

Lexical Awareness: How Explicit Instruction in Vocabulary Can Support Academic Writing in Undergraduate Learners of EFL in Sudan

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Abstract This study aimed to examine lexical awareness: A descriptive study was used to see how explicit vocabulary-related education might boost academic writing in undergraduate learners studying English as a foreign language. SPSS software was used to analyze and verify the data. According to the data, learners' vocabulary is insufficient in-depth and size for academic writing. Furthermore, EFL teachers do not provide students with a choice of reading materials to help them learn vocabulary. According to the findings of the study, EFL teachers should emphasize the importance of vocabulary. Additionally, teachers should encourage students to access the internet, interact, and read native text resources. Additionally, I advocated that the Sudanese English curriculum be integrated into academic writing. Sudanese education policy should promote the study of English for educational purposes rather than for communicative purposes. A questionnaire and vocabulary-building activities were used in the study to determine whether literature is beneficial for vocabulary acquisition. The findings of the study revealed that the EFL subjects gained a positive increase in their vocabulary because of the existing curriculum. EFL teachers should employ innovative methods to instill vocabulary acquisition in the hearts and minds of EFL students to foster a love of reading sections among themselves.

Keywords Communication, Learning Techniques,

Reading Exercises, Vocabulary, Writing

1. Introduction

Vocabulary was not sufficiently recognized as a necessary component of second language acquisition and instruction until the mid-1980s Manguashca, Meara, and Gee [1-3]. The purpose of this study piece is to supply the finest writing skills and strategies to English language professors at Sudanese universities. Second, the findings of this study will aid instructors, educators, experts, supervisors, and designers of syllabuses. Third, this study helps learners to improve their writing skills and to produce well-developed extended themes. Fourth, this study aims to give feedback to instructors, educators, supervisors, and specialists to help them enhance the curriculum and student performance.

This subject was chosen since the ability to write is critical for foreigners learning English. In addition, learners at the Faculty of Education, Bahry university in their third year, have suffered because they don't understand the writing processes, according to reports from English instructors. As a result, this research represents an important and required effort to explore and evaluate third-year student academic writing processes to improve both great and poor writing processes.

Furthermore, the study examines the link between student/teacher knowledge of reports and their outcomes.

1.1. Problem Statement

The study observed that third-year English learners at Bahry University have several difficulties, particularly with written English. Writing entails effectively expressing ideas, views, and feelings via the use of the appropriate words. This complicates the procedure even when done in one's own language and significantly more so when done in a foreign language. Third-year learners should be proficient in writing since it aids in spoken communication. In contemporary years, learners' performance in English writing has been called into question and investigation. This demonstrates unequivocally that many learners are **unable to develop an** effective topic for their exam question papers.

Additionally, writing tasks and exercises alone are insufficient to assist pupils in developing their abilities. This is a critical issue, as traditional systems place a premium on written compositions. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of academic written texts on the vocabulary repertoires of EFL learners.

2 Literature Review

2.1. Words and Their Meanings

Prior to investigating linguistics in morphology and addressing morphemes, a word has usually been regarded as a minor code with meaning. Generally, the meaning of a word is deduced from the context in which it appears. EFL learners are typically assumed to understand the meaning of a term if they comprehend it contextually and can construct an identical equivalent in their L1. Certain words have numerous interpretations. This facilitates the formation of contextual associations. Learners should understand how a word is used since it carries a certain connotation, and they must use words appropriately in the given situation. Learners should be able to recognize a word's style, expression, collocation, and whether it is only used in colloquial expressions/informal settings or in polite/formal contexts, as well as its frequency of use (rare/often). According to Carney [4], some individuals believe that the meaning of a word is referred to as a "concept." When you hear or see a word, you can go to the associated definition stored in your memory to determine its meaning.

