The Impact of Using Visual Materials in Enhancing Learning English Vocabulary at Libyan Preparatory Schools

أثر استخدام الوسائل المرئية في تحسين تعلم مفردات اللغة الانجليزية في المدارس الاعدادية الليبية

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Abstract

Visual aids make learning new vocabulary easier for English as Second Language ESL students because students memorize and remember the words in easy ways. Learning vocabulary has been recognized as a key factor in learning any language. Therefore, different techniques were used to teach vocabulary at different school levels and fields including English as a foreign language learners *EFL*. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of learning new vocabulary words for preparatory Libyan students. The Study requires the use of the Analytical Approach by way of collecting its data through distributing a questionnaire to (90) Libyan students from different schools at Sebha, together with a vocabulary test for two groups of the students. The findings have shown that the use of visual aids in the process of learning was highly effective and that the Libyan EFL learners have positive perceptions towards using visual aids in learning English language vocabulary.

Key Words: Visual Materials, Teaching, ESL Learners

الملخص

يساعد استخدام الوسائل البصرية المختلفة في الفصل الدراسي الطلاب على فهم معنى الكلمات بطريقة فعالة. تجعل الوسائل المرئية تعلم مفردات جديدة أسهل لطلاب اللغة الثانية لأن الطلاب يحفظون الكلمات ويتذكرونها بطرق سهلة. تم التعرف على مفردات التعلم كعامل رئيسي في تعلم أي لغة. لدلك تم استخدام تقنيات مختلفة لتدريس المفردات في مستويات ومجالات مدرسية مختلفة بما في ذلك اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية. الهدف من الدراسة هو التحقق من مدى فاعلية استخدام الوسائل المرئية في تعلم طلبة المدارس الليبية مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية. تتطلب الدراسة استخدام المنهج التحليلي ويتم ذلك من خلال تجميع بياناتها عن طريق توزيع استمارة الاستبيان إلى تسعين طالبا ليبيا من مختلف المدارس الأعدادية في مدينة سبها لجمع البيانات وتم إجراء اختبار لمجموعتين من الطلاب. أظهرت النتائج أن استخدام الوسائل المرئية في التعلم كان فعالا لحد كبير. كما أظهرت النتائج أن متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية الليبيين كلغة أجنبية لديهم تصورات إيجابية تجاه استخدام الوسائل البصرية في تعلم مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الوسائل البصرية، تعلم المفردات، تعليم المفردات، متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية.

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INTRODUCTION

Printed visual aids such as posters, and cartoon strips can be used in a second language classroom to increase students' comprehension. Arnhein (1994) and Chanlin (1998) stated that visual learning tools uniquely enhance students' cognitive understanding of concepts. Allen (1983), explained how useful to use the picture in order to help students understand the meaning of the word. He has noted that visual aids are available in many forms. Using a variety of visual clues such as encyclopedias, newspapers, and magazines increases students' understanding of difficult new words. Shurm & Glisan (1994) recommended the use of visuals for introducing new vocabulary, which is an effective tool for learning. It assists students to strengthen and reinforce what they have learned. The Libyan English language program involves a short period of time in which students have to learn English from elementary schools to high schools. Many Libyan English teachers rarely use visual aids in the classroom.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

Q 1- Is there any significant difference between teaching vocabulary by using visual aids and teaching them by using traditional methods?

Q 2-To what extent do teachers use visual aids in English as a foreign language classroom with young learners?

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Learning and teaching vocabulary has been developed years ago and it has become an integral part of modern teaching. It does not obtain attention in the Libyan schools. Most of the teachers lack the basic knowledge of using visual aids in teaching the new vocabulary words. This can be effective in dealing with learners understanding of the meaning of the new vocabulary. The lack of knowledge of the effective use of visual aids and its important role affect teachers' performance. As a result, teachers fail to play an important role in helping students to learn new vocabulary words. This problem has been taken as a problem for investigation in this research. Mastering this issue will play an important role to make teaching and learning process effective and meaningful.

Methods Followed For Collecting Data

This study is an experimental type of investigation. Therefore, its nature dictates and shapes the questionnaire and the vocabulary test as methods for collecting data.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vocabulary is an important part of language teaching. To make communications with others easily, we should know the vocabulary of foreign language. It should be taught in a special context to become easier for the students to remember and use the words. Visual aids help students to understand the meaning of the word by showing them the objects. It also, helps teachers to give emphasis on what is being taught and presented.

One main concern in teaching second language vocabulary is developing effective methods. Davies and Pears (2003) stated that the new words should not be taught in isolation and they should be taught in context to understand their meaning correctly. The context should also be clear enough to acquire the right meaning of the word. More recently, pictures demonstrate

the meaning of words for learners as well as some computer programs that include transcript to pronounce the words more easily.

