

2024-07

Vocabulary Teaching Techniques In Grades 1 And 2 The Case Of Primary Schools In North Mecha Woreda

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BAHIR DAR UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL OF TEACHERS' EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION

**VOCABULARY TEACHING TECHNIQUES IN GRADES 1 AND 2
THE CASE OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NORTH MECHA
WOREDA**

BY

ZEWDITU TESFA

JULY, 2024

BAHIR DAR, ETHIOPIA

**VOCABULARY TEACHING TECHNIQUES IN GRADES 1 AND 2 THE
CASE OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NORTH MECHA WOREDA**

BY

ZEWDITU TESFA

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE
EDUCATION IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS (MA) IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS
A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (TEFL)**

ADVISOR

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JULY, 2024

BAHIR DAR, ETHIOPIA

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ZEWDITU TESFA

APPROVED BY EXAMINING BOARD:

Advisor

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that the thesis is my own work and has not been presented for a degree in another university.

Name-----

Signature -----

Date of Submission -----

As the candidate's advisor, this Thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval.

Advisor's Name: Seyoum Teshome (PHD)

Signature-----

Date: -----

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to give special thanks to God and his mother saint Virgin Mary for giving me the patience, courage and strength during my study. I would like to forward my sincerely appreciation and gratitude to my advisor Dr. Seyoum Teshome, for his inspiring comments which helped me to shape and reshape the paper. It is his skillful guidance and insight that enabled me to bring the study to its present form. Without his constructive comments, and suggestions, this study would not have been successful. I am very much indebted to the kindness, patience, and warm-welcome he has shown in the course of time.

I wish to convey my sincere appreciation to all of the North Mecha woreda primary school grade 1&2 English teachers who were kind enough and participated in the data collection process of the study. Their time, responses and reflections provided a depth of information in the study.

Lastly, i would like to thank to my family and other individual whose names are not mentioned here but who assisted me to study in one way or another deserves special thanks.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

CPD: Continuous Professional Development

MoE: Ministry of Education

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

NMW: North Mecha Woreda

ABSTRACT

The major purpose of this study was to explore the vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers use and the problems which these teachers face in teaching vocabulary to early grade students with special focus to grades one and two in north Mecha woreda. A descriptive survey method was employed. Out of the 34 government primary schools functioning in north Mecha woreda in 2015E.C, 20 of them were randomly selected. In these schools, there are 58 English teachers teaching at grade 1 and 2 level and all of them were taken as samples of the study comprehensively. The data required for the study were collected from teachers using questionnaires, classroom observations and interview. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics were used in analyzing quantitative data.

The results of the study indicated that the use of translation, using pictures, using the real objects and using drawings are the most frequently employed techniques which early grade English teachers use in teaching vocabulary. Teaching by translating the meaning of the word into mother tongue was the predominantly used technique. The use of pictures technique comes next to the use of translation technique in rank order.

In contrast to this, the other techniques: use of meaning definition, explaining, using mime and gesture, using synonymy, using antonyms, using vocabulary games, using song, the use of dictionary and asking for others were the most infrequently employed techniques by the early grade English teachers in the study area. This shows that teachers do not explore to use all the possible teaching techniques which would interest children and help them to understand meanings of words.

The Problems which early grade English teachers face in teaching vocabulary were problems related to teachers, students and availability of teaching resources. Based on the findings, recommendations which may help to change using the old conventional techniques and improve their practices were forwarded.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

English Language teaching in Ethiopian context is of great national importance because of the increasing demand of the language in the globalized world. Although students study as a compulsory subject from grade one to twelve in Ethiopia, the result of different public exams and different competitive exams in English are not as expected. Students perform poorly with a high failure rate.

For instance, the proficiency level of EFL teachers is not much different from the students' case. According to Baye Yimam (2000E.C), cited in Berhane Gerencheal (2018), stated that "employers frequently complained that graduate students at all levels lack the skills to prepare ordinary reports and are unable to formulate their thoughts and express them using correct sentences."

The main reason behind this deficiency could be due to the status of the English in the country; it is categorized as a foreign language. Students do not have an adequate amount of English exposures out of the classrooms. Neither English speaking communities nor working places are sufficiently available out the classrooms except embassies and few international institutions where the students do not have day -to- day access to those places.

Language is at the core of thinking and learning. Learners reflect, develop and communicate their ideas through language. Language is a fundamental tool that contributes to learners' intellectual and social development. It is also one among many which play key roles in the process of learning in all areas (MoE 2020).

English is being taught as a subject starting from grade one and used as an obligatory medium of instruction in grades nine through twelve. English is also used as one of the general subjects in grades 11 and 12. One of the most persistent challenges of the Ethiopian general education system is inability to use the English language as a medium of instruction and communication by both teachers and students. The language is not only a subject to be learnt and mastered especially for the development of fluency in speech and articulation in writing but, as a medium of instruction, a tool for understanding and learning other subjects. Since English is used as a medium starting from

grade nine, students have to be able to get well-prepared for this challenge starting from early grades (MoE 2020).

Vocabulary knowledge is the center of teaching and learning English because without vocabulary students cannot understand and cannot express their idea using English. According to Wilkins (2008) vocabulary is basic competence essential to master other competencies like reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. It is difficult to master in the other competencies without mastering and understanding the vocabulary. Without sufficient vocabulary, people cannot communicate and express their feeling both in the form of spoken and written effectively. The more people master vocabulary the more they can speak, write, read and listen as they want. Wilkins states that without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. It means that even someone has good grammar but it will be useless if they do not know many vocabularies.

The purpose of teaching techniques is to develop the teaching and learning in a classroom and involve the students into the learning (Nur, 2014). She also adds that techniques in teaching and learning are beneficial either for teachers or students. For teachers, the use of techniques is in order to teachers become easier and better in teaching and learning process. Teachers can give the instruction to the students in the class so that the lesson can be captured, understood and used by the students well. Then, it is to facilitate the achievement of learning outcomes in the teaching and learning process. While for the students, the using of techniques get the students to gain motivation in learning, the material of the learning is clear so that it can be understood by the students and enable them in achieving the learning outcomes, students are not getting bored during the teaching and learning, and students could learn more since they do not focus only on teacher's utterances but also other activities. Thus vocabulary teaching techniques are important to be implemented by teachers in teaching English.

One of the major roles of the teacher then becomes to assist students to learn vocabulary as well as to equip them with strategies for learning words. It can be worded that it is quite sensible to help provide the students with teaching of vocabulary as much attention as other aspects of language presented, such as grammar, pronunciation, and spelling. To solve these problems, English teachers, of course, have to provide practical techniques on teaching vocabulary that the students are able to develop their learning of new words independently. Teachers who teach vocabulary may

employ different techniques. The techniques they use may help students to grasp meanings of words easily and to remember them for later use. The goal of this study is to better understand and explore the current practice of vocabulary teaching techniques in English classes at grades 1 and 2 in North Mecha woreda primary schools and then to propose possible solutions that can help to improve the practice of vocabulary teaching.

1.2. Statement of the problem

English language syllabuses for grades 1&2 have been revised recently. One of the bases of the syllabus a new course book with communicative orientation has been prepared and is now in use across the country. However, in researcher's teaching experience, teachers were not implementing vocabulary in the course book and the syllabus as suggested to be done.

Saying this, in order to achieve success in English improving students' performance is essential, for learning English in general and for learning vocabulary in particular.

Teaching words is a crucial aspect in learning a language as languages are based on words (Thornbury, 2002). It is almost impossible to learn a language without words; even communication between human beings is based on words. Vocabulary is not only an important component of language expression, but also the most basic content of language application. For most learners, the breadth and depth of the vocabulary will affect their listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation level; therefore, vocabulary teaching is particularly important.

Children need to have a rich vocabulary that continually grows through language and literacy experiences, in order to comprehend and construct increasingly complex texts, and engage in oral language for a variety of social purposes. However, vocabulary-learning is challenging, particularly, for the nonnative speakers of English who face problems relating to the meanings of new words, spelling, pronunciation, correct use of words, guessing meaning through the context and so on.

As mentioned in the teacher's guide book for grade 2, research on the cognitive development of young children has shown that they learn best by using all of their senses, i.e. by seeing, touching, feeling, smelling, tasting and hearing real objects in the world around them, when learning about people, animals and objects from pictures.

Teaching vocabulary to children is different from teaching vocabulary to teenagers and adults. This is because different age has different needs, competencies, and cognitive skill (Harmer, 2001). Their different characteristics become the main consideration in treating them differently as the teaching subjects. Teachers should play an important role to build children's vocabularies. The teacher should know the factors in teaching such as methods, techniques, and materials, so that the teacher can convey the material well in accordance with children's characteristics. A good method will be useless in teacher's hand who did not know how to use it and a good teacher could not be effective if teacher uses inappropriate method (Evan and Lang, 2006).

Teaching vocabulary is one of the most discussed parts of teaching English as a foreign language. When the teaching and learning process takes place, problems would appear to the teachers. They have problems of how to teach students in order to gain satisfying results. The teacher should prepare and find out the appropriate techniques, which will be implemented to the students. A good teacher should prepare himself or herself with various and up-to-date techniques. Teachers need to be able to master the material in order to be understood by students, and make them interested and happy in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The teachers should be concerned that teaching vocabulary is something new and different from student's native language. They also have to take into account that teaching English for young learners is different from adults. The teachers have to know the characteristics of his\her learners. They more over need to prepare good techniques and suitable material in order to gain the target of language teaching.

In teaching English vocabulary for early grade students, there are many different ways or kinds of techniques that can be used by teachers such as using pictures, real objects, demonstration, translation, dictionary use, etc. However, teaching and learning English vocabulary has been neglected by the teachers who use the inappropriate techniques exceedingly prefer to teach English grammar rather than teaching vocabulary as a separated lesson (Ersan Sanusi, 2009).

According to Torki (2011), Vocabulary is believed to be the cornerstone of language courses. Vocabulary acquisition also remains a very active area of research with significant implications to inform practice and it is assumed that growth in vocabulary takes place as a result of gains in language proficiency.

In relation to teaching vocabulary techniques, there are few local studies. However, works conducted previously on teaching vocabulary techniques mainly highlight on secondary schools. For example, Amanu(2014) to assess the practice of vocabulary teaching strategies in EFL classes kellem secondary school grade 9 and 10 English teachers in focus in Dembi Dollo.1 and Bayu (2020) conducted a research to investigate vocabulary teaching strategies used by grade nine teachers in Kokebe Tsibah Secondary and Preparatory School in Addis Ababa. This motivates the researcher to focus on primary schools with special reference to grades one and two.

