SJESR

*Sir Syed Journal of Education &
Social Research*

The Influence of Vocabulary Instructions to the Development of grade 9 ESL Learners' English Vocabulary Acquisition: A Phenomenological Study

* Dr. Zahid Ali, Associate Professor

** Ishtiaq Ahmed Kolachi, Assistant Professor

*** Rizwan Azam, Lecturer

Abstract

The goal of this study was to investigate methods for teaching English vocabulary to ninth-grade students in private schools in order to identify learning obstacles in the acquisition of vocabulary instruction and to propose suitable solutions. Hence, a phenomenological qualitative research approach was used to accomplish the goals of the study. This phenomenological analysis of classroom instruction provides important insights into the design of vocabulary-building exercises for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners and discusses several important considerations that must be taken into account. Children learning English as a second language who have a slower than average rate of vocabulary acquisition also have a more difficult time comprehending literature written at the ninth grade level. In-depth interviews with four ESL educators were recorded, transcribed, and evaluated thematically. The findings suggest that ESL educators are employing a wide range of methods to boost students' vocabulary in their lessons, but more research into the effectiveness of these methods is needed. This study confirmed the need of providing ongoing assistance to ESL learners as they work to increase their vocabulary. More research in these areas is needed to improve ELTs' vocabulary instruction, ESLs' vocabulary acquisition and understanding, as this study found that vocabulary training and other linguistically based interventions improved reading and education results for ESL students. Teachers also need to be familiar with and equipped to use contemporary methods of vocabulary instruction that take into account their students' abilities and background knowledge.

Keywords: Vocabulary Instructions, Vocabulary Acquisition, English as a Second Language, Grade 9 ESL Learners'

Introduction

The extensive research on children's vocabulary and its effect on related skills and general language abilities (e.g., decoding processing, comprehension) suggests that vocabulary plays a crucial role in the development of reading and writing skills (Dujardin, Auphan, Bailloud, Ecalle, & Magnan, 2021). Students' diverse backgrounds and their use of regional languages in routine life create a number of challenges and difficulties for language learning and teaching at the school level, including low reading comprehension, writing skills in the language learning subjects, and specifically vocabulary development (Rehan, Ali, & Mankash, 2022). Teachers of languages would do well to give serious thought to how they impart vocabulary knowledge to their students. Ideally, the method used will have multiple positive effects on the pupils' vocabulary development. The plan should help the students accomplish the set goals, but it should also give them something to look forward to doing. It needs to push kids, encouraging them to use their imagination and initiative as they acquire new words. Participation indicates that the information being presented is being received, comprehended, and used. Their comprehension and vocabulary expansion will benefit greatly from those methods (Sutrisna, 2021). Vocabulary knowledge is integral to reading and writing because it emerges naturally from the practice of reading's constituent activities in the company of parents, loved ones, and peers from the reader's immediate milieu (Pulido & Hambrick, 2008; Vadasy & Nelson, 2012). Alessi and Dwyer (2008) stated that pupils who have access to vocabulary assistance spend less time

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*   School of Education, American International Theism University Florida-USA.
      Email: drzahid.aly@aituedu.org

**   Department of Social Sciences, Mohammad Ali Jinnah University Karachi
      Email: ishtiaq.ahmed@jinnah.edu

***   College Education and Literacy Department, Govt. of Sindh. Email: rizwanphd@yahoo.com

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reading the newspaper. In addition, they claimed that engaging in vocabulary acquisition activities can increase reading speed independently of comprehension and that receiving vocabulary aid while reading appears to boost comprehension independently of speed. Vocabulary learning is often more important than grammar study for efficient communication.

