

EFL Vocabulary Acquisition through Reading Courses during Covid-19

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Abstract

This work aimed to explain how students at the College of Languages and Translation (CLT) managed to learn vocabulary through reading courses during the Covid-19 Pandemic. To this end, the researcher adopted a descriptive approach and collected the data mainly through a questionnaire. The sample included students of English at CLT, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU). Teachers and students found themselves forced to shift from traditional to virtual classes, so they resorted to another type of teaching that generally relied on online instruction. The findings showed that there were some difficulties initially, moving from traditional to virtual classes, where the students had to use their previous skills to acclimatize to the shift. The findings also showed that the teaching tools were not adequately available to fit the purpose of vocabulary learning. The researcher suggested using modern vocabulary apps such as Vocab Genius, WordUp, Vocabology, Vocabulary Builder, and Vocabulary App.

Keywords: Active Vocab, MALL, Online Instruction, Passive Vocab.

Introduction

There was an instructional challenge during the COVID-19 Pandemic that obliged the conventional education systems to face it. Teachers found themselves required to shift quickly from traditional and face-to-face instruction to fully online teaching. However, most of the Saudi academic institutions were not ready for such unexpected and rapid change. The introduction of new legislation and measures was steady but ended up with a complete lockdown at certain times. This shift imposed a change in the educational policy, chiefly the use of online tools and lectures in place of actual classes. Accordingly, the university enacted online teaching and learning for the year 2020 onward. Meanwhile, language teachers found themselves forced to use different types of teaching, leveraging technology where personal computers and tablets played an important role. In addition, students' independence appeared to have improved, which might have influenced their perception and skills. This study discussed the way language teachers and learners dealt with vocabulary in reading courses during Covid-19.

Significance of the Study

The unexpected shift from traditional teaching to online teaching and learning caused by the lockdown was the chief incentive for this study. The lockdown was decreed by the authorities of most countries to thwart the spread of the airborne virus and stop its dispersal and transmission among people. In that case, teachers and learners had to implement certain teaching and learning approaches integrated with certain techniques to reach the aims of the courses. The significance of this study lies in revealing the status quo of teaching and learning during the pandemic and pinpointing the techniques implemented in teaching and learning in such circumstances should enlighten stakeholders as to how to deal with unexpected change. What is actually needed in such situation is a successful variation of teaching strategies to suit the content of the courses in order to realize their objectives and learning outcomes. In this way, the internal community (such as school or college) and external community (online learners) would benefit from the results of this study. They would examine the current status and would then attempt to improve it to make teaching and learning more efficient and effective.

The Problem of the Study

The universal Pandemic, Covid-19, spread all over the world, turning the year 2020 into a year of total and unique online learning style and a year of automated communication. The name of the virus and the virus itself spread so fast, affecting life and people, which required legislation for specific laws and taking serious actions to decrease the virus transmission rate to a minimum. These measures must have affected teaching and learning as they impacted people's lifestyles. Language learning has, therefore, been influenced by these measures. There were some issues with performance and efficiency of teaching and learning, where certain processes needed to be improved in an institution. These were the main areas of concern among practitioners in the academic field, where such difficulties were faced by teachers, students and even parents.

Study Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- 1- Explain how the shift in teaching style impacted vocabulary acquisition.
- 2- Identify the challenges encountered in teaching vocabulary.
- 3- Describe how such challenges were met.

Questions of the Study

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1- What was the impact of the shift to online instruction on vocabulary acquisition?
- 2- What challenges did teachers and students encounter in vocabulary acquisition?
- 3- How did the teachers and students overcome these challenges?

Scope and Time-limit

The topic of the study was limited to vocabulary acquisition through reading courses at the college of language and translation, IMSIU, Riyadh. The time period covers March-April 2020, where the teachers and students had to meet online.

Literature Review

Vocabulary is the chief component of language learning. In fact, the most significant aspect of language learning, be it foreign or second, is having an excellent command of vocabulary (Knight 1994). Carter and McCarthy (2014) described the study of vocabulary as the heart of language learning, through which syllabuses are planned and built, learners' performance can be assessed, and learning resources are provided. In addition to the main four language skills, speaking, listening, reading and writing, having a good command of vocabulary and grammar is essential for language learning (Farkhan and Silvia 2012). In fact, proficiency in the four skills above can depend on the learner's reservoir of vocabulary and grammar. Therefore, educators have placed a big emphasis on these components. Vocabulary acquisition has been researched by many scholars, which has led to the emergence of different principles and theories related to this issue.

