

Involvement Load Hypothesis: A New Trend in EFL Contexts

By

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Abstract: This research is a proposal for applying ILH strategy in EFL curriculum. The study aimed at investigating the effect of the involvement load hypothesis-based strategy on developing the English vocabulary acquisition and retention. It was delimited to a random sample of seventy-five EFL first-year secondary school learners. The sample was divided into three equal groups. The instruments of the study included (1) a Vocabulary Familiarity Questionnaire (VFQ) for making sure that the target words and idioms that would be used in the current study were not familiar to the students, (2) a pre-test for identifying the participant's current level and making sure that all the three groups were at the same level, and (3) a post-delayed test for identifying the effectiveness of the activities based on the ILHBS. Equivalent vocabulary pre-and post-delayed tests were designed. The researcher conducted the pretest, the involvement load hypothesis based-strategy (ILHBS) and the post-delayed test. Having collected the data, they were treated statistically. results of the study indicated that the first-year secondary school EFL learner's vocabulary acquisition and retention skills had been developed as a result for the ILH-based activities.

Keywords: Involvement Load Hypothesis, vocabulary acquisition, vocabulary retention.

Introduction

English language has become the most prevalent language in the world. Many people use it to communicate in their life. Vocabulary is the backbone of any language. English Language vocabulary is the bridge that learner cross to learn new ideas and meaningful concepts. Thus, English vocabulary acquisition is very important for the learner as it is the tool that the learner uses to communicate effectively.

Harmon, Wood, & Keser (2009) as well as Linse (2005) state that learner's vocabulary development is an important aspect of their language development. Although vocabulary has been ignored for

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a long period of time, researchers such as e.g., Carter & McCarthy (1988), Nation (1990), Arnaud & Bejoint (1992), Schmitt (1997, 2000), Coady & Huckin (1997) have progressively been turning their attentiveness to it. Vocabulary plays a considerable role for learners in language acquisition for the reason that vocabulary is considered as one of the knowledge areas in language Cameron (2001).

According to Hung & Chen (2011) 32 study vocabulary is surely the first step toward learning a foreign language. A sentence is usually made up of numerous vocabulary words. Without any concepts of grammar, learners may guess the meaning of a sentence if they are given a dictionary.

Additionally, learners of a foreign language are probably to get their message across by putting all the vocabulary words together, even though those words are not put in a grammatical, correct order. Accordingly, the importance of vocabulary can't be over emphasized, and it is a substantial portion when we learn a foreign language.

Goulden, Nation, & Read (1990) mentioned that it has shown that native speakers have vocabulary up to 20,000 headwords for word families. The researchers counted word families, which include headwords, its derived forms and its inflected forms (e.g., -ly, un- and ness). Therefore, the actual number of words known seems to be even larger than 20,000. In point of fact, when native speakers are 20 years old, they increase their vocabulary more than this number. Nation (2001) sees that non-native speakers of English are in no need of having this large number of vocabularies, non-native speakers have to learn the most helpful words. Non-native speakers of English still in need to learn a great many words, and it is a difficult task for them. Accordingly, language teaching experts and language learners would like to discover new methods to increase vocabulary knowledge in an effective way.

Vocabulary knowledge is the core of a language comprehension and use McKeown (2002). In addition, Barra (1995) pointed out that it is necessary that learners should have sufficient word knowledge in order to comprehend a text. The comprehension of a language is conditional upon the number of words that are known in the language. In addition, learners should have sufficient word knowledge to understand what they read. If knowing the meaning of most of the words used in a text students can understand a writer's message. Nation (2001) states that a learner may have a big problem in comprehending the message without being provided with the key

vocabulary in a text, so, word knowledge is essential for any reading comprehension because it helps to determine if the students have the ability to comprehend the texts they read or not.

Literature Review

Vocabulary is defined by some researchers in different ways for example, Hornby (1995) defines vocabulary as "the total number of words in a language; vocabulary is a list of words with their meanings". Another example can be Ur (1998) as he says that: "Vocabulary can be defined, roughly, as the words we teach in the foreign language". He mentioned that sometimes these new items of vocabulary can be more than just a single word: for instance, post office, and mother-in-law, which are made up of two or three words but express a single idea. He sees that the effective convention is the one that covers all such cases by using vocabulary as "items" rather than "words". In other words, researchers such as (Neuman & Dwyer, 2009, p. 385) define vocabulary as "words we must know to communicate effectively; words in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary)". As cited in Coady and Huckin (1997) it is stated in Zimmerman study that "vocabulary is central to language and of critical importance to the typical language learning. Moreover, Diamond and Gutlohn (2006) in an online article state that "vocabulary is the knowledge of words and word meanings".

