



The University of
Nottingham

Learning Vocabulary in L2s Other than English

Norbert Schmitt

Principles for Learning Second Language Vocabulary



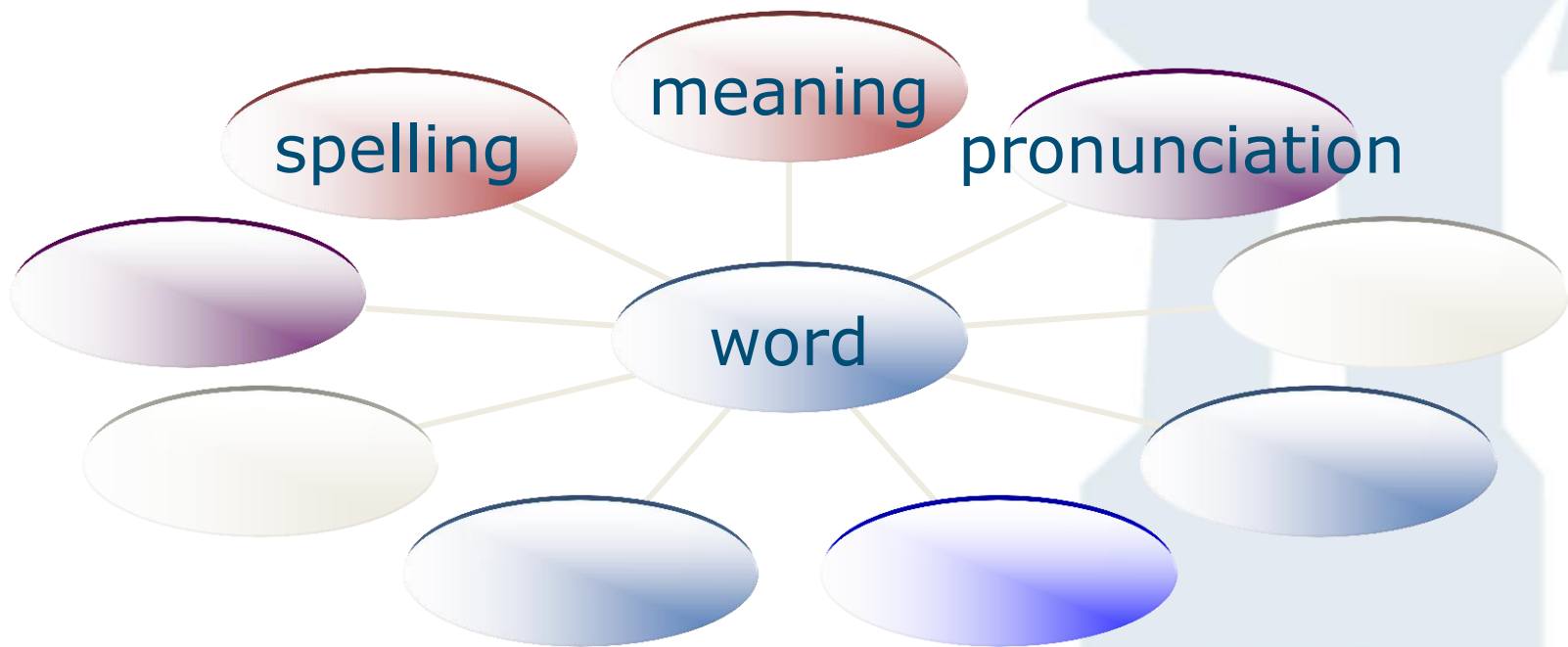
Principles for Learning Second Language Vocabulary

1. Learning vocabulary entails more than just learning a word's form and meaning
2. Vocabulary learning is a complex and gradual process.
3. Recycling is crucial to vocabulary learning
4. There is a role for both explicit instruction and incidental learning
5. Vocabulary is more than just individual words
6. Need to maximize engagement with vocabulary

