

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING VOCABULARY

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Abstract:

The purpose of this literature is to investigate common vocabulary learning strategies and find out how the strategies used to learn vocabulary are connected to the level of vocabulary knowledge and also, the significance of suitable strategies in facilitating proficient vocabulary acquisition. Exploring strategies for effective vocabulary learning highlights the transformative impact on education, reshaping the learning methods for students and teaching approaches for educators. Drawing insights from comprehensive research, this examination emphasizes the benefits of these strategies in fostering student engagement without getting bored, motivation, gaining knowledge, and collaborative learning. It also acknowledges potential challenges and drawbacks, providing insights into how to implement these strategies effectively. In essence, the focus is on the pivotal role these strategies play in enriching the learning journey and helping to students for the linguistic demands of today's world.

Key words: vocabulary, effective learning strategies

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Strategies for effective vocabulary learning play a crucial role in enhancing language skills by promoting a deeper understanding of words, their usage, and context. These strategies aid in expanding one's vocabulary, enabling more precise and varied expression. Additionally, they contribute to improved reading comprehension, writing proficiency, and effective communication. By incorporating diverse learning techniques, such as contextual usage, definition of words, mnemonic devices, and regular practice, these strategies actively contribute to the overall development and mastery of language skills. Vocabulary is a fundamental component of language systems, serving as the foundation for language growth. It is recognized as the essential building blocks of language, without which language acquisition cannot occur. While grammar and phonetics are crucial in learning a second language, vocabulary holds even greater significance. It is commonly held that while grammar facilitates communication to some extent, without a vocabulary bank, communication becomes impossible. Consequently, there is a growing focus on enhancing and facilitating vocabulary acquisition through various learning strategies.

Based on the provided text, the decision to implement strategies for effective vocabulary learning likely stemmed from a recognition that traditional methods might not be optimal for non-English major college students. These students may face challenges in acquiring English vocabulary compared to those majoring

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in the language. The text highlights the central focus of the experiment on training vocabulary learning strategies and the investigation into their effectiveness.

It's possible that previous approaches to vocabulary instruction were found to be less effective in helping students retain and apply new words. This could have led researchers to explore alternative methods, such as the ones based on the framework proposed by Chamot and O'Malley (1994). Additionally, the inclusion of recognition and recall items in the vocabulary tests suggests a desire to assess not just rote memorization but also the ability to understand and use the words in context.

The decision to develop and implement vocabulary learning strategies reflects a proactive approach to address potential shortcomings in vocabulary instruction and enhance the language learning experience for non-English major college students.

1. Definition of learning strategies

In China, some researchers have also explored language learning strategies. They believe that learning strategies are methods employed by students to study more effectively. According to the New Standard of National Curriculum (2003) in China, learning strategies are described as the diverse actions and processes students undertake to effectively learn and enhance their English skills.

According to the definitions provided earlier, learning strategies can be understood as a series of methods, tactics, approaches, or particular actions that learners intentionally use to improve their learning. There are two main aspects to learning strategies: first, their goal is to make learning more effective, and second, they involve actions taken by learners, not just their thoughts.

Source	Definition
Stern, 1983	Strategy should primarily be applied to describe broad patterns or fundamental aspects of how language learners approach their learning, while learning techniques refer to particular observable behaviors related to learning.
Weinstein & Mayer, 1986	Learning strategies refer to the behaviors and cognitive activities that learners employ during the learning process, with the goal of shaping how information is encoded in their minds.
Chamot, 1987	Learning strategies encompass the actions and cognitive processes that learners employ during learning, with the goal of impacting how information is encoded.
Rubin, 1987	Learning strategies are described as techniques that can assist in the formation of the language system created by learners while also directly influencing the learning process.
Oxford, 1989	Learning strategies are actions utilized by learners to enhance the effectiveness, self-guidance, and enjoyment of language acquisition.

2. Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) by Schmitt (1997)

According to Schmitt's (1997) way of organizing things, determination strategies are about how learners can figure out words on their own. There are 9 different ways learners can do this, like guessing from the context or using a

dictionary. This shows that students can find word meanings by themselves without help from others.

Schmitt (1997) also talked about social strategies, which are 8 ways students can ask someone else for help with new words, like asking classmates or teachers. This helps students interact with others to learn language, for example, asking a friend for the meaning of a word or working together in a group. In this method, others, especially teachers, are important for helping students understand new words.

Additionally, memory strategies involve 27 ways of deeply processing information, like connecting new words to similar ones or imagining their meanings based on personal experiences. This helps students remember words better by linking them to what they already know.

On the other hand, cognitive strategies include 9 methods that focus on repeating and mechanical ways of learning vocabulary. Learners might write words many times, keep notebooks, or take notes in class. This strategy is all about repeating things to remember them better.

2.1. Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) by Schmitt (1997)

Many studies have used the Vocabulary Learning Strategies model. Schmitt (1997) said that how often a word appears is important for remembering it, and Nation (1994) suggested that teaching learners the right strategies is crucial, especially for less common words. So, Schmitt (1997) split his model into two main strategies: finding out what a word means and making sure you remember it, which includes all the different ways to learn vocabulary.

