

THE EFFECT OF VIBER APPLICATION ON THE ACQUISITION OF CLIPPED, BLENDED AND ACRONYM WORDS

Liqaq Habeb Al-Obaydi¹, Atyaf Hasan Ibrahim²

¹Asst. Prof. Dr. Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Diyala, Diyala, Iraq. liqaahabeb@yahoo.com

²Inst. Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Diyala, Diyala, Iraq. atyafatyaf2000@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The present study focuses on the use of Viber application groups on the acquisition of three types of words. It deals with words that resulted from three processes of word formation; clipping, blending and acronymy. The study aims at helping students to understand and produce words resulted from clipping, blending and acronymy by using Viber groups. The sample of the study consists of sixty students divided into two groups, experimental and control, thirty students for each. The study based on verifying the following hypothesis: there is no statistically significant difference between the main score of the experimental group performance in enhancing students' knowledge of word formation processes by using Viber groups and that of the control one. The researcher used adapted test to gain the final results. The findings of the study show positive impact of Viber groups on students' performance and clarify that there is a significant difference between the two groups in favor of the experimental one. So, the hypothesis of the study is rejected.

Key Words: Viber application, Clipped, Blended, Acronym Words

1. Introduction

1.1 Word Formation Processes

Knowledge of vocabulary usually increases as a result of comprehension and this occurs partly due to the understanding of the critical word formation processes including the formation of clipped, blended and acronym words. This presentation is meant to provide a theoretical perspective of those three types of words under investigation.

Word formation processes are characterized by Productivity which is the most important property that allows the formation of a wide range of new words. Productivity can be defined as "the property which makes possible the construction and interpretation of new signals, i.e., signals that have not been previously encountered and are not to be found on some list" (Lyons, 1990:22). Katamba (1993:66) views productivity in terms of generality, "the more general a word formation process is, the more productive it will be assumed to be". He adds that there are two key points related to word formation:

a. Productivity is a matter of degree, probably, no process is so general without exception. Some processes are relatively more general than others.

2. Productivity is subject to the dimension of time. A process which is very general during one historical period, may become less general at a subsequent period and vice versa.

Quirk et al., (1972:981) observe that word formation can be divided into two types: major and minor. Major processes tackle the processes of affixation, conversion and compounding whereas minor processes deal with forming new words on the basis of old ones, include blending, clipping and acronymy. The recent study investigates the vocabulary words acquired by those three processes.

1.1.1 Clipping

Clipping "occurs when a word of more than one syllable is reduced to a shorter form, usually beginning in casual speech" Yule (2010:56). It refers to "the process of word formation in which an existing form is abbreviated" (Matthews, 1997:56). Stageberg and Oaks (2000:129) state that clipping is the cutting off the beginning or the end part of a word or both parts, leaving a part to stand for the whole. It is worth mentioning that many forms of

clipping are characteristics of informal or casual or tended speech that belong to colloquial language. Clipping forms are found in everyday life usage of language, for example: lab, exam, prof., bath, standing for examination, professor and bathroom. Quirk et al., (1972:1030) state that clipping may occur in the following phases:

a- the beginning of the word as in: Phone = telephone, bus= omnibus

b-the end of the word: ad= advertisement, exam= examination

c-at both end of the word: flu= influenza, fridge= refrigerator

Stageberg and Oaks (2000:130) clarify that “sometimes, clipped words can be formed from grammatical units such as modifier plus noun. In this case, the first part is shortened and the second remains intact, such as: paratrooper from parachutist trooper.

1.1.2 Blending

Yule (1996:66) states that blending is accomplished by taking only the beginning of one word and joining it to the end of the other word. Richards and Schmidt (2002:55) define it as "the process by which new words are formed from the beginning of one word and the ending of another". On his part, Crystal (2004: 130) adds that “in most cases, the second element is the one which controls the meaning of the whole”, for instance *brunch* (taken from lunch and breakfast) is a kind of lunch not a kind of breakfast.

Stageberg and Oaks (2000,131) clarify that " many blends are nonce words, here today and gone tomorrow, and relatively few become part of the standard lexicon". Kuiper and Allan (1996:185) define nonce words as" words used just once and then are not used again". Some examples of blending are:

simulcast from oadsimultaneous + brcast

Franglais from French + English

modem from modulator + demodulator

1.1.3 Acronymy

Acronymy is a process by which acronyms are produced. Acronym words as defined by Yule (2010: 58) “are new words formed from the initial letters of a set of other words”. They are usually called abbreviated words. Crystal (2004:120) shows that there are many reasons for using abbreviations represented by the desire for linguistic economy, succinctness and precision. It is also important in technological constrains and conveying a sense of social identity.