There are many approaches for vocabulary acquisition suggested in the literature. For example, Hunt and Beglar (2002) suggested a number of ways for enhancing vocabulary acquisition. The first one is through incidental learning, the second is through explicit instruction, and the third is independent strategy self-development. The first approach is described as incidental vocabulary acquisition, an idea supported by some scholars such as Hulstijn and Laufer (2001) and Paribakht and Wesche (1999). They held that vocabulary growth occurs incidentally and involuntarily during some cognitive activities such as extensive or even pleasure reading. Nation (1983) discusses this in the context of L1 vocabulary enrichment, which promotes linguistic competence and academic phraseology. Other researchers proposed diverse ways and methods for enhancing vocabulary acquisition ranging from using traditional dictionaries and glosses to exploiting the context to elicit the meaning of new items of vocabulary and expressions.

The use of technology could enhance vocabulary build-up. A number of scholars believe that students would usually benefit from learning vocabulary through mobile phones (Basoglu and Akdemir 2010; Lu 2008; Stockwell 2010; Zhang, Song, and Burston 2011). Nowadays, mobile apps have proven to be effective for vocabulary learning (Kohnke 2020; Makoe and Shandu 2018; Wang 2017). The use of technology represents an essential part of this study.

Previous Studies

One of the studies on vocabulary acquisition of the Covid-19 terminology during the Pandemic was conducted by Suparsa and Mantra (2020). They pointed out that the Pandemic had affected people's lives across the globe and forced students, in particular, to work from home, where online learning became a necessity during the outbreak of COVID-19. They added that students were expected to engage actively in the learning process. Consequently, they encountered many terminologies regarding classroom

interaction, which might have been confusing for many. Their study intended to show how students acquired the COVID-19 terminologies commonly used in classroom interaction. The study revealed that most students had inadequate comprehension of COVID-19 terminologies although they were widely exposed to such terminologies in their daily lives. In addition, some common terminologies were appropriately comprehended. Suparsa and Mantra's study suggests that the students should be provided with a learning program to improve their acquisition of such terminologies.

Another study on vocabulary acquisition during the Pandemic was conducted by Barjesteh, Movafaghardestani, and Modaberi (2020). They believed that COVID-19 attacked the education system and left the educational process in a state of uncertainty. They suggested a way for minimizing the effect of this change by probing how Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) could facilitate learning vocabulary during the Pandemic. They adopted a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest research design to check the outcome of that newly developed application that employed visual vocabulary learning in an EFL classroom.

Similarly, another study was conducted on young learners by Khamsuk and Whanchit (2021). They based their analysis on the assumption that families would commonly employ storytelling to develop their children literacy, which could also be adopted in L2 learning. So, the researchers integrated storytelling as a family activity to help the learners of English improve their vocabulary. They experimented on children aged 3–5 years whose parents were living in a small area in the south of Thailand. The researchers collected the data in four stages: pretest, storytelling, post-test and interview. The material included five stories, composed particularly for the study. The results showed that, on average, children gained 12.2 scores out of 15 in the post-test versus 8 scores in the pretest. The researchers concluded that storytelling could enhance English vocabulary learning and could be easily implemented at home. The current study, however, differs in the fact that online courses were teacher-oriented, and that the learning material included more than just storytelling.

Methodology

This research was designed to be descriptive as it intended to describe the status quo of teaching and learning during the pandemic. The work examined the impact of Covid-19 on vocabulary acquisition, what challenges were encountered in vocabulary teaching and learning, and how these challenges were overcome. The Pandemic obliged teachers to change their traditional and face-to-face instruction to an online system.

The study sample included students of reading at CLT, IMSIU, who took reading courses during the Pandemic. The number of students who responded was 350, representing both males and females, chosen from reading courses during the pandemic.

The instrument used in this work was a questionnaire, designed by the researcher to find answers to the questions of the study. The questionnaire was refereed and piloted before being administered. The questionnaire items sought to find out (1) the impact of the shift to online instruction on teaching and learning vocabulary acquisition was, (2) The challenges the teachers and students encountered in

vocabulary acquisition, and (3) How the teachers and students overcame these challenges. The question included general information about the participants and 40 items for the main three themes mentioned above.

