Research Article

THE IMPACT OF TRANSLATION AND PICTORIAL STYLES ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNER'S VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE

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ABSTRACT
The impact of two styles on Iranian EFL learner's vocabulary knowledge was variable, two groups of students from elementary level were the subjects of our study, translation of words to mother tongue of students and pictorial words were two styles which were studied in this research, through this study the researcher found that translation method had better result with high score while pictorial method resulted in low scores. Per researcher's study translation method became better method since students of this method require less proficiency level to acquire unknown words compared with pictorial method, as mentioned students of both groups were from elementary level with little proficiency level. Another justification which made the pictorial style to have the lower score was time of treatment which was in the afternoon in this group (Pictorial) while in the other group treatment was done in the morning.

Keywords: Treatment, Style / Method, Proficiency Level, Pictorial Words, Translation

INTRODUCTION
What is to Know a Word
According to Thornbury (2002) knowing the meaning of a word does not just know its dictionary meaning (or meanings) - it also means knowing the words commonly associated with it (its collocations) as well as its connotations, including its register and its cultural accretions.

Word Association and Networks
Gass and Selinker (2008) state that part of what is involved in knowing a word, and in particular in knowing a word in a manner similar to native speakers, is the association that is made to other words. Meara (1978) investigated the lexical associations made by learners of French. Modern theories of lexical semantics are concerned with the relationships between words. Word associations would appear to be a reasonable means of determining how individuals relate words. Meara found that learners tended to produce rather different associations from those made by native speakers of French. Native speakers primarily gave paradigmatic or syntagmatic associations, based on semantic factors.

Paradigmatic

Stimulus	Response
Man	Woman
Dog	
Boy	
Child	

Syntagmatic

Stimulus	Response
Brush	Teeth
Hold	Hands
Black	Mark
Bank	Robber

Learners tended to give responses based on phonological similarity, such as plafond "ceiling" or professeur "professor "to the stimulus profound "deep". A possible interpretation is that the learners had not constructed the network of relationship necessary for fluent word associations in their L2. A later study by Schmitt and Meara (1997) investigated word associations by Japanese learners of English,

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specifically word associations and their relationship with verbal suffixes. The authors found that the ability to produce native –like word associations, not surprisingly, is related to suffix knowledge as well as to vocabulary size and general proficiency.

In both L1 and our L2, we establish networks which may be semantic networks, syntactic networks (words behave in similar /same ways syntactically), phonological networks, and so forth. Essentially, a lexical network involves the linking of words in some way. Henriksen (1999) uses exactly this approach in her discussion of depth of vocabulary knowledge. Various forms of word association measures have been used in second language research (e.g., Soderman, 1993; Schmitt, 1998a; Singleton, 1999; Meara and Fitzpatrick, 2000), with considerable discussion on development in terms of a movement from phonological to semantic associations.

How Important is for EFL Learners to Know Words

Now a days importance of learning unknown words is much more highlighted compared with past time. Richards and Renandya (2002) believe that vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read and write Without an extensive vocabulary and strategies for acquiring new vocabulary learners often achieve less than their potential and maybe discouraged from making use of language learning opportunities around them such as listening to the radio , listening to native speakers using the language in different contexts ,reading or watching television. Research on vocabulary in recent years has done a great deal to clarify the level of vocabulary learning learners need to achieve in order to read both simplified and unsimplified materials and to process different kinds of oral and written texts, as well as the kinds of strategies learners use in understanding, using ,and remembering words.

Vocabulary acquisition is a crucial and is some senses the central component in successful foreign language acquisition (Begla and Hunt, 2005).

How do Second Language Learners Acquire Vocabulary

Just as we can ask the question, what does it mean to know a word? We can also ask the question, when can we say that a word has been learned? Teachers often make a distinction between active and passive vocabulary. Passive refers to vocabulary which can be recognized when encountered, in a text for example, but which the learner cannot easily produce in speech or writing as active vocabulary. However, this is too simple a characterization of language learning. There are words which learners can retrieve from memory and use automatically. There are others for which learners experience a 'tip of the tongue effect', recalling something of the word but not its precise form. Yet other words exist in the memory but prove difficult to recall. It may therefore be most useful to see vocabulary knowledge as a scale running from recognition of a word at one end to automatic production at the other, through intermediate stages of making greater sense of the word and how it might be used in different contexts. However, knowledge of some words will remain at the recognition end of the continuum and will be called on in reading and listening but might never become part of a learner's productive ability. This characterization of vocabulary knowledge is complicated by the phenomenon of forgetting: this can happen quite rapidly if distracting activities interrupt effective storing of the word, or more slowly if the word has been stored in the memory but is rarely encountered or used   (Hedge, 2000).

