

Effectiveness of English Vocabulary Learning Strategies for Learning Second Language Learners

**Mohammad Tamim Aslampoore, Ali Mohammad Hekmat,
Mohammad Mustafa Kamal and Soma Hotak**

The English Language Department
Kabul University of Medical Sciences Abu Ali Ibn Sina, Afghanistan
kapulttps@gmail.com

Abstract

The most significant learning trail of English language is learning vocabulary. Learners usually learn English vocabularies by means of repetition, therefore; it can be so boring for them because there is lack of motivation for learners who want to continue memorizing vocabularies. The study aimed to find the most important vocabulary learning strategies, the effective ways of conducting English vocabulary by learning and importance of leaning English vocabulary in language learning. This study has reviewed significant literature to realize the effective way of learning vocabularies through vocabulary learning strategies. This study applied English vocabulary learning strategies to develop learning English vocabularies through various learning method. This research has provided specific results that showed the effect of vocabulary learning strategies in learning a language. Furthermore, this research brings to light the common strategies that learners use in vocabulary learning. It also discusses the different strategies at length and gives valuable.

Keywords: Vocabulary learning strategies, Effective Vocabulary Learning, Technique, EFL learning, Afghanistan

Introduction

Vocabulary learning strategies is essential to successful learner of any language especially for second language learners. An often – quoted definition of learning strategy is given by Oxford that is learning strategies are those behaviors or actions which students use to make language learning more successful, self- directed and enjoyable. Another definition from Wang and Wen (2003) which clarifies the meaning of vocabulary learning strategies as ‘behaviors or actions which learners use to make learning more effective, this definition expresses the aim to use strategies. They help learners to make learning more effective; strategies are learner’s behaviors or actions,

not thoughts. In this way, vocabulary learning Strategies can be defined as ‘behaviors or actions which learners use to make vocabulary learning more effective’.

Today, it is certainly true that English has played crucial role as a medium of communication among people from different countries; Afghanistan is no exception. Hence, English competences have become significant for Afghan students as it is the global language for the circulation of academic knowledge, and it helps transfer the educational skills of many students. A great vocabulary is just one essential tool in writer’s toolbox, along with punctuation, Grammar, and many others. Vocabulary can make your writing and communication more powerful and more effective and help you say exactly what you mean. This indispensable tool will help you choose the best word for every job and avoid vague words that do not give your readers a good sense of your meaning. It is tried in this article to introduce the most important vocabulary learning strategies that have been found as the most effective.

In our point of view vocabulary plays a vital role in English language acquisition, particularly for University students. Acquiring a deep and rich vocabulary knowledge base can help these students to convey their message more efficiently. However, learning vocabulary is not an easy job. New words run fast out of mind if they are stored without any use. Practitioners and applied linguists have always been trying to not only emphasize the importance of vocabulary learning but also propose a way for efficient learning of new vocabulary items. Recently, learning strategies have been considered as influential tolls for accelerating learning, especially language learning.

Oxford (1993) mentions the critical role of language learning strategies and defines them as behaviors, actions, and techniques that students apply to ameliorate their progress in producing and comprehending second language learning the strategies makes learning faster and better. The famous linguist Wilkins comments: “Without grammar, little can be expressed; without vocabulary, nothing can be expressed” (Wilkins, Stephens Balakrishnan, & Huisman, 2012).

Thus, mastering in vocabulary strategies is one of the most difficult tasks that any learner and teacher faces while gaining another language, Limited vocabulary knowledge can be a huge problem which leads the learners to encounter difficulties in language learning , also vocabulary learning strategies are necessary in acquiring a language as they are the basic building blocks of language and they are the units of meaning from which the larger structure of language such as sentences paragraphs, and whole texts are formed.

Moreover, various studies have shown that lexical complications frequently interfere with language learning. Language learning can be block up when learners have insufficient knowledge

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 22:10 October 2022

Mohammad Tamim Aslampoore, Ali Mohammad Hekmat,

Mohammad Mustafa Kamal and Soma Hotak

Effectiveness of English Vocabulary Learning Strategies for Learning Second Language Learners

of vocabulary. That is to say, there is an increased interest in vocabulary as an important element of language learning. Therefore, it is essential to gain more visions into how Afghan learners Explore vocabulary strategies to help them learn English vocabulary.