Acronyms as mentioned by Stageberg and Oaks (2000:131) “tend to abound in large organizations, for instance, in the army, in government, and in big business where they offer neat ways of expressing long and cumbersome terms”.

Crystal (2004 :120) suggests that acronyms must be distinguished from initialisms (alphabetisms) where the words are spoken as individual letters such as BBC, MP and EEC. Acronyms, are pronounced as a single word such as NATO and UNESCO. Such items would never have periods separating the letters, contrasting initialisms. Some linguists never recognize a sharp distinction between acronyms and initialisms, but use the former term for both.

At last, Fromkin et al. (2003:95) mention interesting examples about using acronyms in daily life which are worth mentioning, specifically with the wide use of computers including MORF (male and female), FAQ (frequently asking questions), FYI (for your information)

1.2 The Language of Social Media

Language used by interlocuters take different forms ranging from the written to the spoken and even sign language. Recently one effective way of communication is in the net social media. Many studies have been

conducted by researchers to discover its different forms, its importance and how it works. Naomi Baron is known of conducting different studies on Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) and she found out that CMC has a great effect on language and communication, since people communicate largely by using computers instead of face-to-face interaction or writing letters (Baron, 1984: 119). Baron calls CMC a written language although there is actually a strong influence of spoken language on CMC and she defines it as "any natural language messaging that is transmitted and/or received via a computer connection (ibid, 2003: 10).

Net communicators use language in a way that changes it to serve their communicative purposes as Fromkin et al (2011: 61) state that internet bloggers like to point out 'inconsistencies' in the English language. They observe that while singers sing and flingers fling, it is not the case that fingers 'fing'.

It is revealed that one way of using language on net is the use of the word formation process known as 'acronymy'. Acronyms came to be very popular in the use of mobile phone messages and online text-based communications such as Twitter, Facebook, messages, email, etc... and began to control the way social media user's interaction. Those acronyms carried new meanings day after another and have grown from the simple abbreviation such as LOL (Laughing Out Loud) to a long list of more complicated ones. Those abbreviations are used to speed up communication and save effort of writing full forms.

The most frequent abbreviations used in chatting are:

OMG: Oh my God, ROFL: Rolling on floor laughing, LOL: Laughing out loud,

LMK: Let me know, NVM: Never mind, OFC: Of course, THX: Thanks.

In addition to a long list provided by www.wearesocial.com.au (<https://www.dailymail.co.uk>).

The use of Viber is very common among college students as it is easy to access and provide students with wide range of texts and authentic vocabulary. In his study, Dernas (2017) states about the role of Viber in enhancing vocabulary that "the use of Viber can enable students to develop their vocabulary skills through a lifelong and informal activity". Farahmand & Kowsary (2016) present a study that is related to the impact of using Viber on Iranian vocabulary learning. They find out that there is a significant relationship between using Viber and students' vocabulary development.

1.3 The Statement of the Problem

The processes of producing new words in language; clipping, acronyms and blending, represent a serious problem to native as well as EFL learners as they create completely new words or reshape the existing ones. Therefore, a special care needs to be paid for teaching them how to acquire new words by using those processes. In addition, there should be new creative ways that facilitates the way for them to enrich their vocabulary by using those processes and the use of traditional ways in teaching gain less acceptance from students as the global context around them become more complex. For these reasons, the researchers have chosen a new way that teachers can use to teach students in an indirect way the use of such words. This new way is through the social media represented by Viber application, it is the medium of the experiments in the study. This study intends to answer the following question:

Is the use of Viber application groups affect students' performance in understanding and producing words that are resulted from clipping, blending and acronymy word formation processes?

1.4 Aim of the Study

This study aims at helping students to understand and produce words resulted from clipping, blending and acronymy by using Viber groups.

1.5 Hypothesis of the Study

There is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group performance in enhancing students' knowledge of word formation processes by using Viber application and that of the control one.

2.Procedures

2.1 The Experimental Design

The researchers depend "The Post Test Control Group Design" in order to answer the study question and to achieve the aim of the study, as shown in Table (1) below:

Table (1) Experimental design

The groups	The nature of explanation	
Experimental	Explanation using Viber groups	Post-test
Control	Traditional way of explanation	Post-test

2.2 The Sample of the Study

To achieve the objectives of the study, the researchers have intentionally chosen a sample of the study that consists of (60) 2nd year students divided into two groups (experimental and control), English department, College of Education for Humanities, University of Diyala.

