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The Role of Shades of Meaning Strategy on EFL Intermediate Schools Students' New Vocabulary
A B S T R A C T

The present study aims at assessing the average level of the 2st year intermediate school student's achievement in new vocabulary, finding out the role of Shades of meaning strategy on EFL intermediate school student's new vocabulary, and finding out whether there is any significant difference between the students' achievement at the recognition and at the production levels of the post-test. Find out whether there is any significant difference between the five variables (relevance, contextual, practice, variety and usage). A sample of (100) students have been randomly selected from Iraqi EFL second intermediate school students from Baghdad College Secondary School in Al_adhamiyah, Baghdad, during the academic year 2024-2025. It is divided into two equal groups, i.e., the experimental and control groups. The experimental group has been taught according to Shades of Meaning Strategy, while the control group has been taught according to the conventional method. An achievement test has been constructed, validated, and applied to the two groups. The results show that Shades of Meaning Strategy is more effective than using the conventional method.

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دور استراتيجية ظلال المعنى على المفردات الجديدة لطلبة المتوسطة دارسي اللغة الإنكليزية لغة أجنبية

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الخلاصة:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقييم المستوى تحصيل طلاب الصف الثاني من المرحلة المتوسطة في المفردات

الجديدة، واكتشاف دور استراتيجية "ظلال المعنى" في تعلم المفردات الجديدة لطلاب اللغة الإنكليزية لغة أجنبية في المرحلة المتوسطة، وكذلك معرفة ما إذا كان هناك فرق ذو دلالة إحصائية بين تحقيق الطلاب في مستوى التمييز ومستوى الإنتاج في الاختبار البعدي. كما تهدف إلى معرفة ما إذا كان هناك فرق ذو دلالة إحصائية بين المتغيرات الخمسة (الملاءمة، السياق، الممارسة، التنوع، والاستخدام). تم اختيار عينة مكونة من (١٠٠) طالبًا عشوائيًا من طلبة الصف الثاني متوسط في ثانوية كلية بغداد في منطقة الاعظمية خلال العام الدراسي ٢٠٢٤-٢٠٢٥. تم تقسيم العينة إلى مجموعتين متساويتين، وهما المجموعة التجريبية والمجموعة الضابطة. تم تدريس المجموعة التجريبية باستخدام استراتيجية "ظلال المعنى"، بينما تم تدريس المجموعة الضابطة باستخدام الطريقة الاعتيادية. تم بناء اختبار تحصيلي، وتم التحقق من صلاحيته، وتم تطبيقه على المجموعتين. أظهرت النتائج أن استراتيجية "ظلال المعنى" أكثر فاعلية من استخدام الطريقة الاعتيادية.

الكلمات المفتاحية، استراتيجية ظلال المعنى ، المفردات , المفردات الانتاجية, المفردات الاستقبالية

1. Introduction

Vocabulary acquisition is a critical component of second language learning, particularly for English as Foreign Language (EFL) students at the intermediate level. Developing a rich and nuanced vocabulary not only facilitates comprehension and communication but also contributes to higher levels of language proficiency. One pedagogical approach that has gained increasing attention is the shades of meaning strategy, which emphasizes understanding subtle differences among related words. By exploring semantic gradation, learners can deepen their comprehension and improve their expressive abilities (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2013).

The Shades of Meaning strategy involves teaching students to recognize and apply distinctions between near-synonyms and context-dependent word usage. Research has shown that such approaches help learners develop more precise vocabulary knowledge and better interpret texts across different subjects (Snow, 2010). However, while extensive studies have addressed vocabulary instruction in general, there remains a need to investigate the specific impact of the shades of meaning strategy on vocabulary development among EFL learners in intermediate school settings.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Vocabulary knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language (Schmitt, 2008). Teaching vocabulary may be problematic because many teachers are not confident about the best practice in vocabulary teaching and at times do not know where to begin to place an instructional emphasis on word learning (Berne & Blachowicz, 2008). It is almost impossible to learn a language without words; even communication between students is based on words. Both teachers and students agree that acquisition of vocabulary is a central factor in learning a language (Walters, 2004).

