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## Ways of Improving Learning and Teaching Vocabulary in High Schools

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## **2. ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impacts of ways of improving teaching and learning vocabulary in secondary schools. A descriptive analytic research method was used. To achieve the general objectives of this study, a questionnaire was designed as data collection tool. The questionnaire was distributed among English teachers of secondary schools in Dammam city. Test and retest were conducted to show the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. Data were analyzed by using statistic program. The results of this analysis showed that ways of improving learning vocabulary affects positively.

## **3 – Introduction:**

Vocabulary learning is a central to language acquisition whether the language is first, second or foreign. Although vocabulary has not always been recognized as a priority in language teaching, interest in its role in second language ( L2 ) learning has grown rapidly in recent years and specialists now emphasize the need for systematic and principled approach by the both the teachers and learners .

Vocabulary learning and teaching focuses initially on current issues in teaching i.e. deciding which items to teach and how to teach them; on explicit and implicit learning, and vocabulary strategies; and on the role of collocations.

Experienced teachers of English as a Second Language know very well how important vocabulary is. They know the students must learn thousands of words that speakers and writers of English use. Fortunately, the need for vocabulary is one point on which teachers and learners agree.

One of the most important things in learning is developing vocabulary .Large vocabulary leads students to good performance, in both written and spoken language. There is various reasons why the learners remember some words better than the others. These include the nature of the words themselves, under which circumstances they are learned, the methods of teaching etc.

## 3 – 0 Literature Review

This section is literature review which consists of vocabulary definition, learning vocabulary, teaching vocabulary, vocabulary with visualization and how to use visual aids.

### 3- 1 Vocabulary Definitions:

The definition of vocabulary relates to various views about the nature and use made of vocabulary in the Longman dictionary (1995); vocabulary is defined as all the words that someone knows, learns or uses. The Oxford Dictionary (2002) defines vocabulary as the body of words used in a particular language or in a particular sphere.

Lewis (2006) defines “Vocabulary is a listing of the words used in some enterprise”. It refers to the word that must be known to communicate effectively. While Diamond and Gutlohn (2006) state that vocabulary are the knowledge of words and word meanings. Similarly, Simpson and Weiner (1989) say that vocabulary is a collective word with brief explanation of their meaning.

Nunan (1999) states that vocabulary is more than lists of target language words. As part of the language system, vocabulary is intimately interrelated with grammar. In fact, it is possible to divide the lexical system of most languages into “grammatical words,” such as prepositions, articles, adverbs, and so on, and content of words. This is supported by Ur (1996:60) who revealed that vocabulary can be defined as roughly as the words the teachers teach in the foreign language. However, vocabulary is not only a single word but also can be more than single word. For example, post office and mother-in-law which are made up two words but express a single idea.

Many language experts have set up about the concept of vocabulary. Kathleen (1983) revealed that vocabulary is the ability to recognize individual letter that form a word. The explanation indicates that the meanings of words are categorized as compound or more become as idiom evenly tends to be a language. However, they cover in all meaning component of words entirely contracted as the element of language.

Similarly, Cameron (2001) states that every person has three types of vocabulary, there are:

Active vocabulary, i.e. the words that are customarily used in speaking

Reverse vocabulary, i.e. the words that are known but people rarely use in ordinary speech, when they have more time to consider or when they are searching for a synonym.

Passive vocabulary, i.e. the words that are recognized vogue but people are not sure of the meaning. They never use them either in speech or writing and just know them because they have ever seen before.

From the definition above, the writer concludes that vocabulary is word that has meaning which is not isolated or the meaning of words that depends on context of the words exist in a context. In other hand, it could be said that vocabulary is a collective of words which their meaning used in a language.

### **3-2 Learning vocabulary:**

In the past fifteen years, the field of second language acquisition has seen renewed interest in vocabulary learning and acquisition. Vocabulary learning and teaching focuses initially on current issues in teaching, i.e. deciding which items to teach and how to teach them .on implicit and explicit learning and vocabulary learning strategies

In order to provide a digest of recent research on vocabulary acquisition and to pinpoint areas that need further exploration .One way to investigate overall task of vocabulary learning is through the distinction between knowing a word and using a word .In the other words, the aim of vocabulary learning should include both recalling words and the ability to apply tem automatically in their writings.

### **3-4 Teaching vocabulary**

Teaching English vocabulary is integrated into the four skills of the language. It means that vocabulary holds significant role in mastery of the four skills of the language. In the teaching of English or any foreign language, teaching vocabulary is one of the important aspects because the unlimited number of vocabulary in a language. Teaching vocabulary should be presented interactively in teaching of the four language skills. To support this, River (1972:28) points out “it is impossible to learn a language without words”. Therefore, vocabulary is the most important subject in teaching and learning process.

According to Nation (2004), the first decision to make when teaching a word is to decide whether the word is worth spending time on or not. If the word is a low frequency word and is not a useful technical word and not one that is particularly useful for the learners, it should be dealt with as quickly as possible. He also said that when words come up in the context of a reading or listening text, or of learners need a word or phrase when speaking or writing, they need quick help which does not interrupt the activity too much.

