

An Assessment of the Practice of Vocabulary Teaching Strategies in EFL Classes: Kellem Secondary School Grade 9 and 10 English Teachers in Focus

Miressa Amenu Terfa

Mettu University, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Department of English Language and Literature.

Abstract- The purpose of this research is to assess to what extent English language teachers practice vocabulary teaching strategies at Kellem Secondary school. The study particularly, tried to find out teachers' knowledge on the theoretical perspective of vocabulary teaching strategies, examine to what extent teachers practically use vocabulary teaching strategies in EFL classes and identify the major factors that might hamper the implementation of vocabulary teaching strategies in EFL classes. To this end, the study employed descriptive survey method, which involves both quantitative and qualitative methods. Accordingly, Kellem Secondary School was selected through availability sampling. Then, 13 English teachers from both grade 9 and 10 were selected purposefully for the interview, for the questionnaire and for classroom observation. In addition, data were collected from 90 randomly chosen students through questionnaire. Thus, descriptive statistics using frequencies and percentages were employed in analyzing the quantitative data and the qualitative data were analyzed qualitatively. Finally, based on the findings, the researcher recommended that creating meaningful vocabulary teaching opportunities through different vocabulary teaching strategies should be practiced widely in the school. The results of the study reveal that the teachers were not capable enough on the knowledge and the theoretical orientations of vocabulary teaching strategies in EFL classes. In addition, it was found that the teachers lacked practical skills on the implementation of different types of vocabulary teaching strategies in EFL classes according to their suitability. Furthermore, the study revealed that they rarely practiced these strategies during vocabulary instruction. Generally, the practices of vocabulary teaching strategies were not given sufficient attention at Kellem Secondary School. Thus, the study indicated that the English teachers didn't practice different vocabulary teaching strategies in EFL classes. Finally recommendations were drawn based on the above findings.

Index Terms- strategies, vocabulary, teaching, and practice

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching vocabulary is a significant issue in language teaching, since words play an important role in expressing our feelings, emotions, and ideas to others during communication. This means, without the mediation of vocabulary, no amount of grammatical or other types of linguistic knowledge can be employed in second language communication or discourse. But it was during the

communicative approach that the prominent role of vocabulary knowledge in second or foreign language learning has been highly recognized by researchers in the field. The current popular communicative approach of language teaching has emphasized meaningful interactive activities over form. It has also recognized that the vocabulary learning strategies that students use have greater impact on the success of their vocabulary learning (Hatch and Brown, 1995). Vocabulary is central to language and is of great significance to language learners because words are the building blocks of a language since they label objects, actions, ideas without which people cannot convey the intended meaning.

The prominent role of vocabulary knowledge in second or foreign language learning has been recently recognized by theorists and researchers in the field. Accordingly, numerous types of strategies, exercises and practice have been introduced into the field to teach vocabulary. It has also been suggested that teaching vocabulary should not only consist of teaching specific words but also aim at equipping learners with strategies necessary to expand their vocabulary knowledge (Nation, 2001). Although each strategy contributes to success or failure, consistent employment of certain types of strategy forms a means to vocabulary learning that may considerably influence the outcomes of L2 learning. Vocabulary knowledge is an important element in foreign language or second language acquisition. A student can increase vocabulary knowledge formally in the classroom and informally through communication with others and through out of class activities. So as to utilize this idea, devising and using instructional strategies needs to be used in teaching vocabulary (Woodard, 1998).

Therefore, teaching vocabulary is a significant factor in language teaching, since words play an important role in expressing our feelings, emotions, and ideas to others during communication. So, vocabulary plays very important role in the communication activity. In the absence of vocabulary, communication will not occur. Indeed, neither literature nor language exists without vocabulary (Harmer, 1991). On top of this, vocabulary is a primary concern for language teachers, applied linguists and etc. The strategies that teachers mostly practice in their language classes is to enhance their students' vocabulary knowledge or help them to be able to communicate by reading; speaking and writing on the basis of good command of vocabulary is very crucial (Anderson and Nagy, 1992).

