Notes from the latest module

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# Answering questions from Scott Thornbury´s chapter 2 (How words are learned):

## Scott Thornbury - Chapter 2

Questions:

1. **How important is vocabulary?**

* David Wilkins: “Without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed”
* The communicative approach (1970s) changed the role of vocabulary and it became more relevant than ever before
* Books focusing on vocabulary tasks, but still many books are focusing on the grammar of words, to collocation and to word frequency (p.14)

1. **What does it mean to “know a word”?**

* The importance of form and meaning
* To know collocations and connotations
* Receptive knowledge (you know how to write it, you know a meaning of it, you are still not comfortable speaking the word and use it) and productive knowledge (you have a brighter look into a word and know different meanings of the word and how to use it both spoken and written)

1. **How is our knowledge word knowledge organised?**

* The mental lexicon: store words randomly or in the form of a list – still it is organised in some way (p.16)
* Words with similar sounds might sometimes be switched around (also called malapropism)
* Sometimes it is more affective to look at shared meanings (for example food)
* Meaning based lexicon and form based lexicon

1. **How is vocabulary learned?**

* To acquire a vocabulary you are to know both labelling and categorising skills
* Build a network – constructing a web of words (p.18) – also look at shared meanings from before
* For learners who are to learn a new language and vocabulary it is often seen that they intent to copy words from their mother tongue directly into the target language, which creates some confusion and a wrong store of knowledge. In the text it is also called “False – friends” (p.19)

1. **How many words does a learner need to know?**

* Mostly facts and numbers in this chapter (look a pp.20-22)

1. **How are words remembered?**

* Learning is remembering (p.23)
* The following systems: short-term store, working memory and long-term memory; short-term store (STS) is a brain´s capacity, working memory is the middle-way so to speak, here you compare a new word to what you already have stored in your long-term memory and then decide if they are the same words or if they are two different words, material stay in you working memory for about twenty seconds (p.23). The long-term memory has an enormous capacity, the real question in this memory is how to go from “the quickly forgotten” to “the never forgotten”
* To make sure that new material stays in your brain in the permanent long-term memory there are some principles shortly introduced here: Repetition, retrieval, spacing, pacing, use, cognitive depth, personal organising, imaging mnemonics, motivation, attention/arousal and affective depth (pp.24-26)

1. **Why do we forget words?**

* Sometimes knowledge of new words can be “over-loaded” – too much in a short amount of time
* To be able to store words a way to do that could be to recycle words; the students are to see the word and use it in a different way

1. **What makes a word difficult?**

* Cognates (common origin) and loan words (words borrowed from other countries) are useful when teaching vocabulary (p.27)
* Factors in which can make some words difficult to learn are listed here: Pronunciation, spelling, length and complexity, grammar, meaning and range, connotation and idiomaticity

1. **What kind of mistakes do learners make?**

* Lexical errors: wrong choice of form (spelling error, suffix error or the wrong word altogether) (p.29)
* Two major error types: form-related (mis-selection, misformations, spelling and pronounciation errors and meaning-related (when words that have similar or related meanings are being confused) (p.29)

1. **What are the implications for teaching?**

I have taken a picture from the text, because some important main conclusions are listed from the text, in which I find important to understand after reading this text:

