

THE IMPORTANCE OF VISUAL AIDS IN TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY

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ABSTRACT: This study aims at showing the importance of using visual aids inside the classroom, and using visual aids in teaching vocabulary. Besides this study hypothesizes that visual aids facilitates learning and enhances students comprehension of vocabulary acquiring, and female teachers use visual aids more than male teachers. The last hypothesis is English teachers in primary schools use visual aids more than in secondary schools. This study will be limited to: (a) Tikrit secondary schools/ the academic year 2016-2017, (b) English language teachers in the primary schools. The sample of thirty male and female teachers is involved in this study. A questionnaire is constructed to find out the importance of using visual aids in classrooms. The results of this study show that there is a great importance in teaching English by using visual aids in classrooms.

Keywords: visual aids, teaching vocabulary, facilitates learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem

To express certain notions more efficiently and fruitfully to learners, teacher need to get benefit of instructional tools, these tools are named as visual aids. The function of such kind of aids is to serve in learning and teaching languages like English. Vocabulary has great role in learning any language it is regarded as the column. Thus speaking will be senseless and definitely it is difficult to have texts with structure without the existence of vocabulary. Others[1] defined the states that it is an item of vocabulary may be presented by two or more words, such as (computer game or air bag). Furthermore, speaking another language demands much attention on the ability to be competent and equipped with sufficient number of vocabulary items in order to maintain scarce and intelligible communication. What is more important is that the humanist approach has brought to the teachers attention the load need to include vocabulary in relation with communicative function. Learning vocabulary is centered in expressing this feeling, sharing one's values and views points with others and developing better understanding of the learners need [2]. To learn any second language, learners are need to very crucial component which is vocabulary, which is regarded as a basic skill. Communication would be impossible without this skill. [3] shows that "If language structures make up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and the flesh". Teachers can notice that language outside classroom can be seen in markets or walls everywhere with images, colors, adverts, or cartoons. So it is better for teachers to show their students examples of these pictures. They enjoy all significant characteristics of visual aids. Learning a different language is mainly depends on learning the vocabulary of the target language. It would be very frustrating if learners don't know the vocabulary of a word that they need to express an idea. Moreover, the grammar of the target language is an essential matter, the tenses, word formation, parts of speech and so on. There reason is when learners know the system of language they can communicate properly [4].

1.2 Aims of the Study

This study aims at:

- 1-Show the importance of using visual aids inside the classroom.
- 2-showing whether female or male teacher use visual aids more, and primary or secondary school teachers use visual aids more.

1.3 Value of the Study .

It is hoped that this study will shed light on modern techniques of teaching English Grammar. This study has a theoretical value since it will add more information concerning teaching vocabulary by using visual aids. Also it has a practical value since it will be useful for teachers, textbook writers, as well as learners.

1.4 Hypotheses of the Study

This study hypothesizes that visual aids facilitates learning and enhances students comprehension of vocabulary, and primary school teachers use visual aids more than secondary school teachers.

1.5 Limits of the Study

This study is limited to the uses of visual aids in teaching vocabulary for EFL students at secondary and primary schools during the academic year 2017 – 2018.

1.6 Procedures of the Study

A sample of secondary and primary school teachers are chosen from secondary schools at Al-Alam town. They have given papers of questionnaire to answer. The questionnaire include 20 questions, divided into (Yes, No) questions and (Alternative) questions to be answered.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Definitions of Visual Aids

[5] defines visual aids as the ability to read, interpret, and understand information presented in pictorial or graphic images. Visual literacy is associated with visual thinking, described as "the ability to turn information of all types into pictures, graphics, or forms that help communicate the information".

