The Role of Visual Literacy in Teaching English Vocabulary: A Case Study in Khartoum State Secondary Schools English language Teachers.

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ABSTRACT:

This study aimed at investigating The Role of Visual literacy in teaching English Vocabulary. The researchers adopted the descriptive analytical methods. The population of the study was teachers of English language at Sudanese's secondary schools in Khartoum state. The sample of this study was (70) English language teachers from Khartoum Locality. The researchers used a questionnaire as a tool for collecting data. The data has been analyzed with SSPS program using descriptive and non-parametric methods. Some results include: using visual literacy in teaching English language as a tool can help students in using new vocabulary and using visual literacy in teaching English language vocabulary can enhance teaching procedures. Based on the results, the researchers recommended the following: English language teachers should take into account the importance of using visual literacy in teaching English language vocabulary on all levels. English language teachers should be aware of the role of using visual objects in teaching vocabulary. Students should be encouraged to know how to interpret visual literacy in their English language classrooms.

Key words: Teaching. Learning. Learning English as a Second Language.

المستخلص

هدفت هذه الدراسة لتقصي دور محو الامية البصرية في تدريس مفردات اللغة الانجليزية. استخدم الباحثان المنهج الوصفي التحليلي. و تكون مجتمع الدراسة من معلمي اللغة الانجليزية السودانين في ولاية الخرطوم. ضمت عينة الدراسة (70) مدرساً من مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية في محلية الخرطوم. واستخدم الباحثان الاستبانة كأداة لجمع البيانات. تم تحليل البيانات عبر إحصاء وصفي ولابارامتري باستخدام برنامج SSPS . تضمن النتائج التي توصلت إليها الدراسة التالي: استخدام محو الامية البصرية كاداة في تدريس اللغة الانجليزية يساعد الطلاب في استخدام المفردات الجديدة كما أنه يساعد في تدريس اللغة الانجليزية في تحسين عملية التدريس. بناءاعلي النتائج التي تم التوصل إليها ، توصي الدراسة بما يلي: يجب على مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية بأن يولوا في الإعتبار أهمية استخدام محو الامية البصرية في تدريس مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية على جميع المستويات و يجب أن يكون مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية على دراية بدور عرض الكائن المرئي في تدريس المفردات. و يجب تشجيع الطلاب على معرفة كيفية تفسير محو الامية البصرية دراساتهم للغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التدريس. التعليم. تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية.

Introduction

Learning English as a second/foreign language needs skills and components to be mastered. One of those components is vocabulary which one of the most central constituents in language learning without which communication is not possible. At basic schools, English is introduced to the students' during learning its vocabulary because it is an important element that will become the basic competence which will help in gaining other competences like listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Vocabulary works also as the fundamental component that enables the students to speak English. Teaching through using different means is very important. One of these means is using visual literacy in Teaching English vocabulary in all levels.

Statement of the Problem:

The present study attempts to explore the role of visual literacy in teaching English vocabulary for students. Throughout a long experience the researcher observed that Sudanese English learners, students, teachers, and even syllabuses designers do not attempt to use visual literacy in language classes. For this case, the learners will never be able to increase their vocabulary in targeted language/nor they can use it in different situations.

Aim of the Study

This study aims to achieve the following aim:
-   Highlighting the role of visual literacy in teaching English Vocabulary.

Question of the Study:

The study aims to answer the following question:
-   To what extent can visual literacy be used in the classroom as a tool for teaching new English vocabulary?

Significance of the Study: This study is significant for teachers in helping them to teach English vocabulary effectively. It is important for Sudanese students at secondary schools because it may help them to overcome many problems in using English vocabulary. Also it is important for the Sudanese ministry of education because it can assist in changing policies of English language teaching and learning at both basic and secondary schools.

Scientific Terms:

-   **Visual literacy:** Burmark (2002) defined visual literacy is the competency to make meaning from what we see and to create images that convey implicit or explicit messages to others.
-   **Vocabulary:** Penny (1996) defined that vocabulary as the words that are taught in foreign language.

