

البحث الثالث

تأثير مستوى تعليم الوالدين على قدرة الأطفال على تعلم واستخدام مفردات جديدة

د. مريم العمير *

د. أشواق المذن **

الملخص

تلعب المفردات دورًا حيويًا في عملية القراءة والتعلم لأنها ضرورية للفهم. يكفي القول ، إن الطالب الذي يمتلك مفردات أقوى هو أكثر عرضة لفهم نص معين بشكل أفضل من الطالب ذي المفردات الضعيفة للغاية. في المقابل ، يمكن أن يكون للمشكلة تأثير كبير على الأداء. سعت هذه الدراسة النوعية الأساسية إلى تحديد تأثير مستوى تعليم الوالدين على قدرة الأطفال على تعلم واستخدام مفردات جديدة. باستخدام المقابلات شبه المنظمة ، تم جمع البيانات من ١٥ معلمًا سعوديًّا لا تقل خبرتهم في التدريس عن ٣ سنوات. أشارت النتائج إلى أن أطفال الآباء المتعلمين جيدًا ، مثل أولئك الذين ينتمون إلى أسر ميسورة ، لديهم عمومًا مفردات أقوى ويمكنهم استخدامها بشكل أكثر سلاسة. علاوة على ذلك ، أظهر هؤلاء الأطفال أنهم يقرؤون ويستخدمون مفردات جديدة أكثر من أولئك الذين لديهم آباء أقل تعليمًا. أخيرًا ، أظهرت النتائج ارتباطًا قويًا بين المفردات والفهم والأداء مع نقص الموارد وضعف الدافع الذي تم الإشارة عليه في البحث كأحد العوامل الرئيسية التي تؤثر على قدرة الأطفال على تعلم مفردات جديدة. تكشف هذه النتائج عن الدور الذي لعبه مستوى تعليم الوالدين في فجوة الكلمات الحالية. ومع ذلك ، من الواضح أيضًا أنه من خلال الموارد المناسبة والتحفيز المستمر ، يمكن للأطفال الوالدين الأقل تعليمًا أن يتحسنوا في هذه المجالات والتي يمكن أن تساعد بدورها في تقليل الفجوة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المفردات، فجوة الكلمات، اللغة، المستوى التعليمي، الوضع الاجتماعي

والاقتصادي

* قسم المناهج وطرق التدريس، كلية التربية، جامعة الملك فيصل، السعودية.

** قسم المناهج وطرق التدريس، كلية التربية، جامعة الملك فيصل، السعودية.

The impact of parental level of education on the ability of children to learn and use new vocabulary

Dr. Maryam A. Alomair

Dr. Ashwag A. Almethen

College of Education, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

Vocabulary plays a vital role in the reading and learning process because it is crucial for comprehension. Suffice to say, a student with stronger vocabulary is more likely to understand a given text better than one with very poor vocabulary. In turn, the issue can have a significant impact on performance. This basic qualitative study sought to determine the impact of parental level of education on the ability of children to learn and use new vocabulary. Using semi-structured interviews, data was collected from 15 Saudi teachers with no less than 3 years of teaching experience. Results indicated that children of well-educated parents, like those from well off families, generally have stronger vocabulary and can use it more smoothly. Moreover, these children were shown to read and use new vocabulary more often than those with less educated parents. Lastly, results showed a strong correlation between vocabulary, comprehension, and performance with lack of resources and poor motivation being reported as some of the main factors affecting the ability of children to learn new vocabularies. These findings reveal the role that parental level of education plays in the existing word-gap. However, it is also evident that with the appropriate resources and constant motivation, children of less educated parents can improve in these areas which can in turn help minimize the gap.

Keywords: Vocabulary, word gap, language, level of education, socioeconomic status

1- Introduction and background

Essentially, vocabulary refers to the body of words that are used in a given language. As children grow, it is their interactions with others, especially their caregivers/parents that allow them to develop their vocabulary. Therefore, caregivers/parents can be said to be the primary source of vocabulary for children during early childhood (Logan, Justice, Yumus, and Chaparro-Moreno, 2019). Studies focusing on vocabulary gap (word gap) between different groups of children can be traced back to the works of Betty Hart and Todd Risley. In their studies, Hart and Risley sought to determine how the economic status of parents can influence word gap and academic performance in general (Kuchirko, 2017). Having a good understanding of these factors is important given that it can pave the way for effective solutions to be implemented in order to allow children to effectively develop their vocabulary. For children, as they grow up, developing the knowledge of words is very important considering that it has a direct impact on reading comprehension and overall academic performance as they develop. For this reason, it is essential to get a good understanding of the factors that affect vocabulary development among young children.

