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UPPER PRIMARY TEACHERS OF ENGLISH ON VOCABULARY

Amit K. Rai

Research Scholar-Indian Institute of Teacher Education (IITE),

Gandhinagar, Gujarat

raiamitrai@yahoo.com

Research Supervisor:

Dr. Prerana Shelat

Director, Centre of Education, IITE, Gandhinagar



ABSTRACT:

Acquiring a new language is a complex process. The vocabulary acquisition is critical to this process and to reach a respectable level it is important for teachers to develop appropriate teaching methodology and strategies, to help learners and teach them how to reach the needed levels. So, it is necessary to investigate the teachers' perception of vocabulary learning strategies and their classroom practice which could lead to learners' awareness about the vocabulary learning strategies.

This study reports Upper Primary teachers' outlook on Vocabulary in English of (class 6 to 8 students) in Kalol Block, Gandhinagar. It's an exploratory research conducted as a part of the researcher's doctoral study. It used a mixed-method design which combined both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. An online survey was conducted using Google form for data collection. The data used in this study included Mixed Questionnaire for 27 Upper primary teachers teaching English in Class VI in Government Primary Schools of Kalol Block, Gandhinagar.

The findings reveal teaching and evaluation strategies mostly used by the teachers and effective in acquisition of Vocabulary in English. The findings also indicate that the primary element in learning a language is the acquisition of the vocabulary using various techniques and strategies.

KEYWORDS: Vocabulary Acquisition, Upper Primary, ESL activities

INTRODUCTION:

A rich vocabulary makes the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing easier to perform. Vocabulary is important because it's the basis of all language. It's the raw building blocks that one can use to express their thoughts and ideas, share information, understand others and grow personal relationships. Even if we barely know a language and have zero grasp of grammar, we can still communicate. With the purpose to strengthen the vocabulary of students, this survey was being carried out.

Acquiring a new language is a complex process and the vocabulary acquisition is critical to this process and to reach a respectable level, it is important for teachers to develop appropriate teaching methodology and strategies, to help learners and teach them how to reach the needed levels. So it is necessary to investigate the teachers' perception of vocabulary learning strategies and their classroom practice which could lead to



learners' awareness about the vocabulary learning strategies.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the teachers' outlook on vocabulary in English.
2. To know different strategies used by teachers for teaching vocabulary.
3. To know how teachers evaluate vocabulary in English
4. To know challenges faced by teachers while teaching vocabulary in English and how they overcome them.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. What are the views of teachers on teaching of vocabulary and evaluation of it?
2. Which are the different techniques/strategies to teach vocabulary?
3. What are challenges faced by teachers while teaching vocabulary?

METHODS AND PROCEDURE:

It's exploratory research conducted as a part of the researcher's doctoral study.

❏ TITLE:

AN OUTLOOK: KALOL BLOCK UPPER PRIMARY TEACHERS OF ENGLISH ON VOCABULARY

❏ RESEARCH DESIGN:

It used a mixed-method design which combined both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. It was a survey type study.

❏ POPULATION:

All the teachers of Upper primary teachers teaching English in Class VI in Government Primary Schools of Kalol Block, Gandhinagar were the population for the present study. There are total 72 upper primary teachers teaching English in Class VI in Government Primary Schools of Kalol Block,



Gandhinagar.

❏ SAMPLE:

The whole population i.e. 72 upper primary teachers teaching English in Class VI in Government Primary Schools of Kalol Block, Gandhinagar was selected as sample. However, only 27 teachers responded to the questionnaire.

❏ TOOLS:

The researcher used an online survey using Google form. The researcher constructed a questionnaire titled "ELT QUESTIONNAIRE". It consisted of 20 open as well as close ended questions.

❏ DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

The study was delimited to the teachers teaching English in Class VI of Kalol block of Gandhinagar district only.

❏ DATA COLLECTION:

The data for the study was collected through online mode using Google form. The researcher prepared 20 questions in Google form and sent the link to the teachers. 27 teachers responded the questionnaire.