In addition, from the researcher experience as a member of parent teachers' association of a primary school, she has got the chance to observe different problems and also hear parents complain on their children's English learning. One aspect of the complain is related to teaching method employed by teachers such as failure to use different effective techniques of teaching vocabulary to early grade students. The informal discussions made with some primary school teachers enlightened the prevalence of challenges of teaching English language in general and practice of vocabulary teaching in particular. The teachers also complain resource problem to support vocabulary teaching. The professional eagerness to know what is going on regarding the vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers use as well as the problems they face in teaching vocabulary, and the need to look for ways which will enhance the teaching of vocabulary in the target area are the other triggering points to undertake the study.

The present study set out to explore the vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers use and the problems which these teachers face in teaching vocabulary so as to add some illuminating insights in this connection.

Therefore, this study was designed to answer the following research questions.

- What are the vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English language teachers use?
- What are the major problems early grade English language teachers faces in teaching vocabulary?

1.3. Objectives of the study

1.3.1. General objectives

The main objective of the study is to explore the current practice of vocabulary teaching techniques in early grade English classes (at grades 1 and 2) in North Mecha woreda .

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

- ❖ Explore the vocabulary teaching techniques used by early grade English language teachers.
- ❖ Identify the problems which early grade English language teachers face in teaching vocabulary

1.4. . Scope of the study

Conceptually, the study was delimited itself to exploring the practice of vocabulary teaching techniques in early grade English classes focusing at grades 1 and 2 and the problems faced by teachers in teaching vocabulary to early grade students. Considering shortage of time, facilities and materials, the researcher preferred to delimit the scope of the thesis to a manageable size of schools. Therefore, geographically, the study is restricted to primary schools in North Mecha woreda in 2015E.C. The primary sources of data were English language teachers and lesson observation.

1.5 Significance of the study

The results of this study were intended to provide benefits to different groups involved in English language education. Conducting this research was important for the following reasons:

- ❖ English language teachers and teacher educators could benefit from increased knowledge about effective vocabulary teaching techniques in order to reshape the traditional strategies of teaching that could hinder effective vocabulary teaching.
- ❖ The study could be of some help to teachers, students, school principals, woreda education offices, and regional education Bureau to be informed about the current practice of vocabulary teaching techniques in English classrooms so as to take corrective measures whenever possible.
- ❖ This study will provide valuable inputs for teachers, such as: by knowing teacher's problem in teaching vocabulary and also the ways to solve those problems, teachers will develop their ability in teaching English especially vocabulary to young learners.
- ❖ The research report might be used as a reference for further researches.

1.6 Limitation of the study

When the research related to exploring the vocabulary teaching techniques used by early grade English teachers were concerned, there was a problem to get adequate local research. It was possible to reach only one related research report made in Ethiopia.

1.7. Definition of Terms

The following terms have been used throughout the present study, and defined below for clarity in their application to this study.

Vocabulary: is knowledge of words, including explanations of word meanings. Vocabulary as stocks of words in a language that can support the learners to learn the skill of the language (Heriyawati, 2003)

Technique: any of wide variety exercises, activities, or tasks used in the language classroom that were consistent with a method and therefore in harmony with an approach as well (Brown, 2001).

Vocabulary teaching techniques: are the ways and means adopted by a teacher to direct the student activities to achieve the objectives in teaching vocabulary.

Early grade teachers: Teachers teaching students of grade 1-4(Moe, 2010).

Problems: anything that causes difficulties or needs much attention and thought when the English teachers do the activities in selecting method, approach, technique, media used and selecting vocabulary's material (Wallace & Charles: 2003).

1.8 Organization of the thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter provides introduction it means background of the study ,statement of the problem, objectives of the study and research questions, significance of the study ,limitation of the study finally operational terms and organization of the study. The second Chapter reviews of related literature and related researches .Chapter three is on methodology where participant of the study, instruments of data collection and sampling techniques, procedures of data collection, validity and reliability research ethics analysis employed in this are discussed. This chapter also discusses the pilot study conducted and the major insights obtained from this study which encourage the researcher to make improvement to the instruments and procedures used in the main study. Chapter four contains the main data analyses, and discussions. The last chapter provides the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with review of varied scholarly works related to the topic which includes what is vocabulary, the importance of vocabulary for learners, teaching English to children, techniques in teaching vocabulary for early grade students, English vocabulary learning areas of grade 1 and 2 students and finally refers previous research studies related to vocabulary teaching techniques.

2.2. The Concept of Vocabulary Teaching

2.2.1. What is Vocabulary?

According to Oxford advanced learners dictionary, vocabulary is:(1) all the words that a person knows or uses, (2) all the words in a particular language,(3) the words that people use when they are talking about a particular subject, and (4) a list of words with their meanings, especially in a book for learning a foreign language. While Lessard-Clouston(2013), defines it as "words of a language, including single items and phrases or chunks of several words which convey a particular meaning, the way individual words do". In other words, it is all the words and chunks of words that help an individual understand the meaning/s encountered in speech or writing or help him/her produce language. Hornby(1974) also defines vocabulary as a total number of words which make up a language with definition or translation. Hence one can generally define vocabulary as the knowledge of words and word meanings.

2.2.2. Teaching vocabulary

Recent research indicates that 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 form an instructional emphasis on word learning (Berne &Blachowicz, 2008). Teaching words is a crucial aspect in learning a language as languages are based on words (Thornbury, 2002). It is almost impossible to learn a language without words; even communication between human beings is based on words. Both teachers and students agree that acquisition of the vocabulary is a central factor in teaching a language (Walters, 2004). Teaching vocabulary is one

of the most discussed parts of teaching English as a foreign language. When the teaching and learning process takes place, problems would appear to the teachers. They have problems of how to teach students in order to gain satisfying results. The teacher should prepare and find out the appropriate techniques, which will be implemented to the students. A good teacher should prepare himself or herself with various and up-to-date techniques. Teachers need to be able to master the material in order to be understood by students, and make them interested and happy in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The teachers should be concerned that teaching vocabulary is something new and different from student's native language. They also have to take into account that teaching English for young learners is different from adults. The teachers have to know the characteristics of his\her learners. They moreover need to prepare good techniques and suitable material in order to gain the target of language teaching.

2.3. The Importance of Vocabulary for Learners

Vocabulary knowledge is the center of teaching and learning English because without vocabulary student cannot understand and cannot express their idea using English. According to Wilkins (2008) Vocabulary is basic competence essential to master other competencies like reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. It is difficult to master in the other competencies without mastering and understanding the vocabulary. Without sufficient vocabulary, people cannot communicate and express their feeling both in form of spoken and written effectively. The more people master vocabulary the more they can speak, write, read and listen as they want. Wilkins states that without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. It means that even though, someone has good grammar, it will be useless if they do not know many vocabularies.

Burton, (1982:98). Also explains that students who have less vocabulary will find difficulties in learning a language and hard to develop the other languages. By having an enough vocabulary of foreign language, it will be easy for them to master the four language skills. In reading, mastering vocabulary helps the students to know the meaning of each word written and understand the meaning of a context. In listening, mastering vocabulary helps the students to grasp what they hear from a conversation, radio or television. In speaking, mastering vocabulary helps the students engage in communication, they understand what people say and they know what they want to say.

In writing, mastering vocabulary helps the students to express their ideas in written form. As mentioned earlier, that vocabulary is the basic element of language and important to learn, it makes vocabulary need to be taught at school starting from primary level.

2.4. Approach to Teaching and Learning of English in the Early Grade Students

The approach to language teaching and learning used in the textbook and teacher's Guide is communicative, skills-based and learner-centered. In other words, the English that is introduced to students and that they learn and practice is meaningful and relevant to them as individuals and for their social interaction with others. Also, the activities through which they learn have a real purpose and context (MoE,2010).

In early grade English, the focus is on the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, in that order. Vocabulary items, structures and grammar are integrated into the practice of these four skills. Activities are suggested through which the students can communicate with each other in a variety of ways: pairs, groups and whole class. Students' natural curiosity and appetite for discovery are stimulated by handling and talking about real objects and interpreting pictures; and their enjoyment of language and learning is encouraged through games, songs and stories. (MoE,2010).

In language learning context it is believed that children will learn a foreign language more actively under certain conditions. Therefore, there is some assumption about language learning that should be considered when teaching English to children. The assumptions are below from different sources (Larsen Freeman, Mackey, Richard and Rodgers)

1. Learning should be fun and natural for children. In order for them to be successful in learning the target language, there must be the absence of stress. Children are believed not to learn language forms directly; commons are believed to be helpful for children to interpret meanings.
2. The language should be first presented through sounds, not written symbols. After children can produce the sound with the truth, they may begin to read the symbol in target language.

3. Children are more sensitive to anything that touches the senses, they read easily to physical object.
4. Meaning should be made perceptible through concrete objects or by the presentation of experience.
5. The idea that teaching should start from what the students already know in order to encourage association processes seems to favor children.

2.5. Considerations of Teaching Vocabulary in Early grades EFL Classes

Teaching vocabulary to children is different from teaching vocabulary to teenagers and adults. This is because different age has different needs, competencies, and cognitive skills (Harmer, 2001). Their different characteristics become the main consideration in treating them differently as the teaching subjects. The teacher has an important role to build children's vocabularies. The teacher should know the factors in teaching such as methods, strategies, techniques, and materials, so that the teacher can convey the material well in accordance with children's characteristics. A good method will be useless in teacher's hand who did not know how to use it and a good teacher could not be effective if teacher uses inappropriate method (Evan and Lang, 2006).

Thornbury (2002) suggested that when learners are taught pre-selected vocabulary items, we should consider how many words should be presented during the lesson. This is closely connected with several factors:

- The level of the pupils – beginners, intermediate etc.
- Their familiarity with the words – have they come across these words or are they completely new?
- words difficulty – are the words abstract, are they easily pronounced, can we find similar words in the learner's native language etc.?
- Can the words be easily demonstrated?
- Shall we use realia or anything that the pupils can become familiar with?
- Can pictures be used to elicit vocabulary?

Research into the cognitive development of young children has shown that they learn best by using all of their senses, i.e. by touching, feeling, smelling, tasting and hearing real objects in the world around them. When learning about people, animals and objects from pictures, it is therefore recommended that the pictures represent the real world as closely as possible (For example, it is easier to learn the word tomato if the picture used to teach the word not only shows the correct shape of a tomato, but also realistically is coloured red). Therefore in order to help children acquire more vocabulary, to use whatever they have learned in communication and to motivate them to learn English, the teacher has to use different techniques of teaching. The techniques which can be used by teachers in teaching vocabulary may depend on the ages of the learners and the nature of the items to be taught.

