

The Effect of Teachers' Instructional Strategies on the Teaching of Vocabulary Learning in English as a Second Language

Dr Rehabeam K. Shapaka
University of South Africa, South Africa
rehashapaka@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-7921-3458>

Abstract

The aim of the study was to explore the effect of teachers' instructional strategies on the teaching of vocabulary learning in English as a second language. Data was collected through interview schedule, field notes and the open-ended questionnaire. Criterion purposeful sampling technique was used to select ten teachers from ten schools. Data analysis was conducted using typological analysis, content analysis and Atlas.ti. The findings established effect of teachers' instructional strategies on the teaching of vocabulary learning, prevailing instructional strategies used and the association between instructional strategies and existing vocabulary learning at schools. Teachers need to study and learn application of instructional strategies, apply strategies to optimise their success and enhance teaching and learning which result on positive students academic outcomes. Teachers' instructional strategies have an effect on teaching of vocabulary learning that affects schools, teachers' performance which results in positive and/or negative student academic performance.

Keywords: Vocabulary learning difficulties, Vocabulary learning strategies, Teaching vocabulary learning

DOI: 10.7176/EJBM/17-1-05

Publication date: January 30th 2025

1. Introduction

Students' priorities have been found to be associated with literature pedagogy implementation. Several studies have highlighted association between literature pedagogy and student motivation. Studies have shown that students' attention, their interest enhance knowledge acquisition during learning process (Wuntu et al., 2024). Literature pedagogy fosters the students' engagement and enthusiasm for the English learning. By using transformative literature pedagogy, teachers can create dynamic, motivating learning environment to students' academic growth and development (Tiara & Hum, 2023).

Studies have evaluated the trends of multimedia integration into English language classrooms, its impact on students' learning abilities; assess how teachers use multimedia to enhance students' vocabulary while learning English. Several studies highlight effects of multimedia technology on students' communication skills, linguistic talents, and language competency (Segar & Asmawi, 2024) in which the students can engage themselves into self-directed study and customise their language learning to their individual requirements.

Studies have highlighted problems associated with multimedia integration. Studies have revealed importance of designing educational environments that utilise multimedia to improve vocabulary learning. Integrating multimedia into language classrooms can improve vocabulary instruction. Teachers should be provided with multimedia to assist the students' vocabulary learning, and use multimedia to enhance language instruction to promote vocabulary learning and to better equip students for globally connected society (Bambang & Despita, 2022).

Several studies have investigated the combined effect of explicit instruction and feedback timing on students work performance and grammar acquisition. Studies have indicated that pre-work /immediate-work has been preferred and that students have the most attempts to use the target of main work/delayed. The pre-work/delayed has produced the longest units with highest accuracy and most correct use of target form of the main work/delayed (Javan et al., 2024). The students who have received explicit instruction within work completion (main task with either immediate and/or delayed feedback) have made fewer errors. Providing explicit instruction before work with delayed feedback can benefit work performance in terms of complexity and

accuracy, while providing explicit instruction within work completion with either immediate or delayed feedback to promote accuracy (Silviana, 2023).

Studies have found that writing software packages, writing courses, and self-studies contribute to students English learning. Paraphrasing and direct quotation were also found to be preferences with different justifications in citing, and the implications for second language academic literacy development and source-based writing instruction (Rezvani, 2024).

Several studies have surveyed extant literature on conceptualisation of second language teachers' pedagogical content knowledge of writing from three perspectives: a categorical perspective, a situative perspective and a participatory perspective. A categorical perspective has its focus on interconnected knowledge categories, elucidates the functions these categories fulfil in writing instruction. A situative perspective advocates for understanding pedagogical content knowledge of writing as integrated entirety and socially situated phenomenon encompassing knowledge of and in practice (Truong, 2024). Participatory perspective emphasises teachers' active, iterative participation in critical experiences in their socio-professional lives where problems of practice are addressed to enable the evolution of knowledge and adaptive expertise.

Studies have revealed the importance of a social constructivist approach to explore the dynamics of pedagogical content knowledge of writing and its manifestations in second language contexts based on situative and participatory perspectives. Studies have emphasised critical dimensions of the second language writing teachers education, epistemological implications of second language writing teachers knowledge, and potential agendas for emphasis into these area of inquiry (Saleh & Althaqafi, 2022).

Vocabulary learning is a very problematic component of any second language learning. Different techniques have been designed to implement effective presentation of new vocabulary. Among others, the focus framework has been developed to offer three different techniques of vocabulary presentation: direct focus, indirect focus, and no focus (Zarifi, 2024). The assumption is that each focus would result in different output. Focus framework has proved to be more effective than traditional mode in vocabulary achievement. As such, different degrees of focus would result in different vocabulary achievement. Studies have taken the current application of explicit teaching of vocabulary a step further revealing that different degrees of explicitness can lead to different learning output (Fauziningrum et al., 2023).

