| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Poetry' Images as an Effective Tool for Understanding and Memorizing Vocabulary: A Case Study of EFL Students at King Khalid University

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| ABSTRACT

Understanding and memorizing new vocabulary generally represent a great challenge for L2 learners who learn EFL; lacking the mentioned cognitive skills can impede the acquisition process of English as a foreign language (EFL). This research aims to illustrate and prove that visual images and mental pictures painted by means of words in poems help and assist L2 learners in understanding and memorizing the new vocabulary; consequently, those words will be unforgettable as the learners connect new words to images they already have stored away. Quantitative and qualitative methods will be adopted in this study, as the qualitative framework allows subjective explanations of the poems' samples. Data was collected via a questionnaire circulated online to 55 undergraduate EFL students of semester-7 at King Khalid University, Almajardha Campus. In addition to that, some purposive examples of imagery were selected from the poems (The Eagle& Solitary Reaper). The mentioned two poems have been taken as samples of the poetry syllabus at the Faculty of Languages and Translation (KKU) Almajardha Campus. The findings show that the majority of the students believed that Poetry imagery could be utilized as an efficient method and a fascinating tool that helps them to understand and memorize English vocabulary and lexis. Moreover, they also agreed with the significant role of poetry in enhancing and enriching their vocabulary and language skills. Whereas a minority of the respondents were unaware of the usefulness of poetry in developing and expanding their linguistic knowledge. Thus, the usage of poetry's imagery can be recommended as an effective method for teaching and expanding English vocabulary.

| KEYWORDS

Vocabulary, poetry, EFL students, mental imagery, acquire

1. Introduction

The main target of learning the English language is to provide learners with knowledge of the whole aspects of language, including words and lexis. Knowledge of how poets depict images and visual pictures by utilizing words is of great importance. Most researchers pay much attention to learning and acquiring English vocabulary by listening to them via some electronic applications or by the usage of some traditionally known methods; however, learning them by exploiting poetry's images has been neglected, although poetry contains an abundance of imagery that is conveyed by figurative languages, such as metaphors, similes, symbols, whereby they clarify or give a vivid picture of something, Khansir argues that poetry can be used to expand the learners' vocabulary ''poetry as one of the literature products can be used to develop learners' knowledge of English and to teach structure, grammar, and vocabulary'' (Khansir, 2012). Learners can easily memorize the words that are used for painting the mentioned visual picture as they connect the pictures with words. Clark and Paiyio illustrate the important role of images in memory formation by puts that ''Construction mental images (Mental Imagery) known by various terms in the academic world, especially in psychology and cognitive such as mental imagery, visualization and seeing through the mental eyes is an alternative that is believed by many scholars can play a very important role in the formation of memory'' (Clark & Paivio, 2004). According to Csikszentmihalyi ''poems

function as a remedy for word-forgetting illness for foreign language learners and speakers, for repetition of words through poems activates the cognitive process. The rhythm and structure of poetry communicate far more than simply presenting information; the construction of imagery and choice of specific words is as meaningful as the content'' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Moreover, Ghosn has emphasized poetry's role in enriching the learners' vocabulary, as she deems that ''through literature, learners can enhance their vocabulary since they learn in a meaningful context'' (Ghosn, 2002). Consequently, poetry is considered an effective tool and method for learning EFL; according to Llash, ''The evocative character of poetry, its imagery, its appeal to feelings and personal experience make it very interesting and enjoyable for the second/foreign language learners' (Llach, 2007). In the following section, some basic key terms related to the domain will be explained, including; poetry, vocabulary, and mental imagery.

2. Theoretical Background:
2.1. Definition of poetry:
Poetry is defined by Merriam-Webster dictionary as ''writing that formulates a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience in language chosen and arranged to create a specific emotional response through meaning, sound, and rhythm. Also, it has been defined as "Poetry is embellished with rhythm, beautiful diction and elevated grammatical features" (Ahmad, 2014). The famous poet Wordsworth defined it in Lyrical Ballad as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth, 1989).

2.2. Definition of Mental Imagery
Imagery is a method that uses descriptive language to communicate our feelings, thoughts, and ideas, and also it can be defined as: is a literary device that refers to the use of figurative language to evoke a sensory experience or create a picture with words for a reader. By utilizing effective descriptive language and figures of speech, writers appeal to a reader's senses of sight, taste, smell, touch, and sound, as well as internal emotion and feelings. Therefore, imagery is not limited to visual representations or mental images but also includes physical sensations and internal emotions by using descriptive language in an effective and unique way. But one useful generic definition is that provided by (Thomas,1999). ''mental imagery is defined as quasi-perceptual experience: in other words, experience in any sensory modality that closely resembles actual perception but experienced without any appropriate external stimulus being present.''

