



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
**National and Kapodistrian
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ELT Methods and Practices

Unit 4: Dealing with Vocabulary

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Task

What does vocabulary knowledge entail?

Reflect on the following questions.

1. Dealing with vocabulary in a language class means dealing with words. But, what are “words”? Decide if the following are words: complexity, book, irregularity, freeze-dry, Oh, no! Oh..., bookmark, may, two, they, so, to bite the dust, to make up, to go cold turkey, read, unlikely, yea, Ouch!, A!, a-ha...
2. Traditional grammar books talk about words on the basis of the notions below. Which is which above?
 - a. Single morphemes or roots: e.g. *book, car*
 - b. Derived words: e.g. *organisation, assistance, remake*
 - c. Compound words: e.g. *bookmark, pathfinder, postman*
 - d. Multi-word verbs:
 - verb + preposition, e.g. *look into*
 - verb+ adverb particle, e.g. *break down*
 - verb+ adverb particle + preposition, e.g. *put up with*
 - e. Idioms (Sequence of words which usually operates as a single semantic unit): e.g. under *the weather, chip on his shoulder, bite the dust*
3. What does it mean “to know a word”? What kind of knowledge does one have when s/he knows a word? Decide if one must have any or all types of knowledge listed below:
 - knowledge of its form (morphosyntactic features),
 - knowledge of the word’s spelling and pronunciation,
 - knowledge of its position in an utterance (syntactic relations),
 - knowledge of the word’s meaning: referential, affective, pragmatic,
 - knowledge of sense relations,
 - knowledge of the word’s use,
 - knowledge of its common collocations.
4. Below you can see a number of utterances by people for whom English is not their mother tongue. Though most of them seem to communicate the speaker’s message, there is a minor problem in each of them. Can you detect what it is and explain what kind of knowledge the speaker is missing?
 - Can you take me in your car to the station John?
 - He made a complain about the food.
 - There was a high difference between the two teams.
 - Mary: What are you doing tonight Claus?
 - Claus: I have a meeting with a class colleague in a pub.
 - There isn’t sufficient milk for breakfast.
 - She made a photo.
 - My mother is a very good cooker.
 - Bill’s evidence was rather skinny.
 - “Casablanca” is a white and black film.
 - What’s the opposite of “hard exam”?
 - S: smooth exam.

5. Within the framework of communicative approaches to language teaching and learning, FL teachers are advised to deal with vocabulary in context (used in utterance and text). Why, do you think?

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Notes

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