Vocabulary instruction can be useless unless teachers can find a way to make learning new words interesting and engaging. Since there are more grammar-centric classes, students often don't get the attention they need to expand their vocabularies (Barani & Seyyedrezaie, 2013; Folse, 2010). Using a selected dictionary is a method of teaching new words. Researchers have found that this could be a problem for some students (Prichard, 2008). It goes on to say that several of the participants could have used the dictionary with more discretion. In addition to selective dictionary use, inferring meaning from the context is also included in communication education, allowing students to rely on the dictionary less frequently. Vocabulary instruction, according to Brown and Waring (2008), should be designed so that students encounter each word more frequently, as this increases the likelihood that the word will be learned, and should also be met subsequently after reading, as failure to do so causes word knowledge to decay. When students struggle to find the words they need to express themselves, they can feel helpless (Barani & Seyyedrezaie, 2013). To remedy this deficiency, we must first determine how many tools are available to the language learner for expanding his or her vocabulary. Teachers have a wide variety of methods at their disposal for fostering student vocabulary growth. One of the most difficult aspects of learning a new language is expanding one's vocabularies (Subon, 2016). Recent studies have found that teaching learners' phonological awareness and other instructional practices relevant to the Pakistani environment in the classroom can have a significant impact on their students' vocabulary development (Mankash, Khan, & Ali, 2023).

Research Objective

In order to identify learning issues in the acquisition of vocabulary instructions and provide appropriate solutions, it is necessary to conduct an investigation into the methods that are used to teach English vocabulary to students in the ninth grade who attend private schools. The goal of the study is to compile information about the teaching of vocabulary and the process of acquiring it among ninth-grade students. The primary purpose of this type of research is to have a conversation about the problem at hand with the participants (in this case, English language teachers), as well as to obtain insight via the process of systematic investigation. In addition to that, the purpose of this research was to generalize the findings of the analysis based on the experience and knowledge of the respondents.

Research Question

What strategies do 9th grade English language teachers employ to teach their students English vocabulary, and how do the students learn it?

Literature review

In this study, we analysed research on how children in ninth grade benefited from vocabulary instruction and how they learned new words. Studies on teaching and learning vocabularies have primarily been undertaken with pupils from low socioeconomic backgrounds, reflecting the situation in Pakistan. On the basis of their research, Elleman, Oslund, Griffin, and Myers (2019) came up with five suggestions. There should be an emphasis on (a) developing semantic networks, (b) teaching students how to learn new words on their own (through morphological analysis), (c) increasing students' opportunities to use these words in conversation and writing, and (d) creating a stimulating and language-rich classroom. It was discovered by Blachowicz and Fisher (2004) that teachers might take on all-encompassing strategies for teaching vocabulary. Wordplay is a great way to increase your vocabulary and appreciation for language. Second, provide in-depth, direct instruction to build essential vocabulary. Third, help children develop techniques for autonomy, and fourth, encourage their reading through a varied curriculum. Teachers' abilities to explain explicitly the reasoning and mental processes involved in successful reading comprehension are emphasized in the direct explanation approach, while these same abilities are emphasized in the transactional strategy instruction, with an additional emphasis on teachers' abilities to facilitate student discussions in which students collaborate to form joint interpretations of text in order to acquire a deeper understanding of comprehension. To get to the 95% comprehension criterion, Prichard (2008) discovered that students often rely on a selective dictionary, but also employ other methods. He went on to say that consulting a dictionary wasn't the only way to learn a passage's vocabulary, and that context clues or skipping

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through technical terms that weren't necessary could be more effective. Reading success depends on a number of factors, but Vadasy and Nelson (2012) showed that phonological awareness is on par with vocabulary growth in terms of importance. It's crucial to emphasize that expanding one's vocabulary aids one's ability to think and express oneself. There is a whole scientific field dedicated to the study and use of it, and it forms an integral element of theorizing (Spencer, Quinn, & Wagner, 2017).