2.6. Techniques in Teaching Vocabulary for early grade children

Teaching techniques emphasize the ways the teacher delivers the lesson to the students. Techniques are the ways and means adopted by a teacher to direct the student activities to achieve the objective which means techniques are the tool of the teacher (Gerlach, 2006). Similar with Gerlach, Brown (2001) defines techniques as any of wide variety exercises, activities, or tasks used in the language classroom that were consistent with a method and therefore in harmony with an approach as well. To introduce new vocabulary, teachers need various ways or techniques to assist the students to acquire vocabulary effectively. In other words, particular techniques are needed to direct students to expand their vocabulary.

According to Adrian Tennant (2021), different techniques are appropriate for different vocabulary items and also for different types of learners. A teacher has to think what words would be best taught using the technique and for which words the technique would probably not work very well.

A number of authors have described vocabulary teaching techniques (Tennant (2021), Gairns and Redman, 1986; Nation, 1990; Cross, 1991; and Brewster, J., Ellis, G and Denis Girard, 2003). The techniques proposed by the authors involved a great deal of vocabulary teaching and learning. The vocabulary teaching techniques are divided into four parts, they are:

1. Visual techniques
2. Verbal techniques.
3. Techniques of practice
4. Techniques of training.

2.6.1. Visual techniques

Concrete words (mostly nouns) can usually be conveyed through pictures or realia (real objects). For example, a word like *chair* (as a noun) is quite easy to teach, by pointing to a chair or by showing a picture. Even some abstract words can often be conveyed using visuals – for example, a picture of a man and woman plus a heart could be used to convey the word *love*. This technique includes the use of **realia (real objects), pictures, drawings and flashcards**. They can function to help learners in remembering vocabulary better, because our memory for objects and pictures is very reliable and visual technique can act as cues for remembering words (Gairns & Redman, 1986).

1.1. **Using the real objects** is associated with the use of things or real objects to teach vocabulary regarding to the contexts. This help learners in remembering vocabulary better, because our memory for objects and pictures is very reliable and visual techniques can act as cues for remembering words. In addition, Gairns & Redman(1986) state that real objects technique is appropriately employed for beginners or young learners and when presenting concrete vocabulary. Objects can be used to show meanings when the vocabulary consist of concrete nouns. Introducing a new word by showing the real object often helps learners to memorize the word through visualization. Objects in the classroom or things brought to the classroom can be used. According to Ngaroga (2006) that the advantage of using realia is to motivate, this allows children to apply various senses when learning and thus make learning effective.

1.2. **Using pictures.**

Pictures connect students' prior knowledge to a new story, and in the process, help them learn new words. Pictures can be used to develop students' understanding of a particular concept or word. Photographs, picture cards, hand-drawn pictures, Wall Charts and Wall Pictures can all be included here. Pictures can substitute objects which are difficult to bring to the classroom.

1.3. **Using drawings.** It is an easy and quick technique of introducing vocabulary to the learners. For students, drawing can be a fun medium to explain vocabulary. It is not

necessary that the teacher must be an expert in drawing pictures accurately. He can draw rough sketches on the chalkboard to make an idea clear.

- 1.4. **Using flashcards.** This is the other way to convey the word form and its meaning through cards within pictures or words which is made by the teacher. This can be used again and again in different contexts if they are made with cards and covered in plastic. They can help early grade students easily understand and realize the main points that they have learned in the classroom.

2.6.2. Verbal techniques

Defining words, using explaining, translation, **mime**, synonyms and antonyms are included in the verbal techniques in teaching the meaning of words

- 1.5. **Meaning definition.** In teaching new vocabulary items, teachers define or explain to make them clear to their students. Usually the new words are defined using words already known by the students, that are within the students' current range (Thornbury, 2002).
- 2.2. **Explaining.** This technique is done by teacher explaining the words to the learners.
- 2.3. **Translation** is a quick and easy way to present the meaning of words. Thus, it can save time of the teaching and learning process. The use of mother tongue is helpful for both teachers and the students in acquiring the meaning of words.
- 2.4. **Using Mime & and Gesture .** Mime is the use of movements and gestures in order to express something or tell a story without using speech. Visuals and realia are usually limited to concrete words and are probably ineffectual when it comes to more abstract notions and even some basic areas of vocabulary such as verbs, adverbs and adjectives. However, these three areas of vocabulary do lend themselves to mime.
It is relatively easy to mime words such as *run* and *walk* and even to differentiate between words that belong to the same group but have quite fundamental differences in meaning, e.g. *run*, *walk*, *stroll*, *sprint*, *jog*, *wander*, etc. It is also relatively easy to use mime to teach adverbs of manner, i.e. *quickly*, *slowly*, *happily*, etc. Getting students to mime various actions in a particular manner is great fun and a good way of making the adverbs memorable.

- 2.5. **Synonyms and antonyms.** Synonyms and antonyms are especially important in building new vocabulary. **Synonyms** are words that have the same meaning as the unknown word in a given sentence. Mean while, **antonyms** are words that have the opposite meaning of the unknown words in a given sentence.

2.6.3. Techniques of Practice

These techniques involve classroom review of the previously introduced vocabulary as well as homework. This kind of practice, as implied by Thornburry underlines the belief that practice makes perfect. The techniques are including:

- 3.1. **Vocabulary games.** This technique has shown the advantages in learning vocabulary in various ways. First, games are fun for the learners and help them in retaining the words easily. Second, games usually involve friendly competition and they keep learners interested and enjoyed.
- 3.2. **Repetition drill.** Students repeat what the teacher utters as quickly as possible and the teachers are not allowed to do mistakes because the teacher is a model or example for the students. According to Ellis & Beaton (1993), Drillings are repetitive exercises intended to develop recognition with a procedure. It is a best method to teach memorization skills. In addition, drilling is used to make students familiar with the form of words, especially how they sound. Drilling is very necessary since learners need to say the word to themselves as they learn it, to recall the words from memory.
- 3.3. **Using song.** As it is stated by Murphy for young learner students “teachers can use songs to teach vocabulary to students”. Song is one of appropriate ways to create a good atmosphere to make teaching and learning process fresh and interesting. The words can be associated with a kind of dance to help the students remember certain vocabulary. It is good to maintain a simple rhythm while saying or singing the song.

Singing a song is usually an activity that children love. Songs can be a vocabulary teaching technique for young students. It can excite the students to achieve the new vocabulary that they had already listened. It is supported by Cebula (2008) that the learners who follow in learning through songs usually express themselves easily and get a lot of new words.

2.6.4. Techniques of training

The purpose of these techniques is to teach the learners independent vocabulary learning like dictionary use and asking for others.

2.6.4.1. *The use of dictionary.* It is an important tool in the teaching and learning of vocabulary. Teachers should encourage students to search words in dictionaries. Therefore, the habit of its use should be inculcated right from the beginning. Giving students strategies for learning vocabulary is an important part of teaching. It helps the students to become independent learners. One of the best, and probably easiest, ways of learning about new words is by using a dictionary.

2.6.4.2 Asking for others. This technique means the learners are grouped by the teacher so that they could work on a task together.

2.7. Focus of word learning areas in early grade EFL instruction

The English syllabus document for early grade students touches suggested answers on the following questions: Which words should be taught? How should vocabulary be taught? How many words do EFL learners need to know? What should a vocabulary-learning programme include? How can vocabulary learning be fostered given limited classroom time? Which activities might be useful in indirect vocabulary learning?

In addition, According to English Minimum learning competencies for Grade 1, it requires the students to perform with and understand a total of 150 words in different contexts, such as, classroom objects, parts of the class, everyday objects, clothes, people, parts of the body, other nouns. And for grade 2, it requires the students to perform with and understand a total number of around 200 words in different contexts, such as adjectives, part of the body, numbers, transport, verbs, classroom, objects, classroom, verbs, food, clothes, people, colour, animals, days, social expressions, weather, drinks etc. As the focus is on the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, grammar and vocabulary items are integrated into practice of these skills (MoE 2010).

2.8. Problems which early grade English teachers face in teaching vocabulary

Teaching vocabulary is one of the most discussed parts of teaching English as a foreign language. When the teaching and learning process takes place, problems would appear to the teachers. They

have problems of how to teach students in order to gain satisfying results. The teacher should prepare and find out the appropriate techniques, which will be implemented to the students. A good teacher should prepare himself or herself with various and up-to-date techniques. Teachers need to be able to master the material in order to be understood by students, and make them interested and happy in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The teachers should be concerned that teaching vocabulary is something new and different from student's native language. They also have to take into account that teaching English for young learners is different from adults. The teachers have to know the characteristics of his\her learners. They need to prepare good techniques and suitable material in order to gain the target of language teaching.

According to Wallace [2008], the teaching of vocabulary is problematic. The problem arises from the selection of word to be taught. For this reason, before teaching any new words a teacher should make sure what the purpose of the lesson is, whether it fits to students' needs and accomplishes the goal of comprehension and communication. Hassen (2012) stated that the commonly observed teacher related difficulties in teaching vocabulary are:

- Lack of availability of contextual vocabulary
- Lack of relevant word lists
- Lack of unique/innovative vocabulary\teaching techniques
- Lack of new ideas
- Lack of cohesion with the rest of the items taught in the English grammar class
- Having no sense of direction as to how aspects like spelling and pronunciation of new words can be handled
- They are not used to adopting any strategies that might help them improve vocabulary retention skill, and even if they do, they are unaware of any such strategies

According to Hollowell,2017. The 4 Challenges of Teaching English vocabulary to early grade students include:

A) Lack of Motivation

When children are not motivated to learn English, a teacher can motivate children by making lessons entertaining and interesting. Games can make lessons fun and productive for learning instead of common words drilling.

B) The Importance of Good Relationships

Building a rapport with young learners for a teacher is obligatory. Early grade students are innocent with their wants and fears. Therefore, a teacher should get familiar with students, understand their personalities and build a connection to make them trust their teacher. Children feel more comfortable if a teacher looks silly sometimes as well as it makes them laugh. Early grade students are very sensitive and they can feel the teacher's mood and attitude. Thereafter, a rapport can be built by caring about kids, communicating with them in English with the use of gestures, supporting them if they failed and rewarding them when they succeeded.

C) Behavior Issues

Children at the early age are not used to having classes; consequently, their behavior may vary. Some children can sit still while others can run around and distract kids from having a class. Thus, it is essential for a teacher to set up rules at the very beginning, explain to kids what they can and can't do. A teacher should follow the rules himself and be fair because kids are very sensitive to injustice. The rewarding system is very useful to control the behavior and motivate them at the same time.

