

لمحة عامة عن البحث في استراتيجيات تعلم المفردات التي يستخدمها الطلاب الناطقين
باللغة العربية في تعلم اللغة الانجليزية كلغة ثانية

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الملخص: تشير البحوث عن تعلم الطلاب الناطقين باللغة العربية لمفردات اللغة الثانية إلى أنه على الرغم من وجود الكثير من البحث حول اختلافات تعلم الطلاب العرب للغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية، إلا أن هناك حاجة إلى زيادة عدد الدراسات حول أهمية تدريس وتعلم المفردات ودلالة فهم استراتيجيات تعلم المفردات. يواجه معظم متعلمي اللغة الثانية قدرًا عظيمًا من التحدي عند تعلم المفردات في اللغة الثانية؛ بالإضافة إلى محدودية عدد الدراسات التجريبية ما بين عامي ١٩٨٠ و ٢٠٠٩ والتي ركزت على نتائج المفردات لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية وقيام العديد من أساليب التدريس المستخدمة في هذه الدراسات على الأساليب المقترحة لمتعلمي اللغة الأولى في حين أعادت دراسات أخرى هيكله المهام التدريسية لتلبية احتياجات متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية. كما كانت هناك دراسات محدودة على اكتساب مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية واستراتيجيات تدريسها وتعلمها من قبل الطلاب العرب؛ وعليه، يدعو البحث الجاري إلى مزيد من الدراسات التجريبية على استراتيجيات تدريس المفردات التي يستخدمها الطلاب العرب. وينبغي أن تعيد هذه الدراسات تقييم مدى فعالية برامج تدريس المفردات بغرض تصميم مناهج أفضل للغة الإنجليزية تلبى احتياجات الطلاب العرب من المفردات الإنجليزية. وقد يؤثر اتجاه الطلاب نحو تعلم لغة أجنبية على تعلمهم لمفردات جديدة.

الكلمات الدلالية: الطلاب العرب، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية، تعلم المفردات، استراتيجية التدريس، اتجاهات التعلم.

An overview of the research: Vocabulary learning strategies used By ESL Arabic-speaking students

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Abstract: The past and current research on Arabic-speaking students' second language vocabulary learning concludes that even though there is much research about the difficulties of learning English as a second language by Arab students, there is a need to increase the number of studies of the importance of teaching and learning vocabulary and the significance of understanding vocabulary learning strategies. Most second language learners encounter a great deal of challenge when learning vocabulary in the second language. Moreover, the number of experimental studies between 1980 and 2009 that focused on vocabulary outcomes for English language learners was limited and many of the instructional approaches used in these studies were built on approaches proposed for first-language learners, while others restructured the instructional tasks to meet the needs of English language learners. Also, there were limited studies on ESL vocabulary acquisition and its teaching and learning strategies by Arab students. Therefore, the current research calls for further experimental studies on the vocabulary teaching strategies used by Arab students. These studies should reassess the effectiveness of the vocabulary teaching programs for the purpose of designing better English language curricula that meets Arab students' English vocabulary needs. Students' attitude toward learning a foreign language may also affect their learning of new vocabulary.

Keywords: Arab students, ESL, Second language acquisition, Teaching, Attitude

Introduction

Research suggests a growing interest in the teaching and learning of English as a Second Language (ESL) by Arab students (Freeman, 1975; Al-Khataybeh, 1992; Suleiman, 1993; Santos & Suleiman, 1993; Daoud, 1998; Farghal, Shunnaq & Shunnaq, 1999; AbiSamra, 2003; Mahmoud, 2005; Al-Bustan & Al-Bustan, 2009; Khan 2011a & 2011b; Saigh & Schmitt, 2012; Al-Mamun, Rahman, Rahman & Hossaim, 2012; Al-Othman & Shuqair, 2013). Some of the previously cited academic research in the field of teaching and learning ESL by Arabic-speaking students has investigated various areas of language learning challenges and explored the possible reasons for those challenges. Multiple studies have examined how Arab students learning ESL varied according to their geographical location. Some of the studies investigated Arab students learning ESL in English speaking countries such as the United States, Canada or the United Kingdom (Saigh & Schmitt, 2012; Santos & Suleiman, 1993), while others investigated their learning in the students' home countries (Daoud, 1998; Mahmoud, 2005; AbiSamra, 2003; Khan, 2011a).

