

Navigating the Complexities of Vocabulary Instruction in Tertiary Education: A Strategic Approach for Effective Instruction

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Abstract—The present study primarily aims to analyse the complexities educators foresee in vocabulary instruction, considering the relevance of vocabulary to language teaching and learning. It uncovers the underlying roots of obstacles and provides resolutions based on the best practices in vocabulary instruction and acquisition theories. The investigation was conducted at the tertiary level, utilising quantitative and qualitative research approaches. It involved 20 English-language educators serving as research subjects. Interview questionnaires were leveraged to collect the data. The complexities faced by the specific demographic regarding vocabulary instruction were the central focus of the semi-structured interviews facilitated by a pre-established questionnaire. The key findings reveal a deficiency in effective teaching and learning resources, a rigid curricular framework, exam-centric pedagogical approaches, overreliance on the mother tongue, time-restricted courses, and inadequate professional development opportunities. Educators require ongoing assistance in enhancing their teaching methodologies and customised strategies incorporating technology, with opportunities for collaborative learning exposure. Strategised and context-sensitive solutions that address significant obstacles, leverage institutional support, and promote active student engagement are necessary for educators to navigate these complexities successfully. The study recommends the creation of accessible, digitalised, and context-specific materials by integrating language games and activities in the classroom. Furthermore, constant management support is necessary to overcome the challenges in enhancing the impact of vocabulary instruction.

Keywords— Vocabulary instruction; Complexities; strategies; Lexical competence; Word acquisition

JEET Category—Research Paper

I. INTRODUCTION

Cultivating vocabulary, a fundamental element of any language, constitutes a crucial aspect of learning and instructing in a foreign tongue. ELT/ESL scholars refer to it as the

Cinderella sister of grammar. Although the focus on word-building is typically secondary or reserved for brief periods, practitioners consider vocabulary instruction and acquisition a cornerstone for every learner to enhance language proficiency. Wilkins (2005, p. 72) states, "Vocabulary instruction encompasses the strategies and tactics teachers employ to teach students word definitions, usage, and contextual application, all of which are fundamental to language learning." Building students' overall communicative competence in English is necessary, as the language cannot exist without vocabulary. Aitchison (2001, p.34) argues, "Tertiary education, which refers to the learning above school age, emphasises the importance of vocabulary acquisition for success in scholarly and professional domains." According to the findings presented by Rosyidah and Giyoto (2019, p. 13), "The English language relies heavily on its vocabulary; indeed, no language can function without it." Not every teacher teaches vocabulary in the classroom passionately. Richards (2004, p. 121) declares, "Vocabulary and its pedagogical challenges include impediments such as time restrictions, resource limitations, and varied learner demands that educators face when teaching vocabulary." Although vocabulary acquisition is essential for academic and professional success, vocabulary instruction frequently suffers owing to a lack of enthusiasm and motivation.

Regardless of students' proficiency in grammar or mastery of L2 sounds, effective communication is next to impossible without a broader vocabulary to convey a larger range of meanings. Tarigan (1984) lists two primary vocabulary functions in language: quantity and quality of someone's vocabulary, which are stronger indicators of mental growth since they affect linguistic abilities. Conceptual vocabulary development is one of the educational aims for everyone to learn linguistic proficiency, as a vocabulary repository is essential for students of second language learning.

Second-language readers' success largely depends on their word knowledge, and its absence is their most significant

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obstacle (Huckin and Block, 1993, p. 154). A person's confidence in verbal and written communication skills will methods. Allen (1983) agreed that learning words and their connotations is insufficient. Understanding word definitions without understanding how to use them in sentences leads to errors. Thus, learning English as a foreign language requires vocabulary for creation, not just recognition (Wallace, 1982).

Nuan (2001) asserted, "Vocabulary is a compilation and assemblage of terms acknowledged and employed by an individual." According to Neuman and Dwyer (2009, p. 385), "A vocabulary constitutes a compilation of words or phrases, generally organised in alphabetical order. Wordstock, Lexis, and Lexicon are all terms that refer to vocabulary." As Ridhi (2022, p. 77) noted, "The inquiry into 'What constitutes vocabulary in the English language?' includes the entirety of the lexicon that forms a language, which a specific individual or potentially a collective can comprehend."

Juan (2005) claims, "The concept of active vocabulary encompasses the terms that we employ and understand in our everyday discourse, while passive vocabulary pertains to words that we recognise yet utilise infrequently." Hornby (1995, p. 47) highlights, "Vocabulary consists of the fundamental words needed for successful communication that are employed in verbal expression (expressive vocabulary) and auditory comprehension (receptive vocabulary)." The teaching and acquisition of vocabulary have been the focus of much speculation. Examining the historical development of foreign language instruction and study throughout the century can provide valuable insight into the challenges currently confronting vocabulary instruction, study, and research. There is a wealth of research about vocabulary that offers definitive evidence.

