

Mnemonics Strategies and its Effects on English Vocabulary Building on Sixth Grade Students in Mafrq Educational Directorate - a Case Study –

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Mafrq Educational Directorate || Ministry of Education || Jordan

Abstract: This case study examined the effect of mnemonic strategies on improving sixth grade students' English vocabulary building. This study examined into students' response and their point of view toward using mnemonic strategies in teaching English vocabularies. A chick list was built based on experts' notes and English language teachers' observations in Mafrq educational directorate, Jordan, during 2019-2020 the first academic semester and vocabulary lessons were conducted using mnemonic strategies depending on the curricula to examine the validity and reliability of the research tool. Data from the teacher's observation was analyzed and the results showed the highest mean range was stated as "Students make a mental map for a familiar place in their minds" with mean range (20). And the lowest mean range was stated as "Students decode words by numbers throughout giving each consonant sound a number" with mean range (5). Based on the results of the study the researcher recommends using mnemonic strategies to improve students' English vocabulary building.

Keywords: Mnemonic Strategies, Vocabulary Building, Sixth Grade.

استراتيجيات تقوية الذاكرة وأثرها على بناء المفردات لدى طلاب الصف السادس في مديرية تربية قصبه المفرق – دراسة حالة –

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مديرية تعليم قصبه المفرق || وزارة التربية والتعليم || الأردن

المخلص: هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد تأثير استراتيجيات تقوية الذاكرة في تحسين مهارة بناء المفردات في اللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلاب الصف السادس، وقد تفحصت هذه الدراسة استجابة ووجهات نظر الطلاب لاستخدام استراتيجيات تقوية الذاكرة في بناء مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية. وكانت الأداة عبارة عن قائمة رصد تم بناؤها بعد الأخذ برأي الخبراء وملاحظات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في مدارس مديرية قصبه المفرق- بالأردن، خلال الفصل الدراسي الأول من العام الدراسي 2019- 2020، تم إجراء دروس مفردات باستخدام استراتيجيات تقوية الذاكرة وفقاً للمناهج الدراسية للتأكد من صدق وثبات أداة الدراسة. تم تحليل البيانات بناء على ملاحظات المعلم وقد أظهرت النتائج أن "الطلاب يقومون بعمل خريطة ذهنية لأماكن مألوفة" جاءت بدرجة مرتفعة مع متوسط حسابي (20) بينما "الطلاب يقومون بفك تشفير الكلمات من خلال إعطاء كل حرف صامت رقماً" جاءت بدرجة منخفضة مع متوسط حسابي (5). وبناءً على نتائج الدراسة: أوصى الباحث باستخدام استراتيجيات تقوية الذاكرة في تدريس مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية لتحسين مهارة بناء المفردات في هذه اللغة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجيات تقوية الذاكرة، بناء المفردات، الصف السادس.

Introduction

Vocabulary amount gain is considered an important factor in English learning especially for students in the medium stages. This importance comes from the interrelationship between vocabulary and other skills in language learning. Adding to that, vocabulary is considered an essential component in English as a second language acquiring because vocabulary amount reflects students competency not only in the curricula but he can also function these vocabularies in his daily life.

The amount of vocabulary gain is an important factor in acquiring a second language and is considered as one of the most important components of communication and language learning (McKeown & Curtis, 2014). Thus, researches have proved that there is a relationship between the amount of vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension and grammar. Furthermore, vocabulary is an essential component that links the four language skills which includes reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Foil & Alber, 2002). Vocabulary is defined as "a language component that links the four language skills including listening, speaking, reading, and writing in learning a foreign language" (Rouhani & Purgharib, 2013: 41). Adding to that, vocabulary mastery includes the meaning, the spoken and written form, the grammatical behavior, and word derivation, the connotation and association of the word (Thornbury, 2002). Therefore, the larger students' base of vocabulary will help to bridge the gap in their English language learning struggle based on the strong relationship between students' vocabulary base and other skills in learning English as a second language.

