

Improving Vocabulary Learning in Foreign Language Learning Through Reciprocal Teaching Strategy

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Abstract

Vocabulary learning is one of the most important factors that foreign language learners encounter during the process of learning a foreign language. Vocabulary learning used to be a neglected aspect of language learning. In recent years, however, interest in this area has grown enormously. Language teachers have been keen in searching for effective approaches to enhance vocabulary learning. Vocabulary learning is more important than familiarity with the form and meaning of a word. This paper has suggested reciprocal teaching strategy as a main factor to improve students' vocabulary learning in a foreign language. The purpose of this study is to investigate whether 'reciprocal teaching strategy improves students vocabulary learning or not. Reciprocal teaching consists of four basic reading strategies: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. Cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies are the reciprocal teaching strategies used to enhance students' vocabulary learning. The lack of good vocabulary learning skills is a main obstacle in a foreign language. One solution to this problem of poor vocabulary skill is the explicit teaching of vocabulary learning strategy. Researcher is going to define the key words, explain the models of vocabulary process, follow reciprocal teaching strategies, discuss cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies and elaborate the related research on reciprocal teaching, and state relationship between reciprocal teaching and vocabulary learning. The findings indicated that reciprocal teaching had a significantly positive effect on the foreign language learning.

Keywords: Vocabulary learning, Reciprocal teaching, cognitive strategy, meta-cognitive strategy

1. Introduction

Vocabulary learning plays an important role in foreign language learning, both in the first language and second language. Several theorists and investigators in learning stated that vocabulary learning and foreign language learning have a strong relationship to each other (Qian & Schedl 2004). They added that many researchers also discovered the strong relationship between foreign language learning and vocabulary learning. Vocabulary learning shows the range of the lexical gap which students experience in vocabulary with authentic reading subjects (Read, 2007). Zhang and Anual (2008) studied the correlation of vocabulary knowledge in foreign language learning and the result showed that there is a significant strong relationship between foreign language learning and vocabulary knowledge. According to Stahl and Nagy (2006), Vocabulary learning is a difficult process, because students need to be motivated in vocabulary learning, engage in vocabulary instruction, meet vocabulary learning standards to pursue the required accomplishment.

According to Sarani and Kafipour (2008), although vocabulary learning is important in foreign language learning, they found that EFL students have insufficient skills and learning strategy in vocabulary. Oxford (1997) explained that the strategy has significant effects on motivating and fostering students' vocabulary learning. When students concentrate solely on the meaning of a single word and do not focus on the contextual meaning of the word, they would not be able understand and recognize the whole text even if they might know the meaning of every single word. In general, the lack of ability to use strategy in vocabulary learning has affected students' success in foreign language learning (Laufer, 2003).

Vocabulary knowledge in foreign language learning has effects on EFL students' reading and motivation to recognize a written language (Alderson, 2000). Several studies had indicated a significant correlation between vocabulary learning and foreign language learning (Qian, 2002). It has been recognized that vocabulary knowledge plays a significant function in foreign language learning. Researchers have found that vocabulary knowledge is a critical predictor of foreign language learning and reading motivation in first and second language learning (Lervåg & Aukrust, 2010).

According to Plinscar and Brown (1985), vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension are significantly related. They also stated that reciprocal teaching strategy is related to vocabulary learning, as well as motivate students in their foreign language learning activities. Greenway (2002) has done an investigation on two groups of learners with problems in studying vocabulary learning. The first group was exposed to reciprocal teaching strategy and the other group was exposed to induction-deduction reasoning strategy. The result showed that the induction – deduction method was less effective than reciprocal teaching strategy. The difference was elicited due to the fact that there was a difference between the ability of recognition and vocabulary knowledge (Greenway, 2002).

Reciprocal teaching is chosen to be investigated in this current study based on the understanding that it is a useful teaching method approved by several researchers. Furthermore, it is a method of systematic training in strategies that assists learners to enhance their learning and vocabulary knowledge (Soonthornmanee, 2002).

