

## **THE EFFECT OF WRITING SUMMARY ON REMEMBERING AND REMINDING WORDS AND VOCABULARY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research has intended to investigate and specify the role of summary writing and keywords on the retention of the newly – learned vocabularies. As a matter of fact, it was a comparative study between summary – writing and rote- memorization of new words in terms of vocabulary learning. For this purpose 32 students of high school level were selected to participate in this study. After almost homogenizing them, the researcher divided them in two groups, control group and experimental group. The participants were chosen in two groups randomly. Each group consisted of 16 students. Then researcher administered the pretest for both groups at the same time. Then the students of control group were assigned to find the new words in the dictionary them and then memorize them. The students of experimental group, on the other hand, were told to write summary of the newly- studied passage. They should use keywords of that passage in their summary. Finally after some sessions, both participants take part in same post test. Comparing the t-test between pre and post tests of both groups, the researcher came to the conclusion that, writing a summary with newly learned keywords has a significant and remarkable effect on the retention of the vocabularies. This also helped students to have a better performance on their tests. Thus the null hypothesis, which stated that summary writing have no effect on the retention of learned vocabulary, was rejected.

**Keywords:** *Summary Writing, Keywords, Pre Test, Post Test, Retention. Long Term Memory*

### **INTRODUCTION**

It is quite axiomatic that vocabulary was almost neglected in the programs of class by some teachers, so little importance has been given to vocabulary in the modern language teaching method. It is important that a foreign language learners know about the value of words to some extent that the lack of it leads to feeling of security.

The extent of their knowledge of vocabulary is only a fraction of what it is for native speakers of English and the failure to understand even a few words of a text – effects on comprehension. There are many things teachers can do to help English language learner to improve their vocabularies.

It is so remarkable to help learners to develop different systems of organizing lexical items in order to speed up learning and facilitate the storage and retrieval of words as well as different techniques to allow them to become independent from the teachers and classmates to find autonomy.

#### **Historical Overview**

Vocabulary learning is crucial to language acquisition. In recent years, interest in its role has grown rapidly and researchers emphasize the need for a systematic approach to it by both teachers and the learners. There are several experimental studies in this area, addresses key questions for language teachers. For example, which words do learner need to know? How will they learn them? what does it mean exactly to know a word?

It is proved that lexical competence is at the heart of language learning, the ability to communicative successfully. In the past years, this area of teaching was neglected due to that they thought the vocabulary came approach to learner by itself. By the late 1970s and early 1980s the challenging beliefs were begun to this view (Judd, 1978; Meara, 1981; Laufer 1986). Most influential in the early years was Charles Fries (Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language, 1945). Fries believed that grammar should be the starting point of language learning and he also stated that learning was a matter of habit formation. It said that once students leaned the structural frames, lexical items could be learned later.

### **Research Article**

The shift to transformational in the 1960s brought revolutionary changes in linguistic theory (Chomsky, 1957). Chomsky rejected the behaviorist notions of habit formation. He said that language is represented as a speaker mental grammar, a set of abstract rules for generating grammatical sentences. The rules generate the syntactic structure, and lexical items are selected to fill in the corresponding slots in the syntactic frame.

Hymes (1972), while not rejecting Chomsky model, extended it put greater emphasis to the sociolinguistic and pragmatic factors. Hymes was concerned with the concept of communicative competence, which emphasized using language for meaningful communication. By the late of 1980s and early 1990s, vocabulary studies were developed and vocabulary teaching was coming into its own. Psycholinguistic studies were providing insights concerning mental processes involved in vocabulary learning, such as memory, storage, and retrieval.

There are some strategies for vocabulary language teaching that aid learner both in discovering the meaning of a new word and in making firm a word once it has been encountered. Learners should become independent learning of vocabulary by using a combination of extensive reading and self study strategies.

Some of them are:

- Guessing meaning from context
- Mnemonic devices
- Vocabulary devices
- Connect a word to personal experience
- Check for an L1 cognate
- Use verbal and written repetition

It is not impossible for learners to use all strategies all the time, but it is useful to vary strategies that seem more appropriate to a given situation.

Recently, corpus studies put important insights in about the nature of words. Patterns of lexis become the central part of communication and discourse. Interaction and form as well as corrective feedback from members or the teacher are important in this competence.

Two most common ways in which the meaning of new items is conveyed are as follows:

1. Traditional approach and techniques, which are teacher – centered. In this approach, learners are provided with vocabulary learning activities composed of items selected by the teacher.
2. Student- centered learning. In this approach, learners were required to compile their own vocabulary lists which were then entered by learners themselves into specially designed online system that would then create the vocabulary learning activities from these items.

