

## Keeping a Critical Eye on “Lexical Friends”: Cognates as Critical Pedagogy in Pre-Service Teacher Education

Manteniendo una mirada crítica a los “amigos léxicos”: los cognados como pedagogía crítica en la formación inicial del profesorado

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This research project investigates more productive, critical and reflective ways of teaching cognates and loan words. The main objective of the research is aimed at making teacher trainees aware of different ways of presenting and practising cognates and loan words in the second-language classroom. The participants in the investigation were studying in a BA programme in Teaching English as a Foreign Language in a Mexican public university. This study argues that cognates are a productive resource for second-language users at all stages and levels of language learning and are not just a tool for the random recognition of words. Furthermore, I describe activities that offer ways for language learners to take control of language learning and not just rely on given knowledge from teachers and textbooks.

*Key words:* Vocabulary, cognates, loan words, critical pedagogy

Este proyecto de investigación tiene como propósito buscar métodos productivos, críticos y reflexivos en la enseñanza de cognados y préstamos léxicos. El objetivo principal consiste en crear maestros más conscientes sobre las diferentes maneras de presentar y practicar los cognados y los préstamos. Los participantes en este estudio están cursando la Licenciatura de la Enseñanza de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera en una universidad pública en México. Este estudio argumenta que los cognados son un recurso productivo para el alumno que estudia en cualquier nivel y no solamente una herramienta aleatoria para reconocer palabras. Detallo actividades que ofrecen diferentes maneras para que los alumnos asuman el control del proceso de aprendizaje y que no dependan solamente de los conocimientos dados por maestros y libros de texto.

*Palabras clave:* Vocabulario, cognados, préstamos y pedagogía crítica

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## Introduction

Cognates and loan words have long been recognized as important lexical resources which the second-language learner brings from his or her first language to the language classroom. I consider cognates and loan words in a similar way because they are complementary first-language (L1) resources within the target-language learning context. Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) have tended to downplay the use of cognates and loan words, presenting them at the elementary level and merely using them to demonstrate to beginner students how much of the target language they already know. Important as this may be, I argue in this research paper that cognates and loan words reflect a much more productive and critical dimension to language use. I build on the work of Holmes & Ramos (1993), who assert that cognates and loan words reflect natural learning strategies; and I argue that current teacher training programmes need to help future teachers to see how cognates are not mere lexical phenomena but also reflect social and cultural language use. Therefore, I undertook classroom action research by: identifying a pedagogical problem; asking trainees to reflect on that problem; and examining possible solutions. This involved presenting and evaluating classroom activities aimed at raising the awareness of teacher trainees. From this research, I contend that a working knowledge of cognates and loan words offers second-language (L2) learners an insight into how linguistic power and learner submission

are often surreptitiously implanted in the classroom and second-language context.

## Theoretical Framework

Loan words and cognates are defined differently from a linguistic perspective and both are important to the language user as they reflect existing lexical knowledge that students bring to the EFL classroom. Although I will define each concept differently, I will argue from a functional point of view that they should be considered pedagogically in the same way in the EFL classroom. At the same time, any attempt to define loan words and cognates is fraught with complications and it is even more difficult to relate the concept to the second-language classroom where teachers, students and EFL specialists often have very contrasting definitions. I will now examine these competing definitions and adopt a working definition for the purposes of this study.

Loan words (or lexical borrowings) are both misleading terms since they refer to words that have been taken from another language without asking for the donor language's permission. According to Rodríguez González (1996a, p. 3), approximately 50 per cent of the 750,000 words in American English entered as loan words. In Spanish-speaking countries where students are learning English, the use of loan words can be seen as a two-way flow: English words have influenced Spanish and, as argued by Rodríguez González (1996b), the Spanish language is having an ever greater influence on both American and British English. The adoption of English-language loan words

by the Spanish language gives Latin American EFL students, for instance, an enormous advantage when encountering new vocabulary. By way of contrast, Hatch and Brown (1995, p. 171) point out that in Romance languages lexical borrowing is not appreciated by language traditionalists trying to keep the language pure.

At the same time, students need to be aware that loan words rarely enter the borrowing language without undergoing some semantic modification, especially when an equivalent word already exists in the borrowing language. Besides modifying meaning, loan words may reflect different ways of expressing perceptions of prestige e.g. ‘top ten’ and ‘fashion’ or downplaying negative phenomenon e.g. ‘motel’ and ‘light’.