In a study conducted in a culturally and linguistically diverse setting in Pakistan, Ali, Mankash, and Ullah (2022) found that students gave high ratings to intensive reading strategies like reading books about topics that piqued their interest, repeating lessons through rhyming words, and repeating new words while listening to classmates and teachers. Vocabulary instruction in English should take into account the individual needs and cultural context of each student in order to help them acquire a greater command of the language and more effectively put it to use in their daily lives. The research also confirmed that undergraduate ESL/EFL students need lexical knowledge support for vocabulary learning. Because English is so ubiquitous, it is crucial to equip ESL students with a rich vocabulary to ensure they achieve high levels of proficiency in the language. Reading comprehension is also dependent on knowing a large amount of slang and idioms (Ricketts, Lervg, Dawson, Taylor, & Hulme, 2020). Learning English grammar, according to Thornburry (2002), won't help you speak the language any better, but simply being exposed to new terms will expand your vocabularies. It has had a lot of sway, probably because it is said that knowing these words grants access to around 80% of the words in any written text, which boosts motivation because the words learned may be seen to have a demonstrable early return on investment. Unfortunately, it relies on outdated word counts and is undergoing revisions at present (Carter & Nunan, 2002). Dujardin, et al. (2021) evaluated the benefits of new technologies for assessing and teaching vocabulary in a study focused on children's vocabulary assessment and stimulation. The importance of vocabulary in learning to read and write, as well as the variation in how children learn new words from their preschool experiences, made this an obvious necessity.

Methodology

The research was conducted using a qualitative research design (Creswell, 2014), and the phenomenology method, which is one of the qualitative research techniques, was utilized. This method investigates people's thoughts, perceptions, experiences, views, and overall understanding, as well as provides answers to related questions. A descriptive inquiry into the contents of conscious phenomena, including both the objective and the subjective aspects of this phenomenon can be defined as this phenomenon. It is beneficial in acquiring and analysing the research study based on the responses provided by the respondent. For the purpose of this investigation, in-depth information was gathered from the respondents, and a focus group interview was carried out with four instructors of the English language. The taped interview lasted for a total of one hundred and twenty minutes. The audio recording was subsequently transcribed into text format, and then sectioned off into their respective parts. Coding further subdivides each segment into smaller parts. In this regard, the first thing that was done was to write a letter in order to request permission to conduct the interview. Following that, with their permission, certain protocol questions have been emailed to them. The scheduled and recorded focused group interview was based on the mutual understanding that was reached between participants. There was a total of one hour devoted to the interview. The interview was scheduled to begin at 10:00 am and was scheduled to last until 11:00 am.

Data collection and Research Procedure

The approach of phenomenology has been chosen because it allows for the collection of the necessary data regarding the improvement of vocabulary and the application of vocabulary acquisition. The approach of phenomenology makes use of a number of different procedures; nevertheless, in this particular instance, the methodology of interview has been employed. After receiving confirmation from the people being interviewed, the researchers put the interview questions that they had prepared in light of the study topic into a sequential order. During the course of the interview, which lasted roughly sixty minutes, the respondents answered practically all of the questions, with the exception of those pertaining to their experiences and perceptions concerning the improvement of vocabulary.

Selection of English language teachers for Interview

Study participants were employed in the field of education as ELTs; most have been in this role for at least five years, during which time they have devoted themselves to learning as much as possible about the English language and how to best impart it to their students. They also kept up with

developments in the field by keeping up with the newest research in the field by activities such as reading peer-reviewed scientific literature, participating in educational conferences, conducting workshops, and attending seminars. They had a strong grasp of the language from their time in secondary school.

Ethical Consideration

The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges and impediments that stand in the way of a person acquiring new vocabulary. This action did not have any kind of effect on the people who took part in the research or on society as a whole, whether it was directly or indirectly, physically, socially, or ethically. Also, the authorization of the responders had previously been obtained, and their identities were concealed.

Data Analysis and Findings

The development of one's vocabulary is a very crucial facet of one's educational experience that should not be neglected. There is no questioning the fact that pupils' linguistic development, their increased comprehension of words, and finally their learning of the vocabulary are all aided by having access to a larger supply of words. This is a truth that cannot be disputed. Throughout the process of this research, interviews with focused groups were carried out with the four ELTs working in private schools in the district of Korangi in Karachi, Pakistan. Questions were asked about the various approaches to teaching vocabulary, including the dictionary method, the reading method, using a library, reading stories and novels, role playing, gestures, graphics, the pictorial method, drawing, phonology, Computer Assisted Vocabulary Acquisition (CAVOCA), and mnemonics, as well as the use of information and communication technology (ICT) for make use of various learning aids in their academic pursuits, particularly when it comes to expanding student's vocabulary. Interviews were transcribed, coded and analysed thematically.

