



TEACHERS VOCABULARY TEACHING STRAGTIES: THE CASE OF SELAMBER PRIMARY SCHOOL, BENISHANGUL-GUMUZ REGION, ASSOSA

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at identifying and analyzing Teachers Preferable Vocabulary Teaching Strategies at Selamber Primary School, Benishangul-Gumuz Region, Assosa. The study revealed the role of the classroom teacher, and it attempted to answer the basic questions- what are the better strategies of vocabulary teaching, and What are the role of the teacher in teaching vocabulary lessons in the selected sample area? In order to achieve the stated objectives, experimental design was employed to a sample population taken from the school - two sample classes 7th A and B were taken as control group and experimental group respectively where averagely 59 students were attending their class. Pretest was given to both sections and the result of the test shows poor for both sections. The researcher employed miming and pictorial strategies to experimental group to teach the words and meanings for five consecutive sessions. Posttest was given to both classes again. The experimental group scored better test result but the control group remained poor. Hence, data collection instruments included, classroom observation before intervention and interviewing English teachers after intervention was made. The collected data were analyzed more of quantitatively and to some extent qualitatively. Finally, the study reveals that the better vocabulary test results were registered in experimental group in assisting students through miming and pictorial strategies repeatedly when compared with control group who learned through the traditional ways (Dictionary as a tool to learning meanings) of teaching vocabulary and their respective meanings.

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INTRODUCTION

English language is recognized as most widely used language of communication in the era of globalization and technology. Hence, teaching English for children and adults has come crucial in order to help them cope-up with the changes and challenges of the current globalization situation (Chanyalew and Abiy, 2015). As children, many of us remember the teaching strategies our instructors used for vocabulary. We would copy down definitions into our notebooks, and then for homework we would have to rewrite each word for what seemed like a million times. On the other hand, we can probably all agree that passive learning is not an effective teaching strategy to instruct vocabulary.

Studies are now showing that students need multiple exposures to a word before they can fully understand it. They also need to learn new words in context, by reading. Teachers can emphasize active processing by having students connect new meanings to words they already have knowledge of the subject. The more exposures students have to a word, the better chance that they will remember it therefore, encouraging pupils to use the learning environment to support independence by making sure they know where to find resources and prompts (Hackman, 2008). Following this, good store of words is crucial for understanding the communication. A major aim of most teaching programmes is to help students to gain a large vocabulary of useful words. In every session, the classroom teacher has to introduce new words and practice

them, making clear the meanings and the way in which each can be used. As a result, there are two main ways to present or introduce vocabulary to students in the actual learning classes. One can either show the meaning in one way (deductively) or use the language (inductively) that the students already know in order to make clear the meanings of the new lexical item. Illustrative context- many words especially verbs have different meanings in different context. Unless one is working with advanced classes, give only the meaning of the word as it is used in the passage. If the verb to reach for is in a text, it will only confuse the class if you talk about reaching home, reaching school, reaching out, and so on (David, 1992). One principle of effective vocabulary learning is to provide multiple exposures to a words meaning. There is great improvement in vocabulary when students encounter vocabulary words often (National Reading Panel, 2000) cited in Linda Diamond, and Linda Galton (1996). According to Stahl (2005) cited again in Linda Diamond, and Linda Galton the source, students probably have to see a word more than once to place it firmly in their long term memories. This does not mean mere repetition or drill of the word, but seeing the word in different and multiple contexts. In other words, it is important that vocabulary instruction provide students with opportunities to encounter words repeatedly and in more than one context. The very aim of the study is to assess better strategies of vocabulary teaching and to identify the role of the teacher in teaching vocabulary lessons in the selected sample area.

To achieve the above stated objectives a good teacher is also instrumental using and employing different strategies of vocabulary teaching. Because, students who feel safe and secure are much more willing to practice a second language. As a result, a healthy classroom climate promotes risk-taking and allows the students to experiment. It is believed that, it is the teacher who acts as facilitator, resource person and language model for the second- language classroom in teaching vocabulary. However, there is a gap between the L2 vocabulary learning strategies that students use and the vocabulary strategies employed or recommended by instructors (Larrotta, 1999) as also meticulously discussed in (Larrotta, 2011). Selamber is a primary school located at the heart of the regional town, Assosa, where traditional ways of teaching vocabulary is mostly practiced by English language teachers. Therefore, the study needs to display better teaching strategies of vocabulary and the role of the teachers in English classes in the cases of Selamber Primary School in the region.

