ROLE OF NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS AS SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALFOR TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARYTO UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

T. NARAYANA & V. LINNET CYNTHIA

Department of English, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT

This study explores the possibilities for teaching vocabulary through the use of Newspaper clippings as a supplementary material and the role of newspaper clippings in promoting communication ability in terms of writing as well as speaking skills. At the outset, the significance of using newspaper clippings is to be explored. In the review section, some of the relevant aspects of vocabulary development and various advantages of learning vocabulary for better English also revisited. The role of newspaper clippings as a source of ready vocabulary has been critically reviewed. The methodology that used in this study is the survey method, both for teachers and students too. In fact, this study surveys the teachers and students to know their methods of teaching vocabulary and to know the students' perception about the usefulness of newspaper clippings in teaching and learning of English vocabulary. Further, the data collected is analyzed and interpreted using various statistical tools, such as tables, bar-charts etc. Finally, the possible conclusion is given based on the review of the literature and the research data collected.

KEYWORDS: Newspaper Clippings, Supplementary Material, ELT, Teaching Material & Vocabulary

INTRODUCTION

In this study, the significance of using newspaper clippings explored that may contribute to enhancing vocabulary for learning English as a second language. The need for learning vocabulary is one of the basic requirements to learn any language. In day-to-day life, people encounter various learning material for the enhancement of vocabulary either in their first language or a foreign language. With the instances in normal routine life that require a person to use a language either as a written form or spoken form, needs enough vocabulary essential for everyone. In the EFL contexts, according to Deville at al. (1985), Ostyn and Godin (1985) and Hindmarch (1980), a lexicon of 5000 words would give coverage of 90% – 95% of the lexis in authentic texts. The knowledge about vocabulary is not only improving the ability to understand printed or written text but also provides necessary words in the given context. Thus, an appropriate use and knowledge of vocabulary assume much significance in daily life.

Teachers in language education rely mostly on textbooks that are typically outdated. These textbooks are not rich in providing variety in the use of vocabulary as well as in all aspects of language skills. Consequently, the students tend to use only the words that they learn from the textbooks. For instance, most of the books that are used at Indian higher education include certain prose pieces that have direct questions which need to be answered along with grammar tasks at the end of a chapter. In Total Physical Response, according to Thamarana (2015), teachers introduce vocabulary and students respond by various acts like drawing, pointing, putting pictures in order that encourages active involvement and verifies understanding about the topic is being taught (Thamarana, 77). In fact, there is no social interaction among the

students or their teachers in the class but for the answers to the direct questions. Mostly, this is the only activity for the enhancement of vocabulary in English at the colleges. As a part and parcel of print media, the newspaper clippings have their own cultural, ideological, semiotic and semantic dimensions.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Newspaper clippings are a contrast to the textbook in terms of elements of interest and relevance. It is a common knowledge that language skills are multifaceted. It is located in the 'outer circle' (Kachru 1997) and has been indigenized, with around 333 million Indians having different degrees of competence in English. It is through speaking, listening, reading and writing that we develop and consolidate language skills. Routine-bound monotonous reading of textbooks in formal classroom situations may help students in acquiring the rudimentary, passive skills of a language to pass an examination. But it does not help students to perform necessary 'speech acts' like accepting/refusing an invitation, drawing one's attention, describing an incident, offering a cup of tea or coffee, and expressing an opinion on a strike or price hike. In order to perform all these activities effectively, one must have adequate knowledge of necessary vocabulary with an ability to use that vocabulary most appropriately suitable to need and context. For this reason, newspaper clippings have a significant role to play in promoting vocabulary.

Newspaper Clippings as a Source of Ready Vocabulary

Most often, students keep on asking about how to use the right word in its right place both in a speech and in a writing task too. It is not always possible through the textbooks that mostly use a limited corpus that can be covered in a limited span of time during the language coursework. So, an appropriate usage of words in other terms, resonances of words, nuances of meaning and various other subtleties can be taught through classroom practices of newspaper clippings. According to Thamarana (2015), for the Communicative Approach, it is acknowledged that structures and vocabulary are important. However, adherents of the Communicative Approach feel that students must master the functions or purposes to which it is put before they will be able to truly use the language (Thamarana, 207). It is surely possible through the repeated use of various news columns, picking and using the words for various purposes. Newspaper clippings help us remain updated not simply through their content but also through their neologisms, old words in their news meanings, and new words for old meanings, for instance, *Cyber raid, Printer-friendly, Bested, Cyberspace, Hackers, Intel, Earth hour etc.*

