The Effectiveness of Applying the Pictorial Method in Increasing Learners' Knowledge of Persian Vocabulary

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Vocabulary plays an important role in language learning by enhancing learners' knowledge of the language and considerably impacts all language skills. In addition, vocabulary is now considered a language skill that needs to be brought into sharper focus. This is why teachers should adopt an appropriate method for teaching vocabulary. The pictorial method is one of the most popular methods in the field of language teaching. The present study aims to examine the effect of the pictorial method in teaching vocabulary to Persian learners at the elementary level. The population included sixty Korean-speaking Persian learners who were studying Persian Language or Iranian Studies at the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. The research sample was randomly selected and the applicants were divided into control and experimental groups. At first, a test was given to the applicants to determine new words. A pretest was then conducted. Both groups performed almost identically in the pretest. Afterwards, the experimental groups were taught passages using pictures for ten sessions, each of which lasted 90 minutes. The control group was taught the passages without any pictures. After the posttest, the scores of both groups were compared using statistical analysis. The t-test results revealed that the experimental group outperformed the

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control group. These findings supported the hypothesis that using pictures while teaching vocabulary would considerably improve the Persian vocabulary knowledge of Korean-speaking learners. It is suggested that more pictures be used in Persian language books for speakers of the Korean language in order to enhance the effectiveness of their Persian studies.

I. Introduction

Vocabularies play a critical role in establishing communication in language learning. Regarding the structuralism period in 1940s to 1960s, it can be said that teaching vocabularies were not paid full attention; that’s why most of methods focused on grammar rather than words. Nunan (2001) indicated that domination of grammar was very obvious in audio-lingual method, the proponent of which believed that learning grammatical points acted crucially in language learning (Carter & McCarthy, 1988).

It was in 1970s when teaching vocabularies became popular and many scholars considered learning vocabularies as a skill (ibid: 43). Vocabulary has been considered a neglected aspect of language learning in second language acquisition since by comparison with phonology, syntax and discourse, much less research has been carried out into vocabulary acquisition in a second language. Wilkins (1974) states that while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. Gradually, other aspects of vocabulary teaching were paid attention and items such as frequency, syntactic role of words, collocations and so on were brought into sharper focus by researchers and scholars of second language acquisition.

Nowadays, it is very necessary to focus on vocabulary instruction in order to enhance learners’ reading, listening, writing and speaking skills. It can be claimed that “vocabulary learning is a developmental process; it means that learners require more words in order to communicate as they go through the