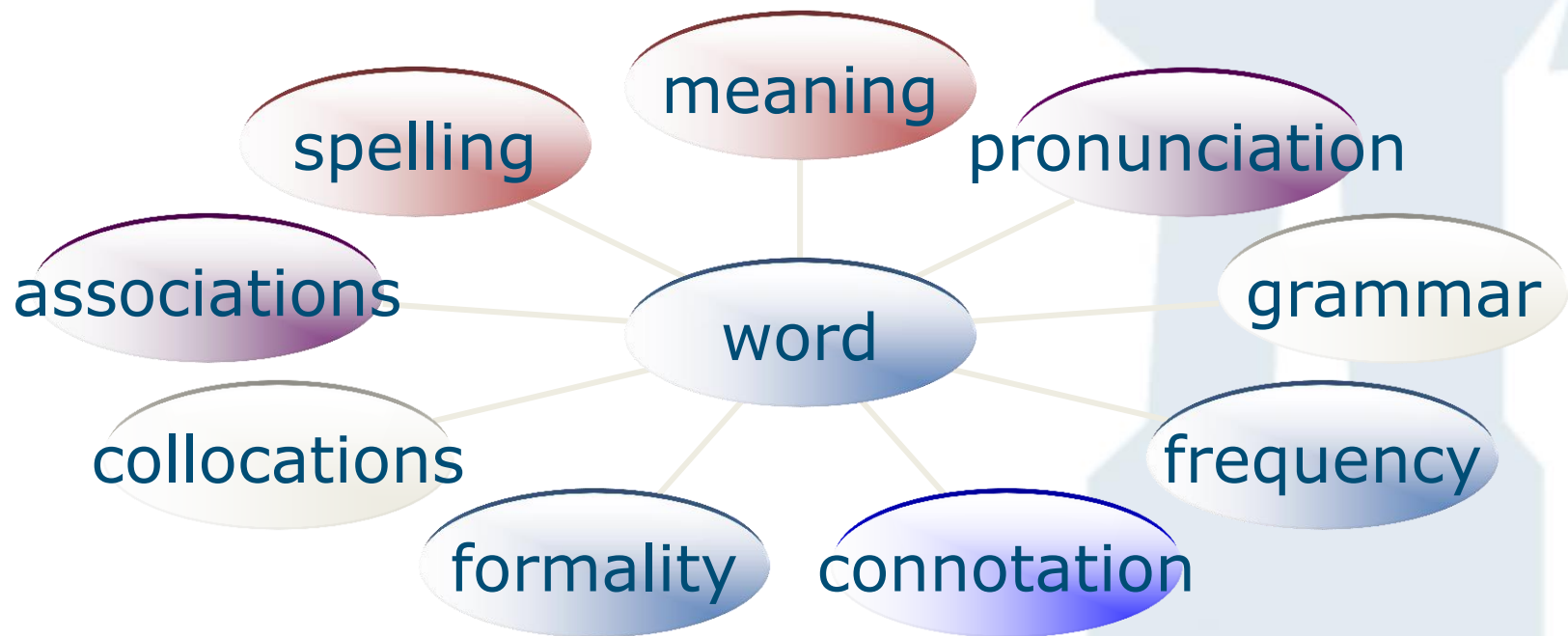
Principle 1

Learning vocabulary entails more than just learning
a word's form and meaning

There is More to Knowledge than Just Meaning and Form



There is More to Knowledge than Just Meaning and Form



A Word's Form May Be More Difficult Than Its Meaning

- The flag is the nation symbol.
- I get a lot of enjoy from listening to music.
- When she heard the good news, she smiled happy.

A Word's Form May Be More Difficult Than Its Meaning

- The flag is the **national** symbol.
- I get a lot of **enjoyment** from listening to music.
- When she heard the good news, she smiled **happily**.

Schmitt & Zimmerman (2002)

persist

- Noun The judge changed his mind because
 of the lawyer's _____.
- Verb The lawyer _____ until the judge
 changed his mind.
- Adjective The _____ lawyer persuaded the
 judge to change his mind.
- Adverb The lawyer argued _____.

Schmitt & Zimmerman (2002)

persist

- Noun The judge changed his mind because of the lawyer's **persistence**.
- Verb The lawyer **persisted** until the judge changed his mind.
- Adjective The **persistent** lawyer persuaded the judge to change his mind.
- Adverb The lawyer argued **persistently**.