It is a great need that one should be updated on one's vocabulary. But, textbooks are not adequate source so far as learning contemporary words is concerned. Hence, the teacher has to be resourceful enough to motivate the learners to this innovative but amusing way of learning English vocabulary. New words like *freebies, sops, wannabe, kitsch etc.,* are only a minuscule of thousands of other words that are worth learning from the newspaper clippings. Thamarana (2015) mentioned that the 'Visual Scaffolding' is a multimedia related strategy in which the language used in instruction is become more understandable by using various media like drawings, photographs along with providing audio to hear English words. This strategy is useful in teaching vocabulary (Thamarana and Narayana, 77).

In this connection, BrajKachru (1975, 1983, 1992) mentioned that several lexical innovations with regard to Englishization of Hindi words and hybrid-formations in Hindi-English code-mixing. In some contexts, the units of expression contain a minimum of one item from a South Asian language and another from English. In other instances, an English word follows a South Asian word, for instance, *Janata meals, lathi charge etc.* These are only a few words from a huge corpus of vocabulary Indian users of English have already contributed to this global language called English.

The domain of this vocabulary and its circulation is presented in the paper media as well as in electronic media,that is in turn embodied with several clippings.

As far as vocabulary selection and graduation is concerned, Michael West formulated a General Service List (GSL) in 1953, which consists of 2000 vocabulary items/ words that have a maximum frequency in their use. However, after the two thousand high-frequency words of the GSL, what vocabulary does a second language learner require? The answer to this question depends on what purpose a learner intends to use the English language. Thamarana (2016) mentioned that "a good reader with an average speed (250–500 wpm) of reading of magazines, newspapers used for regular reading through which one can comprehend 70% of the content" (Thamarana and T, 4). For academic study in school or college or at university, one needs to have a general academic vocabulary, such as the 836 word like called the University Word List (UWL) consists of words that are not in the first 2000 words of the GSL but which are frequently used ones with a wide range in academic texts. In other words, the words occur not just in one or two disciplines like mathematics, or economics, but they occur across a range of disciplines. For this corpus of vocabulary, one of the major contributing sources is the newspaper as advocated from the following table 01 provided by Hwang (1989):

Table 1

Source	General Service List (GSL)	University Word List (UWL)	Total
Academic	78.1%	8.5%	86.6%
Newspapers	80.3%	3.9%	84.2%
Popular magazines	82.9%	4.0%	86.9%
Fiction	87.4%	1.7%	89.1%

It is interesting to note that fiction contributes less to the University Word List (UWL) than the newspapers. Therefore, it is obvious that one's stock of vocabulary that provides useful for an academic purpose at various levels of education can be updated by the use of newspaper clippings from various newspapers.

The Research Questions

- What are the teaching methods used for the teaching of vocabulary and structural elements in English?

- What is the students' perception about the usefulness of newspaper clippings in the learning of English vocabulary?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for this study can broadly be discussed under two heads. The first one is about visiting various selective pages in the newspapers and observing language elements in newspaper headlines and find out language activity that can be provided to the learners for the enhancement of vocabulary, especially through newspaper clippings. For this study, some research design has been prepared. According to Kothari (2004), "A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure."The attempt has been to find various language activities from adequate news items for ease of use and trying those news items to a group of undergraduate students in a more or less in an informal set up (presuming that learners are motivated well in a less formal set up).

Further, to test the hypotheses, feedback data is collected from the target groups. In this direction, another attempt has been made to understand the nature of vocabulary in newspaper writing which is equivalent to any type of writing. The purpose is to make the target group use this understanding so that they try to incorporate that vocabulary into their own speech and writing as well. Secondly, to get the field level experiment, a sample survey is conducted in Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam districts of Andhra Pradesh. To elicit information pertaining to course implementation, course structure, students' perceptions and use of innovative teaching and learning methodologies. It has also been tried to know the views of teachers and students through structured questionnaires. According to Singh (2006), a major advantage of the questionnaire is that it permits wide coverage at a minimum expense of both money and effort. It affords wider geographical coverage it makes for the greater validity of the results through promoting the selection of a larger and more representative sample. The main idea is to get feedback from the participants which would be helpful in improving the existing system of teaching and learning, especially methods and materials used in the teaching English at an undergraduate level.