[6] defines pictures as one of these useful material which give "images of reality into the unnatural world of the language classroom". Pictures supply not only images of reality but can also have function as a fun element in language classrooms. Visual-Aids are material and items which are mostly designed by educational staff which represent written or spoken information, such as graphs, real pictures, diagrams, charts, computer slides [7]

2.2 Benefits of Using Visual Aids

Visual aids require the capacity to stimulate learner's attention, facilitate learning-teaching process, moreover, the support of using visual aids in the classroom stresses the role of two issues to learning [8].

- a-Motivation:: a learner of language is motivated while he/she has a strong need to learn, he/she create an energy to acquire new language with further efficiency.
- b- Participation: this factor denotes to learning by performance not to be silent. Learning can be promoted

by stimulating recognition and production levels moreover, expands memory processes (ibid).

The benefit of visual aids can be briefly summarized Organize the teachers lecture or presentation, provide interest and motivation for students, increase retention of information for students , aid communication , and Clarify something difficult , complicated or stress very important points [9]

2.4 Kinds of Visual Aids

There are many kinds of visual aids, such as chalkboard , pictures, flash cards, postcards, posters , graphic–organizes , television , computers, word calendars etc. [10].

Here in the present study most of them are mentioned as follows:

1-Blackboard: it is the most ordinary visual aid in use .This type of board is commonly fitted learning process in the class which is framed on the wall and provided with a small shelf to keep the duster and sticks of chalk

2-News Papers: newspapers are regarded as visual aids, easy to be used in language classes for practicing various topics, some of them contains appropriate information that fit the teaching material. There are different targets while consuming newspapers in English lessons. They are used to show the culture of the language learners want to learn and can expand vocabulary unconsciously [11]

3-Cartoons Cartoons are drawings that exaggerate some physical feature, action, or quality of a person or thing illustrated and they are popular with people of all ages .

The humor and sympathy created in Cartoons enable teacher and students to better understand the world . Moreover, cartoons can be used to teach language , human values , and citizenship . Lots of information is packed in a small picture create a powerful ground for the readers to interpret, discuss, and present their viewpoint [12]

Others [13], state that the students enjoy working on cartoon because cartoons are an inexhaustible resource of fun and humour . He also comments that the use of cartoons is one important way to ensure learner motivation and participation .

Moreover, authors in [14] use concept cartoons to extend the range of pedagogical strategies presenting a set of alternative idea about a scientific concept in visual form. They use cartoons in the classroom to support teaching and learning by generating discussion , stimulating investigation and promoting learner involvement and motivation.

Visual Aids are divided into several types, such as:

a-Chalk board and white board are regarded the major instrument of learning in the language classes , they are cheap to be fixed on walls, and their colours are white , black and green or even dark [15]

b- Picture flash cards are drawn on cards approximately 15 cm by 20cm.

c- Authentic written materials they contain "anything written and printed in English. e.g. newspapers , magazines , publicity , technical instructions for equipment , holiday brochures etc. [4]

d- Realia, which refers to real objects , and they are more meaningful , than pictures [16]

e - Mime and gesture: can illustrate some complex words and may serves as extra teaching material [17].

2.5 Comics in Education

From the early 40s many educators in USA conducted a series of studies on using comic books in education providing data for its usefulness. Today, educators at all levels are designing new ways of teaching through comics. Some use concept cartoons to extend the range of pedagogical strategies, presenting a set of alternative idea about a scientific concept in visual form [18]. They use cartoons in the classroom to support teaching and learning by generating discussion stimulating investigation and promoting learner involvement and motivation. Author in [19], indicates that comics in education is a source of motivation due to human's natural attraction to pictures, comics can capture and maintain the learner's progress in acquiring new vocabulary rapidly. According to [20], comics are visual pictures and text mutually tell a story . In this" interaction of the printed and visual aids which represent comics "put a human face on a given subject " draw emotional connection between learners and the story characters .

