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Assessing the Role of Visual Teaching Materials in Teaching English Vocabulary

Tessema Tadese Abebe and L. Manjula Davidson

Abstract

The main purpose of the present study is to examine the role of visual materials in teaching English vocabulary. The first-mentioned researcher took a sample of grade 8 students and their English language teachers teaching in three Second Cycle Primary Schools in Robe town and its surrounding in Bale Zone. One hundred and twenty students out of 580 and all eight English language teachers were participated in the study.

Four research instruments: questionnaire, observation, interviews and document analysis were used to collect the data. The questionnaire was filled in by the entire subjects, while interview was conducted to sixteen students and four teachers. Eight lessons were observed while teachers were presenting vocabulary in three sample schools with the help of checklist. The results of the study reveal that the majority of the

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teachers rarely use visual materials like real objects, word flashcards, picture flashcards and charts to teach vocabulary. On the other hand, regarding the extent visual materials enhance vocabulary learning almost all of the respondents mentioned that as visual materials facilitate students' vocabulary learning.

Accordingly, it was recommended that teachers should use various types of visual materials that enhance students' vocabulary knowledge as much as possible. Knowing the importance of visual materials is not enough unless teachers use them in the actual teaching of the meaning of words. Hence, it is recommended that teachers should use easily available materials in order to help the students in understanding the meaning of words. Moreover, since the student's textbook does not include adequate number of visual materials; it is advisable to incorporate more visual materials to facilitate students' vocabulary learning.

Key words: Vocabulary, visual, effective, enhance, communicate

Introduction

Human-beings use language to communicate with one another their ideas, opinions, feelings, likes and dislikes. Effective communication can be performed based on the overall communicative competence of the learners through the use of appropriate words for intelligible interaction. Many scholars also pointed out that vocabulary is the backbone of communication. For instance, McCarthy (1990: viii) underlines the importance of vocabulary by saying: "No matter how well the students learn grammar no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way." This shows that, having good knowledge of vocabulary of a language is mandatory in order to understand or convey message in communication and to pursue and succeed in one's learning.

A scholar like Harmer (1991: 153) also states the importance of vocabulary by saying, "If language structure makes up the skeleton of the language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and the flesh." Harmer further states that an ability to manipulate grammatical structure does not have any potential for expressing meaning unless words are used. Moreover, in order to improve

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students' word power, vocabulary has to be taught as the most essential aspect of language. It is easier to witness that students have been exposed to vocabulary items at some stages but cannot remember them when they need for interaction. In this situation, either communication breaks down or the teacher has to apply some appropriate strategy. Porter and Margaret (1992) assert that using visual materials not only make what you have to say more comprehensive to your students, they can make it more interesting as well.

Wright (1976: 14) also clearly elaborates: “Visual aids used to motivate the student to speak, to create a context with which his speech will have meaning; to provide the student with information to use in speech, including objects, actions, and events; to provide the student with non-verbal clues for manipulation work and to provide non-verbal prompts to dialogue reproduction or to dialogue invention.” Visual materials assist teachers by giving them time for necessary classroom activities like drills, exercises, instructions and explanation for which their personal influence is indispensable. To enrich our vocabulary knowledge visual materials play a great role and prevent our isolation from the world of scientific and technical knowledge that can be gained by using English as a means of communication in real-life situations. Apart from this, Calder (1966), cited in Girma (1983), states that psychologists have found that 84% of what we learn we get from seeing; 13% of what we learn we get from hearing; and only 3% we learn in other ways. This implies that most of what we learn we get through visual medium. More meaningful and problem solving tasks of vocabulary require learners to analyze and process language more deeply, through the use of visual materials which help them to commit information to long-term memory.

Certainly, in order to have good knowledge of vocabulary for communication scholars like Wallace (1982), Allen (1983), Carter and McCarthy (1988) and Schmitt (2000) have written a lot on how to teach vocabulary effectively and efficiently. Similarly, Horn (1966), Coppen (1969), Rigg et al. (1969), Wright (1976), Corder (1977), Cable (1977), Wright et al. (1983), Hill (1990), Wright and Haleem (1991) and Gross (1993) have pointed out how visual materials assist vocabulary teaching. Similarly, Carter and McCarthy (1988) and Schmitt (2000) assert that even though vocabulary research has tended to focus on reading, they indicate as vocabulary is obviously necessary for the

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other three skills as well. According to Atkins et al.(1996) whenever the situation of teaching in the 'English for New Ethiopia' series are changed, teachers need to be aware of appropriate methodologies for introducing and consolidating new vocabulary items. The use of appropriate methodologies and various kinds of visual materials assist the learners in developing adequate knowledge of vocabulary. The frequent uses of verbal techniques, translating into students mother tongue and giving definition of words may not make our students effective user of the language for actual communication.

