The Effect of Rich Vocabulary on the Improvement of Iraqi EFLS' University Expository Writing Proficiency

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Abstract

Vocabulary is an essential part of language learning. The increase and expansion of vocabulary repertoire are fundamental factors that lead to the development and proficiency of composition writing. Students' linguistic knowledge is crucial to express themselves using their own words and expressions in sentences or contexts. The importance of lexis in improving composition writing stems from the fact that writing is one of the language skills (**listening, speaking,** and **reading**). It constitutes a significant component of language in general and language learning in particular. The writing process is an end product of vocabulary learning. Accordingly, this experimental study investigates the effect of L2 vocabulary knowledge on writing compositions, i.e., the correlation between the development of linguistic knowledge and composition writing and the necessity of enhancing EFL learners' knowledge at the university level.

Keywords: composition writing, university EFL learners, lexis/ vocabulary / lexical knowledge, university vocabulary (USV), understanding vocabulary (UNV).

Introduction

Vocabulary is an essential component of second language learning, showing significant correlations with grammar and language skills like (**listening, reading** and **writing**). Research into lexical issues has been one of the most rapidly growing areas of second language acquisition studies in recent years, and understandably so, the importance of vocabulary knowledge can hardly be denied (Laufer, 1998:43). Vocabulary items are the key to every instance of communication, both spoken and written. This study focuses on the impact of vocabulary knowledge on written language, mostly in academic settings. This is due to three major reasons; firstly, it has been found out that communication can be hindered if learners lack the necessary vocabulary items. Secondly, there is a clear interrelation between language learning and vocabulary learning. Thirdly, some studies have revealed that some of the most required lexical items have never been learnt despite devoting much time to vocabulary teaching (Carter, 1992:58).

Learners' vocabulary knowledge involves (1) the spoken form of a word, (2) the written form of a word, (3) the grammatical function of a word, (4) the collocational behavior of a word, (5) the degree of frequency, (6) the stylistic register of a word, (7) the conceptual meaning of a word, and (8) the association of a word with other related words (Nation, 2001:19). However, it is not easy to investigate all kinds of vocabulary knowledge simultaneously. This study investigates the effects of explicit vocabulary instruction on L2 learners' performance in a composition task and converts their vocabulary knowledge to produce.

Vocabulary Learning: An Overview

Little attention has been paid to vocabulary learning in second language acquisition research, which is not recent. O'Dell (1997:27) commented that vocabulary and lexis are absent from the syllabus and theory of language teaching major books throughout (the 1970s) and (1980s). The role of vocabulary in the language learning process, testing, and teaching has been overlooked over the past fifty years. As Meara (1996:222) described, it turned into a Cinderella subje key factor in everyday oral and written communication and academic success is the size of the learners' vocabulary, which has serious implications. Moreover, writing and vocabulary knowledge enjoy a mutual relationship. That is, while writing is an excellent opportunity for enhancing and consolidating vocabulary, at the same time, much research has shown that vocabulary is one of the essential features of writing (Richards, 2008:255). Studies have consistently demonstrated that a

lack of vocabulary makes writing in a foreign language most challenging. That vocabulary proficiency is perhaps the best indicator of an overall composition quality (Leki and Carson, 1994:93-94)

Explicit vocabulary instruction paves the way for converting receptive vocabulary to productive vocabulary through immediate writing tasks to retention. Explicit instruction also helps newly learned vocabulary become productive in an immediate writing task. Still, it is subject to loss, and hence more practice in the production of newly learned vocabulary is required. EFL learners have to be shown how to use their store of recognition vocabulary and new vocabulary in a production task and how lexical variation and lexical frequency affect the quality of the learners' writings.

Statement of the Problem

Despite having, to more extent, a good command over grammatical rules, most Iraqi EFL learners at the University of Basrah, department of English, face serious challenges when writing compositions. It has been observed that students who make more lexical than grammatical errors when they write in a foreign language do not have adequate and appropriate vocabulary knowledge. The inadequacy seems to be due to the lack of vocabulary, and to a large extent, to the insufficient emphasis placed on productive skills and the type of instruction they receive. Students are found to encounter difficulties relevant to their use of vocabulary, such as failing to use the appropriate learned items in contexts and producing the vocabulary item derivations. This is primarily the output of the learner's insufficient lexical knowledge. Accordingly, there is a dire need for developing a firm command of linguistic knowledge to attain successful written communication since this knowledge is crucial to writing skills.

Objectives of the Study

The study tries to fulfil the following objectives:

1) Explaining the impact of FL vocabulary knowledge on the learners' writing performances as an output of this knowledge.

2) Showing the correlation and interrelation between vocabulary knowledge expansion and writing skill development representing other language skills: listening, speaking, and reading.

3) Investigating the linguistic repertoire of EFL students at the advanced (university) level and the difficulties they encounter in recognizing the meaning of vocabulary items and producing the various lexical item derivations in composition writing.

4) Examining to what extent the learners differ in their ability to comprehend and use lexical items and how their vocabulary knowledge improves and moves up from one stage to another at the university level.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The study involves the following questions and hypotheses:

Q1/ Does vocabulary knowledge affect Iraqi EFL learner's written composition? Is there a significant correlation relationship between students' written compositions and their lexical or vocabulary repertoire?

Q2/ What are the typical lexical and grammatical problems Iraqi EFL university learners encounter in writing compositions?

The learners' poor lexical repertoire hinders their ability to write appropriately good and acceptable compositions, i.e.; having difficulties understanding and using vocabulary.

- The first and third-year learners' errors in using vocabulary **(USV)** are more frequent than those of understanding vocabulary **(UNV)**.

