Review

Strategies of Vocabulary Instruction in English Language Teaching: A Literature Review

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Vocabulary is central to English language teaching because without sufficient vocabulary students cannot understand others or express their own ideas. However, vocabulary instruction in TEFL seems to be neglected. Opulent vocabulary will totally help students mastering English and its four major skills which cover listening, speaking, reading and writing. In this paper, the researcher reviewed the terms vocabulary, the importance of vocabulary, approaches of vocabulary instruction and strategies of vocabulary instruction in English language classroom. The review of literature indicated that teachers should use the different vocabulary teaching techniques such as contextualization, collocation, vocabulary network, homonym, polysemy, hyponym, antonym and synonym in their vocabulary instruction. Essentially, constructing eloquent vocabulary teaching opportunities through different vocabulary teaching strategies are worthwhile to be used.

Key Words: English Language Teaching; Strategies; Vocabulary; Vocabulary Instruction

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary plays a key role in every endeavor to learn a new language. The significance of the lexicon has been recognized in almost every language teaching method from the traditional Silent Way in which the most versatile and functional vocabulary was emphasized (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) to the more recent Communicate Language Teaching in which teachers use a wide variety of techniques such as definition, synonyms and antonyms, to teach vocabulary (Savignon, 2002; Kweldju, 2004).

It is important for the teacher to employ effective and dynamic teaching techniques/strategies that will empower the students to master the required tasks. Stahl (1999) found that vocabulary instruction directly improves comprehension. He points out that as the difficulty of

words in a text increases, understanding of the text decreases. Therefore, it is critical for students to have a deep understanding of vocabulary to understand new concepts. Vocabulary is also used to communicate to the world what we know. Individuals who can express themselves precisely with appropriate language are more likely to make a positive impression on their employers, colleagues and clients (Kweldju, 2004; Kuśnierek, 2016).

Lexical competence is currently accredited to be a core component of communicative competence by many vocabulary specialists, which provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read and write (Richards & Renandya, 2002). The movement toward effective methodologies for teaching vocabulary has emerged and researchers and language teachers have also suggested many strategies/techniques for vocabulary learning and teaching, which are dependent

on the efforts of each learner (Cohen & Macaro, 2007).

In this review paper, the researcher reviewed the strategies of vocabulary instruction. This paper intended to increase teachers' awareness of the strategies of vocabulary instruction so that suitable and effective actions can be adopted. It is hoped that the findings of this review paper provide good views for the strategies of vocabulary instruction in English language teaching.

Definition of Vocabulary

Vocabulary has been demarcated by many scholars. Vocabulary can be defined as the words of a language, counting single items and phrases or chunks of several words which covey a particular meaning, the way individual words do. Vocabulary addresses single lexical items, words with specific meaning (s), but it also includes lexical phrases or chunks (Catalán, 2003; Ježek, 2016; Maghsodi, 2010).

Even so, Henriksen (1996), Nation (2001) and Melaku (2020) suggest more complex definitions about vocabulary. Vocabulary knowledge implies knowing a word in the spoken form and the spoken form can be recognized and understood it in and out of context rather than guessed at. Moreover, vocabulary knowledge is often defined as the ability to give a target language paraphrase. This means that vocabulary knowledge requires the ability to react to words that students do not need to think about. The words just come into students' minds to be used in an effective and natural way. When students have knowledge of a word, they do not take much time to think about the word. They just have to use the word naturally and appropriately.

Pithily, vocabulary knowledge requires not only word meanings knowledge, but it requires the usage of the words in the appropriate context and in a natural way and also includes the relationship between new words acquired and the ones already acquired. Hence, governesses should use techniques that teach the meaning of words in context and help apprentices associate the new vocabulary learned and what they already knew and help apprentices memorize the words and their meanings (Ježek, 2016; Maghsodi, 2010).

