

The Impact of Using Flash Cards on Promoting University Students' Knowledge of Vocabulary

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Abstract—In recent years, second language vocabulary acquisition has become an increasingly interesting topic of discussion for teachers, curriculum designers, theorists and others involved in second language learning. Along the same line, an interesting area of research in the theoretical and practical issues of vocabulary learning is the investigation of the various strategies applied by language learners in the process of vocabulary enhancement and lexical improvement. One of the strategies employed by language learners is using flash cards. Accordingly, the main purpose of this study is to find out whether the use of flash cards promotes students' knowledge of vocabulary or not. To this aim, 80 college freshmen (39 males and 41 females) at Roudbar Islamic Azad University were selected and then were randomly assigned to two groups of forty: an experimental and a control group. Having investigated the performance of students in both experimental and control groups, the researchers found out that the experimental group showed no significant difference with the control group on the post-testing. It was observed that at the probability level of $p < 0.05$ for the research hypothesis the observed value of 1.48 fails to exceed or equate the t-critical value of 2.000. Astonishing as it might be, the result of the analysis has indicated quite clearly that using flash cards plays no significant role in promoting the vocabulary knowledge of college freshmen.

Key words: Flash cards, Vocabulary, Lexis, Word

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Purpose

Words are tool of thought, and one will often find that he is thinking inappropriately because he is using the wrong tool (Aitchison, 1989). The term "word" is without doubt the most universally recognized of the technical terms used by linguists, language teachers, and the educated public. Along the same line, Laufer (1997) claims that no text comprehension is possible, either in one's native or in a foreign language, without understanding the text's vocabulary. Also, as attested by Celce-Murcia (1991), words are building blocks upon which knowledge of the second language can be built (p.296).

Although vocabulary teaching was ignored to a great extent in some methods of teaching for a few decades in the past, there is now a widespread agreement that L2 learners need to improve their range of vocabulary substantially. Hence, currently in language teaching, there is increased interest in vocabulary as a component of the second language class or program. Vocabulary is viewed as important in its own right not just as a set of slot fillers for

structural paradigms. Even among some of the structuralists, there is emphasis given to vocabulary (Brown, Madson, & Hilferty, 1985 p. 328). Regarding the importance of vocabulary, Hilton and Hyder (1993) state that a wide vocabulary can make you more confident and give you and your audience pleasure so it worth spending time developing it.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The history of words is the history of people. To study words is to study ourselves and our world (Coomber & Peet, 1981). As attested by Celce-Murcia (1991), one effective way to increase students' facility in communication is to increase their vocabulary (p.298). Chastain (1988) states that vocabulary usually plays a greater role in communication than the other components of language. Also, the lack of needed vocabulary is the most common cause of students' inability to say what to say during communication activity. Lexical problem will, therefore, hinder successful comprehension (Laufer, 1997).

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Often students claim that their primary problem in acquiring a second language is a lack of vocabulary. Poor vocabulary is one of the learners' sources of complaint in the process of language learning. The problems arise where a poor knowledge of vocabulary impeded reading process, is an obstacle in listening process, and serves as a stumbling block in effective communication. Through research the scholars are finding that lexical problems frequently interfere with communication; communication breaks down when people do not use the right words. Moreover, a failure in the mastery of words is considered as a substantial academic handicap (Bowen et al., 1985).

Anyone who has ever taught a foreign language knows that learners usually do one of the two things with a new word. Either they make no attempt to record it, or they write the word on a scrap of paper or in notebook. Sometimes, the word is accompanied by a translation; occasionally there is a definition in the second language.

Accordingly, one of the basic issues that the Iranian high school students face in their learning career is how they can learn words in an easy way. The present study was an attempt in the direction of tackling the problems of word studying and offering a technique (using flash cards) in studying the words.

1.4 Research Question and hypothesis

To achieve the purpose of the research, the following research question is proposed:

Does the use of flash card help vocabulary learning of college freshmen?

