

MFP IN PRACTICE: TECHNIQUES FOR VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY OF GFP STUDENTS

Najah AL Siyabi*¹ Ayoub AL Rashdi¹ Kauthar AL Mawali¹ Taef AL Riyami¹
Yusra AL Kiyumi¹ Einas AL Maqbali¹ Mandhar AL Farsi¹ Halima AL Siyabi¹

¹Foundation Programme Department, Military Technological College, Muscat, Oman

Najah.alsiyabi@mtc.edu.om

ABSTRACT

This quasi- experimental research investigates how MFP techniques impact vocabulary learning among foundation students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Two groups of 20 participants each were assessed before and after a two-week intervention. The study provides insights into the effectiveness of MFP approach in enhancing vocabulary acquisition. Pre- and post- intervention data revealed that the experimental group, receiving MFP pedagogy- based instruction, showed significant improvement in the post test. A paired t- test analysis confirmed a statistically significant difference with a p- value ($p < 0.05$), indicating MFP pedagogy's positive effect on vocabulary learning. This research highlights the value of MFP Practice for EFL educators and instructional designers, suggesting its potential to boost vocabulary and overall language development. Future studies could explore its long-term influence on language proficiency in EFL contexts.

KEYWORDS

MFP Technique, Vocabulary Acquisition, EFL Instruction, Foundation Learners, Language Pedagogy

1. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary acquisition is a vital element of second language learning, serving as the foundation for communication, reading comprehension, and academic success. Without a consistent vocabulary base, learners often struggle to understand and produce language effectively. Therefore, identifying effective methods for teaching vocabulary is crucial for both educators and learners. [1] states that one instructional approach that has gained attention is the MFP technique. It focuses on three key dimensions of vocabulary learning: Meaning, Form, and Pronunciation. [2] added that the MFP technique is a comprehensive method of vocabulary instruction that focuses on integrating three main aspects: understanding the meaning of words, recognizing their form (grammar and structure), and practicing their pronunciation. This approach aims to ensure

learners acquire vocabulary in a balanced and holistic way, leading to deeper vocabulary retention and more confident language use.

The MFP technique is basically found on communicative language teaching that proposes a structured method to introduce and practice new vocabulary [3]. [4] defines teaching **meaning** as the learners' ability to understand how a word is used in context, often supported by examples or visuals. On the other hand, **form** helps learners recognize and use words correctly in various contexts by directing grammatical structure, word form and spelling. **Pronunciation** alternatively, highlights "the way how the word is said, including stress and intonation patterns, which enhances oral communication, listening comprehension and overall language proficiency" [4].

Despite its intuitive appeal, there is a high demand for more empirical research on the actual effectiveness of the MFP technique in real classroom settings. Therefore, this study investigates the impact of using the MFP approach in vocabulary instruction in EFL classes. By comparing the performance of students exposed to MFP-based instruction with those taught using more traditional methods, this research aims to determine whether the MFP technique leads to measurable improvements in vocabulary learning outcomes. The findings will contribute to current discussions on best practices in vocabulary instruction and may offer practical guidance for language teachers seeking to enhance their pedagogical strategies.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study aims to examine the role of MFP (Meaning, Form, Pronunciation,) technique on vocabulary instruction and acquisition among EFL students enrolled in foundation programme.

The key research objectives are:

- Evaluate the impact of MFP instruction on vocabulary use and retention.
- Propose practical recommendations for EFL teachers and curriculum designers.

3. RESEARCH QUESTION

Does the MFP instruction technique significantly enhance vocabulary acquisition and use among foundation-level EFL students?

4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS:

4.1. Null Hypothesis (H₀):

There is no statistically significant difference in vocabulary acquisition between

students taught using the MFP (Meaning, Form, Pronunciation) technique and those taught using traditional methods.

4.2. Alternative Hypothesis (H₁):

Students taught vocabulary using the MFP (Meaning, Form, Pronunciation) technique will show significantly greater improvement in vocabulary acquisition compared to those taught using traditional methods.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

5.1. Theoretical Foundations of Vocabulary Acquisition in EFL

A crucial part of learning a second language is expanding one's vocabulary, and scholars have put forth a number of models to explain how learners pick up and remember words. According to [3]'s four-strands model, language-focused learning, meaning-focused output, meaning-focused input, and fluency development should all be incorporated into effective vocabulary instruction.

This method emphasizes how crucial it is to incorporate both productive and receptive skills when learning vocabulary. The distinction between incidental and intentional vocabulary learning is another crucial factor. When students are exposed to language in context—for example, through reading or listening—instead of concentrating on vocabulary, they acquire new words incidentally [6].