Wright and Haleem (1991: vi) also state:

One of the most important aspects of language teaching is the role of visual material: the importance of using visual media to make one's teaching more effective, communicative and interesting is well-known. However, many teachers _even experienced teachers'; do not exploit the potential of visual materials to the full. In addition, deciding which techniques to use, for which language teaching purpose is often problematical.

Singh (2005) also supports this idea by saying, "Often teachers know the value of certain visuals aids, but they fail to utilize them to the fullest because they do not take time to plan their use (p.177)." Doff (1988:14) asserts, "The use of real objects, pictures and mime for suitable vocabulary is a very effective method as it is direct, interesting, and it makes an impression on the class." This implies that using visuals holds the attention of the learners on meaning, and help them to make the language used in the class more real and alive. Visuals evoke an immediate response from learners in a class which is the vital seed of all meaningful language-learning in general and vocabulary in particular (Hill 1990).

Visual materials stimulate presentation, accelerates learning and group activities. Events, concepts, and processes become more meaningful to the students; they better conceptualize the printed or spoken words attempt to desire through visual materials. Allen (1983) adds that children have an

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uncanny ability for learning languages and an instinctive avenue to success. Visual materials actually economize time; insure more effective learning of vocabulary and permanent retention than do verbal instruction.

In general, the use of various types of visual materials help the learners in order to negotiate meaning, actively interact with one another and exchange views while their attention are on meaning which in turn develops their vocabulary knowledge. The visual expressive teacher can overcome customary mental resistances of the student with the support of the striking graphic image. Horn (1966:7) explains, “For the academically gifted child the visual can excite the imagination; for average students, stimulate; for the retarded child, clarify the visual image.” According to Pintrich (2003) currently research indicates that student's motivation seems to be central in teaching-learning process. When the students learn vocabulary through visual materials they are struggling to develop their knowledge and cognitive power to be successful academically. In addition to this, Mayer and Massa (2003) elaborate that visualizer prefers to learn through the use of visual modes of thinking and instruction involving pictures. This indicates that visual learners have the advantages of using more than one medium to learn vocabulary even if they are good at processing visual things.

The use of various types of visual materials in teaching vocabulary increase the intrinsic motivation of the learners (Hill 1990).When the learners develop interest towards what they learn, they can actively engage themselves in the activities to be performed, which in turn assist them to learn language meaningfully. As to psychologists, visual materials contribute to the efficiency, depth, and variety of learning by stimulating learners' imagination. They arouse interests of the learners by appealing to several senses. This is because of they have the power to make learning more permanent, and their aesthetic character makes the teaching-learning process pleasant and enjoyable.

Regarding this, Cook (2001) states that effective acquisition of vocabulary can never be just the learning of individual words and their meanings in isolation, but it needs the use of various senses to visualize the meaning of the words. Jordan (1997) points out that vocabulary development is of concern to all four language skills which can be facilitated through visual approach by associating

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words, remembering them and extending the networks. Mayer and Sims (1994) indicate that an increasing body of research evidence supports that students' learning are affected positively by presenting words and illustrations or pictures together. Allen (1983:24) points out, "Real objects are better than pictures whenever we have them in the classroom. When there are real windows, doors, walls, floors, desks, etc. in the classroom, it is foolish not to use them in our teaching." Harmer (1991) also states, "If a teacher wishes to introduce the word 'ring' which is worn on finger, it is by far easier to show the material to the students instead of devoting time on other techniques (P.161)."

Coppen (1969:102) explains:

Children have to learn to read pictures and charts just as they have to learn to read printed words. The pictures must be simple and unambiguous, should not include irrelevant matter, and should be so designed that the visual emphasis falls on the teaching point. Colours should contrast well and all the main items should be large enough to be clearly visible to all children. In presenting the material, the children's attention must be directed in such a way that they observe, what is important and are able to draw conclusion from what they see.

