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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ENGLISH TEACHERS AND THE LEXICAL ATTRITION OF THE SUDANESE BASIC SCHOOL PUPILS

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ABSTRACT

There are different variables involved in the teaching and learning process. Taha (1980) had already referred to three important elements in the equation: materials, teachers and teaching style, students and learning style. Each one of these variables and many other factors may be a cause of language attrition. The present paper investigates the phenomenon of language attrition among the basic school pupils; particularly, lexical or vocabulary attrition, i.e. why the linguistic information becomes inaccessible to the individual. There are many factors of language attrition. The present paper approaches this issue from teacher's perspective. Could we argue that the teachers' lack of the three fundamental requirements for effective teaching: a reasonable level of competence in English and training in and understanding of various methods of teaching, the four language skills in the classroom and the ability to adapt methods and materials to their own classroom environment may be one of the reasons of lexical attrition among the basic school pupils in the Sudan; Omderman? To achieve its objectives, two tools of data collection were used: evaluation checklist and observation. It is found that the teachers by their behavior inside the classroom contributed in the occurrence of the phenomenon of lexical attrition among the Sudanese basic school pupils.

INTRODUCTION

This section shed light on the situation of English language in the educational context in the Sudan; hence, a historical account is given to the circumstances of teaching and learning English language. In the Sudan, teaching and learning are classified as happening in a traditional educational context (O'Brien 1988, 2013; GumaaSiddiek, 2011). Education and particularly the teaching of English as a foreign language in the Sudan today at any level cannot be evaluated by focusing on psychological and linguistic theories only. Many considerations which play a part in the learning process should be accounted for such as the prevailing political ideology and how this impacts on how English and western culture in general are viewed, affective factors that may result from these ideological issues, the relationship facilitative or otherwise of the first language (L1) Arabic to the target language and economic factors that impact on education, class size and teacher training (Josephine and Hala 2014). The situation of English language in the Sudan is not stable and changed due to different language policies. As a former British colony, the country adopted English as the medium of instruction initially after independence as English was the "language of earning a living" (El Tigani 1966) and was considered essential for development especially in science and technology and a key to progress, possibility and prestige. However, the developmental goal of increasing overall literacy levels resulted in the

transition to Arabic as the medium of instruction in schools, resulting in mass expansion of education and naturally, increases in class sizes. Taha (1980) explained that the opening of educational opportunities to the masses resulted in a rapid increase in the number of students without a corresponding increase in teachers' training and preparation of materials and methodology. El Tigani confirmed that (1966: 43) in particular to the "failure to assess traditional approaches to teaching during the process of expansion that must be considered primarily responsible for such decline in standards as there has actually been." It was reported that crowded classrooms and shortage of equipment were permanent features of most schools. Many did not have an individual textbook and such an over-crowded, ill-equipped context created logistical problems when efforts were undertaken to shift the focus from a teacher dominated to a student centered methodology. The same was true in primary schools. Changes in the educational ladder and with Arabic as the main medium of instruction and the consequent reduction of hours allocated to English language instruction resulted in a drastic drop in standards. Through the decades following independence, criticism of the abilities of English language teachers and the paucity of teaching materials continued to mount (Taha 1980). Several committees made a range of suggestions but little practical action was taken. While students' desire to learn English remained high as university education and advancement in the professional world depended on English language competency, shortage of funds, books and teaching equipment, decentralization, provincialism and poor teacher training programs resulting in the recruitment of teachers with inadequate skills aggravated

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the declining standards. In the context of Sudan, vagueness surrounded the teaching of English in the secondary schools, as there was no immediate communicative objective for the language in everyday society (Abdel Mageed 1985). Today as in the past, the textbook and completing its contents is still viewed as the main objective in the teaching of English in spite of much discussion about the different variables involved in the teaching and learning process. Taha (1980) had already referred to three important elements in the equation: materials, teachers and teaching style, students and learning style. Any assessment of a programme and analysis of performance involves a triangular relationship that involves all players. Courses have been tailor made over the years for the teaching of English in the Sudan but there are still worrying issues to be resolved. From the 1980s on, many teachers have not been English language graduates and have had little or no training. From the initial stages in the setting up of a national educational system in the country, reference was made to the importance of teacher training (Mohammed and Abdel Ghani Ibrahim 2009); however, classroom methodology has continued to be traditional with the focus in language learning on grammar rules rather than communication. The method of assessment has continued to be testing of knowledge about the language in a final examination rather than use of the language. Most of the teachers still do not have any facility to practice English outside of the four to five hours when they are actually teaching the language. This continues to present a major challenge to the development of their English language competence and professional confidence (Baffoka 2006).