Vocabulary is "the stock of words which is used by a person, class or profession." mentioned by Burns (1972). Vocabulary can be defined as a powerful carrier of meaning according to Hubbard (1983). This means that learner should have a strong vocabulary base that can help in achieving comprehension. In addition, the learners should have the ability to know the meanings of words as well. Hence, when the student has the ability to use and acknowledge a new word in different contexts, pronounce, speak, write the word well, he/she has the knowledge and meaning of that word.

Learning vocabulary items is considered as an essential part in all language skills for instance, listening, reading, writing, and speaking (Nation, 1995). This can appear clearly in English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL). Some researchers like Read (2000), Maximo (2000), Nation (1995), Gu (2003), Laufer and Nation (1999), and others have understood that the formation of complete spoken and written texts is extremely affected by the acquisition of vocabulary. Those researchers see that the successful use of second language requires high level of vocabulary acquisition. We

will be unable to use the functions and structures we may have learned for understandable communication if we don't have a large number of vocabularies in our mind as an appropriate vocabulary acquisition is needed for effective second language use.

Some researchers discussed what are incidental and intentional learning. Intentional learning is defined as an activity where learning vocabulary is the purpose or emphasis of a task. Intentional learning could be practiced through activities, like memorizing wordlists or through form-focused instruction (FFI). Incidental learning of vocabulary can be defined as words being acquired when being involved in an activity with another purpose than learning vocabulary, for instance, when you listen to a native-speaker in a conversation or when you read a book. The difference between intentional and incidental learning is not accepted for some researchers such as somewhat Bruton, García López and Esquiliche Mesa (2011). They claim that we should understand that we can acquire vocabulary as a by-product through both either an intentional-based activity or incidental-based activity. They announce that intention can only be measured at task level, in form of task objectives. Intention is also exists even when being involved in an incidental learning-based activity because of the choices made by the learner in order to comprehend and learn the new word, hence, the term "incidental" may not concentrate more on potential learning situation than the actual learning situation instead; incidental learning is applicable to be used in some cases such as explaining task design keeping in mind that the learners do not know the strategies that they use as it cannot be known in advance and is not quantifiable (Bruton et al., 2011).

A group of researchers of English as a second language (ESL) English as a foreign language (EFL) (e.g., Ahmadian, Amirian and Tajabadi, 2014; Barcroft, 2009; Beal, 2007; Huang, Eslami and Wilson, 2012; Maleki, 2012) draw a distinction between incidental and intentional vocabulary learning. According to the general educational sense incidental learning can be described as learning without the intention to learn. The teacher does not direct the learners' attention to the target words. Based on vocabulary learning research in the context of FL learning, "Once the learner has decided to start the journey of inferring the meaning of an unknown word, he can resort to different types of tools to accomplish, successfully or unsuccessfully, meaning; i.e., knowledge sources and word guessing strategies" (Khatib and Nourzadeh, 2012) .

Ahmad (2012) (as cited in Al-Hadi (2015) shows that in contrast to incidental vocabulary learning, intentional vocabulary learning is the process of cramming the meaning of the new words without undergoing cognitive process. It almost always leads to greater and faster gains as well as better retention; it is more effective because it is more focused and goal-directed (Lehmann, 2007 & Schmitt, 2008). It is famous for its explicit learning. Intentional learning is goal oriented and more focused than incidental learning (Tajeddin and Daraee, 2013, 2). According to Schmitt (2008) as cited in (Jahangard and Movassagh, 2011, 49) intentional learning represents the kind of learning that considers memorization of vocabulary information as its primary purpose.

The debate will not stop between and among FL researchers whether vocabulary learning is incidental or intentional. Some researchers (e.g., Ahmad,2012; Balighizadeh and Abbasi,2013; Chan, Lowie and de Boost,2012; Lazar,2008; Webb, 2007) state that vocabulary learning mainly occurs through incidental learning that is considered the main vehicle by which learner can acquire new items.