Nation (1990) explained that the meaning can be illustrated to the learners by using pictures, real objects, performing an action, photographs, blackboard drawings or diagram. Shrum and Glisan (1994) stated different methods for teaching vocabulary new words in context and teachers should use visual aids to present these words. Danan (1992) and Horn (1998) mentioned that the use of different visual materials by the teachers increases students' interaction and motivation in classroom and it can be helpful for teachers too. As for Levin and Mayer (1993), visual materials increase students' learning as there is more emphasis for them. Some teachers have concluded that there are benefits of using visual aids in teaching vocabulary like Koren (1997) states that learning vocabulary words by using pictures can be easier and memorable than learning them without pictures. Therefore, most teachers use photo dictionaries to increase the extent of vocabulary skills of the learners.

METHODS

The sample of the present study comprises ninety male and female students who were randomly selected from different schools from Sebha, Libya: (Oqba Bin Nafaa, Tareq Bin Ziad, and Alqods) preparatory schools. Their ages ranged between 12- 15 years old with elementary level of language proficiency. All students are nonnative speakers of English with their native language Arabic. The experiment included fifty English language teachers from these different schools who have been teaching English for more than five years. The teachers were asked to complete a questionnaire with some questions focusing on the use of visual materials in the classroom.

The aim of the questionnaire was to examine the extent of teachers' use of visual aids in the classroom. The questionnaire has two sections. The first part consists of 10 items which deal with the extent teachers' use visual materials. The second part has 20 questions, which asked about how far the use of visual materials can enhance vocabulary learning. During the administration of questionnaire, respondents were informed the purpose and how they fill in the questionnaire. They were also informed to fill in based on what actually happened in their own classrooms and about the use of visual materials in teaching vocabulary. The questionnaire handed to the teachers has both close-ended and open-ended parts in which the respondents gives answers about the use of visual materials in presenting vocabulary words.

As for the process of data collection methods, the following procedures were followed: Concerning the questionnaire, the researcher gained permission from the teachers to see the students. Afterwards the researcher met the students and notified them about the main aim of the study. Before distributing the questionnaire to the participants, they were told that the data obtained from them will be used for research purposes only and will be confidential. The questionnaires were given to the students in the class and the main instructions had been clarified for them. Items, that were not clear or not understandable, were translated into the participants' mother tongue to ensure that they understand what they are required to do. The researcher was around to help the students and to make things clear. The participants filled in the questionnaire within a few minutes.

PROCEDURE

Different procedures were followed to collect data with different instruments. Firstly, a preand post-test were done to check the students understanding of the meaning of vocabulary words. Then, a questionnaire was conducted the following day. After giving their consent, all students took a pre-test to determine their level of English proficiency and then students were divided into two groups, each group had forty-five students and the direct method was used. The researcher explained the meaning of the new vocabulary words that the passage contains by using different types of visual aids such as photographs, real objects, slides, and charts for one group (Experimental Group) and the next group (Controlled Group) learned the new vocabulary words without visual aids the teacher provided the definition of the words only. The words were the same for both groups. The only difference was the way of explanation. The number of words was the same in both groups which is ten words during each session. The class met four times a week. The test was designed based on the students' vocabulary learning. At the beginning of the next tutoring class, they took another vocabulary test to evaluate and investigate how they learn new vocabulary.

During the first session, the researcher distributed handouts to their subjects; the handouts contained four short stories based on the students' level of proficiency. The researcher read a text for students in group A and they tried to convey the meaning of the new words in rather simple words in the second language (English) or paraphrasing them. The researchers certainly used slides and printed photos to help the students get the meaning of the new words that were there in the text, whereas the students in group B learned the new words just by paraphrasing in the second language (English). The researcher did not use real (pictures, slides, etc.) with this group.

As previously stated, the present study applied a questionnaire which was used in this study to collect data from teachers to investigate the use of visual aids in teaching vocabulary words and its impact on students' understanding. The teachers gave information about the extent they use visual aids and variation of their use.

FINDINGS

This study was based on a vocabulary test and a questionnaire as instruments for data collection. These instruments were structured because they were based on different instructional techniques and routines conducted and designed for the study. Investigating students' problem in vocabulary and seeking the solution for these problems was the final goal of the researcher. The questionnaires were used to collect data from both teachers and students. All instruments practiced focused on the importance of using visual aids to explain the meaning of the vocabulary words. In addition, the techniques and strategies that teachers used to explain the meaning of the vocabulary words by using visual aids in the classroom were considered. Both classes were observed equally during the English language instruction.

