The Impact of Presentation Modes of Vocabulary Items on EFL University Students: The Case of Ajloun National University

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to explore the effects of word presentation modes on vocabulary learning at Ajloun National University. The number of participants in this study was 40 (20 female and 20 male students) studying at the Department of English Language and Literature. The study instrument consisted of a questionnaire adopted from Lin and Yu (2017), which was distributed to students at Ajloun National University. The Findings of the study showed that the students used different presentation modes to develop their English vocabulary, such as context, inferring and guessing meaning which affect presentation modes positively. The results of the study showed that there were no statistically significant differences between male and female students in learning vocabulary items due to gender.

Keywords: vocabulary development, English as a foreign language, students of Ajloun National University, presentation modes

INTRODUCTION

Research on vocabulary presentation modes started in 1960s some of these modes are:

Vocabulary list, picture mode and incidental context (Wang Mi,2016) . Oxford English Dictionary defines presentation as " the manner or style in which some thing is given or displayed As the First stage of language teaching, it is defined in Longman Dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics, 2002 as the introduction of new items when their meanings are explained. "

Wilkins (1972) stated that without grammar we cannot express ourselves freely "but without vocabulary, we cannot express anything.'' Foreign language learners cannot increase the vocabulary size efficiently, therefore better method of teaching is demand to improve their vocabulary acquisition. Vocabulary items are very important to learn a language, and this is widely known because communication is impossible without vocabulary. Grammar and pronunciation are also important and essential sub skills in learning a language, but vocabulary is the most essential and basic in learning. Coady (1993) and Rot (1999) stated that but that research done on the skill areas and effective communication is a function of appropriate vocabulary acquisition more than learning grammar rules. As is generally accepted, vocabulary is critically important to typical language learners (Zimmerman, 2001). The important role of foreign language

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vocabulary acquisition has been increasingly emphasized in almost all English language teaching institutions. The process of vocabulary instruction concerning introducing vocabulary items to learners is called vocabulary presentation which is essential to enable learners to get richer knowledge about the aimed vocabulary items and make them enter the memory easily.

Teachers and Learners generally acknowledge vocabulary in first and second languages as an important point of language competence. Decarrico (2001) points out that learning vocabulary is something basic in language acquisition. Sokment (1997) discusses ways of helping learners acquiring vocabulary. Attention has been focused on vocabulary learning strategies. Kitajima (2001) affirms that without vocabulary items one cannot express the intended meaning. Schmitt (1997) suggested a taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies based on language learning. Fan (2003) states that inadequate lexical knowledge may hinder student's proficiency development and effect performance in public examination.

Given and Redman (1980) state that there are three types of approaches and techniques that are used to present vocabulary: verbal, such as definition and translation, visual, such as pictures, video, and handouts, and audio such as listening to cassettes.

Wang Mi (2016) investigated the effects of different' Foreign vocabulary acquisition and retention. The findings showed that there was a close relationship between word presentation modes and vocabulary and different learning effects between vocabulary lists and retention.

Coudy and Nation (1988) state that guessing meaning from context is important while reading improves the reading skills in general.

This study comes to investigate vocabulary presentation modes which are helpful for students to memorize and use vocabulary items. It also stresses vocabulary teaching and learning strategies.

 Problems and difficulties face students in learning or remembering vocabulary items. Presentation modes of vocabulary have a clear impact on their learning. Therefore, this can be considered as the problem of this study, which is an attempt to specify the difficulties that faced university EFL students at Ajloun National University in learning vocabulary items and find out effective and appropriate ways to overcome them. Moreover, vocabulary teaching principles should be improved and developed so that students can enrich and expand their vocabularies.

This study is significant for students, teachers, and designers of text books and curricula. This study may also contribute to find methods to learn vocabulary items. Furthermore, it may reveal some solutions that can help overcome obstacles that stand in front of students.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Alqahtani (2015) indicated that vocabulary learning is an essential part in foreign language learning as the meanings of new words are very often emphasized, whether in books or in classrooms. It is also central to language teaching and is of great importance

to a language learner. Recent research indicates that teachers may face difficulties in teaching vocabulary because many of them are not confident about the best methods of vocabulary teaching and at times they don't know where to begin to form an instructional emphasis on word learning (Berne and Blachowicz, 2008).

Barcroft (2004) states that in vocabulary teaching and learning in ESL and EFL contexts, two concepts frequently explored are incidental vocabulary acquisition and direct vocabulary learning. The first refers to "learners acquiring new words from context without intending to do so", and the second to "learners acquiring words while intending to do so'. When vocabulary teaching and learning activities are influenced by communicative approaches, learners are encouraged to acquire second language (L2) vocabulary incidentally by doing extensive reading and inferring word meaning from a context. Many language instructors believe that, "providing incidental encounters with target words is only one method to facilitate vocabulary acquisition" (ibid, p.237). Some studies have found that incidental vocabulary acquisition via inferring meaning from a context is small, and it is only a complementary activity to intentional vocabulary learning (Nation, 2001). Therefore, in EFL contexts where the adequacy of authentic communicative input of a target language makes incidental vocabulary acquisition less effective, it is worthwhile to add intentional (direct) vocabulary teaching and learning activities so that many approaches and methods are explored.