Along the same line, the following null hypothesis is formulated:

The use of flash card does not help vocabulary learning of college freshmen.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Historical Background

The status of vocabulary within the curriculum has varied considerably over the years. For much of this century, the principle focus of language has been on the grammar of the language. While grammar translation approaches to the teaching of language provided a balanced diet of grammar and vocabulary, audiolingualists suggested that emphasis should be strongly on the acquisition of the grammatical patterns of the language. It was believed that if learners were able to internalize these basic patterns, then building a large vocabulary could come later (Nunan, 1991, p.117). Four and a half decades later, this view that vocabulary is secondary in importance for successful learning has changed. What language teachers have intuitively know for a long time—that a solid vocabulary is necessary in every stage of language learning—is now being openly stated by methodologists and second language acquisition researchers (Laufer, 1990).

Since then, however, the status of vocabulary has been considerably enhanced. This has come about partly as a result of the development of communicative approaches to language teaching, and partly under the effect of comprehension-based methods such as the natural approach. David Nunan reflects this view in *Language Teaching Methodology* first published in 1991:

Proponents of these methods point out that in the early stages of learning and using a second language, one is better served by vocabulary than grammar, and that one can, in effect, "bypass" grammar in going for meaning if one has reasonable vocabulary base. (p.117)

According to Rivers (1983), the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for successful second language use because, without an extensive vocabulary, one will be unable to use the structures, and functions we may have learned for comprehensible communication (p.125). Along the same vein, Hayes and Backer (1997) as cited in Laufer (1997) came to the conclusion that the most significant handicap for L2 readers is not lack of reading strategies but insufficient vocabulary in English.

In the following section, there is an attempt to understand why vocabulary has been neglected in programs for teachers during much of the twentieth century.

2.2 Reasons for Neglecting Vocabulary in the Past

Two reasons why vocabulary was neglected in teacher preparation programs during the period 1940-1970 was outlined by Allan (1983): (1) it has been emphasized too much in language classrooms during the years before that time, and people considered it as the only key to language learning; and (2) the meaning of words could not adequately be taught, so it is better not to try to teach them (pp. 1-5).

Another factor contributing to the neglect of vocabulary can be that it is exceptionally difficult to teach an organized syllabus of both grammar and lexis at the same time. In other words, it is very difficult to do two things at the same time. If one's syllabus is organized around grammar, then it will be unlikely that lexis can be focused on at the same time (Coady, 1997).

Zimmerman's (1997) survey would also lead us to think that most second language learners have traditionally been taught by methods that gave minimal attention to vocabulary. Consequently, it seems reasonable to expect that most teachers will also continue to neglect vocabulary, whether it is because of the methods by which they have learned or the methods by which they are learning.

In more recent times, Carter and McCarthy (1988) Conclude:

Although vocabulary suffered neglect for a long time, vocabulary pedagogy has benefited in the last fifteen years or so from theoretical advances in the linguistics study of the lexicon, from psycholinguistics Investigation into the mental lexicon, from the communicative trend in teaching, which has brought the learner into focus, and more

knowledge about what happens in classrooms when vocabulary crops up. (p.51)

2.3 Vocabulary Learning

Discussions of vocabulary learning are often divided into intentional learning and incidental learning. We define intentional learning as being designed, planned for, or intended by teachers or students. Incidental learning, in contrast, is the type of learning that is the byproduct of doing or learning something else (Hatch & Brown, 1995 p. 368). According to Nagy and Herman (1985), in the long run, most words in both first and second languages are probably learned incidentally, through extensive reading and listening. In the same line, Hulstijn (1989) stated that the retention of words learned incidentally from context was greater than that in which inferential clues such as multiple-choice synonyms were provided.