2.2. Change in Meaning

A language form's meaning or function evolves with time. While some linguists suggest that such a semantic shift occurs from a loss of feeling, dubbed semantic bleaching (weakening), others contend that the semantic

change associated with grammaticalization is better accurately described as an instance of polysemy, particularly in its early stages. Hartmann and Landau [5] define polysemes as a "chain of connected meanings or uses" that serves four roles, as the English term demonstrates. The coexistence of meanings that developed over time is frequently referred to as grammatical quotation theory. Morphology is mainly involved with the formation of words, their Latin forefathers, and the construction of things Kim and Davis [6]. The student must understand how the term is uttered. If students comprehend the definition, use, and grammar, this term will be added to their active vocabulary.

2.3. Lexicography

In summary, lexicography is the art and ability to produce a dictionary. Jackson's [7] lexicography definition is an attempt at compromising in the name of conciseness. In their definition of lexicography, Jackendoff and Jackendoff [8] emphasize a large number of human experiences and understanding, awareness, evaluation, and skills required for a dictionary to be used and benefit from competent reference work in real-world contexts. Lexical conceptual structure, according to Yang [9], is a new level of syntax in theoretical semantic information Hsueh-Chao, Kitajima, Allen, and Lewis [10-13]. The words chosen of artifact-denoting predicates appear to be determined by the function of the indicated objects, which appears to be a new cognitive set of criteria.

2.4. Word Choice

Typically, words enable us to communicate our goals, combine them into more significant structures, and utilize them in contexts with established meanings. Without them, there is no language. A term is more useful when it can express numerous meanings rather than just one. According to Oxford [14], reducing the number of words used to communicate a point nearly always enhances readability, although it requires work. Numerous well-known concepts can be conveyed or ignored entirely with a single word. The term "grandiloquence" connotes an arrogant manner that impresses no one. This is seldom useful and frequently perplexing. The use of words enables the transmission of several nuanced levels of meaning. We cannot locate a word that we have forgotten or are unfamiliar with within a dictionary. A thesaurus suggests more appropriate words and idioms that we may have overlooked.

2.5. Significance of Vocabulary

Among all language abilities, vocabulary is largely acknowledged as a critical component of English acquisition. As indicated in the last chapter, none of us can communicate effectively without vocabulary.

According to Oxford [15], learners see vocabulary as a critical, if not the most critical, component of language acquisition. According to EFL students, some of the difficulties encountered while listening and doing written comprehension activities are due to a lack of vocabulary.

Words are a tool for reasoning, expressing oneself, and interpreting the universe. Inadequate vocabulary limits one's capacity to articulate concepts and emotions. A large, diverse vocabulary, on the other hand, allows for proper pronunciation of the correct term. According to Read [16], the intended meaning cannot be articulated without the use of words to denote things, activities, and thoughts. While both vocabulary and grammar are necessary components of a successful language classroom, for spoken English, vocabulary is more important than grammar and should receive greater focus.

The finest classes, according to Nation [17], emphasize both grammar and vocabulary, although vocabulary is more significant and had better be taught first. This is consistent with Henriksen's [18] belief that the value of words should be the primary focus of spoken language acquisition since language is made up of a "grammarized lexicon rather than lexicalized grammar." In other words, these academics value vocabulary over grammar. This approves what we already recognize from experience: we can understand individuals even if they make grammatical mistakes. Nonetheless, no meaningful communication is possible without the use of the appropriate words. Thus, vocabulary appears to be more significant than grammar in terms of language learning. Students who are conversant with the appropriate vocabulary are frequently more effective in schools and social situations. A large, diverse vocabulary enables language learners to utilize the appropriate words and convey their true emotions,

thoughts, and ideas at the appropriate moment.

2.6. Strategy of Language learning

The word strategy comes from the Greek word *strategia*, which means "to plan.", which translates as "generalization" or "the art of battle" Oxford [15]. In education, the notion of the strategy has been used in a non-adversarial context to refer to a plan, a step, or purposeful action used to accomplish a goal. Oxford proposed the term "particular action, behavior, stages, and procedures employed by pupils to accelerate their progress toward attaining L2 abilities" Oxford [15]. The six learning techniques are further classified into six key kinds of L2 learning strategies, which are classified into two broad groups: direct and indirect. As illustrated in Figure 1, the L2 categories are memory, cognitive, compensatory, metacognitive, emotional, and social.