-There are performance differences between the two groups of students, i.e., between (Ist-year) and (3rd -year). In other words, the third–years obtain higher scores than the first years in terms of the same variables.

Vocabulary Knowledge and Writing in Foreign Language

Vocabulary has to do with the knowledge of words and the ability to use words in the generation and understanding of sentences. It has been considered an essential part of the writing process,

Developing a rich and varied vocabulary is essential to becoming an influential writer (Roth, 2000:18). Effective vocabulary use in writing has been found to positively influence measures of the quality of writing and ones' general language level (Lewis, 1997:256).

The relationship between vocabulary learning and writing has been explained in lexical research in relation to such terms of several critical terms as **lexical knowledge** vs **lexical use**; **depth, breadth** and **strength of knowledge**; **passive** and **active vocabulary knowledge recall** and **recognition**; **lexical variation** and **lexical richness**; and **collocation** (Laufer, 1991:445). Vocabulary acquisition can be discussed in terms of both "lexical **knowledge** " and "linguistic **use** ". Lexical knowledge is the information about the words that learners have stored in their mental lexicons, while lexical use manifests this knowledge in real-time production (Laufer and Goldstein, 2004:422). This distinction implies that lexical knowledge in a foreign language is typically more advanced than lexical use because not all words stored in learners' mental lexicons are necessarily activated and used in free writing (Laufer, 1991:442).

Moreover, vocabulary knowledge can be assessed qualitatively in terms of '**depth**' and quantitatively in terms of ' breadth' and ' **strength** ' of knowledge. Depth of knowledge is the degree of acquaintance with a given lexical entry's various form and meaning components (e.g., its morphological structure and its grammatical or lexical items) (Richards, 1976: 87). The breadth of knowledge refers to vocabulary size, i.e., the quantity of lexical entries stored in one's mental lexicon. In measuring vocabulary size, a word is considered ' **known**' when the correct meaning is associated with the correct word form. However, the form-meaning association can be valued regarding distinctions (Laufer and Goldstein, 2004:422).

he first distinction connotes a difference between the learners who can retrieve the FL word form to convey a specific meaning (' **active knowledge'**) and those who retrieve the meaning once the FL word is presented to them (' **passive knowledge** '). The second distinction implies a difference between those who can read the form or the meaning of a word and those who can recognize the form or meaning in a set of options. This leads to the emergence of four distinctions: (1) **active recall**, (2) **passive recall**, (3) **active recognition**, and (4) **passive recognition**. Active recall is the hardest to achieve and represents the highest degree of knowledge, followed by passive recall, active recognition, and passive recognition (Laufer and Goldstein, 2004:423). Active vocabulary has been found to (1) be smaller in size, (2) develop more slowly, and (3) decay faster than passive vocabulary. Accordingly, the most advanced knowledge is active recall, followed by passive (Laufer and Goldstein, 2004, 422).

Methodology
Design of the study
This section will provide a brief description of the participants, procedures, and data analysis of this study.

Participants
Sixty subjects representing the first and third-year learners at the Department of English, College of Arts, and University of Basrah were enrolled and sat for the test. Thirty subjects from each stage were chosen randomly. This choice was made mainly to test the hypothesis, i.e., ' the learners' errors in using vocabulary **(USV)** are more frequent than those in understanding vocabulary **(UVN)** in both stages. In other words, the aim was to investigate the development of the students' vocabulary in composition writing within two years of their study by comparing their performances in both stages, i-e. (The first and third).

The third-year students were chosen because they were supposed to have learnt adequate vocabulary items at this stage. Their performance in composition writing was expected to be appropriate for the test because they have already taken and been exposed to two courses in composition and one course in essay writing. The first-year students were selected because they

were supposed to be acquainted with limited lexical items and had only one course in composition writing. This choice between the two stages was thought to be enough and suitable to measure their ability to use vocabulary items in writing compositions.

Procedures

The procedures adopted in this study involve: (a) a pilot test, (b) the primary test. These two empirical tests form a complementary experimental work upon which the whole study rests.

A) **The Pilot Test**

The pilot administration of the text refers to a "tryout of the test to a small, but representative group of testees" (Heaton, 1988:158). This kind of test helps the researcher (a) to try out the test instructions, (b) to check the estimated time required for the participants to do the items of the test, and (c) to discover any weaknesses in the format of the actual test (ibid). The test was administered to a number of subjects from the Department of English, College of Education, and University of hi-Qar. The students' answers were corrected in the writing of the final format of the test.

In addition, the two parts of the test were examined by some instructors at the College of Arts in Basrah University and the College of Education in Thi-Qar University. The purpose behind the pilot test was, (1) to have a clear picture of the students' levels and the time needed for answering the items of the test, which is one hour, and (2) to have the teachers' recommendations concerning the design, validity, and suitability of the test for the EFL learners in both stages.

B) The Main Test

The experimental work of the study involves a test of seven questions designed to investigate the students' receptive vocabulary knowledge in composition writing. The test consists of two parts; the first part is the receptive and productive test –items. The testees were asked to answer the items concerning the two significant types of lexis, i-e. (The **receptive** and **productive vocabulary**). However, the questions were indirect because the terms (**receptive** and **productive**) were not used in the construction of the questions.

The second part is a composition test intended to measure the participants ' use of the various parts of speech in context, i-e., their productive vocabulary knowledge in composition writing. The testees were asked to write a composition on the same topic, i-e., "Friendship ". The topics were carefully chosen to motivate the testees to use their own vocabulary items appropriately. Two reasons for the choice of the topic, (1) because it gives the examiner an everyday basis for comparison and evaluation, and (2) because the examinees will waste no time in deciding which composition items to answer.