However, it appears from research on vocabulary acquisition that if systematic development of L2 vocabulary is desired, it cannot be left to the students themselves; they cannot be expected to “pick up” substantial or specific vocabulary knowledge through reading exposure without guidance (Paribakh & Wesche, 1997, p.177). Paribakh and Wesche (1997) further added that successful incidental vocabulary learning through reading depends on the presence of a number of factors.

2.4 Vocabulary Acquisition Strategies

To have a concise and comprehensive typology of vocabulary acquisition strategies, it is worth a moment to refer to Oxford and Scarcella's (1994). They classify vocabulary acquisition strategies in three types:

2.4.1 Decontextualized Strategies

Decontextualized strategies remove the vocabulary items from the context in which they first appeared and present them in isolation free from any communication. Lewis (1999) believes that decontextualized vocabulary learning can be a fully legitimate strategy to be used by language learners. Several activities can fall under this category, among them word lists and flash cards are notable. Lehr (1984) as cited in Hatch and Brown (1995) claims that the word list is probably the most widely used approach to vocabulary development in formal setting, and most text books, particularly those used in foreign language settings; nevertheless, Hatch and Brown (1995) believe that word lists by themselves are not particularly good for helping learners learn other content features of word, such as semantic networks (p.417). By the way, according to Schouten-Van Parreran (1986), the learning of words through bilingual word-lists should be rejected for the following reasons: (1) Words are easily mixed up (so-called “lumping”); (2) Words are easily forgotten because of the lack of any cognitive foothold; (3) Words may not be known outside the list; (4) The meaning (s) of a

word as learned in a list is (are) often not appropriate in the contexts encountered by the pupils; and (5) The learning motivation of the pupil will be slight because he has not yet felt the need to find out the meaning of a particular word (cited in Mondria & Wit-de Boer, 1991).

Much of what we say in any language is prompted by what we see or have seen around us. We, therefore, have to give our students practice in reacting in English to objects, or pictures. Apart from this, aids are in addition to our “armory”. They allow us to explain a word or concept simply by showing a picture, or pointing to an object. Abstractions can often be expressed in this way where mime or words are insufficient. Again, the maneuverability of objects or pictures is a great advantage. Moreover, using flash, according to Hellyer, Robinson and Sherwood (1998) seems to be the best method for recording the vocabulary. Tahmasbi (1991) concluded that providing students with coherent verbal material and well-designed visual material and establishing referential connections between verbal and visual representation can foster better retention of words. Furthermore, combining word card and picture card seems to help the consolidation of form and meaning in memory (Oxford, 1990).

Along the same line Hellyer et al (1998) claim creating 3x5 flash cards for vocabulary development is probably the best method in terms of “flexibility” because the cards are portable, and you can sort out what you know from what you don't know. They further added that using flash cards is an excellent method of learning new words, especially in courses heavily weighted with technical terms. The cards are highly visual and tactile, that is, you can easily see the words and can handle and manipulate the cards (p.87). Schouten-Van Parreran (1986) recommends working with “context card” for the consolidation of word knowledge; i.e., cards on the front of which is the foreign word, while on the back there is the translation and the original sentences context which can be used as a cognitive foothold (cited in Mondria & Wit-de Boer, 1991).

Doff (1988) said that flash cards are useful for showing very simple pictures, usually of a single object or action (p.86). Using flash cards as a decontextualized vocabulary learning strategy is a popular strategy for vocabulary learning among students (Oxford & Scarcella, 1994). According to Hatch and Brown (1995), using flash cards strengthens the form-meaning connection in memory. Nevertheless, using flash cards is not a substitution for other techniques. In other words, it is worth combining them with other teaching techniques to fulfill immediate and long term aids.