2.6.1. Cognitive Strategy

Cognitive methods are critical while studying additional languages. These tactics vary from the repetition of statements to summarization. While cognitive techniques differ, they always serve the same purpose: the learner can modify or transform the target language. Cognitive techniques are the most often used language tactics for language learners. The learner can directly control the content using cognitive methods such as reasoning, analysis, and note-taking Harris [19].

2.6.2. Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive methods "beyond cognitive" assist learners in controlling their comprehension and play as they improve their communication abilities Oxford [15].

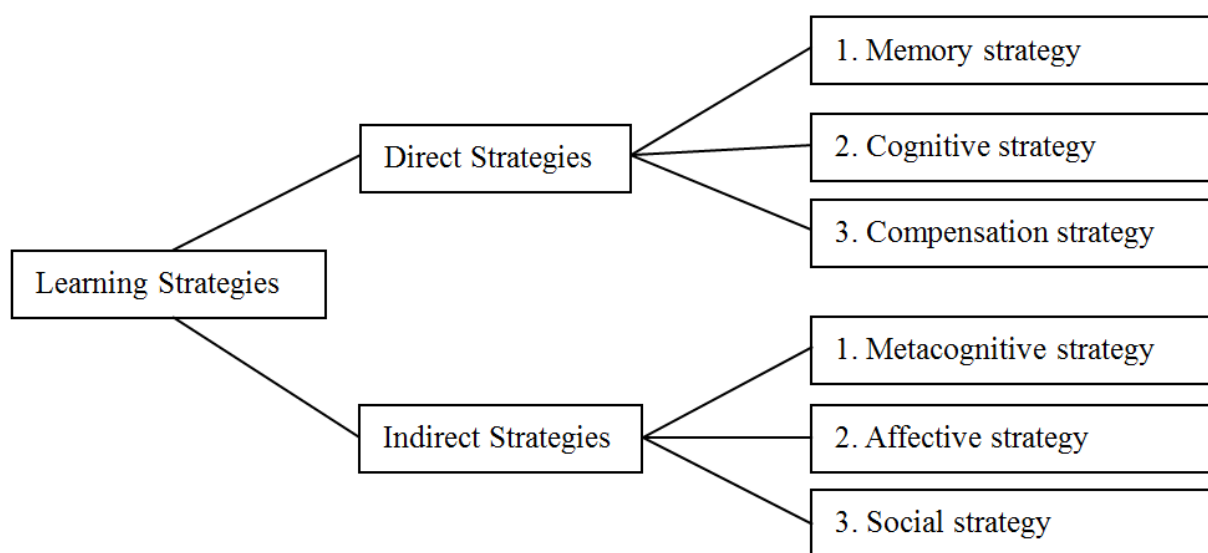


Figure 1. Diagram of the strategy system Oxford [15]

2.6.3. Compensatory Strategies

Compensatory methods allow students to employ the new language for understanding and production procedures despite knowledge limits. Compensatory methods are used to compensate for poor grammar and vocabulary Schmitt [20]. Another compensating function is to give learners access to previously undiscovered knowledge.

2.6.4. Affective Strategies

Affective techniques foster the active development of self-confidence and self-preservation required for language learning Oxford [15]. Practical techniques include assessing one's mood and level of anxiety, discussing feelings, focusing on positive performance and deep breathing, or using positive self-affirmations. As students' progress toward greater skills, impacting methods may become less required (ibid).

2.6.5. Social Strategies

Students can use social tactics to collaborate and gain a better understanding of both the target culture and language. Social systems foster contact and empathetic understanding, two characteristics necessary for developing communication abilities Oxford [15].