It can be understood from the above quotation that pictures assist learners to negotiate word meanings during task performance; they are attending towards meaningful contexts, with immediate opportunities to use the new items in communication. Wright (1976:4) summarizes the role of picture in teaching vocabulary by saying, "A picture can often show an action more easily than even a talented actor can demonstrate." Besides, Dobson (1974:71-72) explains, "If you have a set of flashcards that show a figure or figures performing different activities such as sleeping, getting up, eating a meal, reading the newspaper, driving, working in an office and so on, you can have a student put the flashcards into a logical sequence and then tell a story based on the sequence." Flashcards and postcards develop the learners' self-study and create fun as they are easily shuffled. A teacher can draw a picture on the flashcards, or stick on a picture from a magazine that can be used for presenting and practicing new words as well as for revision purpose. As Cable (1977) mentions blackboard is the most conveniently available instructional device to display lettering and diagrams, drawn on the spot in front of the class. Even if you have little talent as an artist, you can make stick figures to represent

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people and draw simple outlines of subjects which you can then use as elements in the composition of a dialogue, an improvisation, or a story or as discussion topics in general.” According to Doff (1988) teachers or learners do not need to be wonderful artists to draw a picture that can be used in teaching vocabulary; the most important thing is to communicate the message.

As a whole, the majority of the local studies done in Ethiopia both at BA and MA levels dealt with the techniques and strategies of teaching and learning vocabulary. For instance, Abebe (1997) and Jeylan (1999) mention the use of vocabulary learning from the learners' point of view and varieties of vocabulary learning strategies respectively. Both underlined the importance of vocabulary to communicate effectively and efficiently in second/foreign language learning classrooms. Abebe (1997: ii) elaborates, "The knowledge of vocabulary is crucial for learning skills in reading, listening, writing and speaking." This clearly indicates that having sound knowledge of vocabulary facilitates the way for our students to be competent and effective user of the language. But none of them try to relate the teaching of vocabulary with visual materials. Hence, the present study attempts to fill this gap and help the learners to be effective user of the language for meaningful communication.

Objective of the Study

Hence, the general objective of the study is to examine the role of visual materials in teaching English Vocabulary. It does so by focusing on the following specific objectives:

- ✚ To assess the extent the uses of visual materials enhance vocabulary learning.
- ✚ To identify how often the use of various types of visual materials make the learners interact actively in vocabulary learning activities.
- ✚ To analyze the extent the textbook incorporates pictures, charts, tables, diagrams, etc. in vocabulary sections.

Significance of the Study

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The results of this study are believed to be applicable to English language classroom by giving the following invaluable insights: First English language teachers in the sample schools will get information about the use of visual materials in teaching different vocabulary lessons. Second it gives feedback for the syllabus designers and course book writers in order to make further improvements in the attempt to include adequate numbers of pictures, diagrams, charts, etc. in the textbook. Finally, it motivates other researchers in order to conduct further studies in the area.

Research Methodology and Procedure

This part deals with the description of the participants of the study, the instruments used, data collection procedure and, data organization and analysis.

Participants of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine the role of visual materials in teaching English vocabulary at second cycle primary schools. In order to achieve this objective, three second cycle primary schools in Robe town and its surrounding in Bale Zone were chosen from the existing ten schools as target population together with their English language teachers teaching the same Grade level. According to the information gained from the three schools the total number of students learning at Grade 8 is 580. Fifty-five students from Galema, 40 students from Ali Bira, and 25 students from Hora Boka Second Cycle Primary Schools were selected based on the total number of the students in each school through simple random sampling method to be the focus of the study. The total number of the students involved in the study was 120. From these participants 63 and 57 were male and female students respectively.

On the other hand a total of 8 teachers, of whom 5 male and 3 female took part in the study. The teachers were taken on the basis of comprehensive sampling method since they are only eight in numbers. The rationale to choose this Grade was that it is the stage at which the students make adequate preparation in order to attend the next cycle at High School level. This level requires

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students' great effort to cope with the new situation where the medium of instruction is English.

Instruments Used in the Study

To elicit the necessary information from the respondents, questionnaire, observation, interviews and document analysis were used as data collection instruments.

1. Questionnaires

It is believed that questionnaires are helpful to collect the necessary information from large number of respondents. The questionnaire has three parts. The first consists of 10 items which deal with the extent teachers' use visual materials. The second part has 20 questions, which asked about the extent visual materials enhance vocabulary learning. Finally, the third part deals with open-ended questions to generate additional information. During the administration of questionnaires respondents were told the purpose and how they fill in the questionnaire orally. They were also informed to fill in based on what actually happened in the classroom and about the use of visual materials in teaching vocabulary. Besides, the student's were also told to use any of the three languages (Amharic, English or Afan Oromo) for open-ended part of the questionnaire in order to express their ideas clearly. Eight English language teachers teaching in the sample schools were filled in the questionnaire prepared for them. The questionnaire administered for teachers have both close-ended and open-ended parts in which the respondents give answer about the use of visual materials in presenting vocabulary lessons.