Conversely, intentional learning entails actively learning new words through memorization or study. According to recent research, integrating the two approaches can enhance learning results, particularly for novice students [7]. Scholars also stress the significance of vocabulary knowledge's breadth and depth. Breadth refers to the number of words a learner knows, while depth refers to how well they know each word, including its meaning, use, and associations [8]. Studies have shown that depth of vocabulary is a stronger predictor of reading and writing performance than breadth alone [9].

To summarize, effective vocabulary instruction in the EFL classroom should be based on Nation's model, [5] including both incidental and intentional learning strategies, and aim to improve both breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge. This combined approach can help learners build vocabulary more effectively and use it with greater confidence and accuracy.

5.2. Overview of the MFP Framework

5.2.1 What is the MFP (Meaning, Form, Pronunciation) framework?

Over the past 20 years, the Meaning, Form, and Pronunciation (MFP) framework has become better widely recognized as a methodical and interactive approach to vocabulary instruction. This

approach, rooted in larger concepts of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) [10] reflects the educational transition from mechanical memorisation of isolated words to more meaningful and contextualised language use. Effective vocabulary instruction requires not just semantic comprehension, but also phonological accuracy and grammatical clarity, as applied linguistics has long stressed. This perspective is supported by [11], who argues that lexical competency requires learners to do more than just understanding definitions; they also need to pronounce words and use them in grammatical contexts correctly. The MFP framework is now commonly known as the result of the evolution of this triadic model of instruction.

The MFP framework, widely used in language curriculum creation and teacher education since the early 2010s, is a valuable tool for scaffolding vocabulary sessions and promoting active, communicative applications. Recent research highlights the importance of using digital tools and contextual input, as this promotes longer-term acquisition and deeper engagement [12] As pedagogical and technological developments continue to impact language education, the MFP framework remains a fundamental model for systematic and successful vocabulary instruction.

5.2.2. Theoretical background and pedagogical rationale behind MFP

The Meaning, Form, and Pronunciation (MFP) framework is a structured method frequently used in teaching new vocabulary or grammar. It emphasises the importance for students to use a word properly, requiring them to understand its meaning, correct pronunciation, and grammatical form. However, why is this sequence of presentation used for certain linguistic features? [13] found that this method enables students to retain new vocabulary more effectively, which is consistent with cognitive theories of language acquisition. Accurate phonological representations, speaking abilities, and listening comprehension all depend on the MFP sequence. Additionally, it enables students to contextualise the word inside sentence structures, which facilitates its usage in both spoken and written language, as [14] discussed.

5.2.3. Application of MFP in vocabulary teaching

[12] argues that teachers should utilise the MFP framework in classroom by organising terminology in a specific manner. Firstly, images, context, or real-world examples are used to clarify meaning. [15] also discusses the components of meaning instruction, including illustration, mime, definition, translation, synonyms, antonyms, and context. Secondly, grammatical rules, word class identification, and sentence patterns are used to examine form. Finally, phonemic transcriptions, stress patterns, and drilling exercises are frequently used to model pronunciation. The efficacy of this framework is supported by research as [13] discovered that MFP-based education enhanced vocabulary retention in both short and long term. Furthermore, MFP

vocabulary instruction increases learner autonomy, confidence, and language use accuracy, according to [12].

5.3. Techniques for Vocabulary Instruction

5.3.1. Traditional methods vs. Modern Methods

Learning vocabulary is one of the main elements of acquiring a language. However, learning new words shouldn't be only for the sake of passing an exam or checking a list, learners should understand how vocabulary occurs in real contexts and the grammar besides the features of the new words [16]. [16] suggests that in early stages, drilling or repetition practices are the best techniques to memorise the pronunciation and remember the words, but for later stages finding synonyms and searching for definitions from dictionaries may be better as it has shown to have an effect on students' performance. In addition, the Grammar-Translation Method has been used for a long time to teach students the structure of new vocabulary, but unfortunately it lacks the ability to improve learners' communicative competence [17]. The famous British author, Wilkins, has proposed the communicative approach which propounds that acquiring vocabulary should be in real context via exercises and curricula [17].

5.3.2. Technology-enhanced vocabulary instruction (e.g., apps, online platforms)

With the rapid boost of technology throughout the years, it has been introduced intensively in classrooms by teachers recently. It has been noticed that gamified platforms play a significant role in enhancing students' performance in acquiring vocabulary especially that it gives them the chance to challenge while having fun [18]. The traditional way of studying vocabulary is accompanied with anxiety and negative attitude unless technology and online games are integrated in the learning process [18]. They also suggest that using online platforms to learn vocabulary is an ideal example of personalized learning where students are not overwhelmed by their competitors, rather they are content with the level that the platform adapts to and provide exercises and games to continue the motivation and enhancement. Kahoot and Wordwall are excellent examples of online educational platforms which are used in classrooms and have great impact on students' motivation especially for those students who like social comparison [18].

