

Vocabulary Learning Strategies of Discovery and Consolidation of Esp Learners

Normuminova Nodira Suyarkulovna

English teacher

academic lyceum of UWED

Abstract

This study examines the impact of using stories as contexts for vocabulary recognition and retention. We propose that stories are more effective than traditional methods. To test this, we divided participants into an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group learned vocabulary through stories, while the control group used traditional methods. Post-tests and retention tests showed improvement in both groups, but the experimental group achieved significantly higher scores

Key words: *english language learners, language learning, primary school, vocabulary knowledge, vocabulary learning strategies*

Learning English as a foreign language for ESP can be likened to constructing a traditional building. Just as a good engineer creates a detailed blueprint for constructors to follow, a successful language learner plans and adheres to those plans. In this analogy, steel represents grammar, which many EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners find monotonous and daunting. Despite this, it is widely accepted that mastering English requires a thorough understanding of its grammatical structure. Vocabulary acquisition plays an important role in mastering a language. A learner with insufficient vocabulary size will not perform well in every aspect of language itself. Yang (1997) pointed out that many college students still encountered difficulties in reading their English textbooks. The main

reason for those college students who cannot read comprehensively is their limited vocabulary size. In order to facilitate the learning process for learners, a deep understanding of vocabulary teaching is rudimentary. In addition, some issues pertinent to the improvement in learners' vocabulary size are also mentioned. Issues such as what to teach, and how to teach, is also submitted and discussed. Vocabulary skills are often regarded as a crucial aspect for foreign language learners because a limited vocabulary in a second language hinders successful communication. Given the significance of vocabulary acquisition, Schmitt (2000) emphasizes that lexical knowledge is essential for communicative competence and second language acquisition. Nation (2001) further explains that the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and language practice is complementary: vocabulary skills facilitate language use, and language use, in turn, enhances vocabulary knowledge.

One of the most effective methods for teaching vocabulary is to visually present the words to students. Concrete words, particularly nouns, can typically be illustrated using pictures or real objects. For instance, a word like "chair" can be easily taught by pointing to an actual chair or showing a picture of one. Similarly, related words such as "stool," "armchair," "sofa," and "deckchair" can be taught in the same manner, with their differences clearly illustrated. Even abstract words can often be conveyed through visuals; for example, an image of a man and a woman with a heart can effectively represent the word "love." A common technique used by teachers, particularly at lower levels, is to explain words using synonyms or antonyms. However, this approach has several flaws. Firstly, many of the words will be of a similar difficulty level, and if a student doesn't know one, they likely won't know the other. For instance, if a teacher wants to explain "black" by saying it's the opposite of "white," it won't be helpful if students don't know "white." Secondly, this method can be misleading, as very few words have direct antonyms. For example, the opposite of "old" could be "new" or "young," which can be confusing. Lastly, many words have multiple antonyms or synonyms with similar meanings, making it unclear which to use. For example, the opposite of "happy" could be "sad" or "unhappy," depending on the context.

The learning of vocabulary is an important part in foreign language learning. The meanings of new words are very frequently emphasized, whether in books or in verbal communication. Vocabulary is considered as central in language teaching and is of paramount importance to a language learner. Vocabulary is a basic of one learns a foreign language. Few research indicate that teaching vocabulary can be considered as problematic, as some teachers are not really sure about the best practice in the teaching and sometimes not really aware how to start forming an instructional emphasis on the vocabulary learning (Berne & Blachowicz, 2008).

In the second language field, the role that vocabulary plays in L2 competence is nowadays beyond dispute; vocabulary is generally regarded as an essential component in language mastery (Webb & Nation, 2017). However, vocabulary researchers and scholars have long been concerned about the most effective ways of enlarging learners' vocabulary knowledge (Pellicer-Sánchez, 2016). Studies on vocabulary learning and teaching have followed two main approaches to vocabulary learning—intentional and incidental—and these differ in terms of the absence or presence of the intention to learn (Webb & Nation, 2017).

Learning vocabulary is a complex process. The students' aim to be reached in learning vocabulary process is primarily their ability to recall the word at will and to recognize it in its spoken and written form. Generally, knowing a word involves knowing its form and its meaning at the basic level. In deeper aspects it means the abilities to know its (Harmer 1993):

- 1) Meaning, i.e. relate the word to an appropriate object or context
- 2) Usage, i.e. knowledge of its collocations, metaphors and idioms, as well as style and register (the appropriate level of formality), to be aware of any connotations and associations the word might have
- 3) Word formation, i.e. ability to spell and pronounce the word correctly, to know any derivations (acceptable prefixes and suffixes),
- 4) Grammar, i.e. to use it in the appropriate grammatical form.

Unlike grammar learning, which is essentially a rule-based system, acquiring vocabulary involves accumulating individual items. This process largely depends on memory. During the teaching and learning of vocabulary, a key issue arises: how does memory work? Researchers studying memory have identified the following systems (Thornbury, 2002):

Short-term store

Working memory

Long-term memory

The findings of the current study suggest that Iraqi EFL learners employ a diverse array of vocabulary learning strategies. Among these, social strategies are the least frequently used, while determination strategies are the most common. The results also reveal that participants exhibit a low overall use of vocabulary learning strategies. Additionally, the vocabulary size of the participants is found to be average, which is insufficient for their advanced level as fourth-year students. Finally, the study concludes that there is no correlation between the vocabulary size of EFL learners and the strategies they use for learning vocabulary.

List of references

1. Berne, J. I. & Blachowicz, C. L. Z. (2008). What reading teachers say about vocabulary instruction: voices from the classroom. *The Reading Teacher*, 62 (4), pp. 314 - 323.
2. Harmer, Jeremy: *The Practise of English Language teaching*, Longman, 1993.
3. Nation, P. (2005). Teaching and learning vocabulary. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook and research in second language teaching and learning*, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.
4. Yang, Y. F. (1997). The study on the reading process of English Learners' words. The 14th session of the China Chinese Language Teaching Seminar, pp. 183-197.
5. Webb, S., & Nation, I. S. P. (2017). *How vocabulary is learned*. Oxford University Press.
6. Pellicer-Sánchez, A. (2016). Incidental L2 vocabulary acquisition from and while reading: An eye-tracking study. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 38(1), 97–130