Studies have revealed that project-based learning strategies are essential in developing teachers' pedagogical competence within context of English instructional technology based on teachers' perception and experience. Teachers create English instruction and/or lesson plan using project-based learning; integrate Information Communication and Technology in designing of ICT-based instructional techniques (Tristiana et al., 2024). Several studies have revealed that experiencing constructive, cognitive, interactive, and affective advantages have allowed students to utilise their full linguistic knowledge to create and negotiate meaning, resulting in a feeling of ease and motivation when using English. Teachers will benefit from understanding how translanguaging plays a role in teaching English (Memari, 2024).

Teaching and developing vocabulary skills is very challenging because the meaning construction takes place in the students mind and there is no direct access to it, yet the teaching and learning of how to express oneself effectively should be cascaded from ones' private domain to the public domain of classroom for scrutiny and comprehension (Topal, 2024). There is an urgent need to focus on the teaching rather than testing vocabulary skills, the use of vocabulary for learning, acquisition of language, the need to use various strategies and skills, and the role of teachers and students in process-oriented classroom, making teaching vocabulary less demanding (Elhamdi & Hezam, 2020).

The Oshana Region statistical results for 2023 overall performance have revealed that only 23.1% qualify for tertiary institution. The results for English second language have revealed that only 65.1% were graded A-D. By

comparison with the other languages that offered, Afrikaans overall score is 100%; Oshindonga overall score is 82.3%, whereas Oshikwanyama overall score is 91.4% (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture [MoEAC], 2023).

Considering the above, this study sees an urgent need to investigate the effect of teachers' instructional strategies on the teaching of vocabulary learning in English as a second language. Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore the effect of teachers' instructional strategies on the teaching of vocabulary learning in English as a second language in Oshana Region.

The overarching primary research questions the study explored were:

What effects do teachers' instructional strategies have on the teaching of vocabulary learning in English as a second language in Oshana Region?

Which instructional strategies do teachers use in Oshana Region?

Which existing instructional strategies that enhance the teaching of vocabulary learning?

What existing vocabulary learning which associates with instructional strategies?

2. Literature Review

2.1 *Instructional strategies and vocabulary learning*

Vocabulary learning is a crucial aspect of second language learning. It is central to language teaching and is paramount to students' language learning. Studies have shown that the teaching of vocabulary can be problematic because some teachers are not confident in using best practice in vocabulary teaching and at time they don't know where to begin to use instructional strategies on word learning (Yirssie et al., 2023). Although it has been neglected for many decades during the 80s, it became a hot topic for researchers now. Lack of vocabulary knowledge is a barrier to vocabulary learning. Lexical knowledge is central to the acquisition of second language learning and to communicative competence.

Studies have evaluated the trends in area of teaching vocabulary through various techniques used by teachers. Teachers need to understand the type of vocabulary, students' level, characteristics, and the value of techniques to the students. Students' age, and students English proficiency have an effect on students' vocabulary learning and teachers need to be aware of these when applying the vocabulary teaching techniques. They should further provide their students with vocabulary learning strategies to encounter words repeatedly in more than one context (Alqahtani, 2015).

Learning English vocabulary is critical for improving students' language ability. Students should learn vocabulary to establish and maintain a good and a sound command of a language. Students should use meta-cognitive strategies to improve their vocabulary learning (Tiara & Hum, 2023). Studies have identified teaching methods like using context, dictionary definitions and synonyms on both transient and persistent vocabulary memory to teach vocabulary. The context method outperformed the rest when compared to the other two. Studies have suggested useful method for teaching vocabulary which enhances longer-lasting retention of second language terminologies (Bambang & Despita, 2022). Other approaches include pedagogical ramifications for instructors, students, syllabus designers, language content setters, and language test setters.

Students master vocabulary learning before they understand instructional strategies. Teachers' vocabulary teaching strategies support students in vocabulary learning. Strategies which enhance students' vocabulary learning include, among others, reinforcement strategies, graphic organiser strategies, games, drawings, pictures, and real objects. Teachers use more than one strategy in teaching vocabulary learning based on strategies applied and classroom environment (Silviana, 2023; Ulaywi, 2023).

Vocabulary learning plays a crucial role in language acquisition. There is no language without words. Studies have posited that to acquire vocabulary, teachers need to be aware of effect of vocabulary learning on vocabulary acquisition. Vocabulary learning allows ample opportunities for English second language students and teachers

to teach and learn vocabulary based on the real world situation (Indriyani & Sugirin, 2019). The importance of vocabulary teaching is self-evident yet; the present vocabulary teaching mode is still far more traditional than modern which has been caused by the inadequacy of education revolution (Zhang et al., 2016).