In trying to identify cognates, applied linguists and teachers offer conflicting definitions. From a linguistic point of view, a cognate is a word that shares a common ancestry with another word (Crystal 1987, p. 292). For instance, Crystal (1991) defines a cognate as “a language or linguistic form which is historically derived from the same source as another language/form” (p. 60). Meanwhile, Richards and Schmidt (2002) define a cognate as “a word in one language which is similar in form and meaning to a word in another language because both languages are related” (p. 829).

The definitions offered by Crystal and Richards and Schmidt appear to be fairly straightforward except that Richards and Schmidt (2002) add “Sometimes words in two languages are similar in form and meaning but are borrowings and not cognate forms” (p. 82). They offer the examples of *kampuni* in Swahili and English *company*. Therefore, a language student

would need to know the history of a word in order to label it a cognate. Meanwhile, Melka (1997) seems to use the terms cognates and loan words interchangeably: “The cross-linguistic equivalence is all the more easy to perceive when L2 items formally resemble L1 items (more or less cognates)” (p. 96).

However, the second-language classroom requires a working definition which students can relate to. This has been provided by Holmes and Ramos (1993) who define cognates as “items of vocabulary in two languages which have the same roots and can be recognized as such” (1993, p. 88). This definition is much more understandable to students and can be applied to second language use. For the purposes of this paper, I will adopt this definition and usually employ the term cognate because cognates and loan words are generally understood as being the same in the EFL classroom and, furthermore, for the sake of simplicity.

### *Students’ Use of Cognates*

As Holmes & Ramos (1993) point out, cognate recognition ‘is a “natural” strategy’ (p. 92) and as such it does not have to be taught. Furthermore, as Corder (1973, p. 227) argues, students use their own language experiences and resources to find connections between languages. Besides running into problems with “false friends” or *faux-amis* (Corder 1973, p. 231), students also encounter difficulties in using cognates at both the micro and macro levels.

At the macro level, cognates need to be seen within sociocultural and affective contexts. For instance, Gairns & Redman

(1986, p. 20) argue that the use of ‘radical’ reflects different cultural meanings in different languages. I would argue that in Mexican Spanish, the word *patio* can be translated as ‘court’ or ‘yard’ into English. However, connotatively the word ‘patio’ in English reflects middle-class status since it is a paved area used by householders for eating or relaxing outside. Meanwhile, a loan word such as *gay* in Mexican Spanish reflects acceptance of someone’s sexual orientation compared to the more judgmental *homosexual*. Therefore, cognates can offer alternative ways of expressing cultural ideas. Holmes and Ramos (1993, p. 89) point out that, at a macro level, students often engage in ‘reckless guessing’ when they rely too much on selected cognates and familiar vocabulary to provide meaning and employ a limited analysis of the text to arrive at an overall meaning.

At a micro level, a great deal of attention is focused on the problem of false friends, e.g. actual vs. *actual* or sensible and *sensible* in the English-Spanish EFL context. In many instances, the assumed problem of false friends may have been overrated since contextual use helps distinguish different meanings between words. Perhaps a much more serious problem is that of partial synonymy between cognates (Holmes & Ramos 1993, p. 89). For instance, words such as ‘parents’ and *parientes* (relatives) and ‘educated’ and *educado* (well-mannered) overlap in meaning but do not hold the same meaning.

### *Teaching Cognates*

In contrast to the largely discarded grammar-translation approach, the

currently fashionable communicative method largely ignores the use of cognates. However, arguing that cognates are an important existing resource, Haynes (1993) contends that “it would be foolish to teach Spanish or French speakers to ignore the similarities between their native language and English. Cognate recognition is too useful to be abandoned” (p. 56).

In order for language learning to be successful and meaningful, teaching should start with what the students already know. When eliciting cognates in the EFL classroom, there are still difficulties in arriving at an exact definition of a cognate. Students may assert that there is a close relationship between two words which, from the teacher’s perspective, appears to be contrived. However, in the final analysis, teachers may decide that this is a satisfactory working strategy because students themselves are identifying cognates and the teachers’ input lies in identifying false friends or partial cognate synonymy.

