



AN ANALYSIS OF VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES AMONG EFL LEARNERS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Manazarova Oygul Mirzoxid qizi

Farg'ona viloyati Buvayda tumani 49-umumiy o'rta ta'lim maktabi

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Annotation. This article analyzes vocabulary learning strategies used by learners of English as a Foreign Language in the process of English language acquisition. The main aim of the study is to identify the most frequently used vocabulary learning strategies among EFL learners, evaluate their effectiveness, and reveal their impact on language acquisition. The article examines cognitive, metacognitive, memory-related, social, and compensatory vocabulary learning strategies from both theoretical and practical perspectives. The study employed a mixed-method approach using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observation. The findings indicate that learning words through context, repetition, translation, and the use of mobile applications are among the most common strategies used by learners. At the same time, learners who select strategies consciously and purposefully demonstrate better long-term retention and more active use of vocabulary in speech. The article concludes with pedagogical recommendations for the systematic teaching of vocabulary strategies in English classes.

Keywords: vocabulary learning strategies, EFL learners, English language acquisition, lexical competence, language teaching, cognitive strategies, metacognitive approach



Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada ingliz tilini chet tili sifatida o'rganuvchi talabalarning lug'at boyligini oshirishda qo'llaydigan strategiyalari tahlil qilindi. Tadqiqotning asosiy maqsadi EFL o'quvchilari orasida eng ko'p qo'llanadigan lug'at o'rganish strategiyalarini aniqlash, ularning samaradorligini baholash hamda til egallash jarayoniga ta'sirini ko'rsatishdan iboratdir. Maqolada lug'at o'rganish strategiyalarining kognitiv, metakognitiv, xotiraga oid, ijtimoiy va kompensator turlari nazariy va amaliy jihatdan ko'rib chiqildi. Tadqiqotda aralash metodologiya asosida so'rovnoma, yarim tuzilgan intervyu va kuzatuv usullaridan foydalanildi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatdiki, talabalar orasida so'zlarni kontekst orqali o'rganish, takrorlash, tarjima qilish va mobil ilovalardan foydalanish eng ommabop strategiyalar hisoblanadi. Shu bilan birga, strategiyalarni ongli va maqsadli tanlagan o'quvchilarda lug'atni uzoq muddatli eslab qolish va nutqda qo'llash darajasi yuqoriroq ekanligi aniqlandi. Tadqiqot yakunida ingliz tili darslarida lug'at strategiyalarini tizimli o'rgatish bo'yicha tavsiyalar berib o'tildi.

Kalit so'zlar: lug'at o'rganish strategiyalari, EFL o'quvchilari, ingliz tili egallash, leksik kompetensiya, til o'qitish, kognitiv strategiyalar, metakognitiv yondashuv

Аннотация. В данной статье анализируются стратегии изучения словарного запаса, используемые учащимися, изучающими английский язык как иностранный, в процессе овладения английским языком. Основная цель исследования заключается в выявлении наиболее часто применяемых стратегий изучения лексики среди учащихся EFL, оценке их эффективности и определении их влияния на процесс усвоения языка. В статье рассматриваются когнитивные, метакогнитивные, мнемические, социальные и компенсаторные стратегии с теоретической и практической точек зрения. В исследовании использовался смешанный



методологический подход, включающий анкетирование, полуструктурированные интервью и наблюдение. Результаты показали, что изучение слов через контекст, повторение, перевод и использование мобильных приложений являются наиболее распространёнными стратегиями среди учащихся. Вместе с тем было установлено, что учащиеся, осознанно и целенаправленно выбирающие стратегии, лучше сохраняют лексику в долговременной памяти и активнее используют её в речи. В заключении предлагаются методические рекомендации по систематическому обучению стратегиям изучения словарного запаса на занятиях английского языка.

Ключевые слова: стратегии изучения словарного запаса, учащиеся EFL, овладение английским языком, лексическая компетенция, обучение языку, когнитивные стратегии, метакогнитивный подход

INTRODUCTION

In today's era of globalization, proficiency in English has become not only a key factor for academic success but also an essential requirement for professional development. For students learning English as a foreign language (EFL), one of the major challenges in mastering the language is building a sufficient vocabulary. While knowledge of grammar is important, it alone is not enough. Without an adequate vocabulary, learners struggle both to fully understand texts and to express their ideas clearly and confidently. Even when learners study under similar conditions, their vocabulary acquisition levels can vary significantly. One of the main reasons for this difference lies in the strategies they use. Some students rely on random memorization of words, whereas others apply more purposeful and effective techniques. Strategies such as learning words through context, forming associations, using spaced repetition, applying visual



aids, and actively using new vocabulary in communication have been shown to significantly improve retention and long-term acquisition[2].