Objectives

The research investigated the Effectiveness of vocabulary learning strategies on student speaking and writing productivity and it will explore ways of learning English words to enhance students and teacher's English language capacity.

Significances of the Study

Making strategies for learning vocabulary is crucial for all learners of a language especially foreign language. If learners determine a plan of learning based on that plan design their vocabulary, they will learn a huge amount of vocabulary in a very less time. The more vocabulary, therefore, a learner understands the more skillful expressions he/she can make. Second and foreign language learners are the first to acknowledge the importance of vocabulary. However, regarding the learning of vocabulary, the situation in each context is different. Drawing upon the fact that in the context of foreign language learning the opportunities are restricted in terms of target-language input, output, and interaction, what seems necessary for vocabulary learning is the employment of motivational and effective learning strategies (Tseng & Schmitt, 2008).

Research Questions

This investigation suggests answers to the following research questions.

1. What are the most important vocabulary learning strategies?
2. How to conduct English vocabulary learning in an effective way?
3. How important English vocabulary learning strategies are in the language learning?

Review of literature

There is a consensus among language theorists and scholars on the definition of vocabulary learning strategies which is "the process by which information is obtained, stored, retrieved, and used" (Fan, 2003). For the vocabulary learning, for instance, Brown and Payne (1994, as cited in Hatch & Brown, 1995, p. 373) have identified five phases: (a) finding sources for encountering new words, (b) drawing a clear image of the forms of the new words, either visual or auditory or both, (c) learning the meaning of the words, (d) getting a strong memory connection between the forms and the meanings of the words, and (e) using the words. Accordingly, all strategies for learning L2 vocabulary are, to a certain extent, related to these five stages.

Continuing study the review of literature, numerous researchers attempted to classify language learning strategies. For instance, Chamot (2004) introduced metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective as the most basic three types of learning strategies. Following the investigation

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 22:10 October 2022

Mohammad Tamim Aslampoo, Ali Mohammad Hekmat,

Mohammad Mustafa Kamal and Soma Hotak

Effectiveness of English Vocabulary Learning Strategies for Learning Second Language

Learners

with this types of vocabulary learning strategies, Oxford (1993) proposed two broad categories of strategies including direct and indirect. In previous version of the oxford dictionary about vocabulary leaning strategy was written that this strategy includes memory, cognitive, and social strategies.

Drawing on the review of literature, it has been found that the most frequently used vocabulary learning strategies by learners are using a bilingual dictionary, verbal and written repetition, studying the spelling, guessing from context, and asking classmates for meaning (Schmitt, 1997). Moreover, it was revealed that learners use more types of strategies for learning vocabulary than for reading, listening, speaking, and writing (Chamot, 2004).

Furthermore, Gu and Johnson (1996) identified six types of strategy - guessing, dictionary, note-taking, rehearsal, encoding, and activation - together with two other factors: beliefs about vocabulary learning and metacognitive regulation. Metacognitive regulation consists of strategies for selective attention and self-initiation. The latter make the meaning of vocabulary items clear through the use of a variety of means. Guessing strategies, skillful use of dictionaries and note-taking strategies are labeled as cognitive strategies. Rehearsal and encoding categories are classified under memory strategies. Word lists and repetition are instances of rehearsal strategies. Encoding strategies include strategies such as association, imagery, visual, auditory, semantic, and contextual encoding as well as word-structure. Activation strategies include those strategies through which learners actually use new words in different contexts (Bastanfar & Hashemi, 2010).

In addition, Lawson and Hogben (1996), in a classification which is more a reflection of the strategies, categorized the four strategies as: repetition, word feature analysis, simple elaboration and complex elaboration. The strategy “repetition” includes reading of related words, simple rehearsal, writing of word and meaning, cumulative rehearsal and testing. The “word feature analysis” contains spelling, word classification and suffix. Simple elaboration consists of sentence translation, simple use of context, appearance similarity, sound link and complex elaboration includes complex use of context, paraphrase, and mnemonic. In the research, it was found that learners who had used a greater range of learning strategies recalled more of the learned words later. However, all the learners alike tended to favor simple repetition strategies over more complex elaboration strategies, despite the fact that the latter yielded higher recall. Hence the researchers concluded that there is a need to present strategies more directly during language teaching since students are not aware of the advantages of these procedures (Bastanfar & Hashemi, 2010).

