RESEARCH ARTICLE

Exploring the Challenges Encounter EFL learners in Enhancing Vocabulary Awareness

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ABSTRACT

This present article aimed at exploring the challenges encounter EFL learners in Enhancing vocabulary awareness. The subjects of the article were (80) students majoring in English and linguistics at the University of Kassala (Faculty of education) who were divided equally into two groups; the first one included (40) students who studied in the 2nd year, and the second group included also (40) students studied in the 3rd year. Besides the experimental group, a random sample of EFL teachers was selected whose number was (50) university teachers with different teaching experience. The descriptive analytical and experimental methods were used depending on two instruments to obtain the data of the study: The first tool was a diagnostic test tried out on the both groups, then the students' results measured by their performance in the test; and the second one was a questionnaire distributed to the university teachers in order reflect on their attitudes and perceptions. The SPSS program was used in the analysis of the data which have come out with outstanding results that most of the challenges EFL learners encounter in enhancing are owing to different improper pedagogical procedures, perceptions and acts caused by most EFL learners and teachers.

Key words: Challenges, EFL learners, Enhancing vocabulary awareness

Introduction

Vocabulary represents one of the most important elements of the language that learners need to acquire in order to develop their command of language from one hand and to overcome the difficulties they encounter in developing vocabulary awareness from the other hand.

Vocabulary is central to language and of critical importance to EFL learners. Wilkins (1972) argued that without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. One can't speak, understand, read or write a foreign without knowing a lot of words. So vocabulary learning is the heart of mastering a foreign language. Furthermore, learners need to know that the use of vocabulary items is not a matter of putting them together without considering the sort of relationship that holds between them and the

context in which they occur. Learners also need to exert much effort while they are acquiring vocabulary and this can't be done without being highly motivated by teachers.

Exploring the challenges encounter EFL learners to enhancing vocabulary awareness, is the core aim of the current article as well as to fulfil the following objectives:

1. To identify the main factors behind the students' hindrances' of developing vocabulary awareness.

2. To try to provide effective methods, techniques, and strategies whereby learners can enhance their vocabulary awareness.

Statement of the Problem

Once vocabulary learning is the heart of mastering a foreign language. It was observed that the majority of EFL learners still do not know the use of vocabulary items and the sort of relationship that holds between them and the context in which they occur. Learners also lack the knowledge and the abilities by which a platform of vocabulary awareness is established in order to communicate effectively and actively when they use EFL as a lingua franca. This can't be done without certain factors and conditions are achieved, and this is what the article is deeply going to investigate.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The main purpose of this article was to explore the challenges encounter EFL learners in enhancing vocabulary awareness. Thus, in order to achieve its aim, the following questions should be answered:

Q1: To what extent ignorance of the semantic properties of the lexical items negatively affects learners' vocabulary awareness?

Q2: On what way practising using new lexical items can help learners enhance their vocabulary awareness?

Q3: What are the main factors behind learners' failure of enhancing vocabulary awareness?

To answer the above questions, the following hypotheses were posed as follows:

H1: "Ignorance of the semantic properties of the lexical items negatively affects learners' vocabulary awareness**".**

H2: "Learners are not given enough opportunities to practice using new lexical items**"**.

H3: "Inadequate knowledge of vocabulary is the main factors behind learners failure in enhancing vocabulary awareness**"**.

Literature Review

Definitions of Vocabulary

Kamil and Hiebert, (2007), broadly defined vocabulary as the knowledge of words and word meanings, however, vocabulary is more complex than this definition suggests. First, words come in two forms: oral and print. Oral vocabulary includes those words that we recognize and use in listening and speaking. Print vocabulary includes those words that we recognize and use in reading and writing. Second, word knowledge also comes in two forms, receptive and productive. Receptive vocabulary includes words that we recognize when we hear or read them. Productive vocabulary includes words that we use when we speak or write. Receptive vocabulary is typically larger than productive vocabulary and may include many words to which we assign some meaning, even if we do not know their full definitions and connotations – or ever use them ourselves as we speak or write.

