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The Effectiveness of Using Teaching Strategies in Teaching Vocabulary to Primary School Students in Benghazi

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الملخص:

تهتم هذه الدراسة باستخدام استراتيجيات تدريس حديثة لتقديم المفردات الجديدة للطلبة المبتدئين مقارنة بالتدريس باستخدام الطرق التقليدية. الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة في هذه الدراسة هي: استخدام التقنيات الحديثة داخل الفصل والتعليم التعاوني والتعليم المستند إلى الاستقصاء والتجسيد المرئي. تكونت عينة الدراسة من ثلاثين طالباً في المستوى الابتدائي في مدرسة ابن سيناء في بنغازي. قُسِّمَتْ العينات إلى مجموعتين (المجموعة الضابطة والمجموعة التجريبية). الطلاب في المجموعة الضابطة دُرِسُوا بالطريقة التقليدية حيث يقوم المعلم بالشرح وإعطاء الأمثلة ثم يُدَرِّبُ الطلاب بينما الطلاب في المجموعة التجريبية دُرِّسُوا باستخدام طرق تدريس حديثة. احتوت كل مجموعة على خمسة عشر طالباً. قبل تدريس المفردات الجديدة الخاصة بالألوان وُزِّعَ اختبار مسبق للتعرف على مدى معرفة الطلبة للألوان قبل الدراسة بينما الاختبار البعدي استخدم بعد الانتهاء من التدريس مباشرة. ومن خلال البيانات التي جُمِعَتْ تبين أن الطلاب في المجموعة التجريبية حصلوا على درجات أعلى في الاختبار البعدي وكانوا أفضل من الطلاب في المجموعة الضابطة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تقنيات، التعلم، الألوان، الاستراتيجيات.

Abstract

The present study is mainly concerned with teaching vocabulary to fourth-year primary school students through two language teaching approaches. The study compares modern teaching strategies with traditional ways of pedagogy in teaching vocabulary. The strategies used in this study include classroom strategies, cooperative learning, inquiry-based instruction and visualization. The sample of this study consisted of thirty beginner students at Ibn Sina Primary School in Benghazi. The sample was divided into two groups (an experimental group and a control group), each consisting of fifteen students. The data were analyzed using the statistical program SPSS. Before implementing the strategies, a pre-test was given to the participants while the post-test was used immediately after the treatment. The analysis of the collected data revealed that the students in the experimental group achieved better results than the control group. Yet, the post-test students achieved better results than the pre-test in the experimental group. Both of the experimental tests (pretest and post-test) achieved higher results than the results of the students in the control group.

Keywords: technology, learning, colors, strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Acquiring vocabulary is important for learning a foreign language and to develop the four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking as well as developing students' grammar ability. This study investigates the effectiveness of using various teaching strategies for primary students in teaching vocabulary. It compares using modern teaching strategies with the traditional way of teaching. The study considers which approach is more effective in understanding and retaining vocabulary. Common modern approaches include the following teaching strategies: *(1) technology in the classroom; (2) student-led classrooms; (3) differentiation; (4) cooperative learning; (5) inquiry-based instruction; (6) visualization; and (7) addressing mistakes.* Teachers generally select teaching strategies that are suitable to the topics/themes being taught as well as the level of their learners.[1]

Thus, four of the aforementioned modern teaching strategies were utilized in this study, namely: technology in the classroom, cooperative learning, inquiry-based- instruction and visualization. The traditional approach is arguably more teacher-centered where the teacher focuses on instruction using more traditional methods such as repetition and memorization.

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Aim of the Study

This study investigates and compares the application of two types of teaching approaches; the modern teaching approach and the traditional way of teaching. The study aims to evaluate which of these two approaches is more effective in teaching English vocabulary to primary students.

Research Question

Which approach is more effective in teaching English language vocabulary to beginner-level primary school students, modern strategies or the more traditional approach of teaching**?**

Limitation of the Study

This study is limited to two classes of teaching approaches. Other teaching approaches are not included. In addition, this research is a case study that is limited to one primary school (Ibn Sina) and does not include any other schools in Benghazi. Moreover, it is limited to beginners in the fourth year of primary school and does not include students from other primary years.