Data collection took place using Google Forms. The questionnaire was disseminated using social media and email after taking formal permission. The data were analyzed qualitatively using thematic coding of the responses, followed by analysis and description of the themes according to their patterns and trends. Then, variances in emerging patterns were deliberated and interpreted to finally understand how vocabulary was taught and learned during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Testing the reliability and validity of the questionnaire items is of great importance since it is the primary source of data in this study. To do this, the questionnaire was piloted on a sample of students. Second, the questionnaire was arbitrated by a third party, three people with good experience and background.

The data in this work were classified into three main themes. The first theme concentrated on students' transition from traditional to online classes. The second theme dealt with the difficulties students encountered. The third theme discussed the techniques used to adapt to that transition. The study sample consisted of 350 participants from the English program in the Department of English, CLT, IMSIU, Saudi Arabia. All students studied reading courses in which they would learn vocabulary intentionally or incidentally during the Covid 19 pandemic.

To simplify the questionnaire analysis and make the best use of the data, the researcher divided the response into five levels, consistent with the five-level Likert scale. Thus, "Strongly Agree" was given the score (5), "Agree" was given (4), Neutral was given (3), "Disagree" was given (2), and "Strongly Disagree" was given (1). To determine the degree of the responses, the researcher used the equation $((5-1) \div 3 = 1.33$. Then $1.33 + 1 = 2.33$ ". Based on this equation, the degree was low if the mean score ranged between 1–2.33, medium if it ranged between 2.34–3.67, and high if the score was higher than 3.68.

The analysis of the primary data for the research was coded in a way suitable for Excel. There were some statistical treatments performed just to ensure the consistency and stability of the instrument and to calculate the means and standard deviations needed for answering the questions of the study. The researcher used Cronbach's alpha equation to check the consistency and stability of the instrument.

Results and Discussion

The means, standard deviations, and ranks were extracted for the three themes of the study tool, as in Table (1) for female students and Table (2) for male students. The overall degree is medium for each theme.

Table 1: Females - means and standard deviations of the three themes

N	Theme	Total Score	Std	Theme Value	Degree
1	61%	61%	1.565	3.05	M
2	60%	60%	1.435	3.02	M
3	66%	66%	1.515	3.31	M
	Overall	62%		3.13	M

Table 2: Males - means and standard deviations of the three themes

N	Theme	Total Score	Std	Theme Value	Degree
1	First	63%	1.479	3.15	M
2	Second	62%	1.362	3.10	M
3	Third	59%	1.541	2.97	M
	Overall	61%		3.07	M

First Question of the Study. To address the first question as to the impact of the abrupt transition from traditional teaching to remote teaching of the vocabulary, the mean, standard deviation, rank, and degree were calculated for each item of the first theme of the questionnaire. Table 2 shows the results of the female respondents, which indicates an average degree of agreement on all the items (3.05/5), with variant degrees (High, Medium, Low) on each item as shown below.

Table 3: Female – Theme 1: The abrupt transition process from traditional teaching to remote vocabulary teaching.

	Items	Mean	Std.	Rank	Degree
1	Transition process from traditional teaching to remote teaching of vocabulary was smooth.	3.74	0.930	3	H
2	Transition process from traditional teaching to remote teaching of vocabulary was easy.	3.81	1.470	1	H
3	Transition process from traditional teaching to remote teaching of vocabulary was easy but took a long time.	2.35	1.050	10	M
4	In the beginning, I had big problems with preparing for online lessons.	2.97	1.622	5	M
5	I received training on attending online courses.	2.52	1.749	9	M
6	I received training on participating in online courses.	3.77	1.407	2	H
7	I received training on submitting work through online courses.	2.74	1.570	7	M
8	I received training on downloading course resources.	2.94	1.769	6	M
9	I received training on taking exams in online courses.	2.55	1.710	8	M
10	I had to increase my Internet data package.	3.16	1.734	4	M
		3.05			M

