

## INCORPORATING VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES AND BLENDED MODE OF LEARNING TO ENHANCE VOCABULARY OF UNDER GRADUATE ENGINEERING STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

Vocabulary acquisition is the crucial element to learn English as a second language, because it is the fundamental prerequisite to the four skills of a language listening, speaking, reading and writing. Even in second language learning, vocabulary learning is a crucial part. With the advancement of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the professional and technical areas of study, Students' successes depend on the vocabulary learning strategies employed by them. Vocabulary has been recognized as crucial to language use in which insufficient vocabulary knowledge of the learners led to difficulties in second language learning. For students of under graduation engineering vocabulary causes a great deal of hindrance in learning since the vocabulary they are acquainted with technical jargons and so academic lexical items occur with a lower frequency as compared to general vocabulary items do. Allen (1983) also accentuated that "In communication major hindrance is a lexical problem; communication process breaks down when the speaker does not use the exact word during communication." This shows that vocabulary teaching is important in classroom teaching, as without knowledge of vocabulary chances of a breakdown of the communication cycle increases. The study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of technical vocabulary learning strategies and blended mode of learning to enhance the vocabulary of undergraduate engineering students. This paper presents the discussion of the methods of developing vocabulary.

**KEYWORDS:** English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Blended Learning, Vocabulary, Student, Developing, Learning Strategies, Academic Vocabulary

### INTRODUCTION

Capability, efficiency, knowledge, and skill of human resources are the major criteria for any nation's success. So there has been a paradigm shift in the education system as per the demand of the present scenario in India. Since last two decades, markets and business are changing likes leaps and bounds. The market demands large trained workforce. This has changed education, especially technical education in India. Due to the high paid job after completion of Degree or Diploma courses in the engineering field, more students attracts towards engineering field. During the interview and job, they face major hurdles regarding the English language since they have done their schooling in vernacular languages.

One of the hurdles is knowledge about vocabulary. Teaching vocabulary through different methods of presentation has long been a matter of concern for researchers in the field of second language teaching/ learning, and one of the main struggles for teachers to be accounted for.

This paper will be of special interest to teachers who are interested in finding the most effective ways of vocabulary presentation to ESL learners to enrich their areas of knowledge in L2 vocabulary recognition and production.

Vocabulary acquisition is the crucial element to learn English as a second language, because it is the fundamental prerequisite to the four skills of a language listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Wilkins (1972) argued, “without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed.” Strategies use of second language learners for the acquisition of new words in the second language are called ‘vocabulary learning strategies’ (GU, 1994). Schmitt and Schmitt (1993) divided learning vocabulary into remembering a word and learning a new word. Webb (2005) suggested that to infer meaning of English sentences and paragraphs one need to have a huge vocabulary, while a limited vocabulary often leads to misunderstanding or misinterpretation of text. (Oxford, and Scarcellat. (1994)).

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The objective of this study to find out the impact of using blended learning and vocabulary enhancement strategies by exploring students’ opinion and observing their progress after treatment for enhancing vocabulary in English.

### **HYPOTHESES**

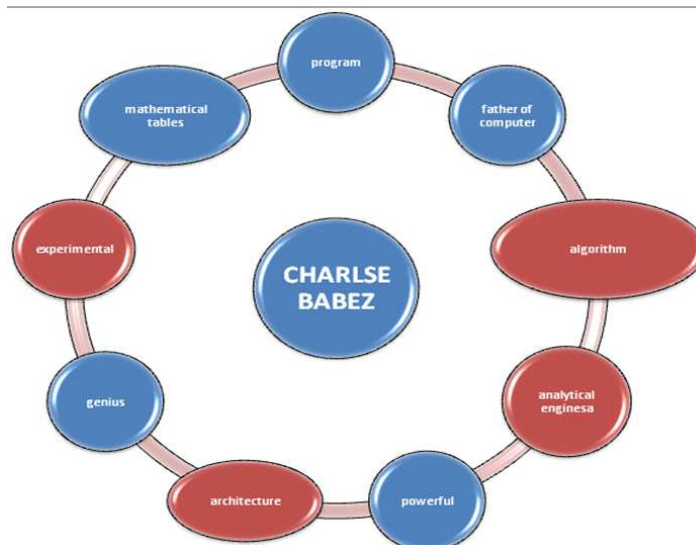
- Blended learning and vocabulary enhancement strategies overall help for enrichment of vocabulary of under -graduate engineering learners.
- Blended learning helps to create a collaborative atmosphere among learners.

### **EXPERIMENT**

The amalgamation of the method of recollection, selection and application with blended learning wherein pedlet was used as a discussion forum, was employed to enhance the vocabulary of undergraduate engineering learners.