2.7. Vocabulary and Curriculum

For nearly 60 years, vocabulary has been a central part of the English language literature on language learning and teaching practice. Sudanese ESL curricula emphasize the development of both receptive and productive English language abilities. This demonstrates the relative disregard for vocabulary instruction. Over the last decade, academic circles have drastically changed language acquisition terminology, and contemporary educational thought contradicts much of what is taught in classrooms and textbooks. As a result, the language learner's primary goal is to acquire foreign language vocabulary. Nonetheless, current technologies enable the generation of normalized data that may be used to estimate the expansion of a foreign language vocabulary during schooling.

2.7.1. Vocabulary Knowledge

In speech research, the term "depth" refers to the "quality of the learner's vocabulary knowledge" Al-khresheh [21]. Additionally, researchers began an in-depth examination of measures of vocabulary size that may reveal a student's linguistic proficiency.

2.7.2. Threshold Vocabulary for Reading Comprehension

Threshold means the minimum number of words necessary for an appropriate interpretation of reading materials. Learners whose language proficiency fell below a specific level encountered difficulties decoding the important aspects and were unable to improve their

comprehension of the material.

3. Objectives and Hypotheses

The following objectives are intended to be met by this study:

1. It aims to detect the challenges that students learning EFL encounter while attempting to comprehend academic writings due to a lack of vocabulary knowledge.
2. It demonstrates that EFL students may acquire vocabulary to enhance their academic writing abilities.
3. It tries to investigate vocabulary acquisition procedures that might be used to improve academic writing abilities.

3.1. Research Questions

The following questions will be addressed in this study:

RQ1. To what degree do students learning EFL struggle to comprehend academic writings due to a lack of vocabulary?

RQ2. To what degree are such pupils capable of participating in the acquisition of vocabulary necessary for academic writing?

RQ3. What are the most effective ways to increase one's vocabulary to improve one's academic writing abilities?

4. Materials and Methods

4.1. Participants

This study used a combination of descriptive, quantitative, and qualitative methodologies. The major data-gathering instruments were questionnaires and diagnostic tests. To elicit teachers' thoughts on this subject, a questionnaire was provided to them. The diagnostic exam was designed to assess the challenges encountered by third-year English students in academic writing. The study took place at Bahry University.

5. Results

The estimated vocabulary required for optimal understanding of authentic literature varies depending on the purpose of the reading job and the material. According to another study Read [22], a vocabulary of 2000 words is regarded as an adequate aim for second language learners who desire to express their ideas in the target languages. A vocabulary barrier of 3000–5000-word families is recommended for those interested in reading modern or classic novels. Learners must be familiar with 10,000-word families to use more intricate and demanding

resources that include specialized vocabulary (such as university textbooks). Hsueh-chao and Nation [10] examined the connection between text coverage and reading comprehension for bilingualists using a fictitious book. They discovered that reading comprehension did not occur when the first 2000-word families covered 80% of the text (one unfamiliar word out of every five words), since reading abilities and past information could not be used to compensate for the lack of vocabulary. Only a small number of people were able to grasp 90% of the material (i.e., one unknown word out of every ten). With a text coverage of 95%, a few more students were able to comprehend the material. 1 out of every 20 words contains an unknown word. At 100% coverage, majority of the students showed satisfactory comprehension. The significance of 3000-word families took up about 88 percent of an academic paper. Proper nouns accounted for 4% of the text, whereas technical terminology accounted for 3%. If readers were familiar with these terms, it made it easier for them to deduce the meaning of scholarly literature.

The outcomes are displayed in Table 1. The percentage of learners who did not answer Question 1 (73%) is higher than that of students who responded to the question, showing that the study's hypothesis for Question 1 is accepted.

Students who did not answer Question 2 (77%) are more than those who passed the question, showing that the study's premise for Question 2 is valid.

Students who did not answer Question 3 (65%) are more than those who passed the question, showing that the study's premise for Question 3 is valid.