The questionnaire has been used to elicit information from students and teachers on various facets of the implementation of courses in English, is well structured, comprising both open as well as close-ended statements. Sometimes, L1 (Telugu) is used to elicit responses from the shy and silent students. The aim is to get the feedback through L2 (English) on the effectiveness of the newspaper clippings in promoting vocabulary knowledge and use in English. It also aims at finding how many students do not have minimum basis vocabulary in English.

The sample survey covers a total of 55 colleges spread across three districts in Andhra Pradesh. A total of 98 teachers (Male 60 and Female 38) and 275 students (boys 165 and girls 110) have been covered. There are variations in college wise teachers as there are colleges where there is an only a single teacher for undergraduate and there are few colleges where there are two teachers at the same level. It is noticed that in Visakhapatnam district the number of respondents is more because this district is a bit more urban in its nature with some good colleges. Therefore, the number of teachers are little more in this district. This issue in the population is well reflected in the sample. In fact, more institutions have been selected form Visakhapatnam district on the basis of the concentration of institutions which is relatively more in this district. The decision to choose more institutions from Visakhapatnam district has saved research time in the data collection process and nonetheless, is a financially viable option for a researcher as the institutional density is comparatively better. Another important thing is that though there has been a discrepancy in the students by gender across the three districts, it is necessarily maintained by the boys to girls' ratio to 3: 2 in the total sample.

Table 2: District-Wise Institutions Covered in the Study

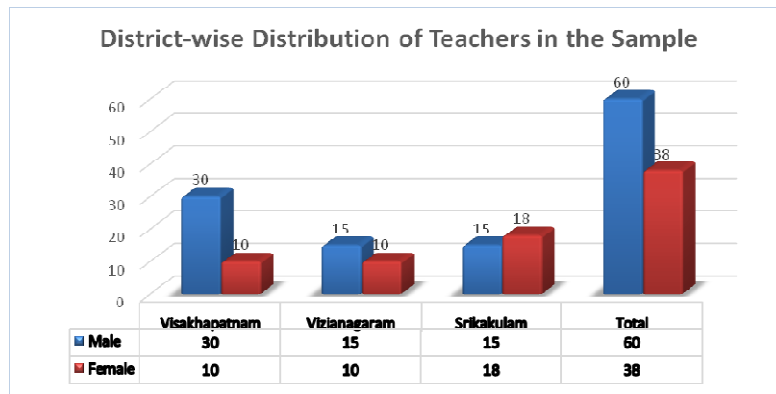| Districts	Number of Institutions
Visakhapatnam	30
Vizianagaram	15
Srikakulam	10
Total	**55**

Figure 1: District-wise Distribution of Teachers in the Sample

Teachers who taught the course at least once were taken into the sample. They were asked to give their views on various aspects of the course, including the issues about designing, implementation and evaluation. The researcher also tried to do some qualitative assessment through a multiple response data sheet. Teachers were free to make choice whether they agree to some or to all the parameters mentioned in each category. In the multiple response tables, one can see what is the parameter get the maximum attentions. Even though the researcher tried all the strategies to get the actual and valid views, there is still a possiblility for teachers' bias while responding to some of the basic questions pertaining to quality and implementation of the vocabulary learning strategies.
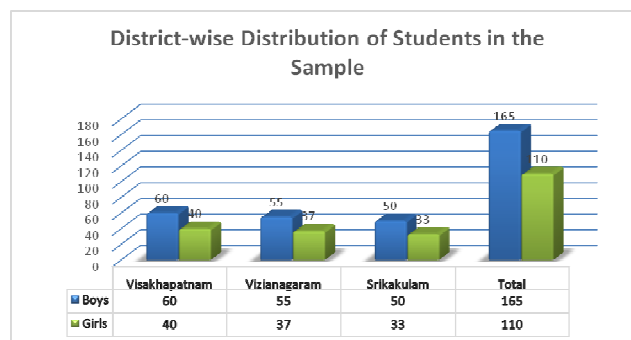

Figure 2: District-wise Distribution of Students in the Sample

The views of the students of various colleges were elicited from the sample. Students were interviewed individually and at times, the researcher had the opportunity to discuss various problems amongst the group of students of the selected institutes pertaining to the usability and implementation of the courseware in the study. The information gathered from the informal group discussions with the students helped very much in cross-checking some issues in the data sheets and helped in understanding the actual implementation and usability of the courseware.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The analysis of the data collected and interpretation made through assessment tables. Total 98 teachers and 275 students have been taken as samples for the study. Table 04 aims at getting the response from the teachers about the teaching method they followed in the classroom for teaching course vocabulary related items.