Vocabulary knowledge has been enhanced through instructional vocabulary training strategies which enhance the levels of learning. Vocabulary training strategies have influenced vocabulary learning useful to improve vocabulary knowledge. Teachers can benefit from vocabulary training strategies, use these strategies to teach vocabulary learning. This will help them to use new and better methods to teach vocabulary learning instead of using traditional methods (Afzal, 2019). Learning strategies instruction help students in three ways: firstly learning strategies instruction help them to become better students, secondly skills in using vocabulary training strategies assist them to become independent and confident students, and finally they become motivated as they begin to understand association between the use of strategies and success in language learning (Ostovar-Namaghi & Rajaei, 2012).

Several studies have revealed the importance of explicit instruction and repeated exposure to the target vocabulary for effective reception and production of new words among second language students. Explicit instruction and repeated exposure to target vocabulary influence vocabulary knowledge if compared to conventional way of vocabulary instruction. In the conventional way of vocabulary instruction, the reception of vocabulary has been found to have an effect on the production of knowledge (Vincy, 2020). Applying educational games with students increase the student engagement, improve knowledge absorption and retention, and give students opportunity to see real word application (Saleh & Althaqafi, 2022).

English language instruction to non-English-speaking students is the reality in many countries. Teachers that are leading the way in teaching English need to have the best teaching methods to teach vocabulary learning. To meet learning objectives, techniques and their justifications should to be known. English teachers should use various techniques to teach vocabulary, to suit their teaching materials and to fit their application (Fauziningrum et al., 2023). Vocabulary instruction is influenced by the student prior experiences in vocabulary learning. Studies have suggested the need to differentiate support during vocabulary instruction and instructional strategies to activate student previous knowledge (Topal, 2024).

One of the fundamental elements of linguistic is words. Language words are like the bricks used in construction. Words are bricks that make up a solid foundation for language proficiency. It's crucial to develop demanding and/or powerful vocabulary words. One of the critical elements of language learning is vocabulary learning. Various teaching strategies help students to build own vocabulary knowledge in their brains as teachers apply a variety of language learning methods to students (Javan et al., 2024).

Cognitive strategies have lots of effect on classroom instruction. They create a favorable learning environment that advances instruction in classroom. They offer chances for the students to be inspired, foster independent and creative learning and increase intelligible input for students. When cognitive strategies are used, instructional practices are improved and there are chances for teaching students to comprehend more words. These instructional strategies have a good and sound effect on academic performance of students. Most students appear to have benefited from these teaching strategies and for the majority of learning situation, variety of these strategies has offered solutions (Ulaywi, 2023).

2.2 Vocabulary learning and vocabulary learning strategies

English language proficiency depends on the knowledge of the vocabulary possesses by second language students. It poses difficulties to non-native students of English language. Students with lack of vocabulary knowledge have poor academic performance in language skills, linguistics, literature, and translation at all level of education (Nagodavithana & Premarathne, 2021). Several studies have revealed that non-native students have faced difficulties in learning vocabulary such as eliciting the meanings of the new words, pronouncing new words, using new words correctly, memorising and/or spelling new vocabulary. Studies have emphasised the

importance of learning English vocabulary and draw the students' attention towards it, highlight problems encountered by students, and raise awareness of the vocabulary. There is also a need to explore the teachers' perception on students' vocabulary learning and instructional methods used by teachers to teach vocabulary in English language classrooms (Afzal, 2019).

Vocabulary learning has been one of language domain which students complain and claim that it impedes language learning. It is one of the three components that constitute language knowledge, and vocabulary teaching, an essential part of English language teaching. Several studies highlight vocabulary teaching strategies which help students to memorise vocabulary and/or enhance the efficiency of vocabulary teaching and vocabulary learning (Mbambo-Marimirofa et al., 2023). In many cases, contextual guessing has affected students' vocabulary learning and prevents them from keeping second language vocabulary in their minds longer. Studies highlight the effects of using context technique in short story for learning vocabulary among level students (Ebrahimi & Azhideh, 2015).

Students have been struggled to cope with the higher order inferencing skills although explicit teaching strategies have been advocated in teaching of higher-order inferencing skills. Teachers' curricula lack explicit teaching strategies of higher-order inferencing skills to equip teachers with expertise necessary to develop critical thinking (Mbambo-Marimirofa et al., 2023). Problems that are highlighted by researchers are classified into three main categories. The first problem relates to students, the second relate to teachers, and the third relate to methods/techniques/strategies of teaching vocabulary (Elhamdi & Hezam, 2020).