One of the best methods to learn newly-learned keywords is preparing the summary of the passage with those vocabularies. It is an effective procedure for the acquisition of learning words in L2 learning. Based on it, learners have opportunity to deal with content material that is cognitively demanding and meaningful. This activity is based on content-based instruction. Vocabulary is easy to acquire when there are contextual clues to help convey meaning.

A considerable strategy for a memory aid in independent learning is setting up vocabulary notebooks. Schimtt & schimtt (1995) recommended arranging the notebook in sheet or index card file, in which, students write word pairs and semantic maps which help them visualize the associative network of relationship existing between new and familiar words.

Researchers examined the effect of taking note and creating summary of passage with newly-learned words among students and learners of English. Some cases must be considerable in writing a summary of the passage. It is better that summary be short and brief.

Repetition of similar subjects and memorizing them based on long index cause to interference and confusion for learners. Do not try to learn new vocabulary in isolation, rather place it in the sentence or phrase and then memorize that sentence.

Writing summary is related to complex elaboration strategies. It is accompany by transfer previous knowledge of learner, about that subject, from long term memory to active memory and mix with new information.

## **Research Article**

### **Purpose and Research Question**

Experienced teachers of English as a second language know very well how important vocabulary is. Laufer (1997) stated that vocabulary is at the heart of any language learning. Researchers view vocabulary as an important language component that effective communication relies on it (Oxford & Scarella 1994). Students usually find words learning difficult and express that they cannot remember many of words they have learned. So teachers must pay attention to teach strategies and techniques to L2 vocabulary learning and retention appropriately. One of the best strategies is writing a summary of the taught passage by using newly-learned vocabularies.

There are two research questions:

1. Do the writing summary based on newly-learned vocabularies, affect learners word learning development?
2. Do the two rote-memorizing and summary-writing tasks differ significantly in order to storage the lexical items in long term memory.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Method**

#### **• Participants**

The population from which the participants were selected included students of high school level who were registered in language institute for their further English study. They agreed voluntarily to take part in this study. The participants included 40 students of both male and female. Their age rang was between 13 to 16 years old. The researcher selected them randomly among existing English institute.

#### **• Procedure**

First the pretest administered to both experimental and control group. They were asked to write the definition of the words, even in Persian if they know. Also they were told to specify the items that they know but they could not remember. During the time of treatment, between pre and post test, they were asked to write summary of the taught passage with newly-learned vocabularies.

After some sessions, the learners became familiar to this task. it became easy for them to use all new words in their writing. In this way, the words had deep impact in their mind and cause to retention and reminding that words even when they faced them later in other contexts. On the contrary, the control group learned new vocabularies only by rote learning and just by memorizing it.

After two weeks, the post test was administered for both groups. It is remarkable to pay attention to physical setting of the class. The researcher must control the condition and setting as much as possible he/she can during all of the stages and phases of research. In is worthy to mention that in this research the time was so limited, so maybe it had some shortage and deficits. But according to the finding of research and based on the mean of the total scores after post test, this research can state that the writing of summary based on the newly-learned words had significant effect on the students vocabulary learning and increased their level of retention and remembering of learned items.

The researcher calculated the mean and standard deviation for this research. This finding is as follows:

The findings of pre test of learners:

<b>Group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>SD</b>
Control	32	19.8	1.7
Experimental	32	19.6	1.9

As the above, the performance of participants was not significantly different from each other.

The findings of post test of learner:

<b>Group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>SD</b>
Control	32	19.9	1.6
Experimental	32	25.5	3.9

### **Research Article**

The above table reveals that the revenue of the second group (experimental) was better and well-developed and the instructional task was effective for the learners. Significant difference between their pre test and post test scores proved the effectiveness of writing summary by newly learned words on their long term memory.

### **Conclusion**

As the researcher mentioned before, vocabulary is obviously an essential component in any language and also is the heart of communication. Recently language teachers and researchers have been informed that vocabulary is an important aspect of language. Many researchers examined the different techniques of vocabulary instruction. So it is worthy to find and research about the best method in this area.

These findings of this research reveal that writing summary of newly-learned words has remarkable effect on retention and remembering the words rather than just rote-learning and memorizing them.

In this task, the learners are able to more successfully develop the learned items compared to other group that received only rote learning without any writing summary. They can retain the words in their long term memory better.

This method, to some extent, reduces the problems of learner in the acquisition and retention of L2 words. This finding may discourage teachers to pay more attention to L2 words teaching tasks and activities and change their beliefs about just memorizing vocabularies.

It is the time for teachers to use appropriate and practical techniques for instruction of words in the classroom. Continued studies in this area are necessary to reach more obvious and clear results and compare this finding with other studies. According to the finding and based on the mean of total scores of participants, this research can express that the writing of summary based on the newly-learned words has significant effect on learning vocabularies in the classroom among students and increase their level of retention and remembering of learned items.

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