#### **Recollection**

Students were divided into groups of six. Through pneumonia (association of ideas), learners were asked to recall all the words connected to a Charles Babez, a passion between them due to their interest in area of engineering. They were asked to post words on pedlet.com. They recalled the father of the computer, founder, mathematical tables, genius, powerful, machines, program, function, etc. When conducted as a group activity on pedlet.com, many more words were recollected by the students. The words in blue circles are passive vocabulary.



**Figure 1: Words Collection by Students**

### **Selection**

Then the students were given an assignment to speak or write about “My Idol”. They asked to jot down the main points. So they can try to utilize their passive memory into active memory. They were instructed to record their speech and post on wall of pedlet.com. They had to give cross comments of peers. Feedback can be oral or written. They can discuss the points during the classroom session.

### **Application**

The words were used in their oral or written composition thus bringing the passive vocabulary into active use. Similarly, learners were asked to sit together and jot down all the words associated with chat shows on TV like Coffee with Karan, on the couch with Koyeal etc. (another burning topic among students). In Passivewords like a celebrity, Carrier decision, etc. were bandied about.

**Exercise 1:** A video of a TED Talk - Pranva Mistry was played mute. The students were asked to write down what idea they got from the video. Then it was played with audio and write down difficult words.

**Exercise 2:** A video clipping of a recipe was shown and students were instructed to write the ingredients and the procedure for baking dish.

**Exercise 3:** Students were shown a movie- Transformer and The Time Machine. They asked to write a review.

**Exercise 4:** Topics like “Is the death penalty appropriate? Or should it be banned?”, “Are video games containing violence appropriate for children?” and “Are single-sex schools more effective than co-ed schools?” were given for discussion.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Data Collection**

The researcher used the analytical, descriptive method to conduct this study.

## Population

The cohort consisted of 40 students studying at a Hansaba College of engineering and technology, Sidhpur in the first semester of computer engineering

## Instruments of the Study

A questionnaire was used to collect data of this study. In addition to that to find the strategies they use to learn vocabulary students' performance and communication was observed.

## Reliability and Validity for Student Questionnaire

Internal consistency of the questionnaire item was tested using Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. The cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.89 for entire questionnaire, which is a high degree that reflects that students' questionnaire was suitable to be used for the study. Besides Cronbach's Alpha calculation questionnaire was sent to 2 ESL experts to evaluate appropriateness of each item in measuring vocabulary enhancement of undergraduate learners. After getting experts' suggestions some items were reformed and it was administered to the students at the end of treatment.

## STATISTICS AND RESULTS

A questionnaire was administered to the students to get their opinion about the blended learning and strategies implementation to enhance vocabulary. It consists of 10 questions.

### Students' Questionnaire Results

Figures below illustrates questionnaire results.

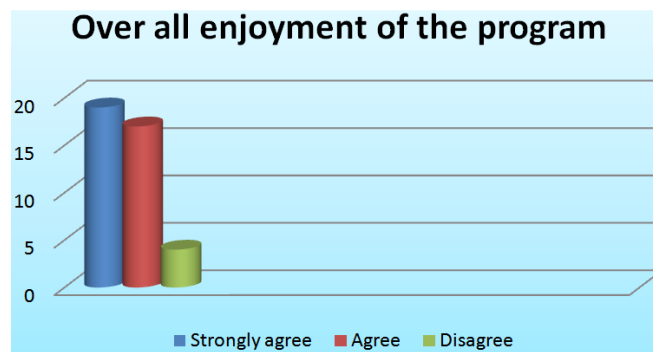
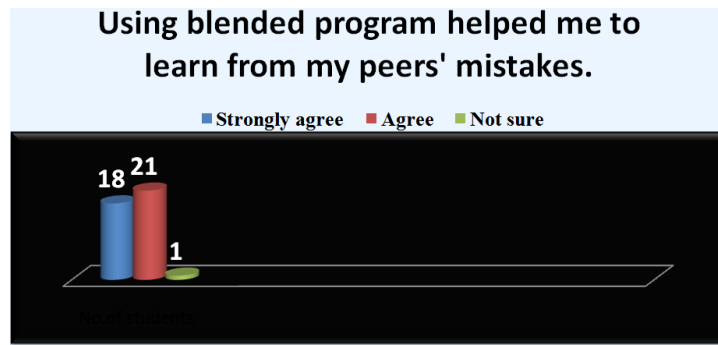