With regard to word gap, one of the factors that has received significant attention is economic status. For many researchers, it has been suggested that the socioeconomic status of a family can directly influence the number of words their children know as well as the meaning of these words. This is largely because parents of different socioeconomic status generally speak differently to their children. According to a study that was published by Ellwood-Lowe, Foushee, and Srinivasan (2020), parents were found to speak less to their children (3 year old children) less during periods of financial scarcity compared to a control group (p. 1). These findings are supported by many other studies that have found a direct correlation between economic status and the word gap.

According to Cartmill (2016) and Kuchirko (2017), children from poor families have in general been shown to know fewer words when they enter school when compared to those from wealthy or financially stable families. This, however, is due to several reasons. As compared to parents who are wealthy/financially stable, parents of low socioeconomic status are likely to experience high levels of stress or have to spend more time working in order to meet their personal and family needs. As a result, they are less likely to spend time reading to their children (Ellwood-Lowe, Foushee, & Srinivasan, 2010). Apart from economic status and access to resources, deficits in the knowledge and skills of the parents themselves are likely to affect the vocabulary development among their children. As compared to educated parents, uneducated parents are less likely to know and use many vocabularies. For this reason, their children are less likely to improve their vocabulary more strongly compared to the children of well-educated parents. Therefore, this study aimed at determining the effects to which the education level of parents will influence the ability of children to improve their vocabulary.

2- Problem statement and significance of the study

Before children start going to school, their interaction with those at home plays an important role in teaching them language. Therefore, this interaction can be said to play a crucial role in influencing the number of words they learn before they start attending school (Cartmill, 2016). For some children, their interaction with their parents allows them to learn many new words and the meaning of these words. This makes it easier for them to not only read but also get a better understanding of text because they understand the vocabulary used. However, for children who do not have the opportunity to learn and use many new vocabularies early, this is likely to affect their academic performance and achievement when they join school (Cartmill, 2016).

According to a study that was conducted in 2019, findings showed that when parents read one picture book a day with their children, these children are exposed to about 78,000 words a year. Within a period of 5 years, the study revealed that even before they enter kindergarten, children from literacy-rich homes are exposed to about 1.4 million words more compared to those who are not read at home (Logan, Justice, Yumus, and Chaparro-Moreno, 2019). More recently, research studies have shown that over 23 percent of children (about 1 in 4 children) do not read books at home (Logan, Justice, Yumus, and Chaparro-Moreno, 2019). For children who develop their vocabulary at such a young age, their academic achievement is likely to be much better compared to those who have not developed their vocabulary early. How do the level of parents' education affect the ability of children to learn a new vocabulary and know how to use it?

3- Purpose of the study

The aim of this study was to determine whether children of higher educated parents can improve their vocabulary more strongly than those whose parents have a lower educational level through teachers' perspective. By finding the effects to which the level of education of parents will influence the ability of children to improve their vocabulary, this can help parents become aware of the problem and thus find the best strategies to help their children.

4- The researchers try to answer the following question:

How do the level of parents' education affect children's ability to improve his/her vocabulary?

5- Definitions of terms

Vocabulary: The term vocabulary refers to a collection or set of words in a particular language that individual speakers know and use (Hatch and Brown, 1995)

Socioeconomic status: A measure of an individual's economic and socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status has also been associated with an individual's health (Baker, 2014)

Word gap: A difference in vocabulary knowledge between individuals (Hindman, Wasik, and Snell, 2016)

6- Literature review

In a study published by Guo, Wang, Hall, Breit-Smith, & Busch (2015), the authors focused on the impact of science instruction on the ability of young children to learn vocabulary. In particular, the authors wanted to determine the extent to which science instruction as an intervention promotes vocabulary knowledge among preschool and kindergarten children. According to the results, science instruction was shown to result in increased outcomes among these children in general. Although most teachers tend to focus on language and literacy when teaching children of this age group, the researchers hold that teaching science can significantly boost vocabulary development. Moreover, given that vocabulary is introduced through discussion, oral conversations, and shared book reading, the researchers emphasize on the importance of teaching science through this approach at a period when children are exploring, engaging in hands-on activities and asking many questions.

