

## The Efficiency of Mnemonic Approaches in Acquiring English Vocabulary Knowledge (A Case of Vocational College in Georgia)

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### Abstract

Speaking is believed to be one of the most challenging and complex activities while learning the English language. It combines verbal and communication abilities. EFL students face difficulties because they lack confidence and a sufficient vocabulary. Most of the time, a deficiency of speaking exercises during lectures is the cause of speaking difficulties among EFL students. Along with difficulties learning new words by heart. Their motivation declines as a result, and they have trouble speaking in English. Based on the mentioned issues, the study intends to explore the difficulties EFL students encounter when speaking English and learning new vocabulary, as well as the significance of mnemonics in the learning process, to enhance speaking abilities. It should be mentioned that mnemonics are a strategy that aids students in learning English vocabulary and improving their memorization of the content. The purpose of the study is to examine how mnemonic devices help people learn and retain English vocabulary. The Vocabulary Learning Strategy (VLS), the Method of Loci, and the analysis of interviews with EFL students enrolled in vocational education will all be covered in this paper.

**Key Words:** Mnemonics, Learning English; English Language Vocabulary; EFL Students; Memory; Vocational Education.

### Introduction

When learning English, students typically struggle to commit new words to memory, which makes it difficult for them to communicate. Students attempt to avoid speaking because they believe they lack the necessary skills to communicate in English, which lowers motivation. Taken together, all of the mentioned factors have a detrimental effect on students' self-esteem. Mnemonics are valuable technique for managing the issue because they make it easier for students to remember new words,

which boosts their motivation and self-esteem and prevents them from feeling as though they are incapable of speaking English (Chiew, 2021, pp. 1298-1309).

In the study, interviews with English language learners at one of the colleges are presented. The learners claim they lack the necessary bravery to communicate in English due to a lack of vocabulary.

Using auditory and visual cues to link new information to previously learned material, the mnemonics technique facilitates word recall for learners (Gu, 2010, pp. 105-118). The study report makes reference to the importance of mnemonics in vocabulary memorization and English language learning. Additionally, the experiences of vocational students and instructional strategies will be covered.

## **Literature Review- Mnemonics' Role in Learning English Vocabulary and Memorizing Studying Materials**

Acquiring proficiency in a foreign language is challenging; it requires effort to commit new knowledge to memory and prevent forgetting it quickly. Furthermore, students usually have trouble remembering newly learned words, which makes speaking challenging for them. A mnemonic is a technique that helps students learn new materials quickly (Jaikrishman, 2021, pp. 297-309). In the literature review will be discussed how mnemonics help students learn vocabulary in English and commit study materials to memory. A method that helps students easily recall new words is the mnemonic. The word comes from the Greek word "mnemonikos," which concerns to memory. People frequently talk about memorization and learning new material by heart (Jaikrishman, 2021, pp. 297-309).

Sometimes vocabulary is overlooked when teaching students the English language. The Vocabulary Learning Strategy (VLS) aids students in concentrating more on novel vocabulary. It claims that the software aids students in expanding their vocabulary and improving their speaking abilities (Jaikrishman, 2021, pp. 297-309).

Transitioning lexical information from short-term to long-term memory is the primary goal of vocabulary learning. A mnemonic device helps students make connections between new and old information, hence improving memory. Put differently, mnemonic techniques assist students in connecting newly learned material to previously learned material that is retained in long-term memory (Amiryousefi, 2011, pp. 178-182).

Mnemonic strategies fall into the following categories: verbal, spatial, linguistic, and visual. Linguistic mnemonics states that there is a two-stage Peg Word Method. In the first stage, students are required to memorize ten pairs of numbers that rhyme, and in the second stage, they are to visualize the word and attempt to make connections with the rhymes. With the help of spatial mnemonics, students write the words in a triangle pattern as opposed to a column, which helps them remember the pattern first and the words later (Amiryousefi, 2011, pp. 175-178).

When words and pictures are paired together, students are more engaged and curious, which improves their memory, according to visual mnemonics. The central concept of the Verbal Method is storytelling, in which students use the new words they have learned to create a narrative. It is simpler

to memorize study materials when words are put together in sentences (Amiryousefi, 2011, pp. 175-178).

