

Acquiring Vocabulary Through a Context - Based Approach

OPEN ACCESS

Volume : 7

Issue : 2

Month : March

Year : 2019

ISSN : 2320-2645

Received : 20.02.2019

Accepted : 03.03.2019

Published : 17.03.2019

Citation:

Muthusamy, I. "Acquiring Vocabulary Through A Context-Based Approach." *Shanlax International Journal of English*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2019, pp. 14-17.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/english.v7i2.325>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License

I.Muthuchamy

*Professor, Department of Educational Technology
Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India*

Abstract

Developing students' strategies for learning unfamiliar words is a prime challenge of English reading people. The shortcomings of this approach are well known. Much dictionary work can mar all interest in reading and even interfere with comprehension because readers become less aware of the context which gives them meaning. It also leads to very slow and ineffective reading. Surmising vocabulary from context is the usual way to con the meaning of new words. Honey field stresses the impetus of context by remarking that even with a functional vocabulary of the 3,000 most frequently occurring items in English; readers will still not know approximately 20 per cent of the items they come across in a un simplified text.

Keywords: context-based, vocabulary, strategy, grammatical pattern, memorization, patterns, lexical, hypothesis, achievement

Introduction

Learning words in context and not in isolation is an efficient vocabulary learning strategy. A word used in different contexts may import different meanings; thus, Simply learning the definitions of a word without examples will not suffice. Learning an isolated list of words without reference to the context is nothing but a memorization exercise which makes it uneasy for learners to use the words. Looking at the context in which the word appears seems to be the best way of learning vocabulary. Good readers should take into consideration background knowledge in processing the context and in creating guess about the kind of vocabulary that will occur in the reading.

The significance of the study

Drawing inferences from what we observe can be used in the reading process. Schema theory suggests that the knowledge we have is organized into interrelated patterns. These patterns are constructed from our previous experiences and guide us as to what we might expect to encounter in a new context. Vocabulary is connected with grammar, so familiarity with grammatical patterns helps the reader guess the meaning of words. For example, a word can be classified as a grammatical item or as a vocabulary item, and in functional grammar, it is also an epithet in the nominal group the beautiful girl and reflects the speaker's opinion of the person described. The association between vocabulary and grammar is manifest by the interdependence of grammatical and lexical cohesion. In a typical text, grammatical and lexical cohesion buttress each other. The subject matter of passage is interrelated, and the text is often structured. Redundantly, writers give definitions or extensive clues within the text when a new word is present.

Readers may have ample chances to understand the passage. By nature, reading is a process of hypothesis formation and verification; it is a communicative act between a writer and reader (possibly a large number of readers).

Consequently, the reader's understanding is unlikely to be 100 per cent accurate. As Wallace puts it, "The mother-tongue speaker learns to be content with approximate meaning... He is satisfied with a meaning which makes sense of the context. He compares this view of reading to the work of secret agents: "In the secret service, there is a principle called the 'need-to-know' principle... In vocabulary learning the 'need-to-know' principle could also be applied. Words are the basic unit of language form. Without adequate vocabulary, one cannot communicate effectively or express ideas. Holding a limited vocabulary is also an obstacle to students from learning a foreign language. If learners do not know how to expand their vocabulary, they gradually lose interest in learning. In India vocabulary is taught mainly through reading. Each course book has a list of words. Teachers should prepare to master these words, and students try to get by heart these words, not being certain about which meanings should be remembered. The texts seem to be the only means of teaching new vocabulary. As a result, learners forget words soon. This article highlights techniques learners can use to learn the word in context.

The contextual way of vocabulary teaching and learning

Learners never ask such questions as "what does run mean?" They know it is difficult to explain the meaning of a word without knowing the context. For example, look at what happens to run in different contexts:

- Don't run so fast.*
- She has a run in her stocking.*
- Soon there will be a run on the banks.*
- He batted in a run when it counted.*
- The car will run better now.*

These sentences show that run may have different meanings. The word run appears not to change; only its surroundings change. Clarke and Silberstein think students can often obtain a general understanding of an unfamiliar word if they continue reading.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the effectiveness of context-based teaching of words in the teaching of English
2. To find out the degree of Achievement in English of the students of standard XI.
3. To study the effectiveness of Context-based instructions in teaching English.
4. To find out the extent of achievement in English of the students of standard XII.

Problem Restated

To what extent is the Context-based approach effective in teaching English words to the students of standard XII?

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were framed for the study.

1. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores for achievement in English in the pre-test between the control group and the experimental group.
2. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores in achievement in English between the pre-test and Post-test for the control group.
3. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores Achievement in English between the pre-test and Post-test for the experimental group
4. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores in Achievement in English concerning the Post-test between the control group and the experimental group.
5. Gap closures in experimental groups will be higher than those in the control group.

Sampling Design

The sample consisted of 70 students for the final study. The sample includes pupil studying in Std XII. Control group and experimental group were first matched before the treatment.

