

Effectiveness of Dictation Method in Developing English Vocabulary Size: A Study of the 1st Year Business Administration Students, Diploma Program, Rattaphum College, RMUTSV

Aree Tehlah*

Department of General Education, Rattaphum College, Rajmangala University of Technology Srivijaya, Songkhla, Thailand.

ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study were 1) to investigate the English vocabulary background knowledge of the Business Administration students and 2) to investigate the effectiveness of dictation method in developing English vocabulary size. The subjects in this study were 35 students who studied in Diploma Program of Business Computer, Marketing and Accounting. They enrolled in the English 1 course in the first semester of the academic year 2016. The instrument used was the English vocabulary knowledge pre-test and post-test. Statistical tools used to analyse the data were percentage, mean, standard deviation and independent sample t-test. Results showed that 1) the vocabulary knowledge of students in each major was at a low level, and 2) the dictation method could enhance the students' English vocabulary size which showed a significant difference at 0.01 levels. This further indicated that the dictation method can help students improve English vocabulary knowledge that encouraged them to learn English in the classroom.

Keywords: Dictation Method, English Vocabulary Size.

1. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is a very important key in the English language learning. With the tendency of globalisation and the frequent exchanges of culture and politics among countries, English, as a worldwide accepted language, becomes more and more important (Ellis, 1997). Vocabulary has proved particularly important and certainly the most important of the English language learning. Vocabulary is of the primary concern in any second language system involving the study of speech sounds and grammar (Lewis, 1993). Linguist pointed out that vocabulary is the building material of language and the basis of many communication abilities, such as reading, listening, writing and spoken language. Teaching requirements of Rattaphum College in learning English state that the teaching purpose of college English is to develop students' comprehensive ability to use English, especially their reading, listening and speaking abilities, so as to enable them to effectively carry out oral or written communications in their future work and social interaction, and meanwhile enhance their ability of independent learning and students' comprehensive cultural accomplishment.

According to Snow (2002), reading is the process of congruently extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with vocabulary in the texts. Nevertheless, it is hard to justify what type of vocabulary would be useful for vocabulary learning of L2 learners. Nation (2008) categorised vocabulary in broad types which can be grouped into the high-frequency vocabulary, academic words or technical vocabulary. Francis and Kucera (1982; cited

* Corresponding Author: kruali@gmail.com

in Nation, 2008) had displayed the proportion of frequency words in each vocabulary size including the 1,000-word level, 2,000-word level, 3,000-word level and 5,000-word level. At the knowledge of 2,000 words, learners knew mostly around 80% of the running words in the text (Nation, 2008). Therefore, how to help the students learn and memorise the English words and enrich their vocabulary in a short time has been tried out in the college English teaching. One of the ways to develop students' learning of English vocabulary is the role of dictation method in vocabulary teaching.

Dictation is mainly aimed at checking students' pronunciation and their knowledge of spelling rules and corresponding Thai meanings. It is a traditional way of vocabulary teaching that can benefit students' vocabulary learning. During the process of dictation, students make use of input skills and output skills and write down the words through their hands, pens and ears, so as to check the effect of dictation and enhance their understanding and memory of English words. Dictation should have a focus and employ appropriate strategies. Firstly, teachers should take the words that cannot be explained and spelled through pronunciation and formation rules, such as the words with double consonants and homophone affixes. Secondly, teachers should lay emphasis on the dictation frequencies of 4 and 6 vocabularies so as to make the students familiar with the spelling of the vocabulary. Thirdly, from the perspective of memory psychology, too many words per time are not beneficial for memory. Therefore, 20-30 words are appropriate per time. Another strategy states that the teacher should formulate strict requirements and the students must correct their spelling mistakes independently. Finally, dictation scores should be counted as a part of daily scores. According to the experiment results, a conclusion is reached that dictation is an effective quantisation strategy, which can reveal students' vocabulary and learning outcomes to some extent. As a means to test vocabulary, dictation method is demonstrated to be an effective method.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- i) To investigate the English vocabulary background knowledge of the business administration students
- ii) To investigate the effectiveness of dictation method in developing English vocabulary size

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study sought to answer the following questions:

- i) At which level is students' English vocabulary knowledge?
- ii) Can the dictation method develop students' English vocabulary size?

