

CHAPTER : 1

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING :
THE PRESENT SCENARIO
- 1.2 TEACHING OF VOCABULARY
- 1.3 SELECTION OF THE PROBLEM
- 1.4 THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
- 1.5 DEFINITION OF THE TERMS
- 1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS
- 1.7 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
- 1.8 MAIN HYPOTHESES
- 1.9 DELIMITING THE STUDY
- 1.10 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY
- 1.11 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY
- 1.12 THE SCHEME OF CHAPTERIZATION

Chapter : 1

1.1 SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING : THE PRESENT SCENERIO

Prior to the attainment of independence, English occupied an important place in the social life of the country. People tried to learn English as efficiently as they could. It was not possible to attend to any work without adequate knowledge of English. Since the atmosphere was different (India being a subject of the British empire), English occupied an important place in the functions of the Government. But after independence, the position has altogether changed and English has been relegated to a secondary place. Now, it is not considered inevitable to teach English to the students. In many of the curriculums, English has been given a secondary place but in certain institutions, it still occupies an important place. The beginning of the teaching of this subject starts from class VI. In certain places, even at the secondary stage, many of the subjects are taught through the medium of English. But this is not a common feature. English does not occupy a very important place for the life of the country. Sometimes we find that

Not appropriate

wastage at public examinations is caused by insufficient knowledge of English. Following are the factors responsible for failure in English :

- (1) Since the knowledge of English is not considered a must for all sorts of jobs, proper attention is not paid to its teaching.
- (2) The methods of teaching English are not appropriate and upto the mark.
- (3) Those students, who do not have a keen interest for study do not take proper interest in learning English. Due to this half-hearted interest in English, educational standards deteriorate. *secondary*
- (4) Generally, in schools 6 to 8 periods are devoted to the teaching of English. These periods are of a duration of 35 to 40 minutes. It is not possible to study a foreign language thoroughly within such a short time.
- (5) There is a great dearth of good English teachers. Teachers are not very much conscious of the objectives of the teaching of English. Even in their minds, English occupies a secondary place. The result is that, they teach English half-heartedly.
- (6) The syllabus is not very properly and thoroughly planned. It is difficult to do justice to it.

Shiv Charan Sharma in his book, *The Teaching of English* (1997, p.156) writes, "There is no uniformity in the curriculum

of English subject of different states. It varies from state to state and school to school. Should English be a compulsory subject or an optional subject and at which stage? Nothing has been done to answer these questions.”

- (7) Today the teachers feel satisfied just by reading to the students. They simply explain what they have read. No place is given to the thorough practice of writing in the teaching of English. The students, should also be given practice in writing after oral practice .

Dr. Abha Rani Bisht in her book, *Teaching English in India* (1995,p.13) quoted Prof. V. K. Gokak. He said, “ The fundamental years for the teaching of English in schools are in the hands of teachers who neither know enough English nor are familiar with the latest and far reaching development in the pedagogy of English.”

- (8) Text-books of English are also not very scientific and upto the mark. They have several drawbacks with the result that the students are unable to get proper practice.
- (9) Language teachers badly need the help and interest of the teachers of all other subjects in the curriculum. With their active co-operation an English course may be very successful, but

without it, it cannot be. But it is really sad that the other subject teachers hardly co-operate with the English teacher.

1.2 TEACHING OF VOCABULARY :

It has often been remarked how strange it is that comparatively little has been written on the teaching and learning of foreign language vocabulary. In some sense learning a foreign language is basically a matter of learning the vocabulary of that language. Not being able to find the words, your need to express yourself is the most frustrating experience in speaking another language.

English is a very rich language and is said to have more than six lakhs of words. It is impossible to know all words. It is not even desirable to do that. And therefore it is very necessary that a selection of words is made. It is accepted that students must have a vocabulary of about 3500 words at the end of their schooling. Vocabulary in English is not only quite rich but also varied. So, it is necessary that special attention should be paid while teaching vocabulary and also strategies of its retention.

