MICHAEL LESSARD-CLOUSTON
Biola University

Word Lists for Vocabulary Learning and Teaching

Within the communicative approach, often the assumption has been that with the right exposure, students will simply "pick up" the vocabulary required for learning and using English, and thus there is no need to focus on or teach it. Yet, as many teachers can attest, this is frequently not the case, and there have been recent efforts to reemphasize vocabulary learning and teaching in both research and practice. This article surveys the literature on word lists for vocabulary teaching in English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL), especially for adults, briefly summarizing their potential for learners and teachers in learning and teaching English vocabulary. After discussing general and academic word lists, it introduces contributions from recent corpus research resulting in 2 lists of English formulaic expressions and 8 subject-specific English word lists, in fields varying from agriculture, business, and engineering to medicine and theology. Finally, it offers suggestions for their potential in vocabulary teaching.

Introduction

Some time ago, Meara (1980) called vocabulary a "neglected" aspect of second and foreign language (L2/FL) learning. Thankfully this situation has changed, and in the last several decades a significant amount of related pedagogical research has appeared (see, e.g., Carter, 2012; Folse, 2004, 2011a; Lessard-Clouston, 2013; McCarthy, O'Keefe, & Walsh, 2010; Nation, 2001, 2011; Nation & Webb, 2011; Schmitt, 2008, 2010; Schmitt & Schmitt, in press; Zimmerman, 2009), as well as research-based ESL/EFL textbooks (e.g., Folse, 2011b; Kinsella, 2013; Schmitt, Schmitt, & Mann, 2011; Wells & Valcourt, 2010). Yet in recent research in various types of ESL classes Folse (2010) concluded that vocabulary is indeed still neglected by many teachers, as the amount of "explicit vocabulary focus" in a week of classes he observed was "surprisingly low" (p. 139). This is a disturbing finding, given two challenges ESL/EFL students face: the large quantity of English vocabulary and complex qualitative issues in mastering word knowledge and use (Laufer & Nation, 2012). As I shall discuss, English word lists are one key resource available to us.

Although they are seemingly passé or uncommon in ESL education (Folse, 2004), word lists are frequently used in many English as a foreign language

(EFL) contexts. Schmitt's (1997) study on the vocabulary-learning strategies of Japanese EFL students, for example, reported that the majority of respondents used word lists to learn English vocabulary, particularly junior high and high school students (67%) and university students (50%). Anecdotally, learners from other Asian contexts report similar patterns of use, and the question remains if teachers in more ESL/EFL contexts might make good use of word lists for students' learning and their teaching.

Within communicative language teaching, vocabulary learning has tended to be done incidentally, though in recent years there has been a call for more explicit teaching of words and vocabulary-learning strategies (Zimmerman & Schmitt, 2005). One challenge with English is its huge vocabulary, which requires focus and some guidelines in order to help students develop greater word knowledge so that they might use vocabulary items effectively. In research with undergraduates and graduates, time and again studies have indicated that ESL/EFL students lack essential vocabulary knowledge not just for reading, but also for listening, speaking, and writing in English (e.g., Liu & Nesi, 1999; Nation & Waring, 1997; Nurweni & Read, 1999; Ward, 1999, 2009a). One way to approach the question of what vocabulary to teach is to consider existing principled lists of English words, research related to their use, and our students' interests, needs, and goals. In this article I survey relevant research, briefly introduce general and academic word lists, two for collocations, and several subject-specific ones, and offer some suggestions for their potential use.

Background: Some Context From the Literature

In considering English word lists, one issue to examine is the teacher's situation, and if it is a more general, academic (i.e., English for Academic Purposes, EAP) or specific (English for Specific Purposes, ESP) English learning and teaching context. Another concern addresses the interests and needs of one's students, given their particular goals for learning and using English. I begin the discussion with the most well-known English vocabulary lists, the General Service List (GSL) for the most frequent English words overall, and two lists for academic purposes.