Using and conducting English vocabulary as second language in an effect way directly relates to word knowledge. Learning vocabulary is a necessary competence, and it is important for

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 22:10 October 2022

Mohammad Tamim Aslampoore, Ali Mohammad Hekmat,

Mohammad Mustafa Kamal and Soma Hotak

Effectiveness of English Vocabulary Learning Strategies for Learning Second Language Learners

production and comprehension in a second language. In the importance of learning vocabulary in communication. Wilkins et al. (2012) indicates, “No matter how good one’s grammar is and how beautiful one’s pronunciation is, but if one has not enough vocabulary to convey one’s own feelings or to understand others’ opinions, one still cannot communicate with others in the language”. As an essential and fundamental building block of language, vocabulary learning is a key aspect of language learning, whichever curriculum, or syllabus we are following and whichever model of language we are applying. The four traditional basic language skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening are all based upon the students’ vocabulary knowledge.

Furthermore, teachers of English language may consider some of the pedagogical strategies for teaching vocabulary and how to learn vocabulary in an effective which is suggested by Teng (2019) as follows:

1. Choose high-frequency words to teach: More frequent words are more useful than less frequent words and they are learnt simply.
2. Supplement explicit vocabulary learning to incidental learning: Incidental vocabulary learning is not enough, and teachers should supplement deliberate vocabulary teaching into classes to facilitate learners to develop the depth and the breadth of vocabulary knowledge.
3. Know how useful each strategy is: Teachers need to model and practice vocabulary teaching in classes so that students are aware of the strategies they can use to learn vocabulary.
4. Focus more on productive vocabulary: The more students engage with the productive use of a word (say or write it, and create grammatical and collocation comparisons), the more likely that they are to master it.
5. Foster learners’ morphological awareness: A word family consists of three morphological structures: the root (promote), the inflections (promotes, promoted, promoting), and the derivatives (promotion, promoting, promoter). Students can be trained to use contextual clues to guess the meaning of new or unknown words that they come across. Teachers can ask them to break down the words into prefixes, roots, and suffixes; then they can brainstorm the potential meanings of the unknown words.
6. Train students’ lexical inference ability: Lexical inference is described as a cognitive top-down process of resorting to different resources to identify the meaning of a word. As guessing from context is one of the most frequent and favored strategies for learners when meeting new words in reading, teachers should spend some class time to develop students’ lexical differencing ability (i.e., ability to guess the meaning of words from context).
7. Choose appropriate textbooks: It is necessary for teachers to support students by choosing appropriate textbooks, contriving new reading materials, or looking for supplementary sources of suitable reading input.

8. Vocabulary learning is incremental: Learning the form, meaning, and use of vocabulary occur over time. Teachers should help students understand that learning vocabulary is a long-term process. Thus, rather than trying to memorize all the words at a time, it is better for students to spend some time reviewing their lists of unknown words each day or week. Teachers should support this learning process.

In the trend of globalization, internationalization of language is unavoidable. English will undoubtedly play the most important role. It includes three elements: pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. It is obvious that vocabulary is the most essential and liveliest part of the three elements. English has four aspects and skills that must be known by the learners. The four aspects are spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Meanwhile, the four skills namely listening, reading, writing and speaking. Those four aspects can develop the four skills in English. The aspect, which is studied in this research paper, is known as vocabulary.

There are some reasons that proves the importance of vocabulary to be learned. First, it will be hard for the learners if they must study English with limited words in their mind. Thus, learning vocabulary can help the learners to enrich their words in English. If they know those words, they can express their thought through English but if they do not know words in English they cannot write, read, and speak anything in English. Second, it is impossible to teach spelling, pronunciation, and grammar for the beginners if they do not know the words first. Those reasons make the writer can see how important to learn vocabulary for the EFL learners. Developing vocabulary will be great if it can be started from a young age. They are great word-learners. They have some special characteristics that can make them easier in learning vocabulary. Children cannot learn by themselves, and they need a good teacher to facilitate them in learning.