Thematic Analysis

The goal of this research is to gain an understanding of the part that vocabulary education plays in the process of growing English vocabulary acquisition among Grade 9 students. The purpose of this research was to obtain information and knowledge from English language teachers by asking those questions about their practices and experiences, perceptions, and various methods and know-how that relate to the teaching of vocabulary in private schools and the acquisition of this knowledge by Grade 9 students. The interviews were conducted to gather this information and knowledge. Reading books, in particular short stories, is one of the strategies that can be used for teaching vocabulary. Other approaches include using dictionaries and getting pupils to overcome their shyness when learning and teaching vocabulary. The pupils need to be encouraged by their teachers to ask questions and to learn new vocabulary by actually utilizing the words. The traditional dictionary method should be supplemented with instruction on English phonetics, which is sound practice using various forms of information and communications technology (ICT). In addition, there is a requirement to boost students' levels of self-assurance in their ability to communicate in English, and accordingly, there is a requirement to establish an environment in which students can interact in the target language, improve their speaking ability, and acquire functional vocabulary. In addition, instructors need to be taught to teach vocabulary using a variety of ways, and they need to cultivate students' interests in reading more and going to the library more frequently.

Significance of diction

The diction plays a vital role in vocabulary acquisition. Highlighting the importance of vocabulary the interviewee remarked: The respondent confidently expressed that greater the stock of words, the better is the expression and learners must be exposed to know words every day for better output. (p.1).

Appropriate Use of words stock

Students must equip themselves with adequate stock of words as it is necessary for comprehension and sharing of views. The interviewee stated: The more knowledge of words facilitate the students to speak comfortably and use appropriate words for the expression of thoughts. Therefore, teacher must impart and share appropriate use of words with students.
(p.2).

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Dictionary method
Dictionary method is oldest one and generally used to acquire vocabulary. The respondent said: The students must develop the habit of consulting dictionary and teachers should also promote this practice in the class. (p.3).

Reading
Reading is essential for improving vocabulary. There are variety of books even books on vocabulary building are available, and students' must take benefit of these books. He stressed: Reading books of interest familiarize students with new words and beside the gain of information through reading books students can also improve their academically vocabulary (p.4).

Use of library and developing interest
The teachers must encourage students to visit library so as to develop their develop interest for reading. He emphasized: Libraries are great source of knowledge where number of books are available on various subjects. (p.1).

Asking questions
The young learners are shy. They do not ask questions. The teacher must facilitate them and promote habit of asking questions which add to learning and can also improve vocabulary. Asking question is an art. The respondent emphasizes on asking questions must be a habit as it improve the learning vocabulary (p.2).

Use of electronic device.
The importance of electronic devices plays an important role. The use of role player, pictorial method and mnemonics are the essentials to acquire required knowledge, and equally important to enhance vocabulary. The respondent expounded: We are living in the technological era. Technological advancement has brought a tremendous change in the field of education as well. The respondent has focused on using electronic devices to get assistance in vocabulary acquisition. (p.3).

Sound practice
Learning through attention and focusing on sound pattern is very important as far as English Vocabulary is concerned watching English dramas, listening news are ways to acquire good vocabulary. The respondent exhorted: Students cannot understand vocabulary without ample practice of sound. The respondent has highlighted the importance of sound practice. (p.4)

Importance of phonetic and phonology
English is a stressed language. The students must be aware of the English Language alphabet as well as recognition the English sound, the respondent said: English is a phonetic language. Phonetic and phonology is the base of English language. The respondent has motivated students to be familiarize with phonetic and phonology. (p.1)

Use of ICT
Information and communication technology plays a vital role in enhancing the vocabulary particularly surfing and searching synonyms and antonyms help the students to be familiar with the new words. The respondent highlighted: ICT has brought variety of techniques in learning English vocabulary. The respondent is inspired by the use of ICT. He stressed on the use of ICT. (p.2).