2. Observation

The observation technique was chosen as second tool to collect data for the present study. This was because the researcher believed that the instrument was able to provide him with the actual practices in the classroom that the other instrument might not provide. Classroom observation was made in three schools which were selected through simple random sampling method. The researcher used observation checklist in order to examine the type of visual materials used by teachers and the extent

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these visual materials enhance vocabulary learning. Moreover, observation helped the researcher in order to check the reliability of the data collected from teachers and students through questionnaire.

3. Interview

Semi-structured interview was used to get additional information about the topic under investigation and to crosscheck the data collected through questionnaire and classroom observation. The interview was conducted with 16 students randomly selected from the three sample schools. The students were asked to reflect about the use of visual materials in teaching English vocabulary, the techniques their teachers' use to teach vocabulary, the extent visual materials enhance vocabulary learning.

Besides, the students explained in detail the techniques that helped them in developing good knowledge of word power in order to communicate effectively and efficiently with the speaker of the language. Teachers' interview was made with four teachers randomly selected from each of the three sample schools. Teachers were asked about the use of visual materials, whether they supplement the teaching of vocabulary with visual materials, the techniques they recommend to teach the meaning of words, the extent English textbook consists of different visual materials in vocabulary sections and other related questions.

4. Document Analysis

This is the fourth instrument in order to collect the necessary information for the present research work. Document analysis helped the researcher to examine the textbook very closely about the types of visuals incorporated in it together with other techniques used throughout the textbook to teach English vocabulary. This tool also assisted the researcher to strengthen the data collected through other three methods. It was used to get other information about techniques used in the textbook to teach English vocabulary, kinds of pictures and drawing included.

Data Analysis

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This part deals with results and discussion of the data collected from the three sample school respondents through different tools: questionnaire, observation, interviews and document analysis. The responses gathered from teachers and students through questionnaires as well as other instruments were analyzed side by side based on their theme relations in order to show the results vividly. The first parts of the discussion starts with the use of visual materials in class, the second deals with the use of visual materials in enhancing students' vocabulary learning, then the third part is about the techniques frequently used by teachers vis-à-vis students' preference, the fourth section presents analysis of data from classroom observation, the fifth part assesses the visual techniques in the textbook and finally main points of this section appears in this sequence.

Table 1: Responses of Students Regarding the Extent Teachers Use Visual Materials in Class

No	Items	Responses													
		Rarely						Sometimes		Frequently					
		Never		Rarely		Total				Frequently		Always		Total	
		NR	%	NR	%	No.	%	N.R	%	NR	%	N	%	R.	%
1	Real objects	10	8.3	38	31.7	48	40	44	36.7	9	7.5	19	15.8	28	23.3
2	Pictures	20	16.7	47	39.2	67	55.8	42	35	9	7.5	2	1.7	11	9.2
3	Models	35	29.2	40	33.3	75	62.5	31	25.8	10	8.3	4	3.3	14	11.7
4a	Word flash cards	41	34.2	34	28.3	75	62.5	16	13.3	12	10	17	14.2	29	24.2
b	Picture flash cards	36	30	44	36.7	80	66.6	21	17.5	10	8.3	9	7.5	19	15.8
c	Postcards	55	45.8	23	19.2	78	65	27	22.5	8	6.7	7	5.8	15	12.5
5	Flip charts	51	42.5	40	33.3	91	75.8	14	11.7	7	5.8	8	6.7	15	12.5
6	Blackboard drawings	25	20.8	33	27.5	58	48.3	28	23.3	17	14.2	17	14.2	34	28.3

7	Mime, action and gesture	27	22.5	34	28.3	61	50.8	23	19.2	22	18.3	14	11.7	36	30
8a	Story games	32	26.7	34	28.3	66	55	27	22.5	11	9.2	16	13.3	27	22.5
b	Memory games	38	31.7	32	26.7	70	58.3	28	23.3	9	7.5	13	10.8	22	18.3
c	Guessing games	37	30.8	34	28.3	71	59.1	23	19.2	14	11.7	12	10	26	21.7
d	Question and answer games	16	13.3	32	26.7	48	40	34	28.3	23	19.2	15	12.5	38	31.7
9	Whole-part relations through visuals	16	13.3	34	28.3	50	41.7	21	17.5	28	23.3	21	17.5	49	40.8
10	Role-play	44	36.7	25	20.8	69	57.5	36	30	9	7.5	6	5	15	12.5

N.R. =Number of Respondents

The first item in the Table above depicts the extent teachers use real objects to teach vocabulary. Forty percent of the student respondents said rarely, 36.7% sometimes and 23.3% stated that the teachers use frequently real objects to teach English vocabulary. The finding shows that teachers rarely use real objects to present vocabulary lessons. Besides, similar responses were collected from the students' interview regarding the use of real objects. Item 2 in the questionnaire was meant to find out the extent teachers use pictures to teach vocabulary. Fifty-five point eight percent of the students said rarely, 35% sometimes and 9.2% frequently.