2.4.2 Partially contextualized strategies

The context provided by these memory activities helps learners retain the meaning of the new words longer. Most of these activities are memory strategies referred to as mnemonics. Such activities fall into mnemonic devices. Mnemonic devices and their uses have been studied

extensively by researchers. According to Nunan (1991), mnemonic devices are tricks for committing words to memory (p.135). Also, mnemonic techniques are supposed to function as facilitation of learning process (Grunberg, 1992). Besides, mnemonics may be either verbal or visual. Cook (1989) who reviewed the literature on visual and verbal mnemonics in general, pointed out that mnemonic techniques may be less suitable for children and mentally handicapped people. He further concluded that there is little evidence that verbal mnemonics are less effective than imagery mnemonics.

Keyword, as a mnemonic device has recently received great attention. This method calls for the word to be learned in a sentence that gives contextual cues to the meaning of the word while relating the form to form the learner already knows (Hatch & Brown, 1995, p. 388). Employing keyword as a technique to master vocabulary entails two stages. In the first stage, the learner associates the foreign word with a vocabulary in the L1, which sounds similar to the foreign word. The item becomes the key word and the stage is known as forming an acoustic link. In the second stage, the learner creates a mental image of the key word interacting the native language translation. This stage is known as forming an imagery link. For example, if a (Polish) learner of English wants to learn the word “willow”, they can imagine a large detached house (Polish willa) with branches of willa covering its windows (Kaminska, 2000, p.56-57). Kasper (1993) believes that the keyword method can be successfully applied with abstract words too, but research has shown that its effect is significantly smaller when applied to abstract rather than concrete words. Accordingly, as Hatch and Brown (1995) see if possible, keywords should be taken not from L1 but from L2 vocabulary with which the L2 learner is already familiar. An ESL learner familiar with “duck” could use this word as a keyword for the target word “decoy” (p. 205).

2.4.3 Fully contextualized strategies

Fully contextualized activities entail what is often associated with incidental vocabulary learning. According to Oxford and Scarcella (1994), incidental learning occurs when students practice the four skills. Guessing from context although is not stated in Oxford and Scarcella's (1994) classification of vocabulary learning strategies, can also be placed under this category. To guess successfully from contexts, learners need to know about 19 out of every 20 words (95%) of a text which requires knowing the 3000 most common words (Nation, 1990). Laufer (1997) mentions that one of the factors that contribute to successful guessing is the reader's background knowledge of the subject matter of the text, or content schemata. In other words, techniques for guessing vocabulary from context include activating background knowledge from the topic of a text obtaining clues from grammatical structures, pronunciation, punctuation and using the natural redundancy of surrounding words (Nunan, 1991, p.134).

Along the same line, Hulstijn (1997) believes that guessing helps retention. He states:

Inferring a word's meaning from context, checking one's inference by consulting a dictionary, and writing the word down in a notebook... fosters an elaborate processing of the word and therefore facilitates its retention in memory....This procedure offers no guarantee for the retention of the link between the word's form and its meaning. It is only sometimes the case that such a link constitutes itself spontaneously, without a conscious effort on the learner's part. (p.203)

Schouten-Van Parreren (1986) cited in Mondria and Wit-de Boer (1991) says that one learns words by guessing their meaning with the aid of context. In other words, guessing is conducive to retention. This implies incidentally, that guessing wrongly should be prevented as far as possible, as incorrectly guessed meaning also tend to stick in the mind. He further considers the following factors that actually determine the guessability: (1) *the contextual factors*, like the redundancy of the context, the occurrence of synonyms and antonym; (2) *the word factor*, like parts of speech, the degree of concreteness or abstractness; and (3) *the reader / the learner factors* concern the knowledge and the skills of the person who is guessing. Laufer (1997) also counted the following factors which affect guessing: (1) availability of clues; (2) familiarity with the clue words; (3) presence of misleading clues; and (4) compatibility between the reader's schemata and the text context (pp.20-34).