Schmitt & Zimmerman (2002)

- Nottingham and California university students
- Advanced learners typically knew some, but not all derivative forms (2 or 3 out of 4)
- Typically knew noun and verb forms better than adjective and adverb forms

Various Kinds Of Word Knowledge Are Needed

- Learning a word requires more than just learning just its meaning and form
- Must learn all of the ‘contextual’ kinds of word knowledge as well
- These are more difficult to learn explicitly, and might require large amounts of exposure
- **Need explicit learning + extensive exposure**

Principle 2

Vocabulary learning is a complex and incremental process.

Three Dimensions of Vocabulary Development

Dimension 1:

partial

precise

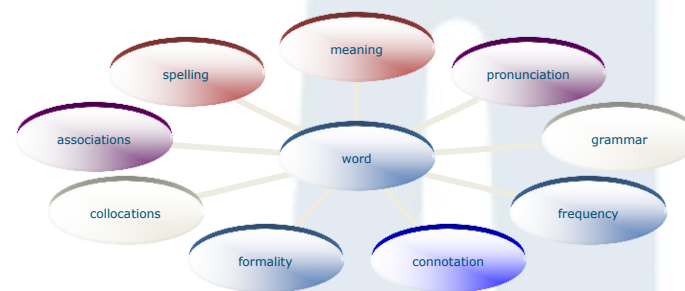
Dimension 2:

depth of knowledge

Dimension 3:

receptive

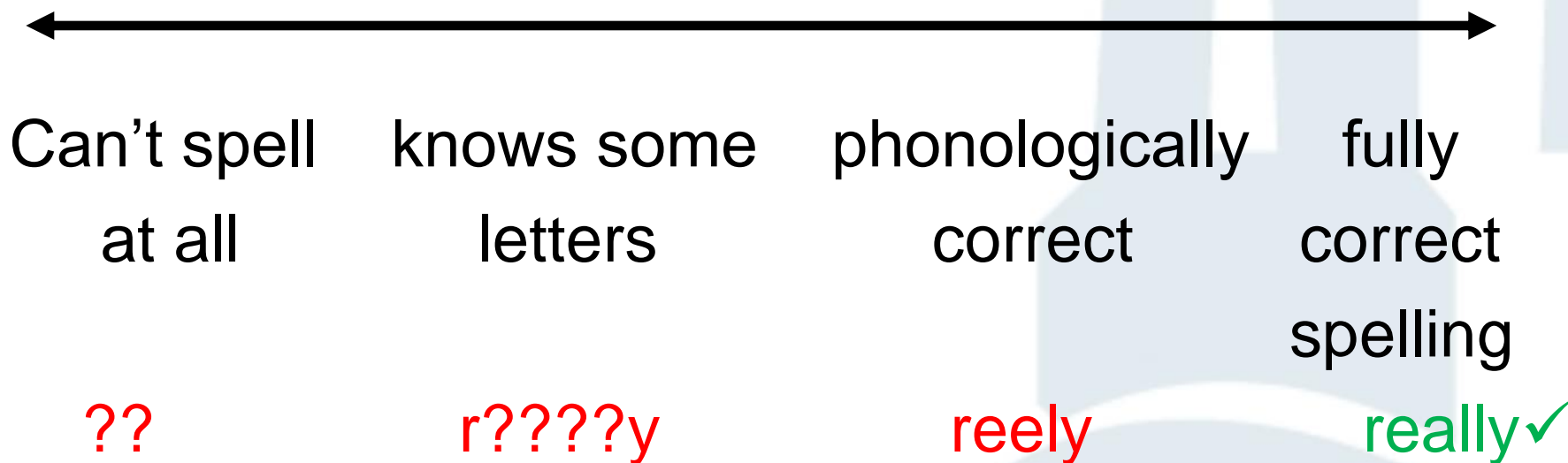
productive use



Henrikson, (1999)