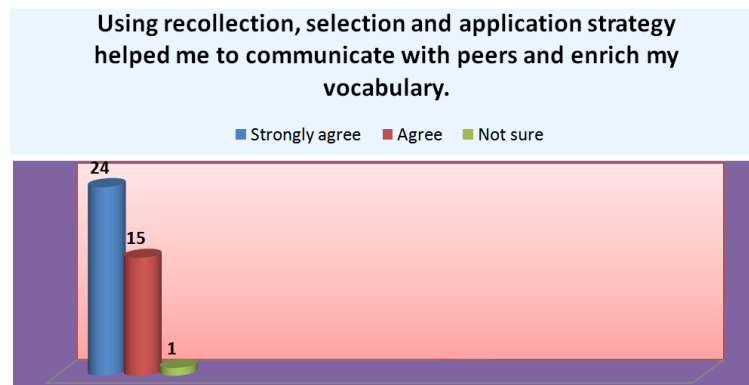
Figure 2: Questionnaire Statement 1

The above figure illustrates that 19 students were strongly agreed, 17 students were agreed while only 4 students were disagreeing with the statement. So 90% students were agreed to the effectiveness of the program for enhancement of vocabulary. Here the first research hypothesis gets verified and accepted.



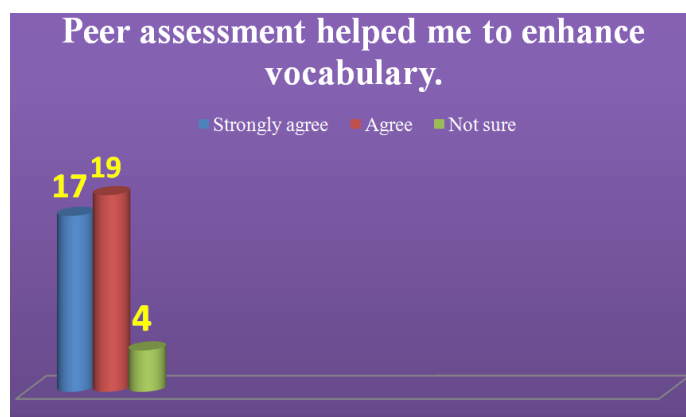
**Figure 3: Questionnaire Statement 2**

In the above figure, 18 students strongly agreed, 21 students agreed that the blended program helped them to learn from peer's mistakes. So 97% students agreed that the blended program helped to learn vocabulary through peer collaboration.



**Figure 4: Questionnaire Statement 3**

The above figure elucidates that 24 students strongly agreed, 15 students agreed that vocabulary learning strategy helped them to learn from peers. So 97% students agreed that a vocabulary learning strategy wherein recollection, selection and application are three stages helped to learn vocabulary through peer collaboration.



**Figure 5: Questionnaire Statement 4**

The above figure reads that 36 students were agreed to the statement that peer assessment helped them to enhance vocabulary while only 4 students were not sure about the statement.

Above all four figures and result favored the use of blended learning and strategies for vocabulary enactment with peer collaboration. So the second hypothesis gets verified and accepted.

## DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Students went through the process of recollection, selection and application of words using a blended mode of learning. Similar exercises can be given using technical jargon. As the process of learning is collaborative, non-threatening and fun-filled, maximum learning takes place. This method also reduces anxiety among Indian learners (Sheorey, 2006). It was found that in some students there was an augmentation of vocabulary acquisition, whereas in others many passive words came into active vocabulary use. If learner wants to enhance vocabulary, then words from different genres and fields should be recalled, selected and applied in real life contexts. The study conducted by Barron & Melnick (1973) found that as compared to individual work with worksheets, classroom discussion appears to produce better vocabulary learning. They compared three approaches to teaching the same set of biological concepts to tenth graders: student-led small-group discussion, teacher-led whole-class discussion, and individual worksheets. They found that both discussion groups had higher scores on two measures of biological word knowledge, but there were no differences between the two discussion groups.

Exercises such as those discussed above help students in establishing previously met vocabulary and enriching them. They also help the learners in developing vocabulary strategies and developing fluency with known vocabulary. Some students internalized the words, making them part of their active vocabulary. Overall the amalgamation of blended learning and vocabulary learning strategies helpful in augmenting vocabulary of under graduate engineering learners.

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**APPENDIX**

- Students questionnaire

**Table 1**

No	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	Using blended mode of learning with vocabulary learning strategies overall I enjoyed the program.					
2.	Using blended program helped me to learn from my colleague mistakes.					
3.	Using recollection, selection and application strategy helped me to communicate with peers and enrich my vocabulary.					
4.	Peer assessment helped me to enhance vocabulary.					
5	It is easy to use pedlet for collaboration with peers					
6	Using pedlet helped me to get immediate feedback from peers and teacher.					
7	Using discussion technique at the classroom helped me to solve my queries.					
8	The program helped me use my passive vocabulary.					
9	The strategy and blended mode helped me to participate in discussion without fear and stress.					
10	The time given for discussion was enough for collaboration with peers.					

