A Comparison between the Translation Method and the Pictorial Method in Learning and Retention of Vocabulary by Iranian EFL Learners

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پديدآورنده:

Many researchers have shown the significance of the role of vocabulary in language learning. However, there have been a lot of questions about which method of teaching vocabulary will be more effective, especially for elementary students. To further research on this issue, the present study aimed at revealing vocabulary role by comparing two supposedly efficient methods of vocabulary teaching: pictorial and translation. The participants were 120 beginner Iranian students. They were divided randomly into two groups. Each group consisted of 60 learners who were both male and female. For the first group, vocabulary was taught by providing the words' pictures, and for the second group it was taught by giving the words' translation. Because of students' level (that was zero beginner), this study did not contain a pretest. During 3 weeks, the students learned two basic words for each English alphabet which means they learned totally 50 English basic words. At the end of the course, an immediate posttest was administrated. After two week, the students were given a delayed posttest to gain information about the long-term effects of those vocabulary teaching methods. Then, descriptive statistics were calculated on the collected data to compare the performance of two groups, and a couple of independent-samples t-tests were conducted to analyze the performances of the two groups on the immediate and the delayed posttest. The results showed that the students in the pictorial
group outperformed their counterparts in the translation group in both the immediate and the delayed posttest. Although the effect size in the first posttest was small, its magnitude was large in the delayed posttest. This would imply that by the passage of time, the words learned through the pictorial method tend to be remembered more easily than those learned via the translation method.