As it was indicated in the review literature part, using pictures to teach vocabulary help the students in order to interact with each other and to express what they feel regarding the information included in the pictures. But the finding implies that pictures are rarely employed in teaching the meaning of words. As indicated in Table 1 above, items (4a-c) were designed to obtain information about the extent teachers use different cards. From the student respondents 62.5% indicated rarely, 13.3% sometimes and 24.2% frequently that teachers use word flashcards. Similarly, 66.6% of student respondents answered rarely, 17.5% sometimes and 15.8% frequently; as well as 65% rarely, 22.5%

sometimes and 12.5% frequently that their teachers' use picture flashcards and postcards respectively.

The other item in questionnaire was used to investigate information about blackboard drawings. Students mentioned that 48.3% rarely 23.3% sometimes and 28.3% frequently. In the same way, to the question related to the use of mime, action and gesture, 50.8% of the students said rarely, 19.2% sometimes and 30% frequently. The responses of the students for the above two items; blackboard drawing and body language revealed that teachers make use of them rarely for teaching the meaning of words. Items 8a-d were aimed at discovering how often teachers use games. Student respondents indicated that 55% rarely, 22.5% sometimes and 22.5% frequently about the extent their teachers use story games. Regarding memory games, 58.3% said rarely, 23.3% sometimes and 18.3% frequently, as well as guessing games 59.1% rarely, 19.2% sometimes and 21.7% frequently.

Data from Teachers' Response

The data collected from teachers regarding their uses of visual materials in class were analyzed below by making reference to the responses of the students.

Table 2: Responses of Teachers Regarding the Extent they Use Visual Materials in Class

No	Items	Responses															
		Rarely						Sometimes				Frequently					
		Never		Rarely		Total						Frequently		Always		Total	
		N.R.	%	N.R.	%	NR.	%	NR	%	N.R	%	N.R.	%	N.R.	%		
1	Real objects			3	37.5	3	37.5	4	50	1	12.5			1	12.5		
2	Pictures			2	25	2	25	3	37.5	2	25	1	12.5	3	37.5		
3	Models			3	37.5	3	37.5	4	50	1	12.5			1	12.5		
4a	Word flash cards	2	25	5	62.5	7	87.5			1	12.5			1	12.5		
b	Picture	2	25	5	62.5	7	87.5			1	12.5			1	12.5		

	cards														
c	Post cards	4	50	3	37.5	7	87.5	1	12.5						
5	Flip charts	4	50	2	25	6	75	2	25						
6	Blackboard drawings			1	12.5	1	12.5	6	75			1	12.5	1	12.5
7	Mime, action gesture							2	25	5	62.5	1	12.5	6	75
8a	Story games	1	12.5	6	75	7	87.5	1	12.5						
b	Memory game	2	25	4	50	6	75	2	25						
c	Guessing game	1	12.5			1	12.5	3	37.5	3	37.5	1	12.5	4	50
d	Question answer games			1	12.5	1	12.5	2	25	1	12.5	4	50	5	62.5
9	Whole-part relations through visuals	2	25	1	12.5	3	37.5	1	12.5	4	50			4	50
10	Role-play			3	37.5	3	37.5	3	37.5	1	12.5	1	12.5	2	25

N. R. =Number of Respondents

In the above table although half of teachers respondents indicate as they use real objects sometimes, the responses of students in Table 1 and the information collected during interview asserted that teachers rarely use real objects to teach vocabulary lessons. A certain number of teachers (37.5%) mentioned that they use pictures in teaching vocabulary, at the practical level what the majority of the students (55.8%) mentioned seem reasonable that teachers use pictures rarely from outside the class. Perhaps, that is why some of teacher respondents shift to sometimes instead of rarely.

The above Table indicates that models were used rarely by teachers for classroom presentation. Comparing the respondents who said rarely and frequently also may give us hint as some of the respondents simply take the middle position, that is, sometimes. The responses of students (Table 1) and teachers (Table 2) for the above three items have similarities that word flashcards, picture Language in India www.languageinindia.com

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flashcards and postcards were used rarely by teachers. This was also asserted by teachers during interview as they were very busy with high teaching load and other activities in order to prepare and use different visual materials which help them in teaching vocabulary.