Mental Imagery is defined as the activity reflects a certain result before the result is achieved through a process of imagination (Korn & Johnson, 1983) or a process or event when the individual feels a significant effect on an object, event, or specific scenes, but the objects, events and the atmosphere is actually non-existent at the moment of mental representations occur in the brain. It was born from the process of recalling visual objects, events seen in the past, and those experienced previously (Richardson, 2013).

2.3. Definition of Vocabulary:
Wikipedia (2018) defines vocabulary as "a set of familiar words within a person's language. Vocabulary serves as a useful and fundamental tool for communication and acquiring knowledge. Alqahtani (2015) defines vocabulary as "the total number of words that are needed to communicate ideas and express the speakers' meaning."

Read (2000) states that "words are the basic building blocks of language, the units of meaning from which larger structures such sentences, paragraphs, and whole texts are formed."

2.4. Types of Vocabulary:
Vocabulary has been classified into two types: active vocabulary and passive vocabulary. Harmer (1991) explains that active vocabulary is the words that learners already know and understand their definitions, and they are supposed to use them in a communicative way. While passive vocabulary stands for the words that students do not know how to use accurately as they are not familiar with their precise meaning, but students may understand the meaning if they tackle them in context (as cited in Alqahtani, 2015).

3. Methodology:
Both quantitative and qualitative methods were adopted in this study. The quantitative part is based on data collected via a questionnaire circulated online to 55 undergraduate EFL students of semester-7 at King Khalid University, Almajardha Campus. And qualitative approach will be adopted for analyzing the Purposive examples that have been selected from the poems (The Eagle& Solitary Reaper) to identify the words used by poets for portraying and painting images by means of language that will remain unforgettable for L2 learners.

The participants of the study are (55) students at the English Department, Faculty of Languages and Translation King Khalid University, who were taking the Introduction to Literary Forms class in the First Semester of 2022/2023; To ensure to what extent

the learners of EFL at the Faculty of Languages & Translation, KKU, Almajardaha Campus benefit from the poetry's imagery in understanding and memorizing new vocabulary because these words are portrayed as visual pictures that their mind eyes can easily see.

4. Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Table 1: Shows the Analysis of some Purposive Samples Which Had Been Taken from the Poems:
(The Eagle& Solitary Reaper)

The poem's Title	Vocabulary	Stanza's Number	Images painted by means of words in our minds
The Eagle by Lord Tennyson	Clasps the crag with Crooked hands	First stanza	In this line, the poet portrays how the eagle grabs the (crag) Which refers to hard rock with (Crooked hands)this refers to the eagle claws that grip the rock solidly. This picture gives the Image of the eagle's power and bravery.
	Close the sun in lonely lands	First stanza	This line makes the readers see the eagle flying freely in the sky from the gravity's bonds, it portrays the eagle's freedom. 'In lonely lands' the mentioned expression pictures the image of the stretched lands around the 'crag'' which emphasizes the isolation of the aforesaid creature.
	Ringed with the azure World, he stands	First stanza	Azure in Cambridge Dictionary Means(having the bright blue Color of the sky on a clear day), this gives a vivid sight which speculates how the eagle has been surrounded by the blue vast sky.
	The wrinkled see Beneath him crawls;	Second stanza	Wrinkle in Cambridge Dictionary Means (a small line in the skin caused by old age); this image depicts the scene of the huge moving waves which appear to the creature as small lines because the eagle sees them from high altitude.
	He watches from his mountain walls,	Second stanza	The speaker has used the word 'Watch' other than 'see' which means (the act of guarding someone or something), and this suggests that the eagle reigns Its natural stronghold, usage of possessive pronoun 'his' implies that these mountain' walls and all the natural surroundings belong to the eagle.
	And like a thunderbolt he falls.	Second stanza	A thunderbolt in Cambridge Dictionary means (a flash of