It is evident from Table 2 that the overall mean of the items of the first theme for female students was average, 3:10/5. This indicates that the degree of impact of the sudden transition from traditional teaching to online vocabulary teaching and learning was moderate from the students' viewpoint, with some disparity between these items as shown by their ranks. The second item received the highest degree came in the first place, whereas the fifth and sixth items came last. The second item, "Transition process from traditional teaching to remote teaching of vocabulary was easy", received the highest agreement and it showed that at the beginning of this transition, most of the students did not have difficulties moving to online courses. What can be inferred from the girls' attitude is that they were familiar with the virtual environment and online media before the attack of Covid-19 and the transition was no surprise to them. However, item 3 received the last rank, denoting that the girls did not agree that the transition took a long time. This rejection of the statement was a positive sign that supported their view as to the simplicity of

transfer to an online environment, which also did not take a long time. However, there were other items that came last in the rank which could reveal other issues about these changes in the educational setting.

Items 8, 7, 9 and 5 were ranked 6, 7, 8 and 9, respectively. The students were not satisfied with the training they were expected to get for downloading course resources, submitting work online, taking exams, and attending online courses. Therefore, it can be elicited that the absence of adequate training can rationalize the reasons behind the total score for this theme (61%), which is, taken as a whole, is not a good sign for a healthy transition from a traditional to an online environment. Another justification could be that the students felt that transition was easy, but they did not have the tools for transition and that being tech-savvy, they might have used their resources to get on the train of online learning.

Table 3 shows the results of the male respondents indicating an average degree of agreement on all the items (3.15/5), with variant degrees on each item as shown below.

Table 4: Male – Theme 1: The abrupt transition process from traditional teaching to remote vocabulary teaching.

	Items	Mean	Std.	Rank	Degree
1	Transition process from traditional teaching to remote teaching of vocabulary was smooth.	3.90	1.055	1	H
2	Transition process from traditional teaching to remote teaching of vocabulary was easy.	3.81	1.042	2	H
3	Transition process from traditional teaching to remote teaching of vocabulary was easy but took a long time.	2.90	1.340	8	M
4	In the beginning, I had big problems with preparing for online lessons.	2.74	1.483	9	M
5	I received training on attending online courses.	2.33	1.525	10	L
6	I received training on participating in online courses.	2.98	1.645	6	M
7	I received training on submitting work through online courses.	3.36	1.559	4	M
8	I received training on downloading course resources.	2.93	1.520	7	M
9	I received training on taking exams in online courses.	3.45	1.611	3	M
10	I had to increase my Internet data package.	3.10	1.590	5	M
		3.15			M

Table 3 shows that the overall mean of the items of the first theme for male students was also average and close to that of female students, 3:15. This shows that the amount of impact of the sudden transition from traditional teaching to online vocabulary teaching and learning was slight from the students' viewpoint, with some differences between these items as shown by the ranks of the items. The first item received the highest degree, and it came in the first place, whereas the fourth and fifth items came last. The first item, "Transition process from traditional teaching to remote teaching of vocabulary was smooth", received the highest agreement, and it showed that at the beginning of this transition, most of the students moved from traditional to online courses smoothly with no struggle. What can be assumed from the boys' responses is that they were acquainted and comfortable with the virtual environment and online media before the strike of Covid-19 and that they had the skill and ability to move to the seemingly new environment, which was actually no surprise to them. Item 5, however, was the last among the other

items, indicating that they were not satisfied with the preparation for attending online courses, even though the transition was easy, and it did not take them a long time to transfer fully to virtual classes. Nevertheless, there were other items that came last in the rank, which could reveal more questions about this shift in the teaching and learning process.

Items 6, 8, and 4 were ranked 6, 7 and 9, respectively. The male students were also not satisfied with the training they expected to get for participating in online courses, downloading course resources, and submitting work online, and preparing for online lessons. Their attitude was similar in a way to that of the girls. Therefore, it can be inferred that despite the lack of adequate training, the students managed to move quite easily from real to virtual classes. They seemed to depend on themselves to cope with the shift and might have exploited whatever resources they had to move to online learning.

Thus, to answer the first question as to the influence of the abrupt shift from traditional teaching to remote teaching of vocabulary, it can be inferred that the transition was easy from the beginning, and fortunately, it did not cause any disturbance to the students. This smooth transition was attributed to the fact that the students were technologically skillful enough to adapt to the change despite the absence of training from the part of the institutions. However, the overall impact will be explored further in the discussion section below.

