



Review Article

# Poor Vocabulary Skills in the English Language at the Secondary Level in Bangladesh: A Barrier to Learning a Foreign Language

Author (s): **Dr. Md. Jakaria Habib<sup>1\*</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Associate Professor, Department of English, RTM Al-Kabir Technical University, Sylhet, Bangladesh

Corresponding Author: \* Dr. Md. Jakaria Habib

Abstract	Manuscript Information
<p>Students have a variety of challenges when studying language at the secondary level in Bangladesh. The students encountered three main types of difficulties: (1) nearly all of them had trouble pronouncing the words correctly; (2) they had trouble writing and spelling; and (3) they had trouble understanding the many grammatical forms of words, or inflexions. One of the reasons why acquiring language might be challenging. Additionally, (4) the students had trouble selecting the terms' proper meanings, and (5) they were still unsure about how to apply the word in the given context. Moreover, when the students come across idiomatic terms or idioms, they remain perplexed. Some elements contribute to students' difficulty in learning English vocabulary. (1) The written and spoken forms of English differ; (2) There are a staggering number of words that pupils must learn; (3) There are limited sources of word information; and (4) Word knowledge is difficult. Knowing a term entails much more than just knowing what it means according to a dictionary; (5) reasons why students do not understand the grammatical meaning of the words; (6) the lack of phonemic similarity between English and the student's native tongue frequently results in inaccurate pronunciation..</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>ISSN No:</b> 2583-7397</li> <li>▪ <b>Received:</b> 17-10-2023</li> <li>▪ <b>Accepted:</b> 26-11-2023</li> <li>▪ <b>Published:</b> 28-11-2023</li> <li>▪ <b>IJCRM:</b>2(6);2023:33-36</li> <li>▪ <b>©2023, All rights reserved</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Plagiarism Checked:</b> Yes</li> <li>▪ <b>Peer Review Process:</b> Yes</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>How to Cite this Manuscript</b></p> <p>Dr. Md. Jakaria Habib. <b>Poor Vocabulary Skills in the English Language at the Secondary Level in Bangladesh: A Barrier to Learning a Foreign Language.</b> International Journal of Contemporary Research in Multidisciplinary. 2023; 2(6):33-36.</p>

**Keyword:** difficulty, vocabulary, and secondary level students

**Introduction:**

A vocabulary is a collection of words learnt by someone who speaks a specific language. The stronger a person's vocabulary mastery in a specific language, the greater their comprehension of that language's use. This lexicon has even become a benchmark for judging a person's capacity for intelligence and education in some circumstances. Vocabulary refers to all of the

words in a language, such as English vocabulary, Indonesian vocabulary, Mandarin vocabulary, and so on. According to (Hornby, 1995), vocabulary is the total amount of words in a language, all of the words, a list of terms known to someone or used in specific books and themes, and their meanings. Learning vocabulary in English is an important element of learning a

language. The more words students know, the better they will be able to grasp what they read and communicate what they want to say whether speaking or writing. Because there are still many students studying English education in Bangladesh, and they appear to have complexities in learning English vocabulary at the secondary level, the importance of learning English vocabulary to improve and develop students' language skills makes vocabulary learning increasingly urgent to be carried out more seriously and directed.

English vocabulary differs from the Bengali view of form, including pronunciation and spelling, meaning and word use, when studying English vocabulary. Furthermore, the way the term is pronounced differs greatly from how it is written. As a result, students studying English frequently struggle with vocabulary acquisition. Vocabulary is an important part of achieving fluency in any language. As a result, lexical competence is regarded as the most important aspect of language learning. Moreover, vocabulary is a key aspect of language acquisition since a lack of vocabulary knowledge causes learners to struggle with language learning. Learners can considerably improve their general English level by developing the capacity to employ vocabulary acquisition tools.

### **Complexities of Learning Vocabulary in English**

Secondary-level students in Bangladesh have trouble with English vocabulary for several reasons, including difficulty understanding the meaning of words; difficulty pronouncing English vocabulary correctly; difficulty spelling the alphabet in English vocabulary; confusion about grammar; difficulty memorizing vocabulary; confusion about similar words; and not knowing unfamiliar words. The following analysis has been discussed on each of these issues:

#### **Meaning**

Vocabulary meaning is a challenge for secondary learners studying English. Students struggle to understand the meaning of English words because of the difficulty of the language's vocabulary. The inability to comprehend English lessons due to a lack of students who have acquired sufficient vocabulary. Teachers are frequently asked questions designed to keep students from learning new words in English. It is difficult for students to grasp the meaning of English materials without a solid foundation in the language's vocabulary. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening all benefit from a well-developed vocabulary, and the English language is no exception. Students' verbal and written expressions and interactions suffer when they lack an adequate English vocabulary. Students need to take a more proactive approach to learning English so that they are not limited in their ability to comprehend the meaning of new words.

#### **Poor Pronunciation Skill**

Students' inability to speak the language correctly in English stems from the complexity of the vocabulary they must learn. In most cases, students simply state how to pronounce a word when they are unsure of how to pronounce it in English. To improve their pronunciation and make it more accurate, students need to pronounce English vocabulary more frequently.

The primary issue that arises from this is that they are not paying attention in class because they are not understanding what their lecturers are saying. Because English is written and spoken differently, making pronunciation difficult, learners have less interest in learning vocabulary. Additionally, when it comes to pronouncing English words, they are anxious.

#### **Spelling Mistake**

The complexity of the language encountered by students in spelling causes them to be unfamiliar with the English vocabulary. Teachers do not teach students how to spell properly and accurately. To learn English writing, pupils must understand proper spelling and grammar. The issue is that students are not paying attention to studying English. They do not understand the English world, so when the teachers ask them to spell English terminology, they become perplexed.