The test was administered to sixty subjects from the Department of English, College of Arts, University of Basrah (thirty subjects from each stage understudy). One week later, the two groups sat for the composition test. They were not told about the aim of the test so that their use of vocabulary and the various parts of speech in composition writing could be investigated. They were provided with some explanations about the idea of the topic. They were asked to pay attention to content rather than grammar to confine their efforts to produce as many vocabulary items as possible. That is, they were asked to employ whatever items, phrases, and expressions to convey meaning.

Data Analysis

Analysis of Response

This section attempts to analyze the (Ist) and (3rd) year students' writings in the two parts of the test, i-e., the **Understanding** and **Use Test-Items** and the **composition Test** .

Analysis of Part One (Understanding and Use Test –Items)

Generally, it has been found that the learners' level of achievement is unsatisfactory in the sense that (15) students, i-e.,(20%) out of (60) were able to pass this part. That is,(5) students from the first stage, (8.3 %) out of (30) and (10) students from the third stage, (16.6 %) out of (30) succeeded in this part of the test. This is far below the required level of achievement.

Analysis of Part Two (The Composition Test)

It can be noticed that the findings of the study are in line with the results of many related studies conducted in the Arab world (e.g. Mukkatesh, 1981; Diab,1996; 2000; Batainch, 2005, and others). These studies agree that Arab learners commit many errors in English when writing compositions due mainly to: (1) their poor lexical repertoire, (2) the inappropriate use of lexical items and (3) their incomprehensibility of grammatical rules, which share a negative impact on the learners' writings. Accordingly, four types of errors committed by the (1st and 3rd) year students in the composition test can be detected and specified: **form errors**, **meaning errors**, **form** and **meaning errors**, and **parts of speech errors**.

(i) Form Errors

Form errors are "errors that result from words confused by similar sounds (**synophones**), similar script (**syngraphs**), or similar morphology (**synomorphs**) " (Cu and Leung, 2002: 122). Consequently, the general term "**synoform**" is used to refer to the three types. The learners confused the form of the target word with the form of another English word already in their working vocabulary. This is evident in the following errors made by the two groups:

1. I cannot * **except** that I am in another section. (**accept**).
2. Everyone must have a close friend to feel friendship and ***who** is important for people. (**how**).
3. The good friend must ***tray** to make his friend able to solve his problem. (**try**).
4. Friendship is ***beggar** than what we write. (**bigger**).
5. There is no need to be an ***angle** because humanity is enough. (**angle**).
6. Sometimes friendship is between the mother and daughter and between the father and his ***sun**. (**son**).
7. Friendship makes us live ***in quiet**. (**quite** or **quietly**).
8. My friend always gives me ***advance** and say for me to ***flow** good things (**advice, follow**).
9. Your friend * **talls** you the real thing. (**tells**).
10. The friend * **like** a brother . (**is like**).
11. This relation is so * **grateful.** (**great**) .
12. I knew very well that friendship is a big * **lier**. (**lie**).
13. You are ***devised** by some friends. (**deceived**).
14. Friendship is a beautiful ***think** in our life. (**thing**).
15. I heard my mother ***screen**. (**scream**).
16. We ***invent** a lot of friends to the party. (**invite**).
17. In our * **live** we met many friends. (**life**).
18. She always ***meats** her friend in class. (**meet**).
19. Layla ***have tow** friends. (**has**, **two**) .

(ii) Meaning Errors

For Gu and Leung (2002:137), meaning errors are those errors that result from the retrieval of a word of related meaning rather than a similar form. There are two kinds of meaning errors: paradigmatic and syntagmatic errors. The former occurs when the elicited error is another example of a particular type represented by the target word, for example, 1. Cotton / maize or linen ; (2) dig/ drill .The latter take place when the error describes the target word or is something that could be done to result in the target word, for instance : (1) hostile /enemy or conflict ; (2) dig/hole or well. The following examples are the most frequently meaningful errors made by the testees of the two stages in the composition test:

1. Friendship either * **stays** or not. (**Continues**, **lasts**, **maintains**).
2. My friend live with you and * **divide** you many things. (**share**).
3. Sometimes, we can ***discover** our secrets to our close friends. (**reveal** or **tell**).
4. I feel happy when I ***find** her. (**meet**).

5. I want to **remember *** another type of friendship between human beings and birds. (**Mention).**

6. They try to ***consist** new relations with new friends, but they fail. (**make**).

7. Everyone should ***progress** the need for his friend. (**Foster** or **satify**).

8. I like my favorite friends who *** truth** me and not *** harm** me. (**Trust**, **hurt**).

9. The *** example** says, "a friend in need is a friend indeed. (**proverb**).

10. Nowadays, good friends are ***small.** (**Few** or **rare**).

11.I have a ***near** a friend who lives in Baghdad. (**close**).