Second Question of the Study. To answer the second question regarding the challenges students encountered in learning vocabulary, the mean, standard deviation, and rank were calculated for each paragraph of the second theme of the study. Table 5 displays the results of the female respondents, which shows an average degree of agreement on all the items (3.02/5), with variant degrees (High, Medium, Low) on each item as shown below. The overall mean of the second theme was average (3.02), which indicates that the degree of appreciation of the study sample for the challenges students encountered in vocabulary learning was modest, with a variance in these evaluations between the items as shown by the rank of each. Item 12 was in the first rank, while items 14, 15, and 20 came last. Item 12 was concerned with the appropriateness of course timing, which indicated that most of the students were satisfied with the scheduling of the course.

Item 20, on the other hand, had the least agreement. It was concerned with the students' lack of IT and technical skills, which indicated that most of the students (65.8%) were satisfied with and confident about their IT skills and technical knowledge. Their responses to the IT and technical gave strong support to the item concerned with the conversion of course material to fit online presentation. That IT skill made it easy for them and their teachers to properly and easily convert whatever material they wanted to use for online classes. However, most of the participants (60%) did not have their own personal computers. The reasonable explanation for this matter would be that there was a sudden shift where the students had to share computers for joining virtual classes while each family would possibly have one or two computers. The average Saudi household consisted of 5.25 persons according to the most recent statistics, and that would justify the dissatisfaction with this item of the survey. Buying extra computers was not a feasible option at the time where new computers skyrocketed and were sold out, too, during the Pandemic. Besides, that would be a big burden for a family with a limited income.

Amongst the difficult issues that the female students ran into was that there were some disconcerting interruptions, the sound quality was not satisfactory, and the visual presentation was not clear enough. Besides, they also had to do more preparation for online classes than for actual classes. Although they were confident about their IT skills, it seemed that preparation for online lessons was time-consuming, and Internet quality was not good.

Table 5: Female – Theme 2: The challenges encountered in learning new vocabulary.

	Items	Mean	Std.	Rank	Degree
11	Course timing was suitable	3.74	1.692	3	H
12	Course timing was adequate	4.06	1.315	1	H
13	Course material was converted properly to suit online presentation	3.94	1.459	2	H
14	Virtual classes were more difficult than real classes	1.97	1.354	9	L
15	There was limited participation in virtual classes	1.97	1.110	9	L
16	I had to do more preparation for virtual classes than for real classes.	2.94	1.825	7	M
17	Sound quality was good	3.52	1.805	6	M
18	Visual presentation was clear	3.61	1.626	5	M
19	There were no disturbing interruptions	3.74	1.437	3	H
20	I am kind of lacking in IT and technical skills	1.71	1.006	11	L
21	I did not have my own computer	2.00	1.414	8	L
		3.02			M

Table 6 shows that the results of the male students have an average degree of agreement on all the items (3.10/5), with degree variations (High, Medium, Low) on each item as shown below. The overall mean of the second theme was average (3.02/5), which indicates that the degree of appreciation of the study sample for the challenges students encountered in vocabulary learning was modest, with some discrepancy in these evaluations between the items as shown by the rank of each. Item 18 was in the first rank, while items 14, 20, and 21 came last. Item 18 was concerned with the clarity of visual presentations, which indicated that most students were satisfied with presentation quality in virtual classes.

Item 21, on the other hand, had the least agreement. It was concerned with the students' having their own personal computers. It indicated that more than half of the students did not have their personal computers. Item 20 showed that only 52% were satisfied with and confident about their IT skills and technical knowledge. Their responses to items 20 and 21 seemed to correlate somehow. Not having a personal computer correlates with low IT and technical skills.

Among the problems that the male students met was that there were some disturbing interruptions, just as the girls alluded to. They believed that the time allotted for each student in virtual classes was too limited compared to real classes.

Accordingly, in answer to the second question as to the issues the students encountered in learning vocabulary during the Pandemic, it can be understood that there were really some challenges. The first was about the students' not having their own computers and having to share with other family members, which made it awkward and uncomfortable. The second was the presence of constant interruptions and bad network due to the Internet pressure, especially at the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis.

