



RESEARCH ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS

CHALLENGES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING VOCABULARY VIA COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING METHOD: WITH REFERENCE TO SAINT MICHAEL INTERNATIONAL YOUTH ACADEMY FOCUS ON GRADE 10 STUDENTS IN ADDIS ABABA: ETHIOPIA

*Dinku Gebeyehu

P.O.Box 138 Woliata sodo University, Woliata Sodo, Ethiopia

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 03rd May, 2019
Received in revised form
11th June, 2019
Accepted 16th July, 2019
Published online 30th August, 2019

Key Words:

Strategies,
Challenges,
Teaching,
Learning.

*Corresponding author: Dinku Gebevehu

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess challenges in teaching and learning Vocabulary using Communicative Language Teaching Method in Saint Michael International Youth Academy. To collect the necessary data for the study, semi-structured interview, questionnaire and observation were used. The interview was used for three teachers and ten students while the questionnaire was utilized for eighty students and classroom observation were employed three times. Data collected through questionnaire was quantitatively analyzed while responses obtained from interview was described and discussed qualitatively. In addition, data obtained via classroom observation were tallied and converted into numbers and described quantitatively. From the analysis of data, difficulty of inferring the meaning of jargon words and idiomatic expressions; unsure of contextually guessed meaning of words; unable to recognize the pronunciation of some words were found as challenges of students in learning vocabulary from communicative language teaching orientation. Regarding teaching vocabulary, unable to create context for jargon words and mispronouncing words were found as challenges. Based on the findings, enhancing word power; encouraging students to guess and use vocabulary in any type of communication; activating the passive vocabularies was recommended.

Copyright © 2019, Dinku Gebeyehu. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Citation: Dinku Gebeyehu, 2019. "Challenges in teaching and learning vocabulary via communicative language teaching method: with reference to saint michael international youth academy focus on grade 10 students in Addis ababa: Ethiopia", *International Journal of Development Research*, 09, (08), 29515-29518.

INTRODUCTION

The neglecting of teaching and learning of vocabulary has now markedly come into the focus of interest for many applied linguistic researchers and language experts (Breen and Candling, 1980). As a result of this, vocabulary teaching and learning strategies in communicative language teaching approach has its place in the Ethiopia context. Accordingly, English language textbooks were produced for secondary school levels on the basis of vocabulary teaching and learning strategies through Communicative approach (MOE,1997). Teaching vocabulary using the communicative approach is better to produce skillful and knowledgeable citizen who can use the target language for various communicative purposes. To sum up, regarding vocabulary learning strategies in Ethiopia, many researchers have conducted researches. For example, Abebe (1997) conducted a research on strategies of vocabulary learning focus in freshman learning English at Addis Ababa University and he pointed out students make use of what they are already accustomed rather than using a wide range of vocabulary.

Getenet (2008) studied vocabulary learning strategy use in the case of high and low achiever and he concluded that the high achiever frequently used strategies than the low achiever. Although the above aforementioned researchers and others have conducted many researches related to vocabulary learning. As the researcher read so far, challenges in teaching and learning Vocabulary using Communicative Language Teaching Method has not been investigated. This is a pivot that leads the researcher to conduct a research on this area.

METHODOLOGY

Research design: Descriptive research design was used in this study. It is a fact finding study with adequate and accurate interpretation of the findings (Creswell, 2003). It describes what is; and it describes with emphasis what actually exists: current conditions, practices, situations or any phenomena. Since the present study focus is to assess challenges in teaching and learning Vocabulary using Communicative Language Teaching Method, descriptive design was employed. Thus, the data were described quantitatively and qualitatively.

Research setting: This research was conducted in Saint Michael International Youth Academy. It is one of private schools in Addis Ababa, a capital of Ethiopia. The school was selected purposively. The owner of the school was telling the researcher about the difficulty of the teachers and students in teaching and learning English. During that time, the researcher has shared the owner of the school about the master thesis he made. After the informal communication, the researcher was invited to conduct research in Saint Michael International Youth Academy..

Participants of the study: The participants of this study were Saint Michael International Youth Academy grade 10 English teachers and their students. Seven English teachers were taken as the participants of the study. Using Slovene's sample size determination formula, 221 students were taken as a sample for students.

Tools of data collection: In this study, three instruments were used for collecting data. These were questionnaires, interview and classroom observation. These instruments were selected because of their suitability for gathering important data for the study.

Questionnaire: Using questionnaire, aspect on challenges of vocabulary teaching and learning using communicative language teaching approach was gathered. The questionnaires were prepared based on the objectives of the study. Close ended questions were constructed and employed to generate data from respondents. The questionnaire was administered to all respondents of the study. All of the items are related to challenges in teaching and learning vocabularies. English version was chosen in designing the questionnaire items.

Interview: Semi-structured interview which have similar contents with questionnaire and classroom observation were prepared. The interviews were conducted with English language teachers and purposively selected students. The number of interview participants was determined while the interview was held since the researcher was stop while he got a saturated data. The interview conducted after prior arrangements in the department of English in the study academy. During the interview time, the researcher recorded the responses.