METHODOLOGY

Most significantly, this study employed experimental design. The design also called intervention studies or group comparison studies. Experimental design is a procedure in quantitative research in which the investigator determines whether an activity or materials make a difference in results for participants. You assess this impact by giving one group one set of activities called an intervention and withholding the set from another group (Creswell, 2012). Based on this principle, the researcher took two sections from the sample school. One as control group and the other one as experimental group. Pretest was given to both sections at same time. And the pretest result was poor for both sections. Following that, the researcher has made an intervention in teaching on vocabulary lesson taken from the students text book for a week (5 sessions).

After the intervention classes posttest was given to both control group and experimental group at once. Then, the result shows that, better test result was registered in experimental group whereas in control group the result remains the same. From this experiment one could reach at a conclusion that practicing a new strategy of vocabulary teaching results students good performance. Kothari, (1990), in an experimental hypothesis-testing research when a group is exposed to some novel or special condition, it is termed an 'experimental group, but when the group is exposed to usual conditions, it is termed a 'control group. In addition, Leedy, (1997) explains that the use of a matched or similar group which is not exposed to the experimental variable can help reduce the effect of History, Maturation, Instrumentation, and Interaction of Factors; the control group is exposed to all conditions of the experiment except the experimental variable.

Therefore, there were two groups under this sampling techniques; the control group treated as group (A) and the experimental group treated as group (B). The result of the study were analyzed predominately quantitatively by using simple mathematical expressions and to some extent qualitatively. The researcher used classroom observation before deciding to make the experimental study; this helped the researcher to get the actual vocabulary teaching strategy of the teacher. This helped the researcher to have the insight about the proceeding study being conducted. The purposes of classroom observation was to permit the researcher to study the process of teaching-learning in naturalistic setting to provide more detailed and precise evidence than other data sources and stimulate change and verify that the change occurred. Besides, the description of instructional events that are provided by this method have also been found to lead to improved understanding and better models for improving teaching (Education.stateuniversity.com). Next an interview was made with four English language teachers at the sample school.

The interview was made, because, the researcher wanted to check what vocabulary teaching strategies were used to use in teaching vocabulary lessons. A semi-structure interview was used to obtain data from the interviewee and the result shows teachers were using denotative ways of vocabulary teaching. Accordingly, this method of teaching vocabulary to students would not help them to tackle the meaning of the words contextually. Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind the participants' experiences. The interview can pursue in-depth information around the topic. It may be useful as a follow up to certain respondents to have further investigation up on the subject (McNamara, 1999) cited in Dapzury, Valanzuala et al, (2017). The reason classroom observation and interview tools were used to strengthen the data obtained from the experiment. And this would help the researcher to triangulate information on the same research design.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From the above Table (1), one could see that there were 52 students attending their regular class. These students were treated as control groups where the researcher used to ask them vocabulary meanings through the traditional ways of teaching-words and their direct dictionary meaning. Thus, twenty new words were taken from students text book by the researcher, this situation was done on the first day where the

Table 1. Assessment of Students Vocabulary Test Result based on Dictionary Meaning

Day One Test Result												
No	Below 5				Students 5-10 score				11-20 score			
1	X1	3			X1	7	X13	8	X25	7	X1	14
2	X2	3			X2	9	X14	7	X26	7	X2	16
3	X3	3			X3	9	X15	6	X27	7	X3	12
4	X4	3			X4	7	X16	6	X28	8	X4	12
5	X5	4			X5	7	X17	6	X29	7	X5	14
6	X6	2			X6	8	X18	6	X30	6	X6	15
7	X7	3			X7	7	X19	8	X31	6	X7	15
8	X8	4			X8	7	X20	7			X8	12
9	X9	2			X9	9	X21	7			X9	11
10	X10	3			X10	10	X22	8				
11	X11	3			X11	10	X23	6				
12	X12	4			X12	7	X24	6				
#	23%<5 Avarge=3/20				59.61%=5-10 average =7/20				17%=11-20 Avarge=11/20			

Table 2. Assessment of Students Vocabulary Test Result based on Dictionary meaning

Day Two Test Result												
No	Below 5					5-10 score			11-20			
1	X1	2	X13	4	X25	3	X1	8	X13	7	X1	12
2	X2	3	X14	2	X26	4	X2	5	X14	7	X2	15
3	X3	3	X15	3	X27	4	X3	6	X15	8	X3	13
4	X4	3	X16	4	X28	4	X4	9	X16	8	X4	14
5	X5	2	X17	4	X29	4	X5	8	X17	5	X5	12
6	X6	2	X18	4		X6	7	X18	8			
7	X7	3	X19	4		X7	8	X19	6			
8	X8	4	X20	3		X9	8	X20	9			
9	X9	4	X21	3		X10	9	X21	6			
10	X10	4	X22	2		X11	6	X22	8			
11	X11	3	X23	3		X12	6					
12	X12	4	X24	3		X13	7					
#	51.78%<5 Avarge=3/20					39.28%=5-10 Avarge=7/20			8.92%=11-20 Avarge=13/20			