❏ DATA ANALYSIS:

For the data analysis, the researcher used frequency percentage and content analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

❏ ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In reply of the 1st question about the most important aspect of ELT (English Language Teaching) for the students of Class VI, 11.11% of teachers mentioned grammar, 70.37% of teachers favoured vocabulary, 11.11% of teachers answered expressions while 7.41% of teachers mentioned fluency. These responses confirmed **that majority of teachers felt vocabulary as the most important aspect of ELT.**

To the 2nd question about average words in English known by students in the beginning of the academic year, 3.70% of teachers mentioned depending on the age of students, 29.63% of teachers replied below 100 words, 3.70% of teachers answered 300-400 words, 14.81 % of teachers replied 200-300 words while 48.15% of teachers mentioned 100-200 words. These responses confirmed **that majority of teachers felt average words known by students were 100-200.**



For question 3 about average words in English known by students by the end of the academic year, 7.41% of teachers mentioned above 500 words, 14.81% of teachers replied 100-200 words, 22.22% of teachers answered 200-300 words, 3.70 % of teachers replied above 1000 words, 3.70% of teachers replied below 100 while 37.04% of teachers mentioned 300-400 words. **These responses confirmed that majority of teachers felt that by the end of the academic year, average words known by students were 300-400.**

For 4th question about how much time teachers spent for vocabulary, 3.70 % of teachers mentioned 10 minutes, 3.70 % of teachers replied depending on lesson, 7.41% of teachers answered half of teaching hours, 25.93% of teachers answered quarter of teaching hours while 59.26% of teachers never calculated time spent for vocabulary. Thus, **majority of teachers didn't calculate how much time they spent for vocabulary teaching.**

In reply of the fifth question about rating the importance of vocabulary for students to learn a language / English in particular, 22.22% of teachers rated 4-7 while 77.78% of teachers rated 8-10. Thus, **most of the teachers felt that vocabulary was important for students to learn a language/English in particular.**

In 6th question about rating the importance of 9 different strategies in teaching vocabulary, the responses were as below:

Rating points	Flashcards	Videos	Pictures	Drawing on blackboard	Translation	Examples	Expressions/ Role play/enact	Real objects	Real-life experiences
1	7.41%	7.41%	7.41%	3.70%	14.81%	7.41%	7.41%	11.11%	7.41%
2	11.11%	3.70%	-	18.52%	7.41%	-	7.41%	3.70%	11.11%
3	3.70%	14.81%	14.81%	14.81%	11.11%	14.81%	11.11%	11.11%	7.41%
4	7.41%	-	-	7.41%	-	3.70%	-	-	-
5	11.11%	7.41%	14.81%	-	11.11%	3.70%	-	3.70%	3.70%
6	-	-	3.70%	7.41%	-	3.70%	-	3.70%	-



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7	7.41%	3.70%	-	14.81%	14.81%	11.11%	7.41%	-	3.70%
8	11.11%	-	-	11.11%	11.11%	11.11%	11.11%	11.11%	7.41%
9	-	3.70%	3.70%	3.70%	3.70%	11.11%	18.52%	18.52%	11.11%
10	40.74%	59.26%	55.56%	18.52%	25.93%	33.33%	37.04%	37.04%	48.15%

40.74% of teachers rated 10 points to flashcards, 59.26% of teachers rated 10 points to videos, 55.56% of teachers rated 10 points to pictures, 18.52% of teachers rated 2 and 10 points to drawing on blackboard, 25.93% of teachers rated 10 points to translation, 33.33% of teachers rated 10 points to examples, 37.04% of teachers rated 10 points to expressions/role play/enact, 37.04% of teachers rated 10 points to real objects while 48.15% of teachers rated 10 points to real life examples. These responses indicated that **for different types of students different strategies were used for teaching vocabulary by the teachers.**

In 7th question about rating the importance of 7 different strategies for evaluation of vocabulary, the responses of teachers were as below:

Rating points	Dictation	Matching pictures	Fill in the blanks	Jumbles letters / words	Complete spellings	Odd one out	Identify correct spellings
1	7.41%	7.41%	7.41%	7.41%	7.41%	7.41%	7.41%
2	7.41%	3.70%	7.41%	-	-	-	-
3	7.41%	11.11%	11.11%	14.81%	14.81%	14.81%	14.81%
4	11.11%	3.70%	-	-	-	-	-
5	7.41%	3.70%	3.70%	3.70%	-	-	3.70%
6	7.41%	-	7.41%	-	-	-	-



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7	3.70%	-	3.70%	-	-	-	7.41%
8	7.41%	11.11%	11.11%	25.93%	14.81%	7.41%	3.70%
9	11.11%	7.41%	11.11%	7.41%	14.81%	11.11%	7.41%
10	29.63%	51.85%	37.04%	40.74%	48.15%	59.26%	55.56%