2.5 Vocabulary Teaching

According to Nation and Newton (1997), there are two ways that vocabulary can be taught: (1) through fluency activities, and (2) through richness activities. Fluency activities have certain characteristics: (1) they may involve processing quite a lot of languages; (2) they make limited demands on the language users; that is, they involve material that does not contain much unfamiliar language or many unfamiliar ideas; (3) they involve rehearsal of the task through preparation, planning or repetition; and (4) they involve some encouragement for the learner to reach a high rate of performance which requires that the activities reach a high level of automaticity. Richness activities aim to increase the number of association to a word can be of two types: Those that establish paradigmatic relationship, and those that establish syntagmatic relationships. Paradigmatic relationships are those that associate a word with others of related meaning. Syntagmatic relationships are those that associate a word with other words that can typically precede or follow it. For example, the word 'fuel' can be preceded or followed by words like cost (as in *the cost of fuel*), and alternative (in *alternative fuels*). Activities that can be used to develop these relationships include the following: (1) collocation, (2) semantic mapping, and (3) dictation and related activities.

2.5.1 Collocations

Jurafsky and Martin (2000) say that collocation refers to a quantifiable position-specific relationship between two lexical items. Collocational features encode information about the lexical inhabitations of specific positions located to the left or right of the target word. Typical features include the word, the root, form of the word, and the word's part of speech. Benson (1985) has pointed out two types of collocations. The first is grammatical collocation: that is where a lexical item frequently co-occurs with a grammatical item. In many cases, the grammatical item is a preposition—for example. Lexical collocation, on the other hand, involves the combination of two full lexical items. Along the same line, Taylor (1990) has pointed that knowing a word means knowledge of collocation, both semantic and syntactic, i.e., knowing the syntactic behavior associated with the word and also knowing the network of associations between that word and other words in the language.

2.5.2 Semantic mapping

Semantic mapping involves drawing a diagram of the relationships between words according to their use in a particular text. Furthermore, such mapping is best introduced as a collaborative effort between the teacher and the class (Nation & Newton, 1997). They further added that semantic mapping has the effect of bringing relationships in a text to consciousness for the purpose of deep understanding of a text and creating associative networks for words.

2.5.3 Dictation and related activities

Nation (1991) has suggested that most value is gained from dictation activities when the dictation text contains known words used in unfamiliar ways. The nature of dictation activity is that it focuses learner's attention on the collocational relationships within the decided phrases.

3. Methods

3.1 Participants

The participants were 80 college freshmen (39 males and 41 females) at Roudbar Islamic Azad University. The participants were selected on the basis of the principles of random sampling.

3.2 Instrumentation and Materials

The following materials were utilized in the study:

3.2.1 Nelson Test

Having administered a standard test (The Nelson Test) to 150 college freshmen at Roudbar Islamic Azad University, the researchers selected 80 students and divided them into two groups of forty. The primary purpose of The

Nelson Test was to prove the homogeneity of the groups. F- test statistical procedure was also applied through the following formula in order to find whether the two groups have the same variance or not:

$$F = \frac{\text{Large Variance}}{\text{Small Variance}} = \frac{185}{176.75} = 1.04$$

Since the calculated F-test (1.04) does not exceed the F critical value (1.86) at 0.05 level of probability for d.f =58, it may be concluded that the samples are not significantly different and probably behave as sample from the same population at the outset of the study.

Table 1. Results of F-test

Test	D.F	C-V	O-V
Nelson Test	58	1.86	1.04

3.2.2 Teacher-Made Test

A vocabulary multiple-choice test was administered to measure the student's word power. The vocabulary test developed by the researchers for the purpose of the study with (KR-21) $r1=0.91$ obtained in a prior pilot test included fifty items (i.e., 20 nouns, 18 verbs, 7 adjectives, and 5 adverbs.) The high reliability indicated its validity. Of course, each item had a one-point value, and no negative point value was considered for wrong answers. The teacher-made test considered as the post test was administered at the end of the term to see whether the use of flash cards has significant impact on promoting the knowledge of vocabulary or not.

3.2.3 Flash Cards

Each session (two hours per week) 13-15 flash cards were distributed among students (in experimental group). On the front side of the card, there was the new word and on the backside of the card, the word was introduced in a context or provided with synonyms.