According to Farrell (2009) research has indicated that people store words semantically, not alphabetically like in a dictionary; that the more we use a word, the easier it is to remember; and that we will remember faster the word we have more recently used. Many times we as teachers suggest that our students read as much as they can so they can expand their vocabularies. We can hope this will happen and sometimes it does, but we have an important role to play in motivating our students to enlarge their vocabulary banks by intervening directly and teaching them how to do this. Many teachers try to accomplish this by getting their students to memorize word lists or look at synonyms and antonyms of a word and then doing fill-in-the-blank exercises connected to these memorized words. These efforts may be useful, but recent research has indicated that ELLs acquire vocabulary more effectively when they are directly involved in constructing the meaning of a word rather than memorize definitions of synonyms.

The importance of vocabulary

Ghazal (2007) reports that vocabulary awareness is very important to language learners. So, Words are the building blocks of a language since they label objects, actions, ideas without which people can't convey the intended meaning. A prominent role of vocabulary knowledge in second or foreign language learning has been recently recognized by theorists and researchers in the field. Accordingly, numerous types of approaches, techniques, exercises, and practice have been introduced into the field to teach vocabulary. It has been suggested that teaching vocabulary should not only consist of the teaching of specific words but also aim at equipping learners with strategies necessary to expand their vocabulary knowledge. Words serve different purposes when reading, writing and speaking. A reader needs to recognize words and assign meaning to them; a writer and speaker must choose words to convey ideas. A person with limited vocabulary will have difficulty in expressing and understanding ideas.

Brynildssen and Shawna (2000) argue that a rich vocabulary is a critical element of reading ability. Research has identified vocabulary knowledge as the most important factor in reading comprehension. They state a strong link between reading and writing. Reading and writing are two analogous and complementary processes in that both involve generating ideas or organizing ideas into logical drafting them a number of times to achieve cohesion, and revising ideas as is appropriate. The processes are so closely aligned that some researchers even advocate teaching reading and writing simultaneously rather than as two separate subjects. Word knowledge has particular importance in literate societies. It contributes significantly to achievement in the subject of the school curriculum, as well as formal and informal speaking and writing. Most people feel that there is a common sense relationship between vocabulary and comprehension, messages are composed of ideas, and ideas are expressed in words.

Vocabulary development

According to Echevarria and et al (2004) vocabulary development is critical for English learners because we know that there is a strong relationship between vocabulary knowledge in English and academic achievement. To be most effective, vocabulary development should be closely related to the subject matter students are studying. So the teacher, who teaches vocabulary well, embedded the new words within the context of the text, providing students with a rich contextual environment in which to learn new terms and expand their English vocabulary. A research conducted on vocabulary instruction determined four main principles that should guide instruction:

- Students should be active in developing their understanding of words and ways to learn them. Such ways include the use of semantic mapping, word sorts, use of concept definition map, and developing strategies for independent word learning.
- Students should personalize word learning through such practices as vocabulary self- collocation strategy, mnemonic strategies, and personal dictionaries.
- Students should be immersed in words by providing language environments that focus on words and draw students' attention to the learning of words. Words walls, personal word study notebooks and dictionaries, and comparing/ contrasting words with the same morphemic element aid students in recognizing and using words around them.
- Students should build on multiple sources of information to learn words through repeated exposures. Letting students see and hear new words more than once and drawing on multiple sources of meaning is important for vocabulary development.

The importance of vocabulary in ELT

Meara (1980) argues that in spite of little attention to vocabulary research, the importance of vocabulary was not completely ignored in language pedagogy, even during the heydays of the development of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). For example, Wilkins (1972) as an early representative advocate of the Communicative Approach, clearly indicated that learning vocabulary is as important as learning grammar. He believes that near-native speaking levels can be distinguished by whether learners can use, say, collocations well. Without such ability, even if there are no grammatical mistakes, users cannot be categorized as native speakers.