Teachers are often found neglecting the teaching of vocabulary. Even in the periods of composition, they give ready-made materials to the students that lead to the symptoms of bad vocabulary learning and

inability to retrieve required vocabulary. The student has been exposed to a vocabulary item at some stage, but he cannot bring it to mind when he needs it. In this situation, either communication breaks down altogether or else the student has to use some repair strategy such as expressing meaning in a different way.

Symptoms of bad vocabulary even affect the social and professional life. Though good at English, students fail to use appropriate language functions in certain situations.

1.3 SELECTION OF THE PROBLEM

Foreign language teaching is a matter of considerable social importance. There is a great demand for it, especially, in the I.T. era, and in many countries E.L.T. forms an important part of the educational facilities. But largely in India and particularly in Gujarat state, English is taught without a full commitment. And it is not only the observation of the investigator but of many that, students of Gujarat lag behind because of lack of proficiency in English. After all, what is the basic problem? Why do students take English as a mirthless subject?

Teaching English for last thirteen years, the investigator experienced many problems. The basic problem was that students could neither speak nor express themselves in properly written form in

English. It was not that they did not know patterns and structures. These they learnt, practised, and read through their high school and higher secondary classes. Then also, they failed to verbalize their ideas, feelings or intentions just because of the inability to find out words needed for that. Here is the cause of the problem. Rarely the investigator has seen a teacher 'teaching' unfamiliar words. Words are just 'given' to the students to cram^e and memorise. They do try for this. But cramming does not go a long way.

Why don't teachers 'teach' vocabulary ? Because hardly there is any training or material regarding this. We still have to evolve efficient class-room methods to enable the young students to use and retain the words they are exposed to. But for this, the rest of teaching will suffer a heavy impairment. It is a telling need to equip teachers with a few strategies of teaching vocabulary.

So, after a long trail of thoughts, observations, encounters and comments, the investigator fixed her Ph. D. research problem. It was verbalized as :

1.4 THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF VOCABULARY TEACHING STRATEGIES ON RETENTION AND USE IN RELATION TO CERTAIN VARIABLES

1.5 DEFINITION OF THE TERMS :

(1) Effectiveness :

According to the dictionary “effective” means something that produces the results that it was intended to.

Here it means the measurable and observable difference in students’ abilities and orientation related to English language learning.

(2) Vocabulary :

All the words in a language comprise the vocabulary of that language. The English language has a formidable total vocabulary of more than half a million words.

Here it means a collection of words from five units taken from the English text-book of std : IX, prescribed by the Gujarat State School Text Book Board for Gujarati medium students.

(3) Strategies :

A method or plan to achieve some goal.

Here, vocabulary strategies means a plan of action which has its objectives, and a procedure of vocabulary teaching by means of different techniques. Four strategies of vocabulary teaching are included in the treatment. (1) Explanation Translation (2) Vocabulary Exercises (3) Vocabulary Games (4) Communicative Tasks.

(4) Retention :

The result of an excitation, experience, or response, occurring as a persisting after effect, that may serve as the basis for future modification of response or experience, regarded as one of the necessary factors in the determination of habit formation and memory. >>>

Here retention means an ability to recognize and identify words which are taught to the students using different strategies.

(5) Use :

Is this the same as the definition or about?
(1) Vocabulary confined to words in general use

(2) A list including words and statements of their meanings through different strategies in common usage. || 91?

- (3) The students' ability to activate their vocabulary when framing a sentence.

In this research 'use' means the students competence in using the target-words in connected writing.

(6) **Variables :**

Any trait that changes from one case or condition to another, more strictly, the representation of the trait, usually in quantitative form, such as a measurement or an enumeration.

Here (a) I.Q. and achievement in the subject are controlled variables. (b) Sex is moderator variable, two levels of sex : (i) boys (ii) girls (c) Dependent variables - use of vocabulary and retention of vocabulary (d) primary independent variables are the four strategies of vocabulary teaching.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS :

- (1) What are the effective strategies of teaching and learning vocabulary?
- (2) How can the teacher help the students in learning vocabulary ?
- (3) Do the effective strategies adopted in teaching of vocabulary related to the syllabus (that comes in text lessons) motivate the students to enrich their vocabulary?