			lightning and sound of thunder together).The word 'thunderbolt' gives the scene of the very fast speed with which a thunderbolt strikes, this image depicts the picture of how the eagle makes a grand dive towards the sea. Suggesting the power and swiftness of the eagle's swoop.
The Scend Example			
The Solitary Reaper By William Wordsworth	Behold, her single in the field Yon solitary Highland Lass!	First stanza	The following three lines Portray the sight of the Highland girl, while she was working alone in the the deep valley that is surrounded by high mountains.
	Reaping and singing by herself alone, she cuts and binds the grain and sings a melancholy strain	First stanza	These lines reflect the image of the girl's immersion in her work of cutting and binding while singing a melancholy song.
	No Nightingale did ever chaunt more welcome notes to weary bands Of travelers in some shady haunt among Arabian sands In the spring time from the Cuckoo-bird	second stanza	'Nightingale' in Cabridge Dictionary means(a type of a Small bird with a beautiful song), and cuckoo according to same dictionary means (a grey bird with a two-note call That sounds similar to its name) In This stanza, the speaker held a comparison between the sweet girl's voice with nightingales and cuckoo-birds' voices, but in his opinion her voice seemed sweeter than the songs of both birds' voices. Here, the poet explained that (the nightingale's fame refers to its singing especially when tired travelers are taking rest in the Arabian desert at an Oasis, and enjoy the music of nightingale).By seeing these images with our mind's eyes, we find ourselves in a Caravan in the desert approaching in oasis.
	I saw her singing at her work and o'er the sickle bending;-	Fourth stanza	'O'er' in Cambridge Dictionary means (over), and the word 'bend' means (to move your body or a part of it so that it is not straight).This spectacular visual picture gives us a sight of how the girl using her sickle for cutting grain crops.

	listened, motionless and still	Fourth stanza	Here, we see the scene of a man that stopped quietly, unable to move from that place because he was utterly enchanted by the girl's song. The speaker enjoyed the song, which lingered in his mind, touched his heart and gave him everlasting joy, so he carried it in his heart when he moved up the hill for resuming his journey.

4.2. Findings & Interpretations of Items and Discussions:

The questionnaire has been designed to investigate the role of poetry imagery as an effective tool for understanding and memorizing vocabulary by (EFL)Students. The rating is from (1-5), which means that '5' represents (strongly agree), '4' represents (agree) while '3' stands for (not sure), '2' represents (disagree) whereas '1' is stands for (strongly disagree). The following part deals with each item separately, followed by analysis and illustration.

1-Do you think that words used for depicting images in poetry help you to understand English Vocabulary?
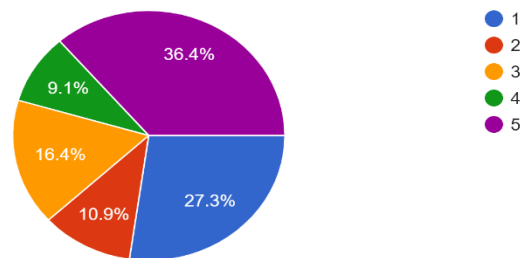

:
55 responses

Figure (1) shows that the students were asked if they believed that words used for depicting images in poetry helped them to understand English vocabulary. Results show that more than 36% of the respondents strongly agreed that poetry images are a very useful and helpful tool for understanding English vocabulary, more than 9% agreed, 16.4% were uncertain about the benefit of this useful method, more than 10% disagreed, whereas 27.3% strongly disagreed about the usage of poetry's images as an effective strategy for teaching English vocabulary. The last category illustrates that students are unaware of the importance of poetry in activating their linguistic knowledge and empowering the retention of English vocabulary.

2-Do you think that words used for depicting images in poetry assist you in memorizing English Vocabulary?
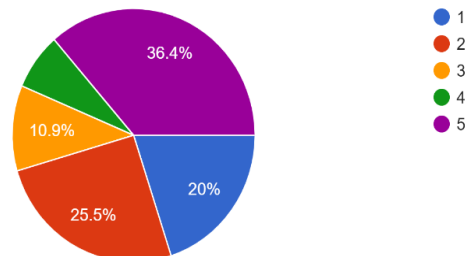
55 responses

Figure (2) shows that the students were asked if they believed that words used for depicting images in poetry helped them to memorize English vocabulary. Results show that more than 36% of the respondents strongly agreed that poetry images are a very

beneficial and helpful technique for memorizing English vocabulary, 7.6% agreed, 10.9% were uncertain about the benefits of this useful method, more than 25% disagreed, whereas 2o% strongly disagreed about the usage of poetry's images as an effective strategy for teaching English vocabulary. The last category illustrates that students neglect the significance of poetry as a helpful technique that assists them in acquiring (EFL).