Meara (1980) Explains that many teachers tend to stress teaching mostly grammatical rules. On other side, they teach students specific topics without giving clear explanation of the techniques or methods on how to recognize the meaning of words rather than the vocabulary in detail. Teaching English vocabulary may often be neglected in the teaching-learning process. For this reason, she comments that vocabulary is considered a neglected aspect of language learning that has not significantly changed today.

Vocabulary learning is a daunting task. There are a massive number of single words and multiword units to be learned in any language. This is especially true for English vocabulary that is growing by the day. The latest Oxford English Dictionary contains more than 600,000 words (Oxford English Dictionary, 2017). Most people know a fraction of these words only. Goulden, Nation, read (1990) estimated that “the average educated native speaker has a vocabulary of around 17,000 base words.

Although the shades of meaning strategy has been recognized as a promising technique for deepening vocabulary knowledge by highlighting subtle semantic distinctions, there is insufficient empirical evidence regarding its effectiveness in EFL intermediate school contexts. In particular, little is known about whether this strategy significantly improves students’ acquisition, retention, and application of new vocabulary compared to more conventional instructional methods. This lack of research creates a gap in pedagogical practice and limits educators’ ability to make informed decisions about vocabulary instruction that supports more advanced language competence. (Nation, 2013)

Accordingly, this study seeks to investigate the impact of the shades of meaning strategy on EFL intermediate school students’ vocabulary development, aiming

to determine whether it leads to measurable improvements in students' understanding and use of new words. (Nation, 2013)

1.2 Aims of the study

The study aims at:

- 1-Assessing the average level of the 2st year intermediate school student's achievement in new vocabulary
- 2- Finding out the role of Shades of meaning strategy on EFL intermediate school students new vocabulary
- 3- Finding out whether there is any significant difference between the students' achievement at the recognition and at the production levels of the posttest
- 4- Finding out whether there is any significant difference between the five variables (relevance, contextual, practice, variety and usage).

1.3 Hypotheses of the study

The following hypotheses have been posited in order to achieve the aims of the study:

- 1- There is a statistically significant difference between the average level of the students' achievement and the theoretical level of the student's achievement in the posttest
- 2- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group's achievement, which is taught by the shades of meaning strategy, and the mean scores of the control group's achievement, which is taught by the conventional method in the posttest
- 3- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the students' achievement at the recognition and the production levels of the posttest.
- 4- There is a statistically significant different among student's mean scores of the five variables (relevance, contextual, practice, variety and usage).

١.٤ Limits of the Study

The present study is limited to:-

- ١- Iraqi EFL in the Baghdad college Secondary school in Al_adhamiyah, Baghdad.
- ٢-During the first semester of the academic year (2024-2025).
- ٣-**English for Iraq** (Student's book and Activity book for 2st intermediate school) unit (2 and 3).
- 4- Shade of meaning strategy as a learning strategy to improve new vocabulary learning.

2.0 Theoretical Background

2.1 Definitions of the Basic Terms.

2.1.1 The Role

Patric (1971) argues that a role refers to the actions and activities that are assigned to, required from, or expected of an individual or a group.

According to Flynn and Raymond (1999), a role represents the anticipated behavior linked to performing a specific task. It encompasses a collection of expectations, actions, and interpretations of responses.

2.1.2 Shades of Meaning

It is a teaching method used to help students differentiate between words that have similar meanings by examining their subtle differences in connotation, intensity, or usage. Through activities like word ranking or semantic gradients, students analyze how words vary in meaning, leading to a deeper understanding and more accurate use of vocabulary in both speaking and writing. (Stahl & Nagy, 2006).

2.1.3 Strategy

Strategy is a plan of developed ideas consciously, purposefully, and made in advance of the specific decisions to which it applies (Mintzberg, 1978).

Strategy is a set of principles for decision making under conditions of partial ignorance. Strategic decisions concern the firm's relationship with its ecosystem (Ansof, 1979) .

2.1.4 New Vocabulary

Hornby (1995) defines vocabulary as the total number of words in a language; vocabulary is a list of words with their meanings.

Richards & Renandya (2002) define vocabulary as a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write.