Seal (1982, in Murcia 1991: 296) declares, "The vocabulary was a significant focus in the early 20th century for students and teachers of foreign languages. Involving a considerable deal of direct vocabulary teaching was a key component of the Grammar Translation method and other mainstream approaches to language instruction at the time." The time also witnessed the inception of what later became recognised as the "Vocabulary Control Movement." A pedagogically motivated research endeavour to identify the vocabulary content of English language textbooks was at the heart of the movement (Carter, 1987). In 1930, Ogden and Richards published *"Basic English,"* and in 1936, Michael published *"A General Service List."* Both of these works are considered to be key consequences of this movement. They primarily focused on the simplification of vocabulary acquisition and instruction making it more accessible and practical for second language learners. The movement influenced language learning methodologies and curriculum design constantly.

A. Historical Trends and Transformations

During the 1940s, the Audio Lingual Method, the most popular language-teaching approach at the time, caused vocabulary teaching and learning to fall out of favour. This had a disastrous impact on the advancement of study and instruction in vocabulary. This situation persisted until the 1970s when voices began to be heard against vocabulary's secondary status (Carter & McCarthy, 1988). The 1980s experienced a revival in

the significance of words. Numerous textbooks focused only on vocabulary training have been published during this period, particularly by those concerned about its neglect. The works comprise *"Working with Words"* by Gairns and Redman (1983), *"Vocabulary"* by Morgan and Rinvolucir (1986), *"Teaching Vocabulary"* by Wallace (1987), and *"Vocabulary"* by McCarthy (1990). According to Carter (1988), "It put forth elucidations concerning the attributes of language, effective methodologies for acquisition, and approaches that might enhance the educational experience."

Vocabulary has become more interesting due to three significant language training philosophies and approach changes. The first theory argued that structural instruction in the classroom would not aid second language learners because each student has a unique internal grammar that develops at a predictable pace (Lewis, 2006). It was believed that teaching students new words would yield better results. It is worth noting that Judd (1978:75) states, "Instead of spending too much time refining students' syntactical performance, we should start working on their vocabulary. Given that numerous syntactic issues are likely to diminish over time, it may be more advantageous to focus classroom exercises on the enhancement of vocabulary."

Another substantial expansion was the emergence of communicative methodologies, which prioritise the practical application of language rather than its theoretical examination. Wilfred (2021, p. 69) declared, "These methodologies prioritise facilitating student engagement in communication, and one effective strategy for achieving this is by enhancing the learners' vocabulary." The third one dealt with second-language teachers and learners' challenges in their academic pursuits due to their limited second-language vocabulary. Improving students' verbal power and teaching techniques was believed to be essential.

B. Contemporary Challenge

An overview of the past thirty years of second language acquisition history highlights significant vocabulary development challenges. Over the past three decades, vocabulary has been crucial in second language teaching and learning (Olsen, 2012). Stern (1983) asserts, "The modern scholars concentrated on *lexical development as a primary challenge* to aid current L2 learners in augmenting their vocabulary proficiency.

Consequently, following an extended oversight period, vocabulary acquisition is now recognised as crucial to second and foreign language learning." According to the *"New Oxford English Course"* book by French F G (2021, p. 41-42), "The volume of language acquisition research over the past several decades and the various themes and conclusions are astounding. Countless books, papers, articles, schemes, and equipment have developed from this debate."

In the last three decades, theoretical and empirical research on vocabulary learning has proliferated. It plays a more prominent role in language learning in the 21st century (Lewis, 1993). Harrison (1980, p. 35) states, "This demonstrates an inquisitive engagement with the research surrounding second language vocabulary as well as the methodologies employed in teaching and learning." The significance of vocabulary

instruction and acquisition has intensified as we progress into the twenty-first century. (Liwes, 1993).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Elias (2020) examined WhatsApp's effects on EFL students' vocabulary issues. This study compares WhatsApp to traditional vocabulary education for EFL students' academic vocabulary and highlights their challenges. It examines students' views on WhatsApp for vocabulary acquisition. WhatsApp outscored the conventional group on the vocabulary exam, according to t-test findings. Farjami (2019) and Nation (2001) investigated the difficulties of vocabulary acquisition in the teaching-learning process. The study underscores engaging and enjoyable learning methods and focuses on impactful teaching for educators. Anisyiyah (2017) examined linguistic and non-linguistic obstacles encountered in vocabulary instruction. The research reviews the importance of promoting parental engagement and motivating more reserved students to engage actively, showcasing pragmatic approaches for improving early-education vocabulary instruction. Khong (2016) and Schmitt (2008) investigated how Thai university students deal with lexical issues. According to the findings, the most common approaches to teaching vocabulary involve using memory, cognitive, and metacognitive methods. The study of M. Chou (2014) examined how games, music, and storytelling boosted primary school English vocabulary and learning. The researcher introduced various testing methods that affected students' vocabularies. Khoamn (2011) addressed the challenges of vocabulary learning in Afghanistan, highlighting its pedagogy. The findings suggest that English has little use in the targeted region. Thus, diagnostic investigations in diverse language areas and skills should help teachers identify issues and their causes. The communicative approach to language teaching was the suggested technique for vocabulary instruction. Maruyama (2010) & Richards and Rodgers (2014) examined the role of extended reading in connecting receptive and productive vocabulary. This study investigated the impact of extensive reading and writing on the vocabulary development of Japanese university students. The results indicated that rigorous reading accompanied by writing tasks aids in preserving both receptive and productive vocabulary. The study by Aisha (2007) aimed to examine the views of Arabic and English teachers in UAE schools on using technology in vocabulary lessons. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis in this study indicated instructors' opinions on technology integration, hurdles to usage, incentives, types of technology, and student technology use.