The literature has extensively explored multiple areas of language learning challenges that Arab ESL learners will face during their learning of a second language, yet little of this research focused on challenges of vocabulary teaching and learning and such studies are rare in the area of Arab ESL learners. Xhaferi and Xhaferi (2008) noted that the "learning vocabulary is a neglected area in the literature and there is a need for more research in the field" (p.8). Asgari and Mustapha (2011) declared that ESL students' most important challenges lie in learning English vocabulary, which has been "recognized as crucial to language use in which insufficient vocabulary knowledge of the learners led to difficulties in second language learning" (p. 84). Ghazal (2007) added support in that "vocabulary learning is one of the major challenges foreign language learners face during the process of learning a language" (p.84). This article aims to build on prior research to further explore Arab students' difficulties in learning English vocabulary to provide innovative ways of teaching and learning vocabulary. This would help Arab students become aware that there are many vocabulary learning strategies that they could use

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in learning new words. For language teachers, using this information can guide them in designing appropriate approaches to teaching vocabulary to enhance vocabulary acquisition in their classes.

The past decade has seen an increase in the interest of teaching and learning of English as a second language by Arab students globally (Santos & Suleiman, 1993; Khan, 2011a; AbiSamara, 2003; Mahmoud, 2005). The academic research states that Arab students encounter many problems in their studying of the English language, whether while attending an ESL course in an English-speaking country or in studying it as part of their K-12 and higher education curriculum in their home country. Nevertheless, these students seem to have more difficulties particularly in acquiring new vocabulary words or improving their academic writing skills. In fact, Abdul Haq (1982) declared that “most Arab students usually fumble in their writing skills” and that “most English instructors and university officials complained about the continuous deterioration of the mastery of the English language among students” (as cited in Khan, 2011a, p. 1249).

Khan (2011a) cited multiple studies conducted in different Arabic-speaking countries—Jordan, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt—which categorized into two groups the problems Arabs face in learning ESL and the errors they commit. The first category included errors related to pronunciation, knowledge of the use of syntax, morphology, and spelling; the second included students’ difficulties expressing themselves competently and contentedly, whether academically or in everyday context. Khan (2011a) concluded that a number of reasons might cause Arab students’ problems in learning English. Some of these reasons included “the deficiency in the English language curricula offered by some schools and universities; dreadful teaching methodology; problems with proper language environments; and lack of personal impetus on the part of the students” (Mukattash, 1983; Suleiman, 1983; Zughoul, 1983, 1984, 1987; Ibrahim, 1983, as cited in Khan, 2011a, p. 1250). Arab students studying English in their home countries do not have the same level of exposure that allows for daily use of the language as those studying in an English-

speaking country. Arab students studying in their home countries seem to rarely use English outside of the classroom, either because it is not part of the official language of the country or the students' lack of efficient proficiency with the language. For example, in the case of Arab students in Saudi Arabia, Khan (2011a) argued that K-12 English teachers' use of the traditional approach to teaching English was the reason behind students' poor level of performance in English. Additionally, there was a lack of emphasis on the importance of teaching English in the K-12 and higher education English curriculum.

The ESL learners' ability to effectively communicate in English depends on the level and range of vocabulary they know and are able to use. Vermer (1992:147) pointed out that "knowing words is the key to understanding and being understood. The bulk of learning new language consists of learning new words. Grammatical knowledge does not make for great proficiency in a language" (as cited in Xhaferi & Xhaferi, 2008, p.8). However, Bruzzano (2018) claimed that even though vocabulary is certainly a fundamental factor that can influence the ESL learners' performance, believing that ESL learners cannot speak due to inadequate vocabulary is one of many counterproductive beliefs ESL learners have which could "strongly influence the way in which they regard and approach tasks in their learning" (p. 1).

Many students from different Arabic speaking countries choose international universities for their academic goals in countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom, where English is the main language of instruction in schools. Regardless of the cultural differences between the Arab countries, Arab students share similar difficulties in learning a foreign language such as English. A number of research studies were conducted on the language-related difficulties, the impact of Arabic proficiency on learning English, and the students' attitude toward learning English (Al-Othamn & Shuqir, 2013; Al-Bustan & Al-Bustan, 2009; Dweik & Al-Hommos, 2007).