In another study investigating the dynamics and impact of language experiences in an intervention classroom, researchers noticed that teacher and peer input had a positive impact on children in-class language use (Perry, Prince, Valtierra, Rivero-Fernandez, Ullery, Katz, Laursen, and Messinger, 2018). For this study, the researchers were particularly interested in learning how such intervention would influence language development among students from low socioeconomic status. As the authors noted, as compared to those from higher socioeconomic households, students from low socioeconomic families were likely to receive less than optimal levels of quality language. For this reason, the study would help determine whether input from

other students as well as the teachers at school would help them improve on developing their vocabulary and improving on language use. The results would prove this to be the case which was evidence that interaction with those who have better vocabulary and use language fluently can help improve the same among others.

Similar results were reported by Logan, Justice, Yumus, and Chaparro-Moreno (2019) in their study on the million word gap. In this study, researchers were interested in finding out the impact of not reading for children at home. Based on a literature, they found out that parents who read a single picture book a day expose their children to over 78,000 words a year. Moreover, data suggested that kindergarten children from literacy-rich homes hear about 1.4 million words during the storybook reading as compared to those who are not read to. This helped explain one of the main causes of the word-gap problem in the United States. In another study investigating the word gap in early education, Cartmill (2016) reports that in general, children from poor families know fewer words when they enter school as compared to those from wealthy families. According to Cartmill (2016), this is because children from poor families hear fewer words from those around them and are therefore only capable of using fewer words. As a result, the word gap develops in early education and can affect educational achievements as the children advance to upper grades. To reverse the issue, Cartmill suggests that poorer parents engage their children more in conversation and even read to them more.

According to Monica, Ruthe, & Mahesh (2020), parents with fewer educational and economic resources generally speak less to their children. In this study focusing on the causes of word gap, the researchers noticed that in most cases, these parents are likely to speak less to their children at the end of the month. This was largely attributed to stress of financial hardships that face these parents during this period. These, according to the researchers, are some of the main contributors of word gap. In addition to

reduced level of interaction between these parents and their children, the study also reported that most of these parents are also likely to use lower quality language which can be passed to their children. In the end, the main contributors of word gap were found to include the poor quality of language used by parents, lower interaction, and overall fewer resources.

Esmaeeli, Lundetræ, and Kyle (2017) sought to investigate the relationship between parents' self-reported reading difficulties and children's emergent literacy. Based on the results, it was evident that reading difficulties among parents was one of the main contributors of literacy challenges among children after other factors were controlled. This is line with a number of other studies that have found a correlation between the level of parent's education and child's literacy.

The current study is in many ways similar to the aforementioned studies. As Guo, Wang, Hall, Breit-Smith, & Busch (2015) points out, children start learning through their interaction with those around them. In most cases, these are parents of caregivers. Given that children build their vocabulary through their interaction with those closest to them, it is crucial to investigate the relationship between parental level of education and children's ability to learn and use new vocabulary. Although some of the studies are slightly different, focusing on socioeconomic status as well as the use of science instruction, they show association between parental level of education, example, their knowledge of science, as well as available resources, and how these factors ultimately influence the ability of a child to learn and use new vocabulary. For instance, a poorly educated parent is likely to have little knowledge of science. Moreover, they are likely to be in the lower socioeconomic status and have fewer resources. Therefore, despite some differences, the studies expand on how poor education in general can affect a student's knowledge and use of vocabulary through a variety of associated factors.

7- Methodology

7-1 Rationale for methodology

For this study, basic qualitative research was used. This is because the methodology (qualitative research) employed an interpretive approach that tries to understand given meanings and behaviors of specific social phenomena as experienced by the participants. As such, it allowed the researchers to get a better understanding of the experiences of the participants and relationships between given factors. Therefore, the overall purpose of this approach was to understand how people actually make sense of their meanings (Merram, and Tisdell, 2016, p. 25). Here, they write, "...all qualitative research is interested in how meaning is constructed, how people make sense of their lives and their world. The primary goal of basic qualitative study is to uncover and interpret these meanings" (25). This made the method appropriate for this study given that results obtained can help explain the issue.

The tools used to collect data include was interviews. The biggest advantage of this tool was that it allowed the participants to clearly explain their views, ideas, opinions, and beliefs in response to a set of questions without any limitations. One of the words that can be used to describe the data obtained through this methodology was descriptive (Daniel, 2016).