Table 6: Male – Theme 2: The challenges encountered in learning new vocabulary.

	Items	Mean	Std.	Rank	Degree
11	Course timing was suitable	3.71	1.312	2	H
12	Course timing was adequate	3.68	1.254	3	H
13	Course material was converted properly to suit online presentation	3.43	1.151	4	M
14	Virtual classes were more difficult than real classes	2.55	1.468	9	M
15	There was limited participation in virtual classes	3.05	1.361	7	M
16	I had to do more preparation for virtual classes than for real classes.	2.62	1.513	8	M
17	Sound quality was good	3.36	1.165	5	M
18	Visual presentation was clear	3.81	1.215	1	M
19	There were no disturbing interruptions	3.07	1.332	6	M
20	I am kind of lacking in IT and technical skills	2.41	1.322	10	M
21	I did not have my own computer	2.40	1.835	11	M
		3.10			M

Third Question of the Study. The third question included pedagogical-related items and thus was concerned about how the teachers and students dealt with vocabulary learning and how they met the challenges during the Pandemic. The mean, standard deviation, and rank were calculated for each item of the third theme of the study. Table 7 shows that female students had an average degree of agreement (3.31/5) with variations in the mean of each item.

Table 7: Female – Theme 3: How transition from traditional classes to online classes was dealt with.

	Items	Mean	Std.	Rank	Degree
22	The teacher introduced new vocabulary using virtual board	3.45	1.588	6	M
23	The teacher introduced new vocabulary using PowerPoint	3.71	1.488	5	H
24	The teacher taught new vocabulary using videos	3.42	1.628	7	M
25	The teacher taught new vocabulary using specialized apps	2.77	1.668	9	M
26	The teacher taught word meaning using PowerPoint	4.32	1.107	1	H
27	The teacher taught word meaning using specialized apps	2.87	1.765	8	M
28	The teacher taught word use using PowerPoint	4.00	1.414	3	H
29	The teacher taught word use using specialized apps	1.97	1.426	14	L
30	The teacher introduced and taught difficult words using PowerPoint	4.00	1.549	3	H
31	The teacher introduced and taught difficult words using specialized apps	2.42	1.566	12	M
32	The teacher introduced and taught the relationship between words using PowerPoint	3.94	1.153	4	H
33	The teacher introduced and taught the relationship between words using specialized apps	2.39	1.498	13	M
34	The teacher introduced and taught the word part of speech using PowerPoint	4.10	1.446	2	H

	Items	Mean	Std.	Rank	Degree
35	The teacher introduced and taught the word part of speech using specialized apps	2.45	1.650	11	M
36	The teacher taught the different meanings of a word using PowerPoint	4.00	1.549	3	H
37	The teacher taught the different meanings of a word using specialized apps.	2.48	1.749	10	M
38	The teacher gave enough exercises to practice words in new contexts.	3.94	1.590	4	H
		3.31			M

As shown in Table 7, the overall mean of all items of the third theme was average (3.31), and that shows a medium degree of agreement by the participants as to how the teachers and students dealt with vocabulary and met the challenges initiated by the shift in teaching and learning. There were, however, some differences in the assessment and the rank of each item, as shown in Table 7. Item 26 was first with the highest rank (4.32/5), while item 29 had the lowest rank with a score of (1.97/5). Item 26, which is the highest, was about the teachers' use of PowerPoint to teach word meaning, which indicated that such software was the easiest and most favorable for the teachers during the Pandemic.

And on the contrary, item 29 was in the lowest rank with a low rating. The item was about using specialized apps to teach word use. Such apps, as the responses suggest, seemed to be very unfamiliar to the teachers or students. For teaching and learning vocabulary, there are many apps available for free or even at a nominal cost. Apps such as WordUp, Vocabulary Builder, and Vocabulary App, just to name a few, are among those apps that language teachers can use in their vocabulary lessons.

The other items in this theme fell in the middle between the lowest and highest with variant evaluations, some of which had the same rank such as 28, 30, and 36. These items comprised the use of videos and special apps to introduce and teach new items of vocabulary and to also deal with difficult words. These practices were ranked as mediocre, and their evaluations ranged between 47.8% and 69%, where the use of videos for teaching vocabulary surpassed the use of specialized vocabulary apps.