D) Short attention Span

Young learners are very easy to lose their focus thus visual aids can be very helpful. Children still learn the world so they enjoy touching everything.

2.9. Research studies related to word teaching techniques

As far as research works related to the practice of teachers' vocabulary teaching techniques in early grades were concerned, it was possible to reach only one related local research report summarizing the case in one city. When we looked at the international studies it is possible to say that there are some related studies done on different grade levels. Some relevant studies are summarized below. Berhane(1998) conducted a research on "an exploration of vocabulary teaching in primary schools with special reference to grades one and two in Addis Ababa.". The findings show that pictures, picture cards, blackboard drawings and real objects are more frequented and effective techniques of vocabulary teaching in grades one and two.

A study was conducted by Anjulo (2020) to investigate teachers' practice of teaching vocabulary in EFL classes at Otona Secondary School on English Language teachers in Jinka. The findings revealed that English language teachers did not give great emphasis on vocabulary instruction to create a participatory classroom through vocabulary lesson; as result, students could not engage new words in meaningful context.

A study conducted by Amanu(2014) to assess the practice of vocabulary teaching strategies in EFL classes: kellem secondary school grade 9 and 10 English teachers in focus in Dembi Dollo. The results of the study reveal that the teachers were not capable enough on the knowledge and the theoretical orientations of vocabulary teaching strategies in EFL classes. In addition, it was found that the teachers lacked practical skills on the implementation of different types of vocabulary teaching strategies in EFL classes according to their suitability. Furthermore, the study revealed that they rarely practiced these strategies during vocabulary instruction. Generally, the practices of vocabulary teaching strategies were not given sufficient attention at Kellem Secondary School. Thus, the study indicated that the English teachers didn't practice different vocabulary teaching strategies in EFL classes.

Bayu (2020) conducted a research to investigate vocabulary teaching strategies used by grade nine teachers in Kokebe Tsibah Secondary and Preparatory School in Addis Ababa. The overall findings of the study showed that teachers did not use the various vocabulary teaching strategies in the English classes. Teachers most frequently used definition, antonym and synonym; contextualization was occasionally used.

A study was conducted by Sorta(2018) examining the vocabulary teaching techniques used by a teacher in English as foreign language learning for young learners in Indonesia. The findings of the study showed the vocabulary teaching techniques used by the teacher were techniques of presentation (using pictures, drawings, meaning definition, and translation), techniques of practicing (repetition drill), and techniques of training (asking for others and dictionary use).

A study was conducted by Lelawati (2018) aimed to describe the techniques used by the teacher in teaching English vocabulary for young learners focusing on grade four students in Negeri primary school. The findings revealed that the teacher applied various techniques in teaching vocabulary which divided into two stages. For presenting new words, using flashcards and miming are

preferred by the teacher in this study. And the final in getting students to practice the words they have learnt, the teacher mostly employed identifying and matching task.

A study was conducted by Jumharia (2013) to elaborate some theories and practice of teaching vocabulary by using English songs as the media. The findings of the study showed dealing with the characteristic of young learner students; song is one of appropriate ways to create a good atmosphere to make teaching and learning process fresh and interesting.

A study was conducted by Bakhsh (2016) to elaborate some theories and practice of using games as a tool in teaching vocabulary to young learners. The findings of the study showed that young learners get bored very fast if the teacher is teaching them using the old conventional methods and techniques. And games are effective tools when devised to explain vocabularies and they make it easier to remember their meanings.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The main purpose of this study was to explore word teaching techniques in early grade English classes (at grades 1 and 2) in North Mecha woreda primary schools.

In this descriptive survey design both qualitative and quantitative techniques were employed. Since the data was analyzed by using percentage and descriptive method, the researcher believes it is appropriate for the study. For this purpose, therefore, a descriptive research method was chosen because it is used to specify or describe a phenomenon without conducting an experiment (Selinger and Shohamy, 1989).

3.2. Samples and Sampling

This survey engaged Grade 1 & 2 teachers as respondents. Currently, a total of 34 government primary schools functioning in North Mecha woreda in 2015E.C was taken as the study setting. In the 34 schools there were 87 teachers teaching English at grades 1 and 2. Out of these 34 schools 20 schools (58.8%) were selected by using simple random sampling (lottery method) and all the 58 English teachers who were teaching English language in Grade 1 & 2 in the 20 sample schools were part of this study. As a result, 58 questionnaires were dispatched to all grade 1 & 2 English teachers teaching in the 20 sample schools. Out of the 20 sample schools 4 were selected randomly for classroom observation,

Table 1: Sample sizes of schools and teachers taken from North Mecha woreda

Total number of primary schools	Number of sample schools	Total number of English teachers teaching in Gr. 1 & 2			Number of respondents from sample schools		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
34	20	50	37	87	21	37	58

Source: North Mecha woreda education office

Demographic information of the Respondents

Table 2: Demographic information of the respondents			
NO.	Variable	Frequency(N)	Percentage (%)
1	Sex		
	Male	21	36.21
	Female	37	63.79
2	Teaching years of Experience		
	Below 3 years	0	0
	3-6 years	6	10.34
	7-10 years	10	17.24
	Above 10 years	36	62.07
3	Qualification		
	Grade 12 and below	0	0
	One year certificate (TTI)	2	3.45
	Diploma	50	86.21
	BA/BSC Degree	6	10.34
	MA/MSc Degree	0	0
	Others	0	0
4	Grade level(s) you are teaching mathematics currently		
	Grade 1 only	22	37.93
	Grade 2 only	23	39.66
	Grade 1 & 2	13	22.41

The questionnaire items (open ended and close ended questions) were administered to 34 primary school grade 1 and 2 English teachers teaching in the 20 sample schools. Table 2 below shows that personal characteristics of the respondent teachers.

The demographic information of the participants was compiled on the base of responses relating to school, sex, and number of years of teaching experience, qualification and Grade level of teaching. The teachers were from 20 government schools of North Mecha woreda teaching in grade 1 and 2.

Years of teaching experience was presented as four categories; results indicated that 6(10.34%) were from three to six years, 10(17.24%) were from seven to ten years and 36(62.07%) were above 10 years. In relation to qualification, 2(61.9%) of the respondent teachers are one year certificate (TTI) holders, 50(86.21%) of the respondent teachers are diploma holders and the rest 6(10.34%) are BA/BSC Degree.

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

Data collection methods that combine qualitative and quantitative procedures were used to strengthen the results. Each can complement the other by providing different information about the same phenomenon. Data from different sources can be compared for consistency, and they can also be used to overcome potential weakness for particular instrument. Thus, to explore the vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers use data were collected from teachers using close ended questionnaires and classroom lesson observations using structured observation checklist. To identify the problems which early grade English teachers face in teaching vocabulary, interview (using semi-structured interview questions) were used.

The data gathering instruments used in this study were presented in greater detail with their corresponding numbers of items and the variables they were meant to gauge as follows:-

3.3.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaire for teachers has both closed-ended and open-ended items. It is sought to obtain information about vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers use. The items in the closed-ended questionnaire contain 15 items that are divided into four parts (Visual techniques, Verbal techniques, Techniques of practice and Techniques of training) which are chosen on the basis of techniques of vocabulary teaching mentioned in the literature. Teachers were requested to rate the frequency of use of each of the techniques of vocabulary teaching. Each item is structured in a four point rating scale. Each item requires respondents to indicate their level of agreement (4=Almost always, 3= Often, 2= some times and 1= rarely).

When using a questionnaire to gather data, particular assumptions were made. The assumptions include:

- (a) The respondent can read and understand the questions or items;

- (b) The respondent possesses the information to answer the questions or items;
- (c) The respondent is willing to answer the questions or items honestly

3.3.2. Classroom Lesson observation

(On vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers use (Part III of the questionnaire)).

As Mackey and Gass (2005) noted, observations, commonly used in classroom research for gathering data on such phenomena as language, activities and instruction, can allow the study of a behavior at close range with many important contextual variables present.

Observation can help to study all observable social phenomena in their natural setting as long as they are accessible (S. Sarankos, 2005.p 221). Based on this idea, Classroom observation with structured observation checklist were employed by the researcher himself to collect information about early grade teachers' vocabulary teaching classroom practice in order to complement and triangulate teachers' reported vocabulary teaching practices(which were collected through PART II closed ended questionnaire) with the actual classroom practices. The researcher used structured observation checklist for collecting data about the observed techniques employed in teaching vocabulary to early grade students (PART III of the instrument).

Lesson observations were made in 4 randomly selected schools for two rounds. A total of 16 lesson observations, eight observations from grade 1 and eight observations from grade 2 were made. The vocabulary items taught during the lesson observations are classified into vocabulary learning area categories for each grade. The possible teaching techniques for the vocabulary items taught during the lesson observations were also identified as suggested from teachers guide book for analysis purpose (Table 3 & Table 4 below).

Table 3:- Grade 1 vocabulary items taught during the lesson observations and the possible teaching techniques suggested from teachers guide book

Observation	Vocabulary learning areas	Vocabulary items taught during the observation	Suggested teaching technique from teachers guide
<i>Observation 1</i>	Parts of the body	Arms, eyes, ears, fingers,	- Using pictures - Using real objects

		legs, hair, head, mouth, nose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repetition drill - Asking for others
<i>Observation 2</i>	Colours	red, yellow, and blue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using flash cards - using real objects - using pictures - using game - using song
<i>Observation 3</i>	Counting	One, two three, four, five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using flash cards - using real objects - using pictures - Using song
<i>Observation 4</i>	Family	mother, father, brother, sister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using pictures - Translation
<i>Observation 5</i>	Animals	goat, bird, dog, frog, fish, monkey, hen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using pictures - Explaining - Translation
<i>Observation 6</i>	Classroom objects	bag, book, chair, desk, pen, pencil, ruler, table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using pictures - Using objects - Using game - Using song
<i>Observation 7</i>	Adjectives	big, small, tall, short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using drawings on the chalkboard - Repetition drill - using pictures
<i>Observation 8</i>	Commands	dance, go, jump, run, sing, Stand up, Sit down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using Mime - Repetition drill

Table 4:- Grade 2 vocabulary items taught during the lesson observations and the possible teaching techniques suggested from teachers guide book

Observation	Vocabulary learning areas	Vocabulary items taught during the observation	Suggested teaching technique from teachers guide book
<i>Observation 9</i>	Color	red, blue, yellow, green, orange, purple, brown, black, white, pink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using flash cards - using real objects - using pictures - Using game - Using song