Lack of confidence in students
Lack of confidence is one of the barriers in learning and under the fear of speaking wrong, students do not ask questions. The respondent highlighted the psyche of students and pin pointed. Confidence is mandatory in learning process. The respondent has highlighted the very common problem of students during studies. (p.3).

Psychological barrier
Due to psychological barrier the students do not ask questions. As a result they do not learn the topic in a befitting manner. The respondent stated as: Human psychology plays a vital role in learning habit. The respondent pin pointed the psychological barrier as a hurdle in asking questions. (p.4).

Understanding of child psychology
The teacher must be aware of children psychology to deal with the student in a required manner. The respondent elaborated: Psychology deals with the attitudes. A teacher cannot teach without knowing the psycho of the student. The respondent emphasis that a teacher must understand the psychology of the child. (p.1).

Confidence building
Confidence building is necessary in children so that he or she does not feel shy to ask questions. The respondent remarked: The respondent focused on confidence building in the student so that he or she doesn't feel shyness to ask questions. (p.2)

Time line and training
Time duration plays an important role in learning process. Fast learning result in less perfection. The respondent exclaimed: Time factor is an opportunity on the one hand as well as a barrier on the other side. The respondent focused on balance training with proper time duration. (p.3)

Environmental exposure
Students learn from environment. In schools the students stay only for 6 to 7 hours and learn English for 1 or 2 hours only. This plays a vital role in vocabulary acquisition. The respondent said: Locality makes mentality, keeping this phenomenon in mind the respondent stressed on better environmental exposure. (p.4).

Revision in policy
The educational policies need revision in order to address the current educational problems. The respondent emphatically remarked: Unfortunately our education department is not making competitive educational policies which address the core problems in education. The respondent stressed on revision of education policy. (p.1).

Memorization
Our education system emphasizes on memorization method as compared to conceptualization learning. The respondent exclaimed: Memorization is in practice in our education system rather than conceptualization. The respondent stated the role of memorization in this regard. (p.2)

Time line and conceptual teaching
Conceptual teaching is very difficult to apply because it needs a big span of time whereas the children have certain time limit to complete the syllabus. The respondent highlighted: Conceptual teaching is directly concern with the time line as it requires more time to teach it is very difficult to apply this technique. The respondent highlighted the difficulties to follow it. (p.3).

Limited Number of working days
Another problem faced by the teacher is the less number of working days. Due to this barrier the teacher cannot deliver subject knowledge in a required manner. The respondent said; Syllabus is divided on the number of working days but due to limited number of working day the teacher is unable to cover the whole syllabus in the given time period. The respondent stated the barrier of the limited number of days. (p.4).

Teachers must be trained and permanent
It is necessary that the teacher must be trained and kept on permanent basis so she/he could play her/his role in the best way. The respondent stated: One of the basic hurdle in education is trained teacher. Unfortunately, the untrained teachers are hired which cannot serve in a better way. Secondly, a temporary teacher never takes responsibility to meet the syllabus needs. The respondent focused on these two issues of education. (p.1).

Activity based training
Another aspect of learning is that it must be activity based as it has ever lasting effect in the mind of the students. The emphasized: With the advancement of teaching activities, activity based training is being adapted. It might be individual or group activity. The respondent on these activities as a tool to teach. (p.2).

Use of ICT
Computer-and-communication is playing an important role in teaching and Internet is a world open to learner. The respondent remarked: With combined introduction of computer-and-communication technology all aspects of life are facilitated specially education sector is mainly equipped with new techniques. The respondent stated the role of ICT. (p.3).

Use of pocket dictionary
Uses of pocket dictionary are also an important in vocabulary acquisition and help in immediate consultation about words and assist vocabulary enhancing. The respondent stressed: Pocket dictionary is a very important tool to learn vocabulary. The respondent has highlighted the significance of pocket dictionary. (p.4).