5.4. Best Practices for Vocabulary Teaching in the EFL Context

EFL vocabulary teaching is most effective when it focuses on strategies that build long-term understanding of words. Vocabulary growth in EFL learners has been linked to strategies like using real-life context, task-based learning, and digital tools. According to [19], teaching vocabulary in a context that uses rich, real-life language input can also improve students' reading comprehension in EFL setting. Research have also shown that game-based learning tools are

effective in maintaining higher levels of interest and better word retention among EFL students [20].

Even with the availability of a range of proven strategies for teaching vocabulary, students in EFL environments frequently struggle with vocabulary acquisition which is limiting their ability in mastering new lexical units. EFL learners often experience difficulties arising from a lack of consistent exposure to authentic language input, a heavy tendency and reliance on rote memorization of vocabulary lists over contextual learning, and difficulties in using vocabulary and lexical knowledge across real-world language scenarios [21]. These barriers may impede the development of acquiring rich, diverse and functional vocabulary base that is significant for progressing long-term language proficiency, specifically in English as a foreign language.

Teachers' beliefs of understanding and approaching language learning and vocabulary teaching play a critical role on the strategies and methods they choose to apply and present in the classroom, making their perspectives a key element in vocabulary instruction. Research indicates that although many teachers acknowledge the importance of vocabulary teaching, a notable disparity is often present between pedagogical beliefs about vocabulary teaching among educators and what is practically feasible for them to implement in class, mainly due to lack of resources and curriculum constraints [22]. To ensure more effective and sustainable vocabulary teaching techniques in EFL context, it is essential to bridge the gap between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices.

Bringing together proven instructional and practical strategies, addressing student-specific challenges, and ensuring the alignment of teachers' instructional beliefs with their classroom practices are all necessary to make vocabulary instruction and learning outcomes more effective in EFL classrooms.

Building on this review, this study investigates how the MFP strategy can tackle these instructional obstacles in a foundation-level EFL programme setting for better vocabulary instruction outcomes. The next section outlines the methodology used to evaluate the impact of the MFP method in a classroom environment.

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1. Research Design

This study employed a **quasi-experimental design** with pre-test and post-test measures to investigate the effectiveness of MFP techniques for vocabulary instruction among GFP (General Foundation Program) students. The research compared a control group receiving traditional instruction and an experimental group exposed to MFP-focused vocabulary teaching strategies.

6.2. Participants

The participants were **40 male students** enrolled in the General Foundation Program, aged between 18 and 21 years. The participants were divided into two groups of 20 students each. All students were at the B1- B2 level on the CEFR scale, as determined by their placement test scores.

6.3. Instruments

- **Vocabulary Pre-test and Post-test:** Two equivalent tests were developed based on the GFP vocabulary list. Each test consisted of 12 items assessing Meaning, Form, and Pronunciation.
- **Lesson Plans:** A series of four lessons were designed for both the control and experimental groups. The control group followed a traditional approach focusing mainly on word meaning, while the experimental group used the MFP model.

6.4. Procedure

The study was conducted over a **4-week period** during regular English classes. The procedure was as follows:

- **Week 1:** Pre-test administration to both groups to assess baseline vocabulary knowledge.
- **Weeks 2–3:** Vocabulary instruction using two different approaches:
 - **Control Group:** Received instruction using traditional based methods.
 - **Experimental Group:** Received instruction using MFP strategies (e.g., phonemic transcription, contextualized use, word formation exercises).
- **Week 4:** Post-test administered to both groups.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To answer the research question about the impact of the MFP instruction technique in enhancing vocabulary acquisition and use among foundation-level EFL students, two main types of statistical analysis were used in order to compare the performance of the control and experimental group before and after the implementation of MFP, an independent sample T test was conducted and the results are shown in tables 1,2,3.

Table 1. Independent sample T test for the mean scores of the pre test*

Pre-Test	Group	N	Std.		df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Mean	Deviation			
	Control	20	1.65	1.79			
	Experimental	20	1.95	1.54	38	-0.57	0.572

*Total score =12

An independent sample t- test was used to check the equivalence between the control and the experimental groups before the treatment, $t(38) = -.057$, ($p = .572$) which indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the control group ($M= 1.65$, $SD = 1.79$) and experimental group ($M = 1.95$, $SD = 1.54$) in their pre-test scores. This signifies that both groups started at a similar level of vocabulary knowledge before the teaching intervention was applied.