- (4) Do interesting vocabulary games and communicative tasks motivate the students for using the English language ?
- (5) What is the role of I. Q. of a student on his/her retention of vocabulary ?
- (6) To what extent are the sex differences active in learning of vocabulary ?
- (7) What can a teacher do to TEACH new words ?
- (8) What amount of vocabulary is lost after a certain period of time?
- (9) What is the relationship between the competence to use the words in retenting new words and sex of the learners?
- (10) How is the achievement in the previous examination related with retention and use of vocabulary ?
- (11) What is the effect of learner centered techniques and activities on learning of new words in L₂ ?

1.7 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

- (1) To define some methods of vocabulary teaching (in the subject of English at lower level)

- (2) To prepare vocabulary explanations, exercises, vocabulary games and communicative task to teach vocabulary from five units from class IX text-book of English. (lower level).
- (3) To try out the selected techniques with the students of class IX.
- (4) To measure the effects of strategies on the retention and use of vocabulary.
- (5) To find out the effect of the treatment in relation to sex, I.Q. and achievement in the previous exam.
- (6) To compare the degree of retention and use of vocabulary among boys and girls; high I. Q. and low I.Q. students; and among high achievers and low achievers.
- (7) To study the feedback of the teachers who observe the experimental group undergoing the treatment.
- (8) To arrive at some recommendations for the teachers of English for vocabulary teaching.

1.8 MAIN HYPOTHESES :

- (1) There will be no significant difference in the mean scores of post-test, delayed test (retention test) and test of use between the experimental group and the controlled group.

- (2) There will be no significant difference in the mean scores on the test of retention and use of vocabulary taught through all the four strategies between the experimental and the controlled group.
- (3) There will be no significant difference in the mean score on the test of retention and use of vocabulary in relation to the sex of the students.
- (4) There will be no significant difference in the mean scores on the test of retention and use in relation to the I.Q. of the students.
- (5) There will be no significant difference in the mean scores on the tests of retention and use in relation to the achievement scores of the students.

1.9 DELIMITING THE STUDY :

- (1) The present study was confined to the students of Std. IX only.
- (2) The investigator selected any five units from std. IX English text-book (L.L.) prescribed by Gujarat text-book board.
- (3) The try out of strategies was done with the students in schools of Khambhat city only.
- (4) Only Gujarati medium schools were selected.
- (5) Out of different strategies of teaching vocabulary only four were experimented.

1.10 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY :

Language teaching experts seem to be widely agreed that vocabulary learning is a very important aspect of language learning, Lado (Quoted in K. P. Thakur, 1985:1) emphasizes the importance of vocabulary learning by saying that we "cannot deny or ignore the existence of the word as a tangible unit of language," and then again by suggesting (Ibid) that "it may be profitable to give an intensive dose of vocabulary for college level students, but on the other hand, we must also develop certain strategies of teaching vocabulary to the secondary and higher secondary students." Sweet (Ibid) says "that real intrinsic difficulty of learning a foreign language lies in that of having to master its vocabulary." Bolinger (Ibid) believes that "the vocabulary in the long run is where the student has to spend the time most."

But, unfortunately, the teaching ^{of} vocabulary in India has not received the attention "it deserves from the point of view of the effectiveness of our English teaching programmes. So, it is necessary that special attention should be paid while teaching vocabulary and also to the strategies of its retention."

The idea of a research approach to questions of language teaching is certainly no longer so unfamiliar as it was a few decades ago. Nevertheless, many language teachers even today are as sceptical

The name of the book is
many of references list

about research on language teaching as about language teaching theory. The idea of literary research and philological scholarship in foreign languages is acceptable to most, but the teaching of a language is often regarded more as a matter of practical intuition, inventiveness and sensitivity than as a suitable subject for research.