Vocabulary should be considered as more than a set of single word units (Schmitt, 2008). Vocabulary can be defined as words we must know to communicate effectively (Neuman & Dwyer, 2009)

2.2.1 Concept of Shades of Meaning

The concept of Shades of Meaning has its roots in linguistics and language education, particularly in understanding how words with similar denotations (dictionary definitions) can differ in connotation (emotional or cultural associations) and intensity. The strategy has been widely applied in education to enhance vocabulary teaching, especially in second language acquisition. (Stahl & Nagy, 2006).

Goodman (2004) states that a significant figure in the development of the Shades of Meaning strategy, Goodman proposed the use of paint chips to represent different shades of meaning. This visual aid helped students understand the continuum of related words. He develops the Shades of Meaning strategy as a way to address this need and help students develop their understanding that many words can be organized in gradients of meaning. The strategy encourages students to talk about words and arrange them along a continuum. As an interesting side note, the ability to distinguish subtle meaning is one of the skills assessed on the Scholastic Aptitude Test. The easiest way to develop students' understanding of the differences between related words is to use paint chips. Using a paint chip, students identify a continuum of words and then write the words in the colored sections of the paint chip. (Fisher, & Frey 2008).

2.2.1.2 Shades of Meaning's Principal Objectives

Graves (2016) explains Shades of Meaning strategy is a valuable tool for enhancing students' understanding of language and their ability to express

themselves with precision. Here are some key principles to guide its implementation:

١- Word Choice and Connotation

Explore connotations: Encourage students to consider the emotional or associative meanings of words beyond their literal definitions.

Analyze synonyms: Compare and contrast synonyms to identify subtle differences in connotation and usage. For example, "happy" and "content" both convey positive emotions, but "content" suggests a more passive or satisfied state.

٢-Contextual Understanding

Examine the context: Analyze how the context in which a word is used influences its meaning. For instance, the word "strong" can have different connotations depending on whether it's used to describe a person, a building, or a drink.

Consider figurative language: Explore how figurative language, such as metaphors and similes, can enhance or modify the meaning of words.

2.2.1.3 Cognitive Theory in Shades of Meaning

The Cognitive Theory behind the Shades of Meaning strategy emphasizes how learners actively process and organize vocabulary based on meaning, using cognitive structures such as semantic networks and schemas. According to this theory, words are linked in the brain by their relationships and similarities. Activities that involve ranking words by intensity, such as "happy" vs. "ecstatic," strengthen these connections, fostering better retention and comprehension. The strategy encourages deeper processing of vocabulary, enhancing both recall and practical use in context (Evans & Green, 2006).

2.2.1.4 Components of Shades of Meaning

The components of the Shades of Meaning strategy involve several key elements that support nuanced vocabulary learning:

1-Semantic Gradation: Ranking words by intensity or meaning, such as "cold," "chilly," and "freezing," helps learners grasp subtle differences.

2- Contextual Usage: Teaching students how these words apply differently in context enhances their precision in language use.

3-Visual Aids: Tools like word ladders or color gradients help students organize words by strength, making abstract meanings tangible.

2.1.2.3 Techniques for Teaching Vocabulary

In general, teaching is a message to educate and improve the level of the students and using Euphemisms can help students soften their expressions by encouraging them to increase their repertoire of vocabulary. According to Finochiaro (2011) teaching vocabulary plays an important role in language acquisition because the mastery of vocabulary will help students master all the language skills, speaking, listening, writing, and reading, vocabulary will make the students practice life and will strengthen their belief that English can be used to express the same ideas or feelings they express of their native language. Teaching vocabulary is an important aspect of learning and teaching language as a second language. Languages are based on words; we cannot communicate without words (Al-Qahtani, 2015).

- 1- Explicit Instruction of Word Meanings: Teachers directly present new words, explain their meanings, and use them in example sentences.
- 2- Contextual Learning: Students learn words by encountering them in authentic texts, such as stories, articles, or dialogues.
- 3- Semantic Mapping: Creating diagrams that show relationships between a new word and related words or concepts (synonyms, antonyms, categories).
- 4- Morphological Analysis: Teaching students to recognize roots, prefixes, and suffixes to infer meaning.
- 5- Repetition and Recycling: Reviewing words frequently over time in different contexts to strengthen retention.