Another item in the questionnaire was designed to get information about the use of flip charts in discussing the meaning of words. The responses of the teachers depict that 75% of the teachers indicate rarely and 25% sometimes regarding their use of flip charts. The results in both Table 1 and Table 2 show that 75.8% of the students and 75% of teachers indicate that flip charts were used rarely in teaching the meaning of words. The finding reveals that teachers use sometimes certain simple stick figures to show the meaning of words.

Hence, the overall findings from the analysis of data with different tools indicate that story games and memory games were used rarely. But guessing games, and question and answer games were relatively used frequently. From the overall results obtained in the above discussion, teachers use certain types of visual materials to teach vocabulary. Mime, action, gesture, question and answer games, guessing games and whole-parts relations through visuals were relatively the main types of visuals utilized by teachers to teach vocabulary.

Table 3: Responses of the Students Regarding the Extent Visual Materials Enhance their Vocabulary Learning.

No	Items	Responses													
		Rarely						Sometimes				Frequently			
		Never		Rarely		Total				Frequently		Always		Total	
		No. of	%	No. of	%	No. of	%	No. of	%	No. of	%	No. of	%	No. of	%
1	Real objects	3	2.5	35	29.2	38	31.7	28	23.3	18	15	36	30	54	45
2	Pictures	4	3.3	19	15.8	23	19.2	37	30.8	35	29.2	25	20.8	60	50

3	Models	25	20.8	27	22.5	52	43.3	30	25	16	13.3	22	18.3	38	31.7
4 a	Word flash cards	11	9.2	16	13.3	27	22.5	35	29.2	33	27.5	25	20.8	58	48.3
b	Picture cards	6	5	30	25	36	30	38	31.7	29	24.2	17	14.2	46	38.3
c	Post cards	24	20	29	24.2	53	44.1	31	25.8	21	17.5	15	12.5	36	30
5	Flip charts	18	15	20	16.7	38	31.7	32	26.7	24	20	26	21.5	50	41.7
6	Blackboard drawings	10	8.3	12	10	22	18.3	24	20	33	27.5	41	34.2	74	61.6
7	Mime, action gesture	12	10	19	15.8	31	25.8	32	26.7	32	26.7	25	20.8	57	47.5
8 a	story games	9	7.5	18	15	27	22.5	40	33.3	33	27.5	20	16.7	53	44.1
b	memory games	11	9.2	22	18.3	33	27.5	28	23.3	35	29.2	24	20	59	49.1
c	guessing games	15	12.5	27	22.5	42	35	30	25	26	21.7	22	18.3	48	40
d	Question answer games	3	2.5	16	13.3	19	15.8	26	21.7	34	28.3	41	34.2	75	62.5
9	Whole-part relations through visuals	7	5.8	14	11.7	21	17.5	24	20	39	32.5	36	30	75	62.5
10	Role-play	15	12.5	26	21.7	41	34.2	33	27.5	26	21.7	20	16.7	46	38.3

No. of R. =Number of Respondents

The first item in the questionnaire in relation to this topic was meant to find out the degree to which real objects enhance vocabulary learning. 31.7% of the student respondents said rarely, 23.3% sometimes and 45% frequently. On the other hand, teachers answered the same question as 12.5% rarely, 50% sometimes and 37.5% frequently that the uses of real objects facilitate vocabulary learning.

From this we can understand that greater number of student respondents (45%) pointed out as the use of real objects enhances their vocabulary learning frequently. This idea also supported by reasonable Language in India www.languageinindia.com

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number of teachers which accounted for about 37.5% of the total respondents. Similarly, to the question raised to them during interview both teachers and students indicated that the use of real objects assist the students in getting clear ideas about the meaning of words.

Next an attempt was made to find out the extent pictures enhance vocabulary learning. 19.2% of the students answered as rarely, 30.8% sometimes and the greater numbers 50% said frequently that pictures enhance their vocabulary learning. Teachers also said 12.5% rarely, 37.5% sometimes and 50% frequently in their responses. So from this finding it is possible to judge that pictures facilitate students' vocabulary learning. A high proportion of teacher and student respondents reported that pictures enhance their vocabulary learning. This was greatly supported by the results in the interview as well as observation.