For general, all-purpose English usage, West's (1953) GSL is now somewhat dated, but it is still the best general-purpose list we have for addressing the most frequent words in English. As Gilner (2011) notes in her helpful primer on it, the GSL is actually a reissue of Faucett, Palmer, Thorndike, and West's (1936) report on English vocabulary selection that came out after two international conferences on the role of word lists for EFL education. Introducing the 2,000-item GSL of the most frequent and wide-ranging words in English, Gilner (2011) declares:

> Over 100 years of analyses of English corpora unequivocally agree on the fact that relatively few words amount for most of the vocabulary used. Approximately 2,000 words account for 70% to 95% of all running words regardless of the source of the text. (p. 65)

So, whether one is reading a newspaper, a novel, a textbook, or an academic

journal article, or listening to a lecture or a radio or television program, most (on average 82% according to Nation & Waring, 1997) of the words one encounters will be found on this list. The GSL is further divided into the first and second most frequent 1,000 English words, listed alphabetically, and has been used for many years in creating ESL/EFL teaching materials, including graded readers. As Gilner (2011) states, despite some criticism (mainly of its age, see Richards, 1974) it has withstood the test of time and continues to be the best all-purpose list of general English vocabulary, based on frequency and range, for widespread use. All ESL/EFL students should thus be familiar with and fluent in using GSL vocabulary, covering common English words.

As for academic vocabulary, two lists exclude items from the GSL but reflect frequent academic English vocabulary appearing in and used across various disciplines. Xue and Nation's (1984) University Word List (UWL) is made up of 836 items (such as *accompany*, *ignore*, *indicate*, *occur*, etc.) and represents on average about 8.5% coverage of the words in academic texts (Nation & Waring, 1997). It is both an alphabetical list and a compilation of 11 sublists, drawing on previous lists of academic English vocabulary in New Zealand and the US. In more recent years, Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List (AWL) has essentially come to replace the UWL, as the AWL was created using a corpus of texts from four disciplines (arts, commerce, law, and science) from the college and university level. The AWL includes 570 items, but has coverage similar to that of the UWL in most academic texts. Like the UWL, the AWL is divided into 10 sublists according to frequency, but it may also be alphabetized (as, for example, in Appendix 2 of Nation, 2008). Although earlier ESL/EFL materials for academic purposes relied on the UWL, in the last decade most textbooks (including those noted earlier) have used the AWL, although the GSL is also common for such works.

Given the availability of these three principled word lists, what has *research* shown about them and their use in teaching English? Shillaw's (1995) brief anecdotal report noted that he used the GSL with EFL students in Japan for 1 semester and reported that his students chose words to focus on from it and were thus able to learn some 300 words as they attended classes, read the graded reader *Cry Freedom*, and later watched and discussed the movie of that title. Van Benthuysen (2003) similarly reported positive results in using the UWL with 14 Japanese EFL college students over 9 months. His students were preparing to take the TOEFL and to go abroad to study, so focusing on the 11 sublists on the UWL (about 75 words each) seemed useful to his highly motivated students. He gave them one of the sublists every 2 weeks, along with example sentences. Students were expected to learn the words by themselves, and could practice them in their writing, but then they had a multiple-choice test on each sublist every 2 weeks. Using a pre- and post-session Vocabulary Levels Test (from Nation, 1990), Van Benthuysen's students showed the most vocabulary growth on the UWL section of the test at the end of their program.

While the two examples above deal with the GSL and the UWL, further research has also been carried out with other word lists in other contexts. Bahrick and Phelps (1987), for example, reported good retention with English-Spanish

vocabulary after 8 years among their 35 students who learned 50 English-Spanish word pairs. They suggested that the optimal recall is likely one to two uses for each word. While some teachers may avoid using a student's first language (L1) or prefer sentence contexts for vocabulary learning, Laufer and Shmueli (1997) studied several different approaches to memorizing new words and reported that among their participants, words glossed with students' L1 (Hebrew) translation were better retained than those explained in English, and that new words learned from lists were retained better than those EFL participants had learned in sentence contexts. In all of these examples, the focus is on adult ESL/EFL students. However, additional research by Griffin and Harley (1996) studying L1/L2 word lists with high school learners of French also indicated that both production and comprehension of the target L2 items are key to students' learning of such words, and that word lists were clearly helpful.[1]

In his book *Vocabulary Myths*, Folse (2004) devotes chapter 2 to refuting the belief that "using word lists to learn second language vocabulary is unproductive" (p. 35). Distinguishing between using word lists to memorize known words and to learn new vocabulary items, Folse states "there is practically no evidence to suggest that learning new words in lists is in itself detrimental" (p. 40). Instead, teachers who know their students well can compile or draw on existing lists, such as those discussed above, to meet their students' learning needs. As a result, Folse concluded that ESL/EFL teachers should not "hesitate to use vocabulary lists," though they should also "not rely only on" them, and they should be aware of their students' learning preferences and classroom expectations (pp. 44-45). A recent study bears this out.