It could be argued that teachers lack three fundamental requirements for effective teaching: a reasonable level of competence in English and training in and understanding of various methods of teaching, the four language skills in the classroom and the ability to adapt methods and materials to their own classroom environment. The involvement of teachers in decision making and in curriculum development and materials writing is vital as a way of developing professional empowerment and building teacher self-confidence. Essential to teacher's ability to select, modify and adapt materials to classroom contexts lays a broad understanding of principles that inform materials development and methodology choices. Consequently, teachers continue to be unaware of the required pedagogical and methodological issues underpinning courses, the rationale for the course and are not informed of what students have learned prior to arriving in their class. Teachers' opinions are not sought on the development of courses or examinations. This will be the focus of the present study, i.e. to what extent do these circumstances applicable to the Sudanese English language teachers and how it affects lexical attrition among the basic school students at Omderman. The teaching methods they use in the class room and their validity in increasing students' abilities is accounted for. Their role in increasing the students' skills, abilities and knowledge with respect to vocabulary learning is also targeted.

English is a widespread and important language in the world today. It is used for everything from international academic conferences to news reports, books, popular music, lyrics and desired higher degree education, add to that it is the ultimate method of communication between native speakers and non-native speakers of English language. English language is a compulsory subject to sit for Sudan Secondary Certificate (S.S.C) which qualifies students to enroll in universities. English Curricula have been change many times since 1970,

but in 1989 not only was the English curriculum changed, but also the education ladder, to be 11 years (8 years basic level + 3 years secondary level) instead of 12 years (6 years basic level + 3 years intermediate level + 3 years secondary level) - (Sudan Ministry of Education Report, 2009). Again in 1992 SPINE series (Sudan Practical Integrated National English) were introduced and English language started to be taught from the 5th grade at basic school instead of the first year intermediate level, however, the standard of English Language continue to decline steadily, although the Sudan Practical Integrated National English (SPINE) series has been designed to have the four skills taught in the Sudanese schools integrity, as the authors of the Secondary SPINE series (Ismail and Cuther 1997) and (AlmusbahBabikir et al. 1996) claimed that the SPINE series integrate the four skills so that each skill supports the others: It (the series) features the best of communicative language teaching creating interactive, learner-centered activities. The central aim of the SPINE series is to enable the pupils to use English freely, naturally and fluently. According to them SPINE aims to motivate and arouse the pupils' interests and leads to make learning both effective and meaningful. SPINE encourages teachers to design learning opportunities to enable their pupils to become active, participants in a communication process.

Language attrition

Vocabulary or lexis refers to the semantics of the language. Quite simply, a lexical item means an item of meaning. Lexical knowledge, that is, the ability to comprehend, acquire, retrieve and recall vocabulary items with relative success, is seen to occupy a key position in learning a second language (L2) and hence is the foundation of language learning. With adequate lexical knowledge and competence, learners are able to cope with the English language because vocabulary acquisition is a requisite and determinant of the extent of learners' language literacy via the four language skills (Torres and Ramos 2003; Nation 2001). However, vocabulary is also seen as the most sizeable and unmanageable component in the learning of any language. The study of language attrition has recently emerged as a new field of study. The conception of loss in language skills occurred in a conference at the University of Pennsylvania in 1980. In literature, the term 'language loss' and 'language attrition' have been used interchangeably. This is because language loss suggests that linguistic information is totally removed from the memory of an individual, whereas in language attrition, linguistic information becomes inaccessible to the individual (Köpke 2004). Language attrition is preferred in comparison to language loss whereby many psycholinguists claimed that something which is committed to long term memory cannot be ever removed (Weltens and Grendel 1993). Attrition can be described in two ways, as a process or as a phenomenon. The definition of the process is deceptively simple: When we are looking at attrition, we are dealing with "the non-pathological decrease in a language that had previously been acquired by an individual" (Köpke and Schmid 2004:5).