It is true that vocabulary is central to a language and is of paramount importance to a language learner. Therefore, the interest of focusing on this vocabulary teaching strategy comes

from various reasons. In the first place, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, it is one of the significant areas language teachers raise as a problem in relation to the practice of vocabulary teaching strategies and secondly, as a language teacher, vocabulary teaching through different strategies is very vital in language teaching.

However, EFL teacher at Kellem Secondary School still seem to have problems in practicing different vocabulary teaching strategies due to the following reasons. Firstly, the learning experience of students Kellem high school. Secondly, there is inadequacy of the content of the text book to practice vocabulary teaching strategies fully which helps students develop their vocabulary knowledge.

In light of this, the purpose of this study is to assess English teachers' practice of vocabulary teaching strategies in EFL classes during vocabulary instruction at Kellem Secondary School and possibly attempts to assess the type of vocabulary teaching strategies frequently practiced. And finally, conclusions and recommendations would be given on how often different vocabulary teaching strategies should be practiced.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

General Objective

The general objective of this study is to assess the practice of EFL teachers' vocabulary teaching strategies in Kellem Secondary School of grades 9 and 10 classes.

Specific Objectives

Based upon the main objective, this research is intended to achieve the following specific objectives:

- a) To identify the types of vocabulary teaching strategies Kellem Secondary School English teachers employ.
- b) To check up whether the practice of strategies in vocabulary teaching in EFL classroom basically practiced or not.
- c) To distinguish vocabulary teaching strategies preferred by the English teachers and students.
- d) To identify the factors that hinders the practice of vocabulary teaching strategies in EFL class

Research Design

In this research, descriptive survey research design involving both qualitative and quantitative techniques was employed. These techniques were chosen because they could provide information concerning the status of the current practices of vocabulary teaching strategies in teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the high school.

Therefore, both qualitative and quantitative techniques help the researcher to draw valid conclusions for advance planning of the methods to be adopted for collecting the relevant data and techniques were used during analysis.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The target populations of the study were grade nine and ten English teachers and students at Kellem Secondary School in Dambi Dollo Town - Qellem Wellega Zone. In line with this, 13 English teachers and 301 students from both grades were taken as a population for the study. So, the total population size is 314. But, the researcher has taken 30% of the students i.e 90.

The respondents were randomly selected from the total population of both grade students using the lottery method for questionnaire. Because it gives each element in the population an equal probability of getting into the sample; and all choices are independent of one another. And it gives each possible sample combination an equal probability.

Study Population

The researcher decided to choose grade nine and ten English teachers and students for two reasons. The first reason is that the researcher believed that respondents at this grade level have a unique experience with regard to the English language at Kellem Secondary School, because grade nine students start to use English to learn other school subjects. The second reason is that the researcher didn't come across a study conducted on assessing the practice of vocabulary teaching strategies at the selected school; therefore, the researcher felt that the study would fill a gap.

Methods of Data Analysis

The data which were gathered from teachers and students through interview, classroom observations and questionnaires was analyzed, interpreted and discussed accordingly. Quantitative data which were collected from the respondents were analyzed by using Statistical Package for the Social Science students (SPSS 16.0) software analysis, the quantitative data were collected through open ended and close-ended questions which were entered into the computer and statistically described in terms of standard deviation, mean, percentage and frequency. Finally, the qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Based on the results, conclusion and recommendations were given.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed at assessing the extent to which EFL teachers practice vocabulary teaching strategies in teaching English at Kellem Secondary School. To collect relevant data for the study, interview, and questionnaire and classroom observation were employed.

Accordingly the results and discussions of teachers' and students' responses, teachers' practices of vocabulary teaching strategies compared with the classroom observation were assessed. Finally, the major factors that affected the practice of teaching vocabulary through different strategies were treated under this section respectively.

Analysis of Data Obtained through Interview Practices of vocabulary teaching strategies English teachers' practice during EFL classes.

There were thirteen teachers who participated in detailed interview. Even if they agreed on the importance of practicing different strategies in vocabulary teaching, the researcher did not observe them while they practiced different strategies effectively in their language classes during classroom observation. Thus, the analysis of data gathered through interview has not shown consistent results with findings of the questionnaire and observation. For example, when answering the first interview item, almost all teachers not only agreed on the importance of practicing vocabulary teaching strategies, but also claimed that

they practiced these strategies in their English classes. But this was not supported by the class room observation.