One of the other reasons as to why this methodology was appropriate for this study was because, in addition to providing data (results) that was used to make conclusions, the participants also shaped the research (Daniel, 2016). By being descriptive in their answers, the participants introduced new important points that the researcher had not thought of before. This, then, made the study participant-centered given that participants have the capacity to change the direction of the study through the answers they provide. These answers can provide new and informative perspectives. In the process, it would also be possible to develop new questions and follow-ups that will continue to inform the study.

7-2 Research methodology and design

As mentioned, the basic qualitative study (BQS) approach was used for this study. Apart from learning how the education level of the parents affect the ability of children to develop their vocabulary, this study also aimed to determine the magnitude of this relationship. For this reason, it was important to use a research method that allows participants to describe their views, perspectives and opinions. This significantly informed the study and effectively shaped the conclusion. Rather than simply asking the participants whether they agree with a given opinion or not, it is valuable to get their description that allowed the researcher to better understand these views and perspectives. For this reason, this study relied on qualitative research rather than a quantitative approach. Here, Shakouri (2014) notes that "Unlike quantitative methods, "qualitative methods open up all experiences to knowledge status"" (p. 674).

Essentially, quantitative research was largely concerned with empiricism and therefore tends to deal with what is observed. Qualitative research, on the other hand, tended to be descriptive allowing for expansion of the existing knowledge base. As such, it generates high amounts of information that makes it to understand the experiences and perspectives of the participants. This is largely because of the fact that the participants are allowed an opportunity to clarify their experiences, perspectives or opinions, etc (Shakouri, 2014). This ensures that the participants were not misunderstood while also eliminating any room for confusion.

Given that teachers were the main participants of this study, this approach (methodology) was proved to be very useful because it provided some flexibility for these participants to express or clarify what they say. Here, the conversation between the researcher and the participants ensured that they (teachers) not only understand the questions they are asked (through immediate feedback) but also expound on their points when they feel the need to. Ultimately, this approach ensured that the

appropriate data is collected with regard to the main focus on the study.

7-3 Study population and sample selection

For this study, participants included teachers from several schools in Saudi Arabia. Given that a given population sample was required, purposeful sampling was used to select the participants. This was an important method that serves to identify and select a population sample that can provide valuable data specifically required for the study. The participants were 15 teachers from Saudi Arabia and have teaching experience at least three years and teach students whose parents have a higher level of education (college level and university) higher level of economy and those whose parents only achieved high school education or did not get to complete high school and have lower economy.

7-4 Limitations

One of the biggest limitations of the study was that it was not possible to include a large sample population. This was because of the fact that collecting data using semi-structured interviews would take too much time and will generate significant amounts of data. For this reason, a smaller sample was used.

8- Source of data

8-1 Semi-structured interviews

Data collection for this study involved the use of semi-structured interviews. This type of interview combined closed and open-ended questions that also allowed for follow-up questions (Adams, 2015). Given that the participants of the study were teachers, the interviews were face-to-face to avoid any confusion on the part of the teachers. This ensured that teacher participants get a clear understanding of the questions asked and respond appropriately.

Teachers were expected to answer each of the questions using a few direct sentences. However, in cases where they introduce new and important points, the researchers introduced follow-up

questions that will be used to allow the participants to clarify their answers. One of the biggest advantages of this method of data collection, compared to structured interviews, is that it was more flexible and allowed probing so that the participants can expand on their responses. With regards to semi-structured interviews, Alshenqeeti (2014) notes that "is the semi-structured interview, which is a more flexible version of the structured interview as "it allows depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and expand the interviewee's responses" (p. 40). As such, it was the ideal tool to obtain adequate data from the students for analysis.

8-2 Data collection procedure

Before data collection started (using semi-structured interviews) it was important to contact teachers through letters. Letters were sent out to teachers with several questions that would contribute to the study. In addition to giving consent by signing the letter, the teachers had to fill out a form with several questions regarding their experience of teaching. Once consent is obtained, the next step involved confirming the availability of the participants. All the necessary equipment (microphone, a recorder etc) then inspected to ensure that they are in good working condition and therefore avoid any inconveniences when conducting the interviews and recording data. With everything in place, the interviews were scheduled.

