


Factors in second language acquisition: opportunity, exposure, uptake and retention

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Two levels of word knowledge

Initial 'form-meaning' level		'Deeper' knowledge
Learning how the meaning is connected to its spelling and pronunciation		Learning how the word works in communicative situations and with its co-text
pencil = /pensil/ = 	WHAT	collocation, colligation, multiple meaning senses and nuances, topic area, register, frequency, spoke or written etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Quite easy to learn •Fast (if done well) •Restricted only to the meaning level 	HOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Takes a long time •Requires massive exposure •Can't realistically be taught – too much to do.
Concrete aspects: Individual words, affixes, lexical phrases, idioms, multi-part words, sentence heads etc.	TYPE	Abstract: collocations, colligations, spoken/written, register etc.

Intentional vs. Incidental learning

Intentional learning		Incidental learning
Direct focus on learning when the focus is to learn words	FOCUS	Learning 'by accident' - as a result of focusing on something else
wordlists, word cards, vocabulary exercises, dictionary use	E.G.	from reading or listening, watching movies, listening to songs, casual conversation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Can be learnt systematically •Meanings are learnt 16 times faster than with incidental learning •Retention high if learnt well •Decontextualized or 'local' learning level 	LEARNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •slow and fragile learning •input tends to be random and unpredictable, unsystematized •contextualized (chances for integrative learning)
Best for 'form-meaning' level learning	USE	Best for 'deeper aspects' of vocabulary learning

Exposure

Different words (types) in a typical 5 level course by frequency

	50+	30-49	20-29	10-19	5-9	1-4	Total
Function	40						
1k	434	167	163	131	42		937
2k	22	35	60	322	506	52	997
Other			2	13	27	1263	1305
Total	456	202	225	466	575	1315	3239
Names	14	16	34	109	177	367	717

Function	1.23%						
1k	13.40%	5.16%	5.03%	4.04%	1.30%	0.00%	28.93%
2k	0.68%	1.08%	1.85%	9.94%	15.62%	1.61%	30.78%
Other	0.00%	0.00%	0.06%	0.40%	0.83%	38.99%	40.29%
Total	15.31%	6.24%	6.95%	14.39%	17.75%	40.60%	100.00%

Exposure

Number of words in a typical 5 level course (by frequency band)

	50+	30-49	20-29	10-19	5-9	1-4	Total
Function	84671						
1k	92390	6465	3986	2021	309		105171
2k	1942	1291	1434	4302	3414	189	12572
Other			42	175	160	2496	2873
Total	179003	7756	5462	6498	3883	2685	205287
Names	2106	616	812	1527	1131	953	7145

Function	41.25%						
1k	45.01%	3.15%	1.94%	0.98%	0.15%	0.00%	51.23%
2k	0.95%	0.63%	0.70%	2.10%	1.66%	0.09%	6.12%
Other	0.00%	0.00%	0.02%	0.09%	0.08%	1.22%	1.40%
Total	87.20%	3.78%	2.66%	3.17%	1.89%	1.31%	100.00%

Uptake

What uptake can we expect from a typical course?

How much text do learners meet?

-Possibly 200-300,000 words over a typical 5 level course.

How frequently do learners meet words?

-Function words - very very frequently

-De-lexical words - (*have, be, do* etc.) - very very frequently

-800-900 words (25-27%) are met enough times for acquisition

-400-600 (10-15%) words will be partially known

-1300 words (over 65-70%) will probably not be learnt

Frequency	Word	No.	% of corpus	No. of words to read to meet it x times				
				1	5	10	20	50
1st	BE	10,387	4.989%	20	100	200	401	1,002
2nd	THE	10,027	4.816%	21	104	208	415	1,038
Top 25	SOME	1,192	0.573%	175	873	1,747	3,493	8,733
Top 50	SENTENCE	606	0.291%	344	1,718	3,436	6,871	17,178
Top 100	OUT	323	0.155%	645	3,223	6,446	12,892	32,230
Top 500	PREDICT	50	0.024%	4,164	20,820	41,641	83,281	208,203
Top 1000	ORGANIC	18	0.009%	11,567	57,834	115,668	231,337	578,342
Top 1500	TIMETABLE	9	0.004%	23,134	115,668	231,337	462,673	1,156,683
Top 2000	COMMERCE	4	0.002%	52,051	260,254	520,507	1,041,015	2,602,538
Top 2500	BIOCHEMICAL	2	0.001%	104,102	520,508	1,041,015	2,082,030	5,205,075
Top 3000	REFUND	2	0.001%	104,102	520,508	1,041,015	2,082,030	5,205,075

Course book plus Extensive Reading

Uptake if they add 1 graded reader per week

	50+	30-49	20-29	10-19	5-9	1-4	
1k	707	93	44	68	47	32	
2k	223	107	90	162	125	168	
Other	93	83	116	309	398	1125	
Total	1023	283	250	539	570	1325	3990
1k	17.72%	2.33%	1.10%	1.70%	1.18%	0.80%	
2k	5.59%	2.68%	2.26%	4.06%	3.13%	4.21%	
Other	2.33%	2.08%	2.91%	7.74%	9.97%	28.20%	
Total	25.64%	7.09%	6.27%	13.51%	14.29%	33.21%	100.00%

Course book plus Extensive Reading

Significant gains in vocabulary (900 --->1500 words)

More of the words in their course book reach the acquisition level (27% ---> 40%)

They will have a better sense of how the vocabulary and grammar fit together

They will have a better sense of collocation, and other deeper aspects of vocabulary acquisition.