Table 3: Teaching Methods Followed by Teachers (in %)

Parameters	Strongly Agreed	Somewhat Agreed	Agreed with Hesitation	Not Agreed	Total
Adhering to the methodology given in the book	7	38	53	2	100
Citing examples form real life communication	18	23	6	53	100
Questions and answers through discussion	27	30	8	35	100
Pair or Group Work followed in class in predicting meaning	20	10	10	60	100
Use of Newspaper as a Teaching aid	7	11	12	70	100
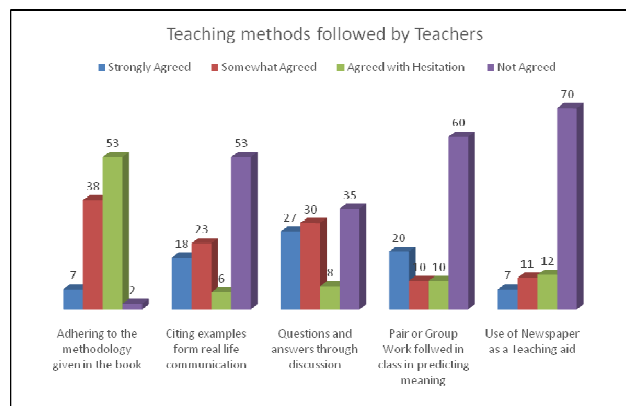
Figure 3: Teaching Methods Followed by Teachers (in %)

From the above data table, it is clear that most of the teachers do not adhere to a certain method but follow the conventional one. They do not always conduct classroom discussion of question-answer techniques. Moreover, they never use the newspaper as a teaching tool.

Table 4: Students' Perception about the Usefulness of Newspaper Clipping

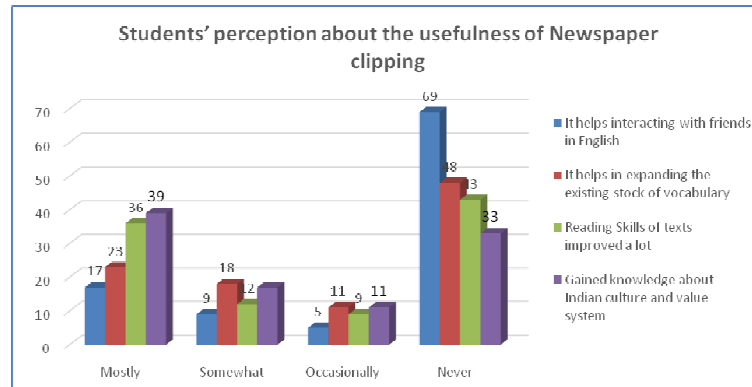| Parameters	Mostly	Somewhat	Occasionally	Never	Total
It helps interacting with friends in English	17	9	5	69	100
It helps in expanding the existing stock of vocabulary	23	18	11	48	100
Reading Skills of texts improved a lot	36	12	9	43	100
Gained knowledge about Indian culture and value system	39	17	11	33	100