2.1.2.4 Importance of Vocabulary Development

According to Majeed (2021) vocabulary is one of the essential things to be mastered in language learning and it is a crucial factor in studying a foreign language. The nation reports that vocabulary knowledge allows language use, language use allows vocabulary knowledge to be increased, world knowledge allows vocabulary knowledge and language use to be increased, and so on.

Vocabulary has consistently been recognized as one of the most important aspects of language teaching and learning. Additionally, early studies on vocabulary have always emphasized that vocabulary knowledge is one of the best indicators of verbal ability (Sternberg, 1987; cited in Graves, 2016). Vocabulary is not an optional part of a foreign language or an unimportant one.

Vocabulary is an important factor in the learning of a second language (David, 2009).

2.1.2.5 Difficulties in Teaching Vocabulary

In teaching vocabulary, teachers face several difficulties within university classes; these include engaging students effectively, managing diverse learning needs, and integrating vocabulary instruction with other curriculum objectives (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Additionally, large class sizes, limited instructional time, and the challenge of assessing vocabulary learning can further complicate the teaching process (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). The following points explain some of difficulties:

1. Students often struggle to retain newly learned vocabulary over time due to factors such as lack of repetition, meaningful practice, and contextual usage (Nation, 2006).
2. Large class sizes in university settings can limit opportunities for individualized instruction and feedback, making it difficult for teachers to address the diverse needs of students (Maringer, 2015).

3.0 Methodology

This chapter describes the procedures followed for achieving the aims of the study and verifying its hypotheses. It includes the experimental design, population, sample, the construction of the posttest, sample equivalence, and statistical methods for data analysis.

٣.١ Experimental Design

Best and Khan (2006, p.177) define experimental design as “the blueprint of the procedures that enable the researcher to test hypotheses by reaching at reasonable conclusions about the relationship between independent and dependent variables.”

Cook (1967) describes the experimental design as important means to test the aims, procedures and hypotheses of the study by the researcher.

Goodman (1973) defines the experimental design as a plan to discover the effect of experimental treatments on experimental groups that are selected for testing the study. The researcher has found that the experimental design is an

approach that needs good understanding of the appropriate system to test the hypothesis and discover the results of the study

3.1. Population and Sampling of the Study

According to Arikunto (2006,p.130) “ Population is the sum of the research subject, while sample is the part of the population that is considered in the research.” Certainly, a population is all the individuals related to the research subject .

Creswell (2012) states a population as a group of individuals with the same characteristics.The sample refers to any group of individuals that is selected to symbolize a population (Richards and Rodgers, 1992).

According to Ary ,Jacobs ,Irvine and Walker.(2018) a sample is a number of individuals, objects or events selected for a study from a population, usually in such a way that they represent the large group from which they are selected.

The target population of the present study includes 100 at Baghdad college Secondary school in Al _Adhmiya, Baghdad ,during the academic year 2024-2025. The students are grouped into two sections: (A, B). Section (A) has been randomly selected to be the experimental group; section (B) represents the control group. Section (A) consists of (50) students and section (B) consists of (50) students, as shown in table (3.2)

Table (3.2)

The Population and Sample of the Study

Names of schools	Groups	Sections	No. of students	No. of Sample
Baghdad college Secondary school	Experimental	A	41	41
	Control	B	٤١	٤١
	Pilot	C	١٨	١٨
	Total		100	١٠٠
	No.of students			
Al-Ebdaa Preparatory School for girls	١٠٠			
Al_Harery Secondary School for girls	١٢٠			

3.3 Face validity

Face validity is "the way the test looks to the examinees, test administrator, educators and the like" (Harris, 1969, p.7). Nevo (1985) suggests that face validity can be understood through the scope of validity, describing face validity as the thoughts, behaviors, and views of testers, raters, or examinees against a test.

3.4 Content validity

Gipps (1995) explains that content validity involves the coverage of suitable and essential content, and is likely to be based on capable judgments. Pennington (2003) claims that Content validity refers to the degree to which an assessment instrument is relevant to, and representative of, the targeted construct it is designed to measure represents all sides of a given concept.

3.5 Pilot Study

The pilot study is a preliminary study carried out with the test sample to familiarize the researcher with any obstructions that could be found during the test. (Good and Merkel , 1973). The purpose of the pilot study is to provide the researcher with information about how the system operates and to determine the approximate time to answer all questions or objects of the test. The goal is also to assess the degree of discrimination and the difficulty level of the test, as well as the consistency of the test instructions.