In EFL classroom research at a university in Japan, Hoshino (2010) worked with 46 students who were to learn 20 pairs of words for each of five types, namely synonym (e.g., "*fabric* and *textile*", p. 304), antonym, categorical (insects—*moth, wasp*, p. 310), thematic, and unrelated, divided into lists of 5 or 10 word items. Students received the various lists of English words and their Japanese translations and could study them for several days. In class they went through the various lists before they were tested on them using an English-to-Japanese translation task. Hoshino's findings were clear, with statistically significant results: These EFL students learned the words on the lists quite well, and although student learning style did not appear to determine which type of list participants learned best, the test scores and further analyses indicated that the categorical words were apparently "a more effective type of list for L2 vocabulary learning than other lists" (p. 310). Hoshino (2010) thus concluded, "Presenting new vocabulary in categorical lists promotes vocabulary learning" in the classroom, and "learning from related word lists … should be encouraged" (p. 310).

While the previous studies address individual words, since Lewis's (1993) influential "lexical approach" there has also been more emphasis on collocation—how words go and work together in language learning and teaching. Lewis (2000), for example, offered suggestions on teaching collocation, but until recently there were no lists of lexical chunks or "formulaic sequences" (Alali & Schmitt, 2012), which are phrases of two or more words, such as "Good

morning!", which research suggests children and adults often learn as single lexical units. In the last few years, however, two useful lists have appeared that outline such formulaic expressions, which reflect words that collocate regularly and have been shown to be common in spoken and/or written corpora. We now turn to some important and recent word lists that language educators should know about for learning and teaching English vocabulary effectively.

Some Important and Recent Word Lists

Given the encouragement from the above research to use lists for learning and teaching languages, what word lists might teachers of adult ESL/EFL students use to help them learn English vocabulary? In this section, Tables 1 and 2 offer charts with 13 important word lists that may be helpful. Starting with the GSL, UWL, and AWL, which are widely available and in use through many ESL/EFL materials, Table 1 also introduces two lists for common English phrasal expressions. Table 2 outlines subject-specific lists of vocabulary from one genre of text and six diverse academic fields. Tables 1 and 2 thus list, in chronological order, a variety of principled lists of English words that teachers may refer to and use in their ESL/EFL teaching. Each table also offers important points concerning each of these word lists. From left to right, the charts provide the name and a short form of each list, the published source (see the References list), and then offer a brief commentary, including the main focus and purpose of the list, some example items from it, and information on where a version may be obtained online.

Table 1 offers further details on the GSL, UWL, and AWL, which were introduced briefly earlier. Not only for adults, but for all ESL/EFL students, the GSL is key to understanding the most commonly used words in English. As a result, beginners at all age levels will need to master the first 1,000 words on it, and as they progress in their English proficiency they should move on to master the second 1,000 words on the GSL, which will be helpful for upper-beginner or intermediate-level students. For students in middle school or above who have mastered much of the GSL, the AWL is an important pedagogical resource, as it introduces academic English vocabulary prevalent in many fields, but especially in the arts, commerce, law, and science. Though older, the UWL is longer and may be useful to students in the humanities.

The First 100 list is included in Table 1 because it is useful not only for adults, but for all ESL/EFL students who want to improve their oral English communication. Although based on British spoken English, the First 100 list represents a number of common oral expressions and discourse markers, including *you know* (#1), *in fact* (#10), *very good* (#36), *very well* (#56), *what I mean* (#63), *mind you* (#75), and *I see* (#85), all of which teachers in ESL/EFL listening and speaking classes might want to emphasize or review with students. These common expressions all use GSL vocabulary but in set, natural phrases that people use in both speech and informal writing, such as email. Similarly, the PHRASE list includes many useful expressions for students of all ages, such as *of course* (#5) and *I mean* (#9). The PHRASE list is also ranked according to 1K frequency increments in the British National Corpus,

Table 1
Important and Recent Word Lists for Vocabulary Teaching "At a Glance"

