Investigating the Impact of Using Incidental Vocabulary Learning on Enhancing EFL Learners' Motivation at University Level

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Abstract:

The current research aims to investigate the effect of incidental vocabulary learning strategy on EFL university students' motivation to learn English. In the light of this aim, the researcher has set one null hypothesis.

The one-group experimental design was adopted and a sample of 40 students has been intentionally chosen from among the second year students at the English Department/ College of Basic Education/ University of Mosul for the academic year 2019/ 2020 after applying an achievement test on the population of the research. The sample was chosen from among the students at the lowest level in the achievement test.

The instrument was prepared by the researcher herself to collect the data based on the dependent variable namely motivation. A questionnaire on students' motivation was constructed. The validity and reliability of the instrument was verified and tested. It was implemented before the experiment and after applying it to test whether there is a difference in the level of motivation to learn English is. The collected data were statistically analysed by using different statistical means.

The findings of this research show that the incidental vocabulary learning is an effective strategy in motivating students to learn English as a foreign language.

Key words: incidental vocabulary learning, motivation, multimedia glosses.

تقصي اثر استخدام التعلم العرضي للمفردات على زيادة دافعية متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية على المستوى الجامعي

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ملخص البحث:

يهدف البحث الحالي الى دراسة اثر استراتيجية التعلم العرضي على تحفيز الطلاب لتعلم اللغة الانكليزية على المستوى الجامعي.

وقد تبنت الباحثة في ضوء هذا الهدف التصميم التجريبي للمجموعة الواحدة لهذا البحث، وبناء على ذلك تم اختيار عينة البحث لـ 40 طالب عمداً بعد اجراء امتحان تحصيلي على طلاب المرحلة الثانية في قسم اللغة الانكليزية/ كلية التربية الاساسية/ جامعة الموصل للعام الدراسي 2019–2020 وبعد تطبيق الامتحان التحصيلي على مجتمع البحث تم اختيار عينة من الطلاب ذوو الحد الادنى من الدرجات في الاختبار.

وتم اعداد اداة استبيان تحفيز الطلاب من قبل الباحثة نفسها لغرض جمع البيانات المتعلقة بالمتغير التابع لهذا البحث؛ وهو الدافعية. استبيان دافعية الطلاب قد نفذ حيث تم التحقق من صدق وثبات الاداة. استبيان الدافعية لتعلم اللغة الانكليزية تم تطبيقه قبل اجراء التجربة وكذلك بعد الانتهاء من تنفيذها لمعرفة فيما اذا هناك اختلاف في مستوى الدافعية لتعلم اللغة الانكليزية بعد تنفيذ استراتيجية التعلم العرضي.

وقد تم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها احصائياً باستخدام وسائل احصائية محددة. وقد اظهرت نتائج هذا البحث ان التعلم العرضي هو استراتيجية فعالة في تحفيز الطلاب على تعلم اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية.

Introduction

Vocabulary learning, nowadays, is considered a controversial issue in spite of the consensus of its underlying role in acquiring linguistic competence and developing cognitive capacity to increase learners' lexicon. Foreign language learners may express themselves and comprehend the meaning of words when they have word knowledge. Learners may gain much more knowledge of words when they are encountered in context (e.g., a form-meaning connection, collocations, word parts, constraints on use) than words learned deliberately in exercises.

McCarthy and O'Dell (1994: 3) argued that it is possible to guess word's meaning before looking up in the dictionary. As we read unfamiliar word in a written context; one or two nearby words may explain the meaning of that word or sometimes, the whole paragraph may explain what that word mean.

Hulstijn (2003: 349) stated that there are two views of learning vocabulary for foreign language learners; one of them is intentional and the other is incidental. "Intentional vocabulary learning involves the deliberate committing to memory of thousands words and grammar rules". "Incidental vocabulary learning, on the other hand, involves the "picking up" words and structures when learners' attention is on meaning rather than on form".