<i>Observation 10</i>	Parts of the body	Fingers, hand, arm, shoulder, leg, foot, knee, toes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using parts of the body - A picture of the body - using song - using game - using picture flash cards and word flash cards
<i>Observation 11</i>	Days	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, tomorrow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using flash cards - Repetition drill - using song
<i>Observation 12</i>	Food	bread carrot, eggs, fish, meat, potatoes, tomatoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using pictures - Translation - Explaining - using flash cards - using song - Asking for others
<i>Observation 13</i>	Adjectives	Wet, dry, fat, thin, old, new	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using pictures - Repetition drill
<i>Observation 14</i>	Drinks	Coffee, milk, tea, water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using pictures - Using flash cards
<i>Observation 15</i>	Social Expressions	Happy Birthday, Happy Ramadan, Happy Christmas, Happy New Year, Happy Easter, Happy Eid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Translation - using song
<i>Observation 16</i>	Greetings	Good Morning, How are you? goodbye, bye bye, Have a nice weekend, Good Night	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repetition drill - Using song - Asking for others

3.3.3. Interview

(On problems which early grade English teachers face in teaching vocabulary to grade 1 and 2 students (Part IV of the questionnaire)

Semi-structured interview were used to gather data from grade 1 and 2 English teachers concerning the problems which early grade English teachers face in teaching vocabulary to grade 1 and 2 students in their schools. Three interview questions were used to guide the interview. 8 randomly selected teachers from 4 sample schools teaching grade 1 and 2 were interviewed. After explaining the purpose of the interview for the interviewees and getting their consent, the researcher conducted the interview and recorded the information by taking notes on the main themes of the discussion. The medium was Amharic to put the communication at ease. The interview question

demands the interviewee to respond to the question: “What are the problems which early grade English teachers face in teaching vocabulary to grade 1 and 2 students?” with regard to

- ✓ Problems related to availability of vocabulary teaching media/ resources
- ✓ Problems related to teachers
- ✓ Problems related to students

3.4. Validity and Reliability

Content validity is the most important consideration in developing and evaluating measuring instruments. It refers to as to which extent an instrument measures that you intended to measure (Ary et al. 2010). In order to assure the content validity and internal consistency (reliability) of data gathering instruments each instrument was given to 20 primary school English language teachers. Based on the feedback gained from those English teachers, the instruments were modified. Hence, items which were vague have been made clear and some unnecessary items were omitted and other items assumed important included in the questionnaire and interview.

3.5 Data Analysis Methods

Data analyses were made with relevant headings and sub-headings which derived from the research questions. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics (such as *frequencies, percentages and mean*) were used in analyzing quantitative data collected through closed ended questionnaire and structured observation checklist to explore teachers vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers use (i.e. for research question 1).

On the other hand, the data gathered through interview questions were analyzed qualitatively using narrations and explanations to identify the problems which early grade English teachers face in teaching vocabulary.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

Ethics in the context of research refers to the appropriateness of one’s behavior in relation to the rights of those who become the participant of the research or affected by the research. In this study, the whole process was going on in an ethical manner. While conducting a study, collecting data and using their information in the study, consent from the authority of the target population was acquired due to ethical issues. All teachers always have the power to decline from

participating in the questionnaires and interviews, unless their names remain hidden .There are several ethical issues to be considered when facilitating children's perspectives in research, Ground water (2006) cited in (Dockett & Perry,2007) notes:

If we consult children we may put them in positions of vulnerability, if we do not Consult them we risk overlooking the important contribution they can make, if We treat them as vulnerable we may be patronizing them and imaging them to be powerless and irresponsible ...If we regard them as invulnerable we may Underestimate their fragility...the fundamental concern is to prevent harm or doing wrong to others, it is a concern to promote the good and be respectful and fair.

Therefore the researcher kept this in mind when dealing with interview subjects. Hence, in this study the researcher promised to hide the teachers and students' names during data collection take place. All things were secured only for the researcher to have access the data.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS OF THE STUDY AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

The major purpose of the study was to investigate to explore vocabulary teaching techniques used by early grade teachers in English classes in North Mecha woreda primary schools and the problems faced by these teachers in teaching vocabulary to grade 1 and 2 students so as to provide more illuminating insights in this connection.

The data were collected using questionnaires (closed-ended) and lesson observation (using structured observation checklist). This chapter presents the results obtained from the data analysis and its discussion part. In the first part, results of descriptive statistics as well as the result of qualitative data analysis on the vocabulary teaching techniques used by early grade English teachers and the problems which early grade English teachers face in teaching vocabulary were reported based on the research questions. Afterwards, the findings of the study presented are discussed based on the research questions.

4.2. Results of the Study

4.2.1. Vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers use

(Research Question 1:- What are the Vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers use?)

4.2.1.1 Results from the analysis of quantitative data

Teachers plan and organize English vocabulary lessons using a variety of teaching practices and techniques for early grade students. Some of these techniques have been recommended to teachers in pre-service and in-service trainings, in professional journals, and in curriculum documentation (Thornbury, 2000). The first research question aimed to explore the vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers use. There were 15 items that related to vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers claim to prefer and use in part II of the questionnaire. In addition, the result of the classroom lesson observation made to examine vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers use is presented under this section.

A list of 15 vocabulary teaching techniques were presented to teachers in the questionnaire for them to indicate the level of frequency of use of each of these as ‘almost always’, ‘often’, ‘sometimes’, and ‘rarely’. Descriptive Statistics for reported use of vocabulary teaching techniques are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for teachers' responses on vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers use

No.	Item	almost always		often		Sometimes		rarely	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
A	Visual Techniques								
1	Using the real objects	12	20.69	21	36.21	21	36.2	4	6.90
2	Using pictures	16	27.59	25	43.10	12	20.7	5	8.62
3	Using drawings	10	17.24	21	36.21	19	32.8	8	13.79
4	Using flashcards	10	17.24	18	31.03	20	34.5	10	17.24
B	Verbal Techniques								
5	Meaning definition	5	8.62	7	12.07	12	20.7	34	58.62
6	Explaining	5	8.62	10	17.24	13	22.4	30	51.72
7	Translation	23	39.66	19	32.76	10	17.2	6	10.34
8	Using Mime and Gesture	7	12.07	12	20.69	22	37.9	17	29.31
9	Synonymy	5	8.62	10	17.24	22	37.9	21	36.21
10	Antonyms	4	6.90	12	20.69	19	32.8	23	39.66
C	Techniques of Practice								
11	Vocabulary games	3	5.17	5	8.62	9	15.5	41	70.69
12	Repetition drill	13	22.41	17	29.31	16	27.6	12	20.69
13	Using song	4	6.90	7	12.07	20	34.5	27	46.55
D	Techniques of Training								
14	The use of dictionary	2	3.45	2	3.45	4	6.9	50	86.21
15	Asking for others	2	3.45	3	5.17	5	8.6	48	82.76

The data in table 5 above indicated that some vocabulary teaching techniques seem to be used more frequently by a majority of teachers than other techniques. The use of translation, using pictures, using drawings and using the real objects are the most frequently employed techniques. For

example, *translating* the meaning of the word in to mother tongue in teaching vocabulary is often or almost always used by 72.41% of the respondents (item 7). Also *using pictures* technique (which includes photographs, picture cards, hand-drawn pictures, wall charts and wall pictures) is often or almost always used by **70.69%** of the respondents (item 2). Besides, *Using the real objects* is often or almost always used by 56.9% of the respondents (item 1). *Using drawings* technique is often or almost always used by **53.45%** of the respondents (item 3).

In contrast to this, most of the verbal techniques (except translation technique) have the highest respondents when compared with the visual techniques in the 'sometimes' or 'rarely' rating scale. The use of *meaning definition*, *Explaining*, *using mime and gesture*, *using synonymy* and *using antonyms*, are the most infrequently employed verbal techniques. For example, *using meaning definition*(i.e. teaching new vocabulary items, by defining or explaining using words already known by the students to make them clear to their students) where 79.31% of teachers rarely or sometimes use this technique (item5). Also, 74.14% of the surveyed teachers rarely or only sometimes *explain* the new words to the learners to teach their meaning (item 6). Similarly, 67.24% the surveyed teachers rarely or only sometimes use *Mime and Gesture* technique of teaching vocabulary (item 8). Using *synonymy* and *antonyms* techniques are rarely or sometimes used by 74.14% and 72.41% of the respondents respectively (item 9 and item 10).

From *techniques of practice*, *using vocabulary games* and *using song*, *vocabulary* teaching techniques are used infrequently by a majority of teachers. 86.21% of the surveyed teachers reported that rarely or only sometimes use *vocabulary games* to teach vocabulary to students (item11). Furthermore, 81.03% of the teachers reported that rarely or only sometimes use *song* to teach vocabulary to students (item13).

The *techniques of training* for vocabulary teaching (i.e. the use of dictionary and asking for others) are used infrequently by a majority of teachers. 93.1% of the surveyed teachers reported that rarely or only sometimes encourage students to search words in *dictionaries* (item14). Furthermore, 91.38% of the teachers reported that rarely or only sometimes group the students in order to they could work on a task to share the meaning of words (item15).

On the other hand, a spread of frequency of use of some *vocabulary* teaching techniques is also observed. These include *repetition drill* and using flashcards. 51.72% of the surveyed teachers reported that often or almost always use *repetition drill* technique and the rest 48.28% of the

respondents rarely or only sometimes use the technique (item 12). Similarly, 48.28 % the surveyed teachers reported that often or almost always use flashcards and the rest 51.72% of the respondents rarely or only sometimes use the technique (item 4).

4.2.1.2. Results obtained from lesson observation

(Research Question 1:- What are the Vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers use?)

As the focus is on the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, Vocabulary items were taught integrated into the practice of these four skills. But, the observation focused on exploring the techniques teachers use in teaching vocabulary.

Lesson observations were made in 4 randomly selected schools for two rounds. A total of 16 lesson observations, eight observations from grade 1 and eight observations from grade 2 were made.

The vocabulary items taught during the lesson observations are classified into vocabulary learning area categories for each grade. The possible teaching techniques for the vocabulary items taught during the lesson observations were also identified from teachers guide book for analysis purpose (table 3 and Table 4). The information gathered through the lesson observations were analyzed by comparing the teaching techniques used during the observation sessions with the possible and plausible teaching techniques suggested from teachers guide book.

For ease of analysis and discussion the eight lesson observations made on grade 1 *were labeled as* observation 1 up to 8 and the eight lesson observations made on grade 2 *were labeled as* observation 9 up to 16. Table 6 and Table 7 below shows the teaching techniques used during the observation sessions in grade 1 and grade 2 respectively.