The process of learning a foreign language for Arab students can be identified as a complex process that becomes complicated because of the distance

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between the two languages, Arabic being a verb-subject-object language (VSO) and English being a subject-verb-object language (SVO) (Al-Bustan & Al-Bustan, 2009). Al-Bustan and Al-Bustan (2009) stated that there is a struggle for international students to go beyond the confines of their first language into a new culture, a new way of thinking, and a new language, making the learning process more than just a classroom teaching.

The research conducted by Daoud (1998), and Al-Bustan and Al-Bustan (2009) concluded that writing and speaking are likely to be more challenging for the Arab students while learning English as a second language. However, Arab students feel that writing in particular is thought of as more challenging and requires a talent rather than learning. In addition, Al-Bustan and Al-Bustan (2009) reported that, significantly, participants expressed how concerned they were regarding making mistakes in class, which makes it more difficult to participate.

Language Learning Difficulties Faced by Arab ESL Learners

Arabic-speakers from different countries face a number of difficulties while learning English as a second language. For example, Allen and Corder (1974) believed that writing for Arab students is an “‘intricate’ and complex task; it is the ‘most difficult of the language abilities to acquire’” (as cited in AbiSamra, 2003, p.5). However, Saigh and Schmitt (2012) investigated more deeply and explored the problems Arab students have in speaking and writing; they concluded that Arab ESL learners “‘have difficulties with the spelling of English vowels in general’”, which they identified as the “‘vowel blindness’” (p. 24).

They argued that the reason behind this might be:

That Arabs tend to perceive the many different vowel graphemes as equal in written English. In other words, the term ‘vowel blindness’ proposed by Ryan and Meara in 1991 may mean the inability to distinguish between different vowel letters due to the many variations of their spellings and the complexity of their orthography

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relative to the high consistency of their L1 Arabic orthography of vowels. (p. 31)

These two arguments, and a few more that will follow, recognize that the difference between the Arabic and the English language might be a possible ‘first’ difficulty for the Arab students in learning ESL. Odlin (1989) argued that ESL students whose first languages have lexical similarities with English—Spanish for example—are more likely to be more successful in vocabulary acquisition than those whose languages are different and disconnected from English—such as Arabic and Chinese. Arabic is a completely different language structure than English—grammatically, phonologically, linguistically, orthographically, and syntactically. These differences between the two languages may cause learning challenges for Arabic-speaking students in developing specific skills in English, such as in speaking and pronunciation and in producing academic writing texts (Abu Shaikh, 2012).

Writing is considered by many academic researchers as one of the hardest tasks to master for most Arabic-speaking ESL students (AbiSamar, 2003; Santos and Suleiman, 1993; Mahmoud, 2005; Khan, 2011a, 2011b; Daoud ,1998). Arabic-speaking students, while writing, think of the different rules they have learned in their reading, speaking, and listening practices including writing. This heightened attention on rules may make them more prone to committing writing errors or mistakes. Moreover, Daoud (1998) pointed out that most Arab learners and teachers might view writing as a difficult task due to the “students’ lack of proficiency and insufficient motivation to write” (p. 391). AbiSamra (2003) made an intriguing argument about Arabic-speaking students, noting that most Arabic-speaking students in ESL classes have been exposed to English in their K-12 education, yet they are considered as ESL students when enrolling in Western universities. The rationale behind the argument is that even though the main language of instruction was English, Arabic was the main language of the country and the home. Therefore, no matter how immersed in English these students might be in school, their level of proficiency remains limited.

Good writing depends on good and diverse vocabulary. The lack of sufficient vocabulary results in weak writing. Moreover, good vocabulary leads to good comprehension of reading. In fact, for students to be able to construct meaning, they would need to understand the words they are reading and will use in their writing. Therefore, it becomes essential to understand the difficulties Arabic-speaking students may face in order to understand and acquire new vocabulary words. Some of these difficulties, as illustrated earlier, lie in the linguistic, phonological, and orthographic structure of the Arabic language compared to English. Santos and Suleiman (1993) suggested that when teaching English to Arabic-speakers some linguistic considerations should be kept in mind.