3.6 Reliability of the Posttest

Reliability can be defined as the consistency with which a test measures the same thing all the time (Harrison, 1983). There are many methods for achieving the reliability of the test one of these method is internal consistency.

Crocker and Algina (1986) define the internal consistency of the test scores are the overall degree to which one can expect the constant deviation scores of individuals across testing situation with the same testing instrument. So, the concept of reliability is unrecognized if it is done outside of literature measurement.

3.7 Item Analysis

Item analysis is a process of analyzing the testees' responses in order to find out the difficulty level and discriminating power of each item included in the test as follows:

3.7.1 Difficulty Level (DL) of the Posttest

The difficulty level is specified as the ratio of the students who replied correctly to each item (Rosas, 2000).

Item difficulty refers to the extent to which an item appears to be complicated or facilitated for a given number of tests. It just reflects the percentage of learners who respond correctly to the object. The most suitable test item will have item difficulty varying between 0.15 and 0.85 (Brown, 2010). It was found that the current test items' DL ranges from (0.30) to (0.80).

3.7.2 Discrimination Power (DP) of the Posttest

Discrimination power means " calculating the degree to which a particular item's results correspond with the results of the entire test' (Alderson, Clapham, and Wall 1999).

This means that an object is deemed to have weak power of discrimination if it is correctly scored by high-skilled students as well as low-skilled students. Item discrimination refers to the degree to which an object makes a difference between good and poor testers. An object has good power of discrimination if it collects the right answers from the good students and the wrong answers from the bad students. It is worth noting that the high power of discrimination will be close to 1.0, and no power of discrimination will be nil at all (Brown, 2010).

4.1 Presentation of the Results

The student's responses to the test items have been analyzed statistically as follows:

4.1.1 Results Related to the First Hypothesis

Comparison between Theoretical Mean and the Mean Scores of the Student's Achievement in the Posttest

To analyze the data related to the first hypothesis specifically: There is a statistically significant difference between the average level of the students' achievement and the theoretical level of the student's achievement in the

N.	Mean Score	SD.	Theoretical Mean Scores	T-Value		DF	Level of Sig.
				Calculate	Tabulated		
41	85.243	8.123	50	27.781	1.68	40	0.05

posttest , the one sample test has been used. Therefore, the first aim of the study namely: assessing the average level of the 2st year intermediate school

student's achievement in new vocabulary will be achieved. The result in table 4.1 show that the students' mean scours is 85.243 higher than the theoretical mean 50 with a standard deviation of 8.123 degrees. Comparing with the tabulated t-value which is 1.68, the calculated t-value 27.781 is higher than the tabulated t-value with, a degree of freedom 40 at a level of significance 0.05. This means, that students in 2st year intermediate school students achieve very high level in new vocabulary. So the first hypothesis is accepted.

Table 4.1

Mean Score, Standard Deviation, Theoretical Mean Scores, and t-Values of the Experimental Groups in New Vocabulary

4.1.2 Results Related to the Second Hypothesis

Comparison between the Mean Scores of the Experimental Group and that of Control Group in *Teaching New Vocabulary in the Posttest*

To analyze the data related to the second hypothesis specifically: There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group's achievement, which is taught by the shades of meaning strategy, and the mean scores of the control group's achievement, which is taught by the conventional method in the posttest , the independent sample test has been used. Therefore, the second aim of the study namely: Finding out whether there is any significant difference between the students' achievement of the experimental group and that of the control group in teaching new vocabulary in the posttest, will be achieved.

According to the following results in table 4.2, the mean scores of the experimental group are 85.243 and standard deviation is 8.1233. While the mean scores of the control group is 81.951 and the standard deviation is 6.7414. The calculated t-value 2.00 is higher than the tabulated t-value 1.99 with a degree of freedom 80 at a level of significance (0.05). Observing the values of T-calculated above, it is found that the calculated T-value 2.00 is much greater than the tabulated T-value of the field 1.99, and from this it can be concluded that there is statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the control group, who are taught according to the conventional method and the

mean scores of the experimental group, who are taught by using shades of meaning strategy, for the benefit of experimental group. So, the second hypothesis is accepted.