In other words, attrition investigates the situation where a speaker (of an L1 or a later learned second or foreign language) can no longer do something which s/he had previously been able to do, and this loss of proficiency is not caused by a deterioration of the brain due to age, illness or injury, but by a change in linguistic behavior due to a severance of the contact with the community in which the

language is spoken. Given this definition there are two theoretically possible scenarios: one where all contact has ceased and there is no linguistic input or communication at all (as would be the case if someone was stranded alone on a desert island) and one where there is overwhelming competition from another language system. While language attrition in general has gained attention in recent years (e.g. Schmid 2002), lexical attrition has not, despite the importance of the lexicon in many communities for linguistic self-identity (Hill 1993). It has been observed that vocabulary loss may be massive (*cf.* Schmidt 1985: 170) in an attriting language, resulting in a smaller overall vocabulary (Trudgill 1976/1977), but it has also been reported that vocabulary loss can be minimal (Hutz 2004: 191-192, Schmid 2002). "Language attrition" is the most common term used for any "Loss of language skills" that occurs after some years of non-exposure (Moorcraft and Gardner 1987: 327). "... Attrition refers to the non-pathological loss of a language in bilinguals; generally speaking, changes in the linguistic environment and termination of an instructional program may lead to attrition" (Köpcke and Schmid 2004, cited in Marefat and Rohshad 2007: 86).

To Gurel (2004: 53) language attrition is defined as "... Language attrition (language loss) is a multi-dimensional phenomenon which has been studied from a variety of perspectives e.g. psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, and sociolinguistics". Second language (L2) attrition may occur in students who learn a second language in school but do not use it once classes have been completed (de Bot and Weltens 1995: 154). L2 attrition may occur in different aspects of language like grammar or vocabulary. According to Schmid (2007: 137) "... the process of attrition can be seen as both an internally and externally induced phenomenon, determined by contact with L2, as well as the influence of L1" (cited in Bar-Shalom and Zaretsky 2008: 282). It has been argued that lexical knowledge is probably the most vulnerable aspect of the language systems to word loss (Weltens and Marjon 1993; Al-Hazemi 2000). Yoshitomi (1992) explained that vocabulary is more likely than grammar to be subject to attrition in advanced L2 learners who had acquired the language in a natural setting. She stated that lexical attrition may be as difficult to detect as grammatical attrition, and at the very beginning, attrition is more apparent in situations that need a variety of language skills than in situations that focus on testing one specific subskill, such as vocabulary or grammar. Morshedian (2008: 89) maintains that "considering attrition of different elements of L2 lexicon including dichotomies such as specific vs. general words, abstract vs. concrete words we can find out about how each category is affected by attrition and then figure out teaching/learning tasks to prevent it". Lexical attrition has been characterized in terms of loss of vocabulary, loss of semantic distinctions, and in reduced performance ability. Performance-related attrition may include difficulty in lexical recall (Olshtain 1989, Leyew 2003: 108, Sasse 1992) and increased unsureness of lexical judgments (Giacalone Ramat 1979). Semantic changes may include increased polysemy (Leyew 2003: 118) and increased generic usage of terms (Fabunmi and Salawu 2005, Leyew 2003) with changes occurring in the designation, connotation, and range of application of words. Some trends in lexical attrition have been noted (Tsunoda 2005: 95-96, Schmidt 1985), but differences occur depending on the type of culture change accompanying the language loss/shift.

Traditionally, no distinction is made between L2 and FL (foreign language) attrition, but we shall argue that there are substantial differences between languages that are learned by instruction through explicit processes, where the learner focuses on the input, on rules, etc., and naturalistically acquired L2s (for the distinction between learning and acquiring (*see* Paradis 2008)). This difference can in the first instance be ascribed to the amount of input, exposure to and use of the L2, which differ substantially between instructed and immersed language learning. Secondly, the more implicit acquisition process that can be assumed to take place in immersion learning may result in a different representation of the linguistic structures in memory, which in turn may impact on their susceptibility to attrition/forgetting. Thus, we understand L2 attrition to involve the attrition of a naturalistically acquired second language, for example in returnees who revert to using and relying more on their first language (L1) as in Hansen (1999a, b) and Taura (2008).