4. SCOPES AND LIMITATIONS

This study is limited to the following aspects:

- i) Target Group: The target group was the 1st Year Students, Diploma Program of Business Computer, Marketing and Accounting, who employed the English1 course, Semester 1 of the academic year of 2016.
- ii) Variables: The independent variable is the dictation method, and the dependent variable is the students' English vocabulary size.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Subjects

The subjects of this study were first-year 35 students in Diploma Program of Business Computer, Marketing and Accounting major. The subjects enrolled in the English 1 course in the first semester of the academic year of 2016. They were of 18-20 years of age. They had studied English as a foreign language for fifteen years.

5.2 Instruments

The instrument used in this study was the English vocabulary knowledge test adopted from Nation's (2008) Vocabulary Level Test. It was used as both pre-test and post-test. The test papers contain 50 items of 6 English words (3 distracters and 3 target words represented the 3 Thai meaning). The test consisted of five vocabulary levels, i.e. the 1,000-, 2,000-, 3,000-, 5,000-word levels and Academic Word List (AWL). The total score was 150 points.

5.3 Data Collection and Data Analysis

The tests were ministered to 35 students in the first week of the semester. After the completion of the vocabulary test, the scoring process was conducted to analyse the students' vocabulary knowledge level. Then the dictation method was used to train students in every class. After the treatment, the post-test was immediately administered to the students. The raw scores both in the pre-test and post-test were calculated to interpret the mean value and standard deviations. Independent sample t-test was the statistics to find out the development of students' English vocabulary size.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study were illustrated from students' English vocabulary level test. The pre- and post-tests were compared. To see the results, the mean score, S.D. and T-test are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Students' English Vocabulary Knowledge and Vocabulary Size

Word Levels	No. of items	Test	mean	S.D.	T-value	Sig (2-tailed)
1,000 level	30	Pre	15.6	2.25	4.87	**0.00
		Post	21.9	1.94		
2,000 level	30	Pre	11.4	2.03	6.64	**0.00
		Post	19.8	1.92		
3,000 level	30	Pre	13.2	1.65	2.05	0.04
		Post	16.2	2.07		

		Pre	7.8	2.10		
5,000 level	30				6.42	**0.00
		Post	15.3	1.75		
		Pre	7.2	1.98		
AWL	30				5.68	**0.00
		Post	14.1	1.50		
		Pre	55.53	7.45		
Total scores	150				6.98	**0.00
		Post	88.11	7.15		

**Significant at 0.01 level

As can be seen in Table 1, the pre-test mean score of each vocabulary level test was 15.6, 11.4, 13.2, 7.8 and 7.2, and those in the post-test were 21.9, 19.8, 16.2, 15.3 and 14.1, respectively. The mean scores of the 1,000-word level, 2,000-word level, 5,000-word level and AWL tests between the pre-test and the post-test were slightly different. The mean post-test scores in each vocabulary level test slightly increased. The T-value revealed that those of vocabulary level test showed statistically significant differences at 0.01 level. This means that students were better with the knowledge of more words after the treatment. Meanwhile, the 3,000-word level test showed that students could perform with the lower rate. However, the total mean score in the pre-test was 55.53 out of 150, and the total post-test mean score was 88.11 out of 150. The students obviously gained higher mean score in the post-test. The T-values showed that there was statistically significant difference at 0.01 levels. This means that the students can improve their English vocabulary knowledge due to the fact that they always have been threatening by doing dictation in the class. They can develop their vocabulary size by this activity.

7. CONCLUSION

Memorising words is one of the keys to learn English and, at the same time, the most boring task for many Thai students. The current study has applied the dictation method into vocabulary teaching so as to help the students to effectively memorise English words. The study also found that dictation should not be isolated. Instead, the teacher should make use of more methods to increase students' enthusiasm and improve their efficiency of memorising words. This is relevant for students to properly use English vocabulary and improve their comprehensive capacity.

The expanding of vocabulary, on one hand, is a process of increasing the amount of words; on the other hand, it is a meaningful store tightly connected with the languages invented in modern science, technology, social and economic to express new things and new changes. So, to an English learner, the expanding of English vocabulary is endless.

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