Observation: The classroom observation was carried out to see how students as well as teachers perform and what problems they had in vocabulary teaching and learning in the class. The observation was conducted by the researcher. The observations were made in different sections while vocabulary teaching was made using communicative language teaching approach.

Data Analysis: Descriptive method of data analysis was made. To this end, the researcher made a narrative description, percentage and tabulation analysis since the data were both quantitative and qualitative. This analysis was helpful to investigate the problem widely and deeply by making a discussion using different scholars. And also the data gathered from questionnaire, interview and observation were analyzed in separated mode.

Ethical Consideration: To be an ethical, before entering into the actual data collection, communication was made about the purpose of the study. Every effort was made to keep

participants anonymous and confidential. So that, every source participated in this study was not written in their names.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students vocabulary learning strategies related challenges: As shown in Table 1, item 2.1 the majority of the sample population 35.7% responded they agree unfamiliar words such as jargon, idioms difficult to be inferred. Some of the respondents 23.5% stated they strongly agree unfamiliar words like jargon, idioms difficult to be inferred. Nearly the same number respondent 21.7% claimed they undecided unfamiliar words like jargon, idioms difficult to be inferred. The minority of the sample population 10.4% and 8.6% responded as they strongly disagree and disagree respectively. Generally the entire respondents mainly indicated they either strongly agree or agree this show that students had difficulties to infered jargon and idioms. According to Chall and Jacobs (2003) students do not adequately grew their vocabulary knowledge by reading comprehension. This indicates that they may have difficulty to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words such as jargon and idiomatic expressions. Item 1.2, as shown in Table 1. The majority 44.3% declared they agree on their difficulty to recognize the words they know because of the way they are pronounced. Among the 221 respondents, 25.3% stated they strongly agree that they face difficulty to recognize the words they know because of the way they are pronounced. However, 17.2% of the respondents asserted that they undecided about difficulty of pronunciation related challenges. On the same agendum, the minority 7.2% and 5.9% stated their strong disagreement and just a disagreement respectively. According to Nation (2001) one aspects of knowing a word knows its pronunciation. But students do not apply this aspect of language's knowledge as they reported they cannot understand the words they know due to the pronunciation made. Therefore, students should be exposed for pronunciation of different words. As evident item 1.3, The majority of the sample population 35.3% and 33% witnessed their agreement and strong agreement respectively that they would normally understand words in written but fail to comprehend when they heard them in stream of speech.

They face difficult to tell where one words finishes and other begins on the same agendum, 16.3%, 10.4% and 4.5% asserted their indecisiveness disagreement and strong disagreement respectively. Regarding written against spoken word understanding, Schmitt and Mc Carthy (1992) advised to develop strategies that help language learners to understand both written and spoken version of language. Therefore, the teachers should encourage their students listen different English media and practice selective attention. As shown in Table 1 Item 1.4, 45.7% and 36.2% of the respondents show their agreement and strong agreement about their feeling discouragement when they don't immediately understand the meaning of the words. Whereas, 6.8%, 6.8% and 4.5% of the respondents indicated their indecisiveness disagreement and strong disagreement respectively. As shown in Table 2, Item 1.5. The majority of the respondents (41.6% and 36.7%) stated their agreement and strong agreement about their intricacy in finding the meaning of unfamiliar words from context. And the minority of the sample population 7.7%, 7.2% and 6.8% indicated their indecisiveness disagreement and strong disagreement respectively.

Table 1. Challenges in learning vocabulary in communicative language teaching approach

Items	Options No						Total
	SD	D	Und	A	SA		
1. In learning vocabulary, I face..							
1.1 unfamiliar words like Jargon, Idioms difficult to be inferred	F 23	19	48	79	52	221	
	P 10.4	8.6	21.7	35.7	23.5	100	
1.2 difficulty to recognize the words I know because of the way they are pronounced	F 16	13	38	98	56	221	
	P 7.2	5.9	17.2	44.3	25.3	100	
1.3 words that I would normally understand in writing, but when I heard them in a stream of speech, I found it difficult to tell where one words finishes and other begins	F 10	25	36	78	73	221	
	P 4.5%	10.9%	16.3%	35.3%	33.0%	100%	
1.4 Discouragement when I don't immediately understand what word means	F 15	10	15	101	80	221	
	P 6.8%	4.5%	6.8%	45.7%	36.2%	100%	
1.5 difficulty in finding the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context	F 16	17	15	92	81	221	
	P 7.2%	7.7%	6.8%	41.6%	36.7%	100%	

Table 2. Challenges in teaching vocabulary via communicative language teaching approach

No	Items	Options					Total
		SD	D	Und	A	SA	
2. In teaching vocabulary, I face difficulty to let my students							
2.1 Infer the meaning of unfamiliar words like Jargon, Idioms	F 1	1		3	2	7	
	P 43.3	14.3		42.9	28.6	100	
2.2 to recognize the words they know because of the way they are pronounced	F	1		4	2	7	
	P	14.3		57.1	28.6	100	
2.3 to tell where one words finishes and other begins both in written and spoken version	F		1	4	2	7	
	P		14.3	57.1	28.6	100	
2.4 Not feel discouragement when they don't immediately understand the meaning of the words	F	1		5	1	7	
	P	14.3		71.4	14.3	100	
2.5 find the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context	F		1	5	1	7	
	P		14.3	71.4	14.3	100	

However, during observation some teachers were observed while they gave activities of guessing meanings from context without creating the context which help students to guess the meaning of unknown words. In this regard, (Nation, 1990) argues that the primary strategy for dealing with the low frequency vocabulary should be to teach students how to guess words in context, among other things. Therefore, the students should be assisted in employing strategies such as background knowledge, and deducing meanings having looked the words that come before and after unknown words.