In Schmitt's (1997) model, determination strategies include 9 different methods that learners can use on their own. These ways include things like guessing the meaning from the context or using a dictionary. This shows that students can figure out the meaning of new words by themselves.

Schmitt (1997) also talked about social strategies, which are 8 ways students can ask others for help in understanding new words, like asking classmates or teachers for explanations or working in groups. In this approach, others, especially teachers, are important for helping students understand new words. Lastly, learners can use metacognitive strategies to check and see how they're doing with their learning. This group of 5 different strategies is about students knowing what they want to achieve and how much they know about vocabulary. They can then pick the right way to learn words. Some of the things in this group include using English media like songs and movies, studying words regularly, testing themselves, and practicing remembering words over time. In this way of learning, students make plans, check how they're doing, and keep track of their progress.

Also, past research looked at the types of ways learners learn vocabulary and how often they use them, both for students who are really good at English and those who aren't as good. This information is explained more in the next parts.

High and low proficient learners may employ different strategies when it comes to vocabulary acquisition. Here are some strategies commonly used by each group:

High Proficient Learners:

1. Contextual Guessing: They infer word meanings from the surrounding text or conversation.
2. Word Associations: They link new words with familiar words or concepts to aid memory retention.

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3. Use of Resources: They utilize dictionaries, online tools, or language learning apps to explore and understand new vocabulary.

4. Active Engagement: They actively participate in discussions, read extensively, and listen to a variety of materials to encounter new words in context.

5. Flashcards and Mnemonics: They create flashcards or mnemonic devices to reinforce vocabulary retention through repetition and association.

Low Proficient Learners:

1. Rote Memorization: They may rely more on memorizing word lists without understanding the context or usage.

2. Translation: They may translate words directly from their native language to the target language without considering nuances or connotations.

3. Limited Exposure: They may have fewer opportunities for exposure to the target language outside of the classroom.

4. Passive Learning: They may passively wait for vocabulary to be introduced by the teacher rather than actively seeking out new words.

5. Dependency on L1: They may overly rely on their native language as a crutch when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary instead of trying to figure out meanings in the target language.

These are general trends and individual learners may use a combination of strategies from both categories depending on their preferences, learning style, and the specific context in which they are learning.

Evaluation for the Training of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

The examination serves as the assessment tool both before and after the experiment. It comprises recognition (multiple-choice) and recall (fill-in) questions. Each correct answer earns two points out of a total of 100 points from 50 items, mainly drawn from newly introduced lexical items in their English course. In total, 69 valid test papers were collected.

The primary focus of the current thesis experiment is on training vocabulary learning strategies. This aspect investigates the impact of such strategies on English vocabulary acquisition among non-English major college students. Specifically tailored for the experimental class, the vocabulary learning strategies training occurs within their college English course. The control class continues with their usual vocabulary learning methods.

The training model utilized is rooted in the framework for direct language learning strategies instruction by Chamot and O'Malley (1994). Vocabulary learning strategies are chosen based on subjects' questionnaire results. The training incorporates both teacher-directed and learner-centered activities, following the CALLA model, which involves five steps: preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation, and expansion. These steps may iterate, with teachers revisiting earlier phases for clarification or additional instruction.

Initially, both experimental and control groups demonstrate similar vocabulary proficiency levels in the pretest. However, post-training, the experimental group exhibits notable improvements in vocabulary proficiency.

Conclusion

In summary, the examination of vocabulary learning strategies, guided by the research and perspectives of esteemed scholars, reveals a diverse range of methods aimed at enhancing language acquisition and proficiency. Dr. Michael Lessard-Clouston stresses the necessity of employing various strategies, from

context-based inference to direct instruction, to foster strong lexical development in learners.

Expanding on Lessard-Clouston's work, Dr. Isabel Beck emphasizes the importance of explicit vocabulary instruction in classrooms. Her research highlights the effectiveness of systematic, teacher-led lessons in providing students with the necessary vocabulary foundation for academic success.

Additionally, Dr. Paul Nation's research underscores the value of extensive reading in enriching vocabulary. Nation argues that exposure to a wide range of texts, along with focused vocabulary activities, helps cultivate a deep understanding of words and their usage within context.

Dr. Margarita Calderón advocates for the integration of collaborative learning environments into vocabulary instruction. She suggests that peer interaction and cooperative structures enhance linguistic engagement and retention, leading to shared understandings of vocabulary concepts among students. Furthermore, Dr. Diane August emphasizes the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy in vocabulary instruction. By contextualizing learning experiences within students' diverse backgrounds, educators can create inclusive environments conducive to equitable academic outcomes.

In synthesizing the insights of these scholars, it is evident that effective vocabulary instruction requires a holistic approach that goes beyond traditional methods. By utilizing a variety of strategies, educators can empower students to navigate language complexities with confidence. Moving forward, it is essential to heed the collective wisdom of these scholars to shape impactful learning experiences that foster a lifelong love for language mastery.

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