The researchers have tried their best to control some of the variables that may influence the final results of the experiment. Therefore, the following variables have been controlled for both groups:

1. The academic level of the father,
2. The academic level of the mother, and
3. Age of the Subjects.

2.3 The Experimental Application

The experiment started on the 1st of April 2018 and lasted for four weeks and ended up on 29th of April 2018. The time of the experiment has been arranged to use one hour daily via Viber group that includes thirty students from second stage students/English department. The group was guided by the researchers. They met every day for an hour. The researchers used "word maps" way of presenting target words. Word maps as stated by Kress (2008:300) is a technique used to "engage students in a discussion of the relationships among the words, create semantic maps by writing the words on the chalkboard and showing, by placement and connecting lines, the relationship among the words presented". The researchers replace the chalkboard by a Viber screen. The researchers present one word of each process daily then the students discuss the guiders and their colleagues. At last, each one of them presents two examples of each process. The control group has been taught by the researchers using the traditional way (discussion) without any use of the social media applications. The two groups were tested then by using a test at the end of the experiment.

2.4 Instrument of the study

In order to evaluate students' performance in the words that are resulted from the three types of word formation processes; clipping, blending and acronymy, the researchers make a Viber group that includes all participants (the experimental group) and then a post test that consist of three parts including recognition and production tasks which is adapted from Al-Obaydi (2007) with some modifications and shortenings.

3. Results

To fulfil the aim of the present study and to verify the hypothesis, the researchers gained the following results: Using the t-test for two independent samples at 0.05 level of significance and 58 degree of freedom, the result reveals that the mean score of the experimental group is 43.70 and that of the control group is 33.30. The computed t-value (8.780) is higher than the critical t-value (2). This means that there is a statically significant difference between the two groups in favor of the experimental one. So, the hypothesis is rejected.

The Results of the first hypothesis (Table 2)

The variable	Groups	No.	M	S. D	t-value		Df	Results
					computed	table		
Word formation processes	experimental	30	43.70	5.434	8.780	2	58	significant
	Control	30	33.30	3.544				

4. Discussion and Conclusions

The results show that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups in their performance in the recognizing and producing words that related to the three types of word formation processes namely clipping, blending and acronymy, in favor of the experimental group. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected. This result reveals that the use of modern technology, specifically the applications that are socially near students' life, in learning a language help them to learn more quickly than the traditional ways. In addition, the atmosphere of group work and social interaction help students to break the ice among them and to be more risk-takers. Also, their motivation towards joining the group increased significantly in addition to their level of academic performance. It is worth mentioning that the results of this study are in line with the study of Dermas (2017) and Farahmand & Kowsary (2016) that the use of Viber groups enhances positively students' level of vocabulary.

5. Recommendations

The following pedagogical implications and recommendations are put forward:

1. It is recommended according to the results of this study to use special exercises and dialogues by teachers and textbook writers in which new words are contextualized specifically by depending on the applications of social media.
2. The presentation of roots first and then the new words by using the word map strategy will help in the process of inferring meaning. So, it is desirable to use it by teachers in teaching vocabulary.
3. Teachers should pay more attention to the use of indirect means and techniques of vocabulary expansion such as the E-learning applications.

References

- Al-Obaydi L. H. (2007) *Iraqi EFL College Students Performance in English Word Formation Processes: Problems and Remedial Work*. Unpublished Thesis. University of Diyala. Iraq.
- Baron, N. S. (1984) Computer-Mediated Communication as a Force in Language Change. *Visible Language*, 18 (2), 118-141.
- _____ (2003) Why E-mail looks like speech: Proofreading, pedagogy and public face. In J. Aitchison & D. Lewis (Eds.), *New media language* (pp. 102-113). London: Routledge.
- Crystal, D. (2004). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of The English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Dermas, S. (2017) *The Use of Viber in Enhancing the Vocabulary Skills of Ethiopian Undergraduate students: The Case of St. Mary's University*. Conference Proceedings. ICT for language learning, 101, 2017.

- Farahmand, F. & Kowsary, M. (2016) The Effects of Using Viber on Iranian EFL University Students' Vocabulary Learning (An Interactionst View) *International journal of Social and Educational Science*. Volume 3/Issue 5/2016
- Fromkin, V. & Rodman, R. & Hyams, N. (2003) *An Introduction to Language*. Bosten: Thomson Heinle.
- Katamba, F. (1993) *Morphology*. London: Macmillan Press LTD.
- Kress, J. (2008) *The ESL/ELL Teachers' Book of Lists*. Jossy-Buss: San Francisco.
- Kuiper, K & Allan. W. (1996) *An introduction to English language*. Sound, Word and Sentence. London: The Bath Press. Bath.
- Lyons, J. (1990) *Language and Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Quirk, R. & Leech, G & Svartvik, J. (1972) *A Grammar of Contemporary English*. London: Longman
- Richard, J. & Schmidt, R. (2002). *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Stageberg, N. & Oaks, D. (2000) *An Introductory English Grammar*. Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers.
- Yule, G. (1996) *The Study of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2010) *The Study of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.