Methods and Materials

Research Design: The research design was article review, first we searched for the key words which related to the research topic through the online scientific and up to date bases. This scientific investigation was conducted using a qualitative approach. It led to descriptive results. A systematic review of relevant articles was done before and during the study.

Data Collection Tools: This study concentrated on textual materials and the reliable articles were collected from Google Scholar and Academic Journals.org. The articles were reviewed through some essential keywords (English Vocabulary, English Skills, EFL, Speaking and Writing). In addition, the education resources information center (ERIC) was consulted; the relevant books were borrowed from Kabul University of Medical Sciences, Kabul University, Kabul Education University libraries.

Sampling Method: The article review research was used in this study; the same led materials were assembled purposefully. Subsequently the articles were analyzed thematically after careful note taking, evaluating, and interpreting. At first, the targeted articles were reviewed and after reviewing the themes of the articles will be emerged. Finally, the information was reported thematically without errors and bias, as far as possible. The related articles were reviewed and they pave the ground for data evaluation and synthesizing.

Study Settings: This scientific research was performed at Kabul University of Medical Sciences, Afghanistan, and it helps medical students, and English for Specific Purposes teacher to realize the importance of vocabulary learning strategies to advance the students vocabulary learning competencies.

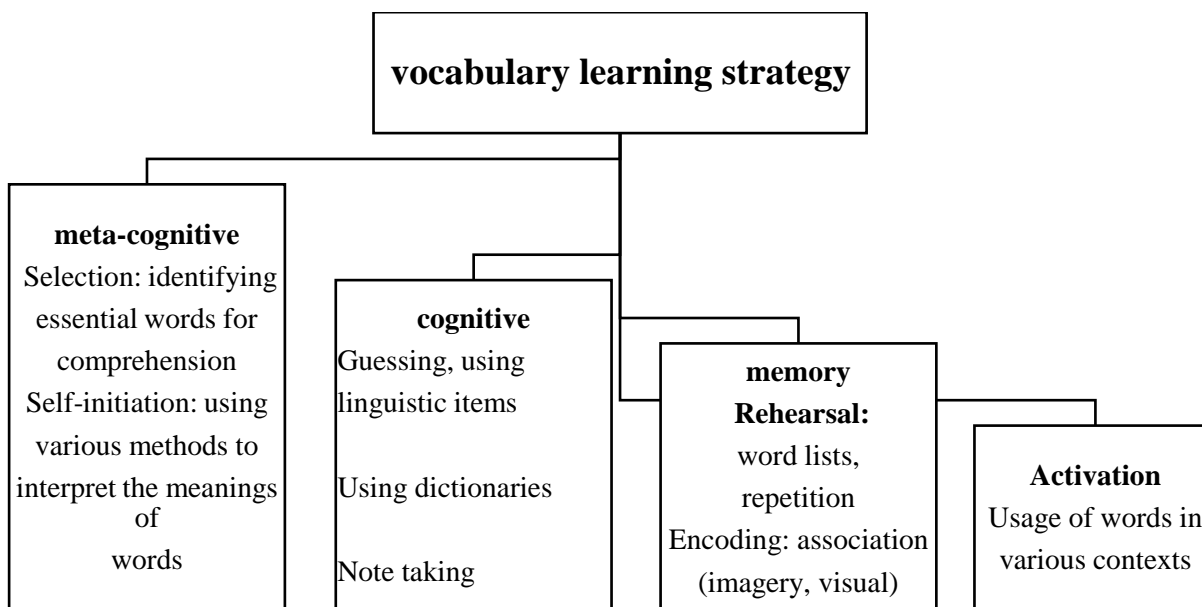
Results

This research article offers a detailed presentation about the strategies of vocabulary learning. It summarizes the findings about vocabulary learning and general outline of the usage of strategies.

Wen Qiufang (1997) introduced two systems in English learning vocabulary, beliefs, and methods. Students' beliefs are important determinants of their behaviors. Vocabulary learning belief refers to the learner's attitude toward vocabulary learning. It has great effects on student choice and use of the strategies and will help the students control their learning process and make an evaluation for their learning outcomes. Therefore, the researchers will understand better the students' use of strategies by investigating students' vocabulary learning beliefs. They predominantly believed that word should be carefully studied and put to use. Their results proved that students like to use function-focused belief. The students who hold this belief preferred to learn English by using it.