2. Vocabulary Learning

According to Kamil and Heibert (2005), vocabulary can be generically defined as knowledge of words or word meaning. They stated that vocabulary learning is the basis of language and without vocabulary, one cannot learn any language; it is the knowledge of words. Accordingly,

Min and Hsu (2010) stated that vocabulary learning is closely related to foreign languages. In the foreign language learning process, the readers need to understand most of the vocabulary and the contextual meanings used in the passage. A better understanding of the vocabulary meaning, it would produce a better understanding on the whole meaning of the text. The knowledge about the meaning of words is called vocabulary (Kamil & Heibert, 2005). There are two forms of words – oral and print. Words that are spoken or read orally are called an oral vocabulary. Words that a reader comprehends or knows when they are reading or writing is called a print vocabulary (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2008). It is more difficult for Iranian students to master because it takes quick, accurate, and automatic recognition of the written word. There are two kinds of word knowledge. The first one is productive and the second one is receptive.

A group of words that readers use in spoken or written form is called productive vocabulary (Kamil & Hiebert, 2005) whereas a group of words that help to understand meaning while listening or reading is defined as receptive vocabulary. Receptive vocabulary is more extensive than productive vocabulary and is important to establish strong oral vocabulary skills for novice readers. As children start reading, they will not understand the word read unless it is in their receptive vocabulary. In academia, the importance of vocabulary knowledge in literacy and academic achievement has rarely been in dispute. It is the building blocks of language which is important in the process of gaining literacy competency (Graves, 2009). It is also a powerful predictor of different verbal ability (Sternberg, 1987) and reading comprehension level (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997). Moreover, it has always been an important element in reading comprehension (Thorndike, 1973).

Furthermore, vocabulary knowledge can predict the knowledge of readers (Dale, 1965). Terman (1918) stated that there is a high relationship between the knowledge of readers and their vocabulary scores. However, vocabulary learning is complicated because of the size of the potential lexicon.

2.1 Historical Development of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is touted as one of the oldest areas in literacy research and investigators stated that improvement in reading comprehension can also result in the improvement of vocabulary knowledge (Biemiller, 2004). Vocabulary studies were stimulated by E. L. Thorndike's *The Teachers' Word Book* in which efforts were made to organize the local English words into categories by frequency of occurrence in the English language. Much of the research focused on vocabulary size as it was related to developmental growth (Biemiller, 2004) and identification of useful words in order to establish a master list for each grade level (Beck & McKeown, 1991). They argued that dictionary use, one of the most popular independent learning methods of the time, resulted in limited word learning. Prior to the 1970s, there were not many researches done on vocabulary instruction in classrooms. In 1977, Becker published a seminal article that attributed the learners' failure of inadequate vocabulary knowledge (Beck & McKeown, 1991).

During the 1990s, the research field began to move towards studying vocabulary instruction (Beck & McKeown, 1991). Beginning in 1990, Paul Nation's publication of teaching and learning vocabulary provided an extensive review of the vocabulary research, as well as classroom applications to vocabulary teaching. Although there has been some emphasis on vocabulary instruction, Beck and McKeown (1991) explained that there is no particular way that has been identified for vocabulary instruction.

Dependence on a single vocabulary instruction method will not result in optimal learning. Furthermore, it is emphasized that while no single method has been proven as reliably superior, any method is superior to no instruction, and students will benefit from varied and multiple exposures to a word. Therefore, the research done puts a clear emphasis on the importance of rich, multifaceted vocabulary instruction (National Reading Panel, 2000).

2.2 The Importance of Vocabulary Learning

One of the most important factors that affect language learning is vocabulary knowledge and it is agreed that vocabulary knowledge helps language learning improvement (Martin-Chang & Gould, 2008). Therefore, if learners read more, they will enhance their vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary learning not only develops learners' spelling but also their writing proficiency. According to Harmer (2007), in vocabulary learning, learners will be constantly tested to find out their level of improvement in vocabulary knowledge. If learners do not have sufficient vocabulary knowledge, they will have difficulties in recognizing the content thereby failing the vocabulary learning test and lose interest in reading.