In spite of the importance of learning vocabulary and its relations with other skills in learning English as a second language, teachers are not aware of different vocabulary teaching strategies in teaching vocabulary. (Harmon, Hedrick & Fox, 2000) emphasized that Some teachers still use traditional strategies which are not adequate for the purpose of teaching vocabulary and storing these vocabularies in the long-term memory such as listing vocabulary, filling in the blanks or matching are not useful ways of learning vocabulary because these methods don't involve a personal connection or involvement with vocabulary for the purpose of memorizing them. Another method teachers use to teach vocabulary is by asking students to use dictionaries but this method of teaching is not adequate because dictionary definitions and context sentences are not effective methods for providing a well understanding of a word and it could cause a misunderstanding of words definitions (McKeown, 1985). Using the traditional methods in teaching vocabulary is considered the main reason behind students' giving up learning English as a second language and affect students not to integrate the link between their previous information and new information item (Latiff Azmi et al, 2016).

Therefore, mnemonic strategy of training the mind and storing the vocabulary in the long-term memory revealed the increase of vocabulary size (Asyiah, 2017). Because of the importance of vocabulary in learning English language and its interconnected relationship with the four skills in English language learning memory strategy which categorized under the direct learning strategy according to Oxford's

(1990) taxonomy which stated that mnemonic, is one of the most useful strategies in the vocabulary learning process are exceptionally powerful mental tools. They contain activities for remembering and regaining the new information such as acronyms, key words, images etc. students by recalling mnemonic devices can recall large pieces of information and researches found that students who use mnemonic techniques on the form of characteristics, steps, stages, parts, phases, etc have increased their tests marks up to 77% (Latiff Azmi et al, 2016). Furthermore, using mnemonic strategies in English language learning increase vocabulary amount which will reflect on English language competence not in school curricula only and the student will function the vocabulary he has learnt in his daily life (DeLashmutt, 2007).

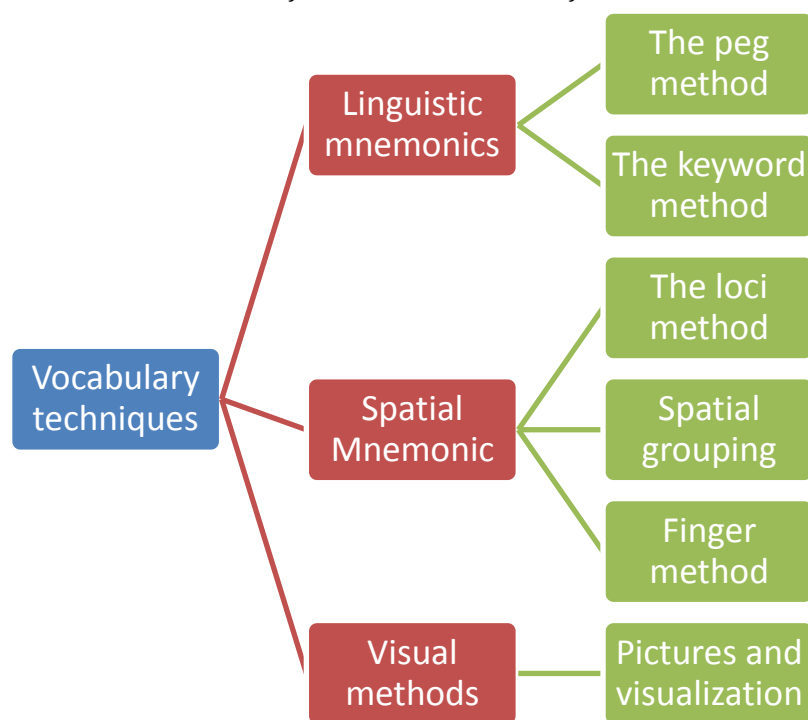


Figure (1). Classification of mnemonic mental learning strategies (Oxford: 1990)

Each mnemonic mental learning strategy contain tools which help students to store and retrieve this vocabularies in English as a second language learning process in figure (1) description of popular mnemonic techniques and system

Table (1). Descriptions of Popular Mnemonic Techniques and Systems

Mnemonic	Description
Link method	Making a chain by interactive visual imagery connection. Then, Joining item 1 with item 2 and so on. Thus, regaining one item in the list leads to the next item.
Method of loci	First, a mental map for a familiar place is set in the mind such as the house. Then imagination is used to store list items at different locations throughout the palace. Students can retrieved vocabulary by "walking" through the house.
Peg system	.a list of tangible objects in a specific order (e.g., <i>one</i> is a twist <i>two</i> is a hat, <i>three</i> is a louse) is learned. Then, visual imagination by combining objects together to be remembered with the peg items.