In the Indian context, Jasti (2020) addresses vocabulary improvement and its practical impact on essential academic skills. Shinge et al. (2024) discusses a specific "Imitation Technique" for language proficiency, which can be linked to strategic vocabulary acquisition. Anjana & Karthika (2024) explore modern teaching tools (podcasts) and their impact on language proficiency, offering a strategic technological perspective for effective instruction. Kadam, & Bhamre (2020) highlight "Role Play" as an active learning strategy to enhance communication, a useful pedagogical tool for teaching contextual vocabulary.

Thus, vocabulary is one of the ignored factors in a language, and it is always a hardship for language teachers to teach vocabulary lessons. By addressing this hardship and employing multiple strategies, educators can cultivate interesting exposure in the classroom to promote vigorous vocabulary development and holistic academic achievement.

Given its centrality to the English language, the present study aims to ensure that students acquire a high-quality vocabulary and that educators develop effective strategies for imparting this skill by overcoming all the complexities. The study explores the multifaceted obstacles and some of the most pressing concerns raised by today's younger generation of language educators, scholars, and students. To facilitate vocabulary instruction and ensure comprehension and mastery of the subject matter, it is imperative to tackle the complexities educators and students encounter in vocabulary acquisition.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In light of the context surrounding vocabulary instruction, the current investigation seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What challenges do educators often encounter while teaching English vocabulary?
2. What are the fundamental factors that contribute to the challenges faced by educators?
3. What might be the possible solutions to the cited issues?

In this study, most of the institutions and the teachers' backgrounds are considered to be in urban and semi-urban areas. The equipment was hardly updated, especially in colleges of semi-urban regions and some institutions in urban areas. Teaching and learning facilities were only found in a few institutions. Teachers and students have limited access to overhead projectors and multimedia devices. More clubs or student groups are needed to help students develop or maintain their fundamental language abilities.

Furthermore, the classes are huge (sometimes with 70–90 students each), making it difficult for teachers to maintain effective control. Most English teachers are from provinces that are different from the ones where the institution is located. It is observed that most of the teachers encounter numerous challenges in their teaching. A survey was created to be disseminated among English educators in tertiary educational institutions. This study's participants included teachers ranging in age from 26 to 40.

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-method approach to accomplish its goals, making it quantitative and qualitative. The instruments used for data collection included questionnaires, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews. Initial data collection involved the administration of the questionnaire in conjunction with semi-structured interviews. The quantitative data from the questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean, median, and mode). It was useful in determining the frequency and core patterns of reported difficulties. Thematic analysis was performed on qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews. The interview transcripts were systematically coded, identifying

recurring patterns and grouping them into key themes. It significantly reflected the core challenges in vocabulary instruction. The acquired data and its analysis facilitated an examination of educators' roles, contemporary developments in English vocabulary, challenges encountered in vocabulary instruction, and suitable resolutions to these obstacles. Ultimately, a few classroom observations were undertaken to ascertain the efficacy of the instructors' English vocabulary instruction and to comprehend the rationale behind the instructors' chosen classroom methodologies. The study illuminated the complex challenges underlying language acquisition at the college level by combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative insights revealed instructors' particular experiences and the causes of such issues, whilst quantitative data revealed teacher patterns. This combination enabled a more complete and insightful study, with the primary advantage of mixed methods being its ability to yield practical and calculated results.

The investigation also identifies and analyses the current state of teachers' vocabulary instruction challenges, considering learners' varying proficiency levels, and proposes potential solutions for their resolution.

A. Population and Instruments of the Study

This study involved a cohort of 20 English language educators, with five to fifteen years of experience teaching English at the tertiary level at various academic institutions, serving as the research subjects. The study seeks to identify teachers' complexities while instructing students in English vocabulary. To gain a comprehensive grasp of the problem statements, these participants were interviewed using pre-established standardised questionnaires to learn more about their backgrounds, English teaching knowledge, and vocabulary teaching challenges. These interviews sought to understand teachers' views on vocabulary, its benefits and drawbacks, and their vocabulary teaching methods.