#### **Grammatical Error**

It is impossible to separate learning grammar from learning a foreign language. Because the target language differs from the mother tongue in its system, learning a foreign language becomes challenging. When learning a foreign language, someone frequently runs into issues when attempting to use their mother tongue or their first language's structure in a foreign language that is not the same as their mother tongue. The intricacy of the vocabulary encountered during grammar instruction leaves students perplexed while structuring sentences. They are unable to discern between the past, present, and future tenses. Thus, they lack the knowledge necessary to compose clear, concise phrases.

#### **Memorizing**

Students' inability to communicate effectively in English stems in large part from their inadequate command of the language's extensive lexicon, most of which must be memorised despite its complexity. Students' abilities in speaking, writing, listening, and reading will be stunted without a firm grasp of the English language. Therefore, students must work hard to memorise vocabulary, as this is the primary factor in achieving fluency in the English language.

#### **Similarity**

When a vocabulary shares the same meaning or is pronounced in the same manner, students become confused due to the complicated vocabulary requirements associated with similarity. Typically, when students get bored, they utilise mobile phones. Students who consistently use cell phones while studying will fall behind in their English education.

#### **Unfamiliar Words and Phrases**

Students only know the vocabulary from everyday life because of the intricacy of foreign words in learning vocabulary. When students learn foreign terminology, they become confused because they are typically only exposed to everyday vocabulary. Their vocabulary abilities will improve and they will learn more than just their everyday vocabulary if they read a lot of books or listen to English vocabulary.

### How to Develop Vocabulary Skills

It is not only necessary to know and use English words to speak English. Possession of English vocabulary is required in various scholarship and skill tests of university-level studies and higher education. For example, in the GRE, students usually need to know the meaning and usage of 1,000 to 1,500 words. It is not only necessary to know the meaning of words, but also to know about the context of where and how to use a word. So, they should try to understand whether they are learning new words with a goal in mind.

### Use Mobile App

Magush GRE Vocabulary Flashcards is a very useful Android application. It contains about 1,100 words, which are common in the GRE. From this app, students will not only know the meaning of the word but also know about how the word is being used in various situations and why it is being used. Also, there are many well-rated apps on the Google Play Store or the App Store on iPhone, with which students can start learning. They ought to read and absorb 10–15 words with a little attention every day in their free time.

### Watch English Movies or Series

If students are too afraid of English words, they should try watching movies or television series with subtitles at first. They can slowly turn off the subtitles and try to understand what they are hearing. On the one hand, listening skills in English increase, and students will be able to master well which word is being used in which situation.

### Read English Passages and English Dailies

Students should try to read two to three English articles daily from various national and international media. After reading a passage, they should visualize it in their mind and try to think like themselves. They can write down the new words they find from the passage in a notebook. They can see different uses of that word. They can try to apply the newly learned words in their writing or speaking as well. Reading English Newspapers help a lot.

### Memorization Techniques

Many students try to remember the meaning of one word with another word. This is called a mnemonic. For example, the word abridge means to shorten. The bridge shortens our journey. With the word bridge, students can remember to abridge. Using small tricks makes students easier to learn words.

### Learn about the Origin of Words

Many words in the English language are derived from Latin, French, German, etc. In this case, if students can know about the root of the word, they can know about many similar words. Learning English prefixes-suffixes like Bengali prefixes-suffixes can be learned about many words.

### Spend Time Daily in Learning English

Many words cannot be learned suddenly in one day. That is why students have to start little by little. They can try to learn five

words for the first seven days. Then they can keep adding two more words each day. They will get a chance to learn about 150 new words in a month. They need to revise after doing this for two months, they can find that they have already learned about 300 new words in two months.

### We Use What We Learn in a Simpler Way in Everyday Life

Students can try to use the words they are learning by reading different passages or texts or using apps every day. For this, students can use new words to write an e-mail or send a message to someone. With regular practice, some words will become very mastery. Through this, English vocabulary skills gradually increase.

### Jumble or Puzzle Game

Many English newspapers or periodicals regularly publish jargon. Students can find various word-matching websites on the internet. Apart from this, there are various mobile applications for playing word games. Students can practise matching words in any medium conveniently. It is said that decluttering is very effective in learning new words. Students can try matching simple phrases at first. Then they can gradually move on to harder, and their focus will increase. At the same time, possession of new words can be created.

### Listen to Podcast

Students should listen regularly to a podcast or audio on any topic they are interested in, such as history or tradition. On the one hand, they will have the opportunity to learn new words and learn new information in the English language. They can get ideas on mastering thinking techniques in English from various podcasts. They can download Google Podcasts and listen to podcasts like Harvard Business Review and Ted.

### Conclusion

This research work shows that there is a wide range of challenges associated with teaching and acquiring vocabulary in Bangladeshi secondary learners. One of the reasons why students have trouble acquiring new vocabulary is because they have a hard time pronouncing new words. This is because of the different grammatical forms of the word, also known as exaggerations. In addition, students experience trouble in choosing the appropriate meaning of words, and also still mistakes in the use of words based on context. Idiomatic words and idioms still cause students a great deal of confusion. A limited vocabulary might hinder their ability to read, which in turn can hinder their progress in any academic field. Their academic performance and overall success can be greatly enhanced by developing a large and diverse vocabulary. Using a computer vocabulary program can make learning new words quick, simple, and enjoyable. Students who take the time to develop their vocabulary will benefit greatly in their academic pursuits.

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