Students use vocabulary learning strategies to learn new words and/or to consolidate the meaning of words they have already learnt. They also use mother tongue to learn and retain the meaning of target language vocabulary and the meaning of unfamiliar words in target language. However, students fall short on common strategies used when learning the meaning of unfamiliar words in the mother tongue and the strategies used when recalling the meaning of already learnt words in the mother tongue. This impedes vocabulary learning process, the development of reading skills and the target language proficiency (Nagodavithana & Premarathne, 2021).

Teachers use many strategies when teaching in class. Some strategies are useful for them when teaching; they are aware of the limits and characteristics of the students. They are more creative, developing and varying strategies in teaching vocabulary. They use strategies in accordance with the lesson that will be presented to students. They require students to be active in lesson, but they can't build exciting atmosphere in class which make students afraid of understanding the lessons given to them (Yousefi & Biria, 2018).

3. Methods

3.1 Research design

Emanated from constructivist paradigm, this study investigates effect of teachers' instructional strategies on the teaching of vocabulary learning in English as a second language. The term constructivism as applied to the learning theory is an interpretivist notion, it represents untruth about ways individual learn (Ling and Ling, 2017). This study employ case study to describe and clarify the phenomenon under study (Dey, 2003). Case study was, therefore, used for in-depth exploration of actual case (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) and to investigate the effect of teachers' instructional strategies on the teaching of vocabulary learning in English as second language in Oshana Region, Namibia.

3.2 Participants

Using Oshana directorate of education's latest statistics of 2023, population of ten teachers from ten schools in junior/senior primary, junior and the senior secondary schools in Oshana Region was utilised. Based on Oshana regional directorate, many schools are poorly managed (Shapaka, 2024; United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2015), which may lead to many dysfunctional schools.

3.3 Sampling

Criterion purposeful sampling was used, based on the researcher exposure to, engagement of ten teachers in ten schools in Oshana Region.

3.4 Data collection

Data was collected through the interview schedule, field notes and open-ended questionnaire to find participants' views on the effect of teachers' instructional strategies on the teaching of vocabulary learning in English as a second language in Oshana Region in Namibia.

3.5 Procedure

After all the required permission were sought and granted, all instruments were pilot tested and re-adjusted.

3.6 Data analysis

In this study, data were analysed using typological analysis, content analysis and Atlas.ti (Leedy and Ormrod, 2023).

3.7 Ethical consideration

After all the required permission were sought and granted, researcher sent a letter to participant informing them about information concerning the study. This process was done to avoid the reality and the appearance of coercion. Confidentiality was maintained and participants were informed of the rationale, recording, transcriptions and safekeeping of audio-taped interviews. Ethical measures were done through making sure that the participants sign informed consent, ensuring privacy in subsequent interviews, guarding against manipulating the participants during data collection, reporting processes. Anonymity, confidentiality was observed when reporting on utterances, and narratives of participants. Participants' names were replaced by pseudonyms to protect participants' identity. Participation was voluntary.

4. Findings

This section presents findings on the effect of teachers' instructional strategies on the teaching of vocabulary learning in English as second language in Oshana Region. The section comprises views of ten teachers participated in this study. Some participant responses were summarised and presented in descriptive forms while others were reported verbatim and presented in italics.

4.1 Instructional strategies and vocabulary learning

The theme presented in this section is derived from the thematically analysed data obtained from the interviews, open-ended questionnaires and field notes, with selected ten teachers from ten schools in Oshana Region. The theme is on the effect of teachers' instructional strategies on the teaching of vocabulary learning in English as a second language in Oshana Region. It is worth-noting that the theme relates to the manner in which relationship between teachers' instructional strategies and the measures of vocabulary learning could be constructed and developed to find the association between the two. In this study, the researcher has to determine whether teachers understand the effect of teachers' instructional strategies on the teaching of vocabulary learning in English as a second language. This was done to respond to the question: What effects do teachers' instructional strategies have on the teaching of vocabulary learning in English as a second language? Responses from teachers showed that teachers' instructional strategies have lots to affect teaching and learning process. For example one teacher at senior secondary phase said:

"It is the strategies and techniques that teachers use to enhance learning and helps students to achieve basic competencies."

Another teacher at junior primary phase said:

"It refers to teaching and learning strategies teachers use to facilitate the teaching of vocabulary instruction"

One teacher at junior secondary phase expressed this view as follows:

"It refers to the methods/techniques/strategies of teaching vocabulary which enable the students to learn vocabulary instruction?"

Another teacher at junior secondary phase said:

"Teachers use the strategy in accordance with lesson that will be presented to students"

4. 2 Instructional strategies used by teachers in Oshana Region

In order to determine instructional strategies used by teachers the researcher asked the question: What instructional strategies do teachers use in Oshana Region? The responses of the teachers revealed that teachers use variety of instructional strategies. One teacher at junior primary phase said:

"Teachers use vocabulary learning strategies, reinforcement and graphic organiser strategies."