1- Statement of the Problem

Considering the vast number of vocabulary items in languages and limited classroom time for learning words, it is not realistic to teach and learn all words intentionality. Accordingly, the researcher wants to investigate the correlation between incidental vocabulary learning and motivation to learn English language. Hence, the researcher studies whether inferring the

meaning of the unfamiliar words from context has any role in stimulating learners' motivation and enhances their English language learning.

2-ypothesis of the Research:

The Null Hypothesis: There is no statistical significant difference between the mean score of the research sample and the standard score of the motivation questionnaire to learn a foreign language.

3- Significance of the Research:

By conducting this research, the researcher intends to appreciate the effect of applying incidental vocabulary learning strategy on learners' motivation to learn the foreign language vocabulary and this will be beneficial for those who work in the academic field; learners, teachers, curriculum designers and others.

Concerning foreign language learners (henceforth FLL), it may be expected that the learners will make exceptional effort to infer meaning based on vocabulary knowledge from the context. These cognitive abilities used by learners will enlarge their FL lexicon. Besides, it will enhance their communicative competence and lead them to mastery in foreign language. The vocabularies acquired by the learners will be stored in the long term memory which be enhanced by repeated exposures.

As for English language teachers, it may help them create some kinds of interaction between learners themselves and between learners and their teacher. This will help the teacher to realize the level and extent learners' comprehending of the teaching material break down boredom in the class by creating an environment of guessing the meaning of unfamiliar vocabularies, estimate learners' level and give them appropriate skills to communicate confidently.

Incidental vocabulary learning can be useful for curriculum designers as it will assist them develop their courses by adopting updated methods and

strategies to achieve effective learning. It will help them engage learners as they are the center of the instructional process.

4- Incidental vocabulary learning

Incidental learning is a process of learning something without the intention of doing so. It is a way of learning something while intending to learn another (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). In incidental learning, the learners are given a reading task without being told to focus on the vocabulary in the text and without being warned that they will have a vocabulary test after finishing the task.

It is expected to be an effective way of learning vocabulary from context. It may motivate learners for extensive reading. It motivates learners' ability to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from the contextual clues. Incidental vocabulary learning may promote deeper mental processing and better retention. This can be done through full involvement in the process of deciphering the meaning through the clues available in the text. Learners may think and rethink about the new words involving cognitive process which helps them retain the words for a longer period of time.

5- Motivation:

Gardner (1985: 10) defines motivation as "the extent to which an individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and satisfaction experienced in this activity". Motivation refers to the compilation of efforts plus desire to learn English and achieve the set goals of learning. It is also a positive affection to learn English.

Littlewood (1995: 53) noted that in language learning as in every other field of human learning, motivation is the crucial force which determines whether a learner embarks on the task at all, how much energy he devotes to it, and how long he perseveres. It is a complex phenomenon which includes

many components, namely the individual's drive, need for achievement and success, curiosity, desire for stimulation, and new experience. It is accepted that motivation is essential to success in any field of learning.

Therefore, we should know where it comes from and what factors influence motivation. The environment outside the classroom may affect the degree of students' motivation to learn English. People around us may have their attitudes to language learning like parents, brothers, peers. If they are enthusiastic, they may take the learners along with them. We should also not ignore the student's natural curiosity concerning who teaches him. Harmer (2009: 51) stated that "it is a very important thing for both the teacher and the learner to have full confidence in the way the teaching and learning take place. So, when both are comfortable with the method being used, success is much more likely".

Since the seminal work by Gardner and Lambert (1972), language teachers and researchers have recognized the important role that motivation plays in language learning. They proposed the most commonly used framework for understanding the different motivations that language learners typically have. They distinguished two types of language learning motivation; instrumental and integrative, both of which are regarded as significant in affecting language learning results, in one way or another. Integrative motivation focuses on how much students learn English with a genuine interest to imitate or assimilate with the target English language, native English speakers' culture, community, their mentality and way of life. This would demonstrate their integrativeness towards English language learners. Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, focuses on how much the students learn English with an instrumental reason targeting a suitable or immediate success like degree, future jobs, further studies or achievement. In summary, it could be implied that students studying the language may possible be integrative or instrumentally motivated.

