



## THE EFFECT OF WORDLESS-BOOK STRATEGY ON STUDENTS' VOCABULARY RETENTION

<sup>1</sup>Firas Ahmed Hameed, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Ahmed Rawdhan Salman, <sup>3</sup>Nadia Hameed Hassoon

<sup>1</sup>College of Basic Education /University of Babylon

Email: [FirasAh1988@gmail.com](mailto:FirasAh1988@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>College of Basic Education /University of Babylon

Email: [ahmedrawdhan@uobabylon.edu.iq](mailto:ahmedrawdhan@uobabylon.edu.iq)

<sup>3</sup>College of Arts/ University of Babylon

Email [nadia.h.hassoon@gmN.com](mailto:nadia.h.hassoon@gmN.com)

**Abstract.** The process of learning a second or foreign language can be challenging and demanding, especially for teachers, as they are required to continuously innovate and improve their teaching by integrating new strategies and techniques into the classroom environment. Hence, the present research intends to examine the effect of utilizing the Wordless-Book strategy on Iraqi Preparatory school students' vocabulary retention. A quantitative research method is adopted, and a sample of (40) preparatory school students is randomly chosen to exemplify the two sets of the research (the control and experimental groups). The study adopts a pre-test post-test design to measure the influence of the strategy. The first hypothesis is accepted, and the researcher concluded that indeed Wordless-Book strategy helps in developing the students' retention of new words; however, other studies could concur or find different results.

**Keywords:** Wordless-Book, Vocabulary, Acquisition, Contextual Inferencing.

Received: 13 November 2019

Accepted: 25 December 2019

Published: 19 January 2020

### WORDLESS-BOOK STRATEGY

A Wordless picture is defined by Miller (1998: 376) as the image whose narrative can be comprehended only with the clarifications completing the text that written in the book. Picture without words is reading after looking of the that picture. They are open-ended process that reader apply their former knowledge and experiences in their reading of these pictures to create a written story (Arif, 2008 124). This technique is neglected by most teachers in EFL classroom, because they do not know how to apply it (Miller 1998:41).

Ekpe and Egbe (2005:27) show that the narrative of picture without words is useful device for "promoting sociocultural integration." Learners may cooperate their thoughts and previous knowledge with their classmates, expanding their visions of picture interpretation.

The wordless picture is open for explanation, and It can encourage learners to express themselves using English language. Reading and writing are skills that can be learned and taught by using Wordless picture (Crawford & Hade, 2000:76).

By wordless picture strategy, students can read photographs and construct their explanation of these images depending on their previous experiences. By reading wordless picture with nice sound to the learners, teachers can form the right basis for reading, so they can make a new narrative, Also, they can start writing their narrations of the pictures. (Booker, 2012:8).

Kristen clarifies that a wordless picture can be used with adult learners to reinforce their writing since "student that would not come up with a story on their own, a wordless picture can motivate them to go off of". Wordless picture can provide learners with a new vision of writing and encourage them to collect their thoughts, using their own words to go along with explanations.

### Statement of The Problem

English language is seen as the most widely used language in the world. It is utilized in both social life and business-wise. Its employment is increasing every day by assuming more significant roles in our life. Mastering English requires knowledgeable instructors and active students who are anxious to co-work to expand their capability and improve their proficiency. However, Iraqi students encounter numerous variables that can obstruct language learning. One of those challenges is the inadequate amount of vocabulary knowledge, which can affect the way they speak, read, listen, and write. When they read, they may encounter difficulty in comprehension texts' meaning, Specialists say that this difficulty occurs because learners do not know some words when they come across in everyday situations (Nation, 2001:188).

Additionally, language learners often find themselves incapable of producing proper English when attempting to communicate with their peers or teachers in the classroom, a problem that happens due to their very limited lexicon. Iraqi language learners might also encounter challenges with translation, memorization because of their limited vocabulary and poor language acquisition (Al-Saedi, 1989:12).

Many language specialists signify the importance of vocabulary knowledge. For example, Nation (2001: 188) considers words as a fundamental unit of foreign language students' competency and communication. Moreover, Richards and Renandya (2002: 255) regard vocabulary as the spine of language that supports the basis on which learners speak, listen, write, and read. Language users perhaps perform inference every day. For example, if you see someone eating new food and he or she makes a face, then you infer he does not like it. Or if someone slams a door, you can assume that she is upset about something. It is broadly admitted that the learners who native language can able to infer meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary from text and this ability represent a large number of words for a part of a native learners' considerable vocabulary storage.

EFL learners are also seemingly able to infer words from a text during reading (Horst, et al. 1998). However, teachers try to find out whether the ability of inferring meaning of words from text can be educated. Three methods of teaching can be used of the overall strategy when facing unfamiliar words in the text, instruction in recognizing and explaining particular text clues found in written text, and improving cognitive understanding of a text by practice with cloze exercises. Therefore, language development depends highly on the amount of the learner's vocabulary knowledge; hence, it is the researcher's intent to enhance students' lexicon through the use of contextual inference strategy.