Therefore, when the interview was conducted with the teachers, it was examined how they practiced vocabulary teaching strategies in line with the given item. Regarding item A₁, “Do you think that practicing different vocabulary teaching strategies are very important to enhance students’ vocabulary use? If yes, to what extent? If not, why?” Almost all of them agreed on the importance of using different strategies in vocabulary teaching. But they didn’t practice different strategies in the classroom during vocabulary instruction. When asked the reasons for not applying, they explained that they do not have adequate materials like dictionary and training on vocabulary teaching strategies so as to practice these strategies in EFL classes and to equip their students with vocabulary knowledge.

In line with this idea, they were asked “to which one of the strategies they give priority most of the time during vocabulary instruction?” Most of them reported as they give priority for contextual strategy for it is convenient to practice in the class.

According to their response, they said that practicing contextual strategy is helpful for students and for teachers since they can practice it from their experiences and it is easy to practice in the class. Because it can be used through different sentences in order to indicate different meanings of one word in a sentence in which the teacher provide students different sentences according to its suitability. The rest teachers gave priority to cooperative strategy because this strategy gives more chance of practicing and thereby retains more words.

Regarding teachers experiences of planning to use different vocabulary teaching strategies, most of the respondents replied that they plan to give vocabulary lesson that contain different vocabulary teaching strategies through integrating other language skills and practice them in the classes usually. But this was found inconsistent with the actual classroom observation because the teachers were not found when they attempted practice strategies in vocabulary teaching with integration of other language skills according their intention.

Analysis of Data Obtained through Questionnaire

Teachers’ experiences of practicing vocabulary teaching strategies

Practices of Vocabulary Teaching Strategies.	Always		Usually		Some times		Rarely		Never		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
6. How often do you practice self selection strategies to convey the meaning of words during vocabulary teaching?	2	15.4	3	23.1	3	23.1	5	38.5	-	-	13	100.0
7. When you teach a vocabulary, how often do you practice task-based teaching strategy in your language classes?	2	15.4	1	7.7	4	30.8	6	46.2	-	-	13	100.0
8. How often do you give opportunities to your students to communicate with you and with their peers in English to develop their vocabulary?	3	23.1	2	15.4	3	23.1	5	38.5	-	-	13	100.0
9. Since there is no one a best strategy of teaching vocabulary, how much you try to practice different strategies according to their suitability?	-	-	3	23.1	4	30.8	6	46.2	-	-	13	100.0
10. To what extent you practice cooperative teaching – learning strategy to attract students’ attention towards the vocabulary lesson?	1	7.7	2	15.5	4	30.8	6	46.2	-	-	13	100.0
11. To what extent you teach to students so as to help them figure out the meanings of unknown words on their own through context?	2	15.4	6	46.2	4	30.8	1	7.7	-	-	13	100.0

12. In teaching vocabulary, how often do you focus on collocation strategies which enable students to develop their vocabulary use?	2	15.4	3	23.1	3	23.1	5	38.5	-	-	13	100.0
13. During your English class, how often do you practice task-based vocabulary teaching strategy to enhance your students' vocabulary knowledge through different tasks?	2	15.5	2	15.4	5	38.5	4	30.8	-	-	13	100.0
14. How often do you use definitional context clue to convey the meaning of words during vocabulary teaching?	1	7.7	6	46.2	4	30.8	2	15.5	-	-	13	100.0
15. During English class, how often do you practices types of contextual clues to familiarize you with unfamiliar words?	1	7.7	6	46.2	4	30.8	2	15.5	-	-	13	100.0
16. Since students should know the correct meaning of a word, how often do you facilitate them to practice meaning in a group with their partners to consolidate the meanings?	1	7.7	2	15.5	4	30.8	6	46.2	-	-	13	100.0

The Vocabulary Self-Selection strategy (VSS) is an interactive-learning instructional strategy that promotes word consciousness, as students are actively engaged in identifying important words from their reading to share with members of their class(Haggard, 1986). In this regard, item Q6 in Table 4.2.3 asked if the teachers practiced self selection strategy vocabulary teaching to convey the meaning of words during their English classes. Accordingly, while 2(15.4%) of the respondents practiced self selection strategy always during vocabulary instruction. Whereas 3(23.1%) of them said that they usually and sometimes did so respectively. But 5(38.5%) of the respondents said that they did practice self selection rarely. This is in line with the researcher's actual class observation. During the observation sessions, the teachers were not practicing the self selection strategy to develop their students' vocabulary use.

