AN INTRODUCTION TO T-CODING METHOD OF LEARNING VOCABULARY: A NEW VERSION OF MNEMONIC KEYWORD METHOD

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Abstract

Being considered basic and integral to leaning any second language (Paivio, 1990; Kasper, 1993; Krashen, 1993), gaining lexical competence is the greatest source of problems for learners due to two factors; forgetfulness and long time of study; hence, strategies of learning vocabulary were developed so as to overcome these obstacles. Among these strategies, Mnemonics gained good popularity in which Keyword method, proposed by Atkinson (1975), is supported to be the best one (Cohen, 1990). Thompson (1987) also believed that mnemonic aids are vey constructive in improving vocabulary collection, as well as effective in easy retention (Pressley, Levin, & McDaniel, 1987; Levin, 1986). However, this strategy was revised and improved by the writer of this abstract both in terms of intensity of learning (the number of words in one session) and quality of retention over a long time. In T-Coding strategy, learning vocabulary is done very fast if the strategy is implemented accurately by the presenter. It works based on three phases; first a link is identified and created in the first language or it can also be a second language link that the learner already knows, then for this link (whatever it is) a real life example and explanation (Universal Code) is provided to include both the link and the word and after that it is used in a sentence in order to create more connections in the memory. In this method, the concept of the new word is created through explanation and example while in the previous strategy, an image was tried to be created which was sometimes impossible in abstract words. There is no limitation for T-Coding as is the case with Keyword method. On the other hand, the speed of learning words through T-Coding is higher than the other methods documented. In fact, T-Coding does not teach vocabulary; what it does is implanting the meaning in the memory with a real life example which exists in the learner's current long-term memory. This study inquired into both the overall effect of T-Coding method (extended Keyword method) of vocabulary instruction on the learning and retention of vocabulary over long time and its claim about being fast in teaching vocabulary. To do so, three groups of university students with Persian first language were randomly selected, all including 36 students (18 male, 18 female); the experimental group received the T-Coding method while the other ones received Mnemonic Keyword method and Word List method. In order to get assurance as to the homogeneity of the learners, there were pretested and after the experiment post tested twice, one after 2 week instruction (16 hours) and learning 600 words, and the other one, one month after the first post test. Then, MANOVA analysis was run on the data so as to clarify the difference among these three methods in terms of learning new words. The results underscored a significant difference among them. In the second step, LSD analysis was also employed to ascertain the difference among pairwise comparisons in post test 1 and post test 2. According to the findings, they were all significantly different and the means revealed that T-Coding method was the most effective method and then Keyword method with the second rank and last was word list method. Therefore, the research suggests promising educational value for T-Coding strategy and its utility in all languages.