Theoretical Frame and Previous Studies

Theoretical frame

What is Visual Literacy?

Tim Stafford (2011) said that *"the term literacy in its simplest form means the ability to read and write words, then it follows that visual literacy must refer to the ability to read and create images."* Visual literacy is the active process of reading, interpreting and understanding images and visual media. Tim Stafford (2011).According to Nola Galagher, H.T., et al (2002) "Every picture tells a story." Visual literacy is being able to make sense of what we see in pictures and understanding how these pictures relate to the

writing associated with them. Picture books, magazines, newspapers, advertisements, and films create meaning through such things as shape, line, color, actions, eye paths, and angles. Giorgiset al.(1999: 146) state that visual literacy is 'the ability to construct meanings from visual images' This more specific explanation acknowledges that being able to derive meaning from images is a key part of the process of visual literacy and, while this may seem obvious, it does need to be stated (the act of reading is not, after all, synonymous with understanding what we read).According to Giorgiset al.((1999) visual literacy is "the ability to construct meanings from visual images."Visual literacy has been defined as the "ability to understand, interpret, and evaluate visual messages" (Bristor& Drake, 1994). According to Wikipedia (2011), "Visual literacy is based on the idea that pictures can be 'read' and that meaning can be communicated through a process of reading."The term "visual literacy" was first introduced in 1969 by writer John Debes(Brumberger, 2011; Riddle, 2009; Yeh&Lohr, 2010). The International Visual Literacy Association has adopted Debes' definition of visual literacy:

"Visual Literacy refers to a group of vision-competencies a human being can develop by seeing and at the same time having and integrating other sensory experiences. The development of these competencies is fundamental to normal human learning. When developed, they enable a visually literate person to discriminate and interpret the visible actions, objects, symbols, natural or man-made, that he encounters in his environment. Through the creative use of these competencies, he is able to communicate with others. Through the appreciative use of these competencies, he is able to comprehend and enjoy the masterworks of visual communication (International Visual Literacy Association)."

Even though Debes was the first to define and label "visual literacy," the use of visual cues or representations to communicate and interpret messages has been around since the dawn of human civilization (Burmark, 2002; Riddle, 2009; Yeh& Cheng, 2010). Once the ability to reproduce images for distribution became available, the use of visual imagery grew exponentially (Burmark, 2002; Riddle, 2009). Dastani (2002) explains that "visualization has become an important way for human beings to learn and perceive things" (as cited in Yeh& Cheng, 2010, p. 244).There are numerous definitions of visual literacy, each emphasizing various unique characteristics (Brumberger, 2011; Northcut&Brumberger, 2010; Yeh&Lohr, 2010). The various definitions range from unequivocally theoretical to highly pragmatic (Brumberger, 2011). Each author of documentation on visual literacy produces his or her own meaning of the term (International Visual Literacy Association) typically stemming from the concept of textual literacy. Traditional textual literacy involves both reading and writing skills, which leads most visual literacy experts to interpret the concept of visual literacy in a similar manner. Yeh (2008) defined visual literacy as "*the learned knowledge and skills needed to accurately understand, interpret, and analyze visual messages and to create visual messages*" (Yeh&Lohr, 2010). Brumberger (2011, p. 21) states that the best definitions "*specify that the ability to analyze and interpret images, and other visual material, although critical, is not by itself sufficient for full visual literacy; it must be accompanied by some ability to create visual material*" as well.