Table 6: The vocabulary items taught and the teaching techniques used during the observation sessions in grade 1

Observation	Vocabulary learning areas	Items taught during observation sessions (vocabulary)	Vocabulary Teaching Techniques used												
			Visual Techniques				Verbal Techniques					Techniques of Practice			
			Real objects	Pictures	Drawings	Flashcards	Meaning definition	Explaining	Translation	Using Mime	Synonymy	Antonymy	Vocabulary games	Repetition drill	Using song

1	Parts of the body	Arms, eyes, ears, fingers, legs, hair, head, mouth, nose	✓	✓				✓	✓					✓	
2	Colors	red, yellow, and blue		✓					✓					✓	
3	Counting	One, two, three, four, five	✓	✓					✓						
4	Family	mother, father, brother, sister		✓					✓						
5	Animals	goat, bird, dog, frog, fish, monkey, hen		✓					✓						
6	Classroom objects	bag, book, chair, desk, pen, pencil, ruler, table	✓	✓					✓						
7	Adjectives	big, small, tall, short	✓		✓			✓	✓						
8	Commands	dance, go, jump, run, sing, stand up, sit down							✓	✓					

Table 7: The vocabulary items taught and teaching techniques used during the observation sessions in *grade 2*

Observation	Vocabulary learning areas	Items taught during observation sessions (vocabulary)	Vocabulary Teaching Techniques used														
			Visual Techniques				Verbal Techniques						Techniques of Practice			Techniques of Training	
			Real objects	Pictures	Drawings	Flashcards	Meaning definition	Explaining	Translation	Using Mime	Synonymy	Antonym	Vocabulary games	Repetition drill	Using song	The use of dictionary	Asking for others
9	Colour	red, blue, yellow, green, orange, purple, brown, black, white, pink	✓	✓				✓					✓				
10	Parts of the body	Fingers, hand, arm, shoulder, leg, foot, knee, toes	✓	✓				✓	✓								
11	Days	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday						✓	✓				✓				
12	Food	Bread, carrot, eggs, fish, meat, potatoes, tomatoes		✓				✓									
13	Adjectives	Wet, dry, fat, thin, old, new						✓	✓								
14	Drinks	Coffee, milk, tea, water						✓	✓								
15	Social Expressions	Happy Birthday, Happy Ramadan, Happy Christmas, Happy New Year, Happy Easter, Happy Eid						✓	✓				✓			✓	
16	Greetings	Good Morning, good afternoon, good evening, Good night, How are you?						✓	✓				✓			✓	

The observation results shown the use of translation (from verbal technique and using pictures (from visual techniques) were the most frequently employed techniques. For example, teaching by *translating* the meaning of the word in to mother tongue technique was predominantly used in all of the sixteen observations. The students' exercise books show how very frequently teachers use translation technique of teaching vocabulary as shown in the sample pictures below.

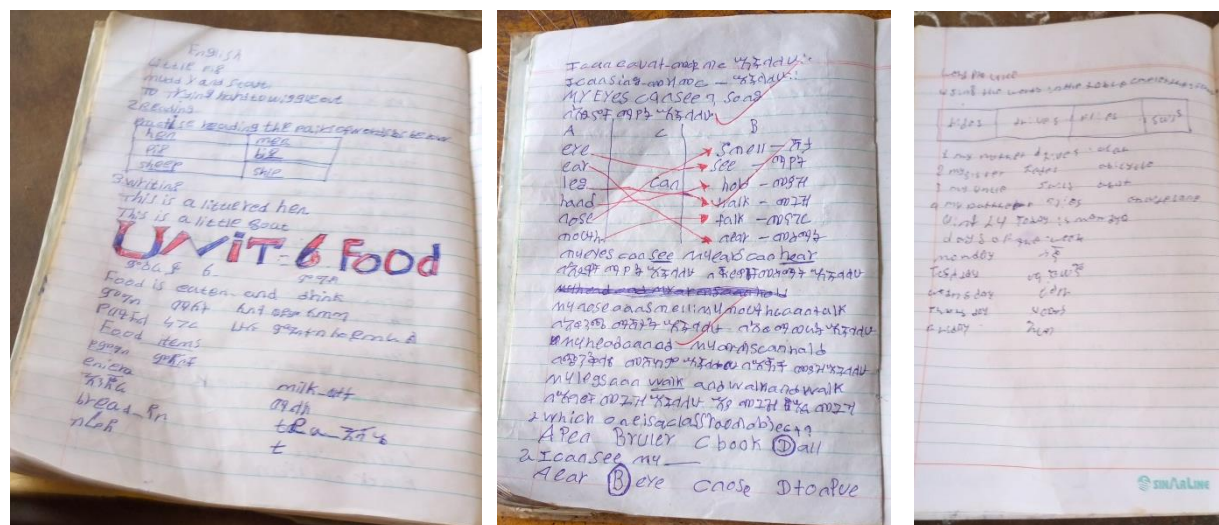


Fig.1. Sample pictures taken from students exercise books during observation.

Also using *pictures* technique (mostly the pictures in the textbooks) is used in nine of the observation sessions. Besides, *Repetition drill* technique and *explaining* the words to the learner's technique are equally used in six of the sixteen observation sessions. *Using real objects* technique is also used in five of the sixteen observation sessions.

In contrast to this, the observation results shown in table 6 and table 7 above indicated that most of the verbal techniques (The use of *meaning definition*, *using mime and gesture*, *using synonymy*, *using antonyms*) are the rarely used techniques in the observation sessions. The use of *meaning definition*, *using synonymy* and *using antonyms* were never used by any teacher during the observation. *Mime and Gesture* were used once by a teacher during the observation.

From *techniques of practice*, *using vocabulary games* and *using song* were never used by any teacher during the observation sessions. Despite using games and using song techniques are the possible and plausible techniques suggested from the teachers guide book, teachers were not observed using these techniques totally throughout the sixteen 16 lesson observations. This contradicts with the view that using game & using song techniques play the central role to make

early grade students actively participate in class and get vocabulary faster and easier (Robinson, 2015). The *techniques of training* for vocabulary teaching (i.e. the use of dictionary and asking for others) are were also the rarely observed techniques in the observation sessions.

When we compare the vocabulary teaching techniques employed from the observation result(table 6 and table 7) with the possible and plausible teaching techniques suggested from teachers guide book(table3 and table 4), most of the teachers did not use more technique when teaching the meanings of some words. For instance:

- In teaching *colors* (observation 2 and 9), the observation result showed that teachers used *pictures, translation* and *repetition drill* techniques out of the five suggested techniques from the teachers guide book. Even though techniques of *using game and using song* were also the suggested teaching techniques to teach *colors*, the teachers never use games and songs.
- In teaching *food* (observation 12), the observation result showed that two different techniques(*translation* and *using pictures*) were employed to teach the vocabulary items *bread, carrot, eggs, fish, meat, potatoes and tomatoes*. But the teacher's guide book also suggests the use of plausible techniques such as *explaining, using flash cards, using song and asking for others*.
- In teaching *Greetings* (observation 16), the observation result showed that four different techniques(*explaining, translation, repetition drill, and Asking for others*) were employed to teach the vocabulary items *good morning, good afternoon, good evening, good night and how are you?*. The techniques used were in line with the suggested techniques of teaching vocabulary in the teacher's guide book. But the teacher never used the suggested song technique.
- In teaching *Parts of the body*(observation 1 and 10), the observation result showed that teachers combined more than one technique (*real object, pictures and translation*) to maximize the possibility of the students understanding of the vocabulary item and to help store the vocabulary to their long term memory retention. The techniques used were in line with the suggested techniques of teaching vocabulary in the teacher guide book.

4.2.2. Problems which early grade English teachers face in teaching vocabulary

(Research Question 2:- What are the Problems which early grade English teachers face in teaching vocabulary?)

4.2.2.1. Qualitative results obtained from Interviews.

The researcher interviewed eight teachers from 4 primary schools. Those teachers were teaching in grade 1 and 2. The interview was carried out to find out the problems faced by early grade English teachers in teaching vocabulary.

It is assumed that different factors can affect the teaching of vocabulary. In connection to this, an attempt was made to identify the Problems which early grade English teachers face in teaching vocabulary. In the interview questions early grade English teachers were asked to list the problems that they face while teaching vocabulary. Accordingly, the teachers mentioned various problems that they face while teaching vocabulary to early grade students. The early grade English teachers were asked to list out problems related to teachers, problems related to students and problems related to availability of teaching media that affects teaching of vocabulary. The mentioned common problems listed by teachers were:

1. Problems related to teachers

- *The teaching of vocabulary methodological problem:* The teachers reported that they do not have adequate knowledge how to teach vocabulary. Thus, they are forced to stick to the use of limited techniques and old conventional methods and techniques. Teachers don't use different teaching vocabulary techniques.
- *Excessive mother tongue language usage problem in teaching English vocabulary:* The teachers reported that they were teaching English using mother tongue language
- Most teachers do not create their own media for teaching vocabulary through visual techniques.
- Problem of maintaining the students' attention during teaching.
- As vocabulary is taught to students integrated with the four language skills, most of the teachers didn't use much of their class time for teaching vocabulary.
- The majority of early grade English teachers rarely include vocabulary teaching techniques that motivate students in learning vocabulary like game techniques and song techniques which can be played in the classrooms with the students.

- Limitation on recycling vocabulary as much as possible and in a variety of ways. Due to fear of shortage of time to cover the content according to plan.
- Most of the teachers are not aware of (may be not committed to) the different techniques of vocabulary teaching.

2. Problems related to students

Early grade English teachers were asked to forward student related problems that affect vocabulary teaching. In response to this, the majority of the teachers pointed out that the commonly student related problems were:

- Students are waiting for teachers' translation of vocabulary in to their local language.
- Low parent's involvement to support students learning at home.
- The students do not pay attention to the teacher's explanation, noisy, and the students are passive in vocabulary learning. The students did not focus when teacher was presenting task on board.

3. Problems related to teaching resources/media

It was anticipated that asking teachers to describe availability of resources/teaching aids to support early grade vocabulary teaching would reveal useful data to identify the problems teachers face in relation with availability of resources. In response, the interviewed eight teachers stated that the commonly resource related factors that affect vocabulary teaching were:

- *The lack of teaching media:-* Based on the interview, when the teacher teaching in the classroom, the teacher begins to have difficulties when they want to show the material to their students. Flash cards, the media for songs and game techniques are not available in most of the schools.
- As there is large number of students in the early grade classrooms, teachers faced a lot of problems in teaching vocabulary. The learning resources are not available for all the students.
- *Limited time for assessing students vocabulary learning:-* It takes time for the teachers to observe their students and teach them at their level. The time of the class is very less for the teachers to teach the English language in general and vocabulary in particular. This is probably not possible for the teachers to complete the topics of their lessons in less time, which is not enough. Furthermore as vocabulary is taught to students integrated with the

four language skills, most of the teachers didn't use much of their class time for teaching vocabulary.