Word List	Source/ Reference	Focus, Purpose(s), Example Words, and Online Information	Comments
General Service List (GSL)	West (1953) (Also included in Nation, 2008, Appendix 1.)	A list of vocabulary families reflecting the 2,000 most frequent words in English and representing an average of "around 82 per cent coverage" of various types of texts (Nation & Waring, 1997, p. 15). Further divided into the 1K (e.g., *act, behind, choose*) and 2K *(delight, entertain, firm, greet)*. Used as the basis for many graded readers and other ESL/EFL materials. See http://jbauman .com/aboutgsl.html for a frequency-ranked version.	An old but often cited list. Still the best we have for high frequency.
University Word List (UWL)	Xue and Nation (1984)	An 836-item academic vocabulary list (e.g., *accompany, ignore, indicate, occur*) that compiles academic English common to a variety of disciplines but excluded from the GSL. Especially useful for academic reading and provides on average some 8.5% coverage of academic texts (Nation & Waring, 1997). Divided into sublists based on frequency. The 11 sublists are available online at http://www.auburn.edu/~nunnath/ engl6240/wlistuni.html.	Suited to humanities? Now largely replaced by the AWL.
Academic Word List (AWL)	Coxhead (2000) (Included in Coxhead, 2006, as Appendix 1. See also Coxhead, 2011.)	A general-purposes academic word list, particularly for reading, with 570 word families that are not included in the GSL but that have wide range in academic texts, across disciplines (based on corpus research in arts, commerce, law, and science). Further divided into 10 sublists that reflect frequency and range. Examples: *require, income, structure, policy, economy, process.* http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/ academicwordlist/default.aspx.	Generally replaces the UWL. Compare Hyland and Tse (2007). [2]
First 100 Spoken Collocations (First 100)	Shin and Nation (2008)	A frequency-ranked list of the 100 most frequent spoken collocations in 10 million spoken words in the British National Corpus (BNC). Examples: you know (1), *I think (that)* (2), *a lot of* (6), *thank you* (8). Chosen using six criteria, including frequency, word type, and so on. An Appendix (pp. 346-348) in the article online at http://eltj .oxfordjournals.org/content/62/4/339.abstract.	Focuses on spoken collocations; conversation emphasis.
Phrasal Expressions List (PHRASE List)	Martinez and Schmitt (2012)	A frequency-ranked list of "the 505 most frequent non-transparent multiword expressions in English, especially for receptive use" (p. 299), chosen using three core and three auxiliary criteria, such as a lack of semantic transparency. Examples: *have to* (1), *there is/are* (2), *such as* (3), *I mean* (9), *a lot* (10). Ranked according to 1K levels of the BNC, and noting the prevalence of each phrase in the BNC's spoken and written data. Available as a supplementary Word file to the article online at http://applij.oxfordjournals .org/content/33/3/299/suppl/DC1.	Draws on both oral and written examples. Good for discourse markers and so on.

Table 2
Recent Subject-Specific Lists for
Vocabulary Learning and Teaching "At A Glance"