Importance of visual literacy

Teaching and learning of the four basic literacy skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) has revolved almost exclusively around verbal language. This dominance of verbal language in the field of visual communication has also been pointed out by several researchers (e.g. Damen, 1997; Moriarty, 2002; Love, 2008; Jim and Boling, 2010). Love (2008) argues, on the basis of the increase of multimodal texts within the new communicative landscape, that in the twenty-first century the traditional notion of literacy as consisting of the 'four basic skills' is not enough. If we accept, then, that there is a new type of literacy that is not (exclusively) verbal in orientation, then we need to adopt a systematic approach to the study of visual education (Jewitt and Kress, 2003).More visuals are used now than ever before, in the form of charts, graphs, pictures, or even the colors and design we select exclusively to create interest (Brumberger, 2011). A number of studies suggest that the balance between words and images has shifted considerably calling for new forms of literacy (Brumberger, 2011). Unfortunately, visual literacy receives relatively little attention in today's curricula (Brumberger, 2005; Yeh&Lohr, 2010). Elkins believes that "visual studies is balanced to become one of the most interesting and conceptually challenging subject that has emerged in academic life in the last several decades" (2003, p. vii). He further points out that visual study as a field is barely more than a decade old. For this reason, most of the literature on the subject is in the exploratory stages, surveying existing programs, evaluating their effectiveness and searching out and testing new methods.

Understanding and Using Visuals

Visual literacy is also connected to visual thinking, which Wileman describes as "the ability to turn information of all types into pictures, graphics, or forms that help communicate the information" (Wileman, 1993). Visual literacy refers, not only to still images, but also to the multi-media experiences and moving images characteristic of electronic media today. Therefore, a 'literate person in contemporary western cultures is, first and foremost, someone who is able to recognize, read, analyze and deploy a variety of visual genres and mediums' (Schirato& Yell 1996).

Vocabulary:

Taylor, 1990, defines vocabulary as the entire stock of words belonging to a branch of knowledge or known by an individual. He also states that the lexicon of a language is its vocabulary, which includes words and expressions. Penny Ur defines that vocabulary as the words that are taught in foreign language. A new item of vocabulary may be more than a single word which is made up of two or three words but express a single idea. (Penny Ur, 1996:60).

Taylor (1990, pp. 1-3; 1992, pp. 3-6) summarizes eleven aspects of 'knowledge of a word' to serve the purposes of vocabulary teaching and learning. These include:

1. Mother tongue. Knowing of how things are said in different languages. Language learners use mother tongue for helping word understanding in the second language by linking the second language sounds to sounds of their mother tongue.

2. Sound-spelling. It is crucial for language learners to be aware of the relationship of sound and spelling because many English words sound similarly though they have

different spelling, and vice versa. Examples are, *hair – hare*; *dear – deer*; and *tear* (as a noun) *– tear* (as a verb), etc.

3. Denotation. Language learners can find out the direct meaning of words in the dictionary. For example, the direct meaning of *'home'* is 'the house where one lives'.

4. Word grammar. Knowledge of word grammar involves word form and the derivations that can be made from it. For example, the word *'unemployment'* has a common prefix denoting 'opposite' (un-), a common noun suffix (ment), and is derived from the verb 'employ'.

5. Collocation. This refers to words which typically come or occur together. For example, the word *'perform'* is used with *'a task'* but the word 'do' comes with 'homework'.

6.   Polysemy. A word with two or more closely related meanings as '*foot*' in the following sentences: *Maggie hurt her foot. George stood at the foot of the hill.* The foot is the lowest part of the hill just as the foot is the lowest part of the human body.

7.   Frequency. Knowledge of some items in English is far more frequent in speech than in writing, e.g. '*indeed*', '*well*', '*actually*'.

8.   Connotation. Besides its direct meaning in the dictionary, some words have second or deep meaning. Language learners need to know a word that gives an extra dimension to its literal meaning. For example, the denotation - direct meaning – of 'home' is described as 'a place where people stay or live in', but in connotation – second or deep meaning – *'home'* might be represented or implied as *'happiness'* or *'warmth'* or *'security'*.

9.   Register. This refers to the appropriate use of a vocabulary item at any situations. For example, *'Want a fag?'* is acceptable only among friends while 'Would you like a cigarette?' is appropriate in most contexts.

10. Vocabulary within written discourse. This involves reference, linking, sequencing, and discovering the meaning of unknown vocabulary items in context.

11. Vocabulary within spoken discourse. This concerns intonation, stress and pausing, and with the words speakers use to signal the beginnings and endings of sections of discourse.