6.2 The Role of the Teacher in the Technology Era

Nowadays the character of teacher has changed a lot . In the previous decades a teacher's function is "to fill" the mind of learners with "true" knowledge, but now according to modern trends and theories a teacher has different roles as a monitor , adviser , councilor in order to negotiate the meaning with students while learning English. The teacher was the only authority that gave information. Students were supposed to give their knowledge book to the teacher through retelling and reporting. But today the teachers should be aware of their new role and responsibilities that high technology requires from them [5].

Today students are supposed to visualize thoughts effort as portion of a cooperative team, problem solve, and role play. In nowadays language teachers have to be beyond competence transmission [4]. Besides, [22] indicate that " the extent to which teachers are given time and access to pertinent training to use computers to support teaming plays a major role indenturing whether or not technology has a major impact on achievement. In many cases however, this training is not given and teachers are left to their own devices. More and more, it is a certain type of individual teacher who takes the initiative and implements technology into their classrooms.

2.6.1 What is Vocabulary

Learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) must learn thousands of words that speakers and writers of English use. Fortunately, the need for vocabulary is one point on which teachers and students agree .Vocabulary is not just words . When we talk about our vocabulary, we meant the words we know and our ability to use them. It is important because it is words which carry the content of what we want to say. Teachers have never doubled the value of learning vocabulary. They know how communication stops when learners lack the necessary words. Grammar joins groups of words together, but most of the meaning is in the words. The more words you know, the more you will be able to communicate [23].

2.6.2 Teaching Vocabulary

Learning a new language is basically a matter of learning the vocabulary of that language . If you did not find the words you need to express an idea is the most frustrating experience in speaking another language of course vocabulary is not the whole of the language .The system of the language (its 'grammar' or ' structure') is also

important, how the plural is formed, how past tense is signified and so on. Nevertheless, it is possible to have a good knowledge of how the system of a language work and yet not be able to communicate in it, whereas if we have the vocabulary we need, it is usually possible to communicate [24]

2.6.3 Visual Aids in Vocabulary Teaching

[25] points out "the typical classroom" is always not a very suitable environment to acquire language, for this reason instructors seek for different aids and motivations to increase this situation. Pictures are the best and preferable of these aids. They refer to "images of reality into the unnatural world of the language classroom". Vocabulary can be learned easily by motivating students and drawing their attention while using pictures. Sometimes it is better to use a combination of two or more techniques to present the meaning of a word. The meaning of new word can be shown by:

1-Visually by using :

(i) Picture, drawing stick figures.

This procedure is suitable to teach concrete words which may be inconvenient to bring the real object into the classroom e.g., the words elephant, tiger, train, and so on.

(ii) Real object or models of them :

The classroom itself is full of objects to be shown to the pupils e.g. desk, pencil, blackboard etc.

(iii) Mimes, actions, dramatization, facial expressions.

Real actions can be used to show the meaning of words by doing that action, e.g. I'm writing on the board.

Miming or dramatization can be used to show the meaning of actions that cannot be done inside the classroom, e.g. swimming.

2. By using examples :

When using examples to show meaning, they should clearly show the meaning of the words, some examples do not show the meaning at all.

3-By giving definitions and explanations :

When we use definitions or explanations to convey meaning, these should be very clear and do not contain any difficult or unknown words.

Examples: Traffic movement of people and vehicle along road and street.

4-By using a verbal context:

A well connected context makes meaning much easier and more accurate because the meaning of all the words in a sentence interact one upon the other and the meaning of all the sentences in a text also interact one upon the other. [23]

5-By using commands :

When teachers ask pupils by physical movement to demonstrate one command which represent new words, the situation is very much like what happens when someone learns one's another language. Since children used to obey commands in their early age so teachers can use this technique to teach them new vocabulary [24]. This tool makes vocabulary learning with the help of flash cards and an on the card box. Flash cards can be set up on line and can be systematically learned and revised with an on line card box. Flash cards are widely used as a learning drill to aid memorization by way of spaced repetition [4]. Learning vocabulary with help of on line flash cards is convenient, because the pupils can learn whenever they have time, in school during the lessons or in free periods and at home.