Learning Unknown Words through Pictorial Words

As Hill (1990) pointed out, "the standard classroom" is usually not a very suitable environment for learning languages. That is why teachers search for various aids and stimuli to improve this situation. Pictures are one of these valuable aids. They bring "images of reality into the unnatural world of the language classroom (Hill 1990)". Pictures bring not only images of reality, but can also function as a fun element in the class. Sometimes it is surprising, how pictures may change a lesson, even if only employed in additional exercises or just to create the atmosphere. Pictures meet with a wide range of use not only in acquiring vocabulary, but also in many other aspects of foreign language teaching. Wright (1990) demonstrated this fact on an example, where he used one compiled picture and illustrated the possibility of use in five very different language areas. His example shows employing pictures in teaching structure, vocabulary, functions, situations and all four skills. Furthermore he pointed out that "potential of pictures

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is so great that only a taste of their full potential can be given" in his book. Wright (1990) To be more specific, beside lessons where pictures are in the main focus, they might be used just as a "stimulus for writing and discussion, as an illustration of something being read or talked about, as background to a topic and so on" (Hill, 1990). However, "pictures have their limitations too (McCarthy, 1992)". For example in teaching vocabulary, pictures are not suitable or sufficient for demonstrating the meaning of all words (McCarthy, 1992; Thornbury, 2004). It is hard to illustrate the meaning of some words, especially the abstract ones such as 'opinion' or 'impact'. Therefore, in some cases, other tools are used to demonstrate the meaning, or alternatively pictures might be supplemented by other tools. Cited from Jaklova (2009).

Learning Unknown Words through Translation

When I first became an EFL teacher eight years ago I used to translate new English vocabulary for my students into their native language (in this case, Thai), If they had difficulty understanding what the word meant, In my natively, I thought this was helping them learn English faster but, after only a few months teaching, I realized it actually was not. EFL and ESL teachers are often tempted to translate an

English word into their students native language in misguided attempt to help them learn. There are however many good reasons why experienced EFL /ESL teachers dissuade them from doing so, as translating can be a determine to an EFL student learning English correctly (James, 2010).

Disadvantages of Translating

James (2010) reported that the biggest problem with translating from English to your EFL student's native language though is it causes them to, forever more ,think of the word in their language first and then English This slows down their ability to think and thus speak in English, Particularly If they have learned hundreds of words this way. As an EFL or ESL teacher, although you think translating for your students is helpful, it's really not. If you truly do want students who learn fast, speak quickly and remember vocabulary easily, use hand gestures, facial expressions, photographs, pictures and explanations for every new word you teach, before you think about translating into their own language I now only translate as an absolutely last resort, if any student is never going to get it. Like I said, I am not a dictionary and neither are you.

Translating Wastes Too Much Time

When I would translate from English to Thai, I would often find I would end up wasting 10 minutes or more just explaining one word ,as the class would go off on long tangents discussing whether the word I had given them in Thai was correct or not. At the end of class, I 'd realize my hour lesson plan went out the window as 25 minutes of it was spent trying to decide upon the right Thai words to use for new English vocabulary. But, news flash. My students already speak Thai. They needed to learn the English word, not improve their knowledge of Thai (James, 2010).

The researcher of current study would like to figure out which of mentioned styles is more effective for Iranian students therefore following hypotheses are formulated:

1. Iranian EFL learners acquire unknown words easily through pictorial words.
2. Iranian EFL learners acquire unknown words easily through translation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methodology

Subjects

Two pre-primary classes in one single school were selected; the age range of students was between 5 to 6. In both classes we had both males and females. Students were all from a high social class, the school was also located in the northern part of Tehran, through researcher's investigation students' families were mostly educated however, and there was limitation to have a background questionnaire.

Subjects were categorized as follows:

Group A: 6 students (1 male and 5 females).

Group B: 11 students (5 males and 6 Females).

It is needful to put forward the point that students' English level was elementary.

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Procedure
In this test teaching unknown words through translation the words to their mother tongue was given to group A. Teaching unknown words through pictorial words was given to group B.

Ten similar words were taught in these two classes. Five selected words were objects which could be found in the kitchen and five words were objects which could be found in the living room or bedroom. Selected words were as follows:

Washing machine, microwave oven, sinks cooker, dish washer, cupboard, sofa, carpet, curtain and TV.

In Group A words were taught by translation into their mother tongue. In Group B words were taught by pictures (See the appendix no. 1).

Students of group A were not homogenous therefore the researcher was obliged to act as following: 5 out of 6 subjects were invited for further investigation in this project.