Previous Studies

The study of Maureen Walsh (2003) Senior Lecturer in Literacy Education at Australian Catholic University. The paper entitled Reading visual and multimodal texts: how is 'reading' different? It examines the differences between reading print-based texts and multimodal texts within the context of changed literacy practices. The researcher closely analyses aspects of a novel, a picture book and an internet site to determine the similarities and differences in the way readers would process each text. Through this examination of extracts from three very different texts the researcher suggested how a reader might respond to each text. It is evident that the process of meaning making Itself occurs in similar ways for print-based and multimodal texts, yet the 'processing' of modes is very different. It is evident that the 'affordance' of different modes, within the purpose of a text, has an essential function in constructing meaning.

The study of Charlease Kelly-Jackson and Stacy Delacruz (2014) at Kennesaw State University. Entitled Using Visual Literacy to Teach Science Academic Language:

Experiences from Three Preserves Teachers. It examined the original pedagogical study captured three preservice teachers' experiences using visual literacy strategies as an approach to teaching English language learners (ELLs) science academic language. Some questions from paper. What are the experiences of preservice teachers' use of visual literacy to teach science academic language with ELLs in an elementary classroom? What are the strengths/limitations of incorporating visual literacy into the classroom with Ells? Results also indicated that elementary students employed self-discovery, knowledge, and the contextual use of academic language during three different lessons. Findings from this study suggest that even though there were some limitations to incorporating visual literacy strategies into the science classroom, preservice teachers find the approach helpful to teaching academic language to ELLs. Along similar lines, teachers of this study appeared to be motivated and eager to use the strategy again in the future. Implications for practice and further directions for research are discussed.

The study of Alia ben sola in (2012) about the influence of using visual in teaching English vocabulary; it was carried out at Mohamed hider university of Biskrs. The researcher in this study applied the descriptive method to gain accrual information through describing a specific phenomenon. The researcher in his study has used questionnaires and class room observation in order to collecting data. The study came out the following results. Teachers and learners should appropriate perform the due task, they consider some practical principle that lastly led to rely more on just one kind of aids, they should benefit from their variation and manipulated them inter changeable following suitable criteria.

Study Procedures

Research method: The research has adopted the descriptive analytical method.

Population: The study population is teachers of English language at Sudanese's secondary schools.

Sample: A purposive sample was used for this study it included (70) teachers who teach English language at the different secondary schools at Khartoum Locality.

Tools of the study

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was used for data collection. it was distributed to the teachers from both male and female. This questionnaire includes a covering page which introduces the topic of the research. It designed according to Likert 5-point scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree). It includes (4) statements given to (70) Sudanese English teachers from different secondary schools. It was judged by experienced professors and doctors from Sudan University of Science and Technology.

The questionnaire was developed through the following stages:

(a)   It was designed by the researcher in consultation with some colleagues.

(b)   It was then presented to the supervisor for approval.

(c)   Then it was referred to four experts for judgment.

The reliability and validity of questionnaire as follow.

$Val = \sqrt{\text{reliability}}$.

Reliability = 0.80.

Validity = 0.71

Cronbach alpha coefficient = (0.80), a reliability coefficient is high and it indicates the stability of the scale so reliability coefficient is (0.71), and this shows that there is a high sincerity of the scale and that the benefit of the study.

Application of the questionnaire
The questionnaire after validity was applied to the teachers who represent the sample of the study .70 teachers responded to the questionnaire. Application was done on 2017.

Statistical analysis
Results
The researcher will present the results according to research question.
-    To what extent can visual literacy be used in the classroom as a tool for teaching new English vocabulary?
After tabulating the results of research question the results appeared as in table (1)

Table (1): the frequency and percentages of the sample responses to the items of the questionnaire in addition to the mean and Chi square.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Chi square	*p.value*
1.Using visual literacy is the best tool for teaching English vocabulary	Freq 31	Freq 35	Freq 1	Freq 2	Freq 1	86.57	0.00
	= 44.3%	= 50%	= 1.4%	= 2.9%	= 1.4%		
2. Using visual literacy helps students in guessing the meaning of new words.	Freq 35	Freq 33	Freq 2	---------	---------	29.34	0.00
				---------	---------		
	= 50%	= 47.1%	= 2.9%				
3. Using visual literacy motivates students to memorize the meaning of English vocabulary.	Freq 34	Freq 31	Freq 3	Freq 1	Freq 1	82.00	0.00
	= 48.6%	= 44.3%	= 4.3%	= 1.4%	= 1.4%		
4. Using visual literacy can help students overcome difficulties of using English vocabulary.	Freq 20	Freq 34	Freq 13	Freq 3	---------	29.08	0.00