Literature Review

The literature review of this study concentrates on studies related to the pertinent types of teaching approaches that are the focus of this paper; the modern teaching approach and the traditional teaching approach**.**

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I. The Modern Teaching Strategies

1.1 Technology in the Classroom



Figure 1: An example of a technology-based classroom.

Using technology in teaching is a great way to give students a chance to be engaged in the learning process. This could be done in various forms such as using televisions inside the classrooms as well as mobile devices like (iPads and tablets) which can be used for recording results, and displaying/taking photos or videos (see Figure 1). Plus, incorporating educational programs into your lesson plans is a great procedure to make assessments fun and engaging.[2] Also, Allen[2] states that teachers can also employ online games/activities to help students become faster at learning and to encourage them to interact more and more with each other and with their teachers. This approach supports the concept of collaborative learning.[3] Furthermore, Collier[4] points out that technology works well in face-to-face meetings as well as remote meetings. Thus, technology is effectively and increasingly used in teaching online, too.

1.2 Student-led classrooms



Figure 2: An example of a student-led classroom

Webb[3] claims that student-led classrooms (see Figure 2) are a creative way for both teachers and students to interact in class. When students are encouraged to switch roles and become teachers, it makes them more confident. According to Collaboration in the classroom: A learner's road to success[5], there are six steps for creating student-led classrooms which are: (1) talk about the aims of collaborative learning; (2) establish basic rules and boundaries; (3) set goals; (4) divide students into medium sized groups; (5) introduce topic/task and (6) monitor effectively.

1.3 Differentiation

Teaching should be differentiated through giving tasks that are based on students' abilities, to make sure that none of the students gets left behind. Classroom activities should be selected according to students' unique learning needs; i.e. students who are more challenged need appropriate support. Thus, worksheets that vary in complexity can be handed out to different groups of students or a range of workstations can be set up around the classroom containing different tasks for students to choose from. This differentiation will significantly help students with different abilities.[2]

Webb[3] implies that differentiation is important in motivating your students and helping them to be sufficiently confident.

1.4 Cooperative Learning



Figure 3: An example of group or cooperative learning.

As stated by Johnson et al[6], cooperative learning is the process of dividing students in classrooms into small groups in order to discover a new concept together (See Figure 3). Furthermore, Johnson et al[6] claim that the impact of group work can vary; it is sometimes positive and in other cases, it can be negative. For example, if teachers use competitions, where groups of students compete against one another. This in turn has a degree of positive impact. However, if students focus more on the competition rather than the learning, the result can be negative. Therefore, teachers should focus on well-structured tasks that promote talk/interaction among pupils.

1.5 Inquiry- Based-Instruction

Alper[7] mentions that inquiry-based instruction is a student-centered approach because students themselves try to discover information to support their investigation. Students can be engaged in the learning process by asking questions. As they do the work to discover the answers by themselves, they remember the concepts better.[8] However, Khalaf et al[9] argue that while the inquiry-based learning approach can be beneficial, it still has some issues that need to be solved.

1.6 Visualization

Webster[10] defines visualization as the "formation of mental visual images". According to Formally and informally, visualization has been used by teachers and students as an appropriate way to summarize information that has been taught inside the classroom. When students receive information with visual devices, it will give them a chance to remember what they have learned for a longer time. Allen[2] indicates that there are some examples of using visualization inside the classroom such as using the interactive whiteboard to display photos, audio clips and videos as well as encouraging students with class experiments.

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1.7 Addressing Mistakes

Cherepinsky[7] claims that students learn from identifying mistakes. Thus, teachers can use this strategy in their teaching by providing an example that includes mistakes and giving students a chance to find the mistakes and then fix them. Yerushalmi et al[11] provide an example of how students learn from their mistakes by giving them mistaken statements which they produced and which they are required to diagnose and locate the mistakes. Doing so, they state, will help the students retain the information and avoid making the same mistakes again.

II. The Traditional Teaching Methods

Phiri[12] stated in a discussion group that in traditional teaching methods teachers direct their pupils to learn through memorization and recitation techniques. However, such techniques do not develop students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Johnson et al [13] indicate that teachers are the main authority figure in the teacher-centered approach and students passively receive knowledge from their teachers through direct instruction. The Digital Class[14] blog points out that in the traditional methods of teaching:

- Teachers are the main source of knowledge.
- There is a lack of collaboration on the students' part, so it is teacher-centered.
- The main aim of teachers is to prepare students for exams rather than helping them effectively comprehend concepts and syllabi.