The Significance of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is noticeably a vital element within a language as the great majority of meaning is carried lexically; and, therefore, something to be taken into consideration both in Second and Foreign Language Teaching (McCarthy 1990). Vocabulary teaching is one of the most important components of any language class. The main reason is the fact that it is a medium, which carries meaning, learning to understand and express the meaning is what counts in learning languages. As pointed out by Harmer (1992:14), "Words are the building blocks of language and having a good supply of them is very important for students' right from the beginning of their English learning."

By the same token, Taylor (1990) declares that ranging from word to sentence level; we find different vocabulary, which plays a very important role for making language meaningful. Thus, vocabulary is useful to create a communicative environment. Regarding this, Wallace (1982) adds that it has often been remarked how strange it is that comparatively little has been written on the teaching and learning of foreign language vocabulary because there is a sense in which learning a foreign language is basically a matter of learning the vocabulary of that language.

In fact, without vocabulary communication in a second or foreign language is not possible in a meaningful way. McCarthy (1990) stresses that no matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of second language are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in a second language just cannot happen in any meaningful way. Furthermore, Wilkins (1976:111) says "People could describe few things without grammar, but they could express nothing without vocabulary." From this perspective, teaching vocabulary is very important in language learning since it is seen as a key element to achieve a high level of proficiency in the target language.

Furthermore, vocabulary assists learners with language production. Hubbard (1983) states that the more words a learner know, the more precisely that learner can express the exact meaning he/she wants to. Based on this view, to communicate effectively, learners need to know a large number of word meanings. Similarly, Cardenas (2001) states that vocabulary is used to determine the proficiency a learner has in oral context. This is to say that vocabulary is an essential component to determine how much a learner is able to communicate successfully.

Overall, teaching vocabulary plays a significant role in language acquisition since vocabulary will help students develop the language skills such as speaking, listening, reading and writing. Vocabulary can make the practice of English language structures easier; having a stock of words is useful for describing daily life ideas and feelings that students express in their native language.

Previous Studies about Vocabulary Instruction

Different studies about the strategies of vocabulary instruction have been carried out. Mizumoto & Takeuchi (2009) declares that in the last three decades, the view on vocabulary has drastically changed and researchers have shown outpouring interests towards this area. Thus, the movement toward effective methodologies for

teaching vocabulary has emerged and researchers and language teachers have also recommended many strategies and techniques for vocabulary teaching and learning.

Compared with traditional approaches, in which vocabulary is often taught unsystematically in class and teachers tend to leave their students to learn vocabulary on their own without much instruction or guidance, teachers following this new research-based approach focus on words students are expected to meet frequently, and present words systematically based on a careful consideration of needs analysis. Vocabulary instruction is personalized according to learners' different learning needs, goals and styles. Learners are taught to raise their awareness of the knowledge involved in knowing a lexical item and the process of learning a new word (Scarcella, 1994; Alqahtani, 2015).

Students need to be taught techniques for inferring words from contexts. Nowadays, it is, generally, accepted that vocabulary instruction should be part of the syllabus and taught in a well-planned and regular basis. Vocabulary is supposed to be at the centre of language teaching. As a result, the incorporation of vocabulary into the curriculum is essential for increasing students' literacy skills not only in the EFL classroom but also in all areas (Lewis, 1993; Hunt and Beglar, 2002; Ahour & Esfanjani, 2015; Bruton, 2007; Catalán, 2003; Ježek, 2016; Maghsodi, 2010).

Challenges in Vocabulary Instruction

Since a good knowledge of vocabulary has a great effect on the learners' improvement of other aspects of language such as reading comprehension, listening comprehension, speaking and writing.