Allen (1983) also emphasized that "lexical problems frequently interfere with communication; communication breaks down when people do not use the right words". This underlines the importance of vocabulary in classroom teaching, as without vocabulary, it is difficult to communicate. Nevertheless, at that time priority to teaching was given to the notional and functional aspects of language, which were believed to help learners achieve communicative competence directly, so vocabulary teaching was much less directly emphasized in many ELT classrooms. But in current trends of vocabulary teaching and learning Strategies for EFL Settings certain attention was given to the importance of integrating it into a general framework of foreign language teaching.

Promoting Vocabulary Development

According to Baumann & Kameenui (1991), word knowledge is crucial to reading comprehension and determines how well students will be able to comprehend the texts they read in the upper elementary grades, in middle and high school, and in college. Although it is true that comprehension is far more than recognizing words and remembering their meanings, it is also true that if a reader does not know the meanings of a sufficient proportion of the words in the text, comprehension is impossible. Poor readers often lack an adequate vocabulary to get meaning from what they read. Consequently, reading is difficult and tedious for them, and they are unable and often unwilling to do a large amount of reading they must do if they are to encounter unknown words often enough to learn them. This situation contributes to what is called "Matthew Effects," that is, interactions with the environment that exaggerate individual differences over time, with "rich get richer, poor get poorer" consequences. Good readers read more, become even better readers, and learn more words; poor readers read less, become poorer readers, and learn fewer words. As stated by Anderson & Freebody (1981).

White & et al. (1990) argue that in spite of its obvious importance to academic success, vocabulary development has received little instructional attention in recent years. So finding ways to increase students' vocabulary growth throughout the school years must become a major educational priority.

Irvin (1997) points out that there are several types of vocabulary For example; a listening vocabulary that includes all the words we hear and understand. Speaking vocabulary includes all the words we use in everyday speech. Reading vocabulary includes the words in print that we recognize or can figure out.

Principles of Vocabulary Development

Brynsildssen and Shawna (2000) state that while words are the writer's most important tools; vocabulary development must be an important part of classroom learning. They offer several key principles that should guide the creation and implementation of a comprehensive vocabulary development program.

1- Teachers must offer direct instruction of techniques or procedures for developing a broad and varied vocabulary. This instruction can be provided both formally through the language program, and informally through various classroom instructions-such as story time with students.

2- New vocabulary term must be connected to students' previous knowledge and experiences. If students are unable to contextualize new words by attaching them to word and concepts they already understand, the word will likely have little meaning to them.

3- Students should be able to contextualize the vocabulary terms they have learned and use them in society in order to do this successfully. Students must first learn to become comfortable using these words in the classroom. Students should be encouraged to incorporate new vocabulary terms into their oral and written report and presentations.

4- Practice and repetition are important methods by which students can become familiar with new words and understand how they may be used correctly. Students should be frequently exposed to the same word through practice exercises classroom use and testing.

5- Schools teachers and students must be committed to vocabulary development over the long term. The teaching of vocabulary must be an interdisciplinary project, integrated into the curriculum at every level.

Some Obstacles to Vocabulary Development

Anderson & Nagy (1992) argue that helping students to develop a strong reading vocabulary requires more than having them look up words in a dictionary. Rather, students need instruction that will help them

acquire new word knowledge and develop strategies to enable them to increase the depth of that knowledge over time. To help students develop word knowledge in breadth and depth, we must first recognize four fundamental obstacles, and then develop teaching practices to address those obstacles:

- The size of the task. The number of words that students need to learn is exceedingly large.
- The differences between spoken English and written or "literate" English. The vocabulary of written English, particularly the "literate" English that students encounter in textbooks and other school materials, differs greatly from that of spoken, especially conversational, English. Students—both English language learners and those for whom English is the first language—may have limited exposure to literate English outside of school.
- The limitations of sources of information about words. The sources of information about words that are readily available to students—dictionaries, word parts, and context—pose their own problems. Each can be difficult to use, uninformative, or even misleading.
- The complexity of word knowledge. Knowing a word involves much more than knowing its dictionary definition, and simply memorizing a dictionary definition does not guarantee the ability to use a word in reading or writing. Adding to the complexity is the fact that different kinds of words place different demands on learners.