Mnemonic	Description
Keyword	.First, to find a keyword that sounds like the unfamiliar word (e.g. "teacher" Then imagery joins the keyword with the definition of the unfamiliar word (an image of a "school"
Phonetic system	Decoding words by numbers throughout giving each consonant sound a number e.g (1 _ d, 2 _ l, 3 _ t etc.). Then numbers can be .function as words, and using vowels when necessary. For example 321 can be remembered as "taladee."
Acronyms	Creating a new word by the first letter in listing words. For .example, the colors' names (white, orange, red, blue yellow, pink) can be remembered as WORBYP. Each letter serves as a reclamation cue for the target items.
Acrostics	The first letters in a list of words serve as the first letters in a new sentence. For example, students' names in the class can be remembered as WORBYP Walter, Omar, Ruba, Baha'a Yusuf, Peter. Each letter works as retrieval clue.
Songs Stories Rhyme Words	.information can be remembered by joining with songs or stories can also be written to remember specific pieces of information (e.g., c before e except after d).

Review of related literature

(Asyiah, 2017)

The study emphasized on the importance of vocabulary learning in teaching English as a second language and the influence of teaching strategies in vocabulary mastering. a mix method design was employed to one English teacher and 30 junior high school students to expose the problems being investigated. The results showed that both teacher and students have positive reaction on vocabulary teaching and learning. Concerning strategies. The study also showed that there is a significant relationship between students' vocabulary learning strategy and their vocabulary mastery.

(Goundar, 2015)

The study pointed to the vocabulary challenges that foreign language learners encounter during the process of learning. The study reviewed relative literature to realize the implication of the teachers and students understanding of relevant literature for the study. The concepts in the relevant studies helped in data analyzing and discussed different strategies in vocabulary teaching and also suggest recommendation and conclude further research implications.

(Alqahtani, 2015)

The study emphasized different types of vocabulary and its importance in learning English as a foreign language. The study provided also some strategies in vocabulary teaching, it summarize some techniques that English teachers use as well as teaching English.

(Malpique & Simon, 2019)

The study examined an evidence-based self regulated approach to develop ninth-grade argumentative writing. The study was applied in tow Portuguese classrooms. The model of the study was designed on the use of mnemonic strategies to support instructions. The findings of the study showed improvement in writing quality, organizing and spontaneous planning in students' national examination after 15 weeks of adapting the strategies.

(Fasih et al, 2018)

The study examined the effect of mnemonic vocabulary teaching to improve content vocabulary learning in EFL classrooms by examining how mnemonic vocabulary improves the comprehension and learning of the vocabulary. The study sample consisted of 256 third year senior high school students from 6 senior high schools in Zanjan (Iran) through a multistage cluster random sampling Method. A questionnaire was design to determine the effects of a mnemonic vocabulary intervention on content vocabulary learning. the results demonstrated that by eliminating the covariance factor of the pretest, mnemonic vocabulary instruction improved content vocabulary learning for students. The use of keyword mnemonics as a means to differentiate instruction is an educational result that can assist teachers.

Statement of the problem:

Vocabulary learning and vocabulary gain is considered an important factor in learning English because its interconnected with listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English language as stated in (Thornbury, 2002) study. learning students vocabulary in traditional methods of teaching cause students' less interest in learning English as a second language and lead them to give-up learning because of the no adequate methods of teaching as stated in (Latiff Azmi et al, 2016). Meanwhile, other studies emphasized on the positive impact of using mnemonic strategies in vocabulary teaching showed a positive influence on functioning new vocabulary not only in the class room but also in the students' daily life as stated in (DeLashmutt, 2007). Furthermore, teachers who used mnemonic strategies in teaching vocabulary raised students' achievements in national exams by 77% as stated in (Latiff Azmi et al, 2016). Therefore, this strategy is not widely used and few teachers know this strategy and previous studies focus more on universities' students rather than students in the basic stages. For that reasons, this research aimed to enlighten teachers about the reliability of using this strategy in teaching English vocabulary. Also, there are

not case studies about using mnemonic strategies in teaching English language vocabulary of teachers who teach English as a second language for basic stages in Jordan.