## Vocabulary

The term vocabulary has various analogous definitions. Hubbard (1983:13) defines it as a potent transporter of meaning. Furthermore, Nation (2001:189) defines vocabulary as the ability to fully understand, comprehend, and recognize the word when it is encountered in a particular context rather than just guessing its meaning. Lastly, Diamond and Gutlohn (2006:73) defined it as the list of words in a language that the language speaker is familiar with and is fully capable of understanding their meaning and use.

Vocabulary and lexical comprehension take an important place in language learning and communication. Without sufficient vocabulary learning, Learners cannot use proper syntax. According to Folse and Bologna (2003), without syntax, the meaning is not fulfilled; but without words, the meaning and communication are impossible. It is necessary to stress that words are required for each language skill and component. It may be considered as the essence of the four skills; speaking, listening, reading, and writing. As Chastain (1988) clarifies that the reduction of required words is the most popular reason for learners' failure in discussing and expressing themselves. To spot the significance of vocabulary in developing other skills in testing, Heaton (1990) shows that tests of vocabulary can lead the learners to a good reading.

It is obvious, unless the language learner has a sufficient quantity of vocabulary learning, she/he can neither express her/himself as intended nor comprehended the speaker. Without enough word learning, the language learner cannot communicate. In this case, when learners

face situation and they feel they lack the knowledge of vocabulary, their stimulation to learn language will reduction (see: Dehham, 2018).

### **Acquisition**

Vocabulary is defined as the best possible way to transport meaning (Hubbard. 1983). Furthermore, Nation defines it as the capacity to completely comprehend, understand, and perceive the word when it is experienced in a specific setting instead of merely speculating its meaning (Nation & Chung:2009) Acquisition is defined as the unconscious process of internalizing the principles of a target language as a result of direct contact to comprehensible meaning. This process is more frequent in a second language or foreign learning (Richards and Schimdt.2010).

### **Contextual Inferencing**

Contextual Inferencing is the students' activation of their background knowledge, while reading a text, trying to understand meaning of new words that may hinder comprehension. This is a dynamic process that happens in all aspects of reading comprehension, in order to activate their background information to infer meaning from the text and achieve coherence(Brown & Yule, 1983: 269).

Lelice (2007: 251) states that students may follow different techniques when they are offered a text with unknown words; these techniques are to:

- (a) Ignore the unknown vocabulary and keep reading.
- (b) Attempt to discover a word in a dictionary or try to seek help and,
- (c) Infer its meaning from the linguistic and contextual clues in the text.

Inferencing plays a vital role in vocabulary comprehension when teachers and students explain a text using their background knowledge. Student should know a high rate of words to facilitate the inferencing of unknown words of a text and be able to explain these words depending on the context. That is, students can acquire new vocabulary from the text relying on their ability to infer unknown words (Hu and Nation, 2000: 413).

According to Paribakht and Wesche (2009: 78), recognizing a suitable meaning of a word demands finding helpful cues from the text. The process of inferring the meaning of new words from the text to achieve comprehension is not easy; it is a challenging task, especially for Iraqi EFL learners, because of their limited knowledge of the target language. Therefore, students need to be taught how to infer by evident. In contrast, teaching strategies to L2 learners and training them by using contextual inferencing to comprehend vocabulary may be considered as an ideal way to manage this.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The present study adopts a quantitative research design. The two randomly selected samples are equated in terms of age (in months), sex, background knowledge, and linguistic abilities. They were divided into the experimental and control groups to achieve the objectives of the study.

### **EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH**

The research method in the present study is an experimental one. Therefore, it has two variables including an independent (wordless-book strategy) and a dependent variable (the test results).

### **Population and Sampling**

The population of the study represents the fourth preparatory school students of central Babylon educational directorate in the educational year (2019-2020). The two samples were randomly selected from \_\_\_\_\_ School. The size of the sample is (40) fourth preparatory students allocated into two groups, group (A) represents the control sample, and group (B) represents the experimental sample. Group (A) receives traditional language teaching, while group (B) is taught according to the **Wordless-Book** strategy.

### **Sample Equivalence**

The researcher equated the two samples concerning their social and economic status by selecting them from the same district in Babylon and also from the same school. The age of the participants was measured by months, and those who had repeated the year were excluded from the experiment. The test scores were used to compare the two samples' linguistic background by measuring the mean scores for the first course, which turned out to be (16.3) for the control group and (16.8) for the experimental group. The achievement of the parents was also taken into consideration and equated by using a statistical formula (Chi-square).

### **Extraneous Variables**

Some extraneous variables may affect the course of the experiment. Therefore, the researcher made sure to equate them, too. The experiment lasted for 45 days, and none of the participants left the experiment. They all mature the same as the experiment did not last more than the intended period. Hence, the growth is unified across all members of the experiment. The students did not know that they are participating in an experiment; therefore, Hawthorne effect did not take place.

## **THE MATERIAL**

The material used in the experiment is English for the Iraqi textbook for the fourth preparatory school and the trial covered units (2\3) from the syllabus. The researcher, throughout the experimental period, presented 20 lessons and set several behavioral objectives to be met across (20) lesson plans, which are proved by a jury of (15) language methodologists.

