

Second Language Learners' Attitudes towards the Methods of Learning Vocabulary

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Abstract

The paper aims at investigating students' learning attitudes after they are exposed to three vocabulary learning methods, namely Contextual Clues, Dictionary Strategy and Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). The study involves 123 undergraduates, who were surveyed to identify the factors that affect their attitudes in learning vocabulary using these methods. Findings from the study using ANOVA revealed that students who were exposed to CALL showed more positive attitudes in learning vocabulary compared to other methods. This is due to the tools matching their aptitude for learning. In fact, the tools are regarded as 'part and parcel' of the students' lives. The results of the study also showed that the usefulness and limitation of the respective methods depend on students' approaches in using them to learn vocabulary. The implications for language teaching and learning of vocabulary demand practitioners to incorporate the use of computers in their lessons. Nonetheless, they may also integrate the use of Contextual Clues, Dictionary Strategy and CALL in their teaching to accelerate the expansion of students' vocabulary.

Keywords: Vocabulary learning, Vocabulary acquisition, Language learning, Contextual clues, Dictionary strategy, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

1. Introduction

Students' learning attitudes largely depend on their beliefs about language learning (Ellis, 1994). Further, Ellis (1994) asserts that individuals learning a language have shown that they have certain perspectives about how they can acquire a language. They may have thought of the concepts and approaches that enable them to learn the language. Also, their beliefs about learning strongly affect their affective states. Thus, some learners are fearful while others are confident in learning the language. To cope with the situation, Nazary (2008) believes that teachers' attitudes should correspond to their learners' aptitude and motivation in learning English. The success factor of learning English therefore does not rely on the students alone. Teachers' approaches in teaching the language are also vital in creating experiences conducive to learning.

This study attempts to investigate students' learning attitudes when they are exposed to the use of Contextual Clues, Dictionary (English-English) Strategy and Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) in learning vocabulary. It attempts to identify their feelings of accomplishment and thoughts after a teacher teaches them the use of the three methods of learning vocabulary. More specifically, it tries to record their implicit anticipatory evaluation (Ajzen & Madden, 1986) in terms of their favour and disfavour on the use of the methods (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Meanwhile,