Because students who did not answer Question 4 correctly (78 percent) are more than those who scored the question correctly, the study's hypotheses about Question 4 are accepted.

The study's hypotheses relating to Question 5 are accepted because the number of students who did not answer Question 5 (73 percent) is more than the number of students who responded correctly.

The computed t-test value for the significance of differences for responses in Question one was (18), which was higher than tabulated t-test value at the degree of freedom (39) and the significant value level (0.05 percent), both of which were lower (6.54). This signifies that there are no statistically significant differences in the responses of the respondents at the station (0.05 percent). This verifies the first study question's validity. The calculated value of the t-test for the significance of differences in respondents' answers to Question one was (17), which was greater than the t-test tabulated value at the degree of freedom (39) and significant value level of (0.05 percent), both of which were lower (6.54). This shows statistically substantial disparities in the responses at the station (0.05 percent). As a result, the second research question is confirmed. The computed t-test value for the significance of differences in the responses in Question three was (16), which was greater than the tabulated t-test value at the degree of freedom (39) and the significant value level (0.05 percent), both of which were lower (6.54). This shows statistically significant disparities in the respondents' responses at the station (0.05 percent). Accordingly, Question three is supported.

Table 1. Displays the participant's frequency distribution and decisions for the questions

Questions	Pass		Failure		Decision
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
Q 1	12	25	36	73	✓
Q 2	10	22	38	77	✓
Q 3	16	33	32	65	✓
Q 4	10	21	38	77	✓
Q 5	12	25	36	73	✓

Q= Question ✓= Accepted

Table 2. Displays a one-sample t-test for the questions of the study

Questions	N	SD	t-value	DF	p-value
1	40	7.2	18	39	Null
2	40	9.81	17	39	Null
3	40	7.44	16	39	Null
4	40	8.66	12	39	Null
5	40	4.66	18	39	Null
For all	40	8.03	15	39	Null

Null=0

6. Discussion

The study's findings and conclusions demonstrated that academic writing is difficult. The findings reveal that these challenges differ according to vocabulary. The researcher's conclusions are as follows:

To begin with, the breadth and depth of students' vocabulary knowledge are insufficient for comprehension of written materials. Second, classroom discussion activities can drive students to write well. Thirdly, students are motivated to develop vocabulary using real items. Fourth, teachers neglected to present kids with a variety of reading tasks that enhance vocabulary acquisition tactics. Fifth, children might benefit from working in pairs and small groups to develop new terminology. Finally, explicit instruction in grammar is necessary to aid in the comprehension of written materials.

7. Conclusions

Numerous linguists, notably Read[22], have identified four aspects of vocabulary: imprecise, inner and depth of vocabulary knowledge, and receptive productivity.

Prior to final proofreading, it is important to repeat some steps and redo the work multiple times. Of course, we should never stop thinking. As a result, the following tactics for the writing process are recommended: (i) drafting and redrafting, (ii) writing and rewriting, (iii) avoiding plagiarism, and (iv) collecting notes.

To summarize, students should be well-versed in academic writing. Additionally, English students should be introduced to meaningful engagement through written activities.

7.1. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made considering the research findings. These are pertinent to students of English, Teachers of English, and university stakeholders:

1. EFL teachers should instill in pupils a sense of the critical nature of vocabulary acquisition.
2. Sudanese EFL students should improve their language abilities and devote more time to academic writing.
3. Teachers should encourage students to utilize the internet, engage with native English speakers, and expose them to a variety of reading resources.
4. Academic writing should be incorporated into the Sudanese English curriculum. Sudanese educational strategy should promote structural rather than communicative learning of English.
5. Students should develop their writing and composing abilities.

7.2. Suggestions for future studies

The recommendations for future research can be

summarized as follows:

1. The effect of imagery technique on vocabulary acquisition of EFL students.
2. Reminding students to utilize academic jargon in their writing.

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