In replying to item 7 almost half of the respondents 6(46.2%) confirmed that they rarely practiced self selection vocabulary teaching strategy and 4(30.8%) of them practiced this strategy sometimes. Whereas 2(15.4%), and 1(7.7%) of the respondents answered that they always and sometimes did so respectively.

To sum up, according to Table 4.2.3, above, for item 6 and 7 respectively seem to indicate that the respondents in the English Department of Kellem Secondary School usually did not practice self selection vocabulary teaching strategy. In light of this, self selection strategy was not practiced frequently during vocabulary lesson. Even if learners do not have enough knowledge of the language structures, an adequate knowledge of vocabulary helps them to maintain a certain degree of communication (Wallace, 1982). Therefore, regarding classroom communication under item 8, 3(23.1%) of the respondents confirmed that they practiced to offer their students to practice

communicative strategy for maximizing communication opportunities always and sometimes respectively. But this is inconsistent with what the present researcher observed in the classrooms since most of the teacher didn't practice to offer their students to communicate with their teacher or their peers in the classroom. Whereas 2(15.5%) and 5(38.5%) of the respondents said that they practiced communicative strategy in vocabulary teaching usually and rarely respectively. Class room observation on the other hand proved that only 5(38.5%) of the teachers practiced this strategy in the classroom.

As far as practicing different types of vocabulary teaching strategies according to their suitability is concerned (item 9), while almost half of the respondents 6(46.2%) confirmed that they practiced rarely. Whereas (23.1%) and 4(30.8%) of the respondents replied that they practiced usually and sometimes respectively. however, during classroom observations, almost more than half of the teachers were observed rushing from one activity to another without paying attention to different strategies.

In the same table item 10 and 16 asked if the teachers organized students into different groupings when they taught vocabulary. Accordingly, 1(7.7%) and 2(15.5%) of the respondents in both items (Items 10 and 16) reported that they always and usually organized students into different groupings when they taught vocabulary respectively, whereas in both items 4(30.8%) and 6(46.2%) of them said that they sometimes and rarely practice cooperative strategy. This confirmed that, during the observation sessions, almost more than half of the teachers were not seen effectively organizing the students into different groupings – whole class organization was the dominant one. This implies the importance of obeying Atkins *et al.* (1996) who recommend organizing students in small groups and in whole class during vocabulary teaching/learning.

Words in context increase the chances of learners appreciating not only their meaning but their typical environments, such as their associated collocations or grammatical structures (Thornbury, 2002). Students learn from context by making connections between the new word and the text in which it appears. Consequently, 2(15.5%),6(46.2%) and 4(30.8%) of the respondents reported that they always, usually and sometimes practiced context clues so as to help the students to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words respectively. This was supported during the actual classroom observation which indicated almost all teacher practiced context clues to teach vocabulary in EFL classes. Whereas 1(7.7%) of the respondent replied that she/he did it rarely.

In Table4.2.3, item 12, 2(15.5%) confirmed that respondents always practiced how words go together to enhance students vocabulary use; while 3(23.1%) of them answered that they usually and sometimes did so. Whereas 5(38.5%) of the respondents replied that they practiced collocation strategy rarely. The mean value of item 12 (3.15) further shows that the respondents sometimes practiced this strategy to encourage their students to understand how to use words according to their collocation. This implies the importance of obeying Jaén(2007) who recommended collocations are very important part of second language vocabulary teaching.

Item 13 in Table 4.2.3 was designed to ask if the teachers give tasks to the students so that they can practice two or more new words at a time. In replying to this item, while two of the respondents 2(15.5%) indicated that they always and usually give tasks to the students so that they practice unfamiliar words, 5(38.5%) and 4(30.8%) of the respondents replied that they practiced task based vocabulary instruction sometimes and rarely respectively.