In order to achieve the goal of this study, the present researcher tried to do the procedure of research in both classes in the same condition however, there was some limitation through the research, and this research was done within two days for each group.

In Group A (Teaching Through Translation to the Mother Tongue)
In this group our research was done within two successive days. Pretest, treatment and posttest were done in the mornings, during mentioned days 6 students were present however, as already mentioned number of students was regarded as 5. On the first day, the Persian translation of words were asked from students as pretest, on the same day, Persian translation of all words was taught to students. On the second day students were requested to translate the same words into their mother tongue.

In Group B (Teaching Through Pictorial Words)
In this group our research was done within two successive days, Pretest, treatment and posttest were done in the afternoons; number of present students was 11 during all phases. In pretest, each picture was shown to students and they were asked the name of each word in English. On the same day the treatment was done and the English word of each picture was taught to students. On the next day posttest was done as pretest.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Methods

Table 1: Students mean scores (out of ten) in two different styles for acquiring unknown words

Methods	Pre-test mean	Post-test mean	Total
Translation	1.2	8.2	9.4
Pictorial words	1.5	2.9	4.4

Per mentioned information group A in which style of teaching was through translation of words into their mother tongue had better score (9.4) and group B in which way of teaching was pictorial words had the next score (4.4). Relevant with these two methods of teaching, following information is required to be shared:

Level of required proficiency from the most to the least for reflecting the best result by students is as follows:

1) Pictorial words
2) Translation

It was expected that students of translation method get better score since translation requires less proficiency level compared with pictorial method and as already mentioned students of both groups were in elementary level with little proficiency therefore, we arrived at our expectation in this part.

Per given figures pictorial word style had fewer score than the translation method. Another reason that the researcher has investigated for this result is as follows:

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As already mentioned in the procedure part, the time when the treatment along with   the pretest and posttest were done in this group (pictorial) was in the afternoons while in the other group (translation) it was done in the mornings. This factor might have been effective in our research final result.

Regarding the first research hypothesis (Iranian EFL learners acquire unknown words easily through pictorial words) as indicated, pictorial words method had low score (4.4) therefore this hypothesis is rejected. As already mentioned it is quite in relation with student's proficiency level, time of treatment might have affected our research result also.

As far as the second hypothesis is concerned (Iranian EFL learners acquire unknown words easily through translation), per this research students who had this method in their class had a high score (9.4), it manifests that translation of words to the mother tongue of EFL students is still one of the best ways therefore the second hypothesis is accepted.

Conclusion and Implication

The current research indicated that language proficiency level along with time of treatment affected the result of different styles on Iranian EFL learner's vocabulary knowledge; therefore the following conclusion and implication are taken into account.

Conclusion

In this research the impact of two styles on learning unknown words in EFL contexts was studied, the collected data in this study revealed that English language proficiency level of students had significant effect on the result of learning unknown vocabularies by different styles, in our research the result of translation method had a high score of 9.4 while pictorial words style was 4.4. The reasons of these results were investigated by the researcher as follows:

Generally, students of translation style require less proficiency level than pictorial style to acquire new words therefore students of this style had a high score (9.4) , needful to mention that students of both groups were from elementary level with little proficiency level.

The other reason was the time of treatment, in translation style treatments was done in the morning while in pictorial one it was done in the afternoon.

Translation slows down student's ability to think and thus speak in English. If you truly do want students who learn fast, speak quickly and remember vocabulary easily, use hand gestures, photos for every new word you teach before you think about translation into their own language (James, 2002). In our research translation style had better result for learning unknown words.

As Hill (1990) pointed out, "the standard classroom" is usually not a very suitable environment for learning languages. That is why teachers search for various aids and stimuli to improve this situation.

Pictures are one of these valuable aids. They bring "images of reality into the unnatural world of the language classroom." (Hill 1990) Pictures bring not only images of reality, but can also function as a fun element in the class. Sometimes it is surprising, how pictures may change a lesson, even if only employed in additional exercises or just to create the atmosphere. Pictures meet with a wide range of use not only in acquiring vocabulary, but also in many other aspects of foreign language teaching. In our research pictorial words had lower score.

Implication

This research indicated that proficiency level of students is a key factor to the result of different styles of learning unknown words, It could be advised that not every style of learning unknown words is an appropriate one for any proficiency level of students therefore, students proficiency level should be considered as a significant criteria for choosing the style of acquiring unknown vocabularies.

Also time of treatment during the day is effective in the result of our instruction; in this research morning time had a better effect for acquiring unknown words than the evening time therefore, treatment of unknown vocabularies could have better result in the mornings.

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