In addition to the techniques mentioned above, students can use the Method of Loci, which involves having them visualize themselves arranging objects in a room. It integrates the use of mental imagery. The word locus, which means location, is pluralized as loci. Students' memory function and capacity to recall information are enhanced by loci, an efficient teaching strategy. Numerous studies indicate that the approach improves students' ability to focus. Students' learning and memory skills are enhanced by using of mnemonic devices, such as the loci method (Gross, 2014, pp. 140-163).

All of the mentioned techniques can help EFL students improve their speaking abilities. The literature review mentioned above makes abundantly evident how crucial mnemonics are to the process of learning vocabulary in English and memorization of study materials. It is essential to the learning process, and English language instructors should employ these strategies to help students.

### **Aim of the Study and Research Questions**

EFL students face challenges while learning English language vocabulary. Thus, they have problems in speaking. Students have low motivation, which might be result of knowing insufficient words. At the same time, all the above issues are caused by the fact, that curriculum pays little or no emphasis to the speaking component.

The research aims to analyze why EFL students have challenges in speaking and how mnemonics strategy will help them to solve the above issues. Based on the above-described problem statement, the main objective of the research is to examine EFL students' speaking performance and their motivation to study new materials. In particular, the study aims to research the impact of teaching methodology on EFL students' motivation to learn vocabulary and speak in English. The research further seeks to explore EFL students' perceptions about learning English vocabulary.

### **Research Questions**

Based on the above-mentioned descriptions, the study attempts to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1: How frequently are speaking activities at the English language lessons?

RQ 2: What techniques would be helpful for students to speak?

RQ3: Do students find it difficult to speak at the lessons?

RQ4: What is the reason for not speaking at the lessons in English?

### **Theoretical Framework, Methodology and Participants**

In the research there are emphasized the philosophy of Pragmatism and Axiology. According to the philosophy of Pragmatism, research simply helps to identify what works. Therefore, the interview

results help the current research to find out whether mnemonics help learners to improve English language vocabulary skills and memorize materials. It has to be noted that axiology is a branch of philosophy that considers values and ethics. Axiology focuses on what researchers' value in their research. Axiological research ethics of educational research observes - informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality (Lodico et al., 2010).

A quantitative method was applied in order to look into the study more thoroughly. Thirty EFL students at one of vocational colleges in Tbilisi, Georgia received the online survey. The case study makes it possible to examine the data by analysis. The questions were created using a review of the literature, and education science two professors at one of Georgia's universities verified them.

### Demographic Information of the Participants

Demographic information		Percentage
Gender	Female	60%
	Male	40%

### Data Collection and Analysis

Participants of the research are 30 EFL students at one of the vocational colleges in Tbilisi, Georgia. The researcher contacted the learning coordinator of the college, to permit conducted interviews with the students. Based on the coordinator and students' permission online survey was sent to the vocational students. Afterward, the researcher analyzed the answers.

### Quantitative Analysis Result

The research result and analysis is the following:

#### Figure1 – Speaking Activities at Lesson

How frequently are speaking activities at English lessons?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Not at every lesson	1	27	27	27
Not frequently	1	9	9	9
Rarely	1	64	64	64
Total	3	100.0	100.0	100.0

According to the survey, 64% of the respondents emphasized that speaking activities are held rarely, while 27% justified that the activities are not frequent, and 9% of them said that it happens not so frequently.

**Figure 2 – Techniques of Speaking**

What techniques would be helpful for you to speak?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Listening activities	1	20.0	20.0	20.0
Speaking in English with group mates	1	50.0	50.0	50.0
Watching movies	1	30.0	30.0	30.0
Total	3	100.0	100.0	100.0

On the question – what techniques would be helpful for students to speak – 50% of the respondents emphasized speaking activities in English with group mates, 30% watching movies in English, while 20% emphasized listening activities.

**Figure 3 – Difficulties in Speaking English**

Do you find it difficult to speak in English?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Always	1	70.0	70.0	70.0
Sometimes	1	30.0	30.0	30.0
Total	2	100.0	100.0	100.0

On the question, if the EFL students find difficult to speak at English lessons, 70% emphasized always, while 30% sometimes.