The tool enlarges the learner's vocabulary to a high degree. Another advantage is that the tool might bring the learners' into the habit of learning vocabulary systematically and frequently [24].

2.6.4 Objectives of Learning Vocabulary

Some of the main purposes of vocabulary learning are :

"to recognize it in its spoken / written procedure, recall it when needed, relate it to a suitable goal or concept, use it in the appropriate structure, pronounce it, speak in a recognizable way, spell it clearly and correctly, and use it with words that correctly goes with it" [12].

Teachers can find pictures and graphs useful to his/her students in comprehending meaning of story or situation. And even using touchable things existed and can be seen in the classroom are regarded as an opportunity for learning and increasing vocabularies [9]. Role play or acting done by students are considered as a visual aid because students use two senses when they see and listen to the action. Besides bringing touchable objects such as fruits, vegetables, animals or even kitchen tools and classroom objects is very useful too, because students here use to senses sight and tactile [4].

3. Procedures

3.1 Population and sampling

Section three consist of the population and sampling of the study population is any group of individuals that has one or more characteristics in common. A sample is defined as a small proportion of the population that is selected for observation and analysis [25]. The population of this study consists of 42 secondary school teachers at Al-Alam town which is comprised of (22) secondary schools. The sample of this study is (20) teachers are chosen to be subjected to the instrument of the study—A questionnaire is conducted to find teachers' attitude toward using visual aids in the classroom, during the academic year 2016- 2017.

3.2 The Instrument of the Study

To obtain the necessary data of this study questionnaire is used a questionnaires can be defined as any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions to which they are to react, either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answer [3]

Questionnaires is an is regarded as complex way to gather data from a potentially large number of respondents [2]. The questionnaire items are chosen carefully and modified by consulting many experts and specialists with in English language teaching field and then applied on the selected sample of teachers.

3.3 Validity of the Questionnaire

The instrument is valid if it measures accurately what is supposed to measure and ensure the face validity of the questionnaire it has been exposed jury of university teaching staff members who have ensured the face validity of the tests. Each juror is a shed to point out, remarks, and suggestions about the suitability of the questionnaire details

3.4 Pilot Administration of the Questionnaire

The advantage of the pilot administration of the questionnaire is to estimate the suitability of the designed questionnaire to the involved sample of study. In order to check the estimated average time required to respond to the items of the questionnaire, identify ambiguous and in suitable items, moreover determine their level of difficulty, and to make sure of the clarity of the given items.

The questionnaire has been administered empirically to twenty of English teachers. It has been found that all the

items are suitable and clear to be applied to the sample. The needed time for answering the questionnaire is around (20 - 30) minutes .

3-Procedures

3.1 Population an Sampling

The sample of the current study is 30 English teachers ,who are teaching English in Tikrit primary and secondary schools. Besides, the sample is chosen randomly and they teach English to different classes.

3.2 The Instrument of the Study

To obtain the essential data of the current study, a questionnaire is constructed. The questionnaire deals with how important is the use of visual aids and different ways practiced in teaching vocabulary. The questionnaire is divided into two parts, the first one is (yes / no) items ,and

the second part is multiple choice items. Part one includes 12 items and part two includes of 8 items .[19] states that “the instrument is valid if it measures accurately what it is supposed to measure”, see also [7] Validity of the questionnaire refers to the degree or level to which a research instrument measures what it purports to measure [8].

To ensure the face validity of the questionnaire, it has been exposed to a jury of university teaching staff members. Each juror is asked to point out remarks , advices and suggestions about the suitability. Reliability is defined as the extent to which the results can be considered stable [11].