Context clues are indicators of the meaning of a word. Such clues may be in the sentence that contains the word or somewhere else in the text within close proximity (Stahl, 1999). Consequently, practicing different types of context clues during vocabulary teaching which is used to highlight textual clues that lead to the meaning of the target word. This will enhance students' capability to recognize textual clues. Clues include synonyms, definitions, antonyms, contrasts, and examples. In line with this, item 14 and 15 asked whether the teachers practiced or not definitional and different types of context clues when they taught vocabulary. Thus, 1(7.7%) and 2(15.5%) of the respondents answered that they practiced context clues always and rarely respectively. Whereas, 6(46.2%) and 4(30.8%) of the respondents replied that they practiced definitional clues and other types of context clues usually and some times during vocabulary instruction in EFL classes correspondingly so.

The frequency of practicing vocabulary teaching strategies practiced students' English teacher during English classes.

Practices of vocabulary teaching strategy	Always		Usually		Sometim es		Rarely		Never		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
III ₆ . How often does your English teacher practice self selection strategies during vocabulary teaching to enhance your vocabulary self selection?	12	13.3	19	21.1	26	28.9	30	33.3	3	3.3	90	100.0
III ₇ . When your teacher teaches a vocabulary, how often does he practice task-based teaching strategy in the language classes?	13	14.4	19	21.1	26	28.9	32	35.6	-	-	90	100.0
III ₈ . How often does your teacher give you opportunities to communicate with him/her and with your peers in English to develop your vocabulary?	12	13.3	19	21.1	27	30.0	32	35.6	-	-	90	100.0
III ₉ . Since there is no one a best strategy of teaching vocabulary, how much your teacher tries to practice different strategies according to their suitability?	15	16.7	19	21.1	25	27.8	31	34.4	-	-	90	100.0
III ₁₀ . To what extent your teacher offers you to practice cooperative learning strategy to attract your attention towards the vocabulary lesson?	15	16.7	19	21.1	25	27	31	34	-	-	90	100.
III ₁₁ . To what extent your teacher teaches you so as to help you figure out the meanings of unknown words on your own through context?	22	24.4	31	34.4	24	26.7	13	14.4	-	-	90	100.0

III ₁₂ . In teaching vocabulary, how often does your teacher focus on collocation strategies which enable you to develop your vocabulary use?	8	8.9	17	18.9	32	35.6	33	36.7	-	-	90	100.0
III ₁₃ . During your English class, how often does your teacher facilitate to practice communicative vocabulary learning strategy to enhance your vocabulary knowledge?	11	12.2	18	20.0	28	31.1	33	36.7	-	-	90	100.0
III ₁₄ . How often does your teacher use definitional context clue to convey the meaning of words during vocabulary teaching?	13	14.4	30	33.3	25	27.8	22	24.4	-	-	90	100.0
III ₁₅ . During English class, how often do your teacher practices types of contextual clues to familiarize you with unfamiliar words?	18	20.0	31	34.4	24	26.7	17	18.9	-	-	90	100.0
III ₁₆ . Since you need to know the correct meaning of a word, how often does your teacher facilitate you to practice meaning in a group with your partners to consolidate the meanings?	11	12.2	21	23.3	25	27.8	33	36.7	-	-	90	100.0

In vocabulary self selection strategy, teachers engage students in the process of vocabulary self-selection. Students work in small groups of three to five, and they read a short passage from the book with the teacher.

They are guided by the teacher to identify a word they wish to select. The teacher demonstrates how to use context and other resources to figure out the meaning of the word (Haggard, 1986).