Reasons for Failure of Vocabulary Instruction

Nagy (1988) argues that vocabulary instruction often fails to increase comprehension of reading text. There are two basic ways to account for this failure. The first is that most vocabulary instruction fails to produce in-depth word knowledge. A number of studies indicate that reading comprehension requires a high level of word knowledge higher than the level achieved by many types of vocabulary instruction. Only those methods that go beyond providing partial knowledge, producing in-depth knowledge of the words taught, will reliably increase readers' comprehension of texts containing those words. The implication is that teachers should augment traditional methods of instruction such as memorizing definitions with more intensive instruction aimed at producing richer, deeper word knowledge.

A second reason for the failure of vocabulary instruction to improve reading comprehension relates to the comprehensibility of texts containing some unfamiliar words. One does not need to know every word in a text to understand it. Some researchers found that one content word could be replaced by a more difficult synonym without significantly decreasing comprehension (Freebody and Anderson 1983). Hence, redundancy of text explains the failure of vocabulary instruction to improve comprehension. If a certain proportion of unfamiliar words in the text does not measurably hinder comprehension, then instruction on these words would not measurably improve it. In fact, inferring the meanings of unfamiliar words in the text is itself a major avenue of vocabulary growth (Nagy, Anderson, and Herman 1987; Nagy, Herman, and Anderson 1985). By implication, what is needed to produce vocabulary growth is not more vocabulary instruction, but more reading. These two accounts of the failure of some vocabulary instruction to improve comprehension appear to have almost contradictory implications for instruction. Yet the two are not mutually exclusive; they give complementary perspectives on the complex relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension.

Learning the vocabulary of English

Yorkey (1982) suggests that it is difficult to count the words a person knows. One difficulty is the definition of the word. Should we consider be, am, is, are, was, and were six different words, or vary, variation, various, and variously four different words? If you know that 'spring' is the name of a season but don't know that it also means ''the place where water comes out of the earth'' or ''to leap'' or ''a part of watch'' do you know the meaning of spring or only one of its several meanings?

Another difficulty is the definition of the word ''know''. What does it mean 'to know' a word? You may recognize the meaning of a particular word when you read but you may never use it in your daily speech or writing. Can you be said to ''know'' the word?.

The size of your native language vocabulary reflects your education, reading, and range of interests. There is a very clear relationship between vocabulary size and professional success. To a certain extent, the

same is probably true for students of English as a foreign language. If you have no contact with English except through your school books, you may know only the words in your books. If you have the chance to meet English speaking people, or to read English from magazines, or to see movies without subtitles, you will be able to extend your vocabulary into areas that are not included in your books. Obviously, the more you hear, speak, read, and write English, the more opportunity you have to increase your vocabulary. As a measure of interest and experience in English, the relative size a students' vocabulary is meaningful- even if it cannot be measured exactly.

Deliberate learning of vocabulary

According to Cook (2009), the most obvious way to speed up the learning involves deliberate learning using word card. There is a long history of research on deliberate learning which has shown the effectiveness of such learning in the explicit knowledge of vocabulary. This research has also provided support for useful guidelines about how such learning is best carried out.

Deliberate learning, however, is open to two criticisms. First, learning from word cards involved decontextualized learning which may mean that many aspects of what is involved in knowing a word – its use in particular – may not be learned. Second, deliberate international learning may not result in the implicit knowledge which is needed for normal receptive language use, that is, the ability to subconsciously and fluently access the meaning of the word forms met in reading or listening.

Cook (2009) claimed there is a comparison between the effects of learning words in isolation and learning words in a sentence context. Knowledge of each word was measured using many different test items for each word which measured knowledge of spoken and written form, collocation, meaning, grammar, restrictions on use associations. Webb found that even learning words in isolation resulted in knowledge of aspects such as collocation, spoken form, and associations and that the only measurable difference between words learned in isolation and in a sentence context was a very small benefit for grammatical knowledge. Even though deliberate learning provides knowledge of a range of aspects involved in knowing a word, it would be foolish to rely on this as the only kind of learning. Deliberate learning is a way of quickly boosting knowledge that is then helpful in the meaning-focused use of the language.