FL attrition, on the other hand deals with a school/university learned language. Previous research on FL attrition includes works by Cohen (1989), Gardner (1985), Nakuma (1997), Starren (1998), Weltens, van Els and Schils (1989), Weltens and Grendel (1993). This is the attrition focused on in the present study. Studies of attrition in learners of second or foreign languages are found in the literature at least as early as 1929. The first studies investigated the question of loss of foreign language skills by high school and college students during summer (Małgorzata Szupica-Pyrzanowska/ Lingwistyka Stosowana 16: 1/2016: 109–120). Overall, the term refers to longstanding loss rather than temporary losses of actions (Cole 1929, for French; Kennedy 1932, for Latin; Scherer 1957, for German). However, language attrition is very much a linguistic reality linguistic material (Brown 1994) and is triggered by "disuse, lack of input or reduced input" (Bardovi-Harlig and Stringer 2010: 34). More specifically, it covers a range of possibilities where language is lost by communities or individual speakers in both neurologically pathological (i.e. patients with language impairments due to a stroke or trauma to the brain) and non-pathological populations (i.e., language users or learners). Furthermore, the problem of language attrition in healthy individuals is at least three-fold as it concerns: 1. first generation immigrant population - L1 (first language) loss in L2 (second language) environment; 2. Second-generation speakers (also known as "heritage speakers" or "incomplete learners") - loss of the heritage language; 3. (Advanced) learners of second or foreign languages (FL) learned at school - loss of L2/FL in L1 environment. In the domain of non-native language acquisition a further division is made between L2 attrition (the context of immersed learning) and FL attrition (the context of instructed learning). They differ in terms of the quality and amount of input, exposure to and the use of non-native language as well as involvement of memory (Schmid and Mehotcheva 2012). The literature recognizes a variety of reasons contributing to the attrition of second or foreign language skills. The most common causes include the strength and quality of learning at the initial stages of the process, motivational factors triggering acquisition, and the way the acquired language is actually used (Weltens and Cohen 1989; Lambert and Freed 1982).

Likewise, Holmes (2008: 59) argues that language erosion is characterized by shrinking phonetic inventories, simpler phonetic rules, lack of grammatical flexibility, and smaller lexical repertoires. Schmid (2002) emphasizes a dual nature of

attrition and identifies it as both a process and phenomenon. The first perspective assumes a non-pathological decline in a language learned before (Köpke and Schmid 2004: 5). In the case of the non-pathological language loss we consider the loss of linguistic material a L1 speaker or late L2 or FL learner previously possessed. To date there is considerable uncertainty regarding the principles governing the phenomenon of language attrition and the factors involved in it (Köpke and Schmid 2011; Schmid 2011). This is especially true for research on L2/FL attrition (Bardovi-Harlig and Stringer 2010) which originally inspired interest in the topic of non-pathological language loss (Köpke and Schmid 2004) although more recently the focus of attention has predominantly been on native language attrition. Empirical studies exploring L2/FL attrition remain limited, as does the knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon. In a society which is now predominantly multilingual rather than monolingual (Johnson 2008) and in which people expend time, money and effort on mastering foreign languages, understanding the principles of L2/FL attrition is becoming ever more important. Furthermore, research on FL attrition can have implications not only directly for FL teaching and learning but also for more theoretical linguistic aspects. These include (among others) the organization of the linguistic information in the brain, its access, retrieval and processing as well as the functioning of human memory.

An overview of this problem, examine the factors which have been shown to be relevant to the study or are believed to be of importance, discuss the challenges and constraints that any project on the topic faces and finally outline some direction for future research focusing on the possibilities that new technologies from disciplines such as psycho- and neurolinguistics offer for the study of foreign language teaching (FLT). Generally speaking, one can assume that attrition is not neurologically-conditioned and relates to a gradual change in one's linguistic behavior triggered by a lack of contact with a community in which the language is spoken natively. The severed or less frequent contact with the community results in a loss of language fluency and its proficient use. This is fuel for the argument that in order to be maintained, languages have to be constantly supplied with linguistic material. Therefore, what could the role of the Sudanese English language teachers in the phenomenon of lexical attrition noticed by a number of researchers among the basic school pupils. As mentioned above, there should be a supply with linguistic materials for increasing the pupils' performance in English and their competence, either.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data was collected from Omdurman locality. It is divided into four sectors which are North Omdurman, South Omdurman, Abu Seid, rural South Omdurman and rural South Omdurman. The study basically covered 20 schools; 9 out of them were for boys, 10 for girls, and remaining one was co-education school. It aims at providing insights into the phenomenon of English vocabulary attrition among basic school pupils at Omdurman, Sudan. The teachers were asked questions in order to provide demographic information. Demographic questions on age, sex, teacher level of education, experience in teaching, academic and professional qualification were relevant to the objectives of the study. In addition, many informal discussions and interviews were

conducted with the school headmasters, students and English teachers.