29.63% of teachers rated 10 points to dictation, 51.85% of teachers rated 10 points to Matching pictures, 37.04% of teachers rated 10 points to fill in the blanks, 40.74% of teachers rated 10 points to jumbled words/letters, 48.15% of teachers rated 10 points to complete spellings, 59.26% of teachers rated 10 points to odd one out while 55.56% of teachers rated 10 points to identifying correct spelling. Thus, **for different types of students' different strategies were used to evaluate vocabulary by the teachers.**

In reply to 8th question about rating 3 different statements, the responses of teachers were as below:

Rating points	Students must memorize the vocabulary.	It is necessary to translate the vocabulary meaning into students' mother tongue	Vocabulary should be taught in discourse and not as a separate exercise
1	3.70%	7.41%	11.11%
2	7.41%	11.11%	11.11%
3	14.81%	14.81%	11.11%
4	3.70%	-	-
5	14.81%	14.81%	3.70%
6	3.70%	3.70%	-
7	7.41%	11.11%	3.70%
8	3.70%	11.11%	14.81%
9	11.11%	3.70%	-
10	29.63%	22.22%	29.63%



29.63% of teachers rated 10 points to the first statement, “Students must memorize the vocabulary”, 22.22% of teachers rated 10 points to the second statement, “It is necessary to translate the vocabulary meaning into students' mother tongue.” ,while 29.63% of teachers rated 10 points to the third statement, “Vocabulary should be taught in discourse and not as a separate exercise.” So, **teachers favoured memorizing and vocabulary in discourse more than translation.**

In reply of the ninth question about assessing vocabulary acquisition of students in English, 29.63% of teachers didn't reply the question. 18.52% of teachers mentioned oral and written tests,11.11% of teachers favoured different activities,7.41% of teachers answered dictation while 3.70% of teachers mentioned games, writing, crossword puzzle, circle the picture, add one word, rhyming words and quiz. Hence, **different games, activities as well as oral and written tests were conducted by the teachers for assessing vocabulary.**

For tenth question regarding training for vocabulary, 22.22% of teachers didn't attempt the question. 66.67% of teachers replied in negation. While 11.11% of teachers answered positively but not the vocabulary, it was general training in English language and as a part of induction programme. Thus,**majority of teachers didn't receive any specific training for teaching vocabulary.**

In response to the 11th question about how they (teachers) taught vocabulary for a particular lesson, they responded different techniques. Out of 27 teachers, 5 teachers didn't respond the question. 22 teachers used two way teaching: question answer. They used different teaching learning material and audio visual aids viz. dictionary, mobile, real objects, pictures and flashcards. Language games were also used. Few teachers used translation and followed multiple methods and multiple techniques as per the level of the students. Thus, **teachers used varied techniques as per the demand of the lesson and suitable for the students.**

In reply of the twelfth question about different strategies they used for teaching vocabulary, 33.33 % of teachers mentioned pictures, 29.63% of teachers favoured translation,29.63% of teachers answered you tube and other videos while remaining 8% of teachers used flashcards, games and activities. **These responses confirmed that majority of teachers chose pictures for teaching vocabulary.**

In reply of the thirteenth question about the most effective technique to teach vocabulary, 3.70% of teachers mentioned games, 3.70% of teachers translated words into mother tongue, 7.41% of teachers favoured pictures,14.81% of teachers answered videos, 14.81% of teachers gave writing task to the students, while



58.57% of teachers mentioned varied techniques as per students' level i.e. gestures, word cards and repetition of words. **These responses confirmed that majority of teachers felt different students needed different techniques.**

In 14th question about the challenges they faced while teaching English, 22.22% of teachers mentioned pronunciation and speaking, 11.11% of teachers said vocabulary related challenges while remaining 66.67% of students mentioned general problems of lack of knowledge of even mother tongue, no and or less practice by students, lack of attention, interest and unwillingness to learn. Thus, **teachers faced many challenges related to language in general.**

For 15th question about how they overcame the challenges, all the teachers responded different solutions as per the situation of students and school. 25.93% of teachers gave more and more practice by drilling and repetition of words and target vocabulary. 37.04% of teachers used different interesting activities, games, flashcards and pictures while other 37.03% of teachers tried their level best to overcome the challenges and taught the best possible way including translation too. Hence, **most of teachers worked hard to overcome the challenge while teaching English.**

In reply to 16th question about list out some words from the Class VI which they found as must in students' vocabulary, they suggested basic daily used words i.e. names of vegetables, fruits, vehicles, public places etc. These responses confirmed that **majority of teachers felt necessity of basic vocabulary as must in students' word bank.**

In reply to seventeenth question about sharing their views on teaching and evaluation of vocabulary, 22.22% of teachers didn't respond the question. 77.78% of teachers found teaching as well as evaluation necessary. They shared their views in the following way:

A lot of teachers agreed to importance of vocabulary and accepting the challenges they agreed to evolve new methods to deal with it more efficiently. Some even suggested beginning it from class1 and evaluation of vocabulary also be done in LSRW form rather than just in writing. In other words, the fear for English must be overcome by interesting activities.