In foreign language learning, there is a correlation between foreign language learning and vocabulary knowledge which also applies to English (Stahl, 1983). According to Nagy (1988), in foreign language learning, it is impossible to recognize a passage without being familiar with any vocabulary. Daneman (1988) indicates that vocabulary learning and words information are the main factor in reading a context. The result of this study showed that vocabulary knowledge is an important element in constructing meaning from written passages.

Davis (1968) discovered that the factor that has the highest correlation with learning is knowledge of word meaning. Hague (1987) stated that readers should know vocabularies for better understanding and be motivated to follow his/her learning. Stahl and Nagy (2006) said that vocabulary knowledge facilitates learning in different conditions. Laufer (1997) and Nation (2001) elaborated that to have a successful learning a learner is required to systematically understand and decode vocabularies in a passage.

Empirical research discovered a significant correlation between general learning and vocabulary knowledge skills in learning a new language (Ben Salem, 2006). Anderson and Freebody (1981) studied the effect of vocabulary knowledge and foreign language learning, so they found a significant relationship between foreign language learning and vocabulary knowledge. Qian (1999) explained that there is a strong relationship between students' foreign language learning and vocabulary knowledge in many different aspects.

2.3 Incidental and Intentional Vocabulary Learning

Researchers generally categorize vocabulary learning activities into two kinds, i.e. incidental vocabulary learning and intentional vocabulary learning (Nation, 2001). Hulstijn (2001) defines incidental vocabulary as learning of knowledge without any intention and it happens accidentally. On the other hand, any activity of transferring verbal knowledge to the memory is called intentional vocabulary learning. Other researchers believe the difference between intentional vocabulary learning and incidental vocabulary learning is the learner's type of attention to reading a text (Ben Salem, 2006).

Nagy and Herman (1987) explained that specific vocabulary direction cannot create important results in learning or vocabulary size. The most important purpose can be achieved by improving vocabulary in incidental learning. In the field of linguistics, it is believed that some, if not most FL/L2 learners' vocabulary is acquired incidentally. Krashen (1989) reviewed a number of studies that dealt with the differences between these two types of vocabulary. He concluded that intentional vocabulary learning does not bear better results compared to incidental vocabulary learning.

However, incidental vocabulary learning sometimes is not sufficient and may be useless in other conditions (Hulstijn, 2001). According to Hulstijn (2001), sometimes written information in the text is not clear and students can neither understand nor recognize it. They elaborated that based on previous researches; electronic dictionaries are found to be useful and effective in incidental vocabulary learning (Ben Salem, 2006).

2.4 Model of Vocabulary Learning

There are three main important models in vocabulary learning (National Reading Panel, 2000). They are as follows:

1. Repetition is necessary for improving vocabulary.
2. Revising the text or materials which meet students' needs and helps in vocabulary learning. This model states that focusing on students' needs and desires in vocabulary learning, is more important than asking learners for the definition of particular words.
3. In vocabulary learning, instructional methods which improve activities in learning, such as making mental definition and pictures for learners have to be provided.

Nation and Waring (1997) argued that building vocabulary is the main factor for students' success in their studies. Nakata (2006) stated that models of vocabulary learning are not like grammar learning but it is a process which takes time, practices and repetition in order to learn vocabulary knowledge. Furthermore, vocabulary learning requires the students to be disciplined in spending more time on the new words in order to memorize high frequency vocabularies and keep them in their long term memory. Nation and Waring (1997) explained that students need to encounter the newly learned vocabularies at different times and in real activities (speaking, reading, and writing) at the learners' level. This will allow learners to understand the word correct usage and prevents them from making mistakes by depending solely on dictionary definition. For example learning new vocabularies from word lists are different from learning vocabularies in the story or context.

According to Yongqi Gu (2003), vocabulary learning through context is a method that can be used in learning. Learners apply their meta-cognitive thinking skills and read the new vocabulary within the context in which they had appeared. The instructor should show high frequency and low frequency vocabulary to the students. High frequency vocabularies are words which occur frequently in the language and would facilitate the learners' understanding if learned. However, low frequency vocabularies are words which do not occur in daily conversation such as academic words (Nation, 2005).