The first part of the discussion starts with the analyses of the results gathered from the questionnaires. The total number of the teachers who taught English vocabulary for first and second grade was 30 teachers while the number of teachers in the third grade was 20 teachers. They were asked if they used visual materials in their classes. All of them answered that they used them. The only difference in their answers is that they use them with variation according to their students' levels and to the variance of lesson. The data table show their answers:

Table 1: Students' Responses on the Extent of Teachers' Use of Visual Materials in Classroom

No	Item	n Response													
		Never		ever Rarely		Total		Sometimes		Frequentl		Always		Total	
		0				7.70				У		<u> </u>			
			%	Nº %		Nº %		Nº %		Nº %		Nº %		Nº %	
1	Real Objects	12	10	36	30	48	40	43	35	10	7.5	1 8	15. 3	28	23. 8
2	Pictures	19	14	45	36	64	50	42	33	9	7.5	2	1.7	11	9.2
3	Flash Cards	42	34	32	27. 5	74	61. 5	17	14.5	12	10	16	13. 2	28	23. 2
4	Post Cards	56	46	20	16. 7	76	63	25	20	10	8.3	7	5.8	17	15
5	Black Board	35	29	45	37	80	66. 6	20	16.5	9	7.5	8	6.5	17	13. 5
6	Computer	50	41	40	34	90	75	15	12.5	17	14. 2	17	14. 2	34	28. 3
7	Gestures	27	22. 5	34	28. 3	61	50. 8	23	19.2	22	18. 3	14	11. 7	36	30
8	Video	44	36. 7	25	20. 8	69	57. 5	36	30	25	20	35	29	60	49
9	Television	20	16. 5	34	28	54	44. 5	25	20	9	7.5	10	5.8	19	13
10	Graphics	38	31. 7	32	26. 7	70	58. 3	28	23.3	9	7.5	13	10. 8	22	18. 3

No =Number of Respondents

Teachers use of real objects to teach vocabulary accounted for (40%) of students responded rarely (35%) sometimes and (23.8%) stated that the teachers frequently use real objects to teach English vocabulary. The findings indicate that teachers rarely use real objects to teach vocabulary words.

The second item in the questionnaire shows the extent of teachers use pictures to teach vocabulary. (50%) of the students said rarely, (30%) sometimes and 9.2% frequently. As it was accounted in the literature review, using pictures to teach vocabulary helps the students to interact with each other and to express their feelings toward the use of pictures. As showed in Table 1 above, flashcards were used to teach vocabulary. From the student responses (61.5%) said rarely, (14.5%) sometimes and (23.2%) frequently that teacher use flashcards. Similarly,(63%) of respondents were rarely for post cards used, (20%) sometimes and (15%) frequently. The questionnaire was used to achieve information about blackboard. Students referred that (66.6%) rarely (16.5%) sometimes and (13.5%) frequently. As for computer using to teach vocabulary, (75%)of the students answered rarely, (12.5%) sometimes and (28.3%) frequently. The responses of the students for the use of blackboard and computer revealed that teachers use them rarely for teaching the meaning of vocabulary. The use of television was indicated by the student that (50.8%) rarely, (19.2%) sometimes and (30%) frequently. Regarding graphics, (58.3%) said rarely, (23.3%) sometimes and (18.3%) frequently, as well as video was (44.5%) rarely, (20%) sometimes and (13%) frequently.

Table 2: Teachers Response on the Extent of their Use of Visual Materials in Classroom

No			Response													
	Item	Never		er Rarely		Tot	Total		Sometimes		Frequently			Always		tal
		N° %		Nº %		N° %		N° %		Nº %			Nº %		Nº	%
1	Real Objects			3	37. 5	3	37.5	4	50	1	12. 5	1		12.5	1	12. 5
2	Picture	1	12.5	2	25	3	37.5	2	25	2	25	12.	5	12.5	3	37. 5
3	Flash Cards	2	25	5	62. 5	7	87.5	1	12.5	1	12. 5				1	12. 5
4	Post Cards	4	50	2	25	6	75	1	12.5							
5	Black Board			2	25	2	25	1	12.5			1		12.5	1	12. 5
6	Computer	5	62.5			5	62.5	2	25	3	37. 5				3	37. 5
7	Gestures			2	25	2	25	5	62.5			2		25	2	25
8	Video	4	50			4	50	2	25	3	37. 5	1		12.5	4	50
9	Television	2	25			2	50	3	37.5	1	12. 5	2		25	3	37. 5
10	Graphics	4	50	2	25	6	75	3	37.5	2	25				2	25