It was consistent with some western research. For example, Krashen and Parry didn't encourage English students to recite the vocabulary, and they held that vocabulary should be learned through extensive reading. Extensive research has demonstrated that vocabulary is easier to learn in context than in isolated word lists because the meaningful context permits more complex and deeper processing. The students began to realize that using the language was an effective way to learn a foreign language. They found out that it was easy for them to remember a new word by using it. The new words could be learned easily by using either in the daily life or in written way. Learning vocabulary by using them is much easier to learners than by just reciting vocabulary mechanically.

Factor analysis on English vocabulary learning strategies items identified 16 factors for learners' English vocabulary learning strategies. The 16 factors are: self-management, plan-making& plan-implementing, selective attention, learner autonomy, reviewing& testing, repetition, association, imagery, word formation, grouping, contextualization, dictionary use, note-taking, guessing, affective control and social activities. O'Malley & Chamot (1986) distinguish three general types of learning strategies: met cognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social/affective strategies. This classification of vocabulary learning strategies is well recognized by scholars and researchers. According to the factor analysis, the 16 factors are further classified into meta-cognitive strategy, cognitive strategy, memory rehearsal and activation strategy.



Discussion

Each learner employs different strategies to assist in learning new vocabulary. A learning strategy is a series of actions a learner takes to facilitate the completion of a learning task. The learner brings to the language learning situation a wide spectrum of individual differences that will influence the learning rate and the ultimate learning result. The most widely reported learner factors include age, sex, language aptitude, intelligence, prior knowledge, motivation, self-concept/image, personality, and cognitive and learning style (Peter, 2003). This brings forth the concept of good learners and poor learners; those learners who are highly motivated feel a genuine need to practice the vocabulary and use this strategy to maintain the vocabulary. Good learners not only use more strategies, but they also rely more heavily on different strategies than the ones poor learners use (Safaru and Tofan, 2006).

In a study carried out by Ahmed (1989) it was found that good learners were more aware of what they could learn about words; they paid more attention to collation and spelling and at the same time they were more conscious of contextual learning. Learners are able to comprehend more new vocabulary once they use a number of strategies and do not simply stick to one which is the case for poor learners who concentrate on one method simply. On the contrary, the article by Scafaru and Tofan (2006) is very contradictory of this statement as it further mentions that statements like “the good learners practice” are not really helpful. What we need are more specific findings which tell us what the learner actually does when he practices”. In fact, it is through practice that learners commit words to memory and thus use it as confirmed by Peter (2003). Some learners will repeat the new word a number of times until they are comfortable with it. Others will go beyond simple rote repetition to commit the word to memory (Peter, 2003). These types of strategies are part of practice which is used by the good learners.

Ahmed (1989), in a study involving 300 Sudanese learners of English, found that good learners not only used more vocabulary learning strategies but also relied more on different strategies than did poorer learners.

In the research conducted by Scafaru and Tofan (2006), there was use of over seven different strategies which included micro-strategies, macro-strategies, dictionary use, memorization, practice, preferred source of information and note taking. Note taking is a strategy which a lot of learners use, and it has been proved to be effective as some learners prefer to work on visual memory, which means since they have written a new vocabulary they are able to create an image in their mind about the word. Learners took notes in the margin, used vocabulary books, organized words by meaning, spelling formation, word derivation, grammatical information, or vocabulary cards.

Research from the studies has also proven that dictionaries have a great impact in learning and one of the most common things that learners buy first is a dictionary. Like it or not, a dictionary is amongst the first things a foreign language student purchases (Baxter, 1980; Luppescu & Day, 1993), and learners carry their dictionaries around, not grammar books (Krashen, 1989).

It has been argued whether a monolingual dictionary is better than a bilingual one. Further, research has shown how the dictionaries have been used by learners. Since a combination of good features of both types of dictionaries is not impossible, there has been considerable interest in the last twenty years in the “new bilingualised comprise dictionaries”, hybrid dictionaries that essentially provide translations in addition to the good feature of monolingual dictionaries (Hartmann, 1991, p.79).