Yongqi Gu (2003) mentioned that vocabulary learning can be facilitated through collaborative working theory. Naturally, vocabulary learning depends on the learners' strategy and motivation towards learning new words which involves strongly student-centered activities. There are many vocabulary learning models available which had brought forth many methods of teaching vocabularies (Wallace, 1988). The basic factors for vocabulary learning which are important and should be emphasized are:

- A. The purpose of vocabulary learning
- B. The real needs of vocabulary learning
- C. The repetition and frequent exposure of vocabulary learning
- D. The presentation of vocabulary learning needs to be meaningful and clear

Harmer (1993) stated that vocabulary learning requires the ability to know:

- 1) Definition of the word
- 2) Usage of the word in an appropriate level of formality
- 3) Formation of the word
- 4) Usage of the word in an appropriate grammatical form

There are many vocabulary-learning methods that learners can use in promoting the vocabulary knowledge. Waring (2002) elaborated that the method of vocabulary learning depends on the individual's strategic learning in order to be successful. Schmitt, Clapham, and Schmitt (2001) suggested that learners keep vocabulary notebooks in which to write in new vocabularies and knowledge of the words which they have studied. This is due to the fact that many researchers have found that keeping vocabulary notebooks facilitate students in vocabulary learning (Schmitt, 2000). Through this method, learners would be able to improve their self-management proficiency which requires individual planning, goals, needs, and opportunity to make decisions for their own vocabulary learning (Fowler, 2002).

3. Reciprocal Teaching Strategy

Reciprocal teaching is as an instructional strategy that directly teaches students to apply meta-cognitive thinking as they make meaning from a text. It is a process of reading comprehension as an interactive one, in which readers interact with the text as their prior experience is activated. Moreover, readers construct meaning from the text by relying on prior experience to parallel, contrast or affirm what the author suggested in the text. Reciprocal teaching strategy allows a teacher to model and give the students enough practice on those four main strategies (predicting, questioning, clarifying and summarizing) to construct the meaning of a text in a social setting (Ahmadi & Hairul, 2012; Stricklin 2011).

Reciprocal teaching strategy is one of the most effective methods for teaching a foreign language and facilitates learning in different area's world and it's designed to improve students' learning at all grade levels and in all subject areas such as reading comprehension, reading motivation and vocabulary learning. So, Students are taught cognitive strategies that assist them construct meaning from text (Ahmadi & Hairul, 2012). In this strategy the teacher models a set of reading comprehension strategies and then gradually changes his/her responsibility for these strategies to the students (Palincsar & Brown, 1984). This strategy helps students to learn the reading strategies, learn what, when and how to use the four components of reciprocal teaching strategies, and become self-regulated with the use of these strategies.

Reciprocal teaching strategy involves the teacher and students, usually in small groups, reading parts of a text. The teacher then leads a dialog of the text, while modeling appropriate reading comprehension strategies. During this dialogue and modeling process, the teacher encourages students to ask questions of both the text and strategies. The teacher uses this discussion to facilitate both reading comprehension and strategic cognition for learning activities. The teacher gradually shifts the role of responsibility to students. As students begin to act as the role of the teacher, the teacher assumes the role of guide or facilitator, rather than a leader. In this strategy teacher-centered shifts to a student-centered (Palincsar & Brown, 1984, p. 13)

According to Rosenshine and Meister (1994), explained reciprocal teaching strategy as an approach that enhances reading comprehension. Lubliner (2001) stated that reciprocal teaching

is an effective teaching method that enhances reading comprehension, vocabulary knowledge and proficiency in different conditions in learning. Students should be prepared to decode vocabulary, comprehend and evaluate a wide variety of complicated texts from books to electronic sources, and reciprocal teaching strategies can help them achieve those goals (McLaughlin & Allen, 2002). They illustrated the goals of reciprocal teaching as follows. (1) To develop learners' reading comprehension through four components of reciprocal teaching strategies: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. (2) To model the four strategies by helping, and use the strategies while learning/reading. (3) To assist learners to utilize meta-cognitive strategy in their studies. (4) To guide learners to monitor their learning activities and using the four strategies. (5) To utilize the social nature of learning to facilitate reading comprehension and to strengthen instruction in a variety of classroom settings and to guide reading groups. (6) To be part of the broader framework of comprehension strategies that comprises previewing, self-questioning, making connections; visualizing, knowing how words work, monitoring, summarizing, and evaluating.