Table 8 shows that the responses of male students had an average degree of agreement (2.97/5), less than that of female students. The items also showed some variations in their means.

Table 8: Male – Theme 3: How transition from traditional classes to online classes was dealt with.

	Items	Mean	Std.	Rank	Degree
38	The teacher gave enough exercises to practice words in new contexts.	3.50	1.469	1	M
22	The teacher introduced new vocabulary using virtual board	3.48	1.383	2	M
23	The teacher introduced new vocabulary using PowerPoint	3.36	1.479	3	M
26	The teacher taught words meaning using PowerPoint	3.17	1.560	4	M
36	The teacher taught the different meanings of a word using PowerPoint	3.10	1.665	5	M
30	The teacher introduced and taught difficult words using PowerPoint	3.07	1.488	6	M
34	The teacher introduced and taught the word part of speech using PowerPoint	3.00	1.431	7	M

	Items	Mean	Std.	Rank	Degree
32	The teacher introduced and taught the relationship between words using PowerPoint	2.93	1.504	8	M
31	The teacher introduced and taught difficult words using specialized apps	2.90	1.635	9	M
24	The teacher taught new vocabulary using videos	2.88	1.699	10	M
28	The teacher taught words use using PowerPoint	2.86	1.507	11	M
27	The teacher taught word meaning using specialized apps	2.79	1.490	12	M
33	The teacher introduced and taught the relationship between words using specialized apps	2.79	1.646	12	M
25	The teacher taught new vocabulary using specialized apps	2.71	1.535	13	M
29	The teacher taught words use using specialized apps	2.69	1.522	14	M
37	The teacher taught the different meanings of a word using specialized apps.	2.67	1.603	15	M
35	The teacher introduced and taught the word part of speech using specialized apps	2.64	1.428	16	M
		2.97			M

Table 8 shows that the overall mean of all items of the third theme was average (2.97), which reflects a medium degree of agreement by the male students as to how the teachers and students dealt with vocabulary. It also shows how the challenges initiated by the shift in teaching and learning were encountered. Just as was the case with the female responses, there were some variations in the evaluation and the rank of each item, as shown in Table 8 above. Item 38 was first with the highest rank (3.50/5), while item 35 had the lowest rank with a score of (2.64/5). Item 38, which is the highest, was about the amount of exercise assigned by the teachers for the students to practice new words in new contexts. This indicated that most of the students (70%) were satisfied with the amount of exercise.

Quite the opposite, item 35 was in the lowest rank with a rating of 2.64/5. The item was about using specialized apps to teach the word part of speech. Similarly, the other items in this theme were between the lowest and highest with different scores. As was the case with the female responses, these items comprised the use of videos and special apps to teach vocabulary. These items were graded as medium, and their assessments ranged between 53.4.8% and 58%. For teaching vocabulary, the teachers tended to use videos more than specialized vocabulary apps, if any.

Considering what has been mentioned above, the third question has been answered. The students' responses showed modest satisfaction as to the processes and tools used for teaching and learning vocabulary, be it introduction, meaning or meanings, and practical use. Dealing with the shift from real to virtual classes was ranked medium, with an average satisfaction rate of 3.2/5, which is the average of 3.50 (female participants) and 2.97 (male participants). The main tool that teachers used was PowerPoint presentations, using authorized platforms such as Blackboard, WebEx or Zoom, whereas there are other tools that can be utilized for teaching and learning vocabulary. These tools could include vocabulary apps such as WordUp, Vocabulary Builder, and Vocabulary App, just to name a few. These applications can help learners to build and develop their vocabulary since they provide a wide variety of interactive

activities in the form of videos, word puzzles, quizzes, games, etc. Such interactive activities can help language learners to learn efficiently and organize their vocabulary logically.

Conclusion

This work attempted to respond to three questions. The first question was about the influence of the sudden shift from traditional teaching to distant teaching of vocabulary. The second question was to identify the difficulties teachers and students met when dealing with vocabulary. The third question was to illustrate what measures the teachers and students took to overcome these difficulties. In a study by Shamsan et al. (2021) there was an investigation of online vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) during COVID-19 pandemic by Saudi EFL students. The study attempted to find out what online strategies Saudi EFL students resorted to in order to find the meaning of new items of vocabulary. The study also investigated the strategies used to learn such vocabulary, in addition to the strategies used in revising newly learned items of vocabulary and adding them to the permanent repertoire. The other study conducted by Khamsuk and Whanchit (2021) suggested that families could contribute to their children vocabulary learning through the storytelling strategy, assuming that storytelling could improve learning of English vocabulary and could be easily applied at home.