8-3 Data analysis procedure

Analysis of qualitative data was an important part of the study aimed at interpreting and thus making it possible to understand the perspective of the participant (based on their responses). In general, the process involved organization of the data (from transcripts and notes) in a manner that made it possible to identify patterns. It was through this process that it became possible to make sense of the data and understand what it means with regards to the issue being addressed. For this study, identification of these patterns was achieved through thematic analysis. According to Maguire and Delahunt (2017), this

(thematic analysis) is the "process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data" (p. 3352). Here, thematic analysis of the data followed the following steps:

Step 1: Going through the data in order to become familiar with it

Given that interviews produce vast amounts of data (descriptive data from the participants), becoming familiar with the data was one of the most important steps of thematic analysis. Essentially, this involved listening to the recorded interviews and going through the transcripts several times. In doing so, the researchers got a general idea of the data and may begin identifying some patterns. As Maguire and Delahunt (2016) explain, "You should be very familiar with your entire body of data or data corpus (i.e. all the interviews and any other data you may be using) before you go any further" (p. 3355).

Step 2: Generating initial codes

Whereas the first step involved becoming familiar with the data, the second step concerned with organizing the data in a meaningful way. In this step, the large amount of data was reduced to smaller and meaningful chunks (this is known as coding). Having become familiar with the data in the first step of analysis, it was also important to go through the data again in order to summarize the pieces of meaningful data and thus organize it for the third step of analysis.

Step 3: Having organized data in the second step, the third step involved an examination of the codes so that they can be fitted into themes. As Nowell, Norris, and White (2017) describe them, themes are "abstract entity that brings meaning and identity to a recurrent experience and its variant manifestations" (p. 8). This step will make it easy to get a clear idea and understanding of the patterns in the data set.

Step 4: A review of themes

While identification of themes and patterns in these themes in step three was important, a review of themes was important because it allowed for the data to be arranged in a manner that

makes sense. Here, it was also important to avoid trying to fit in data where it does not fit. For this reason, any data that was not useful for the study has to be removed. This was particularly beneficial given that it made the conclusion more credible (because it is based on data that makes sense).

Step 5: Defining the themes

According to researchers, this step of data analysis serves to "identify the ‘essence’ of what each theme is about" (Maguire & Delahunt, 2016, p. 33511). Given that the previous step allowed for organization of themes and identification of patterns, this step was used to what the themes mean in addition to identifying any subthemes that may become evident as well as their relationship to the main theme of the study.

9- Ethical considerations

In qualitative research, ethical considerations are very important because the study process tends to be more in-depth (Arifin, 2018, p. 30). Due to its in-depth nature, then, it was important to take measures that will not only ensure that the study was credible but also protects the human dignity of the participants so that they are not exploited or abused in any manner. Given that the primary participants of the study were teachers, the participants were fully informed of the study so that they get a clear understanding of what they are consenting to. On the other hand, anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were ensured. This was important given that it motivated participants to feel free and comfortable to share more during data collection without hesitation.

10- Results

Common strategy	Read aloud(11)	Semantic	Word wall		
Recommendation	Reading and writing 8	Communication with parents at home 3	Reading with examples	Reading combined with other strategies like semantics	

Challenge affecting learning new vocabulary	Lack of enough resources at home 7	Lack of engagement with parents at home using new vocabularies 6	Poor attitudes 3	Lack of effective strategies	
Other factors affecting learning new vocabulary	Lack of motivation and parental influence 5	Lack of sufficient resources 4	Sex and gender influence 2	Unfavorable environment 2	Poor strategies
Use of slang	Students from lower-class families 13	No significant difference between those from lower and upper class			
Students who use standard language	Those from upper-class households				
Higher language outcomes	Students with well-educated parents				
Students enjoy reading more	Students with educated parents 14	No significant difference 1			
Students of educated parents use vocabulary better, smoothly, and can apply it better	Yes 15				
Is there a relationship between vocabulary and comprehension/ vocabulary and performance	Yes (15)				
Students use new vocabulary in	Those with educated	Those with educated parents	Students from		

their communication	parents 5	and from affluent parents 8	affluent households 2		
Students who learn new vocabulary easily	Those with educated parents 12				
Parents education	Majority have a high school education	A few have completed upper high school level	Very few have a tertiary education on average		
Socioeconomic status	The majority are from the middle-class	Few are in the lower class	very few are in the upper-class		