Thus, **majority of teachers felt teaching and evaluation of vocabulary as the important part of language teaching.**



In reply of the eighteenth question about which teaching styles and strategies could ensure long lasting and rich vocabulary learning at upper primary level, the teachers suggested conversation and question answer, LSRW, translation method, audio visual aids, dictation, frequent use/practice of vocabulary in routine, activities, games, by using real objects and real life experience. Thus, **majority of teachers felt activities as per the level of the students could ensure long lasting and rich vocabulary learning at upper primary level.**

In reply to the 19th question about the amount of vocabulary learnt, affected the language learning pace of a student in any form, almost all the teachers agreed to the statement that vocabulary learnt affects language learning pace of the students.

1 teacher disagreed to this and 1 teacher responded as not sure regarding any correlation between vocabulary and learning pace.

These responses confirmed that **teachers felt more vocabulary affected positively the language learning pace of students.**

In reply to the last question about their views on the importance of vocabulary, almost all the teachers considered vocabulary as most important aspect of language learning except for 1 respondent who believed that, it has got nothing related to reading or language learning.

These responses confirmed **that majority of teachers felt vocabulary as the important to learn the language.**

❏ FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In total 27 (19 Female and 8 Male) teachers responded to the ELT questionnaire.

- * As per the ratings to techniques / strategies in teaching of vocabulary, majority of teachers found Pictures, Flashcards and Videos as most important followed by examples and real life experiences.
- * Translation, use of realia got comparatively lesser ratings and drawing on black-board got the least ratings.
- * Regarding the vocabulary evaluation, matching pictures with words, identifying correct spellings, jumbled letters and odd one out were highly rated. Whereas, dictation and complete the spellings



were least preferred while evaluation of vocabulary.

- * Most teachers showed a mixed opinion towards the statement that students must memorize the vocabulary. Teachers agreed mostly to translate the new words in students' mother tongue. Majority of teachers showed strong agreement to the statement that vocabulary should be taught as a discourse and not as a separate exercise.
- * For evaluation, most teachers' responses revolved around spelling test, dictionary games and match pairs. Many teachers also stated that by observation, monitoring the situational usage of words by students they come to know about the vocabulary acquisition. Mostly, teachers found it an important part of vocabulary teaching and evaluation as learning on regular interval.
- * Most teachers responded in negation about receiving any training in specific relation of vocabulary. Few teachers responded in agreement about training received but even they didn't deal in particularly with vocabulary. A teacher also mentioned about ABL(Activity Based Learning)
- * When enquired about their vocabulary teaching style, most teachers mentioned about writing new / unknown words on board and regular dictation, phonetics, examples and mostly translation of the word. Then some teachers shared about word usage, pictures and other language games which mostly focused on repetition and more of drilling.
- * Most teachers mentioned about pictures, videos, Youtube and other visual inputs while dealing with vocabulary. Some teachers mentioned crossword, word memory games and more usage of English in classroom.
- * Most teachers found translation, listing and pronouncing words repeatedly, playing word games- Antakshari as most effective technique in teaching vocabulary.
- * To ensure long lasting vocabulary majority of teachers opined that regular practice, repetition, dictation, daily usage and communication would be most effective. Few teachers mentioned about pictures and translation method.

CONCLUSION:

On the basis of the survey conducted, it can be concluded that majority of teachers are trying their best to increase vocabulary of the students in ELT. They used varied and novel techniques and strategies but the best things take time.



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IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY:

The study can be helpful for the language teachers of upper primary schools. Strategies and techniques discussed in the study can be applicable not only for English but also for all the languages as the language teachers of upper primary schools have to teach more than 1 language. So the present study can positively affect the teaching of languages in terms of methods, techniques and strategies. It can also be helpful to overcome the anticipated problems and challenges. Over all, the present study is a step to reach the goal of language teachers to enrich the ELT and ESL, in specific.



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