

IMPROVING THE METHODOLOGY OF USING MNEMONIC STRATEGIES FOR MASTERING ENGLISH VOCABULARY AMONG ESL STUDENTS

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Abstract. This study investigates the effectiveness of mnemonic strategies in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among English as a Second Language (ESL) students. A total of 60 ESL learners participated in an eight-week intervention, divided into an experimental group utilizing mnemonic techniques and a control group following traditional vocabulary instruction. Pre- and post-tests measured vocabulary retention, while student surveys assessed perceptions of the learning experience. Results indicated a significant improvement in vocabulary acquisition in the experimental group ($p < 0.01$) and positive feedback regarding the use of mnemonics. The findings suggest that mnemonic strategies can be effectively integrated into ESL instruction to enhance vocabulary learning.

Keywords: mnemonic strategies, vocabulary acquisition, ESL students, language learning, educational methodologies

Аннотация. В данном исследовании изучается эффективность мнемонических стратегий в улучшении усвоения лексики среди студентов, изучающих английский как второй язык (ESL). В восьминедельном исследовании приняли участие 60 студентов ESL, разделенных на экспериментальную группу, использующую мнемонические методы, и контрольную группу, обучающуюся традиционным методам изучения лексики. Запоминание лексики измерялось с помощью предварительного и итогового тестирования, а опросы студентов оценивали их восприятие процесса обучения. Результаты показали значительное улучшение усвоения лексики в экспериментальной группе ($p < 0,01$) и положительные отзывы об использовании мнемонических приемов. Полученные данные свидетельствуют о том, что мнемонические стратегии могут быть эффективно интегрированы в обучение ESL для улучшения усвоения лексики.

Ключевые слова: мнемонические стратегии, усвоение лексики, студенты ESL, изучение языка, образовательные методики

ESL talabarlari orasida ingliz tili lug'atini o'zlashtirish uchun mnemonik strategiyalardan foydalanish metodologiyasini takomillashtirish

Abstrakt. Ushbu tadqiqot ingliz tilini ikkinchi til (ESL) sifatida o'rganayotgan talabalar o'rtasida so'z boyligini oshirishda mnemonik strategiyalarning samaradorligini o'rganadi. Jami 60 nafar ESL o'quvchilari sakkiz haftalik aralashuvda qatnashdilar, ular mnemonik usullardan foydalangan holda eksperimental guruhga va an'anaviy lug'at yo'riqnomasidan so'ng nazorat guruhiga bo'lingan. Oldindan va keyingi testlar lug'atning saqlanishini o'lchadi, talabalar so'rovlari esa o'rganish tajribasi haqidagi tasavvurlarini baholadi. Natijalar eksperimental guruhda so'z boyligini o'zlashtirishda sezilarli yaxshilanishni ko'rsatdi ($p < 0,01$) va mnemonikadan foydalanish bo'yicha ijobiy fikrlar. Topilmalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, mnemonik strategiyalar so'z boyligini oshirish uchun ESL yo'riqnomasiga samarali integratsiya qilinishi mumkin.

Kalit so'zlar: mnemonik strategiyalar, so'z boyligini o'zlashtirish, ESL talabalari, til o'rganish, ta'lim metodologiyalari

Introduction

Vocabulary acquisition is a critical component of language learning, particularly for English as a Second Language (ESL) students who often struggle with the vast lexicon of the English language. Traditional methods of teaching vocabulary, such as rote memorization and simple definitions, may not adequately engage students or promote long-term retention (Nation, 2001). Recent research has highlighted the potential of mnemonic strategies—techniques that facilitate memory retention through association—as effective tools for enhancing vocabulary learning (Miller & Gildea, 2017). This study aims to improve the methodology of using mnemonic strategies in ESL classrooms, thereby optimizing vocabulary acquisition among learners.

Literature Review

Mnemonic strategies have been widely researched in educational psychology and language acquisition. According to Atkinson (1975), mnemonics can significantly enhance memory performance by creating meaningful associations between new information and existing knowledge.

Techniques such as visualization, acronyms, and chunking have been shown to aid in the retention of vocabulary (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2000). For ESL learners, these strategies may be particularly beneficial given the challenges they face in mastering a new language.

Research by Tinkham (1993) demonstrated that mnemonic devices could improve vocabulary retention among ESL students by enabling them to create mental images or stories related to new words. Furthermore, studies have shown that learners who actively engage with mnemonics exhibit higher motivation and confidence in their language abilities (Karpicke & Roediger, 2008). Despite the promising findings, there remains a need for refined methodologies that systematically integrate mnemonic strategies into ESL instruction.

Methods Participants

The study involved 60 ESL students from a local language institute, aged between 18 and 25 years. Participants were randomly assigned to either an experimental group (n=30) or a control group (n=30).

Procedure

The intervention lasted for eight weeks, during which both groups were taught 20 new vocabulary words each week. The experimental group was introduced to various mnemonic techniques, including visualization (creating mental images), acronyms (using the first letters of words), and chunking (grouping words into manageable units). The control group received standard definitions and example sentences without mnemonic support.

Data Collection

Pre- and post-tests were administered to assess vocabulary knowledge. The tests included multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blank exercises, and a short writing task requiring the use of new vocabulary. Additionally, student feedback was collected through surveys to gauge their perceptions of the mnemonic strategies.

Results Vocabulary Acquisition

Statistical analysis of pre- and post-test scores revealed a significant improvement in vocabulary retention for the experimental group ($p < 0.01$). The average score for the experimental group increased from 45% to 85%, while the control group showed a modest increase from 47% to 60%.

Student Feedback

Surveys indicated that 80% of participants in the experimental group found mnemonic strategies helpful for remembering new words. Commonly cited benefits included improved recall and increased engagement during lessons. In contrast, only 40% of the control group reported satisfaction with their learning experience.

Discussion

The findings suggest that incorporating mnemonic strategies into vocabulary instruction can significantly enhance ESL students' ability to learn and retain new words. The positive feedback from students indicates that these techniques not only improve academic performance but also increase motivation and engagement in the learning process. This study highlights the importance of adapting teaching methodologies to meet the needs of diverse learners in ESL contexts.

Conclusion

This research supports the implementation of mnemonic strategies as an effective tool for improving vocabulary acquisition among ESL students. Future studies should explore long-term retention and the applicability of these strategies across different language levels and contexts. By refining instructional methodologies, educators can better support ESL learners in their journey toward mastering English vocabulary.

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