Demographic characteristics of the participants

The estimated number of the English teachers in the 20 randomly chosen basic schools was 31; 20 out of them were randomly chosen by the researchers, i.e. one teacher in each school. About 80 classes were attended by the researchers for evaluating teachers' performance inside the classroom; 5 classes for each level: 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th levels. Only 20% (4/20) of the teacher participants were males and the rest were females, their age ranged between (30-55) years, they are all university graduates; 40% of them were English non-specialists; mostly agriculture graduates. Their teaching experience ranged between 1-20 years and all of them had training programmes in English language teaching.

Tools of data collection

Two tools were mainly used for data collection: evaluation checklist and observation. In addition, other tools as discussions, and informal interviews were also used.

Evaluation checklist

The evaluation checklist consists of 16 items to evaluate teachers' performance in the class room. The researchers make evaluations for the teachers in the twenty randomly selected schools. It helps a lot in providing more understanding for the causes of English lexical attrition among Sudanese basic schools pupils; from teachers' perspectives. The evaluation focuses on the techniques used by teachers in teaching lexical items such as: warming up (Revision and introduction), recycling of previous vocabulary, explaining the new vocabulary, questioning techniques of vocabulary, introducing new vocabulary in context, the use of blackboard to clarify new vocabulary, using drawing for illustrating new vocabulary, distribution of opportunities between the pupils, dealing with pupils' individual differences, the using of mother tongue to explain the meaning of new vocabulary, the using of pair and group work in vocabulary interaction, increasing the pupils' general knowledge of English language, chorusing of new vocabulary, revision (sum up), giving homework for new vocabulary, and using varieties of teaching means: audio-visual techniques among others.

Researcher's observation

Researcher's observation was used as another tool of data collection. It is useful to researchers in a variety of ways. Observation improves the quality of data collection and interpretation, and facilitates the development of new research questions or hypotheses. Most of the field work includes participating and observing the people and community under study. The researchers took part in the selected schools with students, teachers during collection of data. Written notes were the method used by the researchers to record day-to-day observations, conversations and informal interviews which were read later to understand and analyse the data. It was an important source of information that helped the researcher to construct description of the phenomena associated with schools and reflected by pupils; hence; facilitates understanding and interpreting of the results.

The researchers observed that

The number of English teachers in the randomly chosen schools is few, ranging between 1-3 teachers in each school. 70% out of them are females and more than 40% are English non-specialists; mostly they are specialists in agriculture. Schools are congested with big number of pupils. This directly influences the pupils' interaction and the teachers' performance inside the classroom. The socio-economic situation also influences directly the pupil's English language learning and their teachers, who work in other schools. The level of the pupils' English learning abilities is greater among the pupils in the schools at the centre of Omdurman municipality than those in the schools at the edges of Omdurman locality; where the socio-economic situation is relatively low.

The learning environment is important: when the pupils' parents have no relation with or knowledge of English language, the pupils do not attain any kind of practice outside their schools. Evaluation checklist and the researcher's observation used in the study were designed to investigate the influence of teaching process, i.e. English language teachers on lexical attrition among Sudanese basic school pupils. Using different approaches to data collection and observation, in particular, leads to richer understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Could we argue that the teachers' lack of the three fundamental requirements for effective teaching: a reasonable level of competence in English and training in and understanding of various methods of teaching, the four language skills in the classroom and the ability to adapt methods and materials to their own classroom environment may be one of the reasons of lexical attrition among the basic school pupils in the Sudan; Omdurman? Only 20% of the teacher participants started their new lessons with warming up (revision and introduction) and recycling of the previous vocabulary. They mostly started the new lesson directly to compensate for the lost time. As mentioned before, the classes are crowded and the teachers in most cases are females in boys' schools; so they usually spend long time and exert efforts to control the classes. In most cases, schools are the only places for student to practice English language and recycling of new vocabulary may be a good way to help studying of vocabulary. This reduces the pupils' chance of vocabulary learning. There are many techniques of vocabulary teaching and the choice between them depends on many factors. One technique is used by all teacher participants; words are expressed in isolation. They are pronounced few times by the teacher and by some selected students and small number of teachers tend to use choring. The use of new words is emphasized by the majority of the teacher participants and the meaning is given in Arabic.