Reciprocal teaching strategy detected by Palincsar in her studies in 1982 (Palincsar and Brown 1984). Reciprocal Teaching is an instructional method which designed to enhance students' reading comprehension. This method encourages group working together to construct meaning from written texts. (DEECD, 2008).

3.1 Reciprocal Teaching's Four Cognitive Strategies

Reciprocal teaching strategy has four stages; predicting, questioning, clarifying and summarizing that based on Palincsar and Brown strategy (DEECD, 2008).

3.1.1 Predicting

In this strategy students need to anticipate what happens in the next paragraph or pages. Prediction is based on background knowledge, the grammatical point of the context, pictures, titles, and explanations. It motivates students to follow reading and learning, as they want to know whether their previous anticipation is correct or not. Prediction helps students to think ahead (DEECD, 2008; & DET, 2006).

3.1.2 Clarifying

Clarifying strategy helps students to clarify unfamiliar sentences, pages and even vocabulary. This clarification strategy can be done by a dictionary or asking for help from the teacher. It helps students to fix areas of problem and then re-read the text to evaluate the meaning and to find meaning for unknown vocabulary or sentences in texts. It facilitates problem solving specially for learners who have problems with the information, unknown vocabulary and the meaning in a text (DEECD, 2008; & DET, 2006).

3.1.3 Questioning

This part of reciprocal teaching strategy prepares teachers to ask their students to find the main important information in the context. Students would ask a lot of questions that are related to their context and show their knowledge about the text. For instance, about the main idea, main important factors in the text. Students are encouraged to find the most important points by generating questioning. This strategy assists students to control their learning and understanding through questioning (DEECD, 2008; & DET, 2006).

3.1.4 Summarizing

In summarizing strategy students find out important information in the text and re-write them in their own words and sentences. It can be written in a whole text, sentences or a paragraph.

Summarizing is an action of elaborating the most important information, issue, and opinion within a context (DEECD, 2008; & DET, 2006).

3.2 The Fundamentals of Reciprocal Teaching

According to Jeffrey (2001), explained that reciprocal teaching has some factors that should be focused on those, in order to enhance the students' ability to affect their background knowledge and be used in their studying in different situation. Reciprocal teaching is focused on education and main points of it in the text, thinking practicing formula, mental monitoring activities that are related to the learning program instruction. Allen (2003), Reciprocal teaching can be explained as follows:

- A. Reciprocal teaching strategy is related between learners and instructors.
- B. In fact the instructors' responsibility in reciprocal teaching strategy and using that strategy, must transfer step by step to the learners.
- C. The instructor must make sure that all of the learners participate in reciprocal teaching classroom activities. The instructor should assist learners, supply learners with the reaction and select activities that suit their characteristics.
- D. Learners have to remember that reciprocal teaching strategies are always useful because those strategies assist learners to improve their ability to recognize what they read. Their activities make the definition of the passage understandable for the learners. Not only correct reading can help students to differentiate between vocabulary and symbols but also it can help vocabulary and symbols to be understandable. The active factors of reciprocal teaching such as; collaborative working among students themselves and students with teacher improves students' cognitive and meta-cognitive ability (Crawford, 2005).

3.3 Importance of Reciprocal Teaching Strategy

Reciprocal Teaching is a strategy that facilitates learners' reading comprehension (DEECD, 2008). It has many important reasons that improve students' learning in their reading and helps them to get confidence and motivation to read texts. Some of the important reasons are as: it improves readers' reading comprehension, it enables readers' to control and evaluate their reading, it makes them aware of the questions that a teacher might ask regarding texts (DET, 2006).