There are difficulties that lessen the students' word knowledge. The following are the most fundamental obstacles.

a.   **The size of the task:** The number of words that students need to learn is exceedingly large. On average, students add 2,000–3,000 words a year to their reading vocabularies (Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2002). This means that they learn from six to eight new words each day for an enormous achievement. Individual differences in vocabulary size also involve large numbers.

b.   **The complexity of word knowledge:** Knowing a word involves much more than knowing its dictionary definition, and simply memorizing a dictionary definition does not guarantee the ability to use a word in reading or writing (Catalan, 2003).

c.   **Lack of creating genuine communication:** Determining how to create genuine communication within the classroom setting presents challenges to teachers. However, in general, teaching vocabulary is not easy, clearly more than just presenting new words (Catalan, 2003).

d.   **Students with limited or no knowledge of English:** English used in textbooks and printed material is different from spoken or conversational English (Crisitina & Houston, 2010).

e.   **Students with reading and learning disabilities:** The amount of time spent on reading. For instance, a student who reads 21 minutes per day outside of school reads almost 2 million words per year. A student who reads less than a minute per day outside of school reads only 8,000 to 21,000 words per year (Crisitina & Houston, 2010).

f.   **Students who enter school with limited vocabulary knowledge**: At first-grade, high performing students know about twice as many words as low-performing students (Hart & Risley, 1995).

Approaches to Vocabulary Instruction

So long as vocabulary instruction is one of the most noteworthy ways in which teachers can improve students' reading and listening comprehension and speaking fluency and can be one of the most challenging that a teacher can do well. Thus, what students learn depends not only on what they are taught but it depends also on how they are taught according to students' developmental level, and their interests and experiences (Curtis and Longo, 2001; Melaku, 2020). This credence requires that much closer attention should be paid to the methods chosen for vocabulary instruction.
Furthermore, Glickman (1991:6) clearly discloses:

> *Effective instruction is not a set of generic practices, but instead is a set of context-driven decisions about instruction. Effective teachers do not use the same set of practices for every lesson…Instead, what effective teachers do is constantly reflect about their work, observe whether students are learning or not, and then adjust their practice accordingly.*

This means that there are many variables to consider when making decisions about the process of instruction

and learning and the method choice can be used by teachers to create learning environments and to specify the nature of the activity in which teachers and learners will be involved during the lesson. Thus, the teacher has to reflect about effective and interesting strategies to teach vocabulary so that teaching creates learning environments (Curtis and Longo, 2001).

To be brief, students need vocabulary instruction that will help them acquire new word knowledge and develop techniques to enable them to increase the depth of that knowledge over time. And to achieve these goals research states that there are three main approaches in which vocabulary can be presented such as explicit/direct vocabulary instruction, implicit/indirect vocabulary and independent vocabulary instruction.

Explicit Vocabulary Teaching

Explicit vocabulary instruction is a highly effective approach to teach vocabulary, that is, it is a crucial approach to be applied by the teacher for the retention of new words. Explicit instruction of vocabulary is highly effective and it justifies this fact stating that to develop vocabulary intentionally students should be explicitly taught. And seeing vocabulary in rich contexts provided by authentic use of visual aids, rather than in isolated vocabulary drills, produces robust vocabulary learning. The use of visual aids gets students actively engaged in using and thinking about word meanings and in creating relationships among words (Curtis and Longo, 2001; Milton and Alexiou, 2012).

The teacher will not have to teach vocabulary many times to reach the goal of the student learning. Thus, when vocabulary is taught with visual aids students usually feel more convinced that they learned what the teacher was teaching them because the message is transmitted more efficiently. So, teachers will feel more confident about teaching vocabulary to the class (ibid).

Implicit Vocabulary Teaching

Many authors present some concerns about implicit vocabulary instruction. Channel (1988) states that the learning of vocabulary implicitly is probably considered more efficient in intermediate and advanced students through extensive reading and listening. This is to say that students can deduce word meanings from context only if they know a large number of word meanings used by the speaker or the writer. This means that this technique cannot be suitable for beginner English students since they still do not have a large number of word meanings in order to be able to deduce unknown word meanings in a text or while listening to the teacher or to someone else. Therefore, implicit vocabulary

instruction used by the teacher can be effective depending on the level of the students' vocabulary knowledge (Hunt and Beglar, 1998).