As can be seen from table 4.2.3, the percentage for item III₁₆ (36.7%) is titled to words rarely. This could indicate that the English teachers in Kellem Secondary School do not always/ usually practice self selection strategy to engage students so that they do not get exposed to practice this strategy from a short passage or from the book with the teacher. The students were also asked if their teachers practiced task based vocabulary instruction to encourage them so that they ask questions and express their ideas freely on item III₇, item III₈ and item III₁₃ extracted whether or not the teachers gave opportunities to create communicative learning process to the students so that they take responsibility to create a dialogue and communicate with their teacher and their peers for the improvement of their vocabulary use when they learn vocabulary through task based and communicative vocabulary instruction. The percentage for items III₇, III₈ and III₁₃ respectively which incline towards rarely; and this would seem to suggest that the teachers do not usually or sometimes play their executive roles which are entertained by these items. Similarly, this is consistent with what the present researcher observed in the classrooms during vocabulary instruction. This is because almost all the teachers were not seen effectively playing their executive roles (as advisor, monitor, organizer, facilitator and so on) in the classrooms. This is why through tasks; teachers can have a number of options for enhancing attention to teach vocabulary. One of such options is to allow learners to work cooperatively to make sense of unfamiliar vocabulary via tasks. Regarding communicative vocabulary instruction, the teacher's role in Communicative

Language Teaching especially vocabulary is mainly acting as a facilitator for classroom activities as well as home take assignments to make learners engage in groups or pairs work. Instruction plays an essential role in passing messages and thoughts to learners. Teachers are expected to full fill what is required from them for the benefit of learners.

Item III₉ was designed to obtain information from students if their teacher provides them with different vocabulary teaching strategies in which students are confronted to enhance their vocabulary knowledge and develop their understanding about vocabulary use and then they practice two or more strategies at a time. This also indicates that the English teachers rarely practice different vocabulary teaching strategies as resources of helping students practice vocabulary use. In responding to teachers interview, item B₂ (See Appendix I), however, the teachers gave an opposite response to this. That is, teachers were asked to what extent they plan vocabulary lesson that contain different vocabulary teaching strategies and practice them so that students could take responsibilities for their own work and practice two or more strategies at a time, their answer shows that they usually use contextual strategy to help their students practice figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words. Similarly, during the entire classroom observations made, few of the teachers rarely tried to practice various vocabulary teaching strategies according to their suitability.

As shown in Table 4.3.3 above, the percentage of item III₁₀(34%) falls in the rarely range; and this would show that the teachers do not always and/or usually try to practice cooperative strategy to organize students into pair or group in order to engage in the tasks and arouse their interest when they teach vocabulary. The above table also shows that the percentage of item III₁₆ (36.7%) inclined towards 'rarely'. From this, it could be concluded that teachers do not give due attention to make use of group/ cooperative instruction when they teach vocabulary. The classroom observation result also confirmed this reality.

The students were also asked if their teachers encouraged them so that they figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words through definitional context clues or through different types of context clues (item III₁₁, III₁₄ and item III₁₅) elicited whether or not the teachers gave useful text to present them in context and students are more likely to deduce meaning from a context. Divorcing words from their surroundings decreases the likelihood of comprehension and retention and it was emphasized that new vocabulary should only be met in sentences and meaningful contexts (Richards and Rodgers 2001). So, setting a good context which is interesting, plausible, vivid and has relevance to the lives of the learners, is an essential prerequisite for vocabulary teaching as it helps in both engaging the attention of the learners and naturally generating the target vocabulary. The percentage for items III₁₁, and III₁₅ are 34.4%, and 34.4% respectively which incline towards 'rarely' and the percentage of III₁₄ is 33.3 % this would seem to suggest that the teachers attempted to practice this strategy more than the other strategies to enhance the students strategy to understand the meaning of unfamiliar words and develop their ability to practice how to

guess the meaning of new words through these type of contextual clues. Likewise, this is very consistent with what the present researcher observed in the classrooms.

On top of this, in reacting to teachers' interview, item A₂ (See Appendix I) teachers were asked when they teach vocabulary, to which one of the strategies they give priority most of the time so that they could practice them and use them so as to develop their vocabulary knowledge. Thus, their answer shows that they usually practice context strategy as a strategy of helping students practice vocabulary learning strategies.

Analysis of Data Obtained through Observation

The analysis and presentation of the data collected through classroom observation is presented below. To fulfil the purpose of the observation, the selected teachers were observed. The data based on the requirement of the classroom checklist (see appendix IV) were collected and the observation was conducted by the researcher. Thus the observation result was presented under here.