Nation (1990) states that there are four ways that can be used in teaching vocabulary. They are:

1. Material is prepared with vocabulary learning as a consideration. This step means the preparation of simple materials and the careful graded of the first lesson of learning English.
2. Words are dealing with as they happen to occur. This means unknown words that appear.
3. A vocabulary problem is taught in connection with other language activities, for example, the vocabulary deals with the learners who have known before.
4. Time is spent either in class or out of class where vocabulary is studied without an immediate connection with some other language activities.

From the statement above, it may be concluded that a good teaching of vocabulary should be presented in a group work in order to involve all students because vocabulary is one of the important aspects in language

## **4- Significance of the research:**

This research will be beneficial for the teachers because the teachers will learn from the method and technique in teaching vocabulary which have been successfully used in the classroom. By revealing the method and technique in teaching vocabulary to young learners, Teachers can create a conducive atmosphere in the classroom and help students in their learning activities. The students will be more active and enjoy in the classroom. Moreover the study will contribute to the development of teaching and learning vocabulary.

## **5 – Research questions:**

- 1- Does mastering vocabulary lead students to good performance, in the four skills?
- 2- Is Explaining meanings of words through context is the best way of introducing them?
- 3- Do teachers need to devise different types of activities to facilitate storage and retrieval of words?

## **6 - Research Methodology**

### **6-1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the methodology used in collecting data relevant to the research. It introduces the research method, research design, population, research sample, tools, questionnaire validity and reliability . The researcher adopted the analytical statistical methods used and the methodology of the study, including population, on which the sample was chosen and how to choose a sample area of study and data sources which have been relied upon. This chapter includes statistical methods used by the researcher, which relied on the statistics program. The tool utilized with the purpose of providing empirical evidence for the postulated hypotheses was a questionnaire for English language teachers in secondary. This is a method of data gathering from samples which are representative of a population

While a survey is proven to be an effective tool, it is also expensive, time and effort exhaustive and practically useless if not carried out well. When conducting a survey, it is important that the researcher clearly understands the goals of the study so that the process will be properly directed. Furthermore, the researcher has to consider the feasibility of the research topic to be able to have realistic expectations from the respondents.

### **6-2 Subjects**

Teachers from governmental schools for boys in Dammam were selected. All individuals teach English as a foreign language. Fifteen teachers from secondary stages were selected to take part in the questionnaires.

## **6 -3 Tools**

Survey questionnaires were used to evaluate using ways of improving teaching and learning vocabulary. This is one of the common tools used in conducting a survey.

## **6-4 Content Validity**

The questionnaire contained 20 items based on the jurors' suggestions. The questionnaire used in this study was given to three specialists to judge its validity. Some items were modified and others were deleted according to the jurors' advice until the researcher came up with a final draft of 20 items that satisfied all of them.

## **6-5 Reliability :-**

Twenty questionnaires were distributed to English teachers. The same questionnaire was distributed to the same teachers after 20 days to assess the reliability of the questionnaire.

## **7- Limitation of the research:**

The research covers ways of improving teaching and learning vocabulary at the secondary levels .It explores teachers and learners practices with the regard to dealing with vocabulary.

## **8- Expected results:-**

This study has come out with following results:

- 1 – Ways of improving learning and teaching vocabulary affects positively .
- 2 – Ways of improving learning and teaching vocabulary serves the needs of the teachers in teaching vocabulary.
- 3 – Improving learning and teaching vocabulary develops the competence of secondary students.
- 4 – The results of the research lead to conclusion that improving learning and teaching vocabulary affects greatly in motivating students toward learning which guides them to the goal of personal improvement and understanding.

## **9 – Statement of the problem:**

The researcher has observed that the students at the higher schools in Dammam face many difficulties when they come to learn new words in regard to discovering meanings, recognizing the learned words and using them correctly .This problem impedes building a large vocabulary. The problem causes failure in language. Accordingly, the researcher tries to forward some solutions which facilitate the process of teaching and learning new words.

## **10- Research Hypotheses:**

To answer the research questions these hypotheses are postulated

- 1 Mastering Vocabulary leads to mastering the four skills.
- 2 Explaining meanings of words through context is the best way of introducing them.
- 3 To facilitate storage and retrieval of words, teachers need to devise different types of activities.

## **11- Objectives of the research:**

- 1- To help students to use effective techniques of how to acquire meanings of the words
- 2- To introduce teachers to various effective ways of teaching new words .

## **12 – References:-**

1 – Oxford Dictionary

2- Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom. ( Trica Hedge) 3Techniques in Teaching Vocabulary.(Virgina French Allen )

4 – Vocabulary in Language Teaching (Norbert Schmitt)

5 – Teaching and Learning Vocabulary ( Nation, I.S.P )

6 - Second Language Teaching and Learning (Nunan, D )