Table 2. Independent sample T test for the mean scores of the post test*

Post – test	Group	N	Std.		df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Mean	Deviation			
	Control	20	1.8	1.54	38	-16.96	0
	Experimental	20	10.1	1.55			

*Total score =12

An independent sample t-test was calculated to check the effect of MFP technique on learning vocabulary, $t(38) t = 16.9$, $p = .000$ with MFP indicating a larger effect on the experimental group ($M = 10.1$, $SD = 1.55$) than the control group ($M = 1.8$, $SD = 1.54$). This indicates that There is a statistically significant difference between the post-test scores of the control and experimental groups, with the experimental group scoring significantly higher. This result also supports the **alternative hypothesis**, which posits that the MFP teaching technique would have a significant impact on vocabulary acquisition of the experimental group, which was outperformed the control group.

In order to compare the performance of the experimental group before and after the instruction of MFP, a paired sample t-test was conducted, the results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Paired samples t-test for the mean scores of the experimental group*

Experimental group	Test	N	Mean	Std.	df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Deviation			
	Pre-test	20	1.95	1.54	19	-14.47	0
	Post-test	20	10.1	1.55			

*Total score =12

A paired sample t-test was used for the experimental group to check the effect of MFP on the vocabulary learning, $t(19) = -14.47$, $p = .000$ with MFP technique indicating statistically significant improvement in vocabulary test scores for the experimental group after applying the new teaching method (MFP technique). ($M = 10.1$, $SD = 1.55$) than the effect before the implementation ($M = 1.95$, $SD = 1.55$).

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

There are several recommendations drawn from the findings of this research. First, it is highly recommended that curriculum developers and designers consider incorporating the MFP model as a vocabulary framework within the curriculum. This would be especially beneficial for English foundation learners. Second, English language teachers should be provided with targeted training and professional development sessions focused on how to deliver MFP-based vocabulary lessons effectively. Additionally, integrating technology into MFP lessons can have a positive impact on learners' understanding of vocabulary. Platforms such as Wordwall, Kahoot, and Quizlet are particularly useful for reinforcing vocabulary meaning, form, and pronunciation. Moreover, teachers should include MFP components in formative assessments throughout the semester to ensure that learners are continuously progressing in their vocabulary development. Finally, MFP-based vocabulary instruction and activities should be integrated with the main language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking. When teaching any of these skills, there should be an embedded focus on MFP-related activities that align with the lesson theme. This ensures that learners make progress in both vocabulary acquisition and skill development simultaneously.

9. FUTURE STUDIES

This paper offers several suggestions for future investigations into MFP-based vocabulary instruction. First, it is recommended to focus on a larger population to draw broader conclusions, for example, selecting institutions from different governorates. This would provide richer insights and allow for more comprehensive interpretations. Second, replicating the study with learners at

different proficiency levels would be useful, as it would reveal whether MFP techniques can be effectively applied across various learner groups. Third, we propose conducting research on the long-term impact of MFP instruction on vocabulary acquisition and, consequently, on learners' overall language proficiency. For instance, applying the same methodology over several months or across an entire academic year could yield valuable data. Finally, further investigation could involve comparing the MFP method with other instructional approaches, such as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) or the Lexical Approach. Exploring the possibility of combining MFP with other methods might lead to more effective vocabulary teaching strategies and improved learning outcomes.

10. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study investigated the impact of the MFP (Meaning, Form, Pronunciation) instructional vocabulary technique used in Foundation Omani EFL classrooms, emphasising its innovative advantages, such as contextualised understanding, structured learning, and active student participation. By adopting an organised, interactive technique that emphasises Meaning, Form, and Pronunciation over traditional rote memorisation, the MFP technique fosters critical thinking, a deeper understanding of word meanings, and the purposeful use of new vocabulary. However, there are still obstacles to overcome in effectively applying the MFP technique, such as the need for carefully planned exercises, sufficient practice time, and continuous support to ensure student interest and understanding. Future studies should investigate how MFP impacts vocabulary retention over the long term and how learner outcomes might be enhanced by incorporating MFP into more comprehensive language learning courses. Teachers can establish engaging and encouraging learning environments that support students in reaching their language proficiency and vocabulary goals by implementing the MFP strategy. The MFP technique enhances language abilities through collaborative learning, systematic practice, and active engagement, thereby boosting confidence and proficiency in applying new terminology in real-life situations.

11. REFERENCES

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