**Table (1)
Part One : Yes /No Questions**

Item	Resp.	Freq.	Perc.	Resp.	Freq.	Perc.
Using visual aids	Yes	27	90%	No	3	10%
Visual aids regarded important	Yes	27	90%	No	3	10%
Ministry of education care for using visual aids	Yes	15	50%	No	15	50%
Language skills can be achieved without visual aids	Yes	18	60%	No	12	40%
time is not sufficient to use visual aids	Yes	18	60%	No	12	40%
English for Iraq has sufficient pictures that explain its topics	Yes	24	80%	No	6	20%
Students face problems to explain pictures in textbooks	Yes	17	%56.6	No	13	43.3%
I ask students to draw pictures	Yes	12	40%	No	18	60%
Large class face difficulties in making games or competitions	Yes	24	80%	No	6	20%
Teaching vocabulary is easier by using visual aids	Yes	25	%83.3	No	5	%16.6
Using visual aids is useful and interesting for both teachers and learners	Yes	27	90%	No	3	10%
Students level will be raised after using visual aids	Yes	24	80%	No	6	20%

**Table (2)
Part Two (Multiple Choice Questions)**

Item	Responses and Percentages		
	Once a week	Twice	All the week
Frequency of using visual aids	33.3%	26.6%	40%
Types of visual aids	One type		Several types
	63.3%		36.3%
Difficulty of visual aids	Very difficult	sometimes	Not difficult
	60%	6.6%	33.3%
Visual aids are useful	Very useful	Sometimes	Not very useful
	100%	0%	0%
The purpose of using visual aids is for	Motivation	Clarifying difficult things	Facilitating learning process
	10%	16.6%	6.6%
Visual aids are expensive	Very expensive	Some of them	Not expensive
	0%	73.3%	26.6%
Teacher’s feeling in using visual aids	Very satisfied	Quite Satisfied	Not satisfied
	90%	10%	0%
How long have you been teaching English?	5 years	More than 10 years	More than 15 years
	30%	40%	30%

To find out the reliability of questionnaire, Persons Correlation Coefficient formula is calculated by using split – half method. It is found out that the Computed Pearson correlation coefficient of reliability is 0.74. Spearman-Brown formula is used to correct Pearson Correlation of the result of split–half method. It has been found that the

reliability of the questionnaire of the study is 0.83 , and it is acceptable value .

Reliability of a questionnaire may be inferred by a second administration of instrument on a small sub- sample , and by comparing the responses with those of the first . Reliability may also be estimated by comparing responses

of an alternate form with the original form. [5] After applying the pilot administration of the questionnaire . It has been found that it is reliable . The final questionnaire administration has been carried out from the 1st may , 2016 to 14th may 2016. The designed questionnaire which consists of twenty items is administrated individually to the selected sample of teachers .

4-Analysis of Data

4.1 Responses of Questionnaire Items

After distributing the questionnaire to the English teachers ,data are collected and analyzed statistically .Frequency and percentage formula are used for this purpose .Table (1) which is about yes/no questions ,and (2) multiple choice questions show the frequency and percentage of the questionnaire items .

The data and teachers responses was subjected to statistical evaluation. Frequency and Percentage is used to find out teachers point of view concerning using visual aids in classrooms and their importance. Each item has different responses thus it has various values. Frequencies and percentages of the items are as follows :

- 1- Most English teachers use visual aids in teaching English 90% of them said that they use visual aids .By comparing them 70% of primary school teachers and 20 % secondary school teachers use visual aids during English lessons. Whereas, concerning the gender of teachers, female teachers prefer using visual aids more than male and the percentage 65% during English lessons.
- 2- 90 % of the English teachers say that Visual aids are regarded important in teaching English vocabulary because they think it facilitates and motivate them to take part in any situation or any topic.
- 3- it is found that 50 % of English teachers think that Ministry of education care for using visual aids .
- 4- more than half of the teachers 60% believe that Language skills can be achieved without visual aids.
- 5- English teachers believe that time is not sufficient to use visual aids 60 of them agreed to this matter .
- 6- Teachers' point of view say that English for Iraq has sufficient pictures that explain its topics 80% of them thing it is right .
- 7- It has been noticed that students face problems to explain pictures in textbooks 56.6 % of English teachers face this problem.
- 8- It is found out that teachers ask students to draw pictures .60 % of the teachers achieve this task in the classrooms.
- 9- The fact that large class face difficulties in making vocabulary games or competitions is shown by 80% percentage.
- 10- Most of teachers of English think teaching vocabulary is easier by using visual aids the percentage is 83.3%.
- 11- 90% of English teachers think using visual aids is useful and interesting for both teachers and learners .
- 12- It has been observed Students level will be raised after using visual aids the percentage of this item is 80% .
- 13- concerning the item of Frequency of using visual aids a percentage of 26% of teacher say that they use visual aids twice a week.
- 14- a percentage of 63.3 % of English teachers agree that they use one type visual aids according the situation or the topic that the teach in a lesson.