Table 3. Assessment of Students Vocabulary Test Result based on Dictionary meaning

Day Three Result													
No	Scored below 5				Scored 5-10				scored 11-20				
1	X1	2	X13		4	X1	8	X13	6	X25	6	X1	11
2	X2	2	X14		3	X2	9	X14	6	X26	5	X2	15
3	X3	2	X15		4	X3	9	X15	6			X3	15
4	X4	2	X16		4	X4	6	X16	6			X4	15
5	X5	4	X17		4	X5	7	X17	6			X5	14
6	X6	2	X18		3	X6	7	X18	6				
7	X7	2				X7	7	X19	7				
8	X8	4				X8	7	X20	8				
9	X9	3				X9	6	X21	7				
10	X10	3				X10	8	X22	7				
11	X11	4				X11	9	X23	6				
12	X12	4				X12	9	X24	5				
#	36.73%<5 Avarge=3/20				53%=5-10 Avarge=6.9/20				10.2%=11-20 Avarge=14/20				

Table 4: Assessment on Students Result based on Miming way of Vocabulary Learning (Key-X1,x2,x3 refers student)

Day One Test Result										
No	Students 7-12 score						13-20 score			
1	X1	7	X13	8.5	X25	8.5	X1	13.5	X13	14.5
2	X2	7.5	X14	9.5	X26	7	X2	13.5	X14	14.5
3	X3	7.5	X15	9	X27	8	X3	13	X15	15
4	X4	8.5	X16	10	X28	7.5	X4	13.5	X16	13
5	X5	9	X17	9.5			X5	15	X17	14.5
6	X6	8.5	X18	7			X6	13.5	X18	15
7	X7	8	X19	10			X7	15	X18	15.5
8	X8	7.5	X20	10			X8	14	X19	13
9	X9	7.5	X21	7.5			X9	13.5	X20	13
10	X10	9	X22	7.5			X10	14.5	X21	13.5
11	X11	7.5	X23	7.5			X11	14.5		
12	X12	7.5	X24	7.5			X12	13.5		
#	57 % =7-12 Avarge=8/20						42.85%=13-20 Avarge=14.69/20			

Table 5. Assessment on Students Result based on pictorial Ways of Vocabulary Learning.

Day Two Test Result										
No	Students 10-16 score						17-18			
1	X1	12	X13	11.5	X25	10	X37	13.5	X1	17
2	X2	12.5	X14	11.5	X26	10.5	X38	13.5	X2	17.5
3	X3	12.5	X15	11.5	X27	10.5	X39	13	X3	18
4	X4	11.5	X16	16	X28	10.5	X40	13.5		
5	X5	11	X17	15	X29	11	X41	15		
6	X6	11	X18	14	X30	12	X42	13.5		
7	X7	11.5	X19	14.5	X31	12.5	X43	15		
8	X8	13.5	X20	14.5	X32	12.5				
9	X9	13.5	X21	13	X33	16				
10	X10	13.5	X22	11.5	X34	15				
11	X11	13	X23	11	X35	15				
12	X12	11	X24	10	X36	10				
#	93.47%=10-16 Avarge=13						6.52%=17-18 Avarge=17.5			

Table 6. Assessment on Students Result based on Mimicking and pictorial ways of Vocabulary Teaching

Day Three Test Result										
No	Students 10-16 score						17-18			
1	X1	12	X13	13	X25	10.5	X37	14.5	X1	17
2	X2	14	X14	13	X26	10.5	X38	15.5	X2	17.5
3	X3	12.5	X15	11.5	X27	10	X39	13		
4	X4	14	X16	16	X28	10.5	X40	13.5		
5	X5	11.5	X17	16	X29	11.5	X41	15.5		
6	X6	11.5	X18	16	X30	12	X42	13.5		
7	X7	11.5	X19	13.5	X31	12.5	X43	15		
8	X8	16	X20	13.5	X32	12.5	X44	11		
9	X9	15	X21	13	X33	16	X45	10.5		
10	X10	13.5	X22	11.5	X34	15.5	X46	10		
11	X11	13	X23	11.5	X35	15.5	X47	12		
12	X12	10	X24	10.5	X36	10.5				
#	95.87%=10-16=Avarge=12.97/20						4%=17-17.5, Avarge=17.25/20			