N°=Number of Respondents

Table 2 shows to what extent teachers use visual materials to teach vocabulary words. Although a large number of teachers indicated that they use real objects sometimes.. The above Table shows that flashcards, postcards and blackboard are used rarely by teachers. The students' responses in the first table and teachers in the second table for the three items have similarities that word flashcards, postcards, and blackboard were used rarely by teachers. This was also confirmed by teachers while they use visual aids to teach vocabulary words. The responses of the teachers illustrated that (25%) said rarely and (62.5%) replied sometimes for the use of gestures. The results in both tables show that (50%) of the students and teachers used gestures rarely to teach the meaning of vocabulary. The findings show that teachers use sometimes certain figures to explain the meaning of words. So, the overall findings from the data analysis with different tools indicate that computer and television were used rarely. Video and gesture used frequently. From the results obtained in the discussion above, teachers use certain types of visual materials to teach vocabulary: Postcards, flashcards, pictures, real objects, computers, television, and different types of visual materials utilized by teachers to teach the meaning of vocabulary words.

Table 3: Responses of the Students Regarding the Extent Visual Materials Enhance their Vocabulary Learning

No	Item	Response													
		Never		Rarely		Total		Sometime s		Frequentl y		Always		Total	
		N° %		Nº %		Nº %		Nº %		Nº %		N° %		Nº %	
1	Real Objects	5	3	32	27	37	3 0	28	23	18	15	30	28	48	43
2	Picture	4	2.3	20	16	23	1 9	37	30	40	35	25	20	65	55
3	Flash Cards	2 5	20	30	25	55	4 5	44	30	25	21	15	12 .5	40	33. 5
4	Post Cards	1 5	12. 5	16	13	31	2 5. 5	35	29	30	25	27	23	44	48
5	Black Board	2	25	2	25	4	5 0	1	12.5	4	30			4	30
6	Computer	4	50			4	5 0	1	12.5	1	12.5	1	12 .5	2	25
7	Gestures			1	12 .5	1	1 2. 5	2	25	4	30	2	25	6	55
8	Video	1	12. 5	1	12 .5	2	2 5	4	30	2	25	1	12 .5	3	27. 5
9	Televisions	2	25	1	12 .5	3	2 7. 5	2	25	1	12.5	2	25	3	37. 5
10	Graphics	1	12. 5	2	25	3	3 7. 5	4	30			2	25	2	25

N°. of R. =Number of Respondents

Table 3 in the questionnaire shows the degree to which real objects enhance vocabulary learning. (30%) of the student respondents indicated rarely, (23%) sometimes and (43%) frequently. On the other hand, teachers replied the same answer where (12.5%) rarely, (50%) sometimes and (37.5%) frequently that the uses of real objects facilitate the process of learning vocabulary.

From this point we can indicate that a large number of (40%) of students replied that the use of real objects enhances their vocabulary learning frequently. A number of teachers also support this idea in which accounted for about (37.5%) of respondents. Both teachers and students indicated that using real objects in teaching vocabulary helps students in reaching clear ideas about the meaning of vocabulary. Another try was made to explore the extent of using pictures to enhance vocabulary learning. (19%) of the students replied as rarely, (30%) sometimes and the larger number (55%) said frequently that using of pictures enhance students' vocabulary learning. Teachers also said (12.5%) rarely, (37.5%) sometimes and (50%) frequently in their responses. According to this finding we can say that pictures

facilitate students' vocabulary learning. A large number of teachers and students reported that pictures enhance their vocabulary learning.

The tests were written by experts in language teaching, they have a high validity. Moreover, these tests were selected for the purpose of the research. The researchers were asked to teach consecutively vocabulary words for forty five minutes. The students' attendance was counted as a bonus for their class participation. At the end of each tutoring session, both groups must take similar vocabulary tests. These tests were based on different techniques conducted and designed before the beginning of the study. The result of the test prepared in table 1.

Table 1 Vocabulary Test Result

Subject	T1	T2	T3	<u>T4</u>
1 (Group A)	18	19	18	19
2 (Group A)	19	18	19	20
3 (Group B)	18	18	19	18
4 (Group B)	19	18	20	18

The row score was 20

The calculation of mean for group A and group B are:

Group A x = 18.75

Group B x=18.5

Table 2 indicates the test results after one day, which was held on the next day of tutoring session.