Word List	Source/ Reference	Focus, Purpose(s), Example Words, and Online Information	Comments
Business Word List (BWL1)	Konstantakis (2007)	An alphabetized 560-word list of items appearing 10 or more times in five books in Nelson's (2000) Business English Published Materials Corpus but excluded from the GSL and AWL. Examples: *conglomerate, manpower, multinational, subsidiaries.* Reading focus. Available as an Appendix (pp. 98-101) to the article online at http://www.publius.us.es/en/node/177.	See also Hsu (2011a), Walker (2011).
Science Word List (SWL)	Coxhead and Hirsh (2007)	For undergraduates, especially for reading, this 318-word general science list represents 3.79% of the words in a corpus of 1.5 million words of texts from 14 different science subject areas. Further divided into six sublists. Examples: *anatomy, diffuse, incubate, molecule, serum.* Click "EAP Science List" at http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/ staff/averil-coxhead.aspx.	See also Cheng (2011).
Medical Academic Word List (MAWL)	Wang, Liang, and Ge (2008)	A 623-item list of high-frequency and wide-coverage words in a 1 million-plus corpus of academic medical research articles representing 32 medical subject areas. Excludes items from the GSL but not those from the AWL (e.g., *analyze, concentrate*). Medical examples: *cell, protein, gene, cancer, incubate.* MAWL appeals most to graduate students pursuing medical or research degrees, for reading and writing. doi:10.1016/j .esp.2008.05.003	See also Chen & Ge (2007). Replace AWL for medical students?
AgroCorpus List	Martínez, Beck, and Panza (2009)	A 92–word-family list of items from the AWL that were most frequent in the 826,416-word AgroCorpus of agriculture research articles. Examples include: *environmental, accumulation, region, variation, chemical.* Purpose is for reading and writing. (Authors highlight how individual words may be general or technical depending on context and argue many GSL words were used in a technical sense in their corpus, while others [e.g., *study, results*] are used academically, even more than synonyms from the AWL [such as *research, outcomes,* etc.].) doi:10.1016/j.esp.2009.04.003	Argues the role of the GSL for academic study (especially reading and writing).
Basic Engineering List (BEL)	Ward (2009a)	A 299-item basic lexical list drawn from an engineering corpus of 271,000 words formed from extracts of key textbooks for undergraduates in five engineering subfields. It does *not* exclude GSL (216) or AWL (78) items, and thus is argued to be a nontechnical list of special interest to those who have not yet studied specialist engineering at the undergraduate level, particularly for reading. Examples include: *system, calculate, value, flow, process, column, factors.* An Appendix (p. 181): doi:10.1016/j.esp.2009.04.001	See also Mudraya (2006), Ward (2009b). Use with GSL/AWL?

Newspaper Word List (NWL)	Chung (2009)	A specialist word list of 588 word families drawn from a newspaper corpus of 579,849 words. Excludes proper names and GSL items that did not have wide range in the corpus. Items are grouped into 10 sublists according to range. Examples: *campaign, financial, individual, job, project, team.* See the Appendix (pp. 176-182): http://jalt-publications.org/jj/articles/263 -newspaper-word-list-specialised-vocabulary -reading-newspapers.	Useful, focused list for current news and journalism.
Theological Word List (TWL)	Lessard-Clouston (2010) (Also included in Lessard-Clouston, 2009, as Appendix F.)	Used in research of 23 90-minute academic theology lectures, the TWL has 100 items and is further divided into TWL1 (58 items) and TWL2 (42) according to frequency. For Christian theology, examples include: *ecclesiology, gnosticism, omnipotence, polytheism, theodicy.* Shows words used in handouts, on the board. Also used in research on students' technical vocabulary learning and disciplinary writing (Lessard-Clouston, 2006, 2008, 2012). Appendix (pp. 318-319): doi:10.1016/j.jeap.2010.09.001	See Ryan (2012) for another list (which does not exclude GSL/AWL).
Business Word List (BWL2)	Hsu (2011a)	A 426-word list of the most frequent items appearing in a very large Business Research Article Corpus at least 270 times, ranked according to range, frequency, and coverage. Excludes words from the British National Corpus below the 3,000 level. Includes 12 mathematics-/stats-related *(alpha, coefficient, median)* and 4 computer *(download, online, software, web)* items, as well as 6 compound words (e.g., *database, keyword, workplace*), and 4 abbreviations *(Euro, GDP, ID, LTD).* Available as an Appendix (pp. 92-99) online at http://asian-esp-journal.com/Dec-2011-wh.php.	See also Hsu (2011b).

so teachers might look to see that their students are using those from higher-frequency levels (such as those examples), but then also target other levels, or focus on common written phrases, such as "in the event," "in respect of," or "in part," all of which are from the 3K level and common in writing but infrequent in speech. Of course all these lists are especially relevant for teaching adult ESL/EFL learners, in EAP or community programs, and college or university classes.

Table 2 summarizes key points about eight specialist lists published in the last 6 years, all of which are available online or through journal publications and may be potentially relevant to ESL/EFL, and especially ESP, teachers of adults, particularly in college or university settings (or those preparing students to study in English in such academic contexts).