Instrumentation

For the purpose of accessing the pupil's performance, the following tools were developed and validated.

1. Context-based instruction
2. Achievement Test in grammar

Experts checked the content validity. Reliability of the test was determined by the rational equivalent method.

Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study are as follows

1. This study was limited to the pupils studying in standard XII
2. The sample is not random.
3. The experimental was limited to a period of a few months.

Analysis and Interpretation

Hypotheses

There will be a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in the pre-test performance in Achievement in English.

There will be no significant difference between pre-test and post-test performance for the control group in Achievement in English.

There will be no significant difference between pre-test and post-test performance for the experimental group in Achievement in English.

There will be no significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in the post-test performance in Achievement in English.

Table 1: Pre-Test Performance

Pretest	N	Mean	SD	"t" value	Significance
Control	30	55.50	11.24	0.45	NS
Experimental	30	54.16	11.83		
Type	N	Mean	SD	"t" value	Significance
Contpre	30	55.50	11.24	1.03	NS
Contpost	30	58.83	13.66		
Type	N	Mean	SD	"t" value	Significance
Exp Pre	30	54.16	11.83	4.75	S
Exp Post	30	68.83	12.11		
Post Test	N	Mean	SD	"t" value	Significance
Controlgroup	30	58.83	13.66	3.00	S
Experimental group	30	68.83	12.11		

$df=68$; $t(0.05) = 1.96$; $t(0.01) = 2.58$

The table reveals the following facts.

There was no significant difference between the Experimental group and Control group in the pre-test performance in Achievement in English.

There was no significant difference between pre-test and post-test performance for Control group in Achievement in English.

There was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test performance for Experimental group in Achievement in English.

There was a significant difference between the Experimental group and Control group in the post-test performance in Achievement in English.

GAP Closure

Gap closure is the difference between the mean score obtained by the group and the maximum score,

called the perfect score. The closing gap score is the percentage up to which the gap towards perfection gets closed for a group. Per cent gap closed is defined by a variable which might be termed percentage of ignorance gap closed and stated as a percentage

Table 2: Gap Closure for Control Group and Experimental Group

S. No	Group	Gap Closure
1	Control	7.48
2	Experimental	32.00

An inspection of the above table discloses the fact that the mean of the gap closure in the unit test is in the range of for the control group.

Hypothesis

Research Hypothesis (HR)

Gap closure in the experimental group will be greater than that of the control group. Null Hypothesis (HR)

Findings

There was no significant difference in the performance of the control group and experiment group in the pre-test. This confirms that the control group and the experimental group were matched.

There was a significant difference in the post-test performance of the experimental group. This is due to the effectiveness of the reinforcement by way of conducting the tests and exposure to the students the question pattern and awakening of awareness.

There was a significant difference between the performance of the control group and the experimental group in the post-test. This is in evidence of the effectiveness of Context-based instructions.

The gap closure for the experimental group was greater than that of the control group. This further collaborates the effectiveness of the Context-based approach

It could be seen that the contextual approach was more effective than the traditional method in the teaching of English at the Higher secondary level.

Suggestion for further research

1. The experiment may be conducted at a different level
2. The experiment may be performed to develop the other skills of the English subject
3. The comparative study may be undertaken about rural with urban, Low SES with High SES, slow learners with fast learners studying in different types of schools.
4. More instructional material for employing a programmed learning method may be prepared through DIET's of each district.
5. Exposure to the teacher in developing PLM

Author Details

Dr.I.Muthuchamy, Professor, Department of Educational Technology, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India.

Email ID: imuthuchamy.bdu@gmail.com

may be given through DTERT.

Conclusion

It could be observed through experimentation that programmed teaching-learning strategy was an advantageous point over the traditional method in teaching English effectively Context-based approach may be built in appropriate knowledge in electricity for the rest of the units.

References

- Brysbaert M, Stevens M, Mandera P and Keuleers E., "How Many Words Do We Know? Practical Estimates of Vocabulary Size-Dependent on Word Definition, the Degree of Language Input and the Participant's Age. *Front. Psychol.* Vol.7, pp.1116. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01116 [1], 2016.
<https://moluch.ru/archive/151/42941/>
https://www.andrews.edu/sed/leadership_dept/documents/context_based_adult_pdf
- Milton, James; Treffers-Daller, Jeanine., "Vocabulary size revisited: the link between vocabulary size and academic achievement". *Applied Linguistics Review.* Vol.4, no.1, pp.151–172. doi:10.1515/applirev-2013-0007, 29 January 2013.
- Prabhu, N. S., "Second Language Pedagogy". Oxford University Press. Retrieved 18 January 2013, 1987.
- Segbers, J. Schroeder, S., "How many words do children know? A corpus-based estimation of children totals vocabulary size". *Language Testing.* Vol.34, no.3, pp.297–320. doi:10.1177/0265532216641152. 28 April 2016.
- Snow, M.A., "Content-based and immersion models for second and foreign language teaching. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.)," *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* (3rd ed.), 2001, pp.303–318.