III. Methodology

This study was based on a quantitative design. It took place in the fall term of the 2022 academic year at the Ibn Sina School in Benghazi. The participants of this study were thirty beginner-level fourth-year primary students and they were chosen randomly. Then, they were divided into two groups. Their ages ranged from 9 to 10. They were divided into two groups: the experimental group and the control group. A pre-test about color-related vocabulary was provided before teaching to determine the students' abilities and levels in English. The control group was instructed via the traditional teaching approach while the experimental group was taught by using modern teaching strategies. After that, a post-test was given to the participants. Both the pre-test and the post-test included three questions: a matching question, reordering the letters and grouping the objects according to their colors (see Appendix A). In both tests, the same questions were used; however, the order of test items and the options were mixed to avoid students utilizing memorization when answering.

Procedures Followed in the Control and Experimental Group

i. The Control Group

In this group, the colors were taught in a traditional method; i.e. the teacher used a traditional approach in teaching, namely the Presentation-Practice-Production approach. Accordingly, the teacher explained the colors and provided examples, then the students practiced them.

ii. The Experimental Group

This group was instructed using modern teaching strategies. First of all, technology was used inside the classroom by giving the students a chance to watch a song about colors. Then, the teacher wrote the colors on the board and she put flash cards with different colors on the board. After that, the students were asked to match the colors with the flash cards. Another employed strategy was inquiry-based-instruction, where the students were encouraged to ask about the colors of the objects which are inside the classroom to become more independent. The students were also encouraged to work together (group work) which is another teaching strategy that enhances learning. Hence, the students in this group were exposed to the target vocabulary (colors) and practiced it using various modern teaching strategies.

IV. Data Analysis

The data analysis of this study was obtained through the results of a pretest and post-test. The pre-test was administered to all students in both groups i.e., the control and experimental group. The pretest was used to determine the level of the students before adopting any of the teaching approaches. The experimental group was taught using modern teaching methods, while the control group was taught using traditional methods of teaching vocabulary. The post-test was administered directly after adopting the teaching approaches. The test included three questions: matching pictures with words, putting the letters of words in the correct order, and grouping certain objects according to their color. The results of both test groups were analyzed using SPSS. The same test items were used for both group tests, however, the order of the questions and choices were changed to ensure accurate findings.

V. Findings

Descriptive Statistics

The results showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in both tests.

Table (1) The mean and standard deviations of the experimental and control groups

Descriptive Statistics					
Group	**N**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Experimental group pre	15	1.00	13.00	6.1333	3.83344
post	15	6.00	29.00	19.0000	7.72750
Control group pre	15	.00	7.00	2.2000	2.04241
post	15	.00	10.00	4.2000	3.66840

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The results of the experimental group show that the standard deviation in the post-test (7.727) was higher than the pre-test results (3.833) (see Table 1).

In addition, the standard deviation of both experimental groups in the pre-test (3.833) and post-test (7.727) are higher than the standard deviation of the control group in both tests, a pre-test (2.042) and a post-test (3.668) (see Table 1).

In the control group, the standard deviation of the post-test (3.668) was higher than the pre-test (2.042) (see Table 1).

The results of the experimental group show that the mean (19,0000) in the post-test was higher than the pre-test results (6.1333) (see Table 1).

In addition, the mean of both experimental groups in the pre-test (6.1333) and post-test (19.0000) was higher than the mean of the control group in both tests; pre-test (2.2000) and post-test (4.2000). In the control group, the mean of the post-test (4.2000) was higher than the pre-test (2.2000) (see Figure 1).

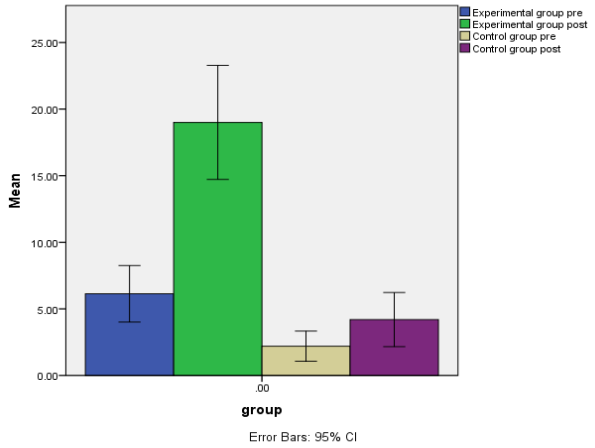


Figure (4) illustrates the mean of both the experimental and control groups in pretests and post tests

The bar chart (see Figure 4) shows that the experimental group achieved significantly higher results than the control group.