researcher began to proceed his ways of assessing on strategies of vocabulary teaching and the roles of the teacher taking part. There fore, of the total 52 students, 23% of students scored below 5, 59.61% Scored 6-10 and 17% scored 11-20. This shows that, students generally scored less results than the expected. i.e at least half. Besides, an information obtained from the actual classroom observation shows that the teacher was accustomed to prepare and test vocabulary questions on word meanings, and students scored poor test results and they were found to be on the same level of ability both in the control and experimental groups. This indicates that students results were poorer and poorer in the controlled groups. On the second day, 56 students were attending their regular class too; despite the fact that the information obtained from the directorate office showed us their total number was 59, those students who were treated as control groups were to be found to be 56.

This can be manifested as on the test results on the second day for the same group of students. So that, 51% of students scored below 5 with average test result 3 registered for each; 39.28% were in the ranges 5-10 with an average test result 7. At last, the data on the table display that 8.92% scored 11-20 with an average test result 13 for each. It could be judged as, students result show averagely poor and poorer, almost same with the first day's test result registered. The above Table (3) depicts that the assessment done on students vocabulary learning strategy- showed students performance in the class on the third day. Twenty new words were prepared for the same classes of students on the same means of testing and the results are shown here by below based on the data analysis on Table 3.

Then, 36.73% of students scored below 5 with average test result 3 marks, 53% in the ranges 5-10 and averagely 6.9 test results were obtained and finally 10.2% scored in gaps 11-20 with average test result 14. Specially these students were from the control groups. Based on the data obtained students test results still show poor. This is because, the teacher did not use any other types of strategies than the one accustomed as usual." As children, many of us remember the teaching strategies our instructors used for vocabulary: We'd copy down definitions into our notebooks, and then for homework we would have to rewrite each word for what seemed like a million times" (Cox, 2009). And hence, it can be concluded that the teacher's role is insignificant in assisting students to develop their knowledge of vocabulary.

To overcome these obstacles, teachers need to engage the best kinds of vocabulary instruction and use technology that accommodates and supports that instruction (Joan, 2005). One way of providing that exposure to new vocabulary might be to read children several studies have found that children can learn words as efficiently from having stories read to them as they can from reading stories themselves as discussed in Stahl, Richek and Vandevier (1990). On the other hand, grade seven section (B) students were taken and treated as experimental group, where the same words tested for control groups were taken to this groups by using different strategies of testing for new words. Hence, T₄, T₅ and T₆ show the data for the test result analysis of experimental group students. For this reason, miming and pictorial ways of testing were used to the group and the results are shown as follows. Based on this fact, Table (4) has shown that this group of students were tested supported by or miming to enable them understand the

words and write the meanings. Holding up on this strategy, 57% of students scored in the ranges 7-12 with average test result of 8 where 42.85% scored 13-20 marks with average scores 14.69. This table has shown students' performance on vocabulary learning classes who were treated as experimental groups, where 55 students sat for the test, but 6 students answered in a meaningless way and were not considered in the data analysis. The same words as of the control groups were provided to the experimental group students through miming strategy explained above. The researcher used different strategy (miming-acting to explain the meanings of the words contextually) than the strategy used to group (A) or control group. Consequently, students have understood the meanings of the words easily and wrote the meanings on the space provided to them and scored better test results when compared with control group in the first day of their test. Context skills are the strategies that a reader uses for incidental vocabulary learning. Texts are full of "clues" about the meanings of words (Smith, 2008).

On the second day the experimental group (group B) was also tested with the same words that of the control groups were used in their second day of vocabulary testing. Here the researcher used different pictures and asked meanings of the words. That is twenty different pictures (pictures of animals and objects) were drawn on the black board with the blank space at the side where students were required to write the meanings. Even though the data obtained from the office revealed that the total number of students were 60, only 52 students sat for the test, of which 6 students wrote on the space provided in a meaningless manner. Then, 46 students wrote properly and the following results were registered. Therefore, 93.47% of students scored 10-16 and 6.52% scored 17-18. Finally, it is possible to conclude that students were more benefited and scored relatively good test scores from the pictorial ways of learning than direct methods of teaching students on vocabulary lessons. The study revealed that experimental groups were scored better test results on vocabulary questions when compared with control groups.

