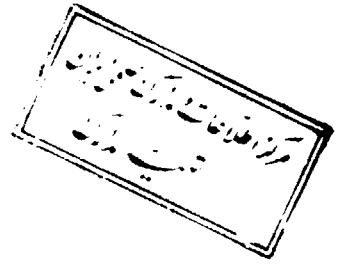


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In the name of God

عنوان The role of visual aids and translation
in teaching vocabulary in EST

By

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In sincere appreciation of his constant help throughout
my life I dedicate this thesis to
my dear brother

REZA

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the effect of the two vocabulary teaching techniques in EST, namely the use of translation and the use of visual aids as two separate vocabulary teaching techniques.

To answer the question of the study, a pretest (Michigan Test) was administered to the 58 randomly selected EST students at Khajeh Nasiredin Tusi University, Faculty of Mechanics. After the homogeneity of the subjects was ensured, the two different teaching techniques were applied to the two groups of the Ss. Also, owing to the basic aim of the study, the researcher constructed a new vocabulary EST test. After that, the test was administered to the subjects as their posttest. The data obtained from the subjects, test scores were analyzed using SAS package. The findings indicated that group 1 (the group taught through translation technique) showed superiority in test scores over the group 2 (the group taught through visual aids). Implications of this study for teaching and for further research are also discussed.

Chapter I

Introduction

It is the experience of most language teachers that the single, and the biggest component of any language course is vocabulary (McCarthy, 1992, P.iii).

As mentioned above, vocabulary is one of the most important components of any language course. Therefore, EST (English for Science and technology) cannot be excepted.

For the first time, Slinker coined the term EST to mean "the written discourse of scientific and technological English (Slinker, 1972). Moreover, it is said, "EST is the most prestigious development in ESP" (Robinson, 1984, P.14).

ESP (English for special purposes) is a broader term for the kind of English which is utilitarian and educational. And it can with advantage be deliberately matched to the specific needs and purposes (Stevens, 1977, P.91).

As it was mentioned earlier, experienced teachers of English as a foreign language know very well how important vocabulary is. They know students must learn many words that are really needed. Fortunately, the need for vocabulary is one point on which teachers and students agree!

For many years, however, programs that prepared language teachers gave little attention to techniques for helping students learn vocabulary. Some books appeared to be telling teachers that students could learn all the words they needed without help (Allen, 1983, P.1): Consequently, the results of the approach have been disappointing.

However, for many people vocabulary, particularly technical vocabulary (or terminology), is a key element of ESP. Despite this, vocabulary studies and, in particular, the teaching of vocabulary appear to have been somewhat neglected in ESP (see Laufer, Swales).

Vocabulary can be presented and explained. Also students need to learn how to commit vocabulary to long term memory. There are two main techniques for teaching vocabulary discussed and used in this research i.e. translation and the use of visual aids in teaching EST vocabulary.

Statement of the Problem

This study is concerned with a comparison between the use of translation technique and the use of visual aids technique in EST in order to determine the role of each of these techniques on teaching/learning EST words which have concrete meanings.

To teach EST words, two techniques of teaching vocabulary were used. The first technique was translation. What is meant by

translation is translating the contextualized words into Farsi without the use of any other aids to make the meanings of the words clear. The second technique was the use of visual aids for getting the students to understand the meanings of the EST words. The researcher used the visual aids to show the meanings of the words without any explanations in the native language. In fact, the only language used along the use of visual aids was the target language. It should be mentioned that the visual aids used in this study consisted of pictures, charts and real mechanical objects.

Then, the present study focused on determining the role of these two techniques on teaching/learning EST words.

This study attempted to answer the following questions:

Question No. 1 : Will translation technique for teaching words with concrete meanings have any significant effect on the Iranian EST students?

Question No. 2 : What will be the effect of visual aids for teaching words with concrete meanings in EST?

Question No. 3 : Which one of these techniques is more effective than the other for teaching words with concrete meaning in EST?

As a result, in order to be on the safe side, the following

null hypotheses are formulated:

Hypothesis 1 : There is no significant effect on the Iranian EST students, learning vocabulary through using translation technique and visual-aids for teaching vocabulary with concrete meanings.