In summary, in indirect instruction, the teacher's role is seen as a facilitator, supporter and resource person (Martin, 1983). The teacher arranges the learning environment, provides opportunity for student involvement, and when appropriate, provides feedback to students.

Independent Vocabulary Teaching

The important point here is that learners receive instruction in how to use what they find in dictionaries or how they can most effectively take information from them so that they are able to define words or translate the targeted words into students' first or second languages. Most of the time students do not receive the kind of instruction they need to learn how to use dictionaries effectively. Thus, dictionaries awareness implies, on the one hand, knowing that dictionaries are important and useful, and on the other hand, it implies knowing how to use them. Learner training in the effective use of dictionaries gives students a valuable skill that will enable learners to use dictionaries in and out of the classroom. Dictionaries are "passports to independence" and using them is one of the student-centered learning activities (Allen, 1983; Saunders, 2013).

In a nutshell, according to independent vocabulary instruction the teacher can encourage and facilitate vocabulary learning by helping learners learn techniques for determining the meaning of words independently. That is, teachers should instruct students to help them build their vocabulary and develop techniques to learn vocabulary on their own.

Strategies of Vocabulary Instruction

Teachers need to consider how to teach students when vocabularies are being taught to them. There are a variety of teaching techniques that teachers can use to improve learners vocabulary learning. Actually, there is no best technique as students may have preference to one over another. Some techniques may be good for some learners at certain level. The same technique which works well to some students may not be enjoyed by others. However, learners should be taught to be an independent learner because they will not be in school forever (Gairns and Redman, 1986).
Flanagan and Greenwood (2007) declare that teaching vocabulary is not just conveying the meaning to the learners and asking them to learn those words. If teachers believe that the words are worth explaining and learning, then it is important that they should do this

efficiently. Teachers should use different techniques in teaching English vocabulary to motivate the learners, enrich their vocabulary and enable them to speak English properly. Teachers should keep four factors in mind when they consider strategies to teach vocabulary such as:

• the students they are teaching,
• the nature of words they decide to teach,
• their instructional purposes in teaching each of those words and
• the techniques they employ to teach words.

In the same way, Graves (2006) clearly explains with respect to effective vocabulary instruction provide students with information that contains the context as well as the meaning of the word, design instruction that engages students and allows sufficient time for word learning, make sure students have multiple exposures to the words with review and practice, and create a dialogue around the words. Thus, in teaching vocabulary, teachers of English mainly focus on explaining the meaning, presenting the form as well as the use of a new word. Nation (2001) suggests different techniques that teachers of English can implement in vocabulary instruction.

Teaching Vocabulary in Context - Contextualization

Contextualization is a technique of teaching vocabulary through reading, providing context and clues. Through reading and interesting context, students would be able to get meaning of certain vocabulary items. The best ways of developing one's vocabulary in a foreign language is to encounter it in a situation and context (Wallace, 1982; Richards, 2006; Thornbury, 2002; Edwards, 2009).

Research indicates that contextual word teaching is more effective than non-contextual word teaching (Biemiller and Boote, 2006). Therefore, in teaching vocabulary, it is important to provide meaningful learning experiences for learners. One way of nurturing vocabulary development and retention is to teach words in context. Divorcing words from their surroundings decreases the likelihood of comprehension. It is emphasized that new vocabulary should only be met in sentences and meaningful contexts (Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Baumann, 2010).

Therefore, setting a good context, which is interesting, plausible and has relevance to the lives of the learners, is an essential prerequisite for vocabulary teaching. It helps in both engaging the attention of the learners and naturally generating the target vocabulary. Maintaining the context and making sure the language surrounding the context is easy to comprehend.

According to Kaivanpanah and Alavi (2008), the following principles can enhance the effectiveness of teaching vocabulary using context clues such as:

➢ Highlight textual clues that lead to the meaning of the target word. This will enhance students' capability to recognize textual clues. Clues include synonyms, definitions, antonyms, contrasts, and examples.
➢ Select texts in which the target words occur a few times.
➢ To enhance accuracy of students' inferences of target words, teach them background knowledge of the text.