Table 2 Vocabulary Test Result

Subject	T1	T2	T3	<u>T4</u>
1 (Group A	A) 17	17	16	18
2 (Group	A) 18	17	17	15
3 (Group]	B) 16	17	15	15
4 (Group]	B) 18	14	15	16

The calculation of mean for group A and group B are:

Group A x=16.87

Group B x = 15.75

To answer the research question and to investigate the effect of visual aids on learning vocabulary in each group, a pre-test and post-test were taken to explore the significant difference between the two groups A and B. Based on the descriptive statistics of both tests, it has been revealed that both groups almost had the same mean score. The mean score had been showed that there's no significant difference between them in the pretest. The data in

table 1 showed that their performance almost the same in the test. The descriptive statistics of the posttest was revealed that the experimental group using visual aids in learning vocabulary compared to the controlled group. Table 2 shows that there is a significant difference between the two groups in the posttest. Moreover, this study showed that the use of visual materials improved the vocabulary learning of the Libyan students. Also, help learners gain more words . The results of this study corresponds with Raims (1983) who mentioned that using pictures and real objects are helpful for learning vocabulary. Moreover, Cunning Worth, A (1984) concentrated on the use of different kinds of visual aids enhance students learning of vocabulary words.

RESULTS, DISCUSSIONS and Conclusion

As suggested by Gardner's (1983), not all students learn in the same way, some learn better by watching, some learn better by listening and so on. Therefore using visual aids in teaching is always helpful for learners. Harmer (2001) also stated that using pictures in the class makes the lessons appealing. Moreover, different related pictures and videos provide the opportunities to learners to be engaged more with the lessons. Visual aids motivate and draw learners' attention and provide a sense of stimulus. Teaching vocabulary words through visual aids is attractive especially for young learners. Also, teachers felt that visual aids attract students' attention and deepen their understanding of words.

The result of our investigation is also parallel with Budden (2004) as he mentioned the good effects of flash cards on learning new words. In addition, the findings were equal to Allen (1983), Arnhein (1994), and Chanlin (1998) in that the visual learning tools uniquely enhance students' cognitive understanding of vocabulary. The participants in experimental group who received visual instruction were able to develop understanding of vocabulary successfully than the learners in control group. As a result, this study shows that the use of visual aids in teaching vocabulary can be more effective in acquiring a second language.

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APPENDIX

Multiple-choice Post-test Task of Vocabulary

- 1- The word allocate means:
 - A- assign
 - B- design
 - C- defuse

The answer is A

- 2- The word project means:
 - A. predict
 - B. present
 - C. estimate

The answer is C

- 3- The word accompanied means:
- A -converged
- B- coordinated
- C. co-occurred

The answer is C

- 4- The word canopy means:
 - A- lack of sunlight
 - B- lack of oxygen
 - C- lack of water

The answer is A

- 5- The word beef means:
 - A- the meat of lamb
 - B- the meat of cow
 - C- the meat of fish

The answer is B

- 6- The word grilled means:
 - A. cooked under high heat
 - B. cooked under low heat
 - C. cooked at the oven

The answer is A

- 7- The word limerick means:
 - A. a short song
 - B. a short poem
 - C. a short story

The answer is B

- 8- The word pilot means:
- A- a person who works at school
- B- a person who works at garden
- C- a person who works at airport

The answer is C

- 9. The word litter bin means:
 - A- a place to freeze food
 - B- a place to put rubbish
 - C- a place to save clothes

The answer is B

- 10- The word impolite means:
 - A- with respect for other people
 - B- without respect for other people
 - C- with confidence to other people

The answer is B

- 11- The word trapped means:
- A- not able to go out
- B- able to get in
- C- able to make it

The answer is A

- 12- The word report means:
 - a. To go outside
 - b. To describe a person
 - To describe an event

The answer is C

- 13- The word printer means:
 - a- somebody who edits books
 - b- somebody who prints as a job
 - c- somebody who types articles

The answer is B

- 14- The word waiter means:
 - a- a person who works at hospital
 - b- a person who works at library
 - c- a person who serves food and drink in a restaurant or a cafe

The answer is C

- 15- The word volunteer means:
 - a- a person who does a job without pay
 - b- a person who does job with pay
 - c- a person who does not work

The answer is A

- 16- The subjects working mean:
 - a- things to learn at home
 - b- things to learn at school
 - c- things to play with

The answer is B

- 17- The word equipment means:
 - a- things needed for a job
 - b- a kind of sport
 - c- things to eat

The answer is A

- 18- The word cartoon means:
 - a- books to read
 - b- funny stories with small pictures
 - c- article about schools

The answer is B

- 19- The word passport means:
 - a- a kind of books to read
 - b- a special document which lets you visit other countries
 - c- a kind of food

The answer is B

- 20- The word jokes means:
 - a- a short article to read
 - b- an issue that is difficult to answer
 - c- Short funny stories

The answer is C