Teachers' role during vocabulary instruction

Teacher's role during vocabulary instruction	Yes		No		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
I ₁ . The teacher introduces the students know the objectives of the lesson so that the students direct their attention to vocabulary instruction.	6	46.2	7	53.8	13	100
I ₂ . The teacher lets the students know the significance of vocabulary learning to their real-life communication	5	38.5	8	61.5	13	100
I ₃ . The teacher teaches vocabulary consciously to arouse students' attention towards to vocabulary instruction.	4	30.8	9	69.2	13	100
I ₄ . At the end of the class, does the teacher give home take assignment that invite students to practice vocabulary self selection?	13	100	0	0	13	100

As depicted in Table 4.3 .1the data obtained from classroom observation revealed that 9(69.2%) of the teachers introduced the objective of the lesson so that the students direct their attention to the lesson; whereas, 4(30.8%) of teachers didn't introduce the lesson and they observed while they were presenting the lesson by letting the students see from their text and read the words and try to guess the meaning of the words. According to Nation (2001) the teacher may draw students' attention on a particular word by writing the new words on the blackboard; the learner may focus on the meaning of a word by providing a definition, a synonym or L1 equivalent.

Regarding letting the students know the significances of vocabulary in a real life communication, 5(38.5) of them were interested in letting the students to understand the importance of

using vocabulary in real life communication. While more than half of them which means 8(61.5%) of the teachers were not interested in creating an opportunity for communication in line with this, students were very passively asking and answering questions in English. Thus, what the teachers should do is to enlarge readers' situation knowledge, arouse their communicative desire to attain the communicative aim (Yiwei WU,2009). This indicates that the teachers did not practice different vocabulary teaching strategies consciously to arouse students' attention towards vocabulary instruction. In case of giving home take assignment, all teachers gave them at the end of the lesson.

Teachers’ practice of vocabulary teaching strategies in EFL classes

Items no	Yes		No		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
II ₁ . Does the teacher present the words through context?	10	77.0	3	23.1	13	100.0
II ₂ . Does the teacher employ self selection vocabulary teaching strategies during vocabulary instruction?	4	30.8	9	69.2	13	100.0
II ₃ . Does the teacher provide task based instruction to utilize vocabulary usage?	5	38.5	8	61.5	13	100.0
II ₄ . Does the teacher create conducive situation for students to communicate with their teacher and their peers to enhance students’ vocabulary knowledge?	3	23.1	10	77.0	13	100.0
II ₅ . Does the teacher create sentences containing the new words in different sentences to teach words in different types of context clues? (Like explanation, definition, synonyms etc)	10	77.0	3	23.1	13	100.0
II ₆ . Does the teacher teach vocabulary through collocation?	3	23.1	10	77.0	13	100.0
II ₇ . Does the teacher employ Cooperative vocabulary instruction?	6	46.2	7	53.8	13	100.0

In Table 4.4.2 above, the classroom observation result indicates that the majority of the strategies expected to be practiced by the teachers were not observed except contextual strategies and types of contextual clues. For instance, under item II₁ and item II₅, 10(77.0%) of the teachers were observed that they practiced contextual strategy.

Next to this, 6(46.2%) of them employed cooperative strategy in the class. In the interview conducted with the teachers, some of the teachers confirmed that practicing all the activities in classroom is difficult. This indicates that the teachers haven’t had access opportunity to practice these strategies according to their suitability during vocabulary instruction. The reasons for not applying the strategies mentioned in Table 4.4.2 may be lack of training on vocabulary teaching strategies which has a consistency with the questionnaire item IV_{II} and IV_{III} (see appendix II). Regarding students participation during vocabulary instruction, the students were not observed to take part actively in asking questions in English language. In connection to this, during cooperative or group work, they preferred to use their mother tongue (Afan Oromo) rather than practicing English language. This is also another problem the researcher observed in the class.