B. Data Collection and Analysis

The data was collected during a three-day international conference, which brought together over 80 language specialists for knowledge exchange. The data were compiled from semi-structured interview questionnaires. A total of 25 enquiries were designed to elicit descriptive responses. The comments were gathered to study the experiences and viewpoints of educators regarding the prospects of vocabulary education, the significance of terminology, limitations of language instruction, self-reported vocabulary instructional strategies, challenges faced in teaching, exercises on commonly used terminology, recommendations for enhancing vocabulary instruction and acquisition, an investigation of the alignment or misalignment between self-reported practices and actual implementation of vocabulary instruction. For the survey, 20 language educators who filled out the questionnaire served as the sample size. 15 teachers from them participated in oral interviews to promote additional discussion and to complete the assigned questionnaires. A comprehensive analysis of the data was performed to identify the actual challenges.

C. Analysis of Responses to Questionnaires and Interviews

The teachers displayed great enthusiasm in discussing vocabulary-related matters. The analysed respondents' answers to different issues are presented in the tabular format below. The table highlights the obstacles scrutinised systematically into 26 categories about teaching and learning environments. The analysis of these hurdles involves a quantitative examination of their mean percentages, medians, and modes to demonstrate their prevalence and severity. The key obstacles from the analysis emerged as critically important impediments.

The findings shed light on a complex fight that encompasses a wide range of difficulties, ranging from infrastructure deficiencies to challenges unique to individual students, which collectively limit successful teaching and learning methods.

TABLE I
STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF OBSTACLES FACED BY EDUCATORS IN VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

No.	Obstacles tied to	Mean (%)	Median	Mode
1.	Lack of pedagogies	40	0	0
2.	Articulation challenges	75	1	1
3.	Assessment pressures	70	1	1
4.	Exam-oriented teaching	75	1	1
5.	Excessive work	45	0	0
6.	Focus on academic outcomes	70	1	1
7.	Inefficient management practices	45	0	0
8.	Instructional strategies	55	1	1
9.	Insufficient subject expertise	15	0	0
10.	Lack of institutional support	30	0	0
11.	Lack of learner motivation	50	0.5	0
12.	Language of delivery	50	0.5	0
13.	Learner passivity	25	0	0
14.	Limited language competence	40	0	0
15.	Organisational constraints	15	0	0
16.	Overcrowded intake	65	1	1
17.	Overreliance on native language	80	1	1
18.	Pronunciation	40	0	0
19.	Rigid curriculum structure	90	1	1
20.	Scarcity of resources	60	1	1
21.	Student proficiency	60	1	1
22.	Students' speaking skills	100	1	1
23.	Teaching infrastructure	55	1	1
24.	Time-constrained lessons	100	1	1
25.	Word meaning associations	65	1	1
26.	Vocabulary limitation	50	0.5	0

Fig. 1 below presents a bar graph depicting the average proportion of instructors' affirmative replies about challenges in vocabulary education. It emphasises prominent and minor problems in language training. The graph also highlights both major and relatively less significant issues faced by teachers during language teaching. It provides a clear visual comparison of the frequency of each challenge, thereby indicating the areas that require greater pedagogical attention and instructional support. Furthermore, the variation in response levels reflects differences in classroom realities and instructional constraints. The data suggest that certain challenges are more pervasive

across instructional contexts, while others remain situational. Overall, the figure offers empirical support for the need to adopt targeted and activity-based strategies to strengthen vocabulary instruction.