I would like to make some observations about the eight subject-specific lists now available, outlined in Table 2, to help readers discern which might be most relevant to their context(s). First, one list, Chung's (2009) Newspaper Word List (NWL), is focused on a particular genre of text, newspapers, rather than a specific academic discipline. This list may therefore be useful in various ESL/EFL classes in which journalism and the Internet are regular sources for

course readings and so on. The remaining seven lists represent six academic fields—business, science, medicine, agriculture, engineering, and theology, as there are two business word lists. This is a good start, especially because some lists, such as the SWL, incorporate various subjects, including chemistry, mathematics, engineering, and technology, and thus may have a wider appeal than appears at first glance. Yet there is definitely still a need for more corpus research on many more disciplines, and I hope that in the coming years such research will refine these lists and provide additional principled, subject-specific lists for ESL/EFL students and educators.

Second, all of these lists are based on various corpora, collections of texts, almost all of which are written, although the Lessard-Clouston (2010) Theological Word List has also been used with transcribed oral lecture data. Third, although three of the lists (BWL1, SWL, and BEL) are geared toward undergraduate students, the remaining four academic lists (MAWL, AgroCorpus, TWL, and BWL2) are mainly targeted toward graduate students, because they deal with research articles (MAWL, AgroCorpus, and BWL2) or graduate textbooks and courses (TWL). Fourth, the lists have been created using various goals, and for different purposes, so some exclude items from the GSL (e.g., MAWL) and AWL (SWL), or both (such as BWL1 and TWL).[3] In one case, the AgroCorpus List is actually a sublist of AWL vocabulary common in agriculture, while Ward's (2009a) Basic Engineering List (BEL) mostly contains GSL words and AWL items common in engineering readings, and the BEL is thus argued to be nontechnical yet especially relevant for students doing academic reading for courses in engineering.

Finally, as Table 2 indicates, these eight lists vary greatly in length, but they might be divided into the short (AgroCorpus List—92 items, TWL—100 items), the medium length (BEL—299 items, SWL—318, BWL2—426), and the long (BWL1—560, NWL—588, MAWL—623). As a result, the lists offer a wide range of coverage of various texts in their respective genre or fields. It is likely that beyond the GSL, many teachers of adults pursuing postsecondary education or studying English for specific purposes will need to work with the students to be sure they are cognizant of and able to use the vocabulary from more than one list here, such as the AWL in Table 1 plus maybe one of the specialist lists introduced in Table 2 (or elsewhere).

Suggestions for Using Word Lists With Students

Perhaps many Western readers, especially in North America, connect word lists to boring rote memorization. While that is one option, it is not the only one, and I would like to offer some suggestions for using word lists with students, making connections to relevant literature.

As noted earlier, brief reports by teachers such as Shillaw (1995) and Van Benthuysen (2003) indicate that they gave their students the actual word lists, or sections of them, and then had students decide for themselves which words to focus on learning from them. That is one strategy, and I suggest reading those articles to learn more about how those teachers went about that. Teachers ideally know their students, their study habits, and, one hopes, something

of their preferred learning styles and strategies. If your students need a firmer grasp of GSL vocabulary for both receptive and productive purposes, then, as in Shillaw's (1995) summary, it would likely be a good idea to have students become familiar with which words are in the 1K and 2K bands. It may be, for example, that low-intermediate students struggle more with items from the second 1,000 word list and that having them discern which words from it they already know and which remaining ones they should focus on will provide motivation and a clear target list to emphasize in their vocabulary learning. As in Shillaw's class, it will be important for students to be reading materials that include such words, using them in their writing, and hearing them in context, as with the film Shillaw's students viewed. So a key point is to enable students to have multiple exposures to words from whatever list one uses, in context as much as possible, as well as opportunities to use them in speaking and writing about relevant topics and experiences.

A second suggestion from both those articles is to narrow the focus of study from word lists somewhat. Handing students a copy of the 2,000-item GSL will likely be overwhelming to them, even if they know many or most of the words. As noted above, I recommend starting with either the 1K (for beginning-level students) or 2K (for low-intermediate–level students) word list, depending on students' vocabulary knowledge and fluency level, and helping them discern which of these high-frequency words they recognize and are confident not only in understanding, but also using in their speech and writing. This process may prove encouraging, yet we should also remind students that one of the reasons these items are so high-frequency in English is that they are often multi-definition content words, which understandably have distinct meanings for different contexts and uses. Thus we also need to help students learn to consider the contexts in which even words they already know appear, and help them observe new meanings or ways such words are used as they come across them while listening or reading.