12. My friends always ***guide** me to the good things and ***stop** the bad things. (,**leave** or **quit**).

(iii) Form and Meaning Errors

Such kind errors mean " the wrong responses resulting from a confusion of form followed next by a confusion of meaning" (Gu and Leung, 2002: 138). A word similar to the target in either sound or shape is activated, but the response stems from another twist, meaning confusion. For example, the target word is ' **precious**', whereas the form confusion is ' **precise** '. Other examples are the following :

Target word	Form confusion	Meaning confusion response
inhabit	inherited	learned/nurtured
pensive	pen	to think deeply

Accordingly, the most frequently occurring meaning errors committed by the (1st and 3rd) year students are the following :

1. When my friend joins the art college, his life *** tests** oppositely. (**twists** or **turns upside down**).

2. Close friends should not *** lie on** each other. (**lie to**).

3. The prophet ***devised** us to treat the good friends kindly. (**advised**) .

4. We can find real friendship in this world, and this depends on ***fat**. (**fate**) .

5. We have many ***ships** in this life; one of these is friendship. (**relationships**).

6. When we went to the zoo with my friends, I *** looked** at the lions inside the ***box**. (**looked at the cage**)

7. The ***reel** friend is the honest one. (**real**).

(iv) Parts of Speech Errors

Parts of speech errors are " the errors that are caused by a vague match of form and meaning without proper knowledge of how the word should be used syntactically and in a sentence or context; for example, (**inhabit –habitation –inhabitant –inhabitable**) and (**hostile –hostility**)" (Meara,1996:40). Such type of errors causes a serious problem since learners who remember only a vague meaning of a word in the wrong part of speech will encounter difficulties in using the word in context. We contend that EFL learners make a substantial number of part of speech errors. This can be ascribed do their deficiency of grammatical competence and to a decontextualized, form-meaning pair strategy for EFL vocabulary learning. The following examples of errors reveal how the target lexis was misrepresented in the (1st and 3rd)year students ' mental lexicon :

A. Errors in Using Nouns

1) I want someone who shares my *** believe** in friendship. (**belief**).

2) Friendship is the greatest thing in*** live**. (**life**).

3) It is a great ***feel** that you have many friends. (**feeling**).

4) Friendship has many ***means** to human beings, such as love, respect, and ***honest.** (**meaning**, **honesty**).

5) I think life without friendship is like life without *** happy**. (**happiness**).

6) You will be surprised by his***real**. (**reality**).

7) Life without friends is like ***dead**. (**death**).

8) The reason for *** continuous** of his relations is that you need your friend. (**continuity**).

9) I have friends who show*** merciful** towards others. (**mercy**).

B) Errors in Using Verbs

1. We should take care when we ***choice** our friends. (**choose**).

2. People ***difference** in their behavior and morals. (**differ**).

3. They have to ***dealing** with each other in a friendly manner. (**deal**).

4. I must ***treatment** with two kinds of friends. (**treat**).

5. The real friend ***behaviors** with love and respect. (**behaves**).

6. The good friend must ***advice us**. (**advise**) .

7. Let us ***image** life without friendship. (**imagine**)

8. The good friend ***sacrifice** to help his friends. (**sacrifices**).

9. God ***creatures** us to be nations (**creates**).

C) Errors in Using Adjectives

1. My friend was *** honesty** and generous. (**honest**).

2. It makes friends ***unity**. (**united** or **unified**).

3. When I meet my friend, it is a*** glory** thing. (**glorious**) .

4. Friendship is just a word, but it is great when we get the *reality meaning. (**real**).

5. It is difficult to find someone who becomes our ***closely** friend. (**close**).

6 .I cannot find a real friend, and this makes me feel ***sadly**. (**sad**).

7. I can tell my friend about ***deeply** feeling. (**deep**).

8. The person is *** fortunately** when he finds real friends. (**fortunate**).

9. I like my friend because he is a*** loyalty** friend. (**loyal**).

D) Errors in Using Adverbs

1. Everybody needs a friend who behaves *** with wise**. (**wisely**).

2. The honest friends help and support each other in ***better or worse** times. (**good** and **bad times).**

3.***Sorry**, few friends are good nowadays. (**unfortunately**) .

4. When I go with my friends to the zoo, we spend our time with ***happiness**. (**happily**).

The Statistical Analysis

This section deals with the scores of the subjects of both groups (1st and 3rd years –stages) on the two parts of the test : (a) the Understanding and Use Vocabulary item test and (b) the composition writing test. Two types of tests are used in this study: **T-Test** and **ANOVA – Test. A T-Test** is a statistical test used to check the performance difference between the two groups in the **Understanding** and **Use Vocabulary**. While **ANOVA** –Test is used here to check the differences in the learners' use of the various parts of speech of lexis: **nouns**, **verbs**, **adjectives**, and **adverbs**.

A- Implementing the T-Test on the Understanding and Use Vocabulary Test

The statistical analysis of the Understanding and Use Vocabulary item –test can be summed up as follows:

1. Implementation of the T-Test on scores obtained by the 1st -year female and male subjects on the (UNV) is represented in table (1) in which the P-value (0.1309), when compared with (0.05) level of significance, indicates no- significant differences in (UVN) variable of the test. Moreover, the mean value of 1st –year females' scores in the same variable, (UNV) is (24.2667) and that of the 1st –year male is (19.6).

Table (1): Implementation of the T-Test Scores Obtained by the 1st -Year Female and Male Subjects on Understanding Vocabulary Item-Test

Variable	Stage &Sex	No.	Mean	P-value	Sig. Art(0.05)
Understand	1 st . Yr-F.	15	24.2	0.130	N.S.

			667	9	
ing Vocabulary (**UNV**)	1 st Yr-M.	15	19.6		

2. Implementation of the T-Test scores obtained by the 1st -year female and male subjects on the (USV) item-test is shown in table (2), in which the mean value of the 1st –year females ' scores is (16.2667), and that of the males is (16.8). Besides, when the P-value (0.8293) is compared with (0.05) level of significance, it indicates non-significant differences in (USV) variable.