4.3. Discussion

The major purpose of this study was to explore the vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers use and the problems which these teachers face in teaching vocabulary to early grade students with special focus to grades one and two in North Mecha woreda and then to propose possible solutions that can help to improve the practice of vocabulary teaching. Data were collected from teachers using questionnaires, classroom lesson observations and interview. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to analyze the data. In this section, the findings of the study presented in section 4.1 are discussed based on the research questions.

4.3.1. Vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers use

(Research Question 1:- What are the vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers use?)

The findings revealed that the techniques used by early grade English teachers are divided into four parts: 1) *Visual techniques* (real objects, pictures, drawings and flashcards.), 2) *Verbal techniques* (defining words, using explaining, translation and using mime and gesture, using synonymy and using antonyms), 3) *Techniques of practice* (vocabulary games, repetition drill, using song) and 4) *Techniques of training* (asking for others and dictionary use) as the way to get the students have their ownership in learning vocabulary. These four major techniques were used by the teachers in teaching vocabulary to grade 1 and 2 students.

The questionnaire as well as the observation results indicated that some vocabulary teaching techniques seem to be used more frequently in the majority of observation sessions than other techniques. The use of **translation** (from verbal technique and *using pictures* (from visual techniques) were the most frequently employed techniques.

As mentioned in the teachers guide book for grade 2((MOE, 2010) regarding to the early grade students characteristics, research on the cognitive development of young children has shown that they learn best by using all of their senses. *Visual techniques* can function to help learners in remembering vocabulary better, because our memory for objects and pictures is very reliable and visual technique can act as cues for remembering words (Gairns & Redman, 1986). Findings from

the questionnaire items as well as the observation result revealed that *using pictures* technique (which includes photographs, picture cards, hand-drawn pictures, wall charts and wall pictures) was the frequently employed technique among the visual techniques. This is in line with the previous study by Berhane(1998) which the results of the study also show that The use of visual aids like pictures is the most frequented and most effective technique in teaching the meaning of words to young learners. Pictures also make young learners enjoy the vocabulary learning since they can associate the pictures with the words meaning easily.

In relation to using translation technique, the Teacher's Guide book for Grade 1 and grade 2 suggested for teachers to try to keep the use of mother tongue really simple and use it only as a tool to give the students access to the meanings of difficult words, ideas, and concepts that are actually expressed in the English. In other words, use mother tongue only when necessary. The result of the data from questionnaire revealed that *translating* the meaning of the word in to mother tongue in teaching vocabulary is often or almost always used by 72.41% of the respondents. This was also proved to be true through lesson observation. Teaching by translating the meaning of the word in to mother tongue technique was predominantly used in all of the sixteen observations. The student's exercise book also shows how very frequently teachers use translation technique of teaching vocabulary as shown in the sample pictures below.

From *techniques of practice*, the use of real objects, as seen from the data collected, comes next to the *use of pictures techniques* in rank order. From the suggested lists of vocabularies that the students should know by the end of grade 1 and grade 2 indicated in the English syllabus for grades one and two, a significant portion of the vocabulary items can be taught using real objects which can be obtained from the classroom or the classroom environment. Gairns&Redman(1986) also state that real objects technique is appropriately employed for beginners or young learners and when presenting concrete vocabulary. Objects can be used to show meanings when the vocabulary consist of concrete nouns. Introducing a new word by showing the real object often helps learners to memorize the word through visualization.

Most of the verbal techniques (except translation technique) are used relatively infrequently by a majority of early grade teachers. The use of *meaning definition, explaining, using mime and gesture, using synonymy and using antonyms*, are the most infrequently employed verbal techniques. For example, the majority of surveyed teachers using questionnaire items revealed that

rarely or only sometimes use *Mime and Gesture* technique of teaching vocabulary. During observation also *Mime and Gesture* were used once by a teacher. However, most of the verbs and numbers of the suggested vocabulary items in the syllabi of grade 1 and 2 can be taught using this technique. It is relatively easy to mime command words such *dance, go, jump, run, sing, stand up* and *sit down*. It is also relatively easy to use mime to teach adverbs of manner, i.e. *quickly, slowly, happily*, etc. Getting students to mime various actions in a particular manner is great fun and a good way of making the words memorable. It is commonly acknowledged that “teaching gestures” capture attention and make the lesson more dynamic.

Data analysis of the reports by the respondents in this study revealed that a wide variety of teaching strategies were not frequently used. From *techniques of practice, using vocabulary games* and *using song*, are the rarely used *vocabulary* teaching techniques by a majority of teachers. Despite using games and using song techniques are the possible and plausible techniques suggested from the teachers guide book, the surveyed teachers were not observed using these techniques. This contradicts with the view that using game & using song techniques play the central role to make early grade students actively participate in class and get vocabulary faster and easier (Robinson, 2015). It is supported by Cebula (2008) that the learners who follow in learning through songs usually express themselves easily and get a lot of new words.

A study conducted by Jumharia (2013) to elaborate some theories and practice of teaching vocabulary by using English songs as the media. The findings of the study showed dealing with the characteristic of young learner students; song is one of appropriate ways to create a good atmosphere to make teaching and learning process fresh and interesting. A study conducted by Bakhsh (2016) to elaborate some theories and practice of using games as a tool in teaching vocabulary to young learners. The findings of the study showed that young learners get bored very fast if the teacher is teaching them using the old conventional methods and techniques. And games are effective tools when devised to explain vocabularies and they make it easier to remember their meanings. Despite the impotence of song and game techniques are proved by the findings of the above researches, the findings of this study reveal that the use of game and song techniques were the most rarely employed techniques.

The findings of a local study report by Berhane(1998) on “an exploration of vocabulary teaching in primary schools with special reference to grades one and two in Addis Ababa.”, shows that

pictures, picture cards, blackboard drawings and real objects are more frequented and effective techniques of vocabulary teaching in grades one and two. The findings of this study reveal that the use of translation and using pictures techniques were the most frequently employed techniques and using drawings and real objects are more frequented techniques. So, the two related studies have similar result with respect to frequent use of pictures real objects and drawings by early grade English teachers in teaching vocabulary.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to explore the vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers use and the problems which these teachers face in teaching vocabulary to early grade students with special focus to grades one and two in North Mecha woreda. In this study, two main research questions were addressed;

1. What are the vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers use?
2. What are the problems which early grade English teachers face in teaching vocabulary?

This research was conducted by making use of descriptive survey research approach. Out of the 34 government primary schools functioning in North Mecha woreda in 2014E.C currently, 20 schools (58.8%) were selected by using simple random sampling method. All the 58 English teachers who were teaching in Grade 1 & 2 in the 20 sample schools were taken as samples of the study comprehensively. The data required for the study were collected from teachers using close ended questionnaire, classroom lesson observations (with structured observation checklist) and interview. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics were used in analyzing quantitative data. On the other hand, the data gathered through interview were analyzed qualitatively using narrations and explanations and integrated to complement and to triangulate with quantitative findings.

❖ Major findings related to the vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers use.

- The data analysis revealed that in government primary schools of North Mecha woreda, some vocabulary teaching techniques seem to be used more frequently by a majority of early grade English teachers than other techniques. Both the questionnaire and the lesson observation results confirm that the use of *translation, using pictures,*

using drawings and using the real objects are the most frequently employed techniques in teaching the meaning of vocabulary to grades one and two students.

- Teaching by *translating* the meaning of the word in to mother tongue was the predominantly used technique.
- The use of pictures was also the most frequented technique in teaching the meaning of words next to *translation* technique in these grades. And, The use of real objects, as seen from the data collected, comes next to the use of pictures *techniques* in rank order.
- Most of the verbal techniques (except translation technique) have the highest respondents when compared with the visual techniques in the 'sometimes' or 'rarely' rating scale. Most of the techniques are used relatively infrequently by a majority of teachers. The use of *meaning definition, explaining, using mime and gesture, using synonymy and using antonyms* are the most infrequently employed verbal techniques.
- From *techniques of practice, using vocabulary games and using song*, are the rarely used *vocabulary* teaching techniques by a majority of teachers.
- The *techniques of training* for vocabulary teaching (i.e. *the use of dictionary and asking for others*) are used infrequently by a majority of teachers. The majority of the surveyed teachers reported that rarely or only sometimes encourage students to search words in *dictionaries*. Furthermore, the majority of the teachers reported that rarely or only sometimes group the students so that they could work on a task to share the meaning of words.
- A more even spread of frequency of use of some *vocabulary* teaching techniques is also observed. These include *Repetition drill* and using flashcards.
- When we compare the vocabulary teaching techniques employed from the observation result(table 6 and table 7) with the possible and plausible teaching techniques suggested from teachers guide book(table3 and table 4), Teachers do not use all the possible techniques which would interest children and help them understand meanings of words

❖ **Major findings related the problems which early grade English teachers face in teaching vocabulary**

The teachers mentioned various problems that they face while teaching vocabulary to early grade students during their interview. The early grade English teachers were asked to list out problems related to teachers, problems related to students and problems related to availability of teaching media that affects teaching of vocabulary. The mentioned common problems listed by the majority of the teachers were:

❖ **Problems related to teachers:-**

- *The teaching of vocabulary methodological problem:* The teachers reported that they do not have adequate knowledge how to teach vocabulary. Thus, they are forced to stick to the use of limited techniques and old conventional methods and techniques. Teachers don't use different teaching vocabulary techniques.
- *Excessive mother tongue language usage problem in teaching English vocabulary:* The teachers reported that they were teaching English using mother tongue language
- Most teachers do not create their own media for teaching vocabulary through visual techniques.
- Problem of maintaining the students' attention during teaching.
- As vocabulary is taught to students integrated with the four language skills, most of the teachers didn't use much of their class time for teaching vocabulary.
- The majority of early grade English teachers rarely include vocabulary teaching techniques that motivate students in learning vocabulary like game techniques and song techniques which can be played in the classrooms with the students.
- Limitation on recycling vocabulary as much as possible and in a variety of ways. Due to fear of shortage of time to cover the content according to plan.
- Most of the teachers are not aware of (may be not committed to) the different techniques of vocabulary teaching.

❖ **Problems related to students**

Early grade English teachers were asked to forward student related problems that affect vocabulary teaching. In response to this, the majority of the teachers pointed out that the commonly student related problems were:

- Students are waiting for teachers' translation of vocabulary in to their local language.
- Low parent's involvement to support students learning at home.