Practitioners are irritated when the results of research seem inconclusive or remote from the realities of the class-room and they may shrug off research as 'useless ivory tower activities' or dismiss it as 'playing at science.' Even some scholars, while themselves involved in research have expressed themselves quite scathingly about certain kinds of research studies. For example, Richterich, a Swiss-scholar, who was a leading participant in the seminar (Council of Europe Modern Languages Project for Adults), had this to say about a research approach.

'Some people, for instance, must use the scientific illusion, which they pass on to others, that it is useless and wrong to try to change anything without first having carried out, with all the necessary scientific rigour, a number of fundamental and definitive studies on the motivation and needs of adults or of certain groups of adults learning a modern language. A complex, cumbersome structure is thus set up to carry out long-term

studies which, once finished, are usually out of date because all sorts of events (new theories; new experiments; new facts; social, economic, or political evolution or revolution) constantly, alter the hypotheses, situations, and conditions of analysis.'

Carroll, (1953:168), who had become attracted to language research complained that, in spite of an enormous literature on language teaching, "We are little better off in our knowledge of the problem than we were, say, thirty years ago." Some years later, the present writer characterized the situation on language teaching research specially on the teaching of vocabulary in Britain as follows :

"In modern language teaching there is a ^{paucity} shortage of research, especially in the teaching of vocabulary. A review of articles published in 'Modern languages' over the past fifteen years suggests that only a handful of papers which report research results have been published".

Most writings on the teaching of languages is at the level of reporting personal experiences, expressing opinions, or inviting discussion. But hardly, anything is written on the teaching of vocabulary. The effect is that the student is using the target language, but he or she ^{does not learn it} is not learning it, since no connection has been made between the vocabulary and meaning. This can all too easily happen in the question-and-answer routines of a second language or foreign

language class-room. So now, vocabulary should be viewed ^{through} from the serious eye and more researches should be taken in hand."

Some students are not aware of the most efficient way to use a dictionary. Others go to the other extreme and are over conscious of the importance of checking individual words. Whenever they come across a new word in a passage, they will immediately stop and not proceed until they have checked it up in a dictionary. This can kill all interest and even interfere with comprehension because the reader is so concerned with the individual words that he is less aware of the context which gives meaning. It also results in very slow and inefficient reading. Some learners, even in conversation, will stop to check up their bilingual dictionary for the word they need, instead of perhaps finding another way to express it or enlisting the help of the native speaker they may be talking to.

So, the investigator decided to develop certain vocabulary ⁹¹ techniques for not only cultivating the interest of students in learning new words but also retaining them for a longer time.

1.11 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY :

A teacher of English faces many challenges tasks while teaching English in our country today and the meagreness of the learner's

vocabulary is one of them. E.L.T experts in India and abroad have prescribed suggest the sizes of vocabulary a learner of English should acquire at different stages of language learning.

But, unfortunately, the teaching of English vocabulary in India has not received the attention it deserves from the point of view of the effectiveness of our English teaching programmes.

The present study depicts the most effective ways of teaching vocabulary and its retention. The study will not only be useful to the learners but also to the teachers of English and E.L.T. researchers. 999

1.11.1 For Learners :

- (1) It will involve learners in activities that are interesting and motivating in themselves and such learning is effective and lasting.
- (2) It will introduce the learners to different useful and interesting techniques of learning vocabulary thus making them familiar with self-study techniques which can help them to build on and expand their vocabulary.
- (3) It will help in widening the vocabulary of the learners- both receptive and productive.
- (4) It will help to acquire sufficient vocabulary to give expression to their ideas and thoughts.
- (5) It will enable the learners to use the right word in the right place.