Table 4.2

Means, Standard Deviation, and T-Values of the Two Groups in the Achievement Posttest

Group	N.	Mean	S.D.	T-Value		DF	Level of Sig.
				Calculated	Tabulated		
Experimental	41	85.243	8.1233	2.00	1.99	80	0.05
Control	41	81.951	6.7414				

4.1.3 Results Related for the Third Hypothesis

Comparison between Experimental Groups: Students' Performance at the Recognition Level Versus the Production Level

To analyze the data related to the third hypothesis namely: There is a significant difference between the mean scores of the students' achievement at the recognition and the production levels of the posttest. Consequently, the related aim of the study namely: Finding out whether there is any significant difference between the students' achievement at the recognition and at the production levels of the posttest, will be achieved.

The obtained results show that students' mean scores at the recognition level are found to be 42.975 and that at the production level is 42.731. The t-test formula for two paired samples is used to show that the calculated t-value is 0.371 and the tabulated t-value is 1.68 at the degree of freedom 40 and level of significance (0.05), as shown in table 4.3. It can be inferred that there is no difference between students' performance at the recognition level and that at the production level. So, the third hypothesis is rejected and the related aim is achieved.

Table 4.3

Mean Scores, Standard Deviation, and T-Value of the Experimental Group Students' at the Recognition and Production Levels in the Achievement Posttest

Level	N.	Mean	S.D.	T-Value		DF	Level of Sig.
				Calculated	Tabulated		
Recognition	41	42.975	4.480	0.371	1.68	40	0.05
Production		42.731	4.318				

4.1.4 Results Related to the Fourth Hypothesis

To verify the fourth hypotheses which is, "*There is a statistically significant different among student's mean scores of the five variables relevance, contextual, practice, variety and usage*). A one- way ANOVA is used in the posttest to see whether there are any significant differences in the mean achievement scores of the experimental groups *five variables (relevance, contextual, practice, variety and usage)*. The researcher used a one-way analysis of variance, as shown in the table 4 below:

Table 4.4

One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Among the Five Variables

	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-value		Sig.
				Calculated	Tabulated	
Between Groups	426.898	4	106.724	2.942	2.4	0.05
Within Groups	7254.390	200	36.272			
Total	7681.288	204				

Table 4.4 shows that the computed F-value 2.942 higher than the tabulated F-value 2.4 at the 0.05 level of significance and DF = 4-200. This indicates that there are statistically significant differences between experimental groups students' mean scores of the five variables in the posttest. The hypothesis " There is a statistically significant different among student's mean scores of the five variables relevance, contextual, practice, variety and usage)" is accepted.

Table 4.5*Comparisons of Means Among the Five Variables (Scheffe^a)*

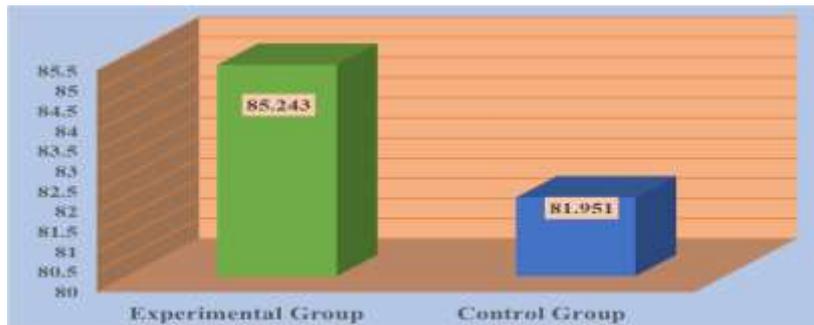
Groups	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05
		Mean scores
Variety	41	7.195
Contextual	41	7.536
Usage	41	7.926
Relevance	41	9.463
Practice	41	11.073
Sig.		0.079
Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.		
a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 41		

According to the table above, the comparisons of means shows that the mean scores of the experimental group in the posttests at Variety 7.195, Contextual 7.536, Usage 7.926, Relevance 9.463 and Practice 11.073, with harmonic mean sample size = 41. These results indicate that students' achievement in Practice has the highest mean score.