Table 4: Responses of Teachers Regarding the Role of Visual Materials in Enhancing Students' Vocabulary Learning

No	Items	Responses													
		Rarely						Sometimes				Frequently			
		Never		Rarely		Total				Frequently		Always		Total	
		N.R.	%	N.R.	%	N.R.	%			N.R.	%	N.R.	%	N.R.	%
1	Real objects			1	12.5	1	12.5	4	50	2	25	1	12.5	3	37.5
2	Pictures			1	12.5	1	12.5	3	37.5	2	25	2	25	4	50
3	Models			1	12.5	1	12.5	3	37.5	2	25	2	25	4	50
4a	Word flash cards			2	25	2	25			5	62.5	1	12.5	6	75
b	Picture cards			2	25	2	25	2	25	3	37.5	1	12.5	4	50
c	Post cards			2	25	2	25	1	12.5	4	50	1	12.5	5	62.5
5	Flip charts			1	12.5	1	12.5	2	25	4	50	1	12.5	5	62.5

6	Blackboard drawings			2	25	2	25	4	50	2	25			2	25
7	Mime, action gesture							2	25	3	37.5	3	37.5	6	75
8a	Story games			2	25	2	25	1	12.5	4	50	1	12.5	5	62.5
b	Memory game			2	25	2	25	1	12.5	4	50	1	12.5	5	62.5
c	Guessing game							2	25	5	62.5	1	12.5	6	75
d	Question answer games							4	50			4	50	4	50
9	Whole-part relations through visuals			1	12.5	1	12.5	2	25	4	50	1	12.5	5	62.5
10	Role-play			2	25	2	25	2	25	3	37.5	1	12.5	4	50

N.R. =Number of Respondents

The finding of the research indicates that the use of pictures frequently facilitates students' effort to understand the meaning of words. The other point raised in the questionnaire was concerned with the degree models enhance vocabulary learning. From students 43.3% indicated rarely, 25% sometimes and 31.7% frequently that model facilitates vocabulary learning. Teachers on their part mentioned that 12.5% rarely, 37.5% sometimes and 50% frequently that models help them in making brief the meaning of words (Table 4).

During interview also both teacher and student respondents stated that the use of different visual materials facilitates students' vocabulary learning. Cards are the other visual materials that can be used to deliver vocabulary lessons (Table 3 and 4 above). Students gave response as 22.5% rarely, 29.2% sometimes and the largest numbers which were 48.3% frequently that word flashcards help them to learn vocabulary effectively, and for picture flashcards 30% indicated rarely, 31.7% sometimes and

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38.3% frequently. In the same way, postcards also enhance vocabulary learning as the students stated 44.1% rarely, 25.8% sometimes and 30% frequently that postcards facilitate their understanding of word meanings. As the responses of the students depicted word flashcards and picture flashcards were frequently that made clear the meaning of words. This implies that the use of flashcards increase students' knowledge by encouraging them in order to explain what they see on the cards.

Both student and teacher participants were also asked how often flip charts enhance students' vocabulary learning. 31.7% of the students asserted as rarely, 26.7% sometimes and 41.7% frequently that the use of flip charts make easier learning vocabulary. In the same way, 12.5% rarely, 25% sometimes and 62.5% frequently that teachers confirmed flip charts assist the students to develop good knowledge of word meanings. Furthermore, the information yielded by the interview from teachers was also strengthened the importance of flip charts in enhancing students' vocabulary learning. From the responses of the respondents, the finding seems to suggest simple drawing of pictures on the blackboard can help to increase the interest of the lesson, and are often a good way of showing meaning and conveying situations to the class.

It appears that story games, memory games, and guessing games enhance greatly the teaching of vocabulary. Games can be used to improve the students' command of a particular item of language: sounds, vocabulary, spelling etc. Similarly, students mentioned that question and answer games clarify word meanings as 15.8% rarely, 21.7% sometimes and 62.5% frequently. This implies that different games help the students in order to build confidence in them and experiment with the language. Besides, in all the four types of games the greater proportion of the students claimed that the use of these techniques help them frequently for their vocabulary learning. During interview the majority of the students pointed out the importance of using games in order to develop confidence and to select the words that they use to achieve the goal of carrying out the various games.

Analysis of Data from Classroom Observation

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Classroom observation was one of the instruments used to collect information about what was going on during the actual teaching-learning process. The engagement of students in vocabulary learning activities and the use of visual materials were examined during classroom observation.