3.2.4 Word Lists

Each session (two hours per week) a piece of paper including 13-15 new words were distributed among the students (in control group). In front of each word, the new word was introduced, in a context or provided with a synonym.

3.2.5 General English Book

Most of the words were excerpted from students' general English book at university.

3.3 Design of the Study

The design of the study is “pre- test post test control group design” which is an experimental design. According to Hatch and Farhady (1982), true experimental designs have three basic characteristics: a control group (or groups) is present the subjects are randomly assigned to the groups a pre-test administered to capture the initial differences between groups .

These three characteristics allow us to avoid almost all the problems associated with internal and external validity (p.22).

The schematic representation of this design is:

G=Group X=instruction T1=pre-test T2= post-test

G1(random) T1XT2

G2(random) T1 T2

3.4 Procedure

To arrive at the desired answer to the aforementioned question, the researchers conducted an experiment, consisting of three main phases: a) pre-test; b) the main treatment; and c) post-test. Prior to commencing the experiment, the researchers carried out a pilot study. The objectives of the pilot study were three folds: to verify the content of the materials for the course; to calculate the reliability and validity of the measuring instruments; and to calculate the sample size for the main experiment.

The next phase of the study was the administration of the pre-test as the result of which, 80 students were chosen. The selected subjects were randomly assigned to two groups of forty; i.e., an experimental and a control group. The students were from a university located in North of Iran; i.e., Roudbar Islamic Azad University.

Having assigned the subjects to two groups, the main treatment of the study was commenced. The subjects in the experimental group attend a training course which was devoted to the use of flash card strategy. The course was composed of 22 sessions. Each session lasted about two hours and there were as many as four sessions in a month. The first session was devoted to a short lecture delivered by the researchers which covered such issues as the nature of flash card in particular and vocabulary learning strategies in general. The rest of the sessions were allocated to the task of introducing the new words by means of flash cards. In order to allocate the same amount of time to the control group, the researchers talked about the importance of vocabulary learning and encouraged the students to learn new words.

Each session of treatment both groups received a series of similar instruction except that the students in the experimental group received 13-15 flash cards (word cards) and the students in the control group received a piece of paper including 13-15 words. It is worth mentioning that the students in the control group studied the same words that the students in the experimental group studied. For the control group, each session was held as follow: the

students received a piece of paper including 13-15 words. Then, the new words were explained by the teacher in context or provided with synonyms. Next, the students were given time to read each item. Finally, the teacher read the text. For the experimental group the same procedure was followed, except that the experimental group studied the new words by means of flash cards.

Finally, one 50-item multiple-choice vocabulary test was designed by the researchers as a post-test. The test was constructed to measure the degree of students' development in both experimental group and control group. The scores obtained from the subjects' performance on the test were analyzed and interpreted statically. The researchers themselves rated the papers; then the new scores were put in statistical formula determine a basis to draw the conclusion.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Review of the Procedure

To get the impact of using flash cards, the researchers chose 80 students (out of 150) though a pretest (The Nelson Test 050 A). The purpose of the pretest was to determine the homogeneity of the group. Accordingly, the homogeneous group was divided into groups of control and experimental, and both groups received instruction. In the experimental group, at the beginning of each session, the students were given 13-15 flash cards and the teacher taught the words through using flash cards. The control group also received a list of words included 13-15 new words.

A vocabulary multiple choice test (as the post- test) was administered in order to check the item facility, item discrimination, and choice distribution. Then, fifty items were randomly chosen (from 60 items). After five months, both groups had a vocabulary multiple-choice test. Having gathered the data, the researchers compared the scores of students in the two groups in order to see the effect of the treatment.

4.2 Statistical Conclusions

The following statistical analyses were undergone to determine the possible consequences of the research.

4.2.1 The Test Reliability

To estimate the reliability of the test scores, KR-21 formula was used. When the required data was plugged into the formula, the computed number was 0.91.