Learners' motivation tends to be stronger when the learner has specific rather than general goals for language learning. Teachers can motivate their students by creating classroom tasks that are interesting and engaging and by using authentic materials to stimulate further interest in the language and the people who use it.

6- Multimedia Glosses

Vocabulary mastery requires interrelation with both intentional and incidental learning, because they can be considered as "complementary activities" and each of them promotes and increases learning of the other. Therefore, Nation (2001) referred to glosses as the most authentic tools for increasing noticing and stimulating vocabulary learning among foreign language learners.

Gloss was described as "a brief definition or synonym, either in first language (L1) or second language (L2), which is provided with the text" (Nation, 2001: 272). Multimedia glosses are considered electronic glosses presented in the form of texts, pictures, sounds or videos and lead to effective vocabulary learning (Roby, 1999). The electronic glosses will revealed as vocabulary with a brief definition and coupled with video clip or with still pictures, and hypertext glosses are digitalized electronic text and linked with the defined word and appears at the screen (Al Seghayer, 2001: 202).

Technology and computer soft wares' integration in vocabulary learning can make the learning process more effective, guided and interesting for EFL learners. The means of multimedia can help the individuals to assimilate the given material according to their needs and interest (Kumar & Tammelin, 2008). They facilitate the dissimilar second language acquisition (SLA) environment and reduce learners' anxiety by providing them with inner or self-feedback when they sense that they having more freedom and

confidence, they make the educational situation interactive and dynamic. The multimedia or electronic gloss spotlights on the new word by attracting the learners' attention and providing insight in retrieving process of new word and recollection of it. Liu and Chen (2007) noted that the instructional materials with multimedia can "facilitate learners' information processing, and enhance effective cognitive encoding due to the multiple representations that trigger both visual and verbal modes of processing in human beings"(Liu & Chen, 2007: 83).

7- Methodology:

7.1-The Experimental Design:

In order to achieve the aims of this research and test its hypothesis, the researcher adopts the "quasi-experimental research design". In this design, the researcher chooses an intentional sample from the population to apply the research and see the findings. The researcher adopted the "quasi-experimental design": the one sample of post- test1 and delayed post-test 2 design.

7.2- The Population:

The population in the current research consists of (480) 2nd year students in the Department of English/ College of Basic Education/ University of Mosul for the academic year 2019–2020. The students are divided among 8 groups. Their ages ranged between (19–23) years and they have different levels of English proficiency. They are engaged in a course of reading comprehension during the first semester of the prescribed academic year.

7.3 -The Sample:

To choose a representative sample, the researcher set an achievement test on definite vocabulary which has been presented to the population as a whole .Then, the researcher selected the lowest students' scores to be as a sample for this research. The sample of the lowest score students included 40 students; 28 males and 12 females. The students had the same level of achievement and same linguistic level. They were taught reading comprehension in a definite classroom. The researcher herself taught them the prescribed subject by using incidental vocabulary learning strategy.

7.4- Instruments:

7.4.1 -The Instructional Materials:

The reading texts were chosen from the prescribed textbook "Developing skills" by L.G. Alexander (1967). Four reading texts were chosen to be taught during the course which lasted for 8 weeks; a lecture of 90 minutes per week. Definite words were determined previously by the textbook designer as unfamiliar words to the students. Each reading text included seven to fourteen unfamiliar words. The reading text was displayed to the students by using PowerPoint presentation on Data Show. The new words emerged with multimedia glossing as a result of combination of a kind of annotation within its visual animation through software technology. Those unknown words were nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives. The meanings of these words were derived incidentally by the students.