Table (2): Implementation of the T-Test Scores Obtained by the 1st -Year Female and Male Subjects on Use Vocabulary Item –Test

Variable	Stage &Sex	No.	Mean	P-value	Sig. Art(0.05)
Use Vocabulary (**USV**)	1 st . Yr-F.	15	16.266 67	0.829 3	N.S.
	1 st Yr-M.	15	16.8		

3. Implementation of the T-Test scores obtained by the 3rd -year female and male subjects on (UNV) item-test is represented in table (3), in which the P-value (0.8571), when compared with (0.05) level of significance, shows non-significant differences in (UNV). Moreover, the mean value of the females ' scores is (27.6), and that of the male is (28.2667).

Table (3): Implementation of T-Test Scores Obtained by 3rd –Year Female and Male Subjects on Understanding Vocabulary Item-Test

Variable	Stage &Sex	No.	Mean	P-value	Sig. Art(0.05)
Understandin g Vocabulary (**UNV**)	3rd . Yr-F.	15	27.6	0.857 1	N.S.
	3rd Yr-M.	15	28.26 67		

4. Implementation of the T-Test scores obtained by the 3rd -year female and male subjects on (USV) is represented in table (4), in which the mean value of the females' scores is (18), and that of the male is (18.9333). Moreover, when the P-value (0.7918) is compared with (0.05). It indicates no- significant differences in the (USV) variable.

Table (4): Implementation of the T-Test Scores Obtained by the 3rd -Year Female and Male Subjects on Use Vocabulary Item –Test

Variable	Stage &Sex	No.	Mean	P-value	Sig. Art(0.05)
Use Vocabulary (**USV**)	3rd. Yr-F.	15	18	0.791 8	N.S.
	3rd Yr-M.	15	18.93 33		

5. Implementation of the T-Test scores obtained by the(1st and 3rd) year female subjects on (UNV)item- test is represented in table (5) when the P-value (0.2903) is compared with (0.05) level of significance, indicates no-significant differences are detected in (UNV) variable. However, the mean value of the (1st) year- females' scores is (24.2667) while of the (3rd) year – females' is (27.6).

Table (5): Implementation of the T-Test Scores Obtained by 1st .and the 3rd -Year Female Subjects on Understanding Vocabulary Item –Test

Variable	Stage &Sex	No.	Mean	P-value	Sig. Art(0.05)
Understanding Vocabulary (**UNV**)	1st. Yr-F.	15	24.2667	0.2903	N.S.
	3rd Yr-F.	15	27.6		

6. Implementation of the T-Test scores obtained by the(1st and 3rd) year -female subjects on the (USV)item- test is represented in table (6) in which the P-value (0.5l67) when compared with (0.05) level of significance, indicates a no-significant difference in (USV) variable. Yet, the mean value of the (1st) year female's scores is (16.2667), and that of the (3rd) year –the female is (18).

Table (6): Implementation of the T-Test Scores Obtained by 1st .and the 3rd -Year Female Subjects on Use Vocabulary Item –Test

Variable	Stage &Sex	No.	Mean	P-value	Sig. Art(0.05)
Use Vocabulary (**USV**)	1st. Yr-F.	15	16.2667	0.5167	N.S.
	3rd Yr-F.	15	18		

7 .Implementation of T-Test the scores obtained by the (1st) and (3rd) year – male subjects on (**UNV**) is shown in table (7) in which the mean value of the (1st) year –males' scores is (19.6) and that of the (3rd) year –male is (28.2667). As a result, comparing the P-value (0.0225) with (0.05) level of significance shows slightly significant differences in the (**UNV**) variable.

Table (7): Implementation of the T-Test Scores Obtained by 1st .and the 3rd -Year Male Subjects on Understanding Vocabulary Item –Test

Variable	Stage &Sex	No.	Mean	P-value	Sig. Art(0.05)
Understanding Vocabulary (**UNV**)	1st. Yr-M.	15	19.6	0.0225	N.S.
	3rd Yr-M.	15	28.2667		

8. Implantation of T-Test on the scores obtained by the (1st) and (3rd) year – male subjects on (USV) is represented in table (8) in which the P-value (0.5309) is compared with (0.05) level of significance showing no-significant differences in (USV). Moreover, the mean value of the (1st) year males' scores is (16.8), and that of the (3 rd) year-male is (18.9333).

Table (8): Implementation of the T-Test Scores Obtained by 1st .and the 3rd -Year Male Subjects on Use Vocabulary Item –Test

Variable	Stage &Sex	No.	Mean	P-value	Sig. Art(0.05)
Use Vocabulary (USV)	1st. Yr-M.	15	16.8	0.5309	N.S.
	3rd Yr-M.	15	18.9333		

B) Implementing ANOVA-Test on the Composition Writing Test

The ANOVA –test has been implemented to test the subjects ' productive vocabulary knowledge of using the different word –classes: **nouns**, **verbs**, **adjectives**, and **adverbs**. This analysis is summarized as follows:

(1) Scores obtained by (1st) year-female and male subjects in the parts of speech test: **nouns, verbs, adjectives**, and **adverbs**.

(2) Scores obtained by the (3rd) year-female and male subjects in the same parts of speech.

(3) Scores obtained by the (1st) and (3rd) year –female subjects on those words –classes.

(4) Scores obtained by the (1st and 3rd) year –male subjects also on the parts of speech mentioned above.

The first category is represented in table (9), which shows that the mean values of the (1st) year females' scores concerning their use of the parts of speech are: the **nouns** (9.0667), the **verbs** (6.2667), the **adjectives** (4.2), and the **adverbs** (1.9333). The mean values of the male subjects' scores in the same parts of speech are the **nouns** (10.2), the **verbs** (6.6667), the **adjectives** (4.4), and the **adverbs** (1.9333). Accordingly, the subjects, use of these words –classes are hierarchical.