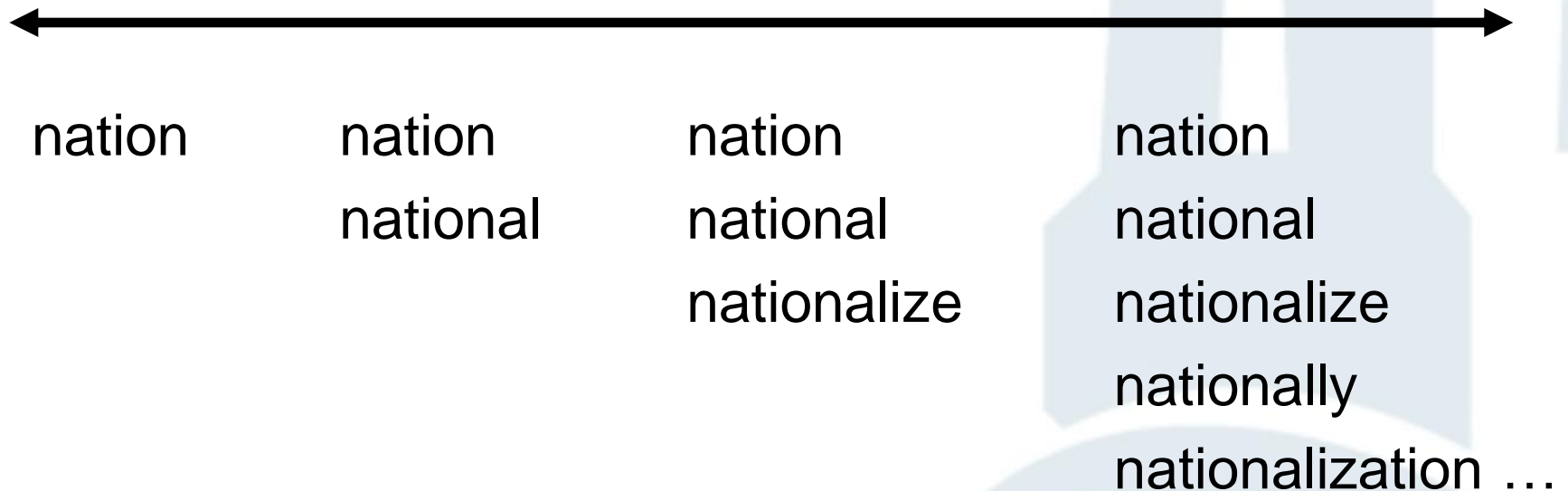
Written Form

Spelling



Vocabulary Learning is Incremental

Derivative Forms



Size and depth are intertwined

For many common vocabulary teaching activities, you need some words to learn more words

- Early learning may be quite dependent on L1 or visuals



- Later learning – makes use of already known words to learn new words

5. cheerful

serious

happy

positive

joyful

6. astonishing

amazing

predictable

surprising

shocking

- a 1. **gripped** (1)
 - a. deeply engaged, interested
 - b. strongly affected by something
- 2. **absorbed** (1)
 - a. very interested in something, often to the point of not noticing other things happening around you
 - b. when light, heat, or energy is taken in and kept and not reflected or sent back

Size and depth are intertwined

For teaching activities that aim to enhance knowledge of individual words, many other words are needed

5. a. **Rural areas** are regularly being absorbed into growing cities.
- b. The **rural population** of America is shrinking: 60 percent of Americans lived in the countryside in 1900 and only 25 percent did so in 1990.
- c. Some young people believe there is little that is interesting to do in **rural communities**.
- d. Over 25 percent of _____ in Costa Rica have been **conserved** as national parks or protected zones.

Definition and Sample Sentence

1. **interchangeable**: when things can be used instead of other things

*Eli Whitney's invention of **interchangeable** parts led the way in the development of factory assembly lines.*

Questions

- a. List four examples of things that are **interchangeable**.
- b. Synonyms are commonly thought of as words with **interchangeable** meanings. But are synonyms truly **interchangeable**? What are some characteristics that make synonyms different from each other?