Based on depth of processing that learners have while learning vocabulary indirectly, Yaqubi, Rayai and Gorgi (2010) hold the belief that deeper processing leads to better memory performance. In addition, Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) claim that incidental vocabulary learning is featured by deeper levels of processing contribute to more elaborate, more durable, more meaningful, and stronger memory traces. A study by Krashen (1985) as cited in Al-Hadi (2015) concluded that, incidental vocabulary learning leads to better results than intentional vocabulary learning.

L2 researchers draw a distinction between incidental and intentional learning, based on cognitive psychology. Learners in incidental vocabulary learning can gain the new words through the context without even having the intention of learning it. According to (Loewen, Erlam, & Ellis, 2009) Incidental learning is characterized by an absence of intentionality to learn, but might still involve conscious attention to some features of the L2.

Most learners will not achieve better vocabulary acquisition and retention unless they find the explicit way to help them acquire words quickly and to increase their retention ability. So, the researcher will use an educational involvement load hypothesis strategy as a center focus in her methodological framework. Since involvement load hypothesis can help teachers work out the best ways of instruction that might foster EFL vocabulary acquisition and retention.

The involvement load hypothesis has grown by means of a model called depth of processing model. It was first proposed by Craik & Lockhart in (1972). They conducted that deep information during learning and how it can go deeper affects retention in long term memory. The information that is processed at a deep level stay in memory longer than that which goes through a shallower processing.

Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) states that the Involvement Load Hypothesis (ILH) is deemed a cognitive, motivational construct of involvement which comprises three fundamental components: need, search and evaluation. The process of involvement is handled through tasks designed in a way that has different degrees of need, search and evaluation. The first component which is need can be described as “the motivational non-cognitive dimension of involvement” (Laufer and Hulstijn, 2001, 14). The hypothesis gives concern to the need to achieve.

The cognitive components of involvement are represented in Search and evaluation as both need giving attention to form-meaning relationship (Schmidt, 1990). Search refers to “the attempt to find the meaning of unknown L2 word or trying to find the L2 word form expressing a concept by consulting a dictionary or another authority (e.g., a teacher)” (Hulstijn and Laufer, 2001, 14). Evaluation, on the other hand, refers to the assessment of an appropriate meaning or use of a given word within the suitable context.

All the three components of the involvement load hypothesis can be present absent when processing a word in any task whether natural designed-based or artificially designed-based task Al-Hadi (2015). The main presumption of the ILH is that retention of the unknown words is depends, in general, upon the degree of involvement in processing these unknown words.

Many studies (Soleimani, 2015; Maleki 2012; Fatalaki 2014; Ghabanchi, Davoudi & Eskandari 2012; Feng 2013; Jing & Jianbin 2009; Al-Hadi 2015) investigated the effects of using involvement load hypothesis in teaching and learning language. These studies mentioned that involvement load hypothesis helps learners to communicate effectively in their target language.

According to Soleimani (2015) study entitled “Visiting Involvement Load Hypothesis and Vocabulary Acquisition in Similar Task Type”, the study claim that language learners and instructors have the ability to use tasks with higher involvement indexes without caring about their type in order to enhance their acquisition skill of vocabulary.

Maleki (2012) indicated the effect of the involvement load hypothesis (ILH) on enhancing Iranian EFL learners. The study conducted that task with higher involvement load led to better retention effects. The study findings included that language experts, researchers, teachers and material writers have to encourage their students to utilize the involvement load hypothesis for enhancing their vocabulary knowledge incidentally.

In a study by Fatalaki (2014) entitled involvement load hypothesis: word meaning retention across oral and written task types, the study concluded that the involvement load hypothesis has great effect in improving the retention of the new word meaning as the participants in this study achieved more successful retention of the newly-learned vocabularies when they received the reading task.

The impact of the Involvement Load Hypothesis on vocabulary learning through input and output tasks was investigated by Ghabanchi, Davoudi and Eskandari (2012). They claimed that the more efficacious initial learning and better retention of the new words comes out of deeply involving the learner in the task.

Feng (2013) in a study examines the impact of using involvement load in EFL vocabulary learning and in their translation tasks. The study findings show that word acquisition and retention in a second language depends upon an involvement load- based task.

Jing & Jianbin (2009) conducted an empirical study of the involvement load hypothesis in incidental vocabulary acquisition in EFL listening skill. They conducted that task with higher involvement load led to better retention effects.