Anyhow, deliberate learning is an important option to consider when looking at how to bridge the vocabulary gap between simplified and difficult texts. In a well-balanced language course, there needs to be a balance of the four strands of meaning-focused input, meaning- focused output, language- focused learning and fluency development. Deliberate vocabulary learning shouldn't be seen as being in competition with incidental learning through reading or listening. Both are useful ways of learning and mutually reinforcing.

Methodology

Method and design of the study

To fulfil the objective of the article, the descriptive analytical, the quantitative and the experimental methods were used. The article design was structured and particularly prepared to explore the challenges facing EFL learners in enhancing their vocabulary awareness.

Subjects

The subjects of the current article are students of English in the Department of English language and linguistics, inside the faculty of education at the University of Kassala according to the academic year (2015-2016). Their overall number is composed of (80) students of English divided into two groups: The first one included (40) students from the second year, and the second included also (40) students from the third year selected purposively. They study English as a foreign language; besides they were homogenous in terms of the educational system, the academic discipline, and age. However, the justification behind the choice of second and third-year students comes from the fact that they have been previously taught vocabulary course, as a part of their BA English program, this courses offered very insightful interpretations to the challenges the learners encountered when studying vocabulary.

The second population targeted by this article included teachers of EFL from different universities. A total of (50) EFL university teachers, males, and females of different teaching experience ranged from (2) to (40) years; collaborated on this study with responding to the questionnaire.

Instrumentation

In this article, two instruments were used for the data collection. The first was the prêt and post-tests which consisted of five questions. Each question was designed carefully and on purpose to assess the hindrances students encounter in vocabulary awareness. As for the questionnaire, it was distributed to fifty (50) University EFL teachers, to reflect their views on the hindrances encounter the learners in enhancing the vocabulary awareness.

Procedure

The test and the questionnaire were used as data collection tools. Particular procedures and steps were followed in collecting the data. In order to check the validity of the test, three copies of the test were handed over to three EFL teachers. They wrote down their comments, suggestions, at the end of the test. According to their comments, suggestions, notes, and advice, the number of the questions were reduced from seven to five. To check the content validity of the questionnaire, the researchers ran a pilot study, where four copies of the questionnaire were distributed to some of EFL teachers, they filled in the questionnaire and wrote down their comments at the end of the questionnaire. According to their comments, the number of the statements were reduced from twenty in the pilot questionnaire to 10 statements. Also, some of the statements were modified.

Reliability of the Questionnaire

Alpha Cronbach formula is used to compute the reliability of the questionnaire. The value of reliability lies between 0 and 1. The reliability increases according to an increase of alpha value up to 1. In general, if the alpha value more than or equal 0.5 the reliability is considered. Cronbach formula is:

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1}\left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{k}\sigma_{y_i}^2}{\sigma_x^2}\right)$$

Where:

$k \equiv$ Items number

$\sigma_{y_i}^2 \equiv$ Variance for each single item

$\sigma_x^2 \equiv$ Variance for total of items

For this article, it was found that $\alpha = 0.84$, and this means the questionnaire has a high reliability.

validity is the square root of reliability. In our case is $SQRT(0.87) = 0.92$. This indicates that there is very high validity in the questionnaire.

The vocabulary test consists of (5) questions, it administered to the students during the academic year (2015-2016) at Faculty of Education department of English language and linguistics. It took about (90) minutes for all students to finish it. As to the experiment, it took four weeks three hours session per week. During the experiment, forty students in two groups were taught as one experimental group. In three hours weekly class, the experimental group was given a series of lectures on vocabulary. During treatment lectures, different activities were elaborated to raise students' awareness of vocabulary. Treatment lectures were selected from English vocabulary books. The students were encouraged to explain different uses of words, providing them with topic-related to vocabulary use.