Question of the study:

- 1- Is there any relation between mnemonic strategies in teaching vocabulary and improving vocabulary building for sixth grade students from their teacher's observation?

Objectives of the study:

- 1- To identify the importance of mnemonic in the educational process.
- 2- To improve students vocabulary building by using mnemonic strategies.
- 3- To verify the relation between mnemonic and vocabulary building.

Importance of the study:

The importance of this study comes from shedding some lights on the importance of using mnemonic as a strategy in teaching English vocabularies to function these vocabularies in daily life and to store them in the long-last memory.

- 1- To improve sixth grade vocabulary building by using mnemonic strategies and to inform them the importance of these strategies.
- 2- To create awareness for English language teachers about the importance of using mnemonic strategies in English vocabulary learning and to improve English learners' in using these strategies.
- 3- To provide researchers with a good feedback about mnemonic strategies and its effect on building students' vocabulary.

Limitation of the Study:

This study was applied during the first semester 2019/2012 academic year. The participants of the study are sixth grade students in the Marfaq Educational Directorate a Jordanian governorate located to the North-East of Amman it has a population of 196000 (International Labor Organization, 2016).

Methodology

This research aimed to identify the effect of mnemonic strategies on vocabulary building for sixth grade students the participant of the study through their English teacher observation. The teacher has been teaching the selected students and through experts' notes and his observation a chick list has been built to observe students while using mnemonic strategies during practicing English vocabulary learning.

Validity: The chick list of the study was established by asking experts to have a look and giving notes about it. SPSS program has been used to analyze the results.

Reliability: The research tool was applied and reapplied on different groups in order to make sure to have the same results during the first semester in 2019/2020 scholastic year.

Table (2). Scores of the teacher's observation chick list

Answers	High	Medium	Low
	1	2	3

Table (3). Analysis of the teacher's observation Chick list

No	Students Response	Mean	Frequencies	Level
1	Students make a chain by interactive visual imagery connection	16.6	10	High
2	Students make a mental map for a familiar place in their minds	20	12	High
3	Students make a list of tangible objects in a specific order	15	9	High
4	Students find a keyword that sounds like the unfamiliar word then imagery joins the keyword with the definition of the unfamiliar word	11.6	7	High
5	Students decode words by numbers throughout giving each consonant sound a number	5	3	Low
6	Students create a new word by the first letter in listing words	13.3	8	High
7	Students decode the first letters in a list of words serve as the firs letters in a new sentence	8.3	5	Medium
8	Students remember information by joining with songs or stories can also be written to remember specific pieces of information	10	6	Medium

Findings and discussion

Results indicate that the highest ranges are stated as:

The highest range is stated as "Students make a mental map for a familiar place in their minds" with mean range (20). The researcher justifies this result because mental map connected with familiar objects is easy to be memorized. Also, "Students make a chain by interactive visual imagery connection" with a mean range (16.6) the researcher justifies this result for the interactive visual imagery with memory. While, "Students make a list of tangible objects in a specific order" came high with a mean range (15). And "Students create a new word by the first letter in listing words" came high with mean range (13.3). Also, "Students find a keyword that sounds like the unfamiliar word then imagery joins the keyword with the definition of the unfamiliar word" came high with a mean range (11.6). Students remember information by joining with songs or stories can also be written to remember specific pieces of

information " Came medium with a mean range (10). And "Students decode the first letters in a list of words serve as the first letters in a new sentence" came medium with mean range (8.3)

While the lowest range is stated as "Students decode words by numbers throughout giving each consonant sound a number" with mean range (5). The researcher justifies this result because students feel confused when using numbers and codes.

Self-reflections:

Based on the research results the researcher recommends:

- 1- Using mnemonic strategies in teaching vocabulary.
- 2- Enlightened English teachers about the importance of mnemonic strategies in the educational process in general and improving vocabulary building in specific
- 3- Providing the decision makers in the Ministry of education about the results of this study to put mnemonic on its priorities while teaching vocabulary.
- 4- Encouraging researchers to do more researches about mnemonic strategies and its relation with other skills in teaching English language.

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