15- it has been found that 60 of the teachers sometimes face difficulties in using visual aids according the size of the class or students level .

16- 100% of the sample agreed that Visual Aids are very useful in teaching vocabulary in classrooms more than using any other technique.

17- 66.6% of English teachers agreed that the purpose of using visual aids is for different reasons like motivation , clarifying difficult topics and facilitating learning process.

18- While concerning the item "Visual aids are expensive" , most of English teachers 73.3% say some of them are expensive .

19- 90% of the teachers were satisfied and their feeling in using visual aids was great and felt happy while using visual aids.

20- How long have you been teaching English? 40% of English teachers taught English with experience for about 10 years .

4.2 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Teaching vocabulary in classrooms need to get high interest since modern syllabuses focus on form and meaning more the structure .Some teachers need more efforts to teach English especially for low level students and large size classes so they need some methods to make students learn faster and better.

Using visual aids in English classrooms has great role .Visual Aids can be as a facilitator , mean or tool which lead teachers to achieve their main target .

As a matter of fact ,teachers don't use visual aids frequently because they face many obstacles in classrooms like time ,number of students ,expense of those visual aids and the like.

Students enjoy lessons with visual aids like pictures or films because they motivate thoughts inside their brains and let them feel active more than lecturer method of teaching or traditional ways which depend on the book only. These colorful charts or flash cards are simple to be made but it can lead to successful lesson .

Concerning female or male teachers ,and who use visual teachers more ,it has been found that female teachers use visual aids more than male .so the hypothesis of the study is accepted . The reason can be because most of them have special activities and skills to be more creative in designing some objects than male teachers .

Most of teachers of English use visual aids . By comparing between teachers who teach in primary schools and those who teach in secondary school the percentage is higher for the behalf of primary school teachers and this may be because children need more than one sense to learn and to acquire meaning of new word, and this according to mind ability and memory. Whereas, concerning the gender of teachers, female teachers prefer using visual aids more than male and a high percentage was for their behalf.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study revealed the following conclusions:

- 1-Visual aids have great importance in teaching English ,and it should not be neglected. They facilitate learning English by enhancing the role of the teacher inside classroom and reflect the use of language outside classroom.

- 2-Teaching of vocabulary needs special efforts and appropriate techniques ,while most of teachers follow the traditional teaching methods without using visual aids frequently.
- 3-Female teachers use visual aids for teaching vocabulary more than male teachers do , as most of them have skills to be creative in designing some objects .
- 4-teachers in primary schools prefer using visual aids more than teachers of secondary schools.
- 5- according to the daily plan and time allotted to teachers to achieve the four skills ,the weekly and daily plan is not enough to teach English vocabulary of the syllabus, since using visual aids needs also to special time to cover the meant ideas .
- 6- Teacher of English believe that using visual aids is better than using other techniques in teaching process such as brainstorming or role play ...etc.
- 7-Visual aids make real thing closer to the learners , they enhance learning practices more ordinary and more convincing, learning will be more rapid and .More practical visual aids make learning easy for learners to form rational pictures of abstract notions .

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