First, the writing system goes from right to left. The way the letters are written depends upon their position in Arabic words. English is a subject-verb-object language, while Arabic is a verb-subject-object language. This means that the grammar structure of English would be one of the first confusions for the Arabic speaking students. For example, a simple present sentence such as 'Ahmad is eating the apple' is understood by the Arabic-speaking student as 'is eating Ahmad the apple'.

Second, the orthographies of both languages are different and tend to pose difficulty in pronunciation and spelling. Some sounds in English do not exist in Arabic: an example is the substitution of the /b/ for a /p/ ("beople ≠ people) and /v/ for /f/ (fideo ≠ video). Arabic does not have two distinctive bilabial plosives, only the voiced /b/ anti-hyper corrected spelling that represents both "b" and /p/ as /p/ and similar for the /v/ and /f/. There are no written vowels; rather diacritics are used to indicate vowels (Santos & Suleiman, 1993). Here lies what Saigh and Schmitt (2012) identified as 'vowel blindness'. Arabic has three long vowels and three short vowels (damma, fatha, kasra) which are not part of the Arabic alphabet/characters. Nunation' (Tanween) is also used for duplicate short vowels of the last consonant, which adds a different meaning to the word used. One of the major differences between the

languages that creates a level of difficulty for Arabic-speaking students is the non-existence of silent letters in Arabic.

The Importance of Learning and Teaching Vocabulary

Vocabulary is central to any language teaching because without sufficient vocabulary students cannot communicate effectively. Wilkins (1972) wrote that "...while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (as cited in Lessard-Clouston, 2013 p. 2). English language learners understand the importance of learning vocabulary to their language learning because of its significance to help them communicate with others and express their own ideas. Schmitt (2008) stated that students recognize this significance that they would carry dictionaries and not grammar books. Therefore, understanding the aspects of vocabulary knowledge becomes imperative for both English learners and teachers. Xhaferi and Xhaferi (2008) declared that this importance of vocabulary learning and exploring ways to promoting it more effectively is being generally recognized by language teachers and linguistic researchers.

First of all, in order to illustrate the importance of learning and teaching of vocabulary, it is imperative to understand the concept of learning and what it consists of. Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, and Norman (2010) investigated the mechanisms and conditions that could promote students' learning. Their suggested seven principles of learning offer a guide to understanding the possible learning strategies used by students that could help or hinder their learning. Some of these principles include the influence of prior knowledge, how students' motivation determines, directs, and sustains what they do to learn, and goal-directed practice coupled with targeted feedback enhances the quality of students' learning. Ambrose et al. (2010) wrote that learning is where students bring to class more than skills, knowledge, and abilities, but they also bring in the social and emotional experiences that they value, "how they perceive themselves and others, and how they will engage in the learning process" (p.4).

This indicates that their learning starts before they come to class. Students may not be aware of the factors involved in their own learning process. For example, ESL students may not know that their first language could influence their second language, as explained in the previous section. Therefore, teachers must be aware of the type of prior knowledge their students may bring to class. Second language learners may apply the grammatical structure of their first language to the new language, which could “impede learning when the new language operates according to fundamentally different grammatical rules, such as a subject-object-verb configuration as opposed to a subject-verb-object structure” (Ambrose et al., 2010, p. 21). Brown, Roediger, and McDaniel (2014) added that prior knowledge is a required foundation for all new learning.

Once teachers understand the concept of learning, it becomes unproblematic to distinguish the principles of vocabulary learning; however, distinguishing the meaning of a vocabulary word should proceed that. Vocabulary is more than just single words, it also includes lexical chunks, phrases of two or more words, such as “Good morning” and “nice to meet you”, which the research suggests that children and adults learn as single lexical units. Therefore, Lessard-Clouston (2013) defined vocabulary as “The words of a language, including single items and phrases or chunks of several words which convey a particular meaning, the way individual words do” (p. 1-2). Also, vocabulary can be classified as receptive (words we understand when others use them) or productive (words we use ourselves). Vocabulary can also be classified as oral or written. Thus, each of us has four vocabularies: words we understand when we hear them (receptive/oral), words we understand when we read them (receptive/written), words we use in our speech (productive/oral), words we use in our writing (productive/written).