Data analysis

Certain statistical strategies were used here in the analysis of the article data. These tools are frequency, percentage, one sample t-test, paired sample t-test, independent sample t-test using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) in the analysis of the data obtained by the designed instrument. The results of the test along with the questionnaire have been collected and counted in order to check their outcomes that explored the hindrances of vocabulary awareness encountered by EFL learners.

Testing the Hypotheses in Relation to the Test

H1: "*Ignorance of the semantic properties of the lexical items negatively affects learners' vocabulary awareness***".**

One sample t-test for the first hypothesis

Expected mean	Mean	St.d.	t-value	d.f	p-value
12	7.04	1.97	-17.82	49	0.000

The table (1) above showed that the p-value equals (0.000), is less than the significance level (0.05), which means that there is a significant difference between the expected and the actual means. When the actual mean (7.04) is less than the expected mean (12), this outcome actually, verified the first hypothesis above that *''Ignorance of the semantic properties of the lexical items negatively affects learners' vocabulary awareness''*.

H2: "*Learners are not given enough opportunities to practice using new lexical items***".**

One sample T-test for the second hypothesis

Expected mean	Mean	St.d.	t-value	d.f	p-value
12	6.94	2.48	-14.44	49	0.000

The above table (2) showed that the p-value equals (0.000) is less than the significance level (0.05), and that means there is a statistical difference between the expected and the actual means. When the actual mean (6.94) is less than the expected mean (12), these results confirmed the hypothesis number two which read *''learners are not given enough opportunities to practice using the new lexical items''*.

H3: "*Inadequate knowledge of vocabulary is the main factors behind learners failure in enhancing vocabulary awareness***".**

One sample T-test for the third hypothesis

Expected mean	Mean	St.d.	t-value	d.f	p-value
12	6.64	2.43	-15.59	49	0.000

The above table (3) showed that the p-value equal 0.000 is less than the significance level (0.05), which indicates that there is a significant difference between the expected and the actual means. When the actual mean (6.64) is less than the expected mean (12), these results, in fact, confirmed the hypothesis number three that **"***Inadequate knowledge of vocabulary is the main factors behind learners failure in enhancing vocabulary awareness***"**.

Paired sample t-test for the students' performance

Skill	Mean	St.d.	t-value	d.f	p-value
2nd year					
Q1	1.88	1.604	-10.422	39	0.000
	3.53	1.935			
Q2	6.15	2.143	-10.422	39	0.000
	8.63	2.361			
Q3	12.98	1.687	-6.811	39	0.000
	14.83	.675			
Q4	4.13	1.202	-8.241	39	0.000
	5.60	1.277			
Q5	3.15	1.748	-9.297	39	0.000
	4.68	1.591			
Total	28.35	6.100	-17.541	39	0.000
	37.25	5.271			
3rd year					
Q1	2.53	1.853	-7.722	39	0.000
	4.70	2.574			
Q2	8.35	2.045	-7.911	39	0.000
	9.88	2.151			
Q3	13.80	1.829	-2.414	39	0.021
	14.45	1.867			
Q4	4.23	1.776	-5.596	39	0.000
	6.00	1.754			

Q5	3.65	2.155	-6.914	39	0.000
	4.88	1.786			
Total	32.18	6.968	-13.358	39	0.000
	40.08	6.955			

The above table indicated that p-value was zero in both tests. Each lexical category denoted that the p-value was less than mean's value. According to the means' value, the table above obviously manifested how vocabulary learning was problematic for the learners in both groups according to their performance in the two tests. As a result, these statistics and rates strongly verified the first and third hypotheses: **"***Ignorance of the semantic properties of the lexical items negatively affects learners' vocabulary awareness***"; and "***Inadequate knowledge of vocabulary is the main factors behind learners failure in enhancing vocabulary awareness***"**. Thus, in the view of the researchers, EFL learners lack the adequate knowledge that enhances their vocabulary awareness.