Results Table #1

Question focus (S)	Themes (T)
Major issues affecting learning new vocabularies	Lack of sufficient resources at home Lack of motivation and encouragement at home
Children of affluent and well-educated parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibit higher learning outcomes • Use vocabulary smoothly and apply it better • Learn new vocabulary easily • Use new vocabulary more in their communication • Enjoy reading more • Use standard language more
Children of poor and uneducated parents	Use slang more
Most common/recommended strategies for learning new vocabulary	Reading and writing
Correlation between strong vocabulary and comprehension/vocabulary and performance	Strong correlation
Socioeconomic status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of students are from middle-class households • A few are from lower-class households • Very few are from the upper-class

Level of parents' education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of parents have been to high school • Slightly less have completed upper-secondary education • Few have attended college/University
------------------------------------	--

Results Table #2

11- Analysis

For this study, a total of 20 questions were presented to the participants. However, during data analysis, a number of common themes were identified. The questions are therefore compressed into five main sections based on similar patterns identified in the themes.

Section 1 (S1) - Questions regarding the main issues affecting the ability of students to learn new vocabulary

Section 2 (S2) - Questions regarding the impact of socioeconomic status on students' abilities to learn and use new vocabulary

Section 3 (S3) - Questions regarding recommended strategies for learning new vocabulary

Section 4 (S4) - Questions regarding the correlation between strong vocabulary and comprehension as well as vocabulary and performance

Section 5 (S5) - Questions regarding the impact of parent education on students' ability to learn and use new vocabulary

Themes (T)

S1-T1 - Lack of resources and motivation

S2-T2 - Socioeconomic status has a significant impact on learning and using strong vocabulary among students

S3-T3 - Reading and writing

S4-T4 - Level of vocabulary has a direct impact on comprehension and performance

S5-T5 - Parent's level of education has a significant impact on students' ability to learn and use new vocabulary

12- Discussion

Based on the findings, the number of educated parents gradually declines between middle school and

college/University. While the majority of parents have a middle-school and high school education, less have completed their upper-secondary education and even fewer have attended college/University. Though there are institutions in which as many as half the parents were reported to be college/University educated, this is not generally the case. According to participant #5, about half of the students have at least one college/University educated parent. However, as some of the other participants reported, this figure can drop to as low as 15 percent (participant #10, #16). This is an important finding considering that the level of parents' education was reported to be one of the main factors affecting the ability of students to learn and use new vocabulary.

As per the results, children of well-educated parents also exhibit higher language outcomes, use standard language more often, and generally enjoy reading as compared to those whose parents are not as highly educated. As participant #1 explained, "students with more educated parents know more vocabularies than their counterparts". This is supported by participants #4 who says "It seems students with more educated parents have an easier time with vocabularies." and #7 who notes that "children of well-educated parents have more language outcomes than those of uneducated parents." These findings are supported by a number of other studies that have found the level of parent's education to influence the ability of students to learn and use new vocabulary. For instance, in a study that was published by Esmaeeli, Lundetrae, and Kyle (2017) the difficulty in reading among family members was shown to cause challenges in the literary development of children. As Guo, Wang, Hall, Breit-Smith, and Busch (2015) pointed out, talking and the use of words is a learned behavior that children imitate and repeat from those around them. In a household with well-educated parents, new and stronger vocabularies are used regularly. Therefore, as the children grow up, they imitate their parents and develop a stronger vocabulary at a young age. For those from households where parents are not as educated, children would not have

similar opportunities. Moreover, if slang is used regularly, they are likely to use it more than often than new and stronger vocabulary.

The majority of participants also reported lack of sufficient resources at home and lack of motivation and encouragement to be some of the biggest issues affecting the ability of students to learn new vocabularies. For instance, participant #11 notes that "I think the lack of enough resources is an important factor to consider." while participant #12 reports that "Lack of parental support and the lack of motivation". Participant #13 notes that "The other factors are lack of the sufficient resources both at school and home" while participant #15 says that "Some of the students do not get enough motivation at home." The issues of resources and lack of motivation and encouragement may be attributed to lower socioeconomic status and low level of parents' education. Lower-class parents may not be able to access and provide their children with the same resources as those afforded in upper-class households. A number of studies has also reported on the impact of socioeconomic status on the development of vocabulary among children. For instance, according to a study that was conducted by Cartmill (2016), there is a word gap between children from wealthy/financially stable households and those from poor backgrounds. In another study, poor parents were found to work longer hours or have several jobs that prevent them from spending more time with their children (Monica, Ruthe, & Mahesh, 2020). Unlike well off parents, poor parents may not afford enough resources to help their children learn and develop their vocabulary. This also helps explain the word gap between the two groups of students. On the other hand, being unable to spend more time with their children means that they would be unable to regularly motivate and read to their children. For instance, if the parent has several jobs, they would find it difficult to dedicate enough time to reading and encouraging their children at home. In addition, as Cartmill (2016) explains, most of the poor parents are also more likely to

be uneducated (or poorly educated) as compared to wealthy ones. This also contributes to the problem because they may not be able to help their children read and understand new vocabulary.