The aim of teaching cognates is to build learner confidence very quickly (Rivers and Temperley 1978, p. 193). Within the EFL classroom, cognate words are often selected at random or within given lexical sets. For instance, transport may include taxi / *taxi*; train / *tren*; ambulance / *ambulancia*; and bicycle / *bicicleta*. In the food and drink category, cognates consist of sandwich / *sandwich*; hamburger / *hamburguesa*; and coffee / *café*. These activities reflect a recognition approach to learning cognates. Such lists tend to be found at the beginning of EFL textbooks and are rarely followed up with further cognates at intermediate and advanced levels.

A more reflective and productive approach can be achieved by asking students to search for lexical patterns. Practice at this process potentially places students in a better position to negotiate new cognates in the future and outside the classroom context. For instance, both Rivers & Temperley (1978) and Larsen-Freeman (1986) point out that the Spanish-language *-ad* termination as in *libertad* and *caridad* changes to *-ity* in English as in “liberty” and “charity”. Similar patterns can be detected with adjectival endings so that *-oso* in Spanish becomes *-ous* in English as in *famoso* / famous and *nervioso* / nervous. In order to take advantage of their own background knowledge, students can be asked to construct lists of nouns, adjectives, and verbs which have common terminations and then investigate whether a similar pattern emerges in English. This activity calls on students to participate in constructing their own knowledge of cognates.

A historical approach to teaching cognates examines how world languages have contributed to each other’s development. For instance, students can examine the food-related words (e.g., anchovy, barbecue, chocolate, guacamole, etc.) that Latin America has given to the world. Students’ discussion can centre on how these words have affected lifestyles in English-speaking countries. A more modern historical approach examines how English as an international language has propagated such concepts as fast food (e.g., hamburger and hot dog); modes of transport (e.g., car and train); and technology (e.g., DVD and Discman).

A more critical approach to teaching and practising cognates examines how they have and continue to have a strong influence on current lifestyles and ways of thinking in Latin America. Cognates abound in current leisure activities (e.g., *jogging* and *spinning*) and in sociocultural phenomenon (e.g., *baby shower* and *fashion*). International influences on trade and commerce have led to the incorporation of cognates and English-language loan words in economics (e.g., *globalization* and *boom*), in business (e.g., *marketing* and *call centers*) and in entertainment (e.g., *rating* and *reality show*). Such a trend is a motive for reflection by language students on the influence of English on their first language.

And even more critical approach to the use of cognates can be found in the work of Hill (1995) who argues that Spanish loan words are used to express negative concepts in English. For instance, the use of *nada* in English often means more than nothing or that something is completely worthless. Meanwhile, the use of *el cheapo* means more than cheap. The use of Spanish in this way indicates that cognates are used not only to insult but to express a lack of respect for the donor language. A critical approach asks students to examine the socio-cultural associations found in cognates and to determine whether the word fills a lexical gap or is charged with a socio-cultural meaning. Classroom activities aim to raise students’ awareness of the impact of English on their own social and economic environment. The purpose of this approach is to help students recognise how much English has

influenced and continues to influence their lifestyles. Furthermore, it gives an opportunity to talk about real-life contexts (e.g., in Mexico or in Colombia).

### *Raising Pre-Service Teachers' Awareness*

Pre-service teacher training courses have moved away from promoting the “traditional transmission model of learning” (Irujo 2000, p. 209) as trainees learn and practice communicative methodologies, negotiated syllabuses, and student-centred learning practices. At the same time, there is still a strong emphasis on preparing future teachers: to follow a prescribed syllabus; to teach grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation; to practise the four skills (reading, writing, speaking and, listening); and to adopt pre-determined classroom management techniques. However, teacher-trainees are not taught to take into consideration the individual learning circumstances of their future students and the attitudes, values, and personal histories that they bring to the EFL classroom. This research paper takes one aspect of second-language teaching and learning, that of cognates, and offers one way to combine the teaching of vocabulary with students' existing knowledge and experiences. By adopting a critical approach to teaching cognates, future teachers can encourage their students to use existing knowledge of their first language and reflect on how target language cognates are being employed in their sociocultural context.

## Participants

This study was undertaken at a public university in Mexico. All the participants in the study were Mexican students in the third year of their BA in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). There were 21 teacher trainees participating in the activities: eleven women and ten men, and their ages ranged from 20 to 30 years. Their language proficiency levels varied from low-advanced to near-native speaker. All the participants in the study were asked to sign consent forms which outlined the purpose of the study and their willingness to be quoted anonymously. Therefore, I have used pseudonyms when quoting from the trainees' written reflections. The signing of the consent forms further raised teacher trainees' interest in the research project.