The Analysis of the Questionnaire in relation to Hypotheses

S1: "Some teachers ignore the role of word power in developing vocabulary awareness**"**.

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	15	30.0
Agree	24	48.0
Neutral	8	16.0
Disagree	3	6.0
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Total	50	100.0

As shown in table (4) above that the majority of the respondents (48%) agreed that some teachers ignore the role of word power in developing vocabulary awareness, (30%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement, whereas, (16%) of the respondents were neutral, and only (2%) of the respondents disagreed with that idea. As such, in the view of the researchers, this fact was counted as one of the hindrances of enhancing EFL learners' vocabulary awareness.

S2: "Most of the teachers do not adopt effective techniques to raise learners' vocabulary awareness**"**.

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	23	46.0
Agree	14	28.0
Neutral	8	16.0
Disagree	3	6.0
Strongly Disagree	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0

The 5th table above indicated that (46%) of the respondents strongly agreed that most of the teachers do not adopt effective techniques to raise learners' vocabulary awareness, (28%) of the respondents agreed with the statement, whereas (16%) of them were neutral and (6%) disagreed, and only (4%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. Thus, these views identified another obstacle that encounters EFL learners in developing vocabulary awareness.

S3: "Limitations of the lexical items create the learners' inability to develop vocabulary awareness**"**.

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	27	54.0
Agree	17	34.0
Neutral	3	6.0
Disagree	3	6.0
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Total	50	100.0

As shown by the 6th table above that the majority of the respondents (54%) strongly agreed that limitations of the lexical items created the learners' inability to develop vocabulary awareness, (34%) of the respondents agreed with the statement, whereas, (6%) of the respondents were neutral and the same number of the respondents (6%) disagreed. As a result, this statement also pointed out to one of the barriers obstructed EFL learners' ability to develop vocabulary awareness.

S4: "Teaching materials should focus on helping learners to develop their vocabulary awareness".

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	22	44.0
Agree	24	48.0
Neutral	3	6.0
Disagree	0	0.0
Strongly Disagree	1	2.0
Total	50	100.0

The 7th table above showed that (48%) of the participants agreed that materials taught should focus on helping learners develop their vocabulary, (44%) of them strongly agreed, while, (6%) of the respondents were neutral, and only (2%) of them strongly disagreed. Therefore, these views called for the necessity of teaching material foci on helping learners to enhance their vocabulary awareness.

S5: "Most of the teachers do not provide learners with strategies that enable them to deal with new words".

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	16	32.0
Agree	21	42.0
Neutral	7	14.0
Disagree	5	10.0
Strongly Disagree	1	2.0
Total	50	100.0

From the 8th table above, it was clear that majority of the respondents (42%) agreed that most of the teachers do not provide learners with strategies that enable them to deal with new words, (32%) of them strongly agreed with them, while, (14%) of the respondents were neutral and (10%) of them disagreed, and only (2%) of the respondents strongly disagreed.

S6: "The process of learning new words and their meanings contribute to the development of learners' vocabulary awareness".

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	18	36.0
Agree	27	54.0
Neutral	4	8.0
Disagree	1	2.0
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Total	50	100.0

As shown in table (9) above that more than half of the respondents (52%) agreed that the process of learning new words contribute to the development of learners' vocabulary awareness, (36%) of the respondents strongly agreed, while (8%) of the respondents were neutral, and only (2%) of them disagreed with the statement.

S7: "Most of the EFL university learners face difficulties in choosing the correct lexical items".

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	22	44.0
Agree	21	42.0
Neutral	5	10.0
Disagree	0	0.0

Strongly Disagree	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0

As shown in the 10th table above, that (44%) of the respondents strongly agreed that most of EFL university learners face difficulties in choosing the correct lexical items to express themselves, (42%) of them agreed, whereas, (10%) of the respondents were neutral, and only (4%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. These views reflected that learners' lack of vocabulary awareness which enables them to choose appropriate lexical items.

S8: "Some of the EFL university learners are unable to differentiate between denotative and connotative meaning".