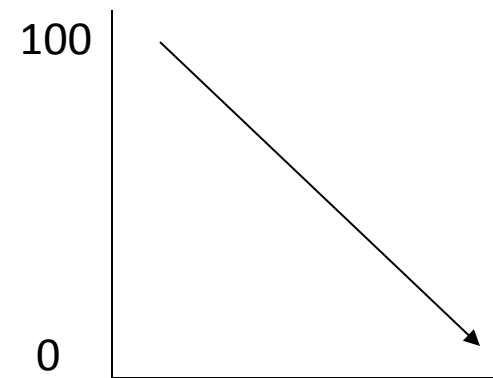
Principle 3

Recycling is crucial to vocabulary learning

Forgetting

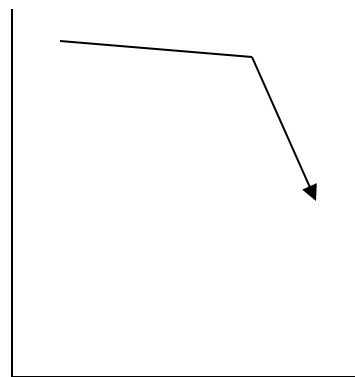
Memory

In what manner does the mind forget?

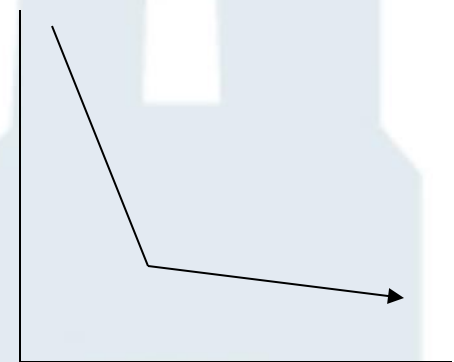


Time →

A

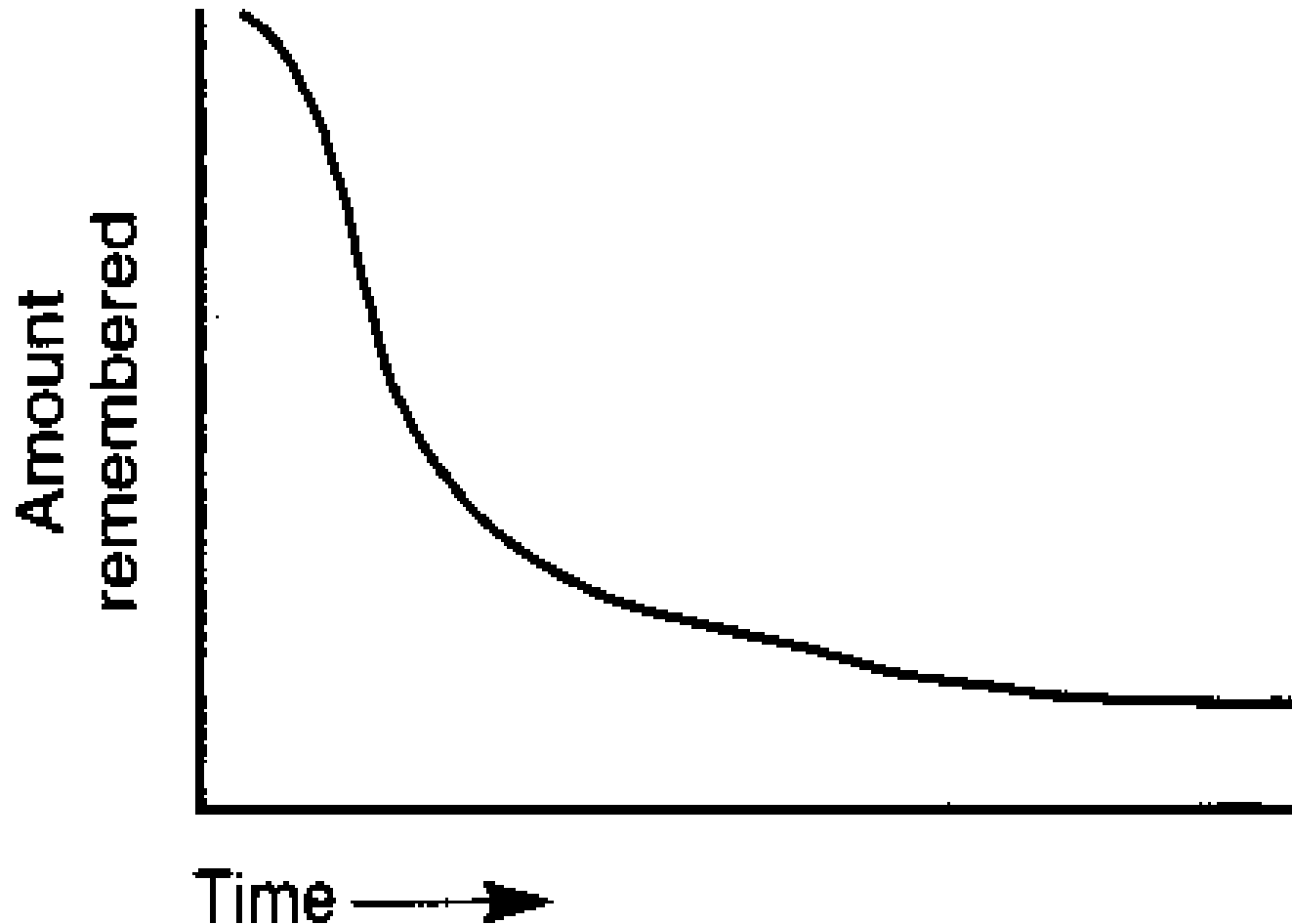


B



C

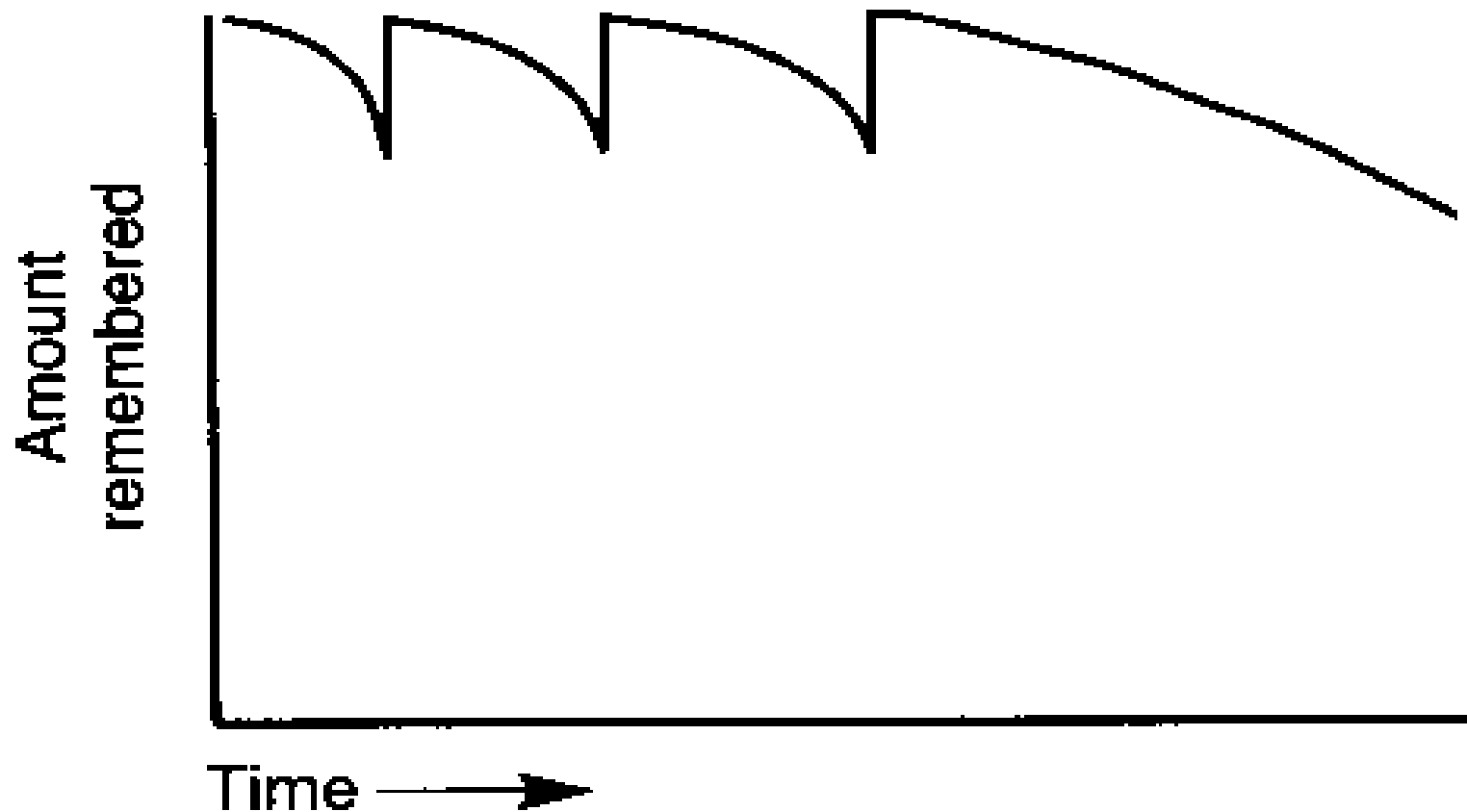
Forgetting



Revision (No Once-only Exposures)

- Some revision needs to be done soon after learning session
- Revision needs to be spaced
- Could be equally spaced or 'expanding rehearsal'
- The key is continuing exposure, recycling over longer periods of time

Maintaining Knowledge



Recycling is Crucial to Vocabulary Learning

Words need to be recycled because it takes time to:

- Consolidate what you have learned
- Move up the developmental scale
- Master the various types of word knowledge

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Recycling is as much about **enhancement** as **consolidation**.

Principle 4

There is a role for both explicit instruction and incidental learning

Explicit Learning and Extensive Exposure

- **Explicit study** leads to learning that is typically:
 - Faster
 - Stronger
 - More durable