According to Palincsar and Brown (1984), stated that reciprocal teaching strategy with four sub-sections (prediction, questioning, clarifying and summarizing) facilitates students reading comprehension, motivation and improving vocabulary knowledge. It focuses on reading for constructing meaning, supports students' activities, helps students to engage in a dialogue regarding texts, extends the readers' ability to talk about a passage, facilitates students' understanding, improves students' topic vocabulary, and assists students to enhance their skills in recording information about a topic for writing, location and organization.

3.4 Challenges in Reciprocal Teaching Strategy

Foster and Rotoloni (2005) stated that one of the challenges of reciprocal teaching strategy is that it was introduced for learners who are sufficient decoders but are poor in reading comprehension and cannot construct the meaning and recognize a text after reading a passage; therefore, it would not be effective for students with poor decoding skills. Strategies which would help poor decoders consist of tape-assisted reciprocal teaching; it means learners listen to a recording of a passage while continuing along with the printed passage, reading texts orally to students, providing unfamiliar words when learners are reading, using easy passage (Foster & Rotoloni, 2005).

Another challenge for practicing reciprocal teaching is when the students are keeping a distance from the instructors due to shyness or other social factors. Oczkus (2003) stated that students who are shy, neglectful, or have individual needs would not benefit from reciprocal teaching in the classroom or other activities that do not provide learners' participation. Learners would benefit through reciprocal teaching when it becomes a part of small collaborative group work, where students are interested to be more comfortable speakers and can be easily focused by their attention.

As mentioned by Rosenshine and Meister (1994), one of the main challenges of the reciprocal teaching strategy is the lack of implementation guidelines. There is no checklist of evaluation for controlling the quality of reciprocal teaching strategy. They found that the most of the investigators did not evaluate the quality of reciprocal teaching.

In their study, Hacker and Tenen (2002) explored some of the challenges related to reciprocal teaching strategy such as;

A- Instructors did not use all reciprocal teaching strategies and strategies that were being used were not sufficient. Several learners' questions and summaries were not important and could not reflect a deeper recognizing of the context.

B. Stable intervention by the instructors were provided for learners to improve a deeper recognizing of the context.

C. Instructors could not stimulate high quality discussion within their learners. Some of the learners did not have any knowledge about the basic classroom rules of dialogue, so, the lack of this basic skills caused learners could not engage in meaningful discussion.

D. Some instructors stated their learners got bored with what in fact became a boring routine of reciprocal teaching strategy usage.

4. Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies are taught to the learners through discussion and support to enhance reading comprehension, and improve students' motivation in their learning (Palincsar, David, & Brown, 1989). According to Brown (2007), cognitive strategies relate to particular learning assignments and are based on direct manipulation of the learning material. Some of the main important cognitive strategies listed by Brown (2007) are as, deduction, inference, repetition, note taking, resourcing, translation, recombination, grouping, imagery, auditory representation, key word, contextualization, elaboration, and transfer.

Cognitive strategies, or learning to think strategically, assist the students to remove the barriers they encounter while they are reading and it is a kind of volition which planned to improve learning in different conditions (Dole, Nokes, & Drets, 2009).

Similarly, a meta-cognitive strategy is utilized to improve mental activities. For enhancing cognitive activities, a cognitive strategy should be used, and meta-cognitive strategies are used for solving a problem and evaluation of thinking, (Houtveen & van de Grift, 2007). Cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies both facilitate students' performance and understanding and motivate their students to solve the problem.

Metacognitive strategies are administrative actions taken in reading which include self-management, self-monitoring, directed attention, planning, thinking, observing, correcting, and evaluating at the different learning phases, for example, before, during, and after learning Brown (2007).

The term meta-cognition has been used to indicate the knowledge about how humans perceive, remember, think, and act (Metcalf & Shimamura 1994). Houtveen and Van de Grift (2007) stated that meta-cognitive strategy is a process which assists students to use strategy in their learning, and this process motivates learners to understand the strategy for facilitating their

reading comprehension. Accordingly, Allen (2003) mentioned that reading comprehension strategies are behaviors that learners utilize to ease their recognizing of text.