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	19	38.0
Agree	26	52.0
Neutral	3	6.0
Disagree	1	2.0
Strongly Disagree	1	2.0
Total	50	100.0

The above table (11) indicate that majority of the respondents (52%) agreed that some of EFL university learners are unable to differentiate between denotative and connotative meaning, (38%) of the respondents strongly agreed with them, whereas (6%) of the respondents were neutral, (2%) of them disagreed and (2%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with that idea. Consequently, these attitudes showed that due to the lack of vocabulary awareness, learners were unable to differentiate between denotative meaning and connotative meaning.

S9: "The use of core vocabulary reflects learners' high levels of vocabulary awareness".

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	22	44.0
Agree	20	40.0
Neutral	5	10.0
Disagree	3	6.0
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Total	50	100.0

Table (11) above indicated that (44%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the use of core vocabulary reflects learners high levels of vocabulary awareness, (40%) of the respondents agreed with the above statement, whereas (10%) of the respondents were neutral and (6%) of the respondents disagreed with it. This fact denoted that the vocabulary awareness of learners is determined by their ability to use of core vocabulary items.

S10: "The self-confidence of EFL learners breaks their barriers of developing vocabulary awareness".

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	28	56.0
Agree	17	34.0
Neutral	0	0.0
Disagree	3	6.0
Strongly Disagree	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0

The 12th table above manifested the majority of the respondents (56%) strongly agreed that EFL university learners' self-confidence breaks their barriers to develop vocabulary awareness, (34%) of the respondents agreed with the above statement, while only (6%) disagreed and (4%) strongly disagreed. Thus, these views assured that if learners felt confidence, they would be able to break the barriers of developing vocabulary awareness.

In brief, it was clear from all the above-discussed statements and the test's outcomes, that the hypotheses of the article have been successfully verified and were in line with the objectives of the article that explored the challenges encountered the undergraduate learners of English in developing vocabulary awareness.

Discussion

The statistics and the analysis results have shown that there are several hindrances and obstacles that obstructed and encountered undergraduate learners of English to develop vocabulary awareness. These facts have been discovered via a diagnostic test tried out on undergraduate learners of English, and supported by some views obtained by a questionnaire delivered to EFL teachers represented different Sudanese Universities. According to these statistics, it has been inferred that most of the hindrances the learners encounter in developing vocabulary awareness were owing to ineffective pedagogical practices, teachers and learners' negative perceptions towards the process of teaching and learning of EFL.

Conclusion

The problems of vocabulary awareness as for undergraduate learners of English pushed the researchers sought to find solutions and suggest new solutions, methods, and strategies whereby learners can be able to overcome the hindrances that encounter them in developing their vocabulary awareness.

This article investigated thoroughly and deeply explored the hindrances of developing learners' vocabulary awareness via the diagnosis of the students' performance in the tests and also through the attitudes and perceptions collected from different EFL teachers. The findings that obtained by the test and questionnaire led to very satisfying and valuable outcomes concerning the causes behind the hindrances encounter undergraduates in developing vocabulary awareness; these results can be outlined as follows:

- Some teachers ignore the role of word power in developing vocabulary awareness skills.
- Inadequate knowledge of vocabulary was a main factor behind the students' hindrances' of developing vocabulary awareness.
- Most of the teachers did not adopt effective techniques to raise learners' vocabulary awareness.
- Most of the teachers did not provide learners with strategies that enable them to deal with new words.
- Limitations of the lexical items created the learners' inability to develop vocabulary awareness.
- The learners' lack of vocabulary awareness did not enable them to choose appropriate lexical items.
- The vocabulary awareness of learners is determined by their ability to use core vocabulary items.

Eventually, the article recommended that teachers should provide learners with strategies that enable them to deal with new words, Teaching materials should focus on helping learners to develop their vocabulary awareness, teachers adopt effective techniques to raise learners' vocabulary awareness, and finally teachers must reflect the role of word power in developing the vocabulary awareness of learners.

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