This article focuses on analyzing vocabulary learning strategies among EFL learners. It explores the theoretical foundations of these strategies, examines the techniques commonly used by students, analyzes their role in language acquisition, and offers practical recommendations for improving the teaching and learning process. The relevance of this topic is particularly evident in modern education, where independent learning, the use of digital tools, and the development of personalized learning paths are becoming increasingly important.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vocabulary learning strategies have been widely studied in the fields of foreign language methodology and applied linguistics. Researchers emphasize that vocabulary acquisition is not a simple act of memorization but a complex process influenced by cognitive, social, and psychological factors.

Schmitt classifies vocabulary learning strategies into two main categories: discovery strategies and consolidation strategies. According to him, learners first need to determine the meaning of new words and then use various techniques to store them in long-term memory[4]. His classification remains one of the most widely used frameworks in vocabulary research. Similarly, Oxford divides language learning strategies into direct and indirect types, including memory, cognitive, compensatory, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies[5]. This approach highlights the close connection between vocabulary learning and overall language acquisition. In particular, metacognitive strategies - such as planning, monitoring, and self-evaluation - play a crucial role in independent learning. Other researchers emphasize that effective vocabulary acquisition requires learning not only the meaning of a word but also its form and usage. True



lexical competence is achieved when learners understand pronunciation, spelling, collocations, stylistic features, and real-life application of words, rather than relying solely on translation[6].

Recent studies also show the growing importance of digital technologies in vocabulary learning. Tools such as electronic flashcards, gamified platforms, audiovisual materials, and AI-based applications enhance learners' motivation and make repetition more efficient. Local research in Uzbekistan indicates that many students still rely on writing and memorizing words in notebooks, which does not always lead to long-term retention[7]. Therefore, modern methodology increasingly emphasizes the need to explicitly teach vocabulary learning strategies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data. Such an approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the issue by examining not only numerical results but also participants' experiences and perspectives.

The study involved 30 university students in Tashkent who were learning English as a foreign language. These participants were undergraduate students at different stages, with proficiency levels ranging from A2 to B2. Among them, 15 students were selected for semi-structured interviews. Data collection methods included questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations. Initially, participants completed a questionnaire about their vocabulary learning habits. Based on their responses, learners were categorized as active or passive strategy users. Interviews were then conducted to explore why students preferred certain strategies, which methods they found most effective, and what difficulties they encountered. Observations were used to validate these findings in practice.



Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using percentages, while qualitative data from interviews and observations were examined through thematic analysis. The results were then compared and interpreted to draw overall conclusions.

RESULTS

The findings revealed that EFL learners commonly use a variety of vocabulary learning strategies. The most frequently used methods included:

1. learning new words through translation
2. studying vocabulary in context
3. repetition and review
4. using mobile applications and electronic flashcards
5. noting unfamiliar words while reading or listening

According to the questionnaire results, approximately 81% of participants reported that they primarily rely on translation into their native language to understand new words. About 75% stated that learning vocabulary in context is more effective, while 63% regularly use mobile applications.

However, the results also showed that simply using multiple strategies does not automatically lead to better outcomes. What matters most is how systematically and purposefully these strategies are applied. Interview data provided deeper insights. Many students emphasized that learning a word once is not enough; it must be encountered repeatedly, used in sentences, and applied in both spoken and written communication. Some participants noted that listening to pronunciation and saying words aloud significantly improved their retention. This suggests that vocabulary learning is not only a visual process but also involves auditory and kinesthetic elements.



DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the effectiveness of vocabulary learning strategies depends not only on the type of strategy but also on the quality of its application. Translation, for example, is useful for quick understanding but does not guarantee deep learning unless it is combined with contextual use, collocations, pronunciation, and active practice. The effectiveness of context-based learning was also confirmed[9]. This approach helps learners understand not only the meaning of words but also their stylistic and functional characteristics. Words may carry different emotional tones or usage patterns depending on the context, and learners who encounter them in real situations tend to use them more naturally. Metacognitive strategies deserve particular attention. Students who plan their learning, set vocabulary goals, and regularly monitor their progress tend to achieve better results. This finding highlights the importance of developing independent learning skills.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study demonstrate that vocabulary learning strategies play a crucial role in language acquisition among EFL learners. Translation, repetition, contextual learning, and the use of mobile applications were identified as the most common strategies. However, the most effective outcomes were achieved through the combined and purposeful use of multiple strategies. Successful learners tend to go beyond memorization by actively using new vocabulary in communication, learning words together with their collocations, practicing regularly, and monitoring their progress. This highlights the continued importance of the teacher's role, particularly in guiding students and teaching effective strategies.



Based on the findings, the following practical recommendations are proposed:

1. Vocabulary learning strategies should be taught explicitly as part of English lessons.
2. Students should learn words together with context, pronunciation, and collocations rather than relying only on translation.
3. Spaced repetition and digital tools should be systematically integrated into learning.
4. Learners should be encouraged to actively use new vocabulary in both spoken and written communication.
5. Metacognitive strategies should be developed to support independent learning.

Overall, understanding and effectively applying vocabulary learning strategies can significantly enhance language acquisition. Therefore, in modern EFL education, teaching these strategies should be considered not as a supplementary component but as a central methodological priority.

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