Hypothesis 2 : There is no significant difference between translation technique and using visual-aids for teaching words with concrete meanings to the Iranian EST students.

The Significance of the Problem

The finding will primarily be beneficial to EST teachers. It can serve as a source of ideas and insights which are of potential relevance to their profession.

In addition, the findings of the research show that large quantities of the vocabulary can be learned effeciently and quickly by such means. Also, this research can demonstrate which of these learning procedures is more advantageous.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

The focal research question of this study is the difference between two main techniques of teaching vocabulary. Therefore, in order to provide a proper perspective on the related literature, a review of the following topics seem warranted:

- a) the importance of vocabulary
- b) historical background
- c) ESP & EST
- d) distinction between GE & EST
- e) the rhetorical functions in EST
- f) EST learners problems
- g) EST Vocabulary

The Importance of Vocabulary

The study of vocabulary is at the heart of language teaching and learning, in terms of the organization of syllabuses, the evaluation of learner performance, the provision of learning resources, and methods of teaching vocabulary.

In fact, no matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L₂ are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in an L₂

just cannot happen in any meaningful way.

As a result, currently in language teaching there is increased interest in vocabulary as a component of the foreign language class or program. Vocabulary is viewed as a significant component of language courses; and new texts are being published which support it as a study; and attention is being given by methodologists and program planners to the most effective ways to promote command of vocabulary among learners.

The Historical Background

The trend of teaching vocabulary and vocabulary study is not novel, but rather it is a continuation of an approach to language teaching which can be traced back over generations. The ancient Greeks left records of vocabulary lessons in the form of lists of alphabetized words and semantic groups. Later the Romans were to continue the practice of alphabetical and topical listings, and to contextualize items in simplified readings and present them bilingually in oral lessons. The Renaissance teacher, Bath, also presented vocabulary in contextualized form using translation. Bath's emphasis on vocabulary acquisition was further elaborated by Comenius, whose program included graded syntax and an inductive approach to grammar, with a strong component of controlled vocabulary taught through visual association.

When the Grammar-Translation approach was in vogue at the turn of the century, the recognition of written words (i.e. vocabulary) as well as an awareness of each word's part of speech and attendant inflections (i.e. Grammar) were among the primary objectives of language instruction. All languages were studied much the way Latin was studied. Then the later, Reading Approach, while giving less attention to grammatical cases and declensions, assigned a central role to the teaching of vocabulary. The primary objective of this method was the comprehension of written materials in the foreign language.

Learners using either of these approaches typically spent a great deal of time looking up words in the dictionary and translating texts from the foreign language under study into their native language. Neither of these approaches aimed at getting the students to understand and speak the foreign language they were studying. In fact following these approaches one frequently studied a foreign language for four, five, or six years without being able to produce or comprehend natural speech; i.e. students were unable to use the foreign language for communicative purposes (Celce-Murica, 1979, P.241)

Both the Direct Method and the Audiolingual (or linguistic) Approach arose in reaction to this basic failure of the Grammar-translation and Reading Approaches. The Direct Method assumes that one learns a foreign language by active and meaningful use of language—especially by listening and speaking, with some attention

given to reading and writing. Using this approach, one hears and uses only the target foreign language in the classroom. No translations into or explanations in the native language are tolerated. It is assumed that the students will acquire vocabulary in context as an integral part of each lesson, often a preliminary part of the lesson consists of identifying or acting out vocabulary that is part of the context used in the lesson at hand, e.g. **These are keys. This is a keyman. This is a lock. I'm locking the door with a key. Now I'm unlocking the door, etc.**

The Audiolingual Approach, on the other hand, deliberately deemphasized the teaching of vocabulary in the initial stages, keeping it to a minimum until the basic structures and the sound system of the language have been mastered. The sequence of teaching points for beginning learners of English presented in Stevick (1957) is a good example of this audiolingual strategy, the theoretical underpinnings of which had been developed much earlier by Fries and others:

In the early stages of language learning, there are phrases and sentences to be practiced as complete wholes in the situations in which they are useful. These contain but few new content items at any one time. Thorough control and a feeling of confidence