## **INSTRUMENT**

The achievement Test: It is defined as the estimation of the information of learners in certain content, skill, or fulfillment in a certain material, period frame, and course of study. It may also assist in distinguish the level of students and what they need to improve and work on (Brown, .2003). The achievement test was structured by next these procedures:

- 1- The pre-test intended to measure students' vocabulary achievement before implementing the experiment.
- 2- The post-test was designed to measure students' vocabulary retention after receiving formal instruction under the wordless-book strategy.
- 3- The scoring is done by giving a mark for every correct answer and a zero for any incorrect answers. The highest possible score is (40) and the lowest one is zero.
- 4- Test validity is achieved by validating it by a jury of 15 language specialists, who instructed some corrections and amendments which were followed accordingly.
- 5- Pilot testing was done on two more schools, which are located near the primary school in which the researcher conducted his experiment. The test items were statistically analyzed. The item difficulty ranges between (0.70-0.32), item discrimination ranges from (0.85- 0.29). The statistical results demonstrate that the test is valid.

6- The researcher implemented the test on a specified time (October 29<sup>th</sup>) the pre-test and (December 14<sup>th</sup>)

## CONCLUSION AND RESULTS

The statistical analysis of the results illustrates that the students of the experimental group are superior when it comes to vocabulary retention with a mean score of (28.5) and that of the control group to be (22.8) at (0.5) level of significance. The researcher accepts the alternative hypothesis and rejects the null one. The results above are in line with other research findings that suggest the superiority of wordless-book strategy as opposed to traditional methods of teaching. The results are demonstrated in the table (8.1).

**Table (1)** Group Statistics

Group	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std. Error Mean
<b>Pretest</b>				
- Control	20	16.35	5.34	.713
- Experimental	20	16.8	6.311	.905
<b>Posttest</b>				
- Control	20	22.82	6.57	.920
- Experimental	20	28.53	8.952	1.266

## REFERENCES

- Miller, T. (1998). **The place of picture books in middle-level classroom**. Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy.
- Arif, M. M. (2008). **Reading from the wordless: A case study of the use of wordless picture books**. English Language Teaching.
- Ekpe, S.I., Egbe, G.B. (2005). **Picture story as a creative connection between reading and writing**. Thinking Classroom.
- Crawford, P. A., Hade, D.D. (2000). **Inside the picture, outside the frame: Semiotics and the reading of wordless picture books**. Journal of Research in Childhood Education.
- Booker, K. (2012). **Using picture books to empower and inspire readers and writers in the upper primary classroom**. Practical Strategies.
- Nation, I, S, P. (2001). **Learning Vocabulary in another Language**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Al-Saedi, R. G. (1989). **Errors Made by Iraqi College Students of English in Spelling. (Unpublished M.A. Thesis)**. University of Baghdad.
- Richards, J. C. and Renandya, W. A. (2002). **Methodology in Language Teaching**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Horst, M. Cobb. T.&Meara . P (1998) **Beyond a Clockwork**.
- Hubbard, P. (1983) **A training Course for TEFL**. Oxford: Oxford University publication.
- Diamond, 'L.' and 'Gutlohn, 'P' (2006). **Teaching Vocabulary**. Retrieved from Internet. <http://eltj.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/50/1/52> on 2018/2/26
- Folse, K. & Bologna, D. (2003). **Targeting Listening and Speaking: Strategies and Activities for ESL/EFL Students**. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Chastain, K. (1988). **Developing Second Language Skill theory and practice**. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). New York: Harcourt Brace Javanoich, Inc.
- Heaton, J.B. (1990). **Classroom Teaching**. New York: Longman.



- 
- Dehham .S. H. (2018) **The Role of Contextualized Testing Technique in Enhancing EFL Intermediate Students' Capacity in Acquiring English Vocabulary**. Sumerians Journal of Education, Linguistics and Literature, 2018, Vol .
- Nation, P., & Chung, T. (2009). **Teaching and Learning Vocabulary**, in Long, M, H., &Doughty, C, J. (2009). **The handbook of language teaching**. London: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Richards, C, J., and Schmidt, R. (2010). **Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics**. fourth edition. British library cataloging in publication data.
- Brown, G., & Yule, G. (1983). **Discourse analysis**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jelic, A. B. (2007). **Lexical inferencing strategy use by Croatian foreign-language learners**. In J. Horvath, & M. Nikolov (Eds), UPRT 2007: Empirical studies in English applied linguistics. Pecs: Lingua Franca Csoport.
- Hu, M., & Nation, I. S. P. (2000). **Unknown vocabulary density and reading comprehension**. Reading in a Foreign Language.
- Wesche, M. B., & Paribakht, T. S. (2009). **Lexical inferencing in a first and second language: cross-linguistic dimensions**. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Brown, D. (2003). **Language Assessment Principles and Classroom Practices**. (1ed). San Francisco. Longman Publication.