Types of Contextualization

Context clues are indicators of the meaning of a word. Such clues may be in the sentence that contains the word or somewhere else in the text within close proximity. Context clues include definitions, examples, synonyms, antonyms, summary, comparison and contrast (Stahl, 1999; Edwards, 2009).

a. **Definition:** Often the writer defines the meaning of the word right in the sentence or gives enough explanation for the meaning to be clear.
b. **Example:** Helps the reader get the meaning of a word by providing examples that illustrate the use of the word.
c. **Comparison and Contrast:** Comparison and contrast usually show the similarities and differences between persons, ideas and things.
d. **Summary:** A summary clue sums up a situation or an idea with a word or a phrase.
e. **Synonyms:** Very often the reader can find in the same passage a familiar word that relates to a subject in a manner similar to the way that the unfamiliar term does.
f. **Antonyms:** Words with opposite meanings may be found in the same context.

Collocation

Vocabulary knowledge doesn't only involve just knowing the meaning of a word in isolation, but includes knowing the word that usually co-occurs with it. These words that co-occur with high frequency are called collocations; for example, heavy rain, strong coffee but not powerful coffee, a brief discussion but a short man. It's a widely accepted idea that collocations are very important part of knowledge and they are essential to non-native speakers of English in order to speak or write fluently (Moon, 1997; Stubbs, 2002; McCarten, 2007; Zhiliang, 2008; Shin & Nation, 2008).

There are two types of collocations: lexical collocations and grammatical collocations (Bahns, 1993 and Carter, 1998). Lexical collocations are combinations of nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and verbs such as Verb + Noun (e.g. break a code, lift a blockade), Adjective + Noun (e.g. strong tea, best wishes), Noun + Noun (language school), Verb + Adverb (e.g. affect deeply, appreciate sincerely), and Adverb + Adjective (e.g. deeply absorbed, closely related). Grammatical collocations are combinations of content words (nouns, adjectives or verbs) and a grammatical word such as a preposition or certain structural patterns. In light of these ideas, it's a widely accepted idea that collocations are very important part of knowledge of second language acquisition, and they are essential to non-native speakers of English in order to speak or write fluently and accurately (Jaén, 2007).

Collocation, generally, refers to the way in which two or more words are typically used together. For example, we talk about heavy rain but not heavy sun, or we say that we make or come to a decision, but we don't do a decision. So, heavy rain and make a decision are often referred to as collocations.

Teaching Vocabulary with Semantic field Theory

In language learning and teaching, sense relations or semantic field theory are of paramount importance. Thus, there are several aspects of lexis that need to be taken into account when teaching vocabulary. These important aspects are synonym, antonym, homonym, hyponym and polysemy (Ur, 1996; Stubbs, 2002; Jaén, 2007).

Synonyms

Synonyms help to enrich a learner's vocabulary bank and provide alternative words instantaneously. These can be effective since they build on words and phrases that students already recognize. Use caution that you do imply that all the words have exactly the same meaning since different words often are used for different connotations or to imply different meanings. The same procedure can be used to elicit synonyms. Ur (1996) declares that the teacher needs to highlight the fact that "true" synonyms are relatively rare and the answers will often be "near" synonyms. The students could make crosswords, word snakes or other puzzles for each other using these synonyms.

Antonyms

The students were asked to make lists of opposite words. Two groups were made; one group gave one word while the other group asked to give an opposite word to it. For example, sharp/blunt, rude/polite, flexible/rigid, generous/mean etc. One group gave word 'sharp' and the other group gave opposite word for it as 'blunt'. Marks were written on the board. They found it very interesting and memorized more words in order to win the contest. Thus, they can learn new words through such techniques (Gairns and Redman, 1986; Jaén, 2007).