Al-Hadi (2015) investigated the effect of the involvement load with its three components - need, search and evaluation - on incidental vocabulary acquisition and retention of EFL learners in Saudi Arabia. Results revealed that there was a positive effect of the involvement load on participants' vocabulary acquisition and retention.

Based on some studies in this area, In Egypt many researchers such as (El-Nekhely, 2012; Ahmed, 2013; Abd El-Aziz, 2016; Ramadan, 2016; Elsamouly, 2014 & Nasr, 2016) discussed the topic of vocabulary acquisition but on different learning stages. There is a lack of studies that discussed vocabulary acquisition among secondary stage.

A study by Refaey (1990) aimed at indicated the effectiveness of using word games versus the use of word lists on the acquisition of vocabulary new items of first grade students of the secondary stage. The study participants were 100 secondary school learners. The

findings of this study showed a perspicuous lack of vocabulary acquisition skills among learners.

Developing the vocabulary of the industrial secondary school EFL learners was the main purpose of Al-Desoky (2015) study. This development occurred through using project-based learning (PBL). The participants in this study were 31 students from 1st year, Kafr Al Tawila Industrial Secondary School for girls. The study conducted that there is a deficiency of English vocabulary acquisition among learners.

Few numbers of studies in the Arabic area discussed this topic among secondary stage EFL learners and asserted that there is a lack of the acquired vocabulary among the learners of this stage.

A study by (Zainol Abidin, Mohammadi, Singh, Azman & Souriyavongsa, 2011) handled the effectiveness of using songs in Youtube to improve vocabulary mastery among the study participants. The study revealed that there is a lack of vocabulary acquisition among upper secondary school students. Having bounded vocabulary is considered as a block that prohibits students from receiving and learning a language. Learners need to know how to increase their vocabulary.

Bahanshal (2015) investigated the efficiency of different strategies of vocabulary learning on the acquisition of Saudi EFL learners. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the strategies preferred by 2nd year Saudi high school students during learning English vocabulary. She claims that the shortage of particular vocabulary knowledge affects negatively on learners' outcomes and understanding of the target language (TL) that's why learners suffer the loss of good communication.

Al-Nasser (2015) study investigated the troubles that face the Saudi Arabians in English language acquisition. Al-Nasser, after studying English for about 9 years, concluded that students of high schools or students who leave schools are not having the ability to write or speak a single faultless sentence in English. He also sees that Saudi English learners face many dilemmas in the acquisition of their English Language.

Statement of the problem

Although vocabulary is important for comprehending and producing language, secondary school students are in need of developing their vocabulary learning and retention skills that is why the present study attempted to help secondary school students develop their

vocabulary learning and retention skills through an involvement load hypothesis-based strategy.

The questions of the study

The present study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What are the vocabulary acquisition and retention skills needed for EFL secondary stage students?
2. How far do secondary stage EFL learners master English language vocabulary skills?
3. What are the features of an Involvement Load Hypothesis Based Strategy for developing vocabulary acquisition and retention of secondary stage EFL learners?
4. To what extent does the Involvement Load Hypothesis Based Strategy affect developing vocabulary acquisition and retention of secondary stage EFL learners?

Aim of the study

The study aimed to develop vocabulary acquisition and retention skills for secondary stage EFL learners by using an Involvement Load Hypothesis-Based Strategy.

Significance of the study

The study seems to be of significance to:

1. Teachers to help their students develop their vocabulary acquisition and retention skills.
2. EFL learners might develop their vocabulary learning and study effectively.
3. Curriculum designers to consider the importance of using an involvement load hypothesis-based strategy to design some activities that might enhance vocab acquisition and retention skills.

Hypotheses of the study

The study hypotheses are as follows:

1. There would be statistically significant differences between the experimental (Exp 1 incidental, Exp2 intentional learning) and the control groups' mean scores of EFL vocabulary post-test in favor of the experimental groups.
2. There would be no statistically significant differences between the experimental groups' mean scores of the posttest and the delayed test in EFL vocabulary test.

Instruments and materials of the study

1. An EFL Vocabulary Familiarity Questionnaire (VFQ) developed by the researcher.
2. An involvement load hypothesis-based strategy developed by the researcher.
3. An EFL vocabulary test (two versions) developed by the researcher.

Delimitations of the study

This study was delimited to:

1. A group of (75) EFL learners at first year secondary school.
2. Some vocabulary acquisition and retention skills that are reflected in Reading Comprehension (RC), Multiple Choice (MC), Sentence production (SP), Arabic Translation (AT) and Matching.