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Non application of dictation method

Dictation plays a vital role in vocabulary acquisition, which is not learning practiced. The respondent asserted: In early days, the vocabulary was increased by dictation method but in modern days this technique has been ignored. The respondent has pointed out this issue. (p.1)

Emphasis on dictation

Dictation without any force demanding from students to memorize the difficult word their lessons therefore, must be used by teachers. The respondent indicated: Due to the importance of dictation method the respondent has stressed to adapt the technique of dictation method. (p.2).

Identification of the words

The teacher must give detail talk on forms and kinds of words so that students identify the word within their grammatical and functional use. The respondent said: It is one of the common problem to identify the word. The respondent focused the teachers to give the student words to identify them as per grammatical and functional use. (p.3).

Develop library interest

Library is the pool of knowledge and it plays an important role in academic learning promotion. The respondent expressed: Readers are the leaders. A good teacher is one who develop the interest to go to the library. The respondent stressed to develop library interest. (p.4).

Theoretical Memo

According to the findings of the study, students in Grade 9 need to place a significant emphasis on developing their vocabulary. The outcome, which will be a fruitful, helpful, and useable by the learners not only in their academic pursuits but also will add to their life skills, particularly their linguistic ability, after the application of various methods extracted from the perception and experiences of the respondent will be. The usage of dictionaries was highlighted heavily throughout the research. It has been discovered that phonological awareness is an equally significant role in the development of reading as vocabulary development. When a learner has acquired a large vocabulary, they are more likely to think and communicate in an improved manner. The research uncovered four methods for expanding a person's vocabulary: cultivating a word-awareness and a love of words; providing explicit instruction; developing skills for independent study; and the direct explanation method. The study focuses on how becoming more familiar with terms might lead to improvements in vocabulary. When it comes to teaching vocabulary and acquiring it, the utilization and application of ICT can add a significant amount towards the accomplishment of improved results. In order to improve the students' output and response, the instructors need to re-evaluate and innovate new approaches and procedures while keeping the limitations of available time in mind.

Conclusion

This study concludes that acquiring new vocabulary is an essential part of the learning process for children in Grade 9, as it plays a significant influence in determining how well students ultimately achieve. It is necessary to revise the many approaches that are taken while instructing learners in language, and this should be done in a way that is conducive to the effective facilitation of learning. In order to cater to the requirements of the 21st century, the approach should be comprehensive while also being founded on contemporary practices. It is of the utmost importance to implement a variety of approaches to the utilization of information and communication technology (ICT). Both the instructors and the students themselves need to make an effort to learn how to make the most of the information and communication technology (ICT) devices that are available to them in order to get the most out of their education and particularly to improve their vocabulary. Even the phonological implications of particular words can be familiarized with the use of ICT, and this is true despite the fact that one may already be familiar with the word family and the sound patterns of the words. It is essential for educators to employ a variety of strategies when instructing children in vocabulary, and they should also guide learners towards opportunities to broaden their vocabularies and hone their language abilities.

Recommendation

It is necessary for both the instructors and the learners to work simultaneously while putting forth concentrated and concerted efforts. It is of more significance for students in grade 9 to be exposed to a variety of word families, affixes, and derivatives, and teachers should make a strategy to enable learners to acquire the necessary threshold vocabulary levels at different phases of learning. Learning is an iterative process, and teachers should always strive to increase their subject-matter expertise, but

they should also work diligently to improve their linguistic competence in order to improve the quality of their lessons. Reading, particularly Computer Assisted Reading, is another feature that needs to be fostered as a habit, and teachers should encourage students to routinely visit libraries and cultivate friendships with ICT gadgets, which need to be employed in the process of vocabulary acquisition. The development of students' vocabularies should also make use of the graphical method, in addition to rhyming. Instructors are required to have knowledge of English phonetics and phonology, which is the study of the patterns of sound system in the English language. Instructors, too, should be well aware of and well equipped with modern teaching approaches of teaching vocabulary. Keeping in mind students' capacity and level, teaching methodologies should be a blend of practical application and classic rhyming methods. It is crucial for educators to stay current with phonetics since they will play a significant role in the pattern of sound system used in the English language.

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