Additionally the data on the classroom observation revealed that the classroom teacher was using different strategies in teaching or testing vocabularies despite the fact that lack of regularity. The teacher was making students predict or guess on the meanings of the words based on the concepts in the reading passage that is different words were written on the black board with their corresponding synonymous meanings directly though students were passive in making interaction and few students scored better test results based on the observation. On the other hand, on last day of testing students' knowledge of vocabulary in the experimental group, the researcher used both strategies (miming and pictorial) at the same time to compare and contrast with students' test results in the control group. Therefore, the study revealed the following results as shown on Table 6. Up on this procedure, 95.87% students scored 10-16 with average scores 12.97, whereas 4% in this group scored 17-17.5 points with average result 17.25 by each. Besides the above findings an interview conducted with Mr. Wogeny Abedisa, English teacher at Selamber Primary School, with 28 years teaching experience, disclosed that contextualized strategies (miming or using pictures) of teaching English words or vocabularies to the students is a better and preferred means of putting words with different meanings in students' mind. He marvelously explained that in his 28 years teaching

experience he taught English language at different schools in the region by traditional methods of teaching and he observed that students' results were poor and have become poorer, that is why he has shifted his methods of teaching moderately using different strategies. In his interview he added that teachers have a great role in supporting and scaffolding students while teaching in creating situations based on the information given on students' text book. Additionally, an interview conducted with Mr. Hussen Aragie, English teacher in Selamber Primary School, who had ample teaching experience in the region, in teaching English for these students forwarded his ideas with positive implication to contextual ways of teaching vocabulary and testing for their meanings. According to Mr. Hussein, English teacher has to be well committed and has a great role in designing strategies in supporting students in their learning classes. Research related to vocabulary instruction and word knowledge shows that there is a robust (healthy) correlation between knowing words and comprehending text (Beck, McKeown, and Kucan, 2008) cited in Steven A. (2005). Based on the classroom observation, it is possible to judge that the teacher has a great role in supporting students in their learning of vocabulary meanings contextually by creating situations which are duly familiar to their life in their natural environment, though students were reluctant in taking participation. An interview made with Girma Bulch, English teacher in the same school proved that creating situations through context always has a burden on the teacher. It had a good opportunity to make students communicative as compared to teaching dictionary meaning. According to this informant the teacher always remained active and has a great role to affect students' ways of learning vocabulary and has a positive impact on their learning outcome.

Generally in the world of teaching, learning words does not occur in a vacuum; that is, children do not acquire meanings of words in isolation. All learning—both personal and academic—occurs within the sociocultural environment of the home, community, and classroom. Literacy is a social practice, so students learn academic vocabulary through social interactions as members of the learning community (Scott, Nagy, and Flinspach, 2008, p. 197). Therefore, effective teachers of language and literacy provide practices that stimulate rich uses of language, designing their instructional programs within a social context that promotes literacy teaching (Gibbons, 2009). Vocabularies include conceptual knowledge of words that goes well beyond a simple dictionary definition. Students' vocabulary knowledge is a building process that occurs over time as they make connections to other words, learn examples and non-examples of the word and related words, and use the word accurately within the context of the sentence (Snow, Griffin, and Burns, 2005) discussed in Steven A. (2005). Graves (2006) offers a framework for successful vocabulary programs that supports effective teaching and students' development of word knowledge. The foundation of his instructional program includes a four-part approach to developing robust vocabularies: Provide rich and varied language experiences, teach individual words, teach word-learning strategies, and foster word consciousness (Gibbons, 2009).

Conclusion

The study revealed that students' test results were judged as poorer and poorer in the traditional ways of vocabulary teaching and here the role of the teacher was insignificantly

shown in assisting students learn their vocabulary lessons. Where as through miming and pictorial strategies in the experimental group students have registered better results when compared with control group students.

Recommendation

Students' test results for the controlled group were poor as could be seen on the data analysis depicted on T₁, T₂ and T₃ consecutively. This was resulted from the effect of traditional ways of vocabulary teaching and the less involvement of the classroom teacher. Poor test results were registered which was below 5, 5-10 and 11-20 - avargely less than the expected test result. But, these bad or poor test results that were resulted from the traditional teaching method would be improved if the teacher were strongly used other strategies of teaching. The test results of experimental group students were good and better than the controlled group ones for which the different teaching methods like miming, pictorial and miming and pictorial(simentanouesly) were the strategies that the researcher used. There was not students' results registered below 5 but relatively better scores were observed. This indicates that the teacher has to be well committed in using different strategies in assisting students to have better results in teaching vocabulary lessons.

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