During many of the classroom observation, the researcher saw while teachers were using the techniques on the student's textbook and to some extent body language to teach the meaning of certain words. The students also did not take part actively like that of when teachers used visual materials on student's textbook. But there was less students' participation in the remaining consecutive observations, when teachers did not use visual materials. Besides, the researcher did not observe any visual materials that teachers brought to the classroom from outside during the whole eight lessons.

As a whole from the classroom observation, the researcher has seen that teachers rarely use visual materials to teach vocabulary even if they know that visual materials facilitates vocabulary learning to a greater extent. It needs teachers' willingness and devotion to use the locally available materials to present vocabulary lessons. The presence of visual materials in the student's textbook may also encourage the students to use the book and to do their own independent learning. As far as there are a number of visual materials that can be used for teaching vocabulary, it seems that what was incorporated in the student's textbook is not satisfactory. Moreover, the types of other techniques used throughout the book was related to contextual guessing, matching, fill in the blank space, and the use of word puzzle. Consequently, the results elicited from teachers interview and document analysis depicted that the main types of visual techniques like different games, cards, role-play, etc. discussed in chapter two were not included in vocabulary section of the student's textbook. Therefore, the document analysis, the open-ended and interview questions reveal that the majority of the techniques which teachers use and what is incorporated in the student's textbook do not meet the interest and needs of the students.

Conclusion

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The purpose of this study is to examine the role of visual materials in teaching English language vocabulary. The subjects of the study were three grade 8 second cycle primary schools in Robe town and its surrounding in Bale Zone. One hundred and twenty students and 8 teachers were included in the study. Four instruments, namely, questionnaires, observation, interview and document analyses were used to collect the data from the respondents. Based up on the information collected through the above tools, the results of the study revealed that teachers use visual materials like real objects, cards, charts etc. rarely in teaching the meaning of words. On the other hand, the majority of teacher and student respondents answered that visual materials enhance students' vocabulary learning frequently. Specially, various types of cards, language games, charts, pictures, etc. assist the teaching of vocabulary to a greater extent.

According to the responses elicited from teachers and students through open-ended questions, the students were eager to learn vocabulary with the help of visual materials. Moreover, the respondents underlined that learning vocabulary through visual materials assist the students to communicate effectively with the language. They added that as the use of visual materials gave the students opportunity to express their ideas and feelings with the language they have in their exposure. On the other hand, during document analysis the researcher observed as the number of visual techniques incorporated in the textbook is not sufficient to assist the students in order to facilitate their vocabulary learning. Teachers also elaborated during interview as the student's textbook did not include satisfactory number of visual techniques that help their students to understand the meaning of words.

To put into a nutshell, both teachers and students argued that visual materials enhance students' vocabulary learning. On the contrary, it was rarely that teachers used visual materials to teach English vocabulary. It seems that there were fewer attempts on the part of teachers to supplement the textbook with visual materials that facilitate vocabulary learning.

Recommendation

It has been generally argued that the use of visual materials facilitates language learning apart from Language in India www.languageinindia.com
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their motivational value in teaching. It is also believed that the students learn best when they are engaged in the activities instead of being passive listener to teachers' explanation. Moreover, the use of various types of visual materials gives the students the opportunity to use their own ideas and expand their vocabulary knowledge. Thus, on the basis of the findings obtained in the study, the following recommendations are forwarded in order to help the students to develop sound knowledge of vocabulary.

- Although teachers know that visual materials facilitate vocabulary learning, it was rarely that they use in the actual teaching-learning process of word meanings. Hence, it is recommended that teachers should use visual materials that can easily be produced by teachers or students from locally available materials.
- The use of various types of visual materials assists the students in learning the meaning of words. They also help the students in order to interact actively using the language for meaningful communication. Therefore, teachers should spare time to present different visual materials that motivate and encourage the students to carry out effective interaction with the speaker of the language.
- The section of vocabulary in student's textbook should be improved so as to include various types of visual materials that enhance vocabulary learning. As far as the students have different styles they can easily benefited from the use of pictures, cards, language games, charts, role-play, etc. So it is recommended that textbook writers have to think of revising this part as much as possible.

Finally, if these recommendations are acted upon, the students will get the opportunity to involve themselves in active vocabulary learning activities which in turn improve their knowledge of words.

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Tessema Tadese Abebe, M.A.
Lecturer in English
Madawalabu University
Ethiopia

Andhra University College of Arts & Commerce
Research Scholar in English Department
Visakhapatnam 530 003
Andhra Pradesh
India
Tessematadesse@gmail.Com

L. Manjula Davidson
Professor of English
Andhra University
Visakhapatnam 530 003
Andhra Pradesh
India
Manju_Lynd@Yahoo.Co.In

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