Another teacher at senior secondary phase said:

"Teachers use cognitive strategies and vocabulary learning instruction."

Another teacher at senior primary phase observed:

"Teacher use vocabulary instruction and pedagogical content knowledge of writing"

One teacher at junior primary phase said:

"Teachers use explicit instruction and repeated exposure to target vocabulary"

Moreover, another teacher at junior secondary phase said:

"Teachers use a combination of vocabulary training strategies, learning strategies instruction."

Another teacher at senior secondary phase said:

"Teachers use a combination of meta-cognitive strategies and context method."

Moreover, one teacher at junior primary phase was sceptical about the process said:

"The teacher use project-based learning strategies, ICT-based instructional techniques."

Another teacher at senior primary phase observed:

"The teacher use writing software packages, writing courses, and self-studies."

One teacher at junior secondary phase said:

"The teachers use transformative literature pedagogies."

Another teacher at senior secondary phase said:

"Teachers use combination of explicit instruction, feedback timing, and multimedia technology."

4. 3 Existing vocabulary learning strategies in Oshana Region

In order to determine existing vocabulary learning strategies researcher asked the question: What existing vocabulary learning strategies in Oshana Region? Teachers gave practical observation about current practices in Oshana Region. One teacher at junior primary phase said:

"Teachers use games, drawings, pictures, and real objects."

Another teacher at junior secondary phase elaborated:

"Learners are expected to use multimedia technology."

One teacher at senior primary phase said:

"Teachers use writing software packages, writing courses, and self-studies."

One teacher at junior primary phase elaborated:

"Teachers use self-regulation-based instruction, and strategy-based instruction."

Moreover, another teacher at senior secondary phase said:

"Teachers use vocabulary building strategies"

One teacher at junior primary phase said:

"Teachers identify and explain difficult words from the vocabulary learning tasks."

Another teacher at senior primary phase said:

"Teachers use direct focus, indirect focus, and no focus"

Another teacher at senior secondary phase elaborated:

"Teacher asks learners to find the meanings of these words."

One teacher at junior secondary phase expressed this aspect thus said:

"Learners are expected to use them in sentences."

Another teacher at senior primary phase said:

"Teachers use vocabulary learning, and explicit teaching of vocabulary strategies."

One teacher at senior secondary phase expressed this aspect thus said:

“Teachers use project-based learning strategies and ICT-based instructional techniques.”

4. 4 Instructional strategies which enhance vocabulary learning

In order to determine existing instructional strategies which enhance vocabulary learning the researcher asked the question: What existing instructional strategies which enhance vocabulary learning in Oshana Region? The responses of teachers indicated that they use variety of teaching and learning instructional strategies to monitor the teaching and learning process and to ensure learners academic performance are taking place. One teacher at junior primary phase said:

“Teachers ensure that they give as many vocabulary assessment activities as they can.”

Another teacher at senior primary phase was sceptical about the process said:

“Teachers ensure that learners are drilled on how to use new vocabulary.”

One teacher at senior secondary phase said:

“They ensure vocabulary learning is given enough practice.”

One teacher at junior primary phase said:

“They ensure that school produces good writers.”

Another teacher at senior secondary phase said:

“Teachers ensure teaching, learning instruction, assessments promote good writers.”

Another teacher at senior primary phase said:

“They ensure assessments enable learners to perform in vocabulary learning activities.”

One teacher at senior secondary phase said:

“Teachers ensure teaching and learning instruction promote good writers.”

4. 5 Vocabulary learning which associate with instructional strategies

In order to establish existing vocabulary learning which associates with instructional strategies, researcher asked question: What existing vocabulary learning which associates with instructional strategies? One teacher at junior primary phase said:

“It is vocabulary learning strategies versus vocabulary instruction.”

Another teacher at junior secondary phase said:

“Teachers use cognitive strategies.”

One teacher at senior primary phase said:

“Teachers use explicit instruction and repeated exposure to target vocabulary.”

Another teacher at senior primary phase said:

“Teachers use meta-cognitive strategies versus context method.”

One teacher at senior secondary phase said:

“Teachers use explicit teaching of vocabulary”

5. Discussion

This section discusses findings on the effect of teachers’ instructional strategies on the teaching of vocabulary learning in English as second language in Oshana Region. The discussion is based on views of ten teachers participated in this study.

5. 1 Instructional strategies and vocabulary learning

This study explored the effect of teachers’ instructional strategies on the teaching of vocabulary learning in English as a second language in Oshana Region in Namibia. The main question answered by study was: What effects do teachers’ instructional strategies have on the teaching of vocabulary learning in English as a second language? The prominent issues that emanated from the findings were that there is a direct link between the teachers’ instructional strategies and the teaching of vocabulary learning which have direct effects on teaching, learning and assessment practices at school. Researchers have found that the use of teachers’ instructional strategies allow the learning-focused process which foster improvement in learning and teaching (Wuntu et al., 2024). Studies have found that instructional role of the teacher is critical in advancing student academic achievement (Yirssie et al., 2023).