Although the linguistic background of the pupils is multiple, Arabic is assumed to be known by all the pupils since it is the official language of the country, the language of education, administration, media, etc. The meaning of new words is not explained in relation to the meaning of other words or in a linguistic context which reinforces the learning of them. Questioning is a technique of vocabulary teaching that is not used by the teacher participants. These leading questions help the teacher to make the pupils ready to learn new items. Instead, they list new words in the blackboard to be written by

the pupils. Using drawing for illustrating new vocabulary motives the visual memory of the pupils and helps them when words are to be retrieved. Only 15% (3/20) of the teacher participants used drawings. The class interaction during the lessons was very weak. The focus is given to the first two rows, and in some cases, on few numbers of pupils. The classes are crowded where the teacher sticks in one place, exerting effort to manage the class, therefore, he/she uses to shout and holding stick all the time. Individuals' variation was not considered or accounted for. Teacher's personality is important in these basic levels of education; their command of English language, appearance, etc. It was difficult to estimate the teachers' knowledge or command of English language. None of them goes behind the topics they teach to discuss and enrich the class by describing their own experiences, telling stories or using any means to make lessons more attractive to the students. Using only punishment helps creating negative attitudes towards English language and its teachers; hence, hinders vocabulary learning as supported by a number of pupils. Ali Hassan complained that "*... I sat on the back, usually hear nothing and miss a lot, the English teacher voice is low and she focuses on certain pupils, when she asked questions and no responses, she hits us... I hate English language so much and will never learn it.*" Some of the teacher participants made some attempts to sum up, but due to the lack of time they failed. Homework was left to be done at home.

Summary

The researchers observed that schools are congested with big number of pupils. This directly influences the pupils and the teacher who teaches the new items of English language in a number of things. It affects:

- Class room management.
- The teachers' ability of observing individual differences between pupils.
- The distribution of chances between pupils during the lesson which is a way of creating an effective involvement.
- Teaching of new items of vocabulary.
- Teacher making sure that the pupils have kept words in their minds.
- The proper pronunciation and this may be among the reasons behind pupils' inability for obtaining proper pronunciation of a lot of words.

It is worth mentioning that the pupil needs time and place that enable him/her to receive words in a proper way and repeating them after his/her teacher to stick in his/her mind. Moreover, the classes should include a suitable number of pupils; easy to be controlled. One method of teaching new English words is used by the majority of the teachers; words are explained in isolation. Chances are not equally distributed between the pupils; therefore, the interaction is low. Some teachers concentrate on certain pupils to pronounce and repeat new words. This indicates the absence of motivation among teachers to increase learning process. Using a variety of teaching methods accounts for individual differences since each pupil has a learning strategy. Many English teachers in the chosen schools used punishment for making pupils memorize English words. The result is a negative attitude towards English language and their teachers. And this directly influences the learning of the new English words.

Many teachers started teaching new items without preparing the pupils to receive the new information and without prepare themselves well. The result is a lack of professional confidence among many teacher participants; especially those with small teaching experience, and they are the majority. There is no use of a variety of teaching methods that motives the pupils' memory and account for individual differences. Teaching words in isolation is not an ideal method of vocabulary teaching. Generally speaking, essential to teacher's ability to select, modify and adapt materials to classroom contexts lays a broad understanding of principles that inform materials development and methodology choices. Consequently, teachers continue to be unaware of the required pedagogical and methodological issues underpinning courses, the rationale for the course and are not informed of what students have learned prior to arriving in their class. In the informal interviews and discussions, teacher participants emphasized the importance of using variety of teaching methods that accounts for individual differences between the pupils and help them learning new lexical items.as confirmed by Mohammed Osman, a 55 years old English teacher, "... it is extremely important to use different methods for teaching. But as you see, from where can we obtain this. I use the same blackboard for more than 20 years, what do you expect?"

Lack of training programmes and workshops may be among the difficulties teachers face to keep them updated. Well preparation before the lesson is the guarantee for successful presentation. Lexical attrition is a phenomenon that is caused by a number of factors; related to the syllabus, teaching and teachers, learning process and the students themselves, in addition to many other factors. It seems that the teachers by their behavior inside the classroom contributed in the occurrence of this phenomenon among the Sudanese basic school pupils.

Recommendations

The study recommends that:

- Although teachers face difficulties in obtaining high level of language skills among the pupils for many reasons, they should try to behave positively inside the classroom, specifically, with their pupils.
- A variety of methods should be used in teaching new English vocabularies.
- To enrich the topics discussed, teachers could do their best to obtain-n their pupils' involvement in the lessons; interaction is away to activate the class.
- Punishment should not be allowed in the schools, instead reward proved to be better.

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