These four vocabularies are the same for native English speakers and English language learners; however, the difference between them lies in the vocabulary size each one has and learns. In teaching vocabulary to English language learners, it is important to decide what is a word. For example, in the sentence ‘the student is eating

an apple' each element is identified as a separate word. In teaching the verb 'eating' for example, we teach the infinitive verb 'to eat' then its word families, which refers to the basic word and all of its inflected forms, so we count (eat, eats, eating, ate) as a single word. Ghazal (2010) and Nation (1990) wrote that knowing a word also includes knowing its pronunciation, spelling, appropriateness, and collocations (i.e. words it co-occurs with).

Graves, August, and Martinez (2013) pointed out that a vocabulary gap exists between native English speakers and English language learners. It is said that native English speakers acquire something between 3,000 to 4,000 new words every school year and as new words are acquired students are able to develop a stronger understanding of how words work together and increase their sensitivity to context and communicative intent. A significant portion of this growth in vocabulary comes from their language and continuous exposure to text and comprehension which in return will lead them to acquire more new words. However, research on the instruction and learning of vocabulary by English language learners indicated that the vocabulary size is almost half for English language learners. Schmitt (2008) argued that the vocabulary size reported by English language learners falls short compared to the size they would need to effectively operate in English.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Recent studies suggest that the best way to accelerate growth in vocabulary is through systematic and long-term vocabulary instruction (Carlo, August, & Snow, 2005 as cited in Graves, August, & Martinez, 2013; Schmitt, 2008; Asgari & Mustapha, 2011). As stated earlier, many factors are involved in the process of acquiring a second language such as motivation, learners' needs, learning environment, learning strategies and language awareness. Consequently, Khan (2011a) pointed out that second language learning strategies have become increasingly difficult to ignore in academic research, which is why there are increasingly rapid advances in the field of second language learning strategies (Wenden & Rubin, 1987; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990 as cited in Khan,

2011a). Bruzzano (2018) suggested that teachers should analyze their own teaching practices to help increase students' vocabulary levels.

Language learning strategies are defined differently by many scholars. Strategies are ways and techniques that learners use to learn new information. Oxford (2003) defined language learning strategies as "specific actions taken by the learners to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations", while Gu (1994) defined vocabulary learning strategies as the particular strategies second language learners use for the purpose of acquiring new words in the second language. Nation (2001) explained that the language learning strategies are sub-categories of the general learning strategies and vocabulary learning strategies are considered as a part of language learning strategies.

The first attempt to understand effective vocabulary comprehension and learning practices was made by Schmitt (1997). Schmitt (1997), Oxford (1990), Gu and Johnson (1996), and Nation (2001) developed different vocabulary learning taxonomies that point out the effective methods of teaching and learning vocabulary. These vocabulary taxonomies identified the three general categories of strategies: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social strategies, with slight differences in the used practices.

Oxford (1990) categorized learning strategies into two main groups: direct and indirect. Direct learning strategies, which are more directly associated with the learning and the use of the target language in making good judgment, require the mental processing of the language. These strategies include 'Memory Strategies' which involve storing and retrieving new information; 'Cognitive Strategies', which help learners to understand and produce new language by many different means, ranging from repeating to analyzing expressions to summarizing; and 'Compensation Strategies' which allow learners to use the language despite their often-large gaps in knowledge. On the other hand, indirect learning strategies help the learning process internally, (i.e. which support and manage language learning without directly involving the target language). These strategies include 'Metacognitive Strategies'

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that allow learners to control their own cognition, ‘Affective Strategies’, which help to regulate emotions, motivations, and attitudes; and ‘Social Strategies’, which help students learn through interaction with others.

In order for English learners to increase their vocabulary level, Schmitt (2008) suggested that vocabulary instructions must be direct and explicit and must include both an “intentional learning component and a component based on maximizing exposure and incidental learning” (p. 329). Direct teaching of vocabulary does not simply mean to teach the words and their meaning. Vocabulary instruction must be intentional in a way that the students are aware of their own learning of the new words. Schmitt (2008) wrote that Nation (2001) provided a structure that will help integrate intentional and incidental vocabulary learning, which can increase the level of students’ engagement to maximize their vocabulary intake. This structure includes four learning strands: meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development. English learners vary in their use of the different learning strategies and their willingness to experiment with new strategies will enhance their learning outcomes (Xhaferi and Xhaferi, 2008).