Pressley,(1983) points out that keyword is a technique ofa two-stage to remember new vocabulary items that has an associative component. To use this procedure, a sound or image link between a new L2 and L1 vocabulary item should be created. In his view of the keyword method, Nation (1990) stated that learners create an unusual association between the words. In Nation's notion, the link can be made between L1 and a new L2 vocabulary item, or between a new L2 and already known L2 vocabulary items.

Marion, (2008) examined the impact of gestures on second language memorization in teaching young learners. Participants were twenty French children who took part in the study. They had to learn eight words in English as a foreign language. The first group (N=10) was taught vocabulary with pictures and the second group (N=10)was taught with gestures. Children in the second group had to use gestures while producing vocabulary items. The findings show that gestures and their reproduction affected significantly the process of memorization of second language vocabulary items .

Nation and Yongqi Gu,(2007) investigate the different impacts of English vocabulary learning and retention when adopting three different presentation modes. 58 English majors were selected as the subjects and two tests were performed one hour and one week after the relevant presentation, utilizing a certain presentation mode respectively. Data analysis reveals four major findings, and presentation influences vocabulary learning effect. The ways of providing example sentences in presentation influences the vocabulary learning and retention effects as well. Different presentation modes will surely produce different vocabulary learning and retention effects; and Providing example sentences in when learners make their own example sentences than that when the sentences are hastily and randomly provided by the teacher.

Lin and Yu (2015) conducted a study to confirm the previous findings of the integration of mobile and the approach of cognitive load. It adopted a within-subjects design. 32 eighth graders in central Taiwan participated in a vocabulary learning program on mobile phones. During the program the participants were required to learn four sets of target words in four different weeks. Each set was presented in one of the following four modes: text mode, text-picture mode, text-sound mode, and text-picture-sound mode. Then , the participants took a vocabulary test and completed a cognitive questionnaire; and after two weeks, they sat the vocabulary test again. Their responses of the vocabulary learning program were also collected in a post-program questionnaire. The meanings in two weeks; and decreased their cognitive load of vocabulary items learning.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1- What are the impacts of vocabulary presentation modes on EFL students' learning at Ajloun National University?

2- Is there any a statistically significant differences between male and female EFL students in vocabulary learning difficulties at Ajloun National University due to gender?

METHOD

Participants

Participants were40 (20males and 20 females) second year students majoring in English language. Their age ranges between 19 to 20. They were chosen randomly. They had studied a course in vocabulary building.

Instruments

To investigate the effect of vocabulary presentation modes on EFL learners, a five Likart scale questionnaire adopted from Lin and Yu, 2017 was used. These include strongly agree, agree, Neutral, strongly disagree and disagree. The Questionnaire was distributed to students in the classroom. The researcher collected all questionnaires which were all answered.

Limitations of the study

The generalizations of the results of this study were limited to Ajloun National University students who were studying English language and literature in the academic year 2021/2022, first semester.

Data collection and analysis

After choosing the participants randomly, who were 40 students (20males and 20 females) majoring in English language, a questionnaire was distributed to them to be filled in. Then the questionnaires were collected. Afterwards data were statistically analyzed.

The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using means, standard deviation and t. Test. The results were shown quantitatively to create the results of the study to answer the study questions.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the study which aimed to explore the effects of word presentation modes on vocabulary learning at Ajloun National University. It also includes descriptive statistics for participants' answers on questionnaire items.

The first question: 1- **What are the impacts of vocabulary presentation modes on EFL students' learning at Ajloun National University**?

To answer this question, means and standard deviation for effects of word presentation modes on EFL students' vocabulary learning at Ajloun National University; tables below show that.

Table 1. Means and standard deviation for effects of word presentation modes on EFL students' vocabulary learning at Ajloun National University (n= 40)

No	Items	males (n=20)		Females (n=20)	
		Mean	Standard. Deviation	Mean	Standard. Deviation
1	I see that the target vocabulary items are easy.	4.70	0.47	4.75	0.44
2	I Learn a new vocabulary item better by reciting it back.	4.75	0.44	4.80	0.41
3	I Learn a new vocabulary item easier by listening to it.	4.80	0.41	4.75	0.44
4	I learn a new vocabulary item easier by seeing an image of it.	4.70	0.57	4.90	0.31
5	The methods I use in English vocabulary learning are listening and reading.	4.80	0.41	4.80	0.41
6	The methods I use in English vocabulary learning are collecting lists of words.	4.75	0.44	4.75	0.55
7	The methods I use in English vocabulary learning are reading English books and magazines.	4.55	0.60	4.45	0.83
8	The methods I use in learning English vocabulary items is using a word in a sentence.	4.50	0.61	4.75	0.55
9	I have an aim that I want to achieve in learning English vocabulary items.	4.70	0.47	4.60	0.68
10	I check the spelling of each new vocabulary item learned.	4.60	0.50	4.70	0.47
	Total Means	4.69	0.28	4.73	0.39

Table (1) shows that: for males the highest means reached (4.80) out of (5) for items(3) "I Learn a new vocabulary item easier by listening to it. And for items (5) "The methods I use in English vocabulary learning are listening and reading" by high agreement degree, and the lowest means was (4.50) for items (8) " The methods I use in learning English vocabulary items is using a word in a sentence." by high agreement degree, and The total means reached (4.69) by high agreement degree.