3-Do you think that words used for depicting images in poetry help you to understand the poem?
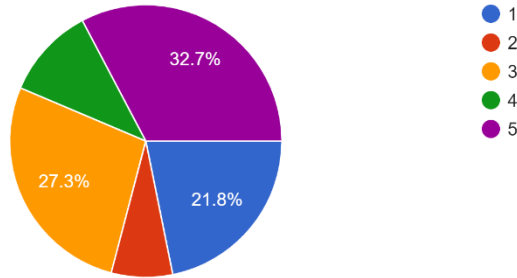
55 responses

Figure (3) illustrates that the students were asked whether they believed that words used for depicting images in poetry helped them to understand the poems included in their syllabus. Results show that more than 32% of the respondents strongly agreed that poetry images are a very helpful tool for understanding the poems in their poetry's syllabus, 11.2% agreed, and 27.3% were uncertain about the benefits of this useful method, more than 7 % disagreed, while 21.8% strongly disagreed about the usage of poetry's images as an effective strategy for teaching English vocabulary. The last category reveals that students are not aware of the importance of poetry in expanding their English vocabulary and enhancing their language skills.

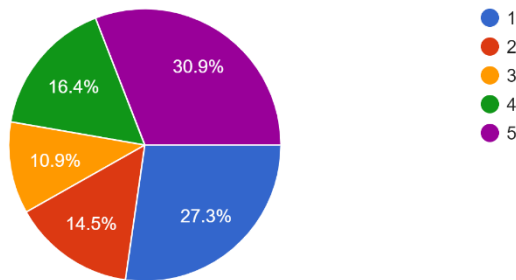4-Do you think that poetry's images help you to acquire EFL?

55 responses

Figure (4) demonstrates that the students were asked if they believed that words utilized by poetry for depicting images assisted them in understanding the poem. Results show that more than 30.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that poetry images are a fascinating method for understanding their lessons, more than 16% agreed, 10.9% were uncertain about the benefits of this useful technique, more than 14% disagreed, while 27.3% strongly disagreed about the usage of poetry's images as an effective strategy that leads to acquiring English as a foreign language. The last category illustrates that students are unaware of the importance of poetry as a magnificent tool that helps them develop their English language skills.

5-Do you practice the words that portray images after having the new poem in the class?
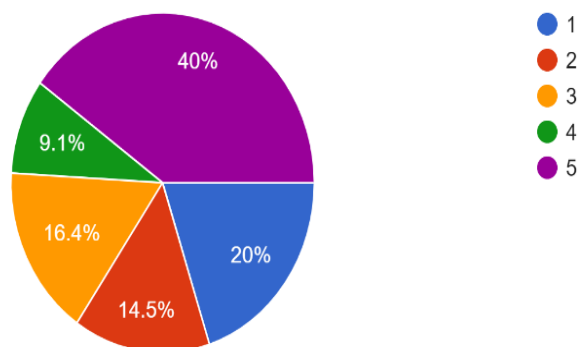
55 responses

Figure (5)demonstrates that the students were asked whether they practiced the words used for depicting images after having a new poem. Results show that more than 40% of the respondents strongly agreed that excreting effort and practicing to memorize the new words are essential, and they tend to practice to attain proficiency in English as a foreign language, only 9.1% agreed about this point and 16.4%, were uncertain whether they are revising their lessons or not more than 14% had shown disagree about this item, while 20% strongly disagreed about it. The last category illustrates that students were unaware of the importance of practicing and revising the new words that were included in their lessons regularly.

5. Conclusion and Future Research

This study aims to illustrate and prove that visual images and mental pictures painted by means of words in poems help and assist L2 learners in understanding and memorizing the new vocabulary; consequently, those words will be unforgettable as the learners connect new words to images they already have stored away. Analysis and discussion prove that poetry's imagery enriches the students' vocabulary in a way that offers a meaningful context that can be used and remembered effectively. According to Lazar and Widdowson ''Using literature in the language classroom helps learners to develop their language proficiency (Lazar, 1993; Widdowson, 1990). Moreover, Mckay argues that ''through literature, learners can increase their linguistic knowledge of grammatical rules and how to use these rules in convenient ways'' (Mckay,1982)

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended to conduct studies that could highlight the importance of imagery's usage in many linguistic forms, as Collie and Slater (1987) believe that using literature in the classroom provides learners a genuine opportunity to evolve both language areas (vocabulary, grammar, etc.) and language skills (listening, reading, etc.). Furthermore, because of the limited number of participants in this study, it is also recommended to conduct similar research with a large number of participants.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.
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