- But we cannot teach everything
- **Extensive exposure** provides necessary repetition
- It also provides information about contextual types of word knowledge that are hard to teach

Spelling can be Taught Explicitly

a. grieve **OR**

b. greive

c. recieve **OR**

d. receive

Spelling can be Taught Explicitly

- a. grieve ✓
- b. greive
- c. recieve
- d. receive ✓

'i' before 'e', except after 'c'

Intuitions of Spelling

- isozyme
- ptardine
- prolificity
- tcharal
- quintain
- hgough
- nulliparous
- louqt

Intuitions of Spelling

- isozyme
- ptardine
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Intuitions of Spelling

- isozyme ☒
- ptardine ☐
- prolificity
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Intuitions of Spelling

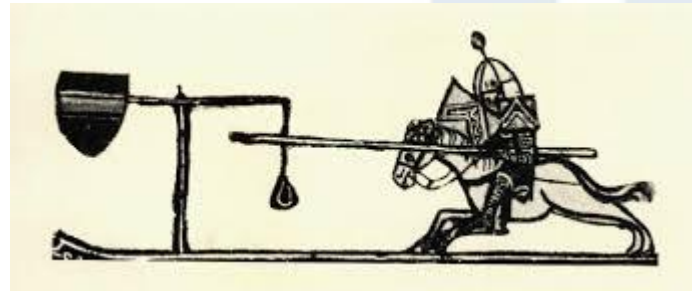
- isozyme ☒
- ptardine ☐
- prolificity ☒ (prolific power or character)
- tcharal
- quintain
- hgough
- nulliparous
- louqt

Intuitions of Spelling

- isozyme ☒
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Intuitions of Spelling

- isozyme ☒
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- nulliparous ☐
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Intuitions of Spelling

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(female with no offspring)

Intuitions of Spelling

- isozyme ☒
- ptardine ☐
- prolificity ☒
- tcharal ☐
- quintain ☒
- hgough ☐
- nulliparous ☒
- louqt ☐

Intuitions of Spelling

- Your good intuitions show that much knowledge of spelling comes from **exposure**, and not just from explicitly study
- Explicit study and exposure support each other in complementary ways
 - Explicit study allows your students to understand more of the language they hear/read
 - Exposure reinforces and enhances explicit learning

Pedagogical Punchline

It takes a lot of vocabulary to use English



Exposure Not Enough by Itself

This much vocabulary will not just be
'picked up' as if by magic



Need Explicit Teaching



Principle 5

Vocabulary is more than just individual words

Vocabulary is More than Single Words

There is a lot of formulaic phrasal vocabulary

- Several hundreds of thousands
- As many as there are single words

collocations - strong coffee, tectonic plate

phrasal verbs – make up, look out

phrasal expressions – “We might as well” get married.

formulaic expressions – As can be seen in Table 1...

idioms – It’s raining cats and dogs.