Procedures and design of the study

The researcher drew a random sample from first secondary stage EFL learners. Then, she applied a vocabulary familiarity questionnaire followed by the pre-test of vocabulary acquisition and retention on the study group. The proposed Involvement Load Hypothesis Strategy (ILHBS) was taught for two experimental groups the first one is incidental-based and the second one is intentional-based. After that, the researcher administrated the post-test of vocabulary acquisition and skills to investigate the impact of ILHS. After a certain time, the delayed test was administered to test the retention skills. The study data were collected and analyzed and the results showed that the first-year secondary school EFL learner's vocabulary acquisition and retention skills had been developed as a result for the ILH-based activities.

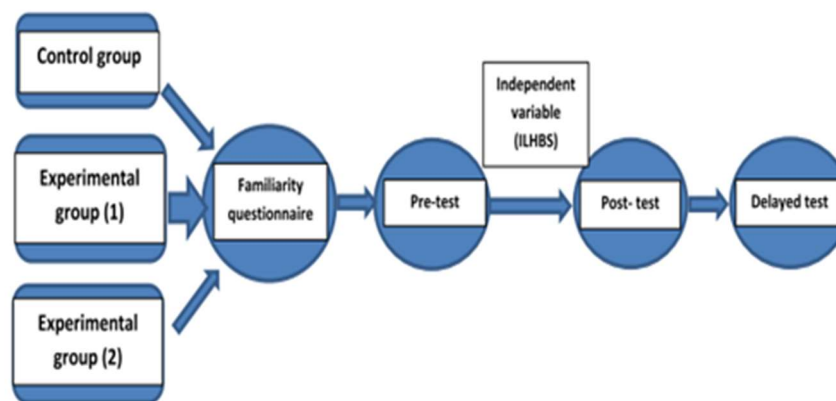


Figure 1: Study Design

Definition of Terms

1. Vocabulary acquisition

The researcher defines it operationally as" it is the process of learning some words of a language that the learner face either by an incidental or an intentional way in order to help the learner to communicate effectively.

2. Vocabulary retention

The researcher defines it operationally as" the ability of remembering the same acquired words when facing a same or different situation, the level of retention depends on how deep information is processed during learning.

3. Involvement load hypothesis-based strategy (ILHS)

To the researcher ILHS can be defined as "an instructional discipline consisting of three basic components: *need*, *search* and *evaluation*, in which the learners are exposed to low, medium or high levels of task involvement. The main aim is to deeply involve the learner in an environment that increases their level of acquiring words and their meanings, to enhance the ability to remember them when exposed to similar vocabulary situations".

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عبء الإدماج: إتجاه جديد في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

المستخلص: هدفت الدراسة إلى التحقق من فعالية استخدام استراتيجية قائمة على نظرية عبء الإدماج على تنمية مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية وإستبقائها. واقتصرت عينة على خمسة وسبعين طالبا من طلاب الصف الاول الثانوى. قامت الباحثة بتوزيع عينة الدراسة على ثلاث مجموعات متساوية. شملت أدوات الدراسة على: (١) إستبيان مألوفية المفردات اللغوية للتأكد من أن الكلمات والمصطلحات المستهدفة التى تم إستخدامها فى الدراسة الحالية غير مألوفة للطلاب، (٢) إختبار قبلى وذلك لمعرفة المستوى الحالى لعينة الدراسة فى الثلاث مجموعات، (٣) إختبار بعدى- مؤجل للتعرف على فاعلية الاستراتيجية القائمة على نظرية عبء الإدماج فى اكتساب المفردات اللغوية وإستبقائها لدى عينة الدراسة. وقد قامت الباحثة بتطبيق الإختبار القبلى، ثم تدريس الإستراتيجية القائمة على نظرية عبء الإدماج (ILHBS) ثم تطبيق الإختبار البعدى-المؤجل. تم جمع البيانات و تم معالجتها إحصائيا وأظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن مهارات إكتساب وإستبقاء المفردات اللغوية لدى طلاب الصف الأول الثانوى قد تمت تنميتها، عزوا ذلك إلى الأنشطة القائمة على نظرية عبء الإدماج.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نظرية عبء الإدماج، إكتساب المفردات اللغوية ، إستبقاء المفردات اللغوية