

Making Words Count: Top Tips for Teaching Vocabulary

TeachingEnglish Webinar

George Wilson May 2022

Please make a note of your 3 favourite
words or expressions in English and
share them in the chat

Today, we'll discuss strategies for:

1. choosing what lexis to teach
2. understanding a lexical item
3. clarifying and checking meaning
4. clarifying form
5. clarifying pronunciation
6. practising vocabulary



What do we mean by lexis?

Tomorrow I'm going to cook dinner for some friends

Tomorrow + I'm going to + cook dinner + for + some friends

Choosing Lexis

Necessity for a task

Usefulness (including frequency)

Learnability

Limited quantity

Emergent language

Understanding a Lexical Item

100%



~~100%~~

**Meaning, form and use relevant
to the context of the lesson**



Contextualised Meaning



(Photo: Myburgh du Plessis)

Method

Trim the chicken breasts and thighs off their bones and remove the skin. They're not good in a curry, even if the bones would add a little flavour. It's when it comes to eating a chicken curry that you don't want fiddly bits of bone all over the place. Slice the chicken meat into fairly small pieces.

Melt the coconut oil and sauté the chopped onion, garlic and ginger until softened. Add the chopped chillies and stir in the masala, then add the tomato purée and cook gently for 3 minutes while stirring.

Stir in the coconut cream and season with salt.

Add the chicken pieces and apricots and stir. Put a lid on and leave to simmer for up to an hour. Check now and then to be careful that it doesn't catch at the bottom. Serve with rice and chopped coriander. **DM/TGIFood** www.dailymaverick.co.za

Ways of Clarifying Meaning

Context

Demonstration

Explanation

Realia

Visuals

Translation

How would you clarify the meaning
of your chosen lexical items for students?

Checking Meaning



Testing activities -
matching, gap fills etc.



Concept-checking questions

If I simmer
chicken curry,

- am I cooking?
- am I cooking a liquid or a solid?
- am I making the curry hotter?
- is it quick or does it take some time?

Design your own CCQs for one of your favourite words and put them in the chat

Form

to simmer

(transitive or intransitive regular verb)

e.g. to leave something to simmer



(Photo: Myburgh du Plessis)

Pronunciation

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vowels					diphthongs			
i:	ɪ	ʊ	u:		ɪə	eə		
e	ə	ɜ:	ɔ:		əʊ	aʊ		
æ	ʌ	a:	ɒ		eɪ	aɪ	ɔɪ	

consonants								
p	f	t	θ	tʃ	s	ʃ	k	
b	v	d	ð	dʒ	z	ʒ	g	
h	m	n	ŋ	r	l	w	j	

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Drilling: "Repeat after me"



<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/drilling-1>

Practising Vocabulary



Controlled

Freer

Controlled Practice Activities

- Gap fills
- Matching
- Pelmanism (pairs)
- Crosswords
- Word searches



Freer Practice Activities

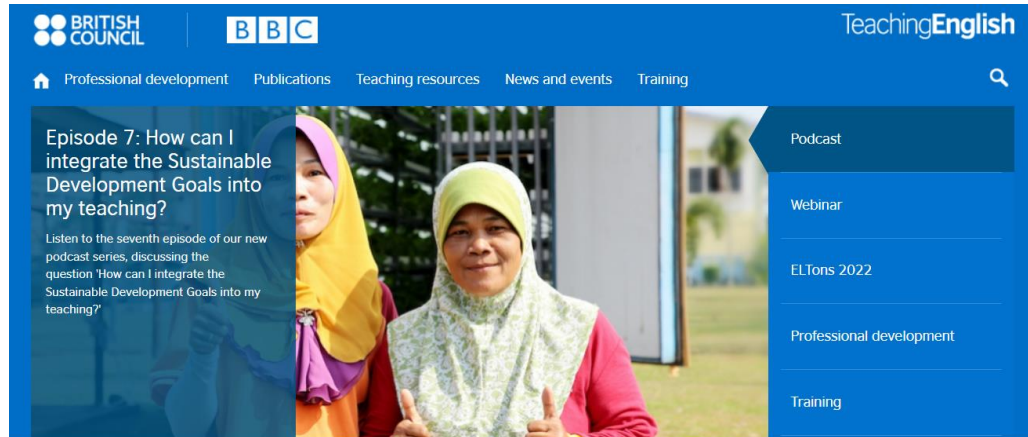
- Role plays using the lexis
- Simulations
- Discussion questions about the topic
- Writing texts with the lexis
- Taboo



Conclusions

- Focus on lexis that is appropriate and helpful
- Teach the meaning / use of the lexis in a context
- Give lots of opportunities to practise the lexis
- Recycle the lexis regularly

Further Resources



The screenshot shows the TeachingEnglish website interface. At the top, there are logos for the British Council and BBC, and the text 'TeachingEnglish'. Below the logos is a navigation menu with links for 'Professional development', 'Publications', 'Teaching resources', 'News and events', and 'Training'. A search icon is also present. The main content area features a large image of two women wearing hijabs, one yellow and one green. To the left of the image, the text reads: 'Episode 7: How can I integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into my teaching?' followed by a short description: 'Listen to the seventh episode of our new podcast series, discussing the question 'How can I integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into my teaching?'' To the right of the image is a vertical sidebar with a search icon at the top and a list of categories: 'Podcast', 'Webinar', 'ELTons 2022', 'Professional development', and 'Training'. The 'Podcast' category is highlighted with a dark blue background.

www.teachingenglish.org.uk

Thank you



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