7.4.2 -The Motivation Questionnaire:

The current research adopts a questionnaire to collect data on students' motivation to learn English. The questionnaire includes 20 items. Each item is followed by three alternatives and the students were asked to choose the most

suitable alternative according to their own view. The alternatives were given the scores (3, 2, 1) respectively. Consequently, the highest degree of the whole questionnaire will be 60 and the lowest degree will be 20. The (40) degree is the standard score (theoretical mean) for the questionnaire. The questionnaire has been prepared by the researcher after reviewing literatures and previous studies. The current questionnaire was presented to a panel of jurors to test the items validity. All the jurors accepted the items with some modifications. The pilot study of the motivation questionnaire was administered twice to test the reliability. The results of the pilot study of the questionnaire items indicated that the items were reliability at 0.82 which indicates high reliability. Hence, the motivation questionnaire was ready for administration to the sample of the main study to investigate the level of their motivation.

8-The Experimental Procedures:

The experiment started on the 3rd. Nov. 2019 by administering the motivation questionnaire to the research sample. Then, the researcher started the teaching texts to the students following the procedure set for teaching vocabulary incidentally. The teaching process lasted 8 weeks. A lecture of 90 minutes was given to the sample per week. The researcher herself took over the teacher's role. Two weeks were allotted to teach each reading text. After finishing the treatment and teaching the prescribed reading texts. The motivation questionnaire was also given to the students to investigate their opinions concerning learning English on the 29th. Dec. 2019. Then, the gathered data were analysed statistically on the basis of suitable statistical means. The students' scores on the motivation questionnaire were accounted for.

9- Data Analysis and Results Discussion

9.1- Data Analysis:

The Null Hypothesis: "There is no statistical significant difference between the mean score of the research sample and the standard score of the motivation questionnaire to learn a foreign language".

To test this hypothesis, firstly, students' responses on the pre application of the motivation questionnaire were scored and computed .The mean score of the students was (36.075) with standard deviation (SD) (4.615). The researcher used the t-test for one sample to compare the students' mean score on the motivation questionnaire with the standard mean score of the questionnaire (40). This had been done to see the level of motivation among the students. The result is shown in table (1) below:

Table (1)

Pre-motivation Level Test

No	Mean score	Standard score	SD	t-value		
				calculated	tabulated	Level of significance
40	36.075	40	4.615	-5.378	2.023 (0.05) (39)	0.05 (39)

Table (1) shows that the t-calculated value is less than the t-tabulated value. This means that the students have low level of motivation or they do not have any motivation to learn English

Secondly, students' scores on the post application of the motivation questionnaire have been computed. Then, the t-test for one sample has been applied to find out the difference between the mean score of the students

(51.525) and the standard score of the questionnaire (40). This has been done to see the level of students' motivation after the application of the experiment. The result is shown in table (2) below:

Table (2)

Post-motivation Level Test

No	Mean score	Standard score	SD	t-value		
				calculated	tabulated	Level of significance
40	51.525	40	5.074	14.366	2.023 (0.05) (39)	0.05 (39)

The t-calculated value (14.366) is higher than the t-tabulated one (2.023) at 0.05 level of significance and 39 degrees of freedom. This means that students have high level of motivation after finishing the experiment. This is obvious as their mean score of motivation questionnaire (51.525) is higher than the standard score (40).