5. Relationships Between Reciprocal Teaching and Vocabulary Learning

Vocabulary learning has important effects on students' development as the main factor in reading comprehension (Graves, 2006) and in language learning learners' achievement (Beck & McKeown, 2002). According to Stahl and Nagy (2006), vocabulary learning is a difficult process and students must be interested in new vocabulary and to learn the strategies of vocabulary learning and then be able to construct meaning from the text. According to Guthrie and Wigfield (2000), vocabulary learning is a main factor in the learners' emotions. Learners' reading motivation is a vital element that fosters learner's vocabulary learning and helps them in reading comprehension, so reciprocal teaching is an effective element to motivate students in their learning and reading texts (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000).

According to U.S. National Reading Panel Report (NICHD, 2000) vocabulary learning must happen accidentally by extensive reading such as to read a novel, foreign language books and any things which improve vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, learners who are motivated to learn vocabulary through strategies of learning will not have any problem with reading comprehension.

According to Todd and Tracey (2006), they explored that reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge in the elementary level are strongly related to reciprocal teaching strategy. Vocabulary is a critical predictor of the development of reading comprehension skills and motivate language learners in both L1 and L2 learning (Lervåg & Aukrust, 2010). According to LeFevre, Moore, and Wilkinson (2003), investigations on reciprocal teaching strategy and reading comprehension and motivation indicated that reciprocal teaching strategy was one of the main factors which has significant effects not only on reading comprehension but also on students' vocabulary and motivation in their target language learning.

Reciprocal teaching strategies enhance motivation, and making reading relevant to learners' lives. It will create what learners know and believe and by being mindful of their purposes and hopes for their futures. Reciprocal teaching strategies can improve learners' reading comprehension, reading motivation and vocabulary learning. Instructors will provide reading environments that are age appropriate and appropriate to learners' reading capabilities to assist improving their vocabulary. Reciprocal Teaching strategies that enhance vocabulary through reading comprehension and motivation consist of activating prior knowledge through pre-reading exercises, teaching learners to look for information while reading, and modelling self-monitoring skills while reading (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000).

Hacker and Tenen (2002) explained several instructors for enhancing learners' proficiency, they changed the old models for reading comprehension and used reciprocal teaching strategy in order to help learners reading comprehension. Investigators emphasized that reciprocal teaching strategies not only assisted learners in their reading comprehension but also helped students arrange the conceptual structure of learners' information and improve their' high thinking proficiency and their ability to write and learn new vocabularies. The outcome represents that reciprocal teaching can be taught in different parts of sciences in society. Coley, described the significance of the clues to assist learners' direct questions as a modification of the models of reciprocal teaching in order to increase learners' vocabulary through reading comprehension and learn from class activities.

Reciprocal teaching showed that instructors want to provide this strategy to improve learners' higher order thinking proficiency (Allen, 2003; Todd & Tracey, 2006). They argued that

reciprocal teaching is an assistance strategy for learners with special needs. Marzano (2001) argued that reciprocal teaching helps cooperation, responsibility and leadership. It enhances learners' reading comprehension for learning, improves their social cooperation, and decreases undesirable behaviours in the classroom. Therefore, by reading comprehension the vocabulary depth and size will be improved automatically.

Plinscar and Brown (1985) and Todd (2006) studied the impact of reciprocal teaching on providing vocabulary and reading comprehension for low-achievers in elementary levels in Basic level. The outcome described that 75% of the learners who participated in these studies improved their vocabulary and proficiency. Carter (1997) explained a longitudinal investigation that aimed at investigating the impact of a reciprocal teaching-based program on the learners' achievement in the basic and secondary levels in Michigan. A team of 10 skilled instructors applied the program in small groups consisting of 6-8 learners who are low achievers in science, math and social studies. Learners were taught for 30 minutes every day for 20 days. The outcome of the study that lasted from (1993-1996) showed that students' achievement on the standardized tests developed from 10%-40% compared to the criteria in the state. Several investigations have been done to see the impact of predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing on the reading comprehension and vocabulary learning, the extent these strategies assist students recognize various contexts.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study that based on reciprocal teaching strategy effects on vocabulary learning improvement, indicated that reciprocal teaching has a strong effect on the vocabulary learning improvement through reading comprehension and metacognitive reading strategies of students. Vocabulary learning has become one of the main important factors of target language learning, and instructors cannot rely on students acquiring the needed vocabulary just through interaction with the language. It is understood that vocabulary has a significant attention in EFL/ESL learning, but recognizing what manner helps students to better plan their lessons so they can acquire the necessary vocabulary in a shortcut process. Students should be learned vocabulary in contexts so that they can retain the words and use them more frequently. But most of the students and also teachers do not have any strategy for vocabulary learning.