**Figure 4 – Reasons of not speaking in English**

What is the reason of not speaking at the lesson in English?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Low self-esteem	1	30.0	30.0	30.0
Not enough courage	1	30.0	30.0	30.0
Shame	1	40.0	40.0	40.0
Total	3	100.0	100.0	100.0

On the question what is the reason of not speaking at the lessons in English – 40% emphasized shame, 30% - did not have enough courage, and the other 30% - had low self-esteem.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings of the study received from the quantitative data analysis are that EFL students have challenges in speaking English. Due to the following factors: there are no speaking activities at every lesson, therefore it is not possible to improve speaking skills, besides the above issues, EFL students find it difficult to speak because of shame, not enough courage, and low self-esteem.

Moreover, the students emphasize the techniques that would be helpful for them to speak, like watching movies in English, speaking with each other, and having listening activities during the lessons. Educators neglect all the above techniques, and as a result, EFL students find it difficult to speak.

The significant body of literature review analyzed that the mnemonics have a positive influence of learning English vocabulary among EFL students. It has been discussed that mnemonic is a memory improving strategy, which helps learners to connect new information to the old one. As well as, it help students to relate the new information to the one, which is stored in long-term memory.

Based on the literature review and research result analysis, the following recommendations should be implemented, in order new words to be easily memorized and to be improved EFL students speaking skills:

- There should be add mnemonics techniques while learning English;
- At every lesson should be speaking activities;
- There should be listening activities at all the lessons;
- Educators should communicate with EFL students to analyze from where the shame, lack of courage and low self-esteem comes from.

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## მნემონური სტრატეგიის ეფექტური გავლენა ინგლისური ენის ლექსიკის შესწავლაზე (საქართველოს ერთ-ერთი პროფესიული კოლეჯის მაგალითზე)

ნინო ზაალიშვილი

### აბსტრაქტი

ინგლისური ენის სწავლის პროცესი სხვადასხვა კომპონენტისგან შედგება, რომელთაგან საუბარი ერთ-ერთ მნიშვნელოვან ნაწილს შეადგენს. რადგან საუბარი ვერბალურ და კომუნიკაციურ უნარებს აერთიანებს. სშირად ინგლისურ ენაზე მეტყველება სტუდენტებისთვის რთული გამოწვევაა, რადგან მათ არ აქვთ საკმარისი ლექსიკა, რასაც თავის მხრივ უარყოფითი გავლენა აქვს მათ თავდაჯერებულობაზე, რომ ისაუბრონ ინგლისურ ენაზე. გარდა ამისა მათ ექმნებათ პრობლემები უცხო ენაზე ნასწავლი სიტყვების დამახსოვრების პროცესში, შედეგად, მათი სწავლის მოტივაცია იკლებს და საბოლოოდ სტუდენტები გამართულად ვერ საუბრობენ ინგლისურ ენაზე.

აღნიშნული საკითხებიდან გამომდინარე, კვლევა მიზნად ისახავს გაეცნოს ინგლისურ ენაზე საუბრისა და ახალი ლექსიკის შესწავლის დროს არსებულ სირთულეებს, აგრეთვე მნემონიკის მნიშვნელობას სასწავლო პროცესში სამეტყველო უნარების გაძლიერების მიზნით. აღსანიშნავია, რომ მნემონიკა სტრატეგიაა, რომელიც სტუდენტებს ინგლისური ლექსიკის შესწავლასა და შინაარსის დამახსოვრებაში ეხმარება.

კვლევის მიზანია გამოკვეთოს, თუ რა გავლენა აქვს მნემონიკის მეთოდს ინგლისური ლექსიკის შესწავლასა და დამახსოვრებაში. ხოლო, ლიტერატურულ მიმოხილვაში მკითხველი გაეცნობა ლექსიკის სწავლის სტრატეგიებსა (VLS) და ლოკის მეთოდს (The Method of Loci). აგრეთვე, კვლევის შედეგებს, რომლებიც 30 სტუდენტს შორის ინტერვიუს საფუძველზე დადგინდა.

**საკვანძო სიტყვები:** მნემონიკა; ინგლისური ენის სწავლა; ინგლისური ენის ლექსიკა; ინგლისური ენის პროგრამის სტუდენტები; მეხსიერება; პროფესიული განათლება.