Another issue that emanated from the findings were that teachers' instructional strategies could promote and enhance teaching and learning. Studies found that while some teachers enjoy the teaching and learning process, others are frustrated because of insufficient preparation and/or training workshops, unclear procedures, coupled with poor academic literacy skills and lack of consideration shown by some students (Segar & Asmawi, 2024). All four instructional practices are associated with vocabulary learning such as process-based instruction, comprehension-based instruction, self-regulation-based instruction, and strategy-based instruction (Javan et al., 2024). Studies indicate that instructional strategies have effect on vocabulary learning of students (Tiara & Hum, 2023). Instructional strategies which contain explicit instruction of vocabulary learning strategies benefit academic vocabulary learning of students (Bambang & Despita, 2022).

5. 2 Instructional strategies used by teachers in Oshana Region

In this study, the principal issue encompassing these findings is that this link is attributed to how teachers' instructional strategies are used to monitor the teaching and learning activities, thus confirm similar study by Silviana (2023). Explicit instruction of vocabulary learning strategies helps students to acquire effective vocabulary learning habits and enhance their vocabulary learning abilities (Indriyani & Sugirin, 2019). However, effective vocabulary learning habits cannot be naturally acquired via implicit learning. Students need to be taught how to use these vocabulary learning strategies in their own vocabulary learning process (Rezvani, 2024). The students' vocabulary learning is enhanced if they are exposed to various vocabulary learning strategies. Students should be explicitly taught combination of instructional strategies to enable them to perform in vocabulary learning (Saleh & Althaqafi, 2022). The main reason some learners are struggling with vocabulary learning is that they lack the prerequisites knowledge for vocabulary learning. Vocabulary learning difficulties is associated with poor word recognition, lack of background knowledge, limited vocabulary and lack of understanding of word meanings (Truong, 2024).

The sample of this study revealed that teachers use direct instruction to give instruction to the students to accomplish vocabulary learning tasks. Students are drilled on how to use vocabulary learning. That said, it should be noted that concern in this study was on the effects of teachers' instructional strategies on the vocabulary learning not vice-versa (cf. Methodology Section). However, a possible interpretation for this finding could be that there are arrangements on the implication of the ministerial mission and vision statement within educational setting (MoEAC, 2023). As a result of the top-down cascades of ministerial mission, vision, and policies, many teachers might have difficulties to adapt/change the status quo. These anomalies might lead to instances where strategies might fail or have unintended consequences. However these anomalies need to be addressed by involving various stakeholders in planning and implementation process (Javan et al., 2024).

4. 3 Existing vocabulary learning strategies in Oshana Region

Another principal issue noteworthy from the study is that teachers use instructional strategies to enhance teaching and learning and to ensure that students' academic performance is taking place. This finding is consistent with previous studies that assessed the usefulness of explicit instruction which empower students, promote their academic well-being, provide learning opportunities and improve quality of students' learning (Fauziningrum et al., 2023). Findings point that teachers' instructional strategies foster vocabulary learning and continuous improvement. This finding correlates with earlier study by Elhamdi and Hezam, (2020). A similar study explored the role of vocabulary methods: silent, and subvocalisation, on vocabulary learning performance of English Foreign Language (EFL) students, considering the cognitive styles of impulsivity and reflectivity (Afzal, 2019). By comparison, a good way to acquire second language require teaching/learning through e-learning, self-regulated learning, and constructivism methods of learning that would be practical and/or useful for EFL students (Ulaywi, 2023).

The students' vocabulary acquisition and text comprehension are associated with the promotion of students' vocabulary learning interest. Knowledge of different effects of teaching strategies on students' vocabulary learning outcomes and interest in vocabulary promote students' vocabulary learning (Mbambo-Marimirofa et al.,

2023). To expand vocabulary, students should make it habit to learn new words regularly, identifying unfamiliar words while listening and look them in dictionary to understand their meanings. Additionally, students should create flashcards or use online tools to memorise the new words (Nagodavithana & Premarathne, 2021). In the age of internet and mobile phones utilisation, the same approach should be done to enhance vocabulary learning in a more interesting and entertaining manner for students (Vincy, 2020). Moreover, summarisation is an excellent skill which enhances both vocabulary learning and critical thinking abilities (Topal, 2024).

5. 4 Instructional strategies which enhance vocabulary learning

In this study, the principal issue encompassing these findings is that teachers use teaching and learning instructional strategies to ensure students academic performance are taking place. They also ensure that assessments enable students to perform in vocabulary learning activities. Various studies have identified a positive correlation between classroom engagement, communicative proficiency, and academic performance, with engagement emerging as a significant predictor among highly and moderately engaged students compared to less-engaged peers (Memari, 2024).