4.2 Discussion of the Results

The statistical analysis of the data indicates that the achievement of the EG in learning new vocabulary is significantly higher in average than that of the CG. The results of the study affirm the contribution of the second year intermediate students. This indicates that Shades of Meaning strategy is more favorable to learning than the conventional methods, as shown in figure (1).

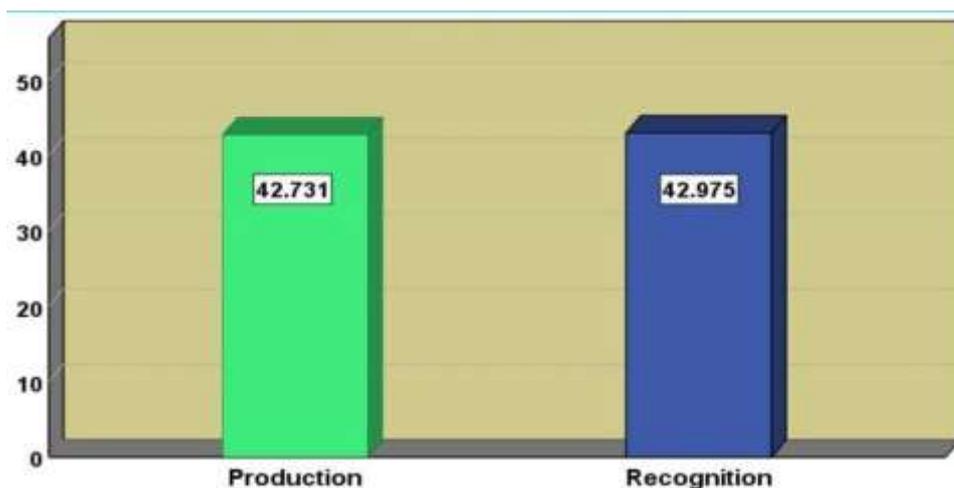
Figure 1 Mean scores of the of the Experimental and Control Groups at the Post Achievement test



The analysis of the third hypothesis, which posits that there is a significant difference between students' achievement at the recognition and production levels of the posttest, has yielded insightful results. The mean scores indicate that students scored slightly higher at the recognition level 42.975 compared to the production level 42.731 as show in figure 4.3. However, the difference in means is minimal, suggesting that both scores are relatively close.

The application of the paired t-test produced a calculated t-value of 0.371, which is significantly lower than the tabulated t-value of 1.68. This result indicates that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, as the calculated t-value does not exceed the critical value required to establish statistical significance. These findings have several implications for understanding student achievement in different cognitive tasks. The lack of a significant difference suggests that students may perform similarly regardless of whether they are required to recognize information or produce it. This could imply that the strategy used may be equally effective for fostering both recognition and production skills.

Figure 2 Mean scores of the Experimental Group's at the Recognition and Production level in the Achievement Posttest



5.1. Conclusions

1- It contributes to the field of EFL pedagogy: By investigating the role of the shades of meaning strategy, the study can contribute to a better understanding of effective vocabulary teaching methods for intermediate EFL students.

2- It provides practical guidance for teachers: it can provide a practical recommendation for EFL teachers on how to implement the shades of meaning strategy in their classrooms.

4- Informs curriculum development: it can inform the development of EFL curricula by highlighting the importance of incorporating strategies like the shades of meaning strategy.

According to the study there is a statistically significant different between experimental group and control group.

5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are put forward in the context of the obtained results and drawn conclusions:

1- Teachers of English should be trained on using the Shades of Meaning strategy in teaching vocabulary to enhance students' ability to distinguish between synonyms and improve their lexical knowledge.

2-Curriculum designers and EFL methodologists are recommended to integrate the Shades of Meaning strategy in vocabulary instruction to develop students' depth of word knowledge and contextual understanding.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Studies

The following points are suggested, for further research:

1- The Role of Using the Shades of Meaning Strategy in Teaching Speaking or Writing Skills.

2- The Effect of Using the Shades of Meaning Strategy on University Students' Achievement in Vocabulary Acquisition.

3- The Impact of the Shades of Meaning Strategy on Enhancing Reading Comprehension through Contextual Word Understanding.

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