## Classroom Research

In order to study cognates, I adopted an action research approach (Nunan 2001) because I wanted teacher trainees to reflect on the teaching and learning of cognates. First of all, I discovered that the teaching of cognates was problematic for teacher trainees because they randomly linked English-language and Spanish-language loans words without reflecting on possible contextual use. Trainees recognized cognates with little difficulty but were not able to present them in any meaningful way in the EFL classroom. In a second stage, I asked trainees to develop their own worksheets and gave them the opportunity to reflect on the usefulness and possible relevance of cognates for their future students. After critiquing their own worksheets, teacher

trainees redesigned their worksheets and reflected in writing on the process of teaching cognates.

### Data Collection Procedures

In order to collect data, I used two classes from the lexical studies course I was teaching at the university to concentrate on the teaching of cognates. Both classes had the stated objective of encouraging trainees to actively participate in designing activities for possible EFL students. In the first class, trainees were given worksheets on cognates which reflect recognition activities but with the underlying objective of encouraging trainees to categorise and analyse cognates in different ways. Therefore, trainees were expected to recognise and construct lexical patterns that would help students learn cognates. In the second class, trainees designed worksheets which related cognates to their future students’ needs and second-language use. As a result, trainees were expected to be much more purposeful and practical in designing activities. Both approaches offer the opportunity for their future students to approach cognates in a more reflective way.

Therefore, this research aims to prepare future teachers to teach and practise cognates in more challenging ways in the second-language classroom. Cognates as a topic were taught over two class periods of 120 minutes duration. The first class focused on student recognition and discussion activities whilst the second class explored ways in which teachers could present cognates in the EFL classroom. Therefore I pursued the following research question: How can teacher trainees be

prepared to teach cognates in more meaningful and relevant ways to their students?

### Classroom Procedure

Before describing in detail classroom activities, I now outline how classroom procedures were set up. Trainees were invited to form their own groups of twos and threes. I then adopted a guided discovery approach to teaching cognates: teacher trainees increased their own awareness, helped each other to find answers and jointly constructed the worksheets.

In the first class, teacher trainees were given worksheets and they were expected to use individual and group knowledge to find the answers and identify cognate patterns. Trainees engaged in lengthy discussions during this process and provided written answers. As the teacher, I evaluated the correctness of the answers and collected the written work at the end of the class.

In the second class, trainees worked on the worksheets in groups but received no feedback from me as the teacher because I did not want to impose a particular method in teaching cognates. I did offer an alternative way of constructing the worksheets and trainees were asked whether they wanted to incorporate any changes. Trainees opted to redesign the worksheet without any intervention on my part. I gave no feedback at any stage and collected their worksheets and written feedback at the end of the class.

## Recognition and Discussion Activities

I will now outline how the recognition and discussion sessions were conducted and the purpose of the different activities. In the first part of this class, I asked teacher trainees, as a lead-in activity, to examine the source of cognates. Using an activity taken from Davis & Rinvolucrí (1988), I gave trainees a map of the world and asked them to locate the geographical source of well-known cognates such as tea, coffee and hamburger came from. This activity aimed to raise teacher trainees' awareness of how loan words from different languages have influenced most languages in the world.

In the second stage, a group activity focused more specifically on Spanish and I asked trainees to reflect on which words the Spanish language had given to English. Students' lists fell into different categories including food (e.g., *tacos* and *tortillas*), lifestyle (e.g., *fiesta* and *piñata*), and locations (e.g., *plaza* and *barrio*). Trainees were asked to reflect on why Spanish words had entered the English language and whether the meanings were the same in both languages. In written feedback, Carla and Armando commented: "We think that these words became part of English because people needed to express feelings in a different way". A follow-up classroom discussion centred on whether words like *macho* and *aficionado* meant the same in English as they did in Spanish.

In the third and final stage, trainees were asked to find and work out cognate patterns. After I presented the *-ad* transformation to *-ty* as an example, teacher trainees produced their own examples including *-or* (as in

*actor* / actor and *error* / error) and *-ificar* / *-ify* (as in *justificar* / justify and *modificar* / modify).