Formulaic Language is Important for Academic Use

- Discourse Organization → *in conclusion*
in other words
as I was saying

Formulaic Language is Important for Academic Use

- Technical phrases → *blood pressure is 140 over 60*
cleared to land

Principle 6

Need to maximize engagement with vocabulary

Principle 6

Need to maximize engagement with vocabulary

Engagement

- Craik and Lockhart (1972): *Depth/Levels of Processing*

Engagement

- Hulstijn and Laufer (2001): *Involvement Load Hypothesis*
- **Need** is the requirement for a linguistic feature in order to achieve some desired task
- **Search** is the attempt to find the required information, for example, looking up the meaning of that word in a dictionary
- **Evaluation** refers to the comparison of the word, or information about a word, with the context of use to determine if it fits or is the best choice

Schmitt (2008)

Other factors that facilitate vocabulary learning:

- increased frequency of exposure
- increased attention focused on the lexical item
- increased noticing of the lexical item
- increased intention to learn the lexical item
- a requirement to learn the lexical item (by teacher, test, syllabus)

Schmitt (2008)

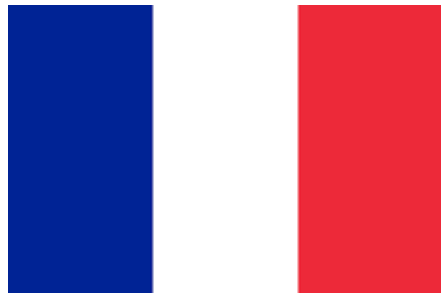
- a need to learn/use the lexical item (for task or for a personal goal)
- increased manipulation of the lexical item and its properties
- increased amount of time spent engaging with the lexical item
- amount of interaction spent on the lexical item

Schmitt (2008)

Overall, it seems that virtually anything that leads to more exposure, attention, manipulation, or time spent on lexical items adds to their learning.

➡ ***Engagement***

What About Non-English Languages?



***Researching Vocabulary:
A Vocabulary Research
Manual***

(2010)

Palgrave Macmillan

Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics
Series Editors: Christopher N. Candlin and David R. Hull

**Researching
Vocabulary**

A Vocabulary Research Manual

al is written
language researchers
want to carry on
eliat
econ. language
bulary. The author
known vocabulary
rcher and he outlin
os and don'ts of go
research. Practice

Norbert Schmitt



Italian

Corpus di Italiano Scritto (CORIS)

- 130 million words of written Italian sampled from categories such as press, academic prose, legal and administrative and ephemera
- Accessible online
- http://corpora.dslo.unibo.it/coris_ita.html

Spanish

The Corpus del Español NOW (News on the Web)

- 6.2 billion words of newspaper and magazine Spanish
- Part of BYU corpus collection (Mark Davies)
- <https://www.corpusdelespanol.org/now/>

German

DWDS German Corpus

- 5.5 billion word corpus
- <https://www.dwds.de/d/korpora>

German Tracking Corpus (*Instituts für Deutsche Sprache*)

- 4 billion words+
- <http://www1.ids-mannheim.de/projekte/laufende.html>

Greek

Hellenic National Corpus

- 47 million words of written modern Greek
- http://hnc.ilsp.gr/index.php?current_page=main&lang=en

Word Lists

- **Sketch Engine** for Spanish and other languages
- <https://www.sketchengine.eu/>

ley sea
 esa año
 día paz más
 iba meso así
 sur tal
 hay don río red males
 eso mis dio voz hoy
 ver dan the aun
 han ve za ún así
 que son e mas



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