	= 28.6%	= 48.6%	= 18.6%	= 4.3%			

Discussion of results
Statement (1): Using visual literacy is the best tool for teaching English vocabulary.
The table shows the distribution of the sample by the statement (1) as follows: strongly agree by (44.3%) agree by (50.0%) neutral by (1.4%) disagree by (2.9%) Strongly Disagree by (1.4%). This results pointed that high percentage in "agree and strongly agree" are exemplified "(50.0%) and (44.3%) respectively are high equal (94.3%). The chi-square is (86.57) with the significant value (0.000) and it is less than probability value (0.05). That means there are significant differences that are statistically significant differences of the choice for agree.

Statement (2): Using visual literacy helps students in guessing the meaning of new words.
The table shows the distribution of the sample by the statement (2) as follows: strongly agree by (50.0%) agree by (47.10%) neutral by (2.90%) disagree by (0) Strongly Disagree by (0). This results pointed that high percentage in "agree and strongly agree"

are exemplified "(50.0%) and (47.10%) respectively are high equal (97.1%). The chi-square is (29.34) with the significant value (0.000) and it is less than probability value (0.05). That means there are significant differences that are statistically significant differences of the choice for agree.

Statement (3): Using visual literacy motivates students to memorize the meaning of English vocabulary.

The table shows the distribution of the sample by the statement (3) as follows: strongly agree by (48.60%) agree by (44.30%) neutral by (4.30%) disagree by (1.40%) Strongly Disagree by (1.40%). This results pointed that high percentage in "agree and strongly agree" are exemplified "(48.60%) and (44.30%) respectively are high equal (93.0%). The chi-square is (82.00) with the significant value (0.000) and it is less than probability value (0.05). That means there are significant differences that are statistically significant differences of the choice for agree.

Statement (4) Using visual literacy can help students overcome difficulties of using English vocabulary.

The table shows the distribution of the sample by the statement (4) as follows: strongly agree by (28.60%) agree by (48.60%) neutral by (18.60%) disagree by (4.30%) strongly disagree by (0). This results pointed that high percentage in "agree and strongly agree" are exemplified "(48.60%) and (28.60%) respectively are high equal (77.2%). The chi-square is (29.08) with the significant value (0.000) and it is less than probability value (0.05). That means there are significant differences that are statistically significant differences of the choice for agree.

Conclusions:

To sum up the statistical analysis generated by SPSS (e.g. frequency, percentage, T-test, p.value and Chi-square tests) revealed that the tools are significantly greater for the study. The main results as follow:

1- Using visual literacy in English language classrooms as a tool for teaching English vocabulary can help students in using and practicing new vocabulary and also for teacher; it can help them to facilities explanation of the meaning of new vocabulary.

2- using or showing pictures in English language classrooms especially in teaching English vocabulary have positive influences in understating and using them in different contexts (spoken or written).

3- Using visual literacy in teaching English language vocabulary can enhance teaching procedures.

4- Using visual literacy can help students overcome difficulties of using English vocabulary.

Recommendations: With regard to results the researchers recommend the following:

1. English language teachers should take into account the importance of using visual literacy in teaching English language vocabulary to students on all levels.

2. English language teachers should be aware of the role of showing visual objects especially pictures and images in teaching English vocabulary.

3. Students should be encouraged to know how to interpret visual literacy in their English classrooms; because it can facilitate in understanding and using new vocabulary.

4. The English language syllabuses should be based on accurate needs analysis, appropriate selection of the visual aids and methodologies are also required. This could be by taking advantage of training and professional development opportunities in learning English language.

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