5. 5 Vocabulary learning which associate with instructional strategies

Finally, most obvious findings emerge from the study is that this direct link between teachers' instructional strategies and vocabulary learning is attributed to factors that determine the choice of instructional strategies. Studies indicate that teachers strategic role play an important part on teaching and learning of vocabulary learning (Rezvani, 2024). Teachers' instructional strategies positively correlate with students' academic performance and a culture of continuous students' improvement in the schools (Truong, 2024). Studies have found a positive correlation between instructional strategies and teaching learning practices (Zarifi, 2024). Many researchers have posited that students should be provided with the explicit instruction in vocabulary learning to overcome difficulties in understanding text they are asked to work on (Tristiana et al., 2024).

6. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of findings, and the design used in this study, it can be concluded that teachers' instructional strategies has an effect on the teaching of vocabulary learning that affect teaching and learning and teachers' performance which result in positive or negative students academic performance. It was evident from this study that teachers should take instructional strategies and vocabulary learning very seriously.

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made for practice: Firstly, teachers should use instructional strategies to improve and enhance their performance, and the students' academic performance. Secondly, teachers should use instructional strategies to enhance vocabulary learning. Lastly, the study recommends an urgent need for teachers to study and learn the application of instructional strategies; apply them to optimise their success and enhance teaching and learning which result on student academic outcomes.

Limitations exist with this study. Its scope is confined to Oshana Region in Namibia which narrows generalisability of its findings thus limits the broader applicability of its findings. Based on the findings of study, the following recommendations are made for future research: Firstly, future research should be undertaken to establish correlation between instructional strategies and vocabulary learning since this was beyond scope of this study. Secondly, future research should conduct comparative studies across different regions and exploring complex interplay between instructional strategies, vocabulary learning and systemic challenges. Thirdly, future study should explore specific mechanisms through which these challenges impact school performance.

Acknowledgements

I declare that I have no any conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. I further declare that I did not receive direct funding for this research.

About the author

Born at Okanya Village, Ongandjera, Namibia in 1967, this author became an ordinal teacher in the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture in 1990, a Head of Department in 2005, and a school principal in 2007. Below is the author's educational background:

Education

Doctor of Philosophy in Education
Education management
University of South Africa
Pretoria
2021

Master of Education
Education management, leadership and policy studies
University of Namibia
Windhoek
2017

Postgraduate Diploma in Education
Education management
University of South Africa
Pretoria
2007

Bachelor of Education
Education management
Rand Afrikaans University
Johannesburg
2004

Further Diploma in Education
English language teaching
Rand Afrikaans University
Johannesburg
2001

Diploma in Education
English and Oshindonga
Ongwediva College of Education
Ongwediva
1996

Senior Certificate
Ongandjera Secondary School
Okahao
1992

References

- Afzal, N. (2019). A study on vocabulary-learning problems encountered by BA English majors at the University level of education. *Arab World English Journal*, 10(3), 81-98.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol10no3.6>