Many ESL educators agree on the listed learning strategies categories. In fact, Schmitt (2008) suggested that similar learning strategies can be applied for English native speakers and English language learners. Thus, teachers are recommended to train their students in different learning strategies. Based on Hunt and Beglar’s 1998 study, Schmitt (2008) proposed a principled approach to vocabulary learning that is summarized to:

Principle 1: Provide opportunities for the incidental learning of vocabulary.

Principle 2: Diagnose which of the 3000 most common words learners need to study.

Principle 3: Provide opportunities for the intentional learning of vocabulary.

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Principle 4: Provide opportunities for elaborating word knowledge.

Principle 5: Provide opportunities for developing fluency with known vocabulary.

Principle 6: Experiment with guessing from context.

Principle 7: Examine different types of dictionaries and teach students how to use them. (p. 353).

Schmitt (2008) indicated that based on the literature on vocabulary learning, any time spent on lexical items, even the process of being tested on lexical items, or any type of learning activity that leads to more exposure to words, and manipulation of the lexical items and properties can lead to the learning of vocabulary.

Vocabulary Teaching Strategies

As illustrated thus far, it is highly recommended to have an explicit focus on vocabulary instruction due to its effectiveness. Explicit vocabulary instruction almost always leads to better chances of a faster retention of new vocabulary words. Laufer (2005) reported that as a result of using explicit vocabulary exercise in her studies, 70% of the words were being learned compared to 41% being learned through incidental learning. Moreover, Smith (2004) stated that direct instruction with target words lead to 90% better retention in terms of receptive meaning knowledge compared to 59% of production word form. Nevertheless, even with the recognition of the effectiveness of explicit and direct instruction, not all teachers incorporate it as a major element of their classroom instruction (Schmitt, 2008).

It is essential to know that vocabulary teaching is important and that as teachers it is our job to incorporate deliberate vocabulary teaching into classes to help students develop the breadth (quantity) and depth (quality) of vocabulary knowledge required so they can use it effectively both receptively and productively. Flanigan and Greenwood (2007) stated that vocabulary words are not equal; therefore, their instruction should not be the same (i.e. look up the word in the dictionary, copy the

definition, write a sentence). As discussed earlier, students' prior conceptual knowledge, along with the nature of the word should be considered in teaching vocabulary. Flanigan and Greenwood (2007) wrote that one of the currently effective methods for profitably organizing and categorizing words for teaching was Beck, McKeown, and Kucan's (2002) system, in which they organize words into three tiers. Tier one words consist of the most basic words that probably will not require instructions (e.g. teacher, baby, brother). Tier two words are high-frequency, high-utility academic vocabulary that students might have acquired from other classes or through incidental learning (e.g. virtual, perspective, analyze). These words require direct instruction because students may come across them in their studies but aren't used in their daily conversations. Tier three words are low-frequency and subject-specific words (e.g. photosynthesis). These words also require direct instruction.

Teachers are the best judges of which of the three tier words they would use in their instruction. Nevertheless, they should note that direct instruction is always recommended for tier two and tier three words. Beck, McKeown, and Kucan's (2002) system is often meant for teaching vocabulary to native speakers, but it can be very applicable to teaching English language learners. DePasquale (2016) and Hall (2016) pointed out that English language teachers should note that not all words are the same for ESL/ELL students. That is, tier one words can differ because of learning differences and students' language proficiency. Therefore, the instruction for tier one words should be tailored to meet the particular needs of the students in learning these words.

Following are some examples of popular vocabulary teaching strategies that are used with native speakers but can also be applied to ELLs. The Frayer Model is a graphic organizer that aims at building students' vocabulary. This technique requires students to define target vocabulary and apply their knowledge by generating examples and non-examples, giving characteristics, and/or drawing a picture to illustrate the meaning of the word. The Conceptual Map is a visual organizer that can enrich students' understanding of a new concept. Using a graphic organizer, students

think about the concept in several ways. Most concept map organizers engage students in answering questions such as, "What is it? What is it like? What are some examples?" Concept maps deepen understanding and comprehension. For example, in teaching a unit about nutrition, we can use the concept of "vegetarian food". Students write the definition, in their own words, give examples, and compare it to non-vegetarian food. Personal glossary or vocabulary notebook strategy is common among beginner level students. Because vocabulary knowledge is personal, individuals have various degrees of knowledge of specific lexical terms. The personal glossary or vocabulary notebook is something students can work on with the teacher in class as they identify the vocabulary they want to add to their notebook. It's a strategy that they can develop independently as they continue to add new words. Teachers can use other activities for reinforcement such as memory cards where the teacher creates two sets of cards, one of the words and the others of the definition, then asks students to open one card from each set. The purpose of this game is to make sure that students have learned the meaning of the word by matching each word with its definition.