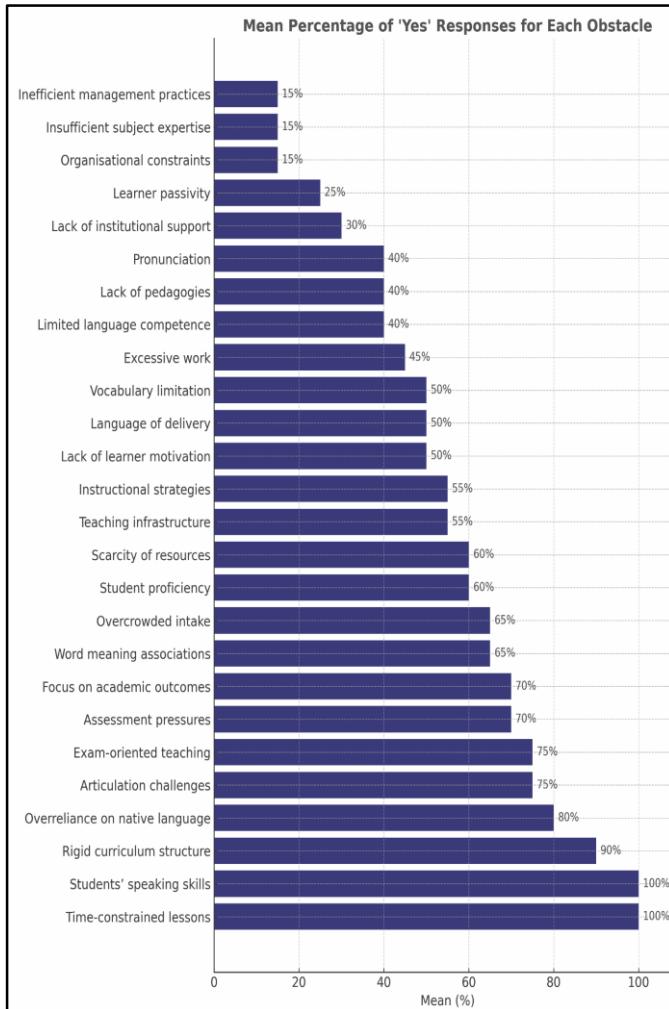


Fig. 1. Frequency Distribution of Responses

Time-restricted classes and learners' inadequate verbal communication skills are the primary concerns, with virtually all educators seeing them as significant obstacles. Rigorous curriculum (95%) and overreliance on native language graded high. It limits flexibility and experiential learning. Mid-level challenges, including assessment demands, language restrictions, and overcrowded classrooms (60–80%), emphasise secondary but essential issues like excessive testing and difficulty meeting individual needs in large courses. Lack of language ability, pronunciation difficulties, and learner passivity (30–50%) are less prevalent but essential in specific circumstances. In rare cases, inadequate subject competency and organisational constraints (20%) might lower teaching quality. Overcrowded classes make vocabulary exercises difficult, and time limits may force teachers to rush through. The analysis suggests that structural and instructional issues dominate vocabulary teaching, although learner-specific and institutional factors are equally important. The graphic representation of both the accepted and disputed elements is visualised as below.

Fig. 2 below highlights different issues from an educational or organisational context. It shows the number of "Yes" (agree)

and "No" (disagree) answers for each problem. Time-limited lessons are a big problem—18 of the 20 people (90%) stated that it makes it harder to get things done, and 85% said that lack of drive from students was a big challenge. On the other hand, the concern regarding overreliance on native language received only 25% agreement, while 75% disagreed, suggesting that it is not commonly viewed as a significant issue. Similarly, the agreement rate for teaching infrastructure was notably low at 30%, indicating its reduced impact. The feedback suggests a notable division regarding subject expertise, with around 55% in favour and 45% against, highlighting respondents' diverse experiences or qualifications. These observations indicate the need for remedies such as prolonged course durations, incentive techniques, and less focus on exam-centric instruction via comprehensive assessment procedures. The results, presented as percentages, provide a more definitive foundation for targeted suggestions to instructors, emphasising crucial aspects like student engagement and time management while relegating less significant concerns like dependency on the native language.

Thus, the analysis of both response charts underscores the considerable challenges that language educators encounter in

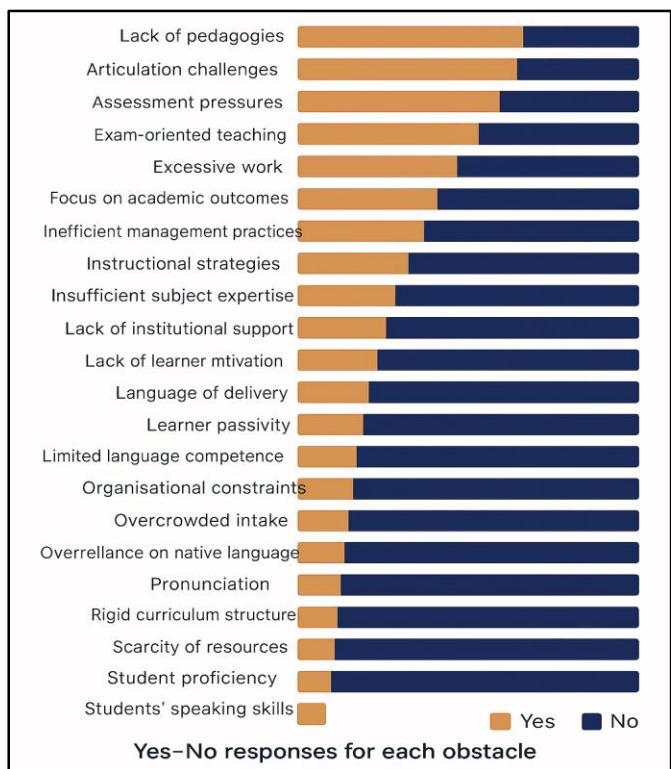


Fig. 2. Frequency Distribution of Yes-No Responses

the contemporary educational landscape. The constraints of time in lessons, students' deficiencies in spoken communication, overcrowded classrooms, and a rigid curriculum structure have collectively emerged as significant challenges, highlighting a broad acknowledgement of these barriers in vocabulary instruction. On the other hand, obstacles such as insufficient subject expertise and organisational constraints received a majority of 'No' replies, suggesting that more people do not consider these problems. Responses to

challenges like language delivery and vocabulary limitation indicate a range of experiences and contexts. The data indicates a persistent necessity to focus on the challenges that have the most significant impact. It is essential to examine the intricate strategies tailored to address context-specific issues.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION FROM THE INTERVIEWS