Homonyms

McCarthy (1990) discloses that homophones are words of the same language that are pronounced alike even if they differ in spelling, meaning, or origin such as "pair" and "pear". Homophones may also be spelled alike as in "bear" (the animal) and "bear" (to carry). But this list consists only of homophones that are not spelled alike. Ant/aunt, eye/I, ate/eight, fare/fair, bear/bare, sea/see, son/sun, stationary/stationery steal/steel, throne/thrown, be/bee, by/bye/buy, cell/sell, cent/scent/sent, census/senses and die/dye.

Hyponyms

In addition to the sense of sameness and oppositeness, words can be studied in terms of the relationship of inclusion. Some specific words (e.g. green, blue and red) can be viewed in relation to other general term, color or still more general one, painting (Ur, 1996). The idea is that part of the meaning of specific words is contained by the general term technically called super-ordinate word. McCarthy (1990) declares that many course book writers directly or indirectly use this frame work as a technique of organizing vocabulary items.

Polysemy

Poleyemy is the relationship of a word to many different meanings. It refers to the different meanings that the same word may have in different contexts or denotations (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Additionally, Gairns and Redman (1986) use the term polysemy to describe a single word form with several different that can have closely related meanings. For example, in English, people talk about the "head" of a pin, the head of a person or the head of an organization. To solve this problem of polysemy, students need to see the appropriate representation of words and practice the word meanings in context since context allows students understand the meaning of words.

Using Dictionary

Students need to use dictionaries, print or online, during their schooling and throughout their lives. In most cases, adults use a dictionary after a word is read in context and they are unable to determine the word's meaning. Since adults have more life experience, they are generally able to use context clues to help them

select the correct meaning in the dictionary. Students, however, often have difficulty with this. They tend to select the first definition or the shortest definition. Teachers must show students how to identify and select the most appropriate meaning of the word based on how the word is used in context (Stahl & Kapinus, 2001; Stubbs, 2002). Students also need other skills in order to use the dictionary, such as knowing how to alphabetize and knowing how to use the guide words at the top of each page to locate specific words.

To help students learn how to select the appropriate meaning in the dictionary, teachers can use the following steps (Graves, 2006). Similar to other strategies in this book, the teacher models this process approach to solving words, and students will internalize it with more practice.

> Read the sentence containing the unknown word.
> Before looking in the dictionary, think aloud and guess the meaning of the word based on the clues in and around the word.
> Explain that many words have several meanings and then read all of the dictionary's definitions for that word.
> Decide which definition makes sense within the context of the text being read.
> If the meaning is still unknown, provide further discussion about the context and look at word parts.

Vocabulary Network

The concept of vocabulary network also known as word web, word map, mind map and word association explains that beyond sameness, oppositeness and inclusion of meanings of words, there is a complex interconnection or network among group of words. McCarthy (1990) states that semantic relationship in terms of synonym and antonym tends to simplify the complex nature of the mental lexicon. According to Schmitt (2000) words are not stored in mind in isolated pattern but in an organized and systematic manner. That organization is suitably explained as association or network. The mental lexicon, how words are stored in the mind, is metaphorically described. Vocabulary network technique is believed to function as a convincing framework of organizing lexical items; the scholars' idea ensures that vocabulary can be taught better through vocabulary network (Ellis, 1994).

CONCLUSION

Vocabulary is very important to convey the idea and to communicate with others. It is one of the components which supports the speakers in communication whenever

we want to communicate with other people using a language. Teaching vocabulary has an important role in English language teaching to improve the effectiveness and efficiency; teachers should not only understand the students' difficulties of word study but also use some useful strategies and methods. This review of literature indicated the strategies of vocabulary instruction such as teaching vocabulary in context, teaching vocabulary with semantic field theory (synonym, antonym, homonym, polysemy), the use of vocabulary network and dictionaries. It is hoped that the findings of this study contribute to the improvement of the strategies of vocabulary instruction in English language teaching.

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