

1. What are some problems that the students of English might have in acquiring/learning English vocabulary?

Because learners of English as a foreign or second language likely grew up in a different language and social environment, with different cultural assumptions and experience – meaning they lack the experience and cultural assumptions that an English language environment might provide, they often can't put new vocabulary in context or in the various contexts to glean the shades of possible meanings. Something like the word "hot" might have various meanings (warm, attractive, popular) and even subtler meanings on a scale that is dependent on context (hot could be relative to the normal temperature, or the specific temperature of that moment, or it could be used sarcastically, it could imply that something is good – ala "the coffee is hot"; or dangerous "don't touch the stove, it's hot). So there's a lot to learn when learning a word. It's not as straightforward as we often think of it. And growing up in the language, we've internalized all these possible contexts because we've come across them so many times, whereas an English learner simply hasn't been exposed to these subtleties yet.

I suppose another problem students might have learning English vocabulary is ineffective teaching, or teachers making their jobs and lives simpler by simply supplying a list of words to memorize the meanings of (boring) rather than engaging more fully in what the students want and need to learn and in how they might best get that knowledge.

The sheer number of words to tackle and the intimidation or feeling of being overwhelmed is also a challenge. For instance, reading is one of the most natural ways we learn new vocabulary, but it's tricky for a learner to find a book that's appropriate to their age or reading level out in the regular world, or without good guidance. Attempting to read a text in which too many of the words are unknown and difficult to glean the meaning of could be discouraging.