A significant number (85%) of surveyed educators felt that students' varying background knowledge makes introducing vocabulary in the classroom challenging. They acknowledged the profound significance of vocabulary in the context of language instruction and acquisition and the need for initial priority to enhance the students' proficiency. The concerned students also acknowledged the exertion of significant effort in seeking solutions to their problems upon inquiry by the researcher. Furthermore, a contributing factor is the need for clear motivation among students, with some even needing a clear understanding of the purpose of learning English. They need to gain fundamental knowledge, which leads to several challenges when learning English.

A. Teachers' General Concerns

The interviewed teachers stated various concerns during spontaneous conversations. The primary ones are: What vocabulary ought to be imparted? How is it possible to teach such a significant quantity of vocabulary? etc. They emphasised the necessity for more time to instruct vocabulary and the inclusion of more vocabulary instruction in the syllabus, as it is not a primary component of the textbook. Students comprise diverse abilities, and it is exceedingly challenging to make them communicate. The increasing demands of their specialised subjects occasionally diminish their motivation; the outcomes are of greater significance to the college than their personal growth, etc. Some of them are unaware and consider English to be less significant than the primary specialised subjects.

B. Key Challenges: Perspectives on Vocabulary Instruction and Struggles of Learners

Plenty of English teachers meet many difficulties while teaching vocabulary, such as teachers' competency in spoken English, lack of teaching equipment, lack of specialised knowledge, lack of various teaching techniques, lack of appropriate materials for students, teaching aids and reference materials, and students' passiveness and deficiency of essential words in learning. English vocabulary encompasses a wide array of terminology, including complex structures and phrases. They need to gain the necessary training in the said areas. The most commonly employed pedagogical method is translation, which is not intellectually exciting but monotonous and disheartening. Teachers' English proficiency levels vary. They encounter numerous challenges when it comes to pronouncing words correctly and speaking effectively in the English language.

Some teachers use code-mixing to educate, while others have tried the direct method, but the students need help to grasp it. The classrooms have basic and conventional tools, including black/white boards, chalk/markers, and textbooks.

Furthermore, the modest libraries do not suffice for the required reference resources. Students have adapted to traditional classroom procedures. They sit still, take notes, and never question the teacher. They learn slowly and only respond when called. Students depend on teachers after years of traditional schooling. Nearly 40% of teachers report that learners lose interest in learning words and never learning them. Thus, both students and teachers appear monotonous in class.

In current English education, vocabulary instruction is typically incorporated into other subjects (such as reading and literature) due to the need for dedicated vocabulary lessons. Usually, teachers in the classroom traditionally train vocabulary by explaining it and providing random instances. The students attempt to memorise the unfamiliar words and example phrases without fully understanding them, resulting in increased cognitive load and hindering the acquisition of new vocabulary. When teaching vocabulary, the teacher is responsible for instructing them on a term's structure, definition, and proper application. Teachers often find using new words and idioms the most challenging aspect of vocabulary teaching.

Certain English teachers prioritise the instruction of literature, grammar, and syntax. They assign numerous exercises to students to achieve high scores on exams. Teachers often need to pay more attention to vocabulary instruction due to the belief that it is unnecessary. The teachers urge the students to repeat the vocabulary items and memorise their meanings. Subsequently, they administer dictation exercises to assess the students' retention. The students need more inclination to dedicate time to amassing their vocabulary. They merely memorise the language before the test without fully comprehending its proper usage. Many learners express dissatisfaction during the examination due to the abundance of unfamiliar vocabulary and phrases. Consequently, their lack of comprehension of the terminology leads to several errors in their tests, ultimately diminishing their motivation to learn English.

For ease, a few educators often instruct vocabulary straight from a word list when teaching English. Sometimes, teachers act as dictionaries, simply copying the word meanings from the dictionary and having students recite them after class. Presenting vocabulary in an isolated way induces boredom and fatigue in the students. If pupils become fatigued with the teacher's instructional approach, acquiring and retaining vocabulary knowledge becomes more effortless. In addition to the teachers, students of various proficiency levels encounter multiple challenges when acquiring vocabulary in the classroom. The primary factors include methods of developing vocabulary, proficiency levels, absence of motivation, insufficient vocabulary, and vocabulary itself.

C. Central Drivers behind Challenges

It seems fair to state that most English teachers need a better command of the language, which is the most significant aspect of teaching effectively. Not only do they lack an adequate grasp of English, but their pronunciation is also surprisingly poor. Teachers lack self-assurance when they are not well-versed in their subjects. To that end, the following should take centre stage in every teacher preparation program:

1. *Understanding of the subject matter*

It is crucial for new educators to have a deep comprehension of the content and material they are tasked with teaching in order to provide effective instruction.