Generally, in all observed classes, teachers were usually interested in using contextual strategy of teaching vocabulary. For example, teachers frequently used definition, synonyms and examples types of context clues (77%) of them. They also often practice cooperative teaching strategy (46.2%) without paying attention to the use/ practice of the target language. Even if they did not totally ignore the rest strategies; they practiced in a very limited manner. In brief, it is worth-noting is that teachers used very limited types of vocabulary teaching strategies except contextual strategy and cooperative strategy. In line with this,

they used translation to teach vocabulary more often than the other strategies in the class. Of course, there is nothing wrong in using translation to teach vocabulary. Translation is really a useful strategy, especially when the students’ proficiency is low. The question is that it should not be overused. This could be the main reason for the students’ less retention of words and vocabulary knowledge. Furthermore, this discrepancy on the focus of vocabulary teaching strategy and learning seems to have resulted not only lack of adequate training of it but also it resulted in their different views on the methods of vocabulary teaching strategies.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the major findings, the following conclusions and recommendations are forwarded by the researcher.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the major findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn.

The teachers hardly practice different vocabulary teaching strategies during vocabulary instruction. From this, we may realize that the teachers do not persistently practice/ use these strategies during vocabulary instruction.

The teachers frequently used context strategy and whole class organization at the expense of pair and/or group organizations when they taught vocabulary in EFL classes. More importantly, strategies such as vocabulary self selection strategy, task based strategy; cooperative strategy and communicative strategy that promote learners’ knowledge of vocabularies in the

classroom and/or outside the classroom were rarely practiced during vocabulary lessons by the sample teachers. As a result, students would be unable to develop and make use of the previously learned vocabulary items in their effort of using the language for actual communication.

In conclusion, it is obvious that different teachers use different strategies in the classrooms. Currently vocabulary teaching practices through different strategies at Kellem high school, however, practice a very limited number of vocabularies teaching strategies appeared to be given a secondary importance by the sample teachers. So teachers were less concerned with the practice of vocabulary teaching strategies compared to other aspects of vocabulary teaching and they focused on contextual strategy which was the most dominantly practiced strategy compared to the other vocabulary teaching strategies. For this reason, students were less interested in learning vocabulary through other strategies which were believed to be fostering better vocabulary knowledge. Since no varieties of vocabulary teaching strategies were practiced at Kellem Secondary School in EFL classes, vocabulary teaching through different strategies has got less attention.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the findings and the conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations could be made:

❖ It would be advisable for the teachers to practice vocabulary teaching strategies and implement them as much as possible when they teach vocabulary in EFL classes, because vocabulary teaching is one of the most important components of any language class. The main reason is the fact that it is a medium, which carries meaning; learning to understand and express the meaning is what counts in learning languages (McCarthy 1990). English language teachers should develop favorable tendency to the primacy of vocabulary in the process of language teaching and learning so that they will be able to consider vocabulary teaching strategies as the major component of their language lessons.

- ❖ The students need to be aware of the advantages of vocabulary learning through different strategies to their daily life so that they become motivated and thereby actively play their roles in the using and practicing of these strategies in teaching and learning process. Students, on the other hand, must promote the sense of autonomous vocabulary learning by practicing intelligent guessing from context and by using vocabulary self collection strategy.
- ❖ Creating meaningful learning opportunities in and out of the school is very important for learners to make use of the language. Establishing English club and declaring one day as an English day help learners to use the language in school.

REFERENCES

- [1] Alemu Hailu (1994). High school Teachers' Attitude towards an Awareness Raising Approach to vocabulary teaching. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.
- [2] Allen, V. F. (1983). *Techniques in Teaching Vocabulary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [3] Graves, M. F. (2006). *The vocabulary book: Learning and instruction*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- [4] Haggard, M. R. (1982). The Vocabulary Self-Collection strategy: An active approach to word learning. *Journal of Reading*, 27(3), 203–207.
- [5] McCarten, J. (2007). *Teaching vocabulary lessons from the corpus lessons for the classroom* (1st ed.). New York: Cambridge University Press
- [6] Nation, I. S. P. (1990). *Teaching and learning vocabulary*. New York: Newbury House.
- [7] Oxford, R. and Scarcella, R. C. (1994). Second language vocabulary learning among adults: state of the art in vocabulary instruction. *System*, 22(2), 231-243.
- [8] Schmitt, N. (2000). *Vocabulary in language teaching*: Cambridge Language Education. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

AUTHORS

First Author – Miressa Amenu Terfa, Mettu University, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Department of English Language and Literature., E-mail – mirre4boni@gmail.com