Reciprocal teaching in various investigations by researchers showed that can be one of the sufficient and important source for students who have difficulty in vocabulary learning. Furthermore, this strategy was advocated to improve reading comprehension and the purpose of it was to develop students reading comprehension that automatically enhances their vocabulary learning. Reciprocal teaching can help to develop vocabulary learning from the student's textbooks and enable them to focus on the words that are necessary in each lesson. The four key strategies of reciprocal teaching help students overcome difficulties when reading texts as they plan and monitor their comprehension, and evaluate their planning and its outcome. For these reasons, it can be concluded that reciprocal teaching is a kind of reading instruction that facilitates the teaching of English reading comprehension and improve vocabulary learning among students.

It allows the students to use the new vocabulary during the study of the lesson in different processes, predicting, questioning, clarifying and summarizing. These sub-sections of reciprocal teaching strategies help them retain vocabularies in their long term memories and use them while reading texts. Using the reciprocal teaching approach assesses the student's present vocabulary level and also help them to see what words needed to be learned to progress or catch up. So, vocabulary is presented to the students, like all materials, it needs to be in

appropriate situations, giving them the chance to use the vocabulary and build upon their language repertoire. Therefore, through reciprocal teaching strategy students would have enough opportunity to practice how, what and when to use them. This activity can be done among themselves or between students and teacher until to learn the correct form and the meaning of the vocabulary and write those meanings of vocabulary in their own words.

In this current paper, it was discussed in details that vocabulary is an important element of EFL/ESL learning. Students need lots of target language vocabulary to be able to tackle successfully both production and comprehension activities in the target language. One of the important way to help students to improve their vocabulary knowledge is through equipping students with a variety of vocabulary learning strategies. Different taxonomies have thus been proposed, and some of which were discussed in the present paper. The significance attributed to vocabulary learning strategies and to teach students in those strategies they lack may have the following implications for EFL teachers:

- 1- Instructors should think of ways to provide less successful learners with vocabulary learning strategies. This must be done by making them aware of the need to become independent learners by understanding the strategies they possess and those they lack.
- 2-Students' attention should be directed toward the strategies successful learners benefit from.
- 3-Instructors should make learners practice lots of vocabulary learning strategies ranging from decontextualized and mechanical strategies to contextualized ones. This helps learners to deal with any unknown vocabulary they may encounter both in and out of class activities.
- 4-Instructors should bear in mind that individual learners may vary on the basis of which strategies they consider more useful and they apply more frequently. Thus, instructors may first need to have an evaluation of learner's belief regarding vocabulary learning strategies and then try to help them gradually realize the value of other types of strategies not only reciprocal teaching strategy.

In a conclusion, learning new vocabularies are challenges for EFL/ESL students but they can overcome by having access to a variety of vocabulary learning strategies like reciprocal teaching strategy. Learners need then be taught in the strategies they lack. Teachers should consider the learners' willingness and readiness to receive trainings and think of the most appropriate way to introduce the strategies. Thus, reciprocal teaching strategy can overcome students' difficulties in vocabulary learning in various conditions and by this strategy students will be able to become independent readers which are the goal of teaching reading for EFL students. To sum up, reciprocal teaching provides effective metacognitive reading strategy instructions because it incorporates scaffolding and explicit teaching of the four main strategies, which creates an environment that facilitates productive information processing and reading comprehension that leads to vocabulary learning.

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