2. *The application*

Aspiring educators must be able to successfully learn from observations to guarantee sufficient knowledge and comprehension regarding the manner in which, the reasons why, and the subject matter they are teaching.

3. *Textbook overreliance*

There is complete reliance on the teacher's book and other sources for appropriate responses, and the teachers are utterly dependent on the textbooks.

4. *Deficit in the lesson planning*

For genuine student-centred learning, the most essential stage is planning a lesson; yet, no planning takes place, and most instructors would want to understand their content completely.

5. *Disorganised or ineffective course material*

The fact that the instructors cannot function without the resources they have at their disposal is another fundamental issue. Keeping the current skill level of the instructors in mind, the content remains in the initial phases of preparation. There is a lack of assistance, which is a must for the teachers. Although teachers' conditions necessitate critical care unit treatment, they are not even being treated as outpatients. Supporting educators to their full potential is the one solution to halt the deterioration of English proficiency. Putting it off any longer would be a mistake. Thorough preparation and a substantial financial investment are necessary, but not to the point where it becomes unfeasible. There is no rationale for underperforming language instruction in colleges or for students not responding positively to instructors who exude competence and self-assurance when approached methodically with a strategy.

6. *Setting Up Instructional Spaces*

Equipping the classroom with visual aids, including overhead projectors, computers, flip charts, posters adjacent to the board, AV aids, supplementary media material, and markers, is essential for enhancing the effectiveness of every class. The library should be equipped with a substantial collection of reference resources. Teachers with a basic understanding of grammatical structures and contextual behaviours should be able to instruct them more effectively, as this knowledge can significantly impact the teaching methods they employ in the classroom.

D. Aligning Key Findings with Existing Literature

The major findings of the study align closely with existing scholarship. The lack of effective vocabulary teaching resources supports Graves (2019), who stresses the need for structured instructional materials. Exam-oriented teaching and time-restricted courses have been critiqued by Schmitt (2013) and Nunan (2005) for the limitations they impose on vocabulary development. Nation (2001) highlights how overreliance on the mother tongue impedes language acquisition, mirroring current findings. Additionally, the identified gap in professional development reflects Beck et al. (2013), who advocate for continual teacher training. These connections reinforce the

broader literature, validating the strategic need for institutional support, learner engagement, and adaptable pedagogy.

The questionnaire survey with context-based spontaneous discussions revealed that the students needed more effective ways of learning English vocabulary. They frequently engage in rote learning, which involves repeatedly penning English words with their Marathi or Hindi equivalents or reciting them loudly. The students in the same class have varying levels of proficiency in English. Furthermore, students need more motivation to acquire vocabulary or to become proficient in English. The majority of them need to practice self-study. Despite possessing a strong knowledge base, the students need a substantial vocabulary. Consequently, individuals need help comprehending the content. When acquiring English vocabulary, learners encounter challenges with pronunciation.

E. General Guidelines that Need to be Established

Michael West's "Teachers' Notes to Book One" (2001, p. 47) states that the following minimum guidelines must be established:

1. Practice should take up at least 70% of the time since 20 to 30% is sufficient for explanation.
2. Students struggle when focusing on structural components, regardless of what the textbook claims.
3. Reinforcing previously acquired knowledge by periodic repetition, not as structured revision, but by integrating the review of earlier material within the framework of introducing new information.
4. Items that are not often reiterated are quickly forgotten.
5. Maintaining an engaging and dynamic educational environment by integrating language tasks with activities within and beyond the classroom and other topics.

Consequently, learners instructed by direct approaches will grow so used to the accurate sounds and sentence structures that they will instinctively arise in their thoughts without deliberate conversion from their native language. Nonetheless, only one individual may acquire proficiency in a new language by initially listening. Consequently, the student must repeatedly hear the accurate sound or pattern prior to articulating it correctly; the instructor must reiterate every new word several times before prompting the students to pronounce it.

F. Recommended Strategies for Effective Instruction

Based on the primary findings of the current investigation, inputs received from participant teachers, and insights gained from my personal experiences as a teacher of English, the study recommends some strategies for effective instruction as below.

1. English language education at the tertiary level is a pivotal phase for adolescent students. According to the teachers, students grasp grammar well but need help articulating their thoughts in English. This issue arises from their need for more vocabulary. On the other hand, some students have a large vocabulary set but need help using it effectively due to the rigid nature of how they have learnt it. Given the prevalence of these

typical occurrences, it is imperative to prioritise using practical techniques or approaches for vocabulary instruction.