Moreover, the implementation of the ANOVA –Test on the scores of the (1st) year-subjects has demonstrated no significant difference between the female and male subjects in the use of the various parts of speech. The P-values obtained for the **nouns** is (0.1535), for **verbs** (0.6155), for **adjectives** (0.7997), and **adverbs** (1).

Table (9): Implementation of ANOVA –Test Scores Obtained by the (1st) Year – Female and Male subjects using the Parts of Speech in the Composition Writing Test

Word Classes	Stage and Sex	No.	Mean	P. values	Sig.At (0.05)
Nouns	1st .Yr-F	15	9.0664	0.1535	N.S.
	1st .Yr-M	15	10.2		
Verbs	1st .Yr-F	15	6.2667	0.6155	N.S.
	1st .Yr-M	15	6.6667		
Adjectives	1st .Yr-F	15	4.2	0.7997	N.S.
	1st .Yr-M	15	4.4		
Adverbs	1st .Yr-F	15	1.9333	1	N.S.
	1st .Yr-M	15	1.9333		

The ANOVA- test is also implemented to analyze the scores obtained by the (3rd) year-female and male subjects in the composition writing test. The results are represented in table (10). Comparing the P-value with (0.05) level of significance reveals no- significant differences in the subjects' productive vocabulary knowledge regarding the four parts of vocabulary speech.

The mean values of the (3rd) year –female subjects' scores are the **nouns** (12.4), the **verbs** (8.333), the **adjectives** (4.8), and the **adverbs** (2.333). Besides, the mean values of the (3rd) year males scores are the **nouns** (11.8667), the **verbs** (8.0667), the **adjectives** (3.4667), and the **adverbs** (2.6667). Moreover, the application of the ANOVA –Test on the percentage scores of the (3rd)year-subjects shows that there are no significant differences between the female and males in the use of the same word –classes. The P-values obtained the **nouns** (0.6519), the **verbs** (0.7517), the **adjectives** (0.1089), and the **adverbs** (0.5467).

Table (10): Implementation of ANOVA –Test Scores Obtained by the (3rd) Year – Female and Male Subjects Using the Parts of Speech of Vocabulary in the Composition Writing -Test

Word Classes	Stage and Sex	No.	Mean	P. values	Sig.At (0.05)
Nouns	3rd .Yr-F	15	12.4	0.6519	N.S.
	3rd.Yr-M	15	11.8667		
Verbs	3rd.Yr-F	15	8.3333	0.7517	N.S.
	3rd.Yr-M	15	8.0667		
Adjectives	3rd.Yr-F	15	4.8	0.1089	N.S.
	3rd.Yr-M	15	3.4667		
Adverbs	3rd.Yr-F	15	2.333	0.5467	N.S.
	3rd.Yr-M	15	2.667		

Equally significant, the ANOVA –Test has been applied to explain the significance of the difference between the (1st and 3rd) year –females' scores in their productive vocabulary when using concerning their use of the word –classes of lexical items. The mean values of the (1st) year females scores are the **nouns** (9.0667), the **verbs** (0.2667), the **adjectives** (4.2), and the **adverbs** (1.9333). On the other hand, the mean values of the (3rd) year females' scores are the **nouns** (12.4), the **verbs** (8.3333), the **adjectives** (4.8), and the **adverbs** (2.333). These results are shown in table (11).

Furthermore, the P-values are the **nouns** (0.014), the **verbs** (0.0066), the **adjectives** (0.4666), and the **adverbs**   (0.344). Consequently, the p-values of the **nouns** and **verbs** show that the differences between the female subjects of the (1st) year – group and the females of the (3rd) year –group are slightly significant; however, the P-values for the **adjectives** and **adverbs** are non-significant.

Table (11): Implementation of ANOVA –Test Scores Obtained by the (1st) and (3rd) Year – Female Subjects Using the Parts of Speech of Vocabulary in the Composition Writing -Test

Word Classes	Stage and Sex	No.	Mean	P. values	Sig.At (0.05)
Nouns	1st .Yr-F	15	9.0667	0.0114	S.
	3rd.Yr-F	15	12.4		
Verbs	1st.Yr-F	15	6.2267	0.0066	S.
	3rd.Yr-F	15	8.3333		
Adjectives	1st.Yr-F	15	4.2	0.4666	N.S.
	3rd.Yr-F	15	4.8		
Adverbs	1st.Yr-F	15	1.933	0.344	N.S.
	3rd.Yr-F	15	2.333		

In the table (12), the ANOVA –test is implemented to analyze the scores obtained by the (1st and 3 rd) subjects using the same parts of speech. The results reveal a significant difference relevant to the nouns only when the P-value is compared with the (0.05) significance level. The mean values of the (1st) year –males ' scores in the various word –classes are the **nouns**(10.2), the **verbs** (6.6667), the **adjectives** (4.4), and the **adverbs** (1.9333), while the mean values of the (3rd) year –males

'scores are the **nouns** (11.8667), the **verbs** (8.0667), the **adjectives** (3.4667), and the **adverbs** (2.6667).

Moreover , the p-values are : the **nouns** (0.019), the **verbs** (0.1334), the **adjectives** (0.2371),and the **adverbs** (0.1748). Accordingly, the p-values for the nouns only prove that the difference between the male subjects of the (1st) year-group and the (3rd)year –group is significant. Yet, the p-values for the **verbs**, **adjectives**, and **adverbs** are non-significant.