For females the highest means reached (4.90) out of (5) for items (4) " I learn a new vocabulary item easier by seeing an image of it." by high agreement degree, and the lowest means was (4.45) for items (7) " The methods I use in English vocabulary learning are reading English books and magazines." also by high agreement degree, and the total means reached (4.73) by high agreement degree. Therefore, the results show that there are positive effects of word presentation on EFL vocabulary learning used by students at ANU.

The second question: Is there any a statistically significant differences between male and female EFL students in vocabulary learning difficulties at Ajloun National University due to gender?

To answer this question, (Independent Sample t. Test) was applied to explore significant differences between in vocabulary learning modes among EFL students at Ajloun National University; table (2) shows that.

Table 2.The result of (Independent Sample T-Test) to explore the difference in vocabulary learning modes among EFL students at Ajloun National University

gender	N	Mean	Standard. Deviation	"t" value	Sig
males	20	4.69	0.28	-0.374	0.710
females	20	4.73	0.39		

Table (2) shows that there are no statistically significant difference between in vocabulary learning modes among EFL students at Ajloun National University, where "t" values reached (0.374) by sig (0.710). learning difficulties among EFL students, value was (0.871) by significant (0.395).

DISCUSSION

The first question

For male students, the highest means is for item 3 (I Learn a new vocabulary item easier by listening to it) as students responses reached the highest agreement response(4.8) out of 5, and item 5 which also reached the highest means(4.8). Item 5 (The methods I use in English vocabulary learning are listening and reading). Both indicate positive effects of presentation strategies students used. A second presentation strategy students used instructors used is: "collecting lists of words"(item No.6) , "having an aim in learning English voc. items "(item No. 9) and " seeing and image of it " (item No.4). These items also indicate that instructors use vocabulary presentation strategies positively, such as setting aims, collecting lists and using images that help students understand and memorize vocabulary items. The lowest means was for item (8)"The methods I used in learning English vocabulary items is using a word in sentence. "by high agreement degree (means 4.50). This shows that instructors use this strategy in training students. It is a very good strategy to use vocabulary items in meaningful sentence. The total means for male students reached (4.69) by high agreement degree.

For female students, the highest means reached (4.90) for item (4) "I learn a new vocabulary item easier by seeing an image of it " by high agreement degree. The lowest

means is also by high agreement degree which is item (7) with the means of (4.45). The Total means reached (4.73) by high agreement degree. Therefore, the findings of the study show that EFL female students use vocabulary presentations modes which have positive effects on their learning. These strategies are:

- checking the word spelling
- using a word in a sentence
- reading books and magazines
- listening and reading
- reciting vocabulary items

Moreover, both male and female students agree that the target vocabulary items are easy with high agreement degree means(4.70 for males, 4.75for females.

The findings of the study conform with many previous studies. The findings agree with Given and Redman (1980) in using sentences, images and listening as learning strategies of vocabulary items .They also conform with Candy and Nation (1988) that context, guessing and reading improve students' language, specifically the reading skills. Furthermore, they agree with Barcroft (2004) in using context to infer word meaning. Finally, this study stresses that presentation modes of vocabulary learning, such as context, listening, using meaningful sentences, inferring and guessing meaning, checking the spelling of a word, reading and collecting lists affect learning vocabulary positively not only for beginners, but also for university students. Therefore, university instructors are encouraged to use them as they help build students' vocabulary items easily.

The second question

There were no statistically significance differences between male and female students in vocabulary learning difficulties among EFL students as the t. value was (0.871) by significant (0.395). This is because both students' males and females studied at the same university, in the same environment. Responses got almost the same means with slight differences that are not statistically significant. This also show that instructors use different teaching strategies for both male and female students.

Conclusion

This study was an attempt to investigate the effects of word presentation modes on EFL vocabulary learners. The findings of the study confirmed that presentation modes of vocabulary learning, such as context, listening, using words in meaningful sentences, inferring and guessing meaning, checking the spelling of a word, reading and collecting lists affect learning vocabulary positively not only for beginners, but also for adults. Moreover, there were no statistically significance differences between male and female students in vocabulary learning difficulties among university EFL students.

Recommendation

Based on the Findings of the study, the researcher recommended the following:

- The researcher suggests that there should be more than one course for vocabulary learning at university.

- Instructors should motivate students to memorize as much as of vocabulary items to help them learn English language.
- Instructors should use other strategies in the lecture to help students strengthen their methods in learning vocabulary.
- The researcher suggests conducting similar studies at other universities.

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