Based on the above results, the study concluded that the experimental group gained higher scores in the post-test than the control group. Hence, the experimental group that was taught using the modern teaching approach had sounder advantages over the control group which was taught via the traditional approach.

I. Conclusion

This study was performed to determine the influence of using modern teaching strategies when teaching vocabulary to primary students in a local school in Benghazi. Two groups of students were selected and taught by the same instructor. The experimental group was taught by using modern teaching strategies while the control group was taught in the traditional way. The findings showed that the experimental group scored better than the control group. It can be concluded that using modern teaching strategies can be beneficial and more effective than using traditional methods of teaching vocabulary.

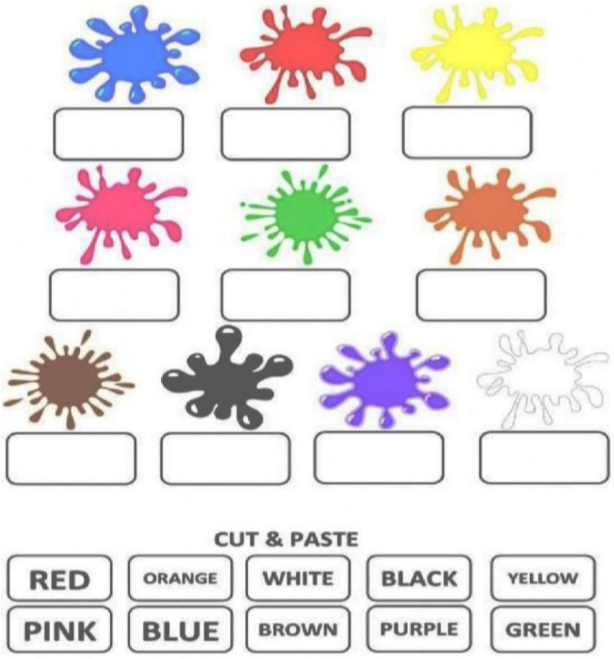
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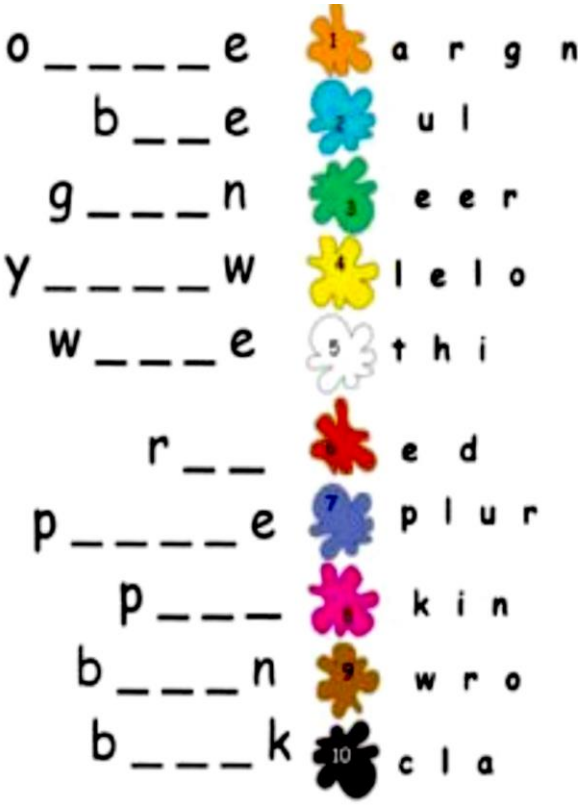
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Appendix
Students' Test

1. Match the pictures with the



2. Reorder the letters.



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3. Group the following objects by color.


Cap


Bananas


Hat


Cheese


Pencil


Bag


Slippers


Teddy bear


T-shirt

Green	Yellow	Blue

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