Table (12): Implementation of ANOVA –Test Scores Obtained by the (1st) and (3rd) Year – Male Subjects Using the Parts of Speech in the Composition Writing -Test

Word Classes	Stage and Sex	No.	Mean	P. values	Sig.At (0.05)
Nouns	1st .Yr-M	15	10.2	0.019	S.
	3rd.Yr-M	15	11.867		
Verbs	1st.Yr-M	15	6.6667	0.1334	N.S.
	3rd.Yr-M	15	8.0667		
Adjectives	1st.Yr-M	15	4.4	0.2371	N.S.
	3rd.Yr-M	15	3.4667		
Adverbs	1st.Yr-M	15	1.9333	0.1748	N.S.
	3rd.Yr-M	15	2.6667		

Discussion of Results

The analysis of results of the (1st G .and 3rd .G) on both the (**USV**) and (**UNV**) can be interpreted as follows:

(1) The students' (**UNV**) is more than their (**USV**) in both groups. This means that the students have a wider receptive vocabulary knowledge than productive vocabulary knowledge.

(2) The students' (**USV**) is very limited in both groups. This is reflected in their poor performance in the productive vocabulary item –test.

(3) There is a slightly significant development in the receptive vocabulary knowledge of the (3rd) year –students compared to the (1st) year- students. However, there is no significant development in the productive vocabulary knowledge of the (3rd) year –students compared to the (1st) because there is no significant difference in utilizing the (**USV**) between both groups. Therefore, their performance is very similar in the (**USV**) in spite of the two years difference between them.

Moreover, in the composition test, the analysis of the writings of both groups shows that the (1st and 3 rd) year – subjects use the various parts of speech hierarchically in the sense that they utilize more nouns and verbs at the expense of adjectives and adverbs. This can be ascribed to the limited and fixed positions occupied by nouns (e.g., subjects and objects) and verbs and that adjectives and adverbs are more complex in their construction since various inflectional and derivational suffixes are attached to them. Further, in the early stages of the FL teaching and learning process, a great deal of attention is given to teaching nouns and verbs compared to adjectives.

Significantly speaking, the results of the two parts of the test have proven the inefficiency of the subjects' vocabulary knowledge to attain effective writing, which is one of the ultimate goals of language learning. Various factors cause such inefficiency: (1) the limited knowledge in terms of quantity and quality at both the receptive and productive levels ; (2) the subjects ' unawareness of the use of context in recognizing and producing the suitable lexis ; (3) the student's poor knowledge of word –formation and their heavy reliance on specific parts of speech, such as nouns and verbs at the expense of adjectives and adverbs; (4) the use of the various types of lexical repetition; and (5)

poor instructions, negligence and the learners' ignorance of the vital vocabulary learning strategies, such as **"learning from context strategy "**, and their concentration on certain useless strategies like; form-meaning strings strategy ' and ' **learning from a word –lists**.'

The subjects' responses to the first part, which consists of six questions, display that the (1st and 3rd) year – subjects do not give attention to the word –classes or their contexts when recognizing and producing items. However, it is noticeable that the percentages of the subjects' performance on the matching –tests and multiple-choice item tests are higher than those of completion tests. For example, the results of (Q.1) has shown that (22), i.e. (66.6 %) of the (1st G.) subjects and (19), i.e.(63.3 %) of the (3rd G.) are successful. Similarly, (Q.2) has obtained a high percentage. Since (83.3%) or (25) students of the (1st G.) and (21), i.e. (70%) of the (3rd G.) could pass. In dealing with (Q.3), 0nly (13), i.e.(43.3 %) of the (1st G.) and (23), i.e.(76%) of the (3rd G.) answered correctly. Concerning (Q.4), only (3), i.e.(10 %) of the (1st G.) and (12), i.e.(40%) of the (3rd G.), succeeded. Therefore, it may be concluded that the students' (**UNV**) of the (1st G. and 3rd G.) is not that bad or disappointing, and that of the (3rd –year) students' receptive vocabulary knowledge is slightly higher than that of the (1st) year students.

In contrast, the subjects' achievement in the completion in –tests represented by (Q.5 and Q6) was far below expectations, (Q.5) marks a low percentage, i.e.(33.3 %) which means that (10) of the (1st G.) subjects and (12), i.e.(40%) of the (3rd G.) could succeed. The same applies to (Q6.) in the sense that only (2), i.e.(6.6%) of the (1st G.)and (9), i.e.(30%) of the (3rd G.) were able to pass. Accordingly, the (1st and 3rd)year –students' (**USV**) is very poor compared with their (**UNV**), and there are no significant differences between both groups concerning their productive vocabulary.

Consequently, such results show an apparent contrast in the subjects' performance. This can be ascribed to the fact that the matching and multiple-choice tests are used to test the subjects ' (**UNV**). The overuse of exercises in the syllabus makes students familiar with the automatic selection of lexical items. Moreover, such tests are based on form–meaning strategy and learning from word–list strategy in vocabulary learning and teaching. As a result, the learners did relatively well and answered these questions since they are easier than others.

On the other hand, the completion –tests are conducted to examine the subjects ' (**USV**). Such tests necessitate knowledge of context and the parts of speech of lexis and word –formation. The low percentages of the completion –tests manifest that the subjects were inefficient in tracing the context of lexis to associate these contexts with the correct and appropriate parts of speech. Also, they were unaware of the importance of word –formation in changing lexical item meanings by adding prefixes and suffixes. Consequently, the majority of learners, i.e.(25) from the (1st G.), i.e.(83%) and (20)from the (3rd G.), i.e.(66.6%), failed in this part of the test.