One important strategy for helping students encounter GSL and AWL vocabulary, both to learn it and to review it, is to use a course textbook that draws on and teaches vocabulary from particular lists (Capel, 2010). At present various series, such as Longman's *New Password* texts (e.g., Butler, 2010), cover vocabulary from the GSL, focusing on reading. Similarly, its *Vocabulary Power* series (e.g., Dingle, 2008) has three levels that help teach and review 500 words from the GSL while also introducing 400 words from the AWL. For the AWL, Oxford's five-level *Inside Reading* series (e.g., Zwier, 2013) systematically covers the 570 items on the list, as does Michigan's three-level *Vocabulary Mastery* series (e.g., Wells & Valcourt, 2010). Two texts aim to cover all (Huntley, 2006) or most (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2011) of the AWL. Often, such texts also teach students to incorporate various vocabulary-learning strategies into their word learning, such as the use of vocabulary cards with the *Vocabulary Mastery* texts or dictionary use, the keyword technique, and affixes and suffixes with the Schmitt and Schmitt (2011) text. Again, such texts and approaches encourage multiple exposures to the words students learn, which is crucial to successful vocabulary acquisition (Laufer & Nation, 2012).

Readers who use a communicative approach in their teaching might hesitate to use word lists, or sections of them. However, authors such as Foley (2009) and Hirsh and Coxhead (2009) offer insights into using word lists in our regular classes. Foley's (2009) focus is EAP, which, he argues, means that teachers need to emphasize longer reading passages, appeal to world knowledge, consider global topics and themes, and focus on vocabulary form as well as use. Using the AWL as his target list, Foley (2009) then introduces various pre-, during-, and postreading activities, such as categorizing sets of 15-20 words from the list, listening for different forms (noun, verb, adjective, etc.) of the words from the list, and using online corpora to have students research common collocations (adjectives, objects, topic areas, etc.) for target words they are learning. Hirsh and Coxhead (2009) also focus on EAP, but they introduce 10 ways that the first 60 words from their Science Word List (Coxhead & Hirsh, 2007) might be incorporated into such classrooms. These include using split information tasks with science words bolded, ranking a list of 15 SWL items for their closeness to and usefulness in biology, nursing, computer science, and technology, using flash cards and vocabulary notebooks to enhance students' learning strategies, and summarizing activities for meaning-focused output (in speech or writing). So while these activities are communicative in nature, they are also targeted for particular words teachers deem useful to students with particular general or discipline-specific EAP vocabulary needs.

As these examples from Hirsh and Coxhead (2009) suggest, subject-specific words lists, such as those included in Table 2, may also be useful in helping students come to know and practice target vocabulary particularly relevant for their future academic studies. As a result, researchers such as Hsu (2011a) recommend that after learning GSL and AWL vocabulary, students preparing for particular subject areas, such as business, study the lists that target words from available lists, such as her Business Word List (BWL2), because this will then help them cope more effectively not only with the textbooks in their fields, but also research articles and other readings they will need to complete during their studies, particularly if they are studying at the graduate level. If the lists included here do not include important fields you would like to prepare your students for, then Carlson's (1999) brief article offers suggestions for creating a corpus by identifying a relevant collection of available texts in a discipline, analyzing word frequency, and then creating a list of the 100 most common words in that field, such as dental English (his focus). In that case, as with some of the lists in Table 2, however, Carlson (1999) chose *not* to exclude items from the GSL or the AWL, so learners who have already mastered the general and academic vocabulary on those lists may prefer a word list that targets just subject-specific terminology.

Yet another way to approach creating your own word list for specific purposes is to follow Westbrook's (2009) example. Working at a Danish university, before his course began he asked administrative staff to suggest words they were unsure about in English, and then he was able to create a bilingual list of 500 terms in Danish and English that he was able to help them learn, using input activities (gap-fill exercises, matching and sorting tasks, organizers, etc.)

and output activities (class discussions, work role-play simulations, student presentations on their jobs, English summaries of Danish articles and information, writing emails on specific topics, etc.) that were relevant to his students who worked at the university. As this list indicates, Westbrook (2009) used both teacher- and student-led activities in class and homework to help students develop fluency with the vocabulary from his list, using meaning-focused opportunities that involved a range of listening, speaking, reading, and writing tasks.