Elola, Rodríguez García, and Winfrey (2008), for example, compared monolingual, bilingual, and bilingualised dictionaries among 123 EFL learners in Israel. Through their study, it was found that, regardless of the learners' proficiency level, the bilingualised version was rather significantly better than, or as good as, the other two types in both comprehension and production tasks.

Conclusion

Research suggests that learning new words in a language seems to be very important. In English language, vocabulary plays a vital role for sending and receiving messages to build a rational communication. Learning vocabulary of languages such as English language needs retaliating and using a new word in deferent ways to make the intended word a permanent vocabulary and use the word comfortably. If language learners learn new words without the role and regulation of word memorization, it will be very difficult for them to memorize less number of words in a day or even weeks. In addition to that, learning motivation will be another effective factor that has a positive impact on the learning process, especially in language vocabulary learning. Initially, languages can be learned through their vocabularies, not any other components of the targeted language, which means that vocabularies are important that the grammar roles and regulations. Therefore, language dictionaries are the most important learning device that leaners should have and used them properly.

According to Vaklifard, Ebadi, and Zangeneh (2015), a dictionary is amongst the first things a foreign language student purchases, which means dictionaries are dynamic guidance for language learners. There are many deferent words in a dictionary, but leaners should be smart enough to know what to learn and how to learn new vocabulary. Lexical words are divided into two deferent types such as active vocabulary and passive vocabulary. Active vocabularies are those language vocabularies that learners understand the meaning and use them in their daily conversation easily and logically while passive vocabularies are those vocabularies that learners only know their meaning but cannot use them in their daily communication. Thus, it is suggested that language learners should be motivated to learn the vocabulary of the target language in an active way rather than passive one.

The new vocabulary should first be used in native sentences, then based on the native sentences, other sentences should be structured and made. Word family will be another helpful factor to increase learners' vocabulary amount. Eventually, the only way to communicate in a language is to learn its vocabulary. After conducting this research, it is recommended that learners should understand the new word roots, prefixes, suffixes, and infixes to memorize them effortlessly, and they need more explorations on the effectiveness of English vocabulary learning strategies for the second language learners.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 22:10 October 2022

Mohammad Tamim Aslampoore, Ali Mohammad Hekmat,

Mohammad Mustafa Kamal and Soma Hotak

Effectiveness of English Vocabulary Learning Strategies for Learning Second Language Learners

References

- Bastanfar, A., & Hashemi, T. (2010). Vocabulary Learning Strategies and ELT Materials: A Study of the Extent to Which VLS Research Informs Local Coursebooks in Iran. *International Education Studies*, 3(3), 158-166.
- Chamot, A. U. (2004). Issues in language learning strategy research and teaching. *Electronic journal of foreign language teaching*, 1(1), 14-26.
- Elola, I., Rodríguez García, V., & Winfrey, K. (2008). Dictionary use and vocabulary choices in L2 writing. *ELIA*, 8, 63-89.
- Fan, M. Y. (2003). Frequency of use, perceived usefulness, and actual usefulness of second language vocabulary strategies: A study of Hong Kong learners. *The Modern Language Journal*, 87(2), 222-241.
- Gu, Y., & Johnson, R. K. (1996). Vocabulary learning strategies and language learning outcomes. *Language Learning*, 46(4), 643-679.
- Oxford, R. L. (1993). Research update on teaching L2 listening. *System*, 21(2), 205-211.
- Teng, F. (2019). The effects of context and word exposure frequency on incidental vocabulary acquisition and retention through reading. *The Language Learning Journal*, 47(2), 145-158.
- Tseng, W. T., & Schmitt, N. (2008). Toward a model of motivated vocabulary learning: A structural equation modeling approach. *Language Learning*, 58(2), 357-400.
- Vakilifard, A., Ebadi, S., & Zangeneh, F. A. (2015). Exploring Vocabulary Learning Strategies in American English File Course Books. *English for Specific Purposes World*, 16 (1).
- Wang, W., & Wen, Q. (2003). Teaching Experience and Evaluation of Second-Language Students' Writing. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 6(2), 219-236.
- Wilkins, S., Stephens Balakrishnan, M., & Huisman, J. (2012). Student satisfaction and student perceptions of quality at international branch campuses in the United Arab Emirates. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 34(5), 543-556.
-
-