In general, parents with very little education may not be in a position to help their children learn new vocabulary because they do not use new vocabularies themselves. In another study, the level of conversation between the parents and the children was found to have a direct impact on vocalization among the children. In this case, children who conversed more with their parents vocalized more than those who did not (Perry, Prince, Valtierra, Rivero-Fernandez, Ullery, Katz, Laursen, and Messinger, 2018). Therefore, if the parents are unable to spend more time conversing with their children, the child is likely to vocalize less. Here, however, it is still important to keep in mind that children will mostly use the language they hear their parents using. Therefore, if the parents are spending more time conversing with the child using slang, the child would only end up using more slang. This could also explain why, according to the results, children from lower-class households use more slang than those with more educated and affluent parents. Most of the participants were quick to point out that students from lower-class households use more slang than the others. For instance, participant #4 was quick to point out that "Students from lower-class families know and use more slang than the others." This is a sentiment that was shared by most of the participants. This is particularly a big problem considering the significance of strong vocabulary for comprehension and overall performance. As most of the participants stated, vocabulary is crucial for comprehension and overall performance. If students are unable to develop their vocabulary over time, general comprehension and performance are negatively affected. This is well summarized by participant #7 who notes "Yes. I would describe vocabulary as the foundation. If the student has difficulties with vocabulary then they will have a much harder time with comprehension and overall performance."

13- Conclusion

Though the problem, for the most part, emanates from the socioeconomic status of parents and their level of education, the findings suggest that enhancing reading and writing can help minimize the gap. As most of the participants pointed out, students with well-educated parents and those from affluent families do much better with vocabulary than the others. Students with well-educated parents have a big advantage given that their parents know and use strong vocabulary all the time. For this reason, their children will gradually and easily learn new words. On the other part, affluent parents have the means to provide all the resources their children need to learn and develop their vocabulary and academics in general. For students of lower-class parents and those whose parents are not educated, the solution, based on the results, would involve more reading and writing. Though their parents may not have enough funds to buy them books, schools could take it upon themselves to increase access to different types of books to these students. At the same time, their parents must be advised to not only help their children read, but also encourage them to use new vocabulary in their interactions. Based on the findings, it is students from lower-class families who use slang more than the others. By encouraging them to read more at home and use better vocabulary, they can also greatly improve.

14- Recommendations for Future studies

One of the biggest limitations of the current study is that it was not possible to use a larger sample due to time and resource constraints. For this reason, the findings should be interpreted with caution. To get a better picture of how parental level of education affects the ability of students to learn and use new vocabulary, it is important to not only use a larger sample but also a more diverse sample from different parts of the region. A good example of this would involve use a sample from different parts of the Arab world. This diversity would help paint a better

and clearer picture of the problem. Secondly, future studies should work on controlling a range of other factors including gender, student social groups, home literacy environment, and children's personal interest in letters and various literatures. By controlling for these factors, it will be possible to determine the actual impact of parent's level of literacy on student's ability to learn and use new vocabulary. Results and findings obtained from these studies will allow for better interpretation and conclusions.