- Alqahtani, M. (2015). The importance of vocabulary in language learning and how to be taught. *International Journal of Teaching and Education*, 3(3), 21-34.
- Bambang, M. P., & Despita, S. (2022). Review on vocabulary teaching strategies: Study case: Effect of learners' lexical recall. *Journal of English Education Literature and Linguistics*, 5(2), 60-68.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
- Dey, I. (2003). *Qualitative data analysis: A user friendly guide for social scientists*. Routledge.
- Ebrahimi, Z., & Azhideh, P. (2015). The effects of teaching vocabulary learning strategies on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary development. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)*, 3(1), 57-64.
- Elhamdi, O. E. H., & Hezam, A. M. M. (2020) Challenges for methods of teaching English vocabulary to non-native students. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 7(5), 556-575.
- Fauziningrum, E., Sari, M. N., Rahmani, S. F., Riztya, R., Syafruni, P., & Purba, M. (2023). Strategies used by English teachers in teaching vocabulary. *Journal on Education*, 6(1), 674-679.
- Indriyani, A., & Sugirin, A. (2019). The impact of vocabulary learning strategies on vocabulary acquisition of adult learners. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 326, 113-117
- Javan Amani, Z., Sadeghi, K., & Alavinia, P. (2024). Combined effect of the phase of explicit instruction and feedback timing on task performance and grammar acquisition. *Teaching English Language*, 18(2), 69-92. <https://doi.org/10.22132/tel.2024.341440.1374>
- Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2023). *Practical research: Planning and design*. Pearson.
- Ling, P., & Ling, L. (1017). Methods and paradigms in education research: Employing paradigm in education research. In L. Ling, & P. Ling (Eds.), *The Power of the Paradigm: Methods and Paradigms in Education Research* (pp. 19-41). IGI Global.
- Mbambo-Marimirofa, S., Phillips, H. N., & Condy, J. (2023). Explicit teaching strategies used to enhance comprehension skills of a second language learner. *Per Linguam*, 39(2), 63-78 <http://dx.doi.org/10.5785/39-2-998>
- Memari, M. (2024). Language skills development via translanguaging: A case of EFL context. *Teaching English Language*, 18(2), 379-406. <https://doi.org/10.22132/tel.2023.392066.1458>
- Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. 2023. *End of the year 2023 Examination Statistics*. Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, Windhoek, Namibia.
- Nagodavithana, S., & Premarathne, K. (2021). A study of vocabulary learning strategies and their effect on vocabulary development. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics JELTAL* 3(2), 68-77.
- Ostovar-Namaghi, S. A., & Rajaei, M. (2012). *Effect of Strategy Training on Vocabulary in EFL*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Shahrood University of Technology.
- Rezvani, R. (2024). A qualitative study of TEFL graduate students' source text use: Learning, problems, and strategies. *Teaching English Language*, 18(2), 93-126. <https://doi.org/10.22132/tel.2024.452802.1592>
- Saleh, A. M., & Althaqafi, A. S. A. (2022). *The effect of using educational games as a tool in teaching English vocabulary to Arab young children: A quasi-experimental study in a kindergarten school in Saudi Arabia*. SAGE Open.
- Segar, T., & Asmawi, A. (2024). Harnessing multimedia for elevating English-speaking proficiency in Malaysia: A thematic review. *Teaching English Language*, 18(2), 35-67. <https://doi.org/10.22132/tel.2024.450465.1584>
- Shapaka, R. K. (2024). Challenges faced by principals in using management styles in Oshana region, Namibia. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 11(10), 141-163. <http://dx.doi.org/10.46827/ejes.v11i10.5559>

- Silviana, S (2023). *Teachers' strategies in enhancing EFL students' vocabulary at middle school in Pekalongan*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). University Islam Negeri.
- Tiara, E., & Hum, S. (2023). Teacher's strategy in improving student vocabulary mastery at Mts Mardhatillah Hidatullah Palembang. Enrich: *Jurnal Pendidikan, Bahasa, Sastra dan Linguistik* 4(2), 48-60.
- Topal, A. (2024). *Timing vocabulary instruction for English language learners: Evaluating the impact of pre-teaching vs. post-teaching approaches on STEAM comprehension*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Saint Mary's College of California.
- Tristiana, N. E., Hartono, R., Faridi, A., & Fitriati, S. W. (2024). ICT-based classroom instruction design: exploring EFL pre-service teachers' perception of project-based learning strategy for developing pedagogical competence. *Teaching English Language*, 18(2), 347-378. <https://doi.org/10.22132/tel.2024.459941.1620>
- Truong, K. D. (2024). Three perspectives on the pedagogical content knowledge of second language writing and future orientations for practice and research. *Teaching English Language*, 18(2), 127-156. <https://doi.org/10.22132/tel.2024.462752.1631>
- Ulaywi, R. K. (2023). *The effect of vocabulary teaching strategies on linguistically diverse classroom reading comprehension*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Al-Mustansiriah University.
- United Nations Children's Fund. (2015). *UNICEF annual report for Namibia 2015*.
- Vincy, I. R. (2020). Examining the effect of explicit instruction on vocabulary learning and on receptive-productive gap: An experimental study. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 16(4), 2040-2058.
- Wuntu, C. N., Tatipang, D. P., & Ali, M. I. (2024). Literature pedagogy for English development: Investigating preferences, motivation, and best practices toward the implementation. *Teaching English Language*, 18(2), 1-34.
- Yirssie, S. D., Demssie, Y. M., & Luele, S. A. (2023). Effects of explicit language instruction on students' vocabulary retention and reading comprehension skills. *University of Gondar, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, ERJSSH* 10(2), 17-37. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/erjssh.v10i2.2>
- Yousefi, M. H., & Biria, R. (2018). The effectiveness of L2 vocabulary instruction: A meta-analysis.. *Yousefi and Biria Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 3(21), 1-19.. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-018-0062-2>
- Zarifi, A. V. (2024). The effect of different degrees of focus on EFL learners' vocabulary learning and retention. *Teaching English Language*, 18(2), 321-346. <https://doi.org/10.22132/tel.2024.442526.1568>
- Zhang, H. W., Li, J., Jiao, L. P., Ma, W. L., & Guan, C. (2016). The adjustment and effects of vocabulary teaching strategies in flipped classroom. *Creative Education*, 7, 1966-1973. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ce.2016.714199>