2. Practical strategies are typically preferred over more intricate ones when teaching beginner's vocabulary. Word lists with usage and their replication can help students learn a lot of vocabulary quickly. Intermediate and advanced students benefit more from contextualised words. The students are more energetic and curious. They like excitement. They also lose interest and give up easily if something needs clarification. Thus, teachers must target appropriate materials to motivate and help students master the English language.
3. When teaching new vocabulary, teachers should focus on a word's spoken and written forms, pronunciation, spelling, synonyms, antonyms, speech components, syntax, inseparable word relationships, paraphrased definitions, semantic network of associations, etc., using audio-visual aids. Teachers should remember that pupils can better recall a word when relating its form, meaning, and physical image rather than merely explaining the abstract concept.
4. Teachers must emphasise function words when teaching vocabulary. Students need to know fewer words, not master them.
5. Picture, conversation, drill, and channel presentations should emphasise active words. Therefore, teachers should employ the best student-centred methods to assist students in recognising new terminology first.
6. Students need help to develop their vocabulary, which hinders their language skills. While helping them learn new vocabulary, teachers must employ various strategies.
7. Instructing students in vocabulary through a tedious approach can lead to a sense of disengagement and a lack of enthusiasm. The innovative and varied vocabulary presentation enhances students' willingness to memorise.
8. Teachers must turn their lessons into games or digital tools and show them short movie clips using various media. That way, the lessons will come alive and be enjoyable, leaving a deep impression on the students and allowing them to remember them without any stress. This interesting way of teaching boosts students' intelligence, interest, and teamwork, making for a fun and easy English class. Also, students will quickly change the exercises' goal words to fit their needs.
9. Teachers can employ vocabulary games and constant interaction as teaching techniques when discussing vocabulary in the classroom.
10. Utilising real-life experiences to teach new words allows for a deeper understanding and impact on individuals. By engaging students in thoughtful discussions and conversations about the things they encounter daily, the newly introduced vocabulary becomes immediately applicable and usable for students. Additionally, it helps stimulate pupils' motivation and interest in expanding their vocabulary.

As mentioned, teaching language methodically is essential. Traditional vocabulary teaching methods must be improved so learners can build their lexical knowledge in time. Teachers do not consider vocabulary word games, although they provide more effective instruction at various academic levels, which must be implemented, as vocabulary knowledge is closely linked to reading and speaking proficiency. Classroom recitation actions often focus on recitation rather than reliable activities that lead to deeper understanding among students. Leaving room for students' creativity or association helps them use their word fields. If we spend the majority of our time learning grammar, our communication in English will not progress to a great extent. We will see maximum development if we gain knowledge of several vocabulary items and their terminology. Albert (1928) rightly states, "We can say very little with grammar, but we can say almost anything with words."

G. Teaching and Learning Implications

Effective strategies can accelerate the learning process by incorporating various techniques and methods. Visual vocabulary teaching tips include practising and visualising spelling vocabulary, using flashcards, drawing pictures, and using a dictionary. Verbal vocabulary teaching tips involve reading text aloud, discussing ideas, making presentations, and using musical jingles. Common vocabulary teaching tips include reading words and definitions aloud, recording pronunciations, using games, language activities, and playing roles. Physical activities can stimulate these students and help them learn more effectively. Diagnosing their levels and preferences is essential to better accommodate students' learning styles.

A balanced instruction approach should focus on accommodating multiple learning styles rather than favouring any educational method. While sometimes teachers may accommodate one style while blocking another, a combined approach can be beneficial. Language acquisition requires both subsidiary and purposeful learning, and a more balanced arrangement of vocabulary sources is more advantageous in enhancing learners' vocabulary. To assist students in developing their knowledge and skills, teachers should demonstrate incidental vocabulary learning for their pupils.

The survey and discussions based on findings show that numerous solutions exist for vocabulary instruction in English classrooms. By appropriately using the discussed strategies, approaches, techniques, and methodologies, vocabulary teaching-learning can become problem-free, engaging, and enjoyable for teachers and diverse students, as learners often enjoy "playing by ear."

CONCLUSIONS

The identified challenges in this study are closely linked with the prior research on vocabulary instruction. As highlighted by Nation (2001), Schmitt (2008) and Richards and Rodgers (2014), these difficulties continue to impede effective vocabulary learning. The observations presented parallel the exam-focused teaching methods. The key findings reveal that instructors confront a variety of hurdles while attempting to

teach language effectively, with some of these obstacles being more prominent than others. There are enough hurdles that considerably hinder vocabulary learning and application, and two of these barriers are time-constrained classes and students' limited communication skills. The diversity in responses to language of delivery and vocabulary constraint implies that these barriers are context-dependent and require personalised methods. While specific issues appear less relevant, the variability in responses suggests that these hurdles are difficult to overcome. To navigate the challenges effectively, educators must implement strategic, context-sensitive interventions that tackle significant barriers, utilise institutional support, and encourage active student participation. Implementing this approach can enhance vocabulary instruction, ensuring it is more effective and tailored to the varied needs of learners.

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