4.2.2 Measures of Central Tendency and Variability

After obtaining the scores, means and standard deviations of test in both groups were computed. The data is shown in the following tables:

Table 2: Results of Pre-test

Group	Experimental Group	Control Group
Subject	30	30
Mean	26.23	25.59
Variance	176.45	185
SD	13.29	13.61
Max	46	46
Min	9	8
Median	19.5	19.5
Range	38	39

Table 3: Results of Post-test

Group	Experimental Group	Control Group
Subject	30	30
Mean	26.86	22.4
Variance	141.83	154.38
SD	11.90	12.42
Max	49	48
Min	7	8
Median	24.5	19.5
Range	43	41

The results of the post-testing are summarized in table 3. As the third table indicates, the experimental groups did not show significant differences with the control group on the post- testing.

4.2.3 t-value

In order to determine the statistical significance of the difference between means on two sets of scores, the obtained means and standard deviation were plugged into t-test formula to calculate the value of t. As demonstrated in table 4 the significance level chosen for our test was $p > 0.05$ or $p > 0.01$.

Table 4: The Results of t-test

Test	D.F	C-V	O-V
Vocabulary Multiple-choice	58	2.000	1.48

As it is clear in table 4, the observed value is lower than the critical value. Therefore, at 58 degrees of freedom the observed value of 1.48 fails to equate or exceed the t-critical value of 2.000 at the 0.05 level of significance, and the null hypothesis would not be rejected.

5. Conclusions and Implications

5.1 Conclusions

Researchers in the field of language learning and teaching have been trying to deal with vocabulary and the

appropriate ways of teaching this important component of language. However, no clear-cut recommendation is available for all situations and level of language proficiency. Moreover, the diversity of words from concrete to abstract, specialized to general has added to the complexity of the issues. The diversity of vocabulary seems enough to justify that a certain approach cannot be the last resort for vocabulary learning and teaching.

This is not the only research on the significance of vocabulary in language learning. There is an overabundance of them. The researchers, on the basis of some suggestions and findings has tended to examine the probable merits of using flash cards for teaching words. The idea of using flash cards in language teaching dates from the appearance of audio lingual. However, at present, it would seem to be true that in teacher training very little attention is given to the use of flash card, due to the fact that its role is a topic that is often discouraged by most EFL teaching methods and methodology books.

In this research, the researchers attempted to determine the impact of using flash cards on promoting the college freshmen knowledge of vocabulary. Therefore, at the first stage, on the basis of a pre-test (nelson test 050 A) 80 female students were selected. The purpose of the pre-test was to have two homogenous groups. Then the students were divided into two control and experimental groups. The researchers themselves devised a vocabulary multiple choice test. The data obtained on the post- test (vocabulary multiple-choice) was analyzed by means of t-test. Astonishing as it might be, the result of the research suggested that using flash cards plays no significant role in increasing student's knowledge of vocabulary. One could think of many explanations for the outcome of the measurement. The researchers themselves believe that using flash cards seems not to be good strategy to learn words especially abstract words. Furthermore, it does not lead to the retention of them in other words. Using flash cards does not help the consolidation of form and meaning in memory.

5.2 Pedagogical implications

Obviously, the results of such research will have both theoretical and practical implications. Certainly, the teaching practitioners will make approaches with caution, more particularly, it might prompt a re-examination of the use of certain types of visual aids, (especially flash cards), as it was somehow done in the present research project.

The findings of this research may be a valuable aid to many groups, especially teachers to conclude the research here is some devise: using flash cards is time-consuming and tedious;

word cards seem not to be a good technique for teaching abstract words. Furthermore, the best way to teach abstract words is by creating context or situation from which the students can deduce the meaning; and using flash cards is not a substitution for order techniques in

other words, it is worth combining them with other teaching techniques to fulfill immediate and long term aids.

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