Teachers can use different instructional approaches in their direct instruction that can work across different proficiency levels. Groves et al. (2013), for example, described a multifaceted approach to vocabulary acquisition that consists of "providing rich and varied language experiences, teaching individual words, teaching word-learning strategies, and fostering word consciousness" (p. 18). Imbedded within each approach are multiple strategies that either focus on increasing oral vocabulary or using reading comprehension to teach high-frequency words, among many. What the research indicates thus far is that there is no right or wrong way for teaching vocabulary. Schmitt (2000) commented that choosing a certain strategy depends on the students, the target words, the curriculum, and the school system, among other factors. Therefore, teachers are recommended to consciously think of what type of vocabulary knowledge their students have and use direct and incidental approaches for their vocabulary learning.

In addition to principled approaches proposed earlier by Schmitt (2008), additional points need to be incorporated into vocabulary instruction:

- Learners need large vocabularies to successfully use a second language, and so high vocabulary targets need to be set and pursued.
- Vocabulary learning is a complex and gradual process, and different approaches may be appropriate at different points along the incremental learning process.
- At the beginning, establishing the meaning–form link is essential, and intentional learning is best for this. Using the L1 is one sensible way to quickly establish this initial link.
- Once this initial meaning–form link is established, it is crucial to consolidate it with repeated exposures.
- It is also important to begin enhancing knowledge of different aspects of word knowledge. Some of these may be usefully learned explicitly (e.g. knowledge of derivative forms), but the more ‘contextualized’ word knowledge aspects (e.g. collocation) are probably best learned by being exposed to the lexical item numerous times in many different contexts.
- Make sure that learners maintain the maximum amount of engagement possible with lexical items. (Schmitt, 2008, p. 353).

Students’ Attitude Toward Learning a Foreign Language

Attitude plays a very crucial role in the learning process because it can influence the success or failure in learning a foreign language. Fakeye (2010) stated that one of the most important factors that might impact the process of learning a language is the learner’s attitude (as cited in Eshghinejad, 2016). A person’s attitude toward learning a foreign language has many aspects and definitions. Al-Mamun, Rahman, Rahman and Hossaim (2012) defined the term from a psychological perspective as a construct that identifies a particular behavior, while Brown (2001) largely defined it as emotional involvement such as self-confidence, feelings toward others, and relationships in the community. Attitude plays a very crucial role in the

learning process because it can influence the success or failure in learning a foreign language. Learning might only be successful if the learner has a positive attitude toward it, which can be originated from life experiences (Eshghinejad, 2016).

Attitude to language is a hypothesis that explains a particular linguistic behavior that might be positive or negative as well as integrative or instrumental (Al-Mamun et al., 2012). Hohenthal (2003) claimed that the evaluation of a particular language as being sweet, harsh, easy, difficult, local, international, vernacular or prestigious depends on the variation of attitudes people have toward that language. Therefore, since attitudes are affected by personal experiences, attitude change is a very important (as cited in Al Mamun et al., 2012). Dehbozorgi's 2012 study investigated the effects of attitude towards language learning on EFL students' proficiency and concluded that positive attitude helps students enter into a new environment of learning and that teachers of EFL will have a harder task if students have a negative attitude toward learning English.

Further Studies Needed

Even though there is much research about the difficulties of learning English as a second language by Arab students, there is a need to increase the number of studies of the importance of teaching and learning vocabulary and the significance of understanding vocabulary learning strategies. Most second language learners encounter a great deal of challenge when learning vocabulary in the second language; therefore, this article calls for more experimental studies on the vocabulary teaching strategies used by Arab students. The main objective of these studies would be to reassess the effectiveness of the existent vocabulary teaching programs for the purpose of designing better English language curricula that meets students' English vocabulary needs.

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