- The students do not pay attention to the teacher's explanation, noisy, and the students are passive in vocabulary learning. The students did not focus when teacher was presenting task on board.

❖ **Problems related to teaching resources/media**

- *The lack of teaching media:-* Based on the interview, when the teacher teaching in the classroom, the teacher begins to have difficulties when they want to show the material to their students. Flash cards, the media for songs and game techniques are not available in most of the schools.
- As there is large number of students in the early grade classrooms, teachers faced a lot of problems in teaching vocabulary. The learning resources are not available for all the students.
- *Limited time for assessing students vocabulary learning:-* It takes time for the teachers to observe their students and teach them at their level. The time of the class is very less for the teachers to teach the English language in general and vocabulary in particular. This is probably not possible for the teachers to complete the topics of their lessons in less time, which is not enough. Furthermore as vocabulary is taught to students integrated with the four language skills, most of the teachers didn't use much of their class time for teaching vocabulary.

5.2. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to better understand and explore the vocabulary teaching techniques which early grade English teachers use and the problems which these teachers face in teaching vocabulary to early grade students with special focus to grades one and two in North Mecha woreda.

The findings revealed that the techniques used by early grade English teachers are divided into four parts: 1) *Visual techniques* (real objects, pictures, drawings and flashcards.), 2) *Verbal techniques* (defining words, using explaining, translation and **mime**), 3) *Techniques of practice* (vocabulary games, repetition drill, using song) and 4) *Techniques of training* (asking for others and dictionary use) as the way to get the students have their ownership in learning vocabulary. These four major techniques were used by the teachers in teaching vocabulary to grade 1 and 2 students.

The use of *translation, using pictures, using the real objects and using drawings* are the most frequently employed techniques in teaching the meaning of vocabulary to grades one and two

students. Teaching by *translating* the meaning of the word in to mother tongue was the predominantly used technique.

In contrast to this, the other techniques: *use of meaning definition, explaining, using mime and gesture, using synonymy, using antonyms, using vocabulary games, using song, the use of dictionary and asking for others* were the most infrequently (rarely or only sometimes) employed techniques by the early grade English teachers in the study area. This shows that teachers do not explore and try to use all the possible and plausible teaching techniques which would interest children and help them understand meanings of words offered by theories from the experts.

The Problems which early grade English teachers face in teaching vocabulary were problems related to teachers, problems related to students and problems related to availability of teaching resources (media that affects teaching of vocabulary).

5.3. Recommendations

On the bases of the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers should implement diversified techniques of teaching vocabulary. They should combine more than one technique of teaching vocabulary to maximize the possibility of the students understanding of the vocabulary item and to help store the vocabulary to their long term memory retention. Dependence on a single vocabulary instruction method would not result in optimal learning.
2. As exposure of words through different activities result the possibility for the children to have long-term vocabulary development, early grade English teachers should exercise recycling vocabulary as much as possible and in a variety of ways.
3. Teachers should undertake professional development that focused on vocabulary teaching techniques in early grade English classes to improve the practice of vocabulary teaching. For this purpose, they can also exploit the existing system, such as the school base CPD program and lesson study. Which touches on the following questions: Which words should be taught? How should vocabulary be taught? How many words do EFL learners need to know? What should a vocabulary learning programme include? How can vocabulary learning be fostered given limited classroom time? and the likes.

4. In order to solve problems which early grade English teachers face due to lack of facilities and teaching materials in teaching vocabulary, the teachers should made teaching materials and simple facilities that students can use to learn vocabulary from locally available materials.
5. In order to motivate students in learning vocabulary, early grade English teachers need to include vocabulary teaching techniques like using songs and game techniques which can be played in the classrooms with the students.
6. Further studies can be conducted on the same area with a larger scope for more reliable results in order to examine the appropriate techniques in teaching vocabulary to early grade students in EFL context

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: Questionnaire

Bahir Dar University

Faculty of humanities

Department of English Language & Literature

Questionnaire to be filled by Teacher Respondents

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect relevant data about on the practice of vocabulary teaching techniques in English. This is part of an assessment for partial fulfillment of Masters of Art degree in English. There are no pre- determined “right answers” to the questions in the questionnaire. Your own options regarding the issue understudy will be welcomed and valued.

Your response will remain confidential. The results of the study will be reported in a way which ensures that the responses from an individual cannot be identified. Your honest response to the questionnaire is highly valuable for the achievement of the objectives of this research.

Thank you for completing the questionnaire

PART I: Demographic Information

Direction: Please answer each of the following questions or tick the appropriate category.

1. School

2. Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

3. Teaching years of Experience:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Below 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	3 - 6 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	7 - 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	above 10 years

4. Qualification:

<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>	BA/BSC Degree
<input type="checkbox"/>	MA/MSC Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Others(specify).....

5. List the grade level(s) you are teaching English currently:.....

PART II: Teachers' vocabulary teaching techniques in English classrooms.

Please indicate how frequently you use each of the following techniques in your vocabulary teaching. Tick one box for each statement

No.	Item	almost always	often	Sometimes	rarely
1	Visual Techniques				
1.1	Using the real objects				
1.2	Using pictures				
1.3	Using drawings				
1.4	Using flashcards				
2	Verbal Techniques				
2.1	Meaning definition				
2.2	Explaining				
2.3	Translation				
2.4	Using Mime				
2.5	Synonyms				
2.6	Antonyms				
3	Techniques of Practice				
3.1	Vocabulary games				
3.2	Repetition drill				
3.3	Using song				
4	Techniques of Training				
4.1	The use of dictionary				
4.2	Asking for others				

APPENDIX B: OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Classroom Observation Checklist

(to be filled by the Investigator).

- Name of the school _____ Grade and section _____

- Observer_____ Date of observation _____
- Topic _____ Number of students Male____ Female ____
- Observation round_____

PART III: Vocabulary Teaching Techniques used

No.	Items taught during observation sessions (vocabulary)	Vocabulary Teaching Techniques used														
		Real objects	Pictures	drawings	Flashcards	Meaning definition	Explaining	Translation	Using Mime	Synonymy	Antonyms	Vocabulary games	Repetition drill	Using song	The use of dictionary	Asking for others
1																
2																
3																
4																
5																
6																
7																
8																
9																
10																
11																
12																

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

For teachers

PART IV: Problems which early grade English teachers face in teaching vocabulary to grade 1 and 2 students.

1. What are the problems which early grade English teachers face in teaching vocabulary to grade 1 and 2 students?
 - 1.1. Problems related to availability of vocabulary teaching media/ resources

1.2. Problems related to teachers

1.3. Problems related to students

APPENDIX D: VOCABULARIES FOR GRADE 1

Suggested lists of vocabularies that the students should know by the end of **Grade 1** indicated in the syllabus

<i>Classroom Objects</i>	<i>Parts of the Body</i>	<i>Pronouns</i>	<i>Question words</i>
<i>bag</i>	arms	he	what
<i>book</i>	eyes	she	where
<i>chair</i>	ears	I	who
<i>desk</i>	fingers	it	<i>School subjects</i>
<i>duster</i>	legs	they	English
<i>pen</i>	hair	her	Maths
<i>pencil</i>	<i>Other Nouns</i>	his	Environmental Science
<i>rubber</i>	cat	my	Aesthetics
<i>ruler</i>	cow	your	Mother tongue
<i>table</i>	bananas	me	(vocabulary related to subjects)
<i>Parts of the Class</i>	oranges	<i>Verbs</i>	<i>Instructional Words</i>
<i>classroom</i>	name	am	everybody
<i>blackboard</i>	number	is	grade
<i>door</i>	<i>Adjectives</i>	are	group
<i>floor</i>	big	has	team
<i>window</i>	small	have	give
<i>Everyday Objects</i>	happy	can	listen
<i>ball</i>	tall	bring	look at
<i>box</i>	short	dance	say
<i>flower</i>	long	draw	tell
<i>pot</i>	strong	go	write
<i>stick</i>	<i>Colours</i>	jump	

<i>stone</i>	black	like	exercise
<i>Clothes</i>	blue	open	page
<i>dress</i>	green	point	picture
<i>jacket</i>	red	put	again
<i>shoes</i>	yellow	read	here
<i>shorts</i>	<i>Numbers</i>	run	come
<i>trousers</i>	one	see	good
<i>skirt</i>	two	show	right
<i>sweater</i>	three	shut	wrong
<i>People</i>	four	sing	along
<i>boy</i>	five	sit	round
<i>girl</i>	six	stand	down
<i>man</i>	seven	touch	up
<i>woman</i>	eight	walk	<i>Other Words</i>
<i>mother</i>	nine	<i>Social Expressions</i>	a
<i>father</i>	ten	Fine, thank you	and
<i>brother</i>	<i>Prepositions</i>	good-bye	there
<i>sister</i>	In, on	good morning/afternoon	yes
<i>teacher</i>	near	hello	no
<i>student</i>	to	how are you, please	this
			that
			the

APPENDIX E: VOCABULARIES FOR GRADE 2

Suggested lists of vocabularies that the students should know by the end of **Grade 2** indicated in the syllabus

Adjectives	Part of the body	Numbers	Clothes	People
clean	head	eleven	coat	Director
hot	nose chin	twelve	shirt	people
different	wings neck	thirteen	sandals	grandmother
empty	mouth	fourteen	hat	grandfather
full	hand	fifteen	cap	children
fat	foot	sixteen	headscarf	family
thin	toe	seventeen		Colours
dry	tail	eighteen	Weather	brown
old	leg	nineteen	rainy	orange
wet		twenty	sunny	white
dirty	Classroom verbs		cloudy	Animals
weak	stand up	Food	windy	goat
strong	come here	bread		bird
young	copy	cabbage	Verbs	dog
	write	carrot	Eat	frog
Classroom objects		eggs	run	fish
bench	Adjectives	fish	wash	monkey
textbook	clean	meat	walk	hen
blackboard	young	potatoes	sleep	Social expressions
bell	hot	apples	drink	hello
stick	strong	tomatoes	fly	how are you?
ruler	different		climb	fine,
window	weak	Drinks	like	thank you
	empty	coffee	swim	Ramadan
Days	dirty	milk	jump	nice to meet you
Monday	fall	tea	close	Christmas
Tuesday	wet	water	play	good morning

Wednesday	fat		show	happy New Year
Thursday	dry	Transport	cook	good afternoon
Friday	thin	airplane	add	bye
Saturday	old	bicycle	touch	good night
Sunday	new	boat	sweep	goodbye
Tomorrow	sad	bus	add	good evening
		car	boil	please
		train	count	happy birthday
		taxi	sing	
			wear	
			hold	
			ride	
			drive	
			hop	