

Understanding Literacies

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Learning literacy is learning to read and write for meaning.

Meaning and literacy involve both cognitive and social and cultural aspects. Both are crucial to the process of literacy learning.

Much home literacy is 'owned' by children, developed for their own purposes and pleasure, and is socially embedded.

A common aim in our projects and of this session is to engage with teachers in thinking about literacy.

What question(s) about literacy would you like to have an answer to?

Overview of the projects in this session

- English orthography: challenges and benefits for learners
- Home-school knowledge exchange in literacy
- Literacies for learning in FE
- Bilingual literacies for learning in FE

Challenges and benefits related to learning English literacy

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Two connections between oral and written language

- The direct connection: written language is a notation system for oral language (Jaffré: phonographic system)
- The indirect connection through an abstract language system that represents syntax and morphology (Jaffré: semiographic system)

Morphology in English orthography

- Some spellings that are irregular when analysed in terms of sounds are regular when analysed in morphemes
 - magician magic + ian
 - confession confess + ion
- Many word endings are derivational or inflectional morphemes and are always spelled in the same way.

Morphology affects literacy in many ways

1. In the establishment of word boundaries
2. In spelling 
3. In vocabulary learning 
4. In reading fluency
5. In reading comprehension

Learning about morphology is challenging

You need to know about:

- ✓ stems and affixes
- ✓ the meanings that go with the affixes
- ✓ word class (“s” at the end of nouns makes a plural; at the end of a verb marks the third person singular)

Often we only know these things implicitly

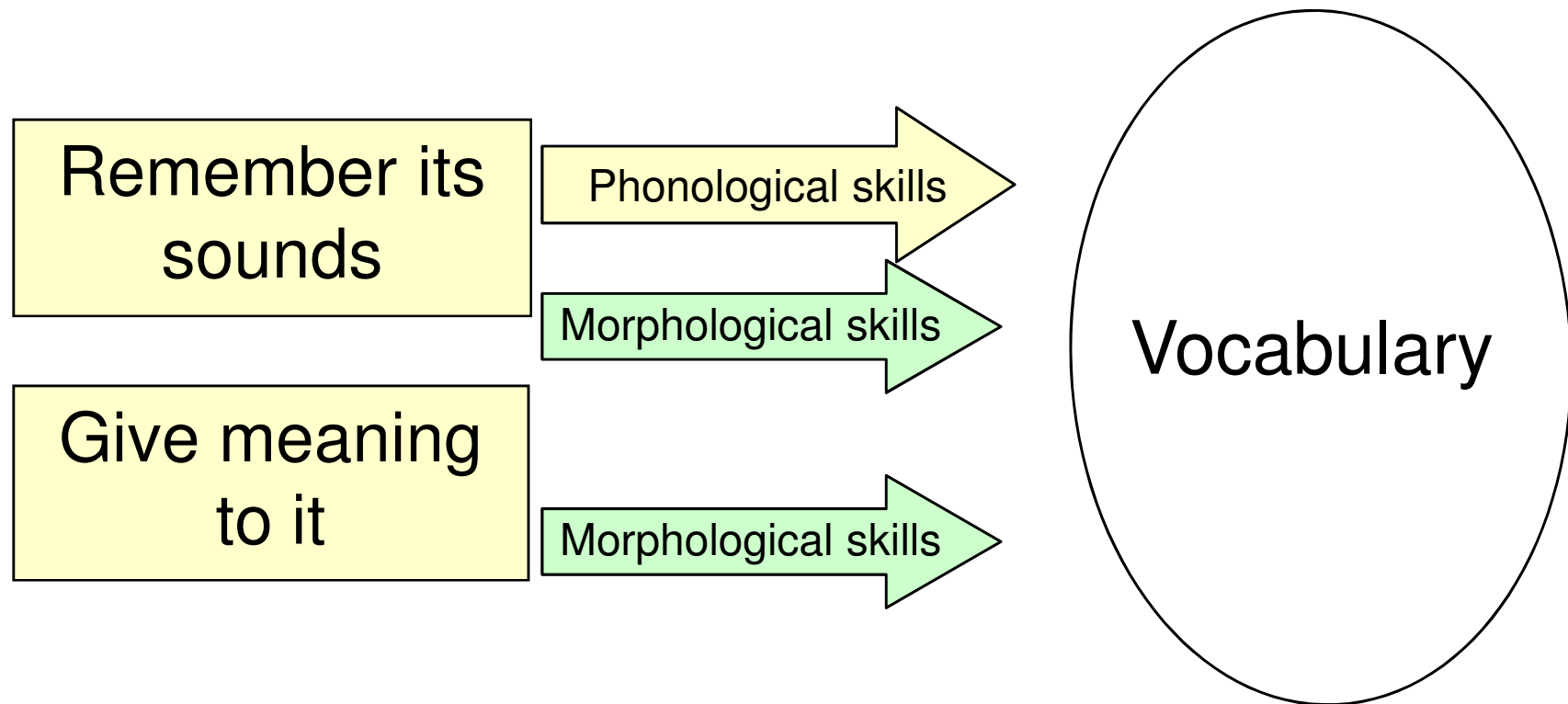
In order to represent them in writing, we need to develop some awareness of morphemes

We can learn word by word, memorising each one, but this is less efficient and we gain less from it

What to you gain from learning about morphemes

- ✓ it helps learn new vocabulary
 - ❖ helps remember the sounds of words
 - ❖ helps give meaning to new words
- ✓ it helps reading fluency and comprehension

To learn a new word we must



How do we test children's memory of new words?

- With made-up words
 - without a morphological structure:
woogalamic, hampent, stopograttic, dopelate
 - with a morphological structure:
concentrationist, unsausagish, winteriser, computerist

- The made-up words that have a morphological structure are easier to remember
- Children who have better morphological skills remember more words with a morphological structure
- For each new word a child learns in primary school, there are at least 3 related new words.

Children's reading and spelling. Beyond the first steps

Terezinha Nunes
Peter Bryant

A book based on the ESRC-TLRP project

The role of awareness in learning literacy and
numeracy



Home school knowledge exchange project

Directed by Professor Martin Hughes, University of Bristol

Project assumptions:

- Children live and learn in two different worlds – home and school
 - These worlds are often kept separate from each other
 - We want to help teachers, parents and children find new ways to exchange their different knowledge of these worlds
 - We believe that doing this successfully will enhance children's learning
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RESEARCHING LITERACY AT HOME

- In-depth study of six Year 2 children and their families
- Methods included:
 - diaries made by the families (both written and photographic)
 - videos
 - observation
 - interviews and informal chats

GERAINT – A MESSAGE TO HIS FATHER

dear dad I'm sorry and please

can I have the TV on

circle yes or circle no

Geraint

yes no

SEREN – A MESSAGE TO THE TOOTH FAIRIES

to The toth feris

Mai toth ceim awt

and i nefor p.

new so et got t.

losst lost o.

from Seren

15 Thursday

Seren's

toth pto

of May

Much home literacy is ‘owned’ by children,
developed for their own purposes and
pleasure and is socially embedded

- Messages that serve real purposes
- Children’s awareness of audience

T·L·R·P
TEACHING
& LEARNING
RESEARCH
PROGRAMME

E·S·R·C
ECONOMIC
& SOCIAL
RESEARCH
COUNCIL

There's a need:

4. for those who are not in employment to have access to learning as well
5. to recognise that learning is often not linear or hierarchical and to create structures and systems which support rather than constrain participation

DISCUSSION