Productivity	Do you often use this word
Selection suitability	Acceptance	Which contexts do words often appear in
	Productivity	Should this word be used

**Table 4. Semantic features**

Type	Features	Details
Concept	Acceptance	What is the meaning of a word
	Productivity	Which word is used to express the meaning of a word
Semantic association	Acceptance	Related conjunctions and synonyms
	Productivity	Substitutes, derivatives

According to the above table, Neshen divides vocabulary knowledge into four categories: word form, location, pragmatic function and semantics. Each broad category is divided into two aspects, each of which includes both receptive knowledge and productive knowledge. As Neshin himself said, even for native speakers, the vocabulary they have is only a small part of all the vocabulary that is fully applicable to the words described in the table.

Therefore, this description of vocabulary knowledge is only an idealized requirement, not a realistic description of language users' vocabulary knowledge. The depth knowledge continuum of vocabulary includes not only the referential meaning of vocabulary, but also the vertical aggregation and horizontal combination of vocabulary. As shown in the figure:



**Figure 2. Setting of English vocabulary teaching content under project teaching method**

Through the change of linguistic research, this paper examines the change of the concept of context in the evolution of language research, and points out that the enlightenment of the cognitive turn of context research to English vocabulary teaching is a new perspective to study English vocabulary teaching. On the basis of traditional context theory, project-based teaching method is introduced to study English vocabulary teaching, focusing on the cognitive subject status of English learners. From the perspective of project-based teaching, vocabulary teaching, analysis of the characteristics of project-based teaching and its implications for English vocabulary teaching have strong explanatory power for the understanding and application of English vocabulary. From the perspective of project teaching, English vocabulary learning lies in the construction of vocabulary knowledge, which cannot be limited to the ontology knowledge of vocabulary. To fully understand vocabulary and use vocabulary, we should not only pay attention to the quantity of vocabulary, but also pay attention to the quality of vocabulary. We should understand vocabulary through the knowledge field that vocabulary points to. Combining project teach-

ing method to realize effective teaching of English vocabulary.

### 3. Empirical Analysis

In order to further improve the effect of project-based English vocabulary teaching, a survey was conducted. At the beginning of the experiment, 100 students from each of the three universities were randomly selected to take an English test. The test results were equally divided. Each university had 50 researchers in each group, and the evaluation English scores and vocabulary proficiency of 50 students were basically the same. In this environment. The distribution records the study group proposed in this paper as the experimental group and the study group guided by traditional teaching methods as the contrast group. The three universities are marked as A, B and C respectively. A comparative experiment is carried out in this environment. On the basis of fixed teaching contents and teaching environment, two groups of students are respectively given different teaching methods for a period of one year. The results of Observational learning are as follows:

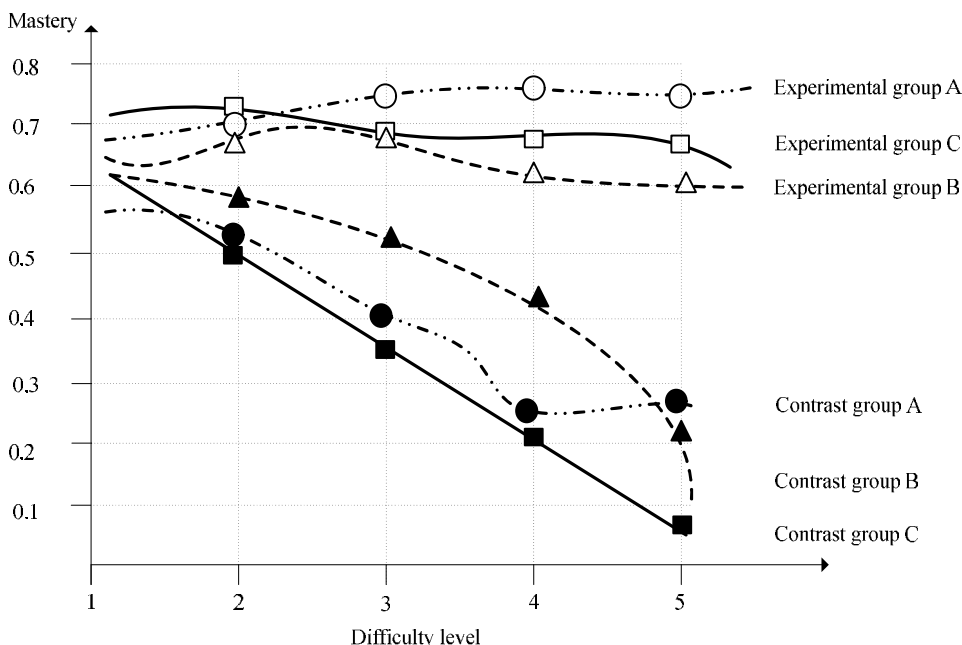


Figure 3. Results of comparative survey on vocabulary course mastery

According to the above comparative survey results, it is not difficult to see that compared with the comparison group, the overall mastery of English vocabulary teaching by project teaching method is relatively higher at the same time and under the same teaching environment,

which is obviously improved compared with the traditional methods. In order to further test the effectiveness of the project teaching method, a questionnaire survey was conducted, the survey contents were set up and the survey results were counted, as follows:

Table 5. Questionnaire survey

Serial number	Survey content	1 Yes	2General/uncertain	3No
1	English vocabulary is difficult to learn	35	54	65
2	Having remembered the corresponding words of all Chinese words in English, we have also learned English.	45	41	54
3	The best way to remember words is to recite a dictionary or vocabulary.	25	62	51
4	The meaning of many words can be obtained by reading.	41	53	60
5	To learn a word, one should at least master its form, meaning and basic usage.	50	56	49
6	I often act out a word to help me remember it.	48	57	69
7	When I look up the dictionary, I pay attention to the usage in the example sentences.	55	44	52
8	I will not study unless the teacher asks me to.	56	51	50
9	I know which words are the focus of my study.	47	42	51
10	I read a lot so that I can use the new words I have memorized.	55	45	55

According to the survey results, the students who chose the passive options of "English vocabulary is difficult to learn" and "I will not learn unless the teacher asks me to learn" were mostly students in the control group. On the contrary, the students who chose the items of "I know which words are the focus of my study" and "I read a lot so that I can use the new words I remember" were mostly in the experimental group. This proves that English vocabulary teaching guided by project teaching method can greatly promote the development of students' subjective

initiative and cultivate students' ability to aid learning, thus effectively improving the efficiency and effect of English vocabulary learning.

#### 4. Concluding Remarks

With the all-round advancement of the curriculum reform of basic education, the voice of "promoting the all-round development of students and improving the quality of education" continues to resound in the blue sky of educa-

tion. Each call touches the heartstrings of educators. In response to the call for educational reform, major reforms have been made in foreign language education policies. In fact, foreign language education started many years before the official decision was made. As far as this is concerned, English curriculum has become the subject with the longest learning time in one's life, highlighting the importance and urgency of English education research. A linguist once said that learning a foreign language means learning its vocabulary. I believe this sentence is a true portrayal of the current situation of English teaching in our country. For this reason, just ask the "responsible" parents who have accompanied their children to memorize words and "deliberately" learned a lot of vocabulary. In any case, vocabulary cannot be overemphasized for language learning. The current situation of English vocabulary teaching, how to implement it and how to learn English vocabulary in the context of English vocabulary teaching have entered our vision. The following will take linguistics theory, foreign language teaching theory and context theory as breakthrough points to analyze the diachronic fate and realistic representation of English vocabulary teaching, examine the existing problems, and analyze the theoretical motivation and realistic situation that vocabulary teaching has been neglected in the past decades.

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