- (6) It will enable the spontaneous recall of words.
- (7) Long term retention will help to build up learners' confidence in the spoken language.
- (8) It will enable the pupils to provide a tension free atmosphere for communication.
- (9) Exercises will create interest in learning and an atmosphere of fun and joy apart from the dull routine.
- (10) Exercises based on communicative tasks will enable the students to develop team spirit in them and will help them to work in groups and pairs.
- (11) Confidence will help them to acquire both fluency and accuracy.
- (12) It will provide the atmosphere to talk among themselves using English.
- (13) It emphasizes on oral work, written work and provides the ground to the learners to act in real life.
- (14) Students will get an extensive exposure to the language they are learning.
- (15) It will lead to a general improvement in their performance in the subject (English). Thus, the teacher will also feel encouraged with the progress of the class.

1.11.2 For Teachers:

- (I) Teachers will get ample ideas to introduce unfamiliar words to the students.
- (ii) Foreign learners are very fond of noting down new vocabulary items as they come across them. This enthusiasm is very heartening for the teacher and thus teachers will find out these techniques to be very useful in their teaching process.
- (iii) With the help of the present study, the ^{teacher} ~~teacher~~ will be able to develop a positive and effective atmosphere in the class- room.
- (iv) The present study will provide the background for the enthusiastic teachers to work in the most creative way.
- (v) The study will provide the ideas to the teachers for motivating the students to learn and adopt the new teaching learning techniques.
- (vi) It will lessen the work of the teacher in composition periods.
- (vii) The present study will also help the teachers to retain his/her vocabulary.
- (viii) Teacher will get the desirable results and the English teacher will thus be getting job-satisfaction by seeing his learners communicating in English.

- (x) The English teacher will be benefitted in the way that improvement in the vocabulary of the learners will lead to an overall improvement in the performance of the students in the subject and in an integrated way.

1.11.3 For Researchers :

In spite of impressive gains, it would be fair to say that the present study has its limitations. A limited number of chapters have been covered on such a vast field. Shortage of time and resources were also limiting factors. It is a field with immense scope for further exploration and research particularly from the pedagogic point of view for the students' linguistic development and natural use of language.

Such courses lead to material production. Taking clues from this course, each chapter, each theme can be expanded to a book form. Such vocabulary course books can be useful for the teachers and the learners.

The same can provide background for further studies to the researchers.

1.11.4 Contribution to E.L.T.

In the fifties and sixties, language centres with a strong research orientation were established in several countries. But, mostly the research were done on the methods of teaching and grammar. But, in

demanding research, we openly admit lack of knowledge in areas of vocabulary teaching. So, the present study is an important contribution in the field of E.L.T. It is a new approach to the teaching of English in the area of vocabulary. It builds the background for the teachers and researchers for further study.

1.12 THE SCHEME OF CHAPTERIZATION :-

The report of this experimental study will be presented in six chapters.

Chapter 2 : Theoretical Foundations of Vocabulary Teaching:

In this chapter, some theoretical aspects regarding L2 vocabulary and its teaching will be described. There will be a detailed discussion on various strategies of teaching vocabulary.

Chapter 3 : Review of Literature :

Here, studies done in the area of vocabulary teaching will be reviewed. The strength and weakness of the research studies will be underlined. This chapter will also include review of articles, research papers and books related to this area.

Chapter 4 : Research Methodology and Procedure :

This chapter will describe the sampling technique, variables, research controls and the design of the study. The procedure to be

followed to tabulate and interpret the data will also be given. This will also discuss the statistical method to be adopted.

Chapter 5 : Analysis and Interpretation of Data :

In this chapter, the collected quantitative data will be tabulated. The 't' test of significance will be applied to test the formulated hypotheses. The data will be interpreted in relation to the variables defined for the study. The data of feedback and observations will be presented in descriptive form.

Chapter 6 : Conclusions, Observations and Suggestions :

This last chapter will present the inferred conclusions regarding the effect of each strategy of vocabulary teaching on retention and use in relation to variables. This will also discuss the qualitative conclusion regarding the effective aspects of vocabulary learning. Finally, recommendations regarding strategies of vocabulary teaching for the class-room teachers will be made.

The report will have appendices, references and bibliography at the back.