Finally, to find out the students' level of motivation development during the application of the experiment, the mean score of the pre-motivation level and post-motivation level have been statistically tested. Accordingly, the researcher has adopted the t-test for two independent samples to see the statistical difference between the two mean scores. The result is shown in table (3) below:

Table (3)

Statistical Difference between Pre-Post Motivation Levels

No	Mean score	SD	t-value		
			calculated	tabulated	Level of significance
40	Pre-	4.615			

40	36.075		14.792	2.023	0.05
	Post-51.525	5.074		(0.05) (38)	(38)

It is clear from table (3) that the post-level of motivation is better than the pre-level. The t-calculated value (14.792) is higher than the tabulated value (2.023) at 0.05 level of significance and 38 degree of freedom. This means that there is development in the motivation level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

9.2- Discussion of the Results:

Based on the findings of the null hypothesis, it can be concluded that the students in the research sample are to a certain extent motivated to learn English. This indicates the effectiveness of incidental vocabulary learning IVL in motivating students to learn English as a foreign language EFL. Moreover, and during the experiment, the researcher noticed that the students were comfortable and the teaching environment in the class was joyful for both the teacher and the students. In addition, the researcher perceived that this strategy raised the self-confidence sense and free expression through the cooperation and the interaction among students. Besides, a significant change has been noticed in the students' role from a recipient into a participant in the learning process.

The positive effects of the IVL in acquiring vocabulary in general is due to the fact that this strategy develops the students' way of thinking during the process of learning EFL. The above mentioned findings have been observed and noticed by the researcher herself throughout the research.

This research indicates that the more the students interact with the reading text, the faster they get the distinct meaning of the vocabulary. The

IVL works on motivating the memory that helps students increase their desire to learn. The IVL works on motivating the memory that helps students increase their desire to learn.

Based on the findings of the null hypothesis, it can be concluded that the students in the research sample are to a certain extent motivated to learn English. This indicates the effectiveness of IVL in motivating students to learn EFL.

10- Conclusions

Based on the application of the experiment based on the IVL and the findings, the researcher concludes the followings:

1. The adoption of IVL in teaching vocabulary improves and enhances students' motivation to learn English.

2. IVL is more individualized and is totally student-centered as students interact with the text to extract vocabulary meanings.

3. By using IVL, the teacher manages to overcome the individual differences between students. It gives students more opportunities to participate and encourage them to give their opinions without hesitation.

4. Using computers 'software can enhance the learners' interest and tendency to lean a foreign language.

5.

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Appendix (1)
Iraqi EFL Learner's Motivation for Learning English

No.	Items	Agree	Don't know	Disagree
1.	Learning English is interesting.			
2.	English is my favorite class since childhood.			
3.	I would like to have online friends from other nationalities.			
4.	I want to travel abroad.			
5.	Studying English supports me to find information on the internet.			
6.	Speaking English fluently helps me in applying for a job.			
7.	I enjoy reading poetry and English literature.			
8.	I enjoy making discussions in English with my colleagues.			
9.	I commonly listen to songs in English.			
10.	Studying English enriches my knowledge about other cultures.			
11.	Learning English makes me more knowledgeable person.			
12.	Learning English fosters communication and exchanging thoughts with foreigners.			
13.	I enjoy reading English stories, books, articles, newspapers and magazines.			
14.	I enjoy watching English news and movies.			
15.	English is the language of modern technology.			
16.	I would like to be specialist in English.			
17.	Learning English enhances self-confidence.			
18.	Learning English feels me satisfied and pleased when learning new words.			

19.	Learning English facilitates getting a future job.			
20.	Learning English enhances my experience.			

Appendix (2)
Students' Scores on Motivation Questionnaire Pre- and Post-test

No	Pre-test	Post-test	No	Pre-test	Post-test	No	Pre-test	Post-test	No	Pre-test	Post-test
1	41	58	11	32	48	21	32	45	31	37	52
2	32	46	12	32	58	22	32	46	32	41	55
3	40	55	13	36	49	23	35	52	33	40	57
4	38	55	14	39	52	24	40	53	34	41	35
5	37	54	15	32	52	25	39	58	35	33	59
6	31	48	16	40	42	26	32	50	36	29	49
7	45	49	17	41	51	27	31	50	37	32	48
8	50	52	18	38	58	28	30	54	38	33	49
9	41	54	19	35	44	29	31	52	39	36	56
10	38	58	20	33	58	30	32	54	40	36	56

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