References

- Adams, W. C. (2015). Conducting semi-structured interviews. *Handbook of practical program evaluation, 4*, 492-505.
- Ali, M. S., & Jalal, H. (2018). Higher education as a predictor of employment: The world of work perspective. *Bulletin of Education and Research, 40*(2), 79-90.
- Alshenqeeti, H. (2014). Interviewing as a data collection method: A critical review. *English linguistics research, 3*(1), 39-45.
- Arifin, S. R. M. (2018). Ethical considerations in qualitative study. *International Journal of Care Scholars, 1*(2), 30-33.
- Bhagat, V., Haque, M., & Jaalam, K. (2018). Enrich schematization in children: Play as the tool for cognitive development. *Journal of Applied Pharmaceutical Science, 8*(7), 128-131.
- Baker, E. H. (2014). Socioeconomic Status, Definition. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118410868.wbehibs395>
- Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking: A tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation? *Qualitative health research, 26*(13), 1802-1811.
- Cartmill, E. A. (2016). Mind the gap: Assessing and addressing the word gap in early education. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 3*(2), 185-193.
- Eyisi, D. (2016). The usefulness of qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in researching problem-solving ability in science education curriculum. *Journal of Education and Practice, 7*(15), 91-100.
- Elo, S., Kääriäinen, M., Kanste, O., Pölkki, T., Utriainen, K., & Kyngäs, H. (2014). Qualitative content analysis: A focus on trustworthiness. *SAGE open, 4*(1), 1-10.
- Esmaeeli, Z., Lundetræ, K., & Kyle, F. E. (2018). What can parents' self-report of reading difficulties tell us about their children's emergent literacy at school entry? *Dyslexia, 24*(1), 84-105.

- Hatch, E., & Brown. S. (1995). *Vocabulary, Semantics, and Language Education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hammarberg, K., Kirkman, M., & de Lacey, S. (2016). Qualitative research methods: when to use them and how to judge them. *Human reproduction*, 31(3), 498-501.
- Guo, Y., Wang, S., Hall, A. H., Breit-Smith, A., & Busch, J. (2016). The effects of science instruction on young children's vocabulary learning: A research synthesis. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 44(4), 359-367.
- Hampton, C., & Reeping, D. (2019, June). Positionality: The stories of self that impact others. In 2019 ASEE Annual Conference & Exposition. Rederived from <https://peer.asee.org/positionality-the-stories-of-self-that-impact-othersv>
- Hindman, A. H., Wasik, B. A., and Snell, E. K. (2016). *Closing the 30 Million Word Gap: Next Steps in Designing Research to Inform Practice*. Child Development Perspectives. Temple University.
- Kuchirko, Y. (2019). On differences and deficits: A critique of the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the word gap. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 19(4), 533-562.
- Logan, J. A., Justice, L. M., Yumus, M., & Chaparro-Moreno, L. J. (2019). When children are not read to at home: The million word gap. *Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics*, 40(5), 383-386.
- Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. *All Ireland Journal of Higher Education*, 9(3), 3351-33514.
- McLeod, S. A. (2016). Bandura-social learning theory. *Simply Psychology*. *Psychology*, 8(3), 2-8.
- Ellwood-Lowe, M. E., Foushee, R., & Srinivasan, M. (2022). What causes the word gap? Financial concerns may

- systematically suppress child-directed speech. *Developmental science*, 25(1), 1-16.
- Ojose, B. (2008). Applying Piaget's theory of cognitive development to mathematics instruction. *The mathematics educator*, 18(1).
 - Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.
 - Monica, E. L., Ruthe, F., and Mahesh, S. (2020). What causes the word gap? Financial concerns may systematically suppress child-directed speech. Center for Effective Global Action. UC Berkeley.
 - Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International journal of qualitative methods*, 16(1), 1-13.
 - Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and policy in mental health and mental health services research*, 42(5), 533-544.
 - Perry, L. K., Prince, E. B., Valtierra, A. M., Rivero-Fernandez, C., Ullery, M. A., Katz, L. F., ... & Messinger, D. S. (2018). A year in words: The dynamics and consequences of language experiences in an intervention classroom. *PloS one*, 13(7).
 - Rukwaru, M. (2015). *Social research methods: A complete guide*. Eureka Publishers.
 - Shakouri, N., & Nazari, O. (2014). Qualitative research: Incredulity toward metanarrativeness. *Journal of Education and Human Development*, 3(2), 671-680.
 - Song, J. Y., Demuth, K., & Morgan, J. (2018). Input and processing factors affecting infants' vocabulary size at 19 and 25 months. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 1-11.
 - Westernen, I., Halberg, A. M., Ledesma, H. M., Wold, A. H., & Oppedal, B. (2018). Effects of mother's and father's education

تأثير مستوى تعليم الوالدين على قدرة الأطفال على تعلم واستخدام مفردات جديدة..... د. العمير، د. المذن

level and age at migration on children's bilingual vocabulary.
Applied Psycholinguistics, 39(5), 811-833.

<< وصل هذا البحث إلى المجلة بتاريخ ٢٠٢٢/٥/١، وصدرت الموافقة على نشره بتاريخ ٢٠٢٢/٧/٢١ >>