This result has been attained by comparing the scores in the receptive and productive item –test between the (1st G. and 3rd G.) (two years between them). The statistical measurements display a slightly significant difference between the (1st G.) scores and those (3rd G.) in the receptive vocabulary knowledge only. Therefore, it can be concluded that cross-sectionally, there is a slightly significant development in the (3rd) year –students' performance in comparison to the (1st) year-students in (**UNV**) or in recognizing lexis only.

The results of the composition –test have shown that the student's competence to express themselves efficiently in written English is far below the anticipation because of their poor (**USV**) in terms of quantity (**breadth**) and quality (**depth**). These results have also displayed distinctive aspects of the subjects' linguistic abilities.

The findings clarify that the subjects overuse lexical repetitions, especially simple and complex repetitions. These types of repetitions are the most distinguishing features in their writings. For example, friend(s) , relation(s) , need (n.v.),help (n.v.), and bad (n.adj.). The subjects' use of lexical repetition can be ascribed to the frequent and common use of these lexical items in different written texts and courses to which the subjects were exposed. Besides, in vocabulary learning, the learners resort to the most frequently occurring lexis due to their generality and practicality and then overuse them in most situations and contexts.

The most interesting part of these results is that the subjects heavily use specific parts of speech (mainly' nouns ' and 'verbs ') at the expense of ' adjectives ' and ' adverbs'. This is because, in second language learning, 'nouns' and 'verbs' predominate in the very early lexicon of learners, whereas' adjectives ' and ' adverbs ' have a minor status in language processing and learning.

Conclusions

Based on the data collected from the subjects' responses, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1) It has been found that the majority of the students at the university level have a limited or inadequate vocabulary or linguistic knowledge to help write suitably in English. They resort to lexical repetition, i.e. they repeat a certain set of lexis over and over in their writings. Moreover, they overuse specific parts of speech of lexis, such as ('nouns' and 'verbs') at the expense of others, i.e.('adjectives' and ' adverbs').

2) The subjects' underachievement in the composition writing reflects their inability to produce a piece of writing in the form of creative composition or an essay on a specific topic since they use ineffective language that shows a minimum mastery of English vocabulary. In addition, the learners do not only have the capacity to selecting the exact and the appropriate lexis to express the intended meaning; therefore, there is a severe gap between the lexical items they use and the needed ones that are assumed to use. This is due to the students' poor linguistic knowledge and the absence of systematic and graded courses of writing material, which negatively impacts their writings in particular and on their academic achievements and their ability to communicate efficiently in a foreign language in general.

3) Based on the statistical results, it has been found that university students in the early years face difficulties in the domain of vocabulary at both the receptive and productive levels. In contrast, those in the advanced years encounter difficulties at the productive level only.

4) The average of correct responses to items measuring the students' receptive and productive knowledge indicates that their performance in (**UNV**) is relatively better than (**USV**). This is clear when the students cannot actualize their receptive vocabulary knowledge in composition writing.

When presenting the teaching material, instructors focus on the traditional strategies based on memorizing materials , such as form-meaning strategy and learning from word–list strategies. 5) The lack of a systematic approach for FL vocabulary and context of learning justify the subjects' failure to use the parts of speech in various contexts. Teachers overlook the strategies that depend on using lexis in sentences, such as guessing from context and word-formation.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions arrived at, the following recommendations can be outlined:

Sloan (1996:268) explains that selecting " good books, as the best source for teaching writing, helps students become better writers". (1) Paying more attention to the vocabulary in literary subjects. After having students read books, poems, and stories containing interesting vocabulary, instructors can present new words and provide a class discussion about them.

(2) Helping students become aware of and search for interesting words. This is achieved by grouping them in pairs and looking through books for words that catch attention, and writing down the common words that could be used instead.

(3) Offering a variety of writing opportunities. Corona et al.(1998:29) state that a " writing–centred classroom emphasizes using written expressions to communicate ideas, and that writing is an important part of all curriculum areas ". Therefore, students should benefit more from their writing when choosing assignments that may include (summarizing short stories, book reports, poetry, autobiography, or other variations).

(4) Vocabulary instruction must be an interdisciplinary /project integrated into the syllabus at every level.

(5) Since content or meaning is an important component in composition writing, students' attention should be drawn to the fact that meaning can be expressed by all parts of speech of lexis that can be employed to express different meanings in various contexts. Therefore, vocabulary–item derivations should be given due attention on the part of teachers as well as on the part of learners.

(6) The best solution to overcome the students' errors is to draw the learners' attention to word parts explicitly. According to Carter (1992:376), using the word–part strategy of vocabulary learning is significant to recall the meaning of a word. This strategy requires the learners to recognize the most frequent and regular affixes, to identify them in words, and to be able to re-express the meaning of the word using the meanings of its parts.

(7) Since there is neither a micro-theory nor a systematic approach for FL vocabulary learning and teaching, it is recommended to use incidental vocabulary learning and intentional vocabulary teaching that are the main components of effective FL vocabulary instruction. This will add flexibility to the process of FL vocabulary learning and teaching and the whole process of language learning and teaching.

(8) As students encounter difficulties using lexis in context rather than recognizing vocabulary items, completion –tests, short –response –tests, and free –a composition that demand utilizing the vocabulary inappropriate contexts are recommended. Consequently, there should be a heavy emphasis on such drills to train students to use lexical items appropriately.

(9) Composition teachers should explain the difference between English and Arabic in terms of completely different morphological and syntactic devices, i.e. the inflectional and derivational affixes attached to the parts of speech of lexis, the use of ' verb to be ', the ' adjective-noun 'order and the likes.

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