## Presenting Cognates in the EFL Classroom

In the follow-up class, teacher trainees were asked to reflect on different ways of teaching cognates. Since they teach EFL students, from Monday to Thursday, as part of their BA programme, trainees were already likely to have had experience of teaching cognates. First of all, teacher trainees decided which cognates they were going to teach. With suggestions including animals, technology, phrasal verbs and school subjects, teacher trainees designed classroom activities to teach the cognates. In their proposed activity plans, teacher trainees asked their students:

- to talk about how new technology has changed (e.g., the words TV and stereo have changed to flat TV and DVD);
- to choose school subjects for the next academic year;
- to narrate a Christmas story (involving such cognates as chocolate, hospital, TV, radio, sofa);
- to brainstorm cognates in the kitchen (e.g., refrigerator and microwave);
- to match phrasal verbs with cognates (e.g., escape / run away and enter / go in);
- to talk about personal feelings using cognates such as sensitive, sensible, embarrassed etc.;
- match animals such as elephant, hippopotamus, lion and giraffe to pictures.



Teacher trainees were given no feedback at this stage for the already stated reason that I did not want to impose a particular method in teaching cognates.

In the second part of the class teacher trainees were asked to reflect on different approaches to teaching cognates. Teacher trainees were given a worksheet and asked to discuss and reflect on the historical and sociocultural factors in teaching cognates and loan words. These were categorised as follows:

- Historical roots e.g., hospital / *hospital*; difficult / *difícil*
- International use e.g., taxi / *taxi*; cinema / *cine*; pizza / *pizza*
- Lifestyles / leisure activities e.g., look / *look*; aerobics / *aerobics*
- Expressive / judgmental meanings e.g., *no problema*; *el cheapo*

During the classroom presentation of the worksheet, teacher trainees were asked to examine the relevance of the categories for their students and whether they considered words such as *nada* and *pesitos* to be offensive.

In the third part of the class, teacher trainees were asked to modify the previous activity they had designed and take into consideration historical and sociocultural factors that had been outlined in the worksheet. Teacher trainees modified their worksheets by designing more student-centred interaction activities and made changes in the selection of cognates. Interaction patterns changed from teacher-lead discussions and matching exercises to role plays and student-led discussions. One group altered their proposed activity

plan from asking students to talk about feelings to asking them to participate in a debate examining the advantages and disadvantages of technology. Another group abandoned the theme of animal cognates and developed a role-play scenario involving fast food. A third group discarded the topic of school subjects and asked their students to examine different forms of transportation because they felt that it was “a more real context for their students”.

In the fourth stage, teacher trainees were asked to reflect on the activities seen in class and decide whether it was important to take into consideration historical and sociocultural factors when teaching cognates. All the groups agreed on the importance of teaching cognates. Teacher trainee opinions varied from: “Since they are obvious we wouldn’t dedicate a whole class teaching them”, to: “This activity is relevant because it provides students with information that they might use in real-life situations”. Pedro and Gilberto were even in favour of taking an historical approach, arguing that: “looking at cognates from a historical point of view could make SS [students] take a look at how language is created and operates: a lot of students want to know the reasons behind the language”.

### Findings: Recognition and Discussion Activities

The lead-in recognition activity resulted in protracted group discussion as teacher trainees offered possible answers. As is to be expected, teacher trainees found it easier to recognise cognates from Romance languages. Nevertheless, the activity raised student awareness concerning the

constant traffic of loan words among the world's languages. Regarding this, in the EFL classroom, teachers often need to give students considerable input regarding cognates. However, the source of food and drink cognates, for example, is often easier to detect.

In the feedback on the second stage which asked teacher trainees to identify cognates given by Spanish to English, participants identified different categories of cognates: food and drink (e.g. chilli, guacamole and tequila) and leisure-related (e.g. fiesta and piñata). Lourdes wrote that using the Spanish language would help her students "to get involved with the language because they see that their mother tongue has influenced the foreign language that they are trying to learn".

In the third stage, which asked teacher trainees to find cognate patterns, trainees encountered few problems in finding and guessing cognates forms. This activity encouraged a risk-taking approach to second language learning.

### **Findings: Presenting Cognates in the EFL Classroom**

Teacher trainees' initial approach to teaching cognates suggested that cognates do not have to be taught solely through recognition activities. However, trainees' activities tended to be fairly controlled as students would be largely engaged in identifying visuals and undertaking matching exercises. After receiving input in the second part of the class, teacher trainees were given an opportunity to reflect on the exercises they had designed in order to decide whether they wanted to make the

activities more relevant to their students' needs.