A number of writers mentioned earlier, including Xue and Nation (1984) and Hoshino (2010), suggest it is important to help students understand collocations and how they relate to particular items from word lists that we use. For general-purposes classes, the two formulaic-expressions lists in Table 1 are a good place to start for all students, in oral or written communication. As for the lists in Table 2, one might have students examine example sentences in their English-English or discipline-specific dictionaries, or in using Google or other online or hard-copy readings students have at their disposal. Both Xue and Nation (1984) and Hoshino (2010) suggest categorizing not only the words, but also the collocations, so that students can see relationships between the collocations (e.g., adjective + noun, verb + adverb, etc.). In this way we can use word lists from Table 2 as a launching pad for class discussions and activities that will help students learn to speak and write appropriately with technical vocabulary.

In a collection of suggestions such as this we need to recognize that there are a growing number of online resources available that can help students learn and use vocabulary from word lists, whether for self-study or in our classes. A major resource is Tom Cobb's Compleat Lexical Tutor (CLT, http://www.lextutor.ca), where various tools are available for analyzing texts that one can copy and paste in and then see the percentage and highlighted vocabulary from the GSL, AWL, and words not on any lists. Again, teachers should know their students and in that context examine what is available on CLT and through links to other sites, including AWL highlighters and so on, that are most relevant to students' vocabulary learning goals and strategies. Spiri (2007) suggests various websites where teachers can assess their students' knowledge level for various lists such as the AWL, develop online quizzes using tools such as Hot Potatoes, and use the course-management options at WordChamp (http://www.wordchamp.com) to help individual students and classes study English vocabulary. A final excellent resource is the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA, http://corpus.byu.edu/coca), which offers a huge database and a wide variety of spoken and written text types. Like the CLT, the COCA offers users tutorials to help them understand and make good use of these resources (including several on YouTube).

Since online tools are created and updated regularly, I simply want to close this suggestion section by reminding teachers to avail themselves and their students of whatever web resources are available to support and encourage their word learning, whether it is from general or specialist word lists such as those introduced here, or from lists that teachers develop themselves.

Conclusion

This article provided background from recent literature on vocabulary studies and encouraged readers to reconsider word lists for vocabulary learning and teaching in their classes. Understanding which lists are available may be useful in helping students fill gaps in their vocabulary knowledge and use and aid their development of English language fluency as they transition to college or university courses in English within their chosen fields. In addition to general and academic vocabulary, recent word lists from relevant corpus research on phrasal expressions and in six academic fields were noted, as was the need for more research into additional academic disciplines. Word lists can guide both English teacher and student attention and efforts for both comprehension and production of English vocabulary. It seems high time to (re)consider what lists are available and creative ways to use them both in and out of ESL/EFL classes.

Author

Michael Lessard-Clouston is an associate professor in the Department of Applied Linguistics and TESOL at Biola University (La Mirada, California), where he coordinates the MA in Applied Linguistics and teaches in both the on-campus and online MA TESOL Programs. His research interests include corpus linguistics, second language acquisition, and vocabulary studies.

Notes

[1]The main focus here is adult ESL/EFL students. Recognizing differences between such learners and younger students and earlier grades, however, interested readers may consult several relevant works. For elementary school, see http://thefirst4000words.com. For middle school a key website is Word Generation, based on a large research project: http://wg.serpmedia.org. Hiebert and Lubliner (2008) discuss academic vocabulary in schools (including Hiebert's Core Academic Word List), as does Marzano (2010). See also Harmon, Wood, and Hedrick (2008) for middle and secondary content vocabulary and its instruction. Kinsella's (2013) text is also geared toward middle school students.

[2]In an attempt to evaluate the AWL, Hyland and Tse (2007) did a follow-up corpus study and showed that specialized uses of vocabulary operate beyond the level of register, so the AWL's bias toward some fields (science and law) and short texts (2,000-word fragments) raised questions. Hyland and Tse (2007) also challenged the division of "*academic* and *technical* vocabulary" (p. 249), noting that EAP focuses on communication, so lists alone are not sufficient, and "the student's specific target context" is the best focus for a well-planned vocabulary-learning program. They also recommend teaching "multiword units" (p. 251).

[3]The exception is Hsu's (2011a) BWL2, which was based on the British National Corpus, and excluded words below the 3,000 level, which in essence represents most of the GSL and AWL.

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