Teachers vocabulary teaching strategies related challenges:

As showed in Table 2, item 2.1, the majority of respondents (42.9% and 28.6%) stated their agreement and strong agreement in that order about their difficulty in creating context to let their students infer the meaning of unfamiliar words such as Jargon and idioms. On the same agenda, 43.3 % and 14.3% of the respondents pointed out their strong disagreement and just a disagreement respectively. Regarding inferring the meaning of unfamiliar words (Jargon and Idioms), Nation (1995) and Schmitt (2000) said teachers should encourage employing various strategies and sorting out their problems to enhance the ability to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words. As evident Table 2, item 2.2, the majority of the respondents (57.1% and 28.6%) claimed as they face difficulty to let their students recognize the words they know because of the way they are pronounced respectively. However, other respondents (28.6% and 14.3%), on the aforementioned issue, showed their strong disagreement and a disagreement respectively. As it was observed, most of the teachers face difficulty in letting their students recognize the way words are pronounced. But, Abebe (1997) pointed out teachers should equip in different strategies to overcome some problems they are facing while they are teaching vocabulary. Regarding information indicated at item 2.3, in Table 2, 57.1% and 28.6% agreed and strongly agreed respectively. This is so since they said the claimed they have faced challenges to let their students tell where one words finishes and other begins both in written and spoken version.

Whereas, scholars like Getent (2008) stated teachers are expected to use strategies of vocabulary learning so as to teach effectively and also to facilitate their students learning. Therefore, teachers deal with the problems by exposing themselves to various vocabulary teaching strategies. As showed in Table 2, item 2.4, 71.4% of the respondents claimed they have difficulty to let their students not feel discouragement when they don't immediately understand the meaning of the words. 14.3% of the respondents stood to the contrary. From the data, it can be understood that teachers found their students discouragement when they don't immediately understand what word means. As evident in Table 2, item 2.5, (71.4% and 14.3) of the participants of the study, stated their agreement and strong agreement on the difficulty they have had to let their students find the meanings of unfamiliar words from the context. From these data, it can be understood that teacher's students are unable to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context. Lack of this strategy is a big challenge especially the target language is a foreign language like a case in Ethiopia. In this country, English is a target as well as a foreign language

Conclusion

Based on the above results, it can be concluded that -teachers do not explicitly address the vocabulary teaching strategies in their vocabulary classes. As a result students are not using vocabulary learning strategies which let them autonomous in development their vocabulary. The teachers seem not have awareness and use of different teaching strategies that increases learners autonomy in learning vocabulary. On the basis of the conclusion the following recommendations are suggested.

Recommendation

- Teachers should use various vocabulary teaching strategies while they are teaching new words to make students effective in their vocabulary learning.

- Teachers should let their students engage actively vocabulary activities.
- Teachers should help the students to identify suitable strategies for each vocabulary activities.
- Furthermore, text book and materials developers should take in to account vocabulary teaching strategies in cooperating with various activities.
- Teachers should use at most effort to facilitate and help students to aware, use and practice different vocabulary learning strategies.
- English language teachers should use student-centered approach to teach.

REFERENCES

Abebe, G. 1997. Vocubulary Learning Strategies of AAU Freshmen Learning English as a Second/Foreign Language Unpublished PhD dissertation. Addis Ababa University: Unpublished phd dissertation.

Breen, M. and Candlin, C. 1980. The Essentials of acommunicative Curriculum for Language Teaching. In Applied Liguistics (pp. 1,89-112).

Chall, J.S. and Jacobs,V A. 1983. Writing and Reading in the Elementary Grades:Developmental Trends among Low-SES Children.language Arts,60(5)

Cresswell, J. 2003. Research Design Qualitative and Mixed Methods approach (4 th ed. Thousand oaks,CA:. Sage.

Getenet, G. 2008. Vocabulary Learning Strategy use. addis Ababa University: Unpublished Master's Thesis

Mc.carthy, M. 1992. some Vocabulary Modes in Conversation. In InR. Carter and Carthy./Eds, vocabulary and Language. Newyork: Long Man press.

MEO, 1997. New English For Ethiopia, Text Book. Addis Ababa

Nation, L. 1990. Teaching and Learning Vocabulary. New York: New Bury House Publishers press.

Zangash, M. 1995. Analysis of problems of Teaching and Learning English in the High Schools of the Kermanshah province. Shiraz University: Unpublished M.A Thesis.