The studies above did not explain how the shift impacted vocabulary learning, nor what challenges were met. They did not even show how vocabulary learning was actually dealt with by teachers and learners. Therefore, the current study, however, has addressed all these issues. The shift did pose some difficulties, particularly in the beginning. Moving abruptly to online classes proved to have created some displeasure and uneasiness for teachers, students, and families. Nevertheless, such conditions seemed to have prompted the teachers and students to find quick solutions to these difficulties despite the scarcity of training and other services, which enabled them to take a step forward towards a better learning environment. The teachers and students had enough technological competence that enabled them to adjust to the new situation in spite of the lack of previous institutional arrangements. The shift did impact vocabulary learning at first, but things began to run quite smoothly as the teachers and students got the hang of online teaching and learning. Moreover, the current study also revealed that there were some problems the teachers and students encountered. The first problem was the lack of personal computers as most families would usually have a limited number of computers. During the crisis, all family members had to share computers if they wanted to work or study. Things would be easy and acceptable if the schedules were different, but there would be great discomfort and instability if they were the same or overlapping. Another problem the results revealed was the presence of persistent disruptions and bad Internet due to pressure in the beginning. The last issue directly related to the third question of the study was that most teachers and learners were not familiar with modern teaching tools and that the PowerPoint software was almost the only solution to presenting and teaching vocabulary. The studies mentioned above did not attempt to bring to bear the feasibility and potential of advanced learning tools. However, the current study attended to the teaching tools that could be utilized to teach vocabulary and which can be implemented, leveraging the teaching platforms available during the crisis.

Therefore, this study suggests that the educational system should be dynamic and flexible enough to find rapid, reasonable, and convenient resolutions to any possible difficulties. Another suggestion would be the professional growth of teachers and students in terms of using technology and modern teaching and learning strategies, leveraging the power of technology as a means to improve education in a meaningful fashion. For instance, in this work, the teaching and learning of vocabulary using modern apps were brought to bear. Apps such as Vocab Genius, WordUp, Vocabology, Vocabulary Builder, Vocabulary App, and many more can facilitate and expedite vocabulary learning. The research directs those recommendations primarily to decision-makers at the ministry of education, language teachers and departments of English.

اكتساب المفردات لطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية من خلال مقررات القراءة خلال جائحة كورونا

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الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى شرح الطريقة التي تمكن بها طلاب كلية اللغات والترجمة من تعلم المفردات اللغوية من خلال مقررات القراءة أثناء جائحة كورونا. ولهذه الغاية، اعتمد الباحث المنهج الوصفي وجمع البيانات بشكل أساسي من خلال استبانة، وقد شملت العينة طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية في الكلية بجامعة الإمام محمد بن سعود الإسلامية، حيث وجد المعلمون والطلاب أنفسهم مجبرين على التحول من الفصول التقليدية إلى الفصول الافتراضية، لذلك لجأوا إلى نوع آخر من التدريس يعتمد بشكل عام على التدريس عبر الإنترنت. وقد ناقشت هذه الورقة كيفية تعامل معلمي اللغة والطلاب في الكلية مع المفردات خلال الجائحة، والعقبات التي واجهها المعلم والطالب. وقد أظهرت النتائج وجود بعض الصعوبات في البداية عند الانتقال من الفصول التقليدية إلى الفصول الافتراضية، حيث كان على الطلاب استخدام مهاراتهم السابقة للتأقلم مع التحول. كما أظهرت النتائج أن أدوات التدريس لم تكن مرضية بما يكفي لتلائم الغرض من تعلم المفردات. وقد اقترح الباحث استخدام تطبيقات المفردات الحديثة مثل فوكاب جينيس، وورد أب، فوكابالوجي، فوكابيولاري بيلدر، و فوكابيولاري أب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المفردات النشطة، مول (MALL)، التعليم عند بعد، المفردات غير النشطة.

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