In the second part of the class, teacher trainees debated the sociocultural dimension of cognates and developed their critical awareness about how cognates are used in English. They were particularly interested in the phenomenon of 'mock Spanish' perhaps because so many second-language users have suffered from rudeness in the target language (Mugford, 2007). Discussion centred on whether 'mock Spanish' expressions, words, and phrases such as 'dining for pesos' or 'adios' (Hill, 1995) were really insulting to Spanish-language speakers. For example, Hill argues that a newspaper advertisement in the United States which reads "dining for pesos" underscores the low value placed on Mexican currency. Blanca and Adrian wrote that language learners should be aware of how these words were used because: "These words could be helpful for students to be aware of the use of words for insulting Mexican people".

In the third stage, which reflected growing critical awareness, teacher trainees modified their activity plans to reflect more interactive and reflective activities (e.g., examining the history of cognates). The teaching-learning activities were more focused on producing language (e.g., student debates, role playing, and retelling stories). The selection and teaching of cognates were more centred on students' language needs.

In the fourth stage, teacher trainees reflected critically on two different ways of approaching cognates: recognition and production. Teacher trainees argued that factors such as their students' existing knowledge, language level, and

individual context would have to be taken into consideration. Although some trainees argued that “not all topics can be personalised”, Pedro and Gilberto contested that point of view stating that: “We think that personalizing the language is a good way to make it part of the SS themselves”.

In examining the outcome of the two classes, I would argue that teacher trainees’ attitudes now reflect a more proactive stance towards the use of cognates and contrast heavily with typical textbook matching exercises and guessing activities. In conclusion, teacher trainees had thought seriously about how to make cognates more relevant to their future students’ lives.

### Critical Cognates

Although the previous exercises demonstrate how cognates can be practised in more productive and relevant ways than those currently offered in EFL textbooks, I argue that there is a further step to be taken. Cognates can be taught within a critical pedagogy. Such an approach would ask students to examine how cognates reflect global economic, social and cultural expansion. For instance, students would be asked to reflect on the influence of

- fast food
- brand names
- product names in English etc.

Students could use cognates as a springboard to reflect on their own attitudes and values towards the influence of English in their daily lives. Such reflection also alerts students to the rate of change in contemporary language use. This approach to cognates asks students to consider

critically whether the use of cognates reflects the encroachment of English into other languages or offers new ways for expressing ideas and emotions. Instead of viewing cognates passively, students are encouraged to react to their proliferation in Latin America. Far from rejecting the use of cognates outright, students need to be encouraged to examine the motivation behind the use of cognate words. For instance, Holmes & Ramos (1993) argue that students should be “encouraged to look for the author’s purpose in writing the text and be alert for different points of view” (p. 93). As I have argued in this paper, cognates may be used to reflect status and prestige, or to insult and denigrate.

### Conclusions

In this paper I have tried to answer my research question: How can teacher trainees be prepared to teach cognates in ways that are more meaningful and relevant to their students? I have attempted to do this by highlighting recognition, production and reflection activities that reflect a critical mode to teaching and learning. However, in moving towards a critical pedagogy, cognates need to be seen as a productive resource for second-language users and not just a tool for the random recognition of words. In this research, I have argued that teachers need to engage their students interactively: students need to identify and reflect on patterns of use. Furthermore, the activities offer ways in which language learners can take control of language learning and not just rely on given knowledge from teachers and textbooks.

The teaching and learning of cognates is not an all-or-nothing undertaking. Students can improve their awareness of cognate words through the use of recognition, production or criticism activities. In conclusion, this paper has emphasised the importance of teaching and learning of cognates at all levels of language learning because they

- build confidence: by showing students how much they already know;
- break down language barriers and help learners to understand that a second language may not be that strange;
- underline how the student's own language may have contributed to the target language;
- help students to “become better guessers” (Holmes & Ramos 1993, p. 90) and to improve vocabulary recognition and production strategies.

The importance of the reflective, productive and critical ways of teaching cognates lies not only in that they raise teacher trainee awareness concerning different ways to approach vocabulary learning but also in that they encourage students to develop their own language-learning strategies.

Furthermore, the reflective, productive and critical ways of teaching cognates allow teachers to help language learners develop wider vocabulary-learning techniques in terms of building student confidence, taking risks and carrying out educated guesses. Cognates reflect the learners' own input into the L2 context and, as Lewis (1997) points out, it is inevitable that learners will use their L1 as a resource in the EFL classroom. Therefore, language teachers need to take

advantage of this resource and not jettison cognates at the elementary level and purely focus on English-only approaches to language teaching.

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