Figure 4: Students' Perception about the Usefulness of Newspaper clipping

The students' perception shows that they do not get much benefit from newspaper clipping as it does not add to their range of vocabulary nor it enhances self-reading. Contrarily, it does not encourage or enable the students in interacting with friends in English.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The teaching and evaluation quality has diversely affected the learning outcomes of the English course at UG level. The absence of teachers' training, students' inability to understand English due to lack of adequate knowledge of necessary vocabulary, teachers' inability to add varieties to conventional teaching methods, non-recognition of the utility of newspaper and other materials in teaching learning process and ineffective time management are some of the main factors that contribute to this failure. Being faced with such a problem, the teacher should consider to making good use of newspaper clippings for teaching vocabulary, and this proves easier to explain without taking recourse to either paraphrasing or using the mother-tongue. In this study, it has been tried to establish the use of newspaper clippings is inducted into the language classroom, the students can be encouraged to read texts. As it has already been shown, the language of newspapers, especially their clippings become highly useful and interesting by being up-premediated, random and contingent and playful within the over-schematized language learning programmes that ignore the basic fact that neither the contexts nor the domains of language use are determinate; not is the corpus of linguistic performance in real life situations limited. It is found that the effect size also a considerable one. "Effect size is a measure of the degree to which a phenomenon is present or the degree to which a null hypothesis is not supported" (Cohen et. al, 293). In fact, the pedagogic possibilities of the different section of the newspaper are immense as it has been explored in the review of this study. This study has relevance as it adds to the existing research in this area.

The result of the combination of men, materials, and methods in the pedagogic scenario of English teaching in Andhra Pradesh is far from satisfactory. Although competently produced, the undergraduate English texts fail to meet the basic communicative needs of the learners due to the teaching methods followed in the classroom are not strictly aimed for communicative competence. Making students participate in the learning process and helping them with the use of newspaper clippings makes them independent learners. The stark reality is that the students are mostly non-participants in English classes. So, the use of newspaper clippings helps the students to learn language elements, especially vocabulary items.

CONCLUSIONS

The newspaper clippings offer the pleasant diversion from the reading of textbooks and expose the students to the representation of many interesting aspects of everyday life and events and issues that touch really them. Feeling encouraged to read extensively on various topics not covered by the texts, the students get to understand the structure that makes messages clear, emphatic and economical. The students can also learn the creative use of language through the vocabulary learning from newspaper clippings in which reporters often coin new words and also popularize their use by using such vocabulary frequently. Therefore, it would be sufficed to say through this study, as far as the context of English language teaching in Andhra Pradesh is concerned, the use of newspaper clippings is beneficial, on condition that one should study the ELT situation that prevails at UG level and have an account of the assessment of the textbooks and pitfalls in their use in the actual teaching-learning settings.

REFERENCES

1. Deville, et al. *Measuring the R/L Learner's Lexical Needs.* Paper presented at the Fifth European LSP Symposium. Leuven: Belgium, 1985. Print.

2. Kachru, Braj B. "Towards structuring the form and function of code-mixing; an Indian perspective". *Studies in the Linguistic Sciences,* 5.1 (1975): 74-92. Print.

3. Kachru, Braj B. *The Indianization of English:The English Language in India.* Oxford: OUP. 1983. Print.

4. Kachru, Braj B. *The Other Tongue: English Across Cultures.* Urbana Champagne: University of Illinois P, 1992. Print.

5. Ostyn, P and P. Godin. "RALEX: An Alternative Approach to Language Teaching". *The Modern Language Journal. 69.4* (1985): 346-353. Print.

6. Thamarana, Simhachalam and Narayana, T. "A Critical Overview of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages."*International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)* (2016): 1-6. Print.

7. Thamarana, Simhachalam and Narayana, T. "Significance of various Strategies for Teaching and Learning English." *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature* (2015): 75-79. Print.

8. Thamarana, Simhachalam. "A Comparative Study of various English Language Teaching Methods, Approaches and Techniques." *English Studies International Research Journal* (2015): 204-207. Print.

9. Kothari, Chakravanti Rajagopalachari. *Research methodology: Methods and techniques*. New Age International, 2004.

10. Singh, Yogesh Kumar. *Fundamental of research methodology and statistics*. New Age International, 2006.

11. Cohen, Louis, Lawrence Manion, and Keith Morrison. *Research methods in education*. Routledge, 2013.

12. Boers, Frank, and Seth Lindstromberg. *Cognitive linguistic approaches to teaching vocabulary and phraseology*. Vol. 6. Walter de Gruyter, 2008.

13. Hiebert, Elfrieda H., and Michael L. Kamil, eds. *Teaching and learning vocabulary: Bringing research to practice*. Routledge, 2005.

14. Hinkel, Eli. *Teaching academic ESL writing: Practical techniques in vocabulary and grammar.* Routledge, 2013.

15. Lewis, Gordon. *Bringing